

Projects of Note

Antidote for Big Apple Workaday Stress *Architect's design offers restful residential respite on Long Island*

by Stephanie Stubbs, Assoc. AIA



The Rifkind Residence is a New Yorker's dream come true. Designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates for a busy professional couple looking for an antidote to big-city intensity, the serene house lives in complete harmony with its three-acre wooded site outside the village of Wainscott near the eastern end of Long Island, some 100 miles from Big Apple



Natural materials and wide expanses of glass heighten the Rifkind Residence's connection to its lovely wooded site.

bustle.

The house shows its respect for nature by keeping a low profile on the site—it stands a modest 11 1/2 feet tall, except for its double-height living area. Wide expanses of glass open to a variety of views; sited at the edge of a pond, the house also offers vistas to the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Strategically placed operable windows invite offshore breezes, eliminating the need for air-conditioning.

Echoing the variety of woods on its site, the house is composed of wood frame with cedar exterior siding, with Douglas fir interior panels and mahogany trim. Wood also is used for many interior finishes and the furniture, and is complemented by natural bluestone fireplace and floors.

Three distinct volumes compose the house:

- Public spaces, which include the double-height living room on one side, a dining room on the other side, and a kitchen in the center
- Master bedroom wing, with its dressing area, large bathroom (complete with indoor and outdoor showers), and a study
- Guest wing, which houses three bedrooms, each with its own private bath and door to the outside.

The three major spaces are all connected



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by glass passageways. A fourth major area, a freestanding planting and storage shed, rounds out the necessary functions for the family's relaxing weekend living.

"We tried to design a house whose own aesthetic order would complement the surroundings and provide a variety of new ways to see and appreciate the beauty of the land," the architects say. "The articulation of volume was meant to be at once serene and stimulating, simple and complex."

Tod Williams Billie Tsien & Associates will receive an AIA Honor Award for Architecture for their design of the Rifkind House during the AIA national convention in Denver, May 17–19. ■