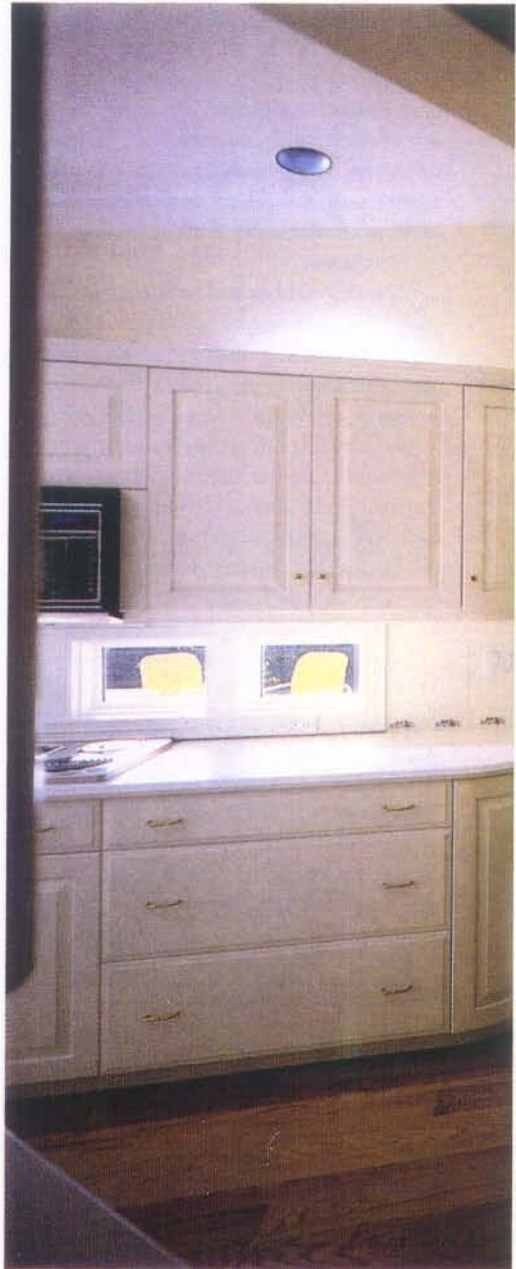


# ALL THE RIGHT ANGLES

With the help of Barbara's architect son, Bill and Barbara Parnell joined forces to create a home that is comfortably familiar but also filled with surprises.

by Marsha Mah



"WE'RE SO GLAD YOU'RE NOT putting up another colonial," neighbors told Bill and Barbara Parnell when they began construction on their new custom home on an empty lot in a 30-year-old neighborhood.

Colonial, it's definitely not. But how would you describe the Parnells' rambling two-story, four-bedroom house? With its spacious front porch, it could be a farmhouse. And there are whimsical architectural details that recall Victorian flights of fantasy. But the soaring, flowing space inside is strictly 1990s.

"It's based on the familiar image of a late 19th-century farmhouse but in every respect it is contemporary," says architect Tom Dever, Barbara's son, who designed the home. "All the detailing is either playful or very contemporary." Even the exterior of

the home is a contrast of old and new: It looks like old-fashioned stained cedar clapboard but actually is low-maintenance vinyl.

The house represents a fresh start for the Parnells, who both lost spouses in tragic accidents several years ago. When they decided to get married almost three years ago, they each sold their older, traditional homes to build this one together. A lot of thought went into its design. "They wanted a house built for the way people live, not the hypothetical next buyer," says Dever.

Bill, who recently took early retirement from Du Pont as financial director of staff functions, volunteers as a soccer coach and a tutor in the Chester County Adult Literacy Consortium. Barbara works part-time at her daughter's one-of-a-kind clothing boutique, Endeavor, in Glen Eagle Square,

on Route 202 near Glenn Mills, Pa.

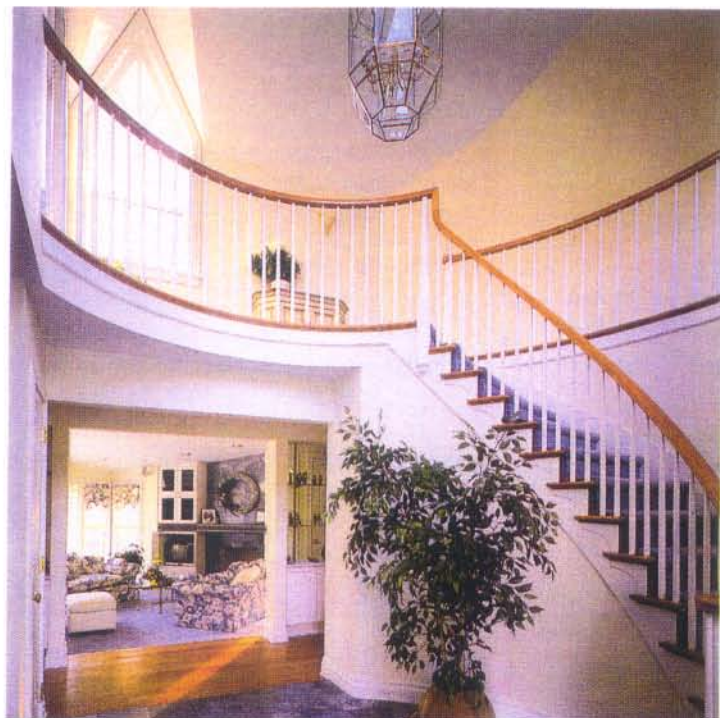
Between the two of them, the Parnells have eight grown children. With the exception of one son, all the children either live with them or nearby. So at a time in life when many couples are "downsizing," the Parnells needed plenty of room to accommodate and entertain a large blended family.

The house was built on an empty lot in a development where Barbara and her family lived for many years, near the intersections of Route 202 and U.S. Route 1 in Pennsylvania. "We used to play baseball on this lot," says Dever. "I tell everyone that's why the family room is shaped like home plate."

Flowing spaces and odd angles characterize the living space. There are more than the usual number of interior walls, but not always where you expect to find them, separating rooms. Few rooms in the house are



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WILLIAM DOUDS



**Far left:** The Parnell home, sited on a vacant lot in an older subdivision, is a contemporary interpretation of a 19th-century farmhouse. The front view only hints at the unusual angles and spaces inside.

**Above:** Shades of blue-gray and rose dominate the family room and breakfast nook. The hallway leads to the master bedroom suite, which has its own private deck and office area. Note the unusually placed windows in the kitchen.

**Left:** A nod to East Coast formality, the two-story entry features a marble floor and a dramatic curved staircase. Beyond the entry is a light-filled family room, which overlooks an expansive deck and backyard pool.

