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## This Modern Delaware Home Adds Flare With Asian Influences

Drew Lisosky May 12, 2022

Photos by Angie Eye Photography

A renovation in Hockessin by Spring Studio Architecture balances cool modernism with warm Japanese elements.

Scott Sampson of **Spring Studio Architecture** employed a light palette to soften the modern angles of a three-bedroom Hockessin home. His substantial renovation transformed the ranch-style house, which was previously far more conventional in style. The kitchen was executed with bamboo flooring and a commanding marble countertop with thick, pale veins. The skylight, one of many in the home, mirrors the dimensions of the island. The custom dining table, in white oak, is 10 feet long.

One client often leads to another and, in this case, they were in the same town. A Hockessin husband-and-wife duo (the wife is a local business owner) hired Scott Sampson of Spring Studio Architecture after they saw a previous Hockessin project of his—a partial reconstruction where he had "opened things up and let in a lot of light."

So, Sampson's new clients didn't ask for a gut renovation either, but they offered him a budget that could be used to make a big impact in a similar style at their Hockessin home.

The owner wanted to update their 1960s ranch house (three bedrooms, 2.5 baths) and focus on creating a new kitchen, entry, living space and primary bedroom suite. "They wanted a bright, modern, sustainable and easy-to-clean space with easy access to the outside since they have two dogs," Sampson says. "They did not want to increase the footprint of the existing building, which required us to create highly efficient spaces, oftentimes concealing closets and shelving within the wainscot to maintain modern, simple lines."

Within the sunroom, a black-painted light to come through reinforces the Japanese aesthetic

The result was a particular type of openness—not a loftlike space but instead a home in which rooms are delineated without being closed off from each other.

Skylights and interior clearstory windows allow shared light between rooms

Supply-chain issues and delays due to COVID-19 challenged the design and construction team throughout the project, which took 2 1/2 years to complete. "but the owners never compromised what they wanted out of the project," says Sampson, who drew upon the considerable contracting skills of Hugh Lofting Timber Framing and High Performance Building.

One notable aspect of the home is its references to Japanese design, such as its sliding shoji screens, handleless cabinetry and a Japanese soaking tub sourced from Aquatica that's shaped "like a teacup. (The "wet" bathroom is easily maintained, with an open shower and a floor that pitches to a drain so the entire bathroom can be hosed down.) "Warmer textured materials associated with Japanese house design provide contrast and balance to the more modern aspects of the design," Sampson says.

The standout feature in the open bathroom is the oft-chosen Japanese soaking tub sourced from Aquatica

Another key element is the home's inventive use of natural light in the way it is shared from room to room. Skylights, clerestory windows and floor-to-ceiling windows occur in abundance. For example, the illumination in the primary bedroom is actually "borrowed" from the main bathroom's skylights. "What you end up having is a large volume of open space and light that feels a lot bigger than it actually is," Sampson explains.

Bamboo flooring and oak wood function to soften things up. The architect designed the kitchen cabinets and a 10-foot-long custom dining table (midcentury chairs from Design Within Reach) out of the same white oak that the wainscot was created from "to create seamless transitions between furniture and architecture," Sampson says. The island sports a richly veined white marble (as is the backsplash), and its dimensions are mirrored in the continuous rows of skylights above—a choice that delivers subtle harmony and reminds that light is always an essential material and, in this case, a strategic way to connect spaces.

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