

Vision & Revision

FOR DESIGNER AMY STUDEBAKER, IT TOOK A SECOND LOOK TO UNCOVER HER NEW HOME'S POTENTIAL.

BY AMANDA WOYTUS

If vision is the ability to see what others can't, what happens when you have so much vision, you can't *stop* looking? Does good food taste better and bad food taste worse to a fine dining chef? Does a Monet inspire more awe in an artist, or intimidate him? Is it easier for an interior designer to find a new home because she knows she can fix any problem, or harder because she has higher standards?

For designer Amy Studebaker Milonas (Studebaker professionally), finding the right new home for her family wasn't easier or harder because of her profession (she's the founder of Amy Studebaker Design and creator of Interiors in a Box by ASD). It was difficult in part because her husband, Nick

Milonas, was set on securing their forever home. It took them nine months, she estimates, to look at a little more than 100 houses.

"Everyone would tease me. They'd say, 'Oh, being the designer, of course you're taking so much time to find a home,'" says Studebaker, "and I was, like, 'No, I was fine 60 homes ago.' I could have even taken some of the first few. But Nick is very particular."

Still, the designer admits, she was probably more open because of her knowledge: "I can work with anything. Just give me a house, give me a style, and we'll go with that style."

On their punch list: an office space for Milonas, who works from home; four bedrooms; a playroom for Studebaker's 5-year-

old son August. Studebaker also wanted to be in the Ladue area, close to her clients. Milonas wanted a movie room. Studebaker wanted a screened-in porch. It was on this last item that the vision (and compromise) her profession requires shone through. "I didn't have to have a house that *had* a screened-in porch. I had to have a house with *space* for an outdoor area for me." She knew she could always add one later.

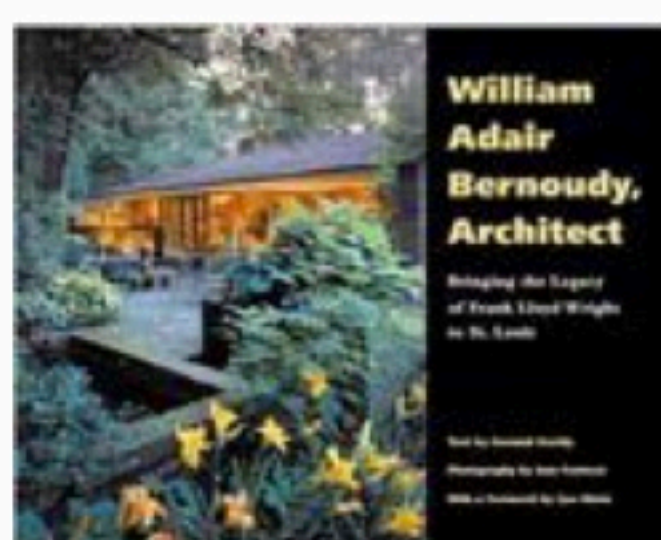
But Studebaker lucked out: The house she and Milonas chose, a Colonial in Ladue (check), has a screened-in porch off the kitchen. In their backyard is a park, perfect for Studebaker's son. Milonas got his office (check) and movie room (check).

The other reason house-hunting for Studebaker and Milonas took a while: They both saw this home earlier in their search. Milonas said he could envision living there; Studebaker didn't want to touch it with a 10-foot pole. "It was a really bad addition," she says, likely the one thing that turns her off a home. "I said, 'Absolutely not. I don't even want to think about dealing with this. It's a disaster.'" The whole master suite was an addition, and the structural changes were made without attention to the aesthetics. "They just kind of threw it in there and then drywalled around everything," says the designer. She also didn't love the Colonial's exterior...at first. But then, she says, she came around to it. "I realized I could bring the columns down from the upper portion." They also plan to paint the house white, take down the shutters, and add gaslights. "I thought, 'This actually really can be beautiful and darling on the outside, and then I can fix the renovation with PK Construction's help.'" One room that doesn't need much of a redo is the kitchen, with its modern inset cabinets and Wolf range. Studebaker removed the upper cabinets to create more space and ordered a new built-in refrigerator. They plan to convert the hearth room across from the space into the dining room (Milonas' idea).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN A. ROBERTS

Book Bound

What's sitting on your coffee table?



William Adair Bernoudy, Architect: Bringing the Legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright to St. Louis

by Osmund Overby

"I think it's important that a local architect has been immortalized in a book. I live in a house designed by Bernoudy, so the book holds a special place for me. My home is also pictured in it. It's nice to see what the house used to look like so as I do gentle renovations, I maintain its integrity."

—TED WIGHT, AGENT, DIELMANN SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY



Connect with Nature

by Anna Carlile

"This book gives practical ideas for connecting with nature all year long, from planting a native garden in the fall to reading the clouds in the summer. There are also recipes, craft ideas, and, of course, gardening how-tos for each of the seasons. The photography is nice, too."

—TOM MEE, DIRECTOR OF RETAIL AND WHOLESALE OPERATIONS, FRISELLA NURSERY



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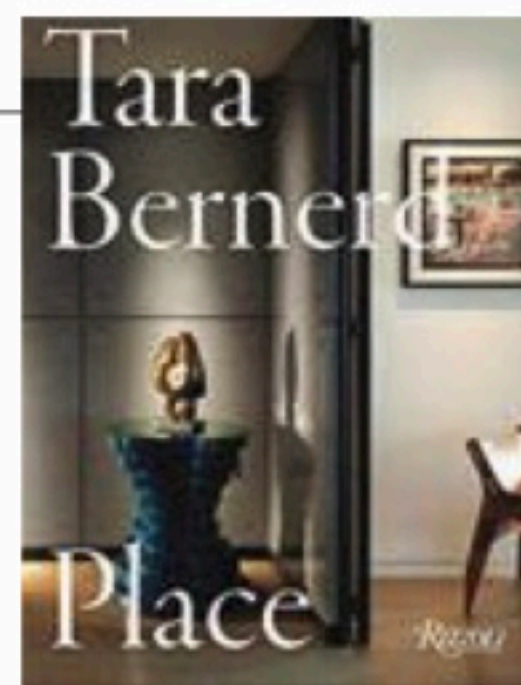
In the end, Studebaker says, because she’s often looking at homes with her clients, house-hunting for her family was more about learning to work as a team with her husband. “It was very interesting,” she says, “trying to understand what he wanted. It taught me to communicate.” She says she often asked: “What can we live with? What can we live without? What will make us all happy and be good for my son?”

Was there any box this new house didn’t tick? One. Early in the house hunt, Studebaker decided that she wanted a luxurious laundry room. “I ended up with 3 feet for a laundry room,” she says, laughing. “I was, like, ‘Whatever—I’m going to design the heck out of this laundry room. It’ll be great.’”



The Finer Things

by Christiane Lemieux



Place

by Tara Bernerd



Evocative Interiors

by Ray Booth and Judith Nasatir



An Invitation to Château du Grand-Lucé

by Timothy Corrigan

“*The Finer Things* reads like a mini history lesson about furniture, textiles, and the details of design. *Place* speaks to my code about design: that each room should evoke a sense of place. The author works on a global scale, which is also important to me. I want to be aware of design around the world so that I can infuse my own work with interesting details. *Evocative Interiors* is about blending interiors with the surrounding landscape. I love the mix of antique and contemporary features pictured in these rooms, which together create a sense of calm and elegance.”

—MARCIA MOORE, INTERIOR DESIGNER, MARCIA MOORE DESIGN

“The Loire Valley, located just south of Paris, is a design and architecture lover’s dream. This book instantly transports me there. Corrigan offers an intimate look into the painstaking restoration of his Loire Valley château and provides fascinating instruction on how to blend French grandeur with his signature mix of elegant California comfort. After reading this book, you’ll feel as if you’ve spent the perfect weekend at this grand estate.”

—MEGHAN HEETER, INTERIOR DESIGNER, CASTLE DESIGN