

SPOTLIGHT LIVING LARGE

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“I am living the dream”,
says an exuberant
Nancy Brown about
her spanking new, ultra-luxurious home in
Cresskill, New Jersey.

One might think that empty-nesters Nancy and Howard Brown might be a little lost rattling around in a 6,000 sq. ft. house all by their lonesomes. Well, think again. This most dynamic of duos have recently upgraded—in every sense of the term—to a new, 12,000+ sq. ft. home where they most happily greet extended family, friends, and most importantly, each other in rooms specially molded for play, work, family and private couples’ time.



Nancy and Howard Brown in their living room

“I am living the dream”, says an exuberant Nancy Brown about her spanking new, ultra-luxurious home in Cresskill, New Jersey. What makes the words—and house—most interesting are that Nancy and Howard are not strangers to the luxe life; in fact, both are pretty used to having the best. But this house-- its comfort, functionality and most of all, beauty-- has left them giddy with pleasure.



View of front of house



Entry Foyer



Living Room

At a time in their lives when many couples are downsizing thinking it will make life easier, the Browns have found that the opposite—upsizing-- has done that neat trick for them. Fully equipped gym/spa, right there in the house; media complex, got it; his and her studies, check; wine room, right this way; playroom(s) for the grandkids, for sure; chef-ready kitchen, follow your nose; guest suites, ready and welcoming; library, of course; servants quarters and staff kitchen, tucked conveniently but unobtrusively away; outdoor pool and indoor Roman bath room, yes and yes.



“Everything here is just the way we wanted it, and it is like living in a resort,” says Howard.

Living Room from Entry - Foyer

The new abode has so many goodies and such expansive gardens that the Browns, who are used to traveling far and wide, now hate to leave home. “Everything here is just the way we wanted it, and it is like living in a resort,” says Howard.



Living Room from second floor balcony

Part of the miracle of the house is how quickly it all came together. Though the Browns built their former home, also in New Jersey, to their specifications, this time they bought a builder's model and made only minor adjustments. "We wanted instant gratification," notes Howard. Therefore, the Browns opted to keep intact the moldings that came with the house, along with the bathrooms, grand staircase, floors (inlaid woods and marble) and even light fixtures in several of the areas. Their designer, Lauren Ostrow, of Lauren Ostrow Interior Design, agreed that the Browns would be foolish to pass up the paint job that came with the mammoth house, despite there only being seven colors in the offered palette. Ostrow assured the duo they could get around the blandness effect by upholstering many of the walls with glorious coverings and gimp.



Dining Room

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The couple closed on their builder's manse in October of 2006, and over the next few weeks, in tandem with Lauren Ostrow, made only functional changes to the house's blueprint. The couple moved into the house for Thanksgiving and by this past August, 99% of the furnishings, finishings and accessories had been completed. The fast pace of the decoration has stunned family and friends who predicted that the perfectionist couple would not have the house in "viewing" condition for another two years. Less than a year later, the owners are happily ensconced in their deluxe habitat, entertaining on a grand scale, and "best friends" with and admirers of designer Ostrow and her chief assistant, Ronnie Grossmann. How rare is that? "We told Lauren the colors we liked and what kind of lifestyle we wanted the house to reflect," says Nancy. "We owe so much to Lauren, Ronnie and the whole team for making this house so perfect and easy for us," lauds Nancy.

Finding their new home was not, of course, so easy. The couple did think about moving into a smaller abode, but quickly discarded the notion. "The thought crossed my mind," admits Howard, "but then I saw some new, smaller spaces, and the rooms were not the size we were accustomed to; it just wasn't our lifestyle." When Nancy brought Howard to see this house, his immediate reaction was, "I get it."



Nancy in her private study



Howard in the Library



Master sitting room

The real work centered on creating the environment the Browns craved. “We wanted a warm, comfortable not stodgy house,” explains Nancy. “Yet we also wanted the formality of a Great Room that looked handsome and we wanted to be able to utilize the rooms for all of our desires.” Howard makes another point: “Our old house was modern in furnishings and art, and while we wanted to keep the art, (the Browns’ collection includes David Hockneys and Larry Rivers)



Family room with custom built saltwater fish tank

we wanted this house to have a more elegant and traditional feel. Between us and Lauren, we were able to envision the house and we were willing to take direction.” That last point is key, believes Ostrow in answering how they were able to complete an over 12,000 sq. ft. home in less than a year.

“We gave Nancy and Howard options on all or most items, but we always made a top recommendation and nine times out of 10 they took it,” she says. “We were so excited by the things we were buying, that we couldn’t wait for delivery,” laughs Nancy. “And when the things would come in, I had to call Lauren and tell her how happy we were with it and how great it looked in the room.”

One of the happiest surprises in the new house is one that bedeviled them in the old: closets. Howard Brown loves



Grandchildren’s Bedroom



Breakfast Room with terrace beyond

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clothes and shopping and often picks out his wife’s outfits as she would rather be on the golf course. (Nancy is a champion golfer.) Now the couple’s closets—they are really rooms—and shelves are color-coded, arranged by occasion and function and totally accessible. “Getting dressed is now so logical and easy,” says Nancy. “Lauren translated our needs beautifully and painlessly,” comments Howard.



View of back of house

“There are no shortcomings in this house,” states Howard. Everything is just the way we wanted it.”

The couple is thrilled with the end result. “There are no shortcomings in this house,” states Howard. Everything is just the way we wanted it.” Nancy adds that they use all parts of the house—even the playroom which was set up for their four grandchildren. They don’t play with the giant train set, but they love the pinball and other arcade games scattered around the room. If they are not there, you might find Nancy in her study where she works on her charities or in the sunny library where she loves to read. Howard is usually in his office tending to business interests or in the fully-equipped gym and spa. And of course, it’s highly possible to catch the two of them soaking in the big Roman-style plunge pool with glasses of wine from their sizeable stock. “We are so blessed to be here,” sighs Nancy. “We pinch ourselves all the time because we think we are in some wonderful dream.”

TESTIMONIAL LETTER

Designing a dream home with your spouse is an evolution of excitement. Add a time-sensitive nine months completion mandate and you have a worthy challenge. However, the solution can be and was simple due to our decision to choose Lauren Ostrow Interior Design Inc. as the creative guru.

The process began and intensified after three focused meetings established the future vision. A rapport and respect emerged that generated a whirlwind of activity. Timelines were drawn, inspired choices were considered, decisions were made, and deadlines were met!

The achievement of the 'project' produced pure and enduring beauty. We are thrilled with our elegant and comfortable home and we share Lauren's enthusiasm and pride in it.

Moreover, we have evolved into friends after a business relationship built on trust and inspiration by a talented individual who is worthy of a designation of 'discerning designer'.

Nancy & Howard Brown

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