



Home plan: Modern meets country curb appeal. **H5**

Design: 5 popular trends for kitchen islands. **H5**

◀ **Homegazing:** Stately Summit Hill mansion for sale. **H6**

INDOORS & OUT **3** • REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS **5**

Grab your yardstick at the
MN State Fair
Blue Flame Lodge!

www.gopherstateonecall.org

(651)454-0002 (800)252-1166

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2018

★ **StarTribune**

STARTRIBUNE.COM/HOMES • SECTION H

HOMES

& GARDENING



Living in a glass house allows a Woodland couple to fully experience
the four seasons — from every room.

STAR TRIBUNE/AIA HOME OF THE MONTH

TIMELESS AND TRANSPARENT

By LYNN UNDERWOOD
lynn.underwood@startribune.com

Two extraordinary homes laid the groundwork for the see-through glass house that David and Kathleen Daniels built.

One was Philip Johnson's iconic 1949 rectangular Glass House. The couple admired the way the historic Connecticut dwelling disappears into the landscape.

"I wanted to experience the outdoors like I did in that house," said David.

The other home was one they'd seen on the 2008 Homes by Architects tour. Built on White Bear Lake and designed by ALTUS Architecture, the home boasts bluestone gabled pavilions connected by glass links.

"The house was all on one level and had great stone details," said Kathleen. "It was timeless, yet modern."

Exactly what the Danielses wanted.

But it wasn't until they found the perfect piece of property in the Lake Minnetonka community of Woodland that they were able to make their glass house dream a reality.

They'd been planning to sell their three-



Top: The see-through house is composed of glass walls juxtaposed with warm walnut floors and a bluestone fireplace.
Above: Visitors get a sneak peek of the wetlands and lake before entering the front door. The brown-toned cedar siding blends with the wooded setting.

Photos by PAUL CROSBY

story Arts & Crafts-style home in Orono, and were on the hunt for secluded, wooded acreage in the western suburbs.

"We weren't interested in a golf course development," said David.

In 2012, a 6-acre property with wetlands, a bog and a small lake popped up on the MLS. The land, which was in foreclosure, was in Woodland.

Kathleen was entranced by the tiny woodsy hamlet of twisting and turning roads. So, the couple consulted architect Tim Alt of ALTUS Architecture + Design about the property. He advised them to go for it.

"It's like an observation plateau," said Alt. "When you're viewing the lake, it doesn't feel like civilization is all around you."

There was a 1950s-era home on the property, which the Danielses had torn down because it wasn't cost-effective to update and remodel. That allowed them to build an understated modern house that melded with the landscape.

The new flat-roofed home, composed of glass and dark-stained cedar, delivers unobstructed panoramic views and "amplifies the gift of the site," said Alt.

See **AIA** on H2 ▶

Meet St. Paul's busy boulevard booster

A gardener in the Como neighborhood has transformed his yard into a pollinator paradise. Now he's set his sights on his neighbors' boulevards.

By KIM PALMER
kim.palmer@startribune.com

Drive down Lexington Parkway in St. Paul's Como neighborhood, and Quentin Nguyen's yard will definitely catch your eye. There's a lot going on at this small, high-visibility corner lot — a reflection of Nguyen's boundless energy and ever-flowing spigot of ideas.

His front yard has a Hobbit-y look — covered with velvety chartreuse mounds of Scotch moss, punctuated

by large animal statues and signs supporting his current cause.

"It's green, healthy and I don't have to mow it," he said. Better yet, the moss flowers into October and "honeybees love it."

He also has a Bee Nice Boulevard garden, where he replaced the lawn with a swath of purple liatris, to nurture monarch butterflies and other pollinators. That garden is studded with tiny American flags, which mark the location of each chrysalis he finds. Across the sidewalk is a colorful pup tent that he keeps filled with live monarch caterpillars. "Children come over to take a close-up look," Nguyen said.

He also has a meditation garden, a fairy house cut into a small hill, and a hanging garden — a suspended net-

work of 120 green plastic pop bottles cut into vessels for growing herbs and small salad greens. That garden also camouflages his lattice fence, which he considers ugly.

Nguyen, 24, a VIP host at Mystic Lake Casino, was born in Vietnam and came to St. Paul with his parents as a preteen. He's enthusiastic about this country ("I love America so much," he said) and gardening.

He wasn't a gardener until he bought his house four years ago. Not long afterward, he learned about monarchs and other pollinators being threatened by loss of habitat. That gave him a mission statement for his landscape.

"I use my yard as an attraction," he said. "I want to use my house to

See **BOULEVARDS** on H3 ▶



KIM PALMER • Star Tribune

Quentin Nguyen plants for pollinators, even in a patch off the alley.

STAR TRIBUNE/AIA HOME OF THE MONTH

Home of the Month appears in the Homes section the first Sunday of every month. The program, a partnership between the Star Tribune and the Minnesota chapter of the American Institute of Architects, features architect-designed houses selected by a jury of experts. The houses represent a range of prices, styles and locations.

TIMELESS AND TRANSPARENT

◀ **AIA** from HI

Massive floor-to-ceiling windows create a see-through experience and allow views of the outdoors from every room in the house, which Alt describes as “organic minimalism.”

“Pieces are tactile and natural — the bluestone fireplace, blackened steel hearth and wood cedar beams and columns — so it feels comfortable,” he said.

The one-level linear floor-plan contains three wings — one for the live/work area, another for the master suite, another for the garage/workshop. The wings are connected by two glass entry links.

With 13-foot-high ceilings, the central living-kitchen-dining space feels open and airy. Six panels of glass 80 feet long form the rear wall. Amid all the glass are walnut floors with radiant in-floor heat and exposed wood beams.

“It feels seamless inside and out. There are no boundaries,” said David. “We feel much more connected to the changing seasons.”

Since the home has no basement, Alt designed a freestanding “cube” on the edge of the compact kitchen, which provides plenty of storage, and conceals the refrigerator and other kitchen essentials. The cube also houses the laundry room and a powder room.

Natural materials are repeated inside and out, including bluestone, which is used in the fireplace, exterior wall and in the outdoor terrace.

“The transparency of the house makes the livability much larger than it is,” said Alt. “The terrace feels like a living room.”

Both Kathleen and Daniel work from home, so Alt designed a home office at the far end of the live/work wing to create a sense of separation from the rest of the house, making it easier to focus and be productive.

“It’s the way many people will be living in the future,” he said.

The master wing, which holds a TV-watching den and owners’ suite, is hidden from the public side, which makes it feel like a restful retreat.

“Every morning we see wildlife — deer, coyote, wild turkeys and hawks — out the bathroom window,” said Kathleen.

The 2,600-square-foot home’s smart space planning and its size also reflect emerging trends in home design.

“Almost all of our projects are under 3,000 square feet,” said Alt. “People are looking to live more efficiently, flexibly, with less investment and maintenance. And it makes sense.”

Shiny shed

Because the side-entry, two-car garage has limited storage, the couple requested an out-building near the house to store their John Deere lawn tractor and other tools.

But they wanted the out-building to blend with the environment. Alt’s solution was to clad the shed in mirror-polished stainless steel, which reflects the surrounding maples and oaks and makes the structure itself seem to disappear.

“The polished steel makes a utilitarian structure into an art object,” said Kathleen, who dubbed it the “shiny shed.”

The home itself also merges with its wooded surroundings, thanks to its cladding of brown-toned cedar, which emulates tree bark.

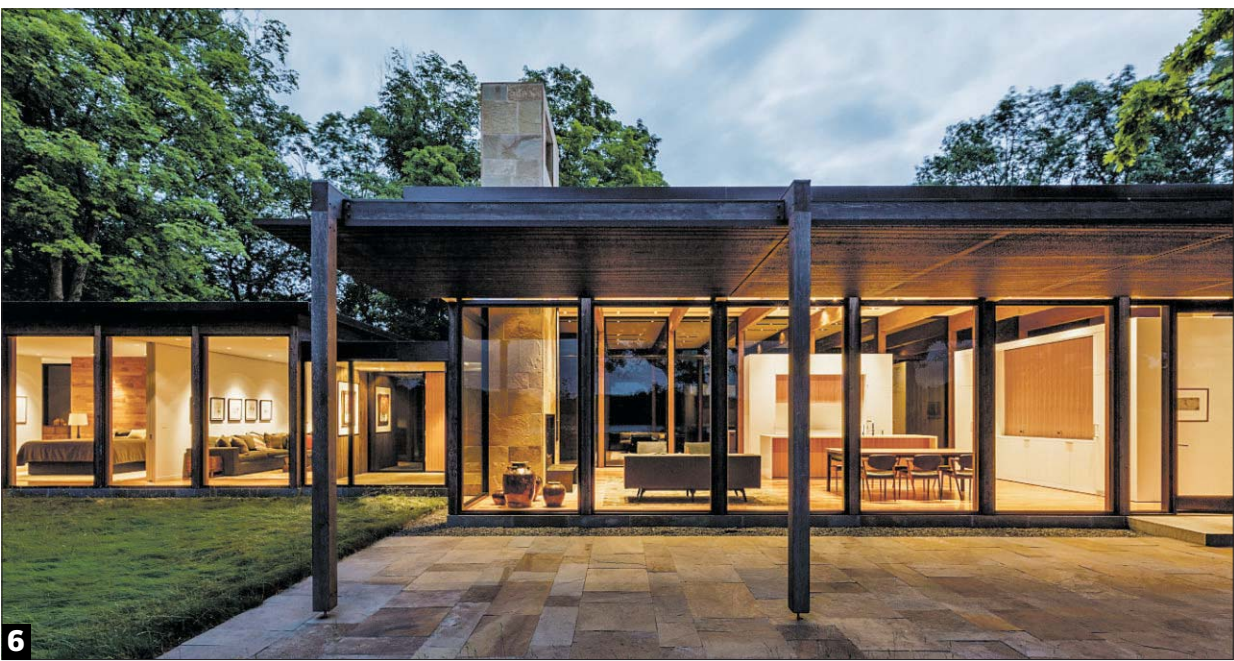
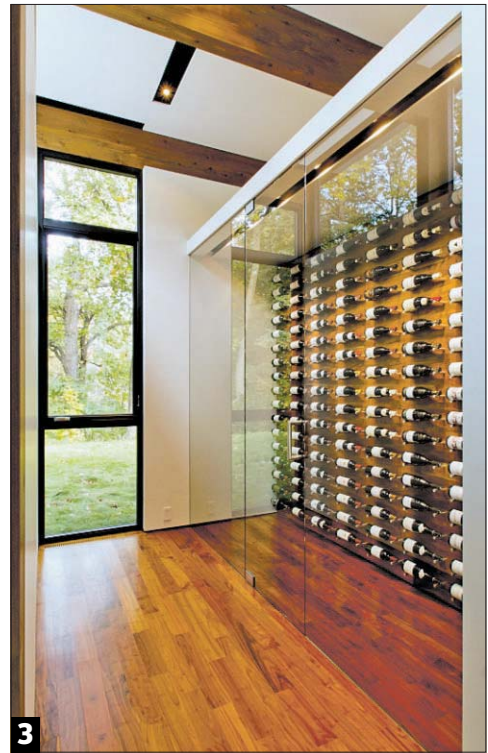
“It looks timeless,” said Kathleen of the house. “It could have been built in 1960 or 1914.”

Living in a house made of glass is not for everyone, admits Alt.

“The design has to create a balance of open, outdoor living with a feeling of sanctuary,” he said. “The owners have to feel at ease and comfortable living there.”

It works for Kathleen and David because they have a private site with trees, wetlands, even loons on Lake Marion. “It’s so peaceful to see the moonlight coming in,” said David.

And, besides, if they want a little more privacy, all they have to do is lower the automated shades.



1. Six panels of glass 80 feet long form the rear wall. 2. Owners Kathleen and David Daniels like the “clean, edited and restrained” qualities of modern design. 3. Wine is displayed on a walnut wall in the climate-controlled wine room. 4. The bed abuts a walk-through closet in the owners’ suite. 5. A freestanding “cube” on the edge of the kitchen provides storage and houses the laundry and powder room. 6. A modern pergola made of industrial steel and cedar timbers shades the large bluestone patio. 7. The mirrored “shiny shed” reflects and disappears into the surroundings.

More photos at startribune.com/homegarden

Photos by PAUL CROSBY and ALTUS Architecture
Portrait by RICHARD TSONG-TAATARI • Star Tribune

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

What: Glass house melds with its setting while capturing dramatic views.

Size: 2,614 square feet with two bedrooms, (one used as the office) and two bathrooms.



Tim Alt

Design team: Architect Tim Alt with Roger Cummelin and Chad Healy, ALTUS Architecture + Design, Mpls., altusarch.com.

Builder: Streeter & Associates, Wayzata, streeterhomes.com.

Landscape design: Travis Van Liere Studio, Mpls., tvstudio.com.

Interior design: Tim Alt, ALTUS Architecture + Design, (finishes, fixtures, lighting, window treatments and products), and Lucy Penfield (furniture), Lucy Interior Design, Mpls., lucyinteriordesign.com.