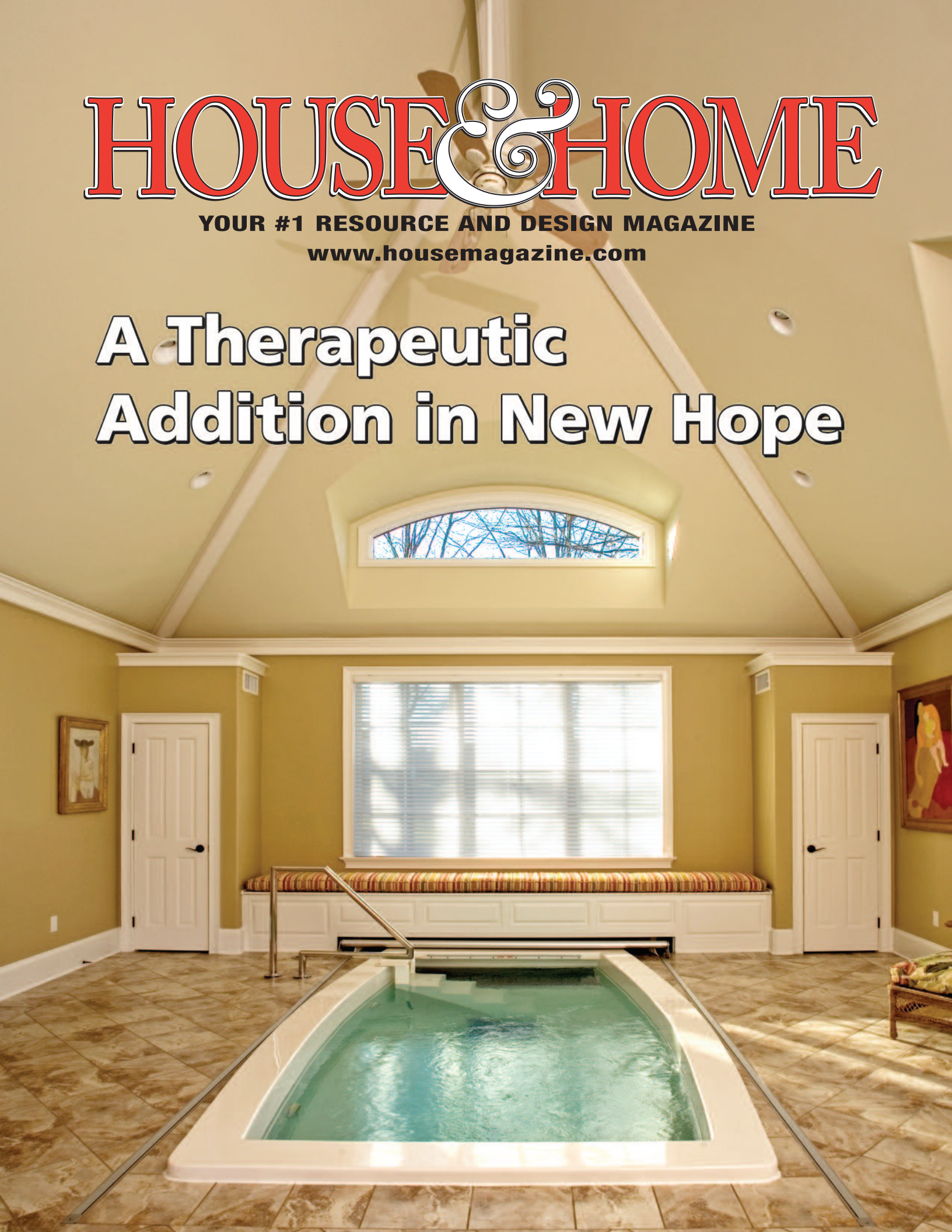


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A Therapeutic Addition in New Hope

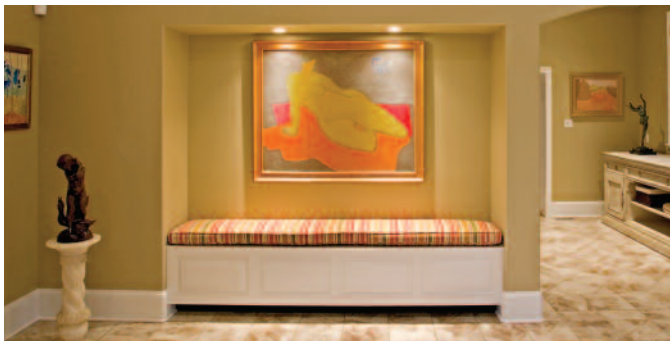




The whole design, especially the sweeping ceilings, gives the appearance of being outdoors.



The homeowners love the way their pool room came together and enjoy spending time in the space.



The bench opposite the pool houses the HVAC return duct, keeping the climate comfortable and the aesthetics pleasing.

a therapeutic addition

a New Hope, PA, couple turned
a physician recommendation
for hydro therapy into a
beautiful addition to their home

By Kerri Penno
Photos by Randl Bye Photography

Carol and Louis Della Penna's brick federal rancher, built in the late 1970s, in New Hope, PA, has grown to approximately 6,000 square feet from the 4,000-square-foot home they purchased in 2001. Clearly, the Della Pennas are no stranger to renovations or the professionals involved.

John Gemmi, contractor, Gemmi Construction Inc., had completed a smaller construction project at the couple's previous home. They reached out to Gemmi again when they purchased their current home. The couple was impressed with his enthusiasm, work ethic and competence as well as his employees' abilities, thoroughness, honesty and attention to detail.

Consequently, when they wanted to remodel their newly purchased home, the Della Pennas knew that Gemmi and his team were more than capable of doing the major renovations they envisioned. The project, which included a new addition, all new electric work, HVAC and windows, expanded rooms, higher ceilings, a new kitchen, master bath, game room, foyer and sitting room was designed by architect Ralph Fey. "Ralph had been so successful with the home's transformation during the major makeover that we were confident he could do it again," Carol says.

COMPLETE CONTROL

And they weren't finished yet. "The results were amazing and we once again contacted John Gemmi and our architect, Ralph Fey, when we wanted to add a swim spa," Carol says. The idea of the swim spa was inspired by Carol's physician, who recommended she use water therapy to ease her arthritis. "We could have gone



Matching the brick of the new addition to the existing house proved challenging, but worth the effort.

with a large regular spa, but we felt that a swim spa with a wave feature would be more effective and versatile," Carol says.

To accommodate the spa, the homeowners decided to add an addition to the house off the master bedroom. "One of the goals was to have the swim spa in a large, bright and airy room, conveniently off the master bedroom and attached to the house in such a way that it appeared to look original to the house," Carol says. The couple wanted a 1,000-square-foot room with high ceilings that were up to 16 feet, large windows, an additional bathroom and a laundry closet. "It had to be functional, comfortable, attractive and solidly constructed," Carol says.

The contractor's biggest goal was to give the clients the indoor continuous current exercise pool they desired, as well as a room they could still enjoy sitting in. To achieve this goal, the team installed The Desert Air System to maintain a comfortable atmosphere in the pool room. Though pool manufacturers recommended using a standard HVAC system, Gemmi had researched the issue and found that other swim spa owners had major

problems with humidity. "We didn't need that," Carol says. "We have complete temperature and humidity control at all times."

The team chose SWIM EX as the swim spa manufacturer because of its reputation and material construction. Color selection was geared to bright, neutral colors that complemented each other and provided a setting for displaying large colorful works of art that graced the walls.

SwimEx Luxury Pools can be designed with a choice of metal colors, waterline tiles and pool colors in either a polished or matte finish. The line is popular due to its unique paddlewheel propulsion that flows through the entire width of the pool. The propulsion system moves upwards of 30,000 gallons per minute and is adjustable to more than 99 different speeds. The SwimEx single-piece, fiberglass construction uses a balsa wood core to produce great strength as well as built-in insulation, also saving on heating costs.

A FEW CHALLENGES

The unique nature of the Della Penna project presented a few challenges to the Gemmi Construction team. "The project could have been a

mechanical nightmare when you consider all the electrical and mechanical aspects of the swim spa, its wave machine and the HVAC system," Carol says. However, with SwimEx's one-piece construction and simplification of systems, and with Fallon specializing in this type of construction, the mechanics of the project were easily managed.

McGlaughlin Spray Foam Insulation Inc. provided spray foam insulation for the entire addition, which includes the ceiling, floors, walls and pool walls. "Applying insulation for a pool is always challenging," says Dik McGlaughlin, owner, McGlaughlin Spray Foam Insulation Inc. "But Gemmi made it an accomplishable task."

McGlaughlin says spray foam insulation was necessary for this project because as closed-cell foam insulation it does not absorb moisture. This is very important in a pool area with high humidity. Spray foam insulation makes it possible to control heat and humidity load.

Another challenge was maintaining the pleasing aesthetics in the room, while incorporating the pool's equipment. The Della Pennas were concerned about their visiting



The neutral wall colors allowed the homeowners to decorate the addition with art.

grandchildren's safety in the room. To prevent a youngster from accidentally falling into the water, the contractors installed an automatic cover that opens with a key which completely seals off the pool. However, when the cover was in the rolled up position, it would be an eyesore. To solve the problem, the team used aluminum L-shaped beams to span the cover and build a beautiful raised panel bench seat with a hinged top, providing access to the cover motor and additional storage space. They also built a matching

bench seat on the other side of the room, in which the toe kick acted as the massive air return for the Desert Air System. This eliminated a giant return grill in the wall that would have been another eyesore.

Also complicating the project was the design and the homeowners' desire to duplicate the brick exterior that existed on the rest of the house. Careful attention was paid to the foundation, basement crawl space and connection to the existing basement. In the end, all these challenges

were overcome and the project was completed in just 6 months.

A RARE PLEASURE

Gemmi Construction Inc. was recognized for its swim spa project with local and regional Contractor of the Year (CotY) awards and a national CotY nomination from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). The end results combined functionality with a cheerful atmosphere and a bright and airy aesthetic. "It has become a place where we can relax, either in the pool or in a lounge chair," Carol says. "You could live in here full time."

The homeowners' goals were met and exceeded. "It is almost impossible to detect this room as being an add-on to an existing home," Carol says. "The construction was first rate and the design, particularly the sweeping ceilings, eyebrow windows and wrap-around windows, gives you the feeling of being outside when you are actually inside."

The brick exterior is almost an exact match to the original brick. The room and roofline dovetail into the rest of the house. Replacing all the windows allowed another seamless transition from the addition to the rest of the home.

These details were important to the contractor. "One of the highlights for us on this project was building a very intricate vaulted ceiling over the small octagon bump out,"

Fallon says. "It took some time to build, but was a pleasure to look at when it was finished." He also enjoyed building the bench seats to conceal the pool cover and equipment. "Anytime we can turn an area with mechanical necessity into something the client can use, it is always a pleasure."

A rare pleasure and the biggest highlight for the construction team was hooking up the pool and starting up the endless current. "It's not every day we get to do one of these," Fallon says. "The swim was quite relaxing!"

Gemmi Construction Inc., is located in Mechanicsville, PA. The company is a member of NARI and can be reached at 215-340-4600. Visit www.gemmiconstruction.com for more information.

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Contractors: John Gemmi, CEO, (left) and John Damian Fallon, lead carpenter and project foreman, of Gemmi Construction Inc.

as seen in

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