

A woman with glasses, wearing a white sleeveless top and a bright blue necklace, sits at a white desk with ornate carvings. She is writing on a document. On the desk are a vase of pink and white flowers, a white mug with a logo, and some papers. Above her is a large window with a view of green trees. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling. Several framed photos are on the wall.

LA DOLCE VITA

A SLICE OF ITALY RIGHT HERE IN TOWN

A woman in a white sleeveless dress and a bright blue necklace stands smiling in front of a modern house entrance. The house has grey stone walls and a wooden door frame. A small potted tree sits on the steps.

BY ROBIN H. PHILLIPS // PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANE BEILES



PHOTO: DAVID HEALD

RIGHT ANGLES Emilia Ferri's design for the couple's home takes into consideration the changing landscape, maximizing its beauty in different seasons, while enhancing the indoors with natural elements, connecting the two. Two exterior decks made of green composite materials have aluminum railings, creating those lines that Maryla and Peppe admire. Pops of color abound: a centerpiece of the living room is *Golden Ticket*, an original painting by Kerri Rosenthal (kerrirosenthalart.com) of Weston. A blue-and-white rug from ABC Carpet complements the grey Natuzzi New York sofa and Savafieh blue velvet armchairs.

PHOTO: RIGHT: DAVID HEALD



AS YOUNG SWEETHEARTS summering in Monte di Procida, a village on the coast of Naples overlooking the islands of Capri, Procida, and Ischia, Maryla Colandrea and Giuseppe ("Peppe") Scotto would often talk of their future home. While they admired the rustic island architecture that surrounded them, the home of Colandrea and Scotto's dreams was contemporary in design—yet still inspired by their beloved Italy. Italy has always been considered a world trendsetter in terms of furniture, automotive, and fashion design, and now architecture and interior design are catching up. "Italians are modernizing their practices," says Colandrea-Scotto. "Peppe and I admire the clean lines and minimalist interiors there. They allow the structure to speak for itself and take center-stage." While Scotto is a native of Italy, Colandrea was born in Connecticut, but spent summers in Scotto's hometown where she also has family. After settling in Fairfield County, her parents opened Massimo Pizzeria Ristorante in Bridgeport. Recently celebrating 30 years in business, Massimo's remains a popular destination for large gatherings, with its family-style portions of Neapolitan dishes, just like dining in an Italian home. Although the couple married in a fairytale wedding in Italy, and visit often, they knew they wanted to plant their roots in Fairfield. They also had a vision for their first home. "We





PHOTO, TOP LEFT: DAVID HEAD

LUMINOUS LAYERS Three panels of a blue ombré acrylic art with glass resin coating from Murano, Italy line the staircase, drawing the eye upwards. Ferri and Colandrea-Scotto became close while working on the project and remain friends while still collaborating on the house. A cook's kitchen is custom-made with cabinets from Leicht Westchester. Special Appliances include a built-in refrigerator by Leibherr, a Dacor range stove with a Thermador downdraft. The gray tones continue in a Restoration Hardware stone topped table and Arhaus chairs and stools.



wanted the shell to be linear, modern, and crisp," explains Colandrea-Scotto. "We love that contemporary design often features large open spaces perfect for entertaining. I am dubbed the "Party Girl" by my family and friends, and that is exactly what I need in a home."

They found a 1950s ranch on busy Black Rock Turnpike, overlooking Samp Mortar Reservoir. "We liked the location, and the fact there was already an established office for our business," says Colandrea-Scotto. Begun in 2010, Art of Perfection Events (AEventdesign.com) slowly developed into a "destination Italy" luxury wedding and special event planning company. So, the location was not only ideal for the business, but also for Scotto to travel to Massimo's where he works with his father-in-law part of the year. "The easy access to the Merritt Parkway is ideal for working and having clients come by, yet the beauty of the water is right there," adds Scotto.

They had the location, but not the house they wanted, so they embarked on finding an architect to transform the 50s ranch into a 21st century modern gem. Through their network of Italian-American friends, the couple was introduced to architect Emilia Ferri (emiliaferridesign.com), based in Greenwich and Westchester. "Emilia immediately understood what we wanted and we loved her ideas," says Colandrea-Scotto. Ferri



SPA-LIKE SENSIBILITY The master bedroom is sleek but soft and inviting, with a custom made headboard in a lush gray velvet with nailhead. *Meadow*, another Kerri Rosenthal (kerrirosenthalart.com) original painting adds feminine color to the overall muted tones. Wood-like horizontally laid tiles by Pavia & Cavaliere Tile and Marble Company are dramatic in the masterbath. The three ring entrance Lighting New York custom Swarovski crystal chandelier adds whimsical “bling” to the entrance way. Maryla’s office bathroom features a state-of-the-art “floating” sink and toilet from Adm bathroom design.



PHOTO: DAVID HEALD



brings over 15 years of international and local design work that contributes to her cutting-edge design sense.

“Maryla and Peppe wanted their home to represent their taste—fresh, modern, and sophisticated,” explains Ferri. “I knew it was critical to showcase the lake views, maximize an inside/outside feeling, and capture the natural sunlight to enhance the interior spaces.” Ferri used a series of eight-foot tall windows that give you a feeling of floating once inside.

This isn’t just the couple’s dream house, but also an award-winning design. Ferri received the AIA New England People’s Choice 2015 Award for her work. Conscious of the environment in all she designs, Ferri integrated several green elements into the design. The cedar siding is renewable, biodegradable, and has an innate resistance to moisture and insects. It is also sourced from sustainably managed forests. The exterior composite decking and stairs are made of a combination of recycled plastic and waste wood fiber ground into sawdust. They installed high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, radiant flooring on first floor, and insulated low emissivity glass windows throughout the house.



PHOTO: DAVID HEALD



VIVE L'ITALIA Living a tad more like Europeans than Americans, the couple often enjoy breakfast on their master bedroom balcony, overlooking the lake. Modern functional outdoor pieces make the perfect place to relax and enjoy the outdoors.



Because of zoning laws, Ferri needed to remain on the original footprint. Designing the entire house as new construction, Ferri created an open concept with high ceilings, creating the perfect living and entertaining space the couple desired. "The jewel of the home is the northeast corner where a sequence of floor to ceiling windows allow for panoramic lake vistas," explains Ferri. The overall effect is that you are in a quiet tranquil home on the water. Once inside, you would never know the cars of Black Rock Turnpike were speeding outside. The contractor, Fer-Nap Construction of Trumbull, completed new construction with great attention to modern details.

Ferri also collaborated with the couple on the interior design, choosing both custom-made designs and ready-made pieces for the main living area, master bedroom, and guest rooms. The couple loves a white and gray palette so the overall scheme took on these hues, but pops of color add interest to the decor. "The warmth of the house began to evolve with the wood tones Emilia used, and VAP Painting & Decorating was instrumental in perfecting the interior paint colors we chose as well as the staining on the outside cedar," explains Colandrea-Scotto.

According to his wife, Scotto's favorite part of planning the home was the kitchen. "This is his territory," she says. "Although I love to cook, this is his dream kitchen. He enjoys having the center island to play "Master Chef" as he demos his new recipes when guests come to dinner." Ohad Berebi from Leicht Westchester designed the kitchen counter and cabinets. Pavia & Cavaliere Tile and Marble Company supplied the marble, stone, and tile work throughout the home.

Ferri designed the office part of the home with a more feminine feel, featuring a pretty Italian-inspired desk and desk accessories, and European fixtures in the bathroom. They placed striking photographs of events and weddings they have planned around the window. This past year, they expanded their services into offering villa rentals in some of the most exclusive destinations around the Amalfi Coast and regions of Tuscany. If you make an appointment to stop by, chances are, Colandrea-Scotto will have a delicious espresso waiting for you. ■