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# Detroit Home

Summer 2013

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# On an ISLAND in the STREAM

Summer activities flow happily at a house on the Detroit River designed for living ... and loving

by JUDITH HARRIS SOLOMON  
photographs by MARTIN VECCHIO

floral styling by:  
CINDY HICKS, FOR SCARLET POPPY EVENTS,  
GROSSE POINTE

*Summertime, AND THE LIVING IS PARTICULARLY EASY IN THIS delightful HOME THAT CLEARLY REFLECTS ITS OWNERS' heritage, interests, AND lifestyle.*



**Wanda and Andy Giancamilli** purchased their 100-plus-year-old farmhouse 13 years ago. Part of the old Vernor (as in Vernors Ginger Ale) estate, the house is located on Grosse Ile, an island in the Detroit River.

The couple hired designer Jeffrey King, principal of Jeffrey King Interiors in Birmingham, to do "a significant renovation," King says. "But eventually, because the Giancamillis love to cook and entertain, the original house just didn't accommodate their needs." So three years ago, they bought the house next door, tore it down, and, with the help of King and architect Glenn DeSimone of Prime Design Systems in Warren, they constructed a 2,100-square-foot addition whose main attraction is a fabulous 32-by-40-foot gathering room.

"Food is very important to us, and the gathering room's large, open space gives us the opportunity to be together cooking and eating in the same room," Wanda Giancamilli says.

At the far end of the gathering room, along the back wall, stainless steel ovens and a commercial stainless steel refrigerator flank white wooden under-counter cabinets and an eight-burner Viking stove. A stunning backsplash made of textured stainless steel tiles climbs from the stainless steel countertop to the ceiling. Just beyond that, there are two 4-by-8-foot white Carrera marble-topped islands. Why two islands? "Why not?" laughs Wanda. "I never thought of it as two islands — just more space to do all that we do there."



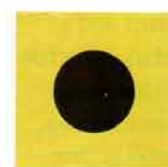
Almost every room in the Giancamilli home has a Detroit River view, which inspires crisp and snappy nautical décor along with a bit of a boating motif. Freighter sightings are common and add excitement to the splendid vistas.





*"To sit there ...  
OR ON THE PATIO ...  
with feet up and  
drink in hand,  
PERHAPS WATCHING  
A FREIGHTER GO  
BY, is sublime."*

— JEFFREY KING



**In the seating area,** near a massive stone fireplace, a pair of banquette-height, charcoal grey brass nail-studded sofas from

Henredon flank either side of a cocktail table custom-made out of cold rolled steel by Tom Myers of Gallery Steel in Waterford.

Across the space, a long dining table has been placed in front of the wine-decanting bar, which has cabinets for storing wine glasses and a sink for washing them.

And here's the clever part: All the tables are designed to join together in the center of the room. "When the modular seating is all in place and the tables are all connected, we can comfortably seat 24 to 26 people," Wanda says.

The Giancamillis enjoy hosting wine tastings in the gathering room and in their charming basement wine room, which is decorated with antique wine casks, an ornate crystal chandelier that originally hung in the old farmhouse, and huge vintage photographs of the couple's fathers. Next to the wine room, a cellar contains stainless steel vats and glass vessels that store the wine the Giancamillis make every September.



This page, clockwise from top: The garden fence blends well with its surroundings. The kitchen and main gathering space — adorned with navy accents and vintage nautical flags that spell out GIANCAMILLI — invite friends and family to linger long into the evening. The 100-year-old-plus farmhouse was part of the old Vernor (as in Vernors Ginger Ale) estate. The fruits of the homeowners' gardening labors include a variety of tomatoes, often starring in homemade pasta dishes.

Opposite page, top to bottom: Deborah Silver, of Detroit Garden Works in Sylvan Lake, created an outdoor space bordered by rectangular raised beds designed to hold vegetables. An adorable attic loft converted into a grandchildren's room makes a splash with four boat-like, built-in bunk beds.





**The addition also includes**  
Andy Giancamilli's study, which was formerly a one-car garage. The room is furnished with a

Ralph Lauren reproduction trestle table made out of reclaimed pine that Andy uses as a desk, and a Henredon sofa clad in a tweed fabric. Over the sofa, a wall Jeffrey King calls "Andy's Wall of Fame" holds framed articles about the now-retired CEO, as well as some of the many awards he received over the years.

To capitalize on its superb location on the river, almost every room in the home has a water view, including an adorable attic loft that was converted into a grandchildren's room complete with four boat-like, built-in bunk beds, nautical hardware, and a drapery rod made from an oar.

This page, clockwise from top: The Giancamilli family has several interests and pastimes, including making pasta, sausage, and salami; and collecting maps, charts, and heirloom photos.

Opposite page: A basement wine room enchants with antique wine casks, seating for sampling, and huge vintage photos of the couple's relatives from the old country. This past year, the Giancamillis made 30 gallons of Pinot Grigio and 35 gallons of Cabernet.







The "bunk house" is located in the home's loft area. Everything's ship-shape, thanks to interior designer Jeffrey King and his keen eye for selecting nautical-inspired accents. The designer avoided going overboard on the boating motif, preferring to stay the course of simplicity and fun. Grandchildren love to ring the bell and play with the toy dory, in foreground, made by a Maine artist.





**Outside, a fire pit,** built-in barbecue, and pizza oven have been placed on the patio just beyond the gathering room.

Deborah Silver, of Detroit Garden Works in Sylvan Lake, has created a wonderful outdoor space that is bordered by rectangular raised beds designed to hold vegetables. Sometimes this garden is set up with long tables to accommodate 40 or more dinner guests; other times, it's used to play bocce ball.

Says King: "To sit there ... or on the patio ... or in the sunroom ... with your feet up and drink in hand, perhaps watching a freighter go by, is sublime. It just doesn't get any better than this."

This page, clockwise from top: Fresh white trim complements blue wall paint, while two inviting islands of Carrera marble add to the charm. Outdoors, a fire pit, multiple seating areas, and a million-dollar view create the perfect spot for family gatherings. The covered cooking area, complete with a pizza oven, is a family hot spot.

Opposite page: The master suite makes the most of river views, and its colors evoke canvas boat sails, breezy days, and sky-reflecting waters.

