

HOUSE & HOME

AN INSIDE LOOK AT CHICAGO'S MOST EXCLUSIVE ADDRESS—THE NORTH SHORE



Details that stand the test of time.

The library provides a private and tranquil setting. Custom cabinetry, subdued color palette, and textile selections add to richness of the space. The plaster-cast ceiling detail adds texture and beauty.

Jeff Harting, (Gensburg, Toniolo Harting Architects), thoughtfully designed and oriented the recent additions to showcase the magnificent rear yard and gardens. Of note are the two octagonal bays designed for the breakfast room and screen porch. The original structure can be seen to the left and renovations to the right.

HOME TOUR



AUTHENTICALLY TUDOR

A Lake Forest couple joins forces to restore their English Tudor to the grandeur it was meant to enjoy.

WORDS BY ANN MARIE SCHEIDLER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM HARRIS FOR HEDRICH BLESSING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Nestled quietly off of a secluded drive in Lake Forest is the enchanting English Tudor home of Jan Serafine and Alan Eisenberg. An interior designer and general contractor respectively, who together have Northshore Design & Building Group, collaborated on creating this home nearly 30 years ago.

As the years passed and the couple's needs for the home evolved and changed, they turned to long-time friend Jeff Harting of Gensburg Toniolo Harting Architects to help them incorporate historically accurate architectural details into the home—both inside and out.

Walking through Serafine and Eisenberg's home today, there's a sense that the home has a history greater than its three decades. And one would never know that Harting's vision for the newer wings off

the back of the house weren't there from the beginning.

"Jeff has been absolutely incredible in this collaboration," Serafine says. "He has a fabulous eye for creating linear passages. I could never have done any of this without him—his ideas are phenomenal. I don't know how he comes up with the ones he does, but he always has them and has worked incredibly hard to give us exactly what we wanted," Serafine says with a smile. "Jeff is a very patient man."

There is serenity to the home's interior that comes from the soft palette of blues and grays carefully selected by Serafine. "I had a feeling in mind that I like certain colors better than others," she explains. "I always head towards blues and softer colors. A home has to look lived in. It can't look just like a model home."

To achieve this look, Serafine artfully displays her lifetime of col-

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This beautifully appointed screen porch becomes one with the outdoors throughout spring, summer, and fall.

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This impressive space serves as the media room and entertainment center for family and friends. Lush furnishings and materials are in keeping with the architectural grandeur of the home.

lections. “I don’t know how people make a house look like a home without collections of something,” she says. In her library, behind glass in softly lit hutchches, are treasures from the family’s rich history in the skating world. Some of the most intriguing are antique lanterns that ice skaters once used when skating on frozen ponds.

Across the room, Serafine points to a fan. “I brought that home with me on the plane after a trip to China,” she says. “Some of my best finds came from my travels when I could bring anything and everything back with me on the plane. You can’t really do that any more.”

Just steps from the luxurious library is the kitchen that the homeowners renovated three years ago—making it one of the home’s grand focal points today. “Everything I had before was very modern, very contemporary. Not sure why I did that in the ‘80s, but I did,” Serafine says with a smile. “So when we redid the kitchen, I wanted it to have long-lasting qualities, where all we’ll ever have to do is repaint.”

The team started with a French Blue LaCornue range as its inspirational launching point for this space. In the kitchen’s center is a large wooden island with a piece of stone inlaid at the top. Just

above the sink is a strategically placed television that you’ll likely miss unless someone points it out—true to Serafine’s vision that while every space should be beautiful, it must also be functional. “We cook a lot and we love to sit here at the island with family and friends. Most nights my husband and I will eat dinner here and watch something on TV.”

As part of the renovation, Harting moved the dining room to where the library was once placed, making the synergy between the dining room and kitchen much more harmonious. This change also allowed for Harting to execute his vision for a butler’s pantry—perfect for entertaining—punctuated with a first floor wine cellar. The cellar’s door was once an exterior door of the home retrofit to become the entrance for the cellar. The arch of the doorway mimics the same archways of the window adding to the authenticity of the home’s architectural details.

This is a theme pervasive through this English Tudor, where one design element lives in many different forms within a space. On the couple’s three-season porch, Serafine took a detail from the trim of

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the home's outdoor water fountain and incorporated it into the creation of the porch's fireplace. "Once your eye learns to discern these details, and you have the commitment to see them through. It's the only way you'll ever approach a space," Serafine adds.

As if the wall treatments, furniture choices, and lighting weren't enough to captivate your attention while walking through this home, you must always glance upward. "I think of ceilings as the fourth wall—they can't be forgotten," she says with a laugh. From dark beadboard to intricate plaster reliefs—the options are endless for what's possible on the wall above. "I have yet to create my favorite ceiling," says Serafine, who dreams of a dark beadboard with a paint treatment on top of it. "We may see that yet in this home. We'll see."

But quite possibly the family's favorite part of the home are the gardens outdoors. "When we originally built this house, it had quite possibly the ugliest backyard ever," Serafine recalls. "But over the years, we've experimented, we've added, and we've enjoyed it immensely," she explains—pointing to the new patchwork walkway being installed to link the gardens. "When our house was full of dust from the renovation, I would come and work outdoors. These gardens restored by sanity."

As the homeowners near the end of their renovation projects (only an upstairs bathroom remains), they do so with mixed emotions. "This has been a labor of love in every sense," Serafine says. "But part of embarking on a project like this is also knowing when it's finished. I think we're nearly there."

This kitchen (above) is appreciated for its beauty and functionality. The island features an inlay of marble surrounded by a large wood edge detail. Some of the owners' favorite features are the French Blue LaCornue range, centrally located warming drawer, steam and convection ovens, and concealed doggie bowls in pull out cabinetry under the window seat. A stunning leaded glass door (right) with Gothic arch, custom designed by Jan Serafine, adorns the butler's pantry and provides the perfect entry to the 1,000 bottle wine cellar.

