







## Outdoor Urban Retreat

"The owners—a lawyer and construction company executive—often entertain clients at their home so it was important in warmer months to have an extension of the interior to entertain," says Michael Wood, principal of Michael Wood Interiors. "The kitchen is fully outfitted with a grill, icemaker, sink and beverage fridge. The two zones—dining and lounge—function as one, or can be used independently." The space has an open area for kids to play, a fully outfitted kitchen for dining and entertaining, and a lounge with HDTV. There is comfortable outdoor furniture with a fireplace as well as a proper dining area with built-in bench. At the time of the renovation the client's children were 1, 6, 7 and 9 years old. "It's interesting how it's so easy to design for kids as all of

the materials are so durable: We used ipé wood, which has a 30-year life expectancy, plus outdoor fabrics and solid surface materials," says Wood. "The key, of course, was to integrate storage in the kitchen and bench seating in the dining area for toys and garden tools, along with blankets cushions and pillows." The space is sophisticated enough to entertain clients, yet comfortable enough for a child's summer birthday party. "The goal was to add personality and dimension to a very warm but structured space given the uniformity of the ipé finish," says Wood. "When properly balanced, a mix of old and new not only creates a unique mix but a timeless space that is a good investment as it won't feel dated after a few years."

## Poolside Luxury

This Larchmont, NY, house, located on the Long Island Sound, feels like an elegant vacation home. "Even with the various sections, the goal was to create an open entertaining area that isn't segmented," says Cleo Abrams-Horsburgh of Conte & Conte landscape architects. Construction involved demolishing an existing pool and series of stepped terraces, followed by substantial regrading of the terrain to allow for the expansive lawn area. The new, level yard provides ample space for the clients' twin girls to play, complete with swing set and a much-loved tree swing near the firepit that gets regular use. Large shallow steps into the pool are ideal for lounge chairs or young children just testing the water. The laminar jets add extra splashing fun for pool playtime, but also look exotic and elegant when lit up at night (with options for light shows). The seating areas are combined with large umbrellas which are inserted directly into the terrace surface—avoiding tripping hazards while providing ample shade. Substantial excavating of the property created a large, level lawn for the swing set and countless activities. "Spaces are designed to provide for flexible use," says Abrams-Horsburgh.

The openness of the space and multitude of seating also allows for entertaining larger groups. The replete options for seating, shade, sun, and social or solitary relaxation provide a welcoming space for everyone. "Your landscape is an extension of your home," says Abrams-Horsburgh. "This property has some of the best of views of the Long Island Sound, which are made better when shared with friends and family."



ALLYSON LUBOW



## Game Space

An antique Connecticut barn was turned into a billiards room for a family that wanted to create a comfortable space where they could spend the day relaxing. "It's great for entertaining friends, without the worry of making too much noise," says Stewart Skolnick, partner at Haver & Skolnick Architects. The project, which took six months to complete, included preserving the original timbers of the barn. A fieldstone fireplace was added along with the centerpiece of the room-a 19th century inlaid billiards table. A similar project undertaken by Haver & Skolnick Architects Architects—but at a different home in Connecticut—was turning a horse stable into a family pub and gaming arcade. "This family has four active children," says Charles Haver, partner at Haver & Skolnick Architects. "The parents wanted a place away from the main house where the kids could be kids." The space has turned out to be just as popular with adults as with children. "The tap room style bar is a great place to enjoy a glass of wine or a root beer and the nearby table is perfect for card games, puzzles or monopoly," says Haver. The vintage arcade games provide the whole family with hours of entertainment. "Since the stable is in a separate building, it makes for a fun destination for the family, almost a minivacation!" he adds. A vintage pinball machine and arcade games have replaced the former horse stalls. The birthing stall—the largest section of the stable—was repurposed as a bar.

