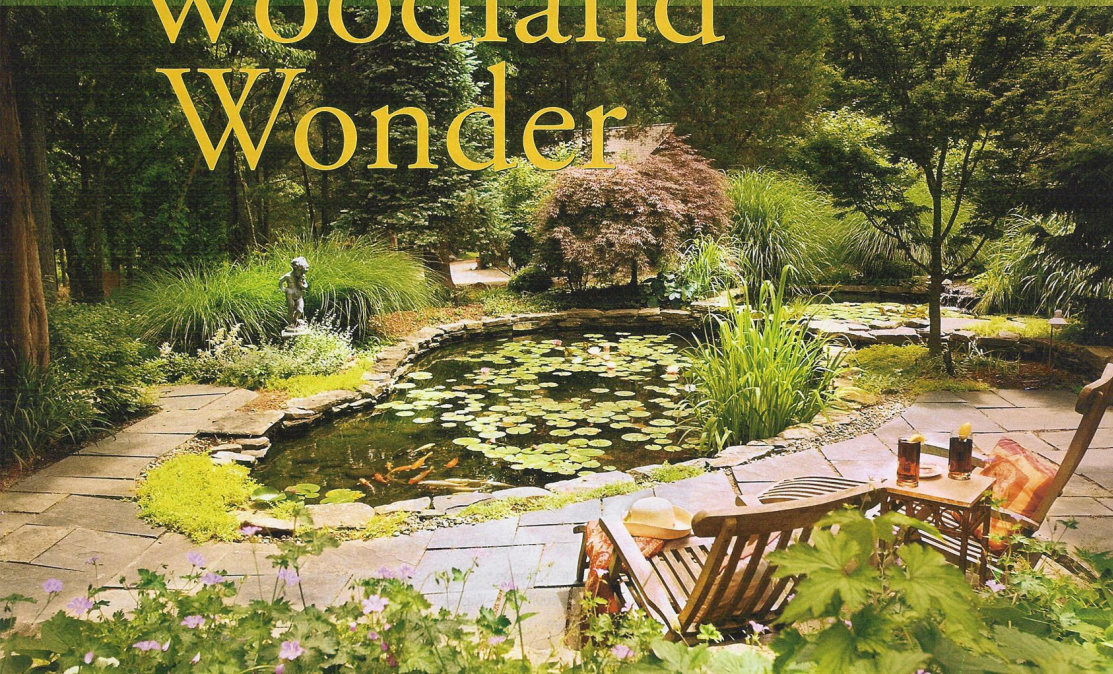


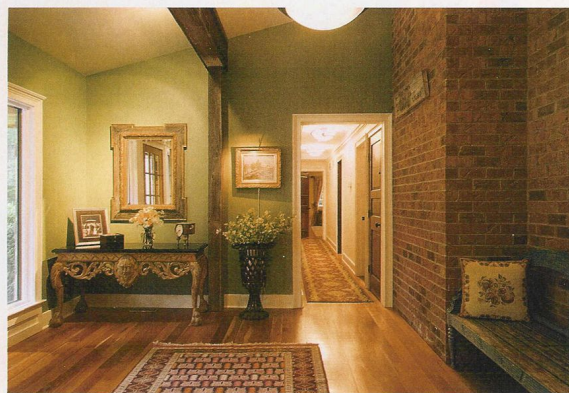
An interior designer and a landscape contractor turn an old ranch into an inviting showplace in Hunterdon County

# Woodland Wonder



WRITER: JUDY JEANNIN  
PHOTOGRAPHER: MORRIS GINDI  
DESIGNER: SANDRA LAMBERT  
LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR: STEPHEN LAMBERT





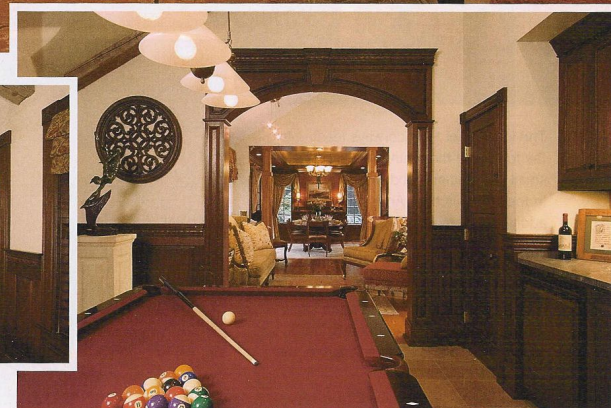
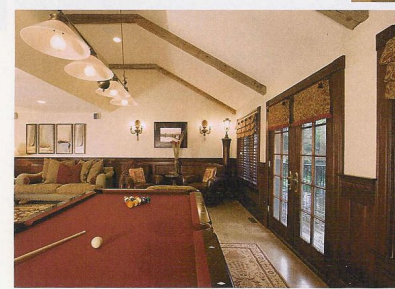
**Top:** Sandra Lambert created a dramatic backdrop for the 1920s dining room set she refinished with walls stenciled to look like damask, a 14-karat goldleaf ceiling, and a cherry floor. Rather than obscure the French doors leading to the deck, she framed them with draperies hung from brackets. Accent lighting behind the crown molding highlights the ceiling. **Above:** When the foyer suffered water damage, Lambert enlarged it by enclosing a small vestibule. It's the only part of the house that remained after a teardown. She couldn't widen the hallway, which leads to the bedroom wing, so she raised the ceiling so it seems more spacious.

## Sandra and Stephen Lambert had **big dreams** and a **small budget**

when they purchased a rundown ranch situated on six acres of Annandale woodland.

"We were searching for a home we could afford in Hunterdon County and we wanted a lot of property," Sandra Lambert recalls. "The house was hideous, like a shrunken 'Brady Bunch' house, but it was fine for a young couple. It was that or the one down the road with the chicken coop."

While hardly their dream home, the 1994 purchase proved a wise investment for the interior designer and the landscape contractor. The modest price tag allowed them to save faster for renovations. "We knew it would be ripped down," says



**Opening pages:** Sandra Lambert designed her Annandale home to harmonize with the natural surroundings. It features stucco walls, cedar trim, copper gutters, true divided-light windows, and a custom mahogany door with a stained-glass window. Her husband, Stephen, a landscape contractor, designed and installed the plantings and a pond that's home to a number of koi that have thrived despite visits from the deer, fox, and raccoons that inhabit the surrounding woods. A portico housing an outdoor seating area is convenient to the kitchen and the outdoor food preparation area. A copper roof covers the cedar beam ceiling, while the floor is fashioned from giant bluestone slabs. The Lamberts left the sides open so they could feel closer to nature.

**This page:** The house is designed to flow easily from the billiard/family room to the living room and dining room (top). The homeowners chose a billiard table as the centerpiece of their family room (above). The family room has two distinct seating areas as well as access to a redwood deck at the back of the house. In this large space Sandra Lambert used travertine marble for the floor and mahogany for the wood trim.





The location of the doorways leading to the foyer and the dining room dictated a small but efficient food preparation area in the large kitchen. An island provides additional storage and counter space. The cabinetry is alder; the stained-glass cabinetry fronts and the pendant lights are custom-designed. The farmhouse sink (right) is fashioned from the same granite that tops the counters and the island. The floor is tumbled marble; the backsplash is China slate.



Lambert, a member of the American Society of Interior Designers. In the meantime, she made the house livable with some fresh carpeting, cherry floors, a minor kitchen makeover, and a redo of the foyer necessitated by water damage. Stephen Lambert added a pretty little pond and some landscaping.

It was 2002, and one daughter later, when the Lamberts began the renovation that would turn the non-descript ranch into a showplace. The only thing remaining from the original home would be the renovated foyer. The couple's goal was to create a home in harmony with the woodland setting — one that would be warm, unique, and inviting. "We wanted to maintain the original look of a ranch-style home and to keep the roof line relatively understated," says Lambert, principal interior designer at Realm Designs Inc. in Warren. The couple also planned to use natural materials wherever possible and to hire local tradespeople.

Because she had already spent years on the project — gathering ideas, arranging the layout of the rooms, making certain the house flowed from one section to another — she decided to forego an architect and undertake the entire design. "For years, I did my 'wish' floor plans," she says. "It was a challenge fitting all the pieces together to make it flow and not be choppy. I didn't want this giant, tall, massive home. I wanted to keep it Arts and Crafts. I wanted it to be understated."

She got an assist from designer Samuel Mensah of Hackettstown, an expert in framing and construction. They worked on the drawings together, and he built a model that proved helpful during construction. "He gave me the model as a Christmas gift," Lambert says. "Because we didn't have an architect, the model helped

## STIRLING INTERIORS



### TRADITIONAL TO TRANSITIONAL INTERIORS

DESIGN CONSULTATIONS BY APPOINTMENT  
CUSTOM WINDOW TREATMENTS & UPHOLSTERY  
FINE FABRICS & WALLCOVERINGS • FURNITURE & LIGHTING

Visit Our New and Expanded Design Studio  
1106 Valley Road, Stirling, NJ  
908-647-1530 • Open M-F 9-5

## Rin Robyn Pools

[www.rinrobyn.com](http://www.rinrobyn.com)

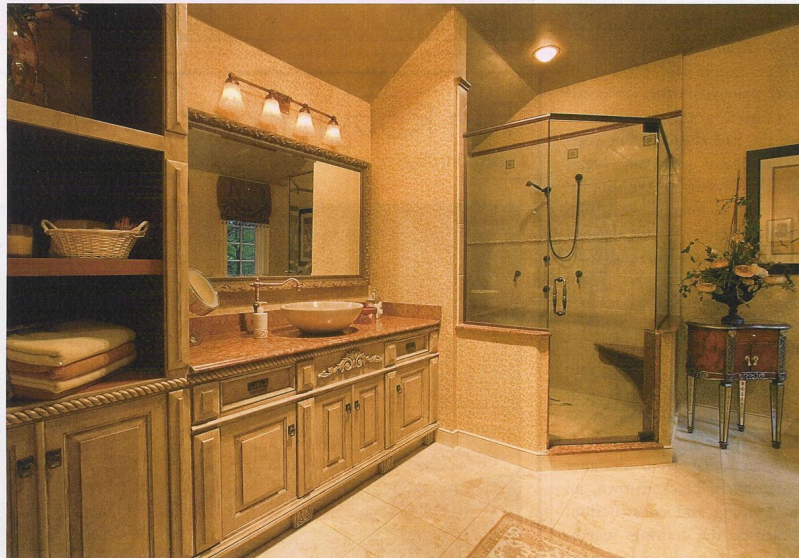
All Natural- Chemical Free  
Pools Also Available



17 Rt 46, Hackettstown  
908.850.8545

115 Morristown Rd (Rt 202)  
Bernardsville 908.766.5759





**Top:** A beamed tray ceiling, pale yellow walls, cherry floor, and pine furnishings make the master bedroom seem cozy despite its generous size. While it may one-day become an adult retreat, it is currently a tranquil gathering spot for Stephen and Sandra Lambert and their two young children. **Above:** His side of the master bath includes a large shower with four body sprays, a vessel sink set atop a marble counter, and a large storage cabinet. The floor is also marble.

the other tradespeople see the vision. The house turned out exactly like the model."

Mensah's experience in landscape construction also proved a bonus. "He had people in place from his years of experience," Lambert says. He wound up overseeing much of the construction — a necessity because Lambert was six-months pregnant with a second child when the tear-down began.

The family lived and worked in the original home as long as possible. Stephen Lambert moved his office after a rainstorm sent water streaming in, and they relocated to his mother's Flemington home the day the crew announced they were ready to take down the master bedroom. The family moved into their new home in nine months.

### Smooth Sailing

The key to the smooth transition was organization. "I don't hem and haw and change my mind. It was a piece of cake because everything was in place. All the materials were ordered and ready to be shipped as needed," says Lambert, who continued to work with clients throughout the project. Even son Hayden, now 3, cooperated. He arrived after a Mom put in a full day at the office. Sister Ryann Elizabeth is now 5.

Today, the family has a home that fulfills all their wishes. By raising the roofline they were able to create space for his office and for a handsome guest suite. There's another area that one day will be Ryann Elizabeth's room.

Downstairs the foyer is flanked by the bedroom wing and a generous eat-in kitchen. The dining room, living room, and family room stretch across the back of the house, where French doors access a large redwood deck. A mudroom and a laundry

**Aaron's**  
**Decorative Bath & Hardware Inc.**  
Where Over 20 Years of Industry Experience is Put to Work For You!

Open  
Sundays 12-4!  
Late Night Thurs  
Till 8PM!

- ✓ Tubs
- ✓ Toilets
- ✓ Whirlpools
- ✓ Showers
- ✓ Shower Doors
- ✓ Faucets
- ✓ Kitchen Sinks
- ✓ Kitchen Faucets
- ✓ Handles
- ✓ Hardware
- ✓ Entrance Locks
- ✓ More...
- ✓ Standard Vanities
- ✓ Furniture Vanities
- ✓ Semi Custom Vanities
- ✓ Basins
- ✓ Vessel Sinks
- ✓ Pedestals

**VANICO MARONYX**

421 Rt 59 • Pavilion III • Airmont, NY 10952 • Tel: (845)352-0123  
Hours: Mon - Wed 10 - 6; Thurs 10 - 8; Fri 10 - 2; Sun 12 - 4PM\* (\*Except Jul & Aug)

**D&D DESIGN**  
KITCHEN INNOVATIONS, L.L.C.  
Fine Handmade Interiors  
**908.879.3097**  
67 W. Main/CDIA, Chester, NJ 07930  
www.ddkitchens.com

**3 TIMES THE REASONS.**

- custom cabinetry
- kitchen design
- bathroom designs
- fine interiors
- hardwood floors & tile
- expert installation

Photos by: Peter Farnsworth Photography

**keystone designs**  
fine custom kitchens

Call today to set up a design consultation  
**908.722.7600**  
Come visit our NEW Showroom!  
1021 Route 302, Suite 100, Fairview, NJ 07410  
www.keystonekd.com

Located inside the keystone designs showroom.

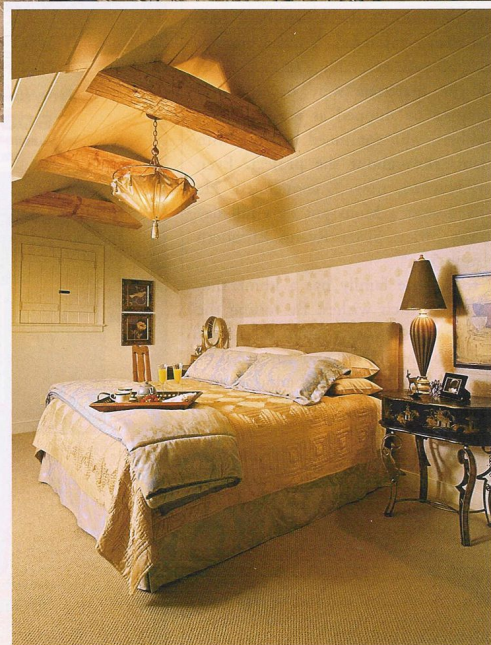
**switch2**  
digital life  
HOME THEATRE DESIGN  
WHOLE-HOUSE AUDIO  
LIGHTING & CONTROL  
HOME AUTOMATION  
IPAD INTEGRATION

www.switch2digital.com 877.586.8262  
Experience surround sound and control it all with switch2 digital life





**Top:** A handsome William Morris wallcovering adds drama to a large second-floor guest bathroom. Double sinks are set into a cabinet that provides ample counter and storage space. The floors and shower stall are China slate. **Right:** Sandra Lambert wanted a quiet, modern Zen look for the second-floor guest room. The room's clean lines are accented with a silk-draped ceiling fixture, an upholstered headboard, and a hand-painted table. While the cedar plank ceiling is painted, Lambert opted to leave the cedar structural beams in their natural state.



room are near the garage, and a covered outdoor seating area and food preparation center are located conveniently off the kitchen.

The large master suite, situated near the children's rooms, has become a gathering spot for the family. "It is very quiet back there," Lambert says. "There is a television set, and we can all snuggle up and watch a show." There's also space for a desk and plenty of room for the children to play. "The children hardly spend any time in their own rooms. They are either in my room or in the kitchen."

### Back to Nature

The house makes maximum use of natural materials — something Lambert feels is instrumental in creating an inviting home. The exterior is stucco with copper gutters and cedar trim, and the outdoor seating area has a copper roof. The interior features a variety of stones and different types of wood. "There is no vinyl, no plastic. There is natural stone in every room. I like mixing different natural textures to make things warm," Lambert says.

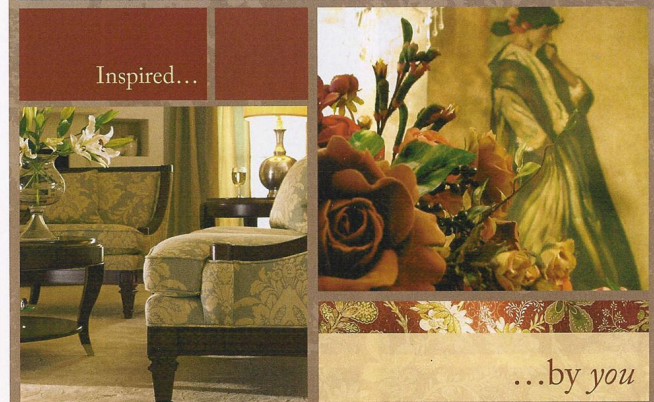
Furnishings are a blend of antiques and more contemporary pieces. There are formal as well as more relaxed spaces. The earth-tone color palette is spiced with jolts of bright color.

"It has so much personality," Lambert says of her home. "Every room is a fun, little wonder."

Friends and family often remark on the warmth and intimacy of the home. "One woman told me she runs past the house and found it so inviting she would like to have a peek inside," Lambert recalls with obvious pride.

"We bought our house at a great price. If we'd bought an expensive home we couldn't have gotten what we wanted right away. We were not

## A Love Affair With Every Room



THE  
**DESIGN STUDIO** OF SOMERVILLE  
FINE FURNISHINGS AND DISTINCTIVE INTERIORS

67 West Main Street, Somerville, NJ 08876  
908.685.1921 • [www.design-sos.com](http://www.design-sos.com)



### Welcome to First Class Seating

Finally, after over 45 years of crafting the highest grade sofas and sofabeds, Carlyle opens a factory showroom in Bergen County.

Discover what the elite of Manhattan have known for decades: *each Carlyle sofa, sofabed, sectional, and chair is 100% custom made for you.* Unlimited selection of the best fabrics in the world. Luxurious down and feather filled pillows and cushions. Solid hardwood frames in hundreds of sizes and styles. Each detail chosen by you and crafted to perfection by us.

**Carlyle**  
custom convertibles

6 Empire Boulevard • Moonachie, NJ 07074  
showroom: 973.546.4502  
Mon - Sat: 10 - 5 • Closed Sunday

Chelsea Collection  
122 W. 18th St., NY, NY 10011  
showroom: 212.675.3212  
Mon - Sat: 10 - 6 • Sun: 12-5

East Side Collection  
1056 3rd Ave., NY, NY 10021  
showroom: 212.838.1525  
Mon - Sat: 10 - 6 • Sun: 12-5



**Royal Intercontinental, Inc.**  
Tibetan Carpets & Customs

T: 201.777.4315  
F: 201.507.9571  
www.royalrugs.net



33 F Route 17 South. East Rutherford, NJ 07073

MON - FRI 10 am - 6 pm

going to do it [renovate and decorate] until we could do it right." **DN**

*Judy Jeannin has covered interior design for more than a decade, interviewing architects and designers from New Jersey and New York. Jeannin, based in Hillsdale, founded and edited a monthly home section for a major northern New Jersey newspaper before becoming a freelance writer.*

**SOURCES Exterior:** design, Sandra Lambert, ASID, of Realm Designs in Warren; landscaping and pond, Lambert Landscaping in Annandale; carpentry, John Doremus Craftsman in Milford; door, Stonerow Millwork in Oxford with stained glass by Out Of Hand in Lebanon. **Dining Room:** window treatments, Window Scapes in Livingston; faux finishing, Wall FX Studio in Sparta (T). **Living Room:** seating, Ital Art Design in Rancho Dominguez, California; rug, Tufenkian Artisan Carpets in New York City. **Billiard Room:** sculpture, William Dean Kilpatrick in Highlands; lighting, Savoy House in Braselton, Georgia; sofas, Thayer Coggin in High Point, North Carolina; leather chairs, Bernhardt in Lenoir, North Carolina; woodworking, O'Meara's Cabinetry in Irasburg, Vermont; flooring, Pet-Mal Supply Co. in Westbury, New York; window treatments, Window Scapes. **Kitchen:** cabinetry, Tewksbury Kitchens & Baths in Oldwick; sink and counter tops, Bridgewater Marble & Granite Works in Bound Brook; stained glass, Out Of Hand; faux finish on walls and ceiling, Wall FX Studio; tumbled marble floor, Pet-Mal Supply Co. **Master Bedroom:** bed, Marie Albert Corp. in Remsenburg, New York; bedding, Tomasini; chaise, P.A.M.A. Furniture Inc. in Jamestown, North Carolina (T); window treatments, Window Scapes; drapery fabrics, Stroheim & Romann in New York City (T). **Master Bathroom:** custom cabinetry, Classic Creations in Phillipsburg; fixtures, Imaginative Design Center in Bedminster; mirrors, Tim Houting Co. in Moravian Falls, North Carolina (T); marble countertops, Bridgewater Marble & Granite Works; decorative finishes on furniture, Art Robshaw in Piscataway; shower enclosure, Glass Castle in Neshanic Station; flooring, Pet-Mal Supply Co. **Guest Bathroom:** wallcovering, Sanderson in Englewood; vanity, Hooker Furniture Inc. in Martinsville, Virginia (T); glass shower enclosure, Glass Castle; flooring, Pet-Mal Supply Co. (T) = To the trade.

**FL Feldman Associates, Inc.**  
*Custom Woodworking of Every Dimension*



Kitchens • Home Office/Study/Library • Home Theaters

www.customwoodworking.info

811 Memorial Drive, Asbury Park, NJ 07712

732.776.8544