

# ROOMS THAT REACH OUT

Homes may shelter us from the elements, but they can still be as airy as all outdoors

Since many of us work in hermetically sealed office buildings, it's no wonder that at home, an outdoor orientation—with sun-rooms, conservatories, even backyard kitchens and alfresco baths—is figuring into many a site plan. We're mindful of design precedents here. In the traditional Japanese house, an intermediate area serves as a buffer between interior and exterior spaces, bringing nature nearly indoors while still shielding occupants from the elements. Borrowing from the Orient, the American Craftsman-style house of the early 20th century accomplished an indoor/outdoor fluidity with sleeping porches, terraces and gardens. Later, technology ushered in advanced window and glass design that has enabled homes in even the coolest climes to address the outdoors. Willing to take an outside chance, these homes are reaching out—both traditionally, with the comeback of the porch and the gardening revolution, and in new ways, as decking and glazing become ever more elaborate.





Matisse-inspired cutouts give this New England space all the charm of a treehouse — with none of the bugs

# Playful approach to the porch

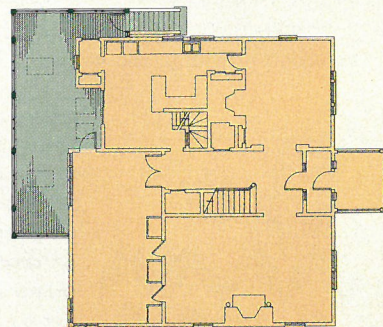


**T**hese Boston-area homeowners learned the hard way: The burgeoning insect population made it nearly impossible for them to enjoy their open-air porch. When they hired architect Gary Wolf of the Boston firm Adams and Wolf to create a new family room, they asked him to also rebuild the porch and screen it in so that it would integrate well with the new room and kitchen.

With the ground sloping away in a backyard full of giant beeches, Wolf describes the 400-square-foot elevated wraparound porch as having the feel of a “treehouse.” It left him with a dilemma: “I wanted to provide a sense of enclosure,” he says, “that still had openness to it.” He did it with naturalistic Matisse- and Arp-inspired cutouts in the plywood wall panels. Not only do they dematerialize otherwise solid infill walls between the traditional foursquare windows, they also recall their leafy surroundings. The result is a cheery seasonal space that plays with the notion of what’s indoors and what’s out, bringing to the conventional porch the best of both worlds.

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Above: Architect Gary Wolf’s free-form cutouts in weather-resistant marine plywood are as charming from the outside as they are inside (right), where they cast fanciful patterns across the wood floor.



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Opposite and above: The porch’s dining and sitting areas are bathed in light not only from windows and walls but from skylights in the exposed-beam ceiling. The wood panels are removable for easy screen cleaning.

ARCHITECTURE



For further information, see *Buying Guide*, page 84