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kitchens and baths shine brightly
in these open-plan houses.

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a house undivided

Jay Chiat was a client who knew just what he wanted—and how to get it. After all, he was the legendary advertising genius who brought America the Energizer Bunny and launched the annual Super Bowl ad frenzy with the “1984” Apple computer commercial. In the case of his new custom home on the east end of Long Island, he wanted a barn-like structure sheltering wide-open spaces.

Just two years before his death in April 2002, Chiat commissioned architect Hut Sachs Studio of New York City to make it happen on 1.5 acres of Atlantic beachfront. He turned to the firm because of its success planning the 25,000-square-foot, open-plan offices of his Internet ad agency, ScreamingMedia.

Recalls architect Tom Hut, FAIA: “He said, ‘I just want a simple house. Find a barn and build around it.’” And so, Hut found Chiat his barn: a 220-year-old salvaged frame from Vermont. The Cornwall-style structure is composed of 10-by-10-foot king posts holding up the ridge beam, which is an impressive 45-foot-long tree trunk. The frame’s rafters are trees as well, flattened on top to receive the roof sheathing. The skeleton was shipped dismantled (each timber restored, cleaned, and numbered) and reassembled and erected on site.

“A lot of these barns transform themselves into suburban housing,” Hut explains. “Instead, we tried to emphasize the barn-like nature of the frame.” To do that, he and partner Jane Sachs, FAIA, built a 2x6 wood-frame house around the barn, with 2x10 rafters and wood joist floors to insulate it from the elements. The windows, building insulation, and cedar siding are all part of the outer shell, leaving the barn exposed on the interior. The result is an open, loft-like space that contains the living room, dining room, and kitchen.

The architects added straightforward interior finishes—American cherry floors, maple paneling, and aluminum window frames—to a muted color scheme to create a subtle backdrop for the client’s eclectic collection of art and furniture. Glazed, industrial 10x10 roll-up garage doors on either side of the house connect indoors and outdoors, allowing light, air, and party guests to



To celebrate a 220-year-old barn frame, architects Tom Hut and Jane Sachs built a 2x6 wood-frame house around the antique structure.



Exposed 10-by-10-foot interior posts accentuate the rustic origins of the salvaged frame. Roll-up garage doors and an open floor plan allow light, air, and party guests to flow throughout the kitchen, living room, and outdoors.

Photos: John Umberger/Trends Publishing International

light fantastic



Stainless steel appliances, Carrara marble countertops and striated silver laminate cabinets give the kitchen a vibrant, active feel. The frame dictated windows openings and cabinet heights.

Photos: John Umberger/Trends Publishing International

“the frame allowed us to be even more contemporary and interpretive with what we added because it had such a strong character by itself.”

—tom hut, faia

flow effortlessly between the two.

The kitchen occupies the east side of the house, where a curtain wall ushers in morning light. Stainless steel appliances, Carrara marble countertops, and striated silver laminate cabinets give the space a vibrant, active feel. As with the overall design of the house, details take their cues from the barn. Hut and Sachs scaled counters and cabinets to the recycled frame, which dictated both heights and lengths. The timbers also determined the locations and sizes of window openings.

The barn’s high ceiling and exposed structure complicated the kitchen’s lighting plan. To avoid the dangling pendulum effect, the architects spec’d track mounted on lower beams for overall illumination and used desk lamps for task lighting. “In a way, that was an ad hoc solution, but it gave a great feel to the kitchen,” Hut explains. “It was unlike

anything I’ve ever done. It gave a nice scale to a big space, bringing it down to the right place.”

A skyscraping vent hood didn’t fit the aesthetic either. Hut and Sachs didn’t want to disrupt the openness of the kitchen, and height was an issue for proper drafting. Instead, they ran a downdraft through the basement. More serious grilling is done outside. “There really was no challenge to overcome with this project,” Hut insists. “The client wanted it all open. He wanted to live with the clatter of dishes when entertaining. We didn’t have to deal with where to place the caterers because he didn’t care.”

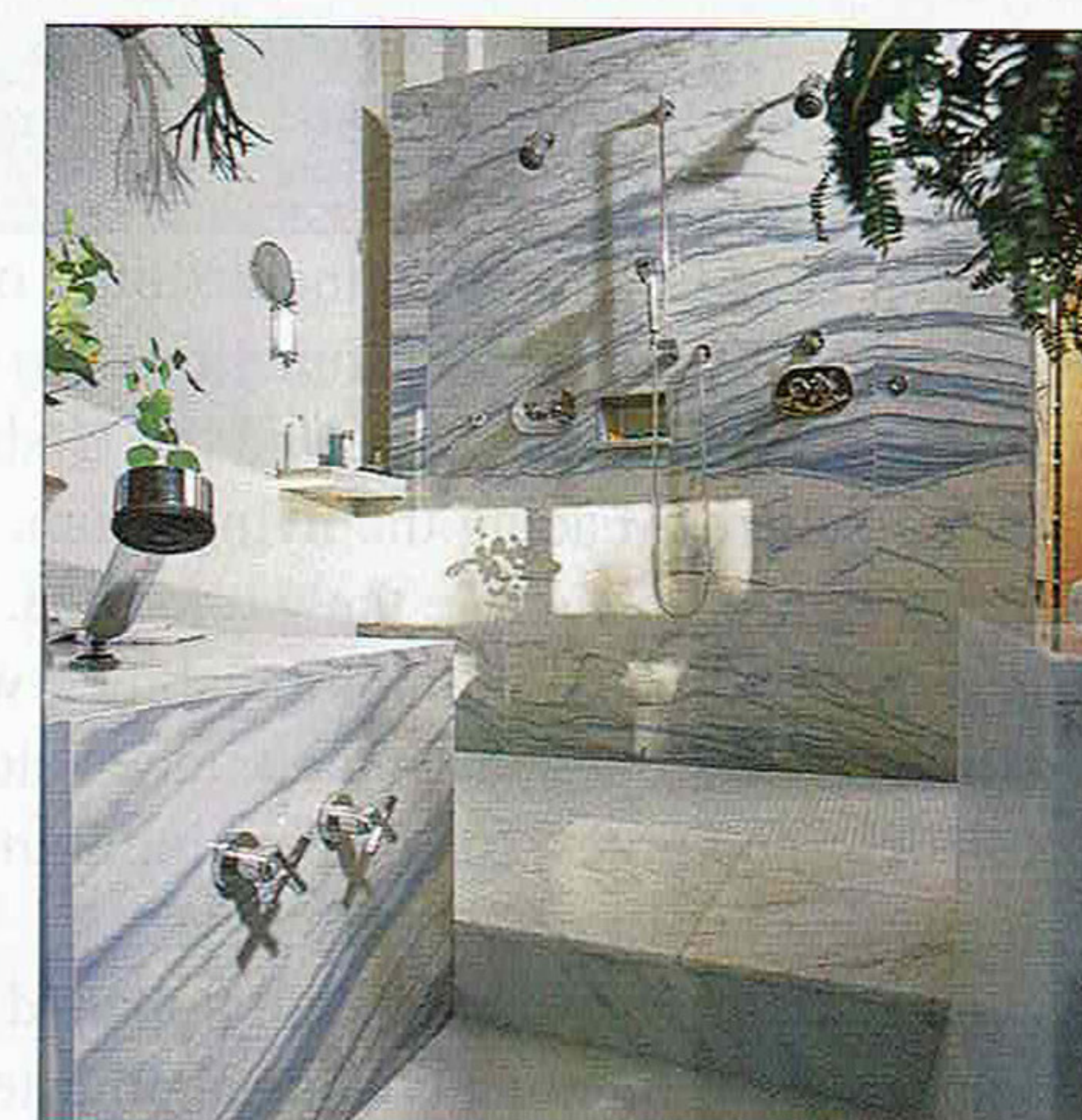
The master suite and guest quarters are contained in a wing grafted onto the barn volume. The architects angled the two-story building for ocean views and privacy from neighbors. Guests are on the first level; the master suite grabs the second story, a roof deck, and, of course, the best views. In keeping with the open-plan edict, the master bedroom and bath are only minimally separated from each other. A combination headboard and storage cabinet traces the division while allowing natural light to channel through.

In the bathroom, walls clad in ocean-hued granite, counters topped by the same Carrara marble used in the kitchen, and teak millwork make the room seem lush and expansive. Instead of double vanities and a separate shower, the sink is one long trough and the shower is exposed. And the two share a bar of soap through a peephole in their common wall. “The client didn’t need an enclosed shower, so we chose to use that to our advantage,” says Hut. “Even in the bath, it was all about the open landscape.”

The house’s transparency makes the design work, according to Hut. “It doesn’t feel like you’re in a barn, but you get a sense of its style,” he explains. “The frame allowed us to be even more contemporary and interpretive with what we added because it had such a strong character by itself.”—melissa worden



Carrara marble covers the counters and walls of the master bath. A long trough sink backs to the shower, and the two share a soap dish through a peep hole.



The bath, like the rest of the house, has an open plan with no doors. An exposed shower becomes the centerpiece of the room.

project:
Chiat residence, Long Island, N.Y.
architect:
Hut Sachs Studio, New York City
structural engineer:
Gilsanz Murray Steficek, New York City
contractor:
C.S. Hildreth, Inc., Bridgehampton, N.Y.
project size:
4,500 square feet
cost:
Withheld