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Facing page: The exterior of the Nashville, Tennessee, house that architect Price Harrison built for himself and his wife, Stacy; the interior was decorated by Harrison's mother, Marilyn McMackin, and the landscape design is by James Murray of Coile and Associates. This page: In the living room, an Ellsworth Kelly lithograph is propped on a ledge over a Charles sofa by B&B Italia; Harrison designed the Elson & Co. rug. See Resources.





SOUTHERN PLANES

IN BUILDING HIS HOUSE IN NASHVILLE, ARCHITECT PRICE HARRISON DISCOVERS THAT MINIMALISM AND MARRIAGE DO NOT ALWAYS MIX

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When a client approached architect Price Harrison four years ago with an intriguing plan, to design two compatible houses, one for each of them, on a narrow, deep plot of land not far from downtown Nashville, he jumped at the opportunity. After years of theoretical study and toiling for others—Yale architecture school, an apprenticeship with the controversial modernist Paul Rudolph, and a stint with Richard Meier—he was ready to go it alone. And designing one's own home can be an architect's ideal. There is no client to please and no one else's clutter to ruin the pure geometry. Harrison, a mini-

malist, certainly had little concern for belongings and furniture. "If it were up to me," he says, "I would just have a bed on the floor and nothing else." But in the middle of construction on the project, a wrench got thrown into his plans: He got married.

Harrison met Stacy Davis, a cardiologist, at a party given by his mother, Marilyn McMackin, at the house he had designed for her. "Stacy loved my mother's place," he says, "and she let it be known that she was also 'interested' in the architect." So as the romance developed, he was forced to overhaul his scheme to accommodate his future wife and her belongings,



which constituted quite a bit more than his preferred “nothing.” There were medical books to shelve, artworks to integrate, and a substantial glass collection, including pieces by Dale Chihuly, to display. (Her generic, mass-market furniture didn’t make the cut, however.) For help, Harrison turned to the one interior designer he trusted—his mother.

The glass sculptures are now illuminated on internally lit shelves, but constitute practically the only jolts of color in the otherwise bleached interior. Pale ash floors, Thassos-marble countertops, gleaming white cabinetry, and a few choice pieces of white leather furniture by B&B Italia create a space that is at once severe and serene. “It’s the perfect antidote to the chaos of the hospital,” says Stacy.

“I try to make the spaces as quiet as possible,” Harrison explains. “I don’t want to have too much going on, because that’s how I want to live.”

An open plan keeps things informal despite the spare aesthetic. “The great thing about the house is that we use every space in it every day,” says Harrison. “There are no formal areas. Even the guest bedroom gets used. I’ll sit there and watch TV if Stacy is dictating a chart. It’s so functional.”

To soften all that white, oversize and asymmetrical windows are framed in dark mahogany, forming a grid throughout the house. The custom-made windows, which ate up a significant portion of the budget, were also used in the house that Price designed for his client at the rear of the property, creating a sense of cohesiveness between the two.

Ever the disciple of modernism, Harrison designed many of the furnishings himself, including a simple mahogany bed and the geometric-patterned carpet in the living room. He also constructed a series





Facing page: The Harrisons outside the entrance to their house. This page: In the open-plan living and dining area, a Mies van der Rohe Barcelona cocktail table by Knoll, Spaghetti barstools by Alias, and Jeffrey Bennett's Landscape chaise by B&B Italia; Mario Bellini's Cab chairs by Cassina surround a dining table by Anthony Buzak. The artworks include a pair of Josef Albers screen prints and a painting by Harrison, *Cadmium No. 1*. See Resources.

In the master bedroom, a pair of lithographs by Eduardo Chillida, and a Simplicite table by B&B Italia; the bed-cover is by Matteo. Facing page: The Thassos marble-clad master bath has fittings by Dornbracht; the sconce is by Ginger, and the etchings over the tub are by Piranesi. See Resources.





“THE STYLE OF MY HOUSE IS VERY DISTINCT FROM THE OTHERS ON THE STREET,” SAYS HARRISON. “THE IRONY IS THAT ITS SCALE IS MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE ORIGINAL NEIGHBORHOOD”

of built-in cabinets to store the couple's clutter, including her books and his audio equipment. “Of course the architect wants nothing in the house except the architecture,” Harrison jokes. The cabinets are treated with conversion varnish, a special acid-based treatment that forms a surface that is not only visually appealing but extremely durable, so they are as practical as they are refined.

For the exterior, Harrison chose subtle finishes, including stucco, to better blend in with the neighborhood—not that a stylish modern box exactly conforms to Nashville tradition. Bronze was used for all of the hardware as well as on the roof. “I didn't want the coldness of steel,” he explains. He also added some stone walls, at Stacy's behest, to define a place where she could plant a garden, and a slate terrace off the kitchen and dining area where

the couple eat dinner on most summer nights—an outdoor dining room at the edge of the city.

Harrison has always been bothered by the tendency to plop down big houses on small lots, which is why he chose to build a relatively modest structure of only 2,100 square feet on the tree-lined block that was once full of unassuming, single-family houses. “The style of my house is very distinct from the others on the street,” he says with characteristic understatement. “But the real irony is that its scale is much more in keeping with the original neighborhood.”

If he could do it over again, Harrison says, he would build a studio in which to paint and construct his models—“a place to do really messy stuff and leave in chaos all the time.” But such a room could never be directly attached to the house, he admits with a laugh: “The mess would make me crazy.” ■