

**WALL STORY**

Above (3), the house is designed to be open to the outside, yet shielded from winter weather

outside space, private and very private, that continues through the entire house. Yarinsky points to a series of study models based around the clients' needs – three bedrooms that could also be used as studies; an open and convivial kitchen; flexibility of space; and lots and lots of light – that figure and reconfigure basic blocks into a series of meandering rooms. The final plan locks three similar spaces together in a criss-cross pattern that allows, on a summer day, six people to comfortably inhabit the space without stepping on each other.

The inside-outside play is more considered than it looks, Yarinsky says. Part of the brief was to create a house that was winter-ready, so the architects had to figure out a way of making the interior feel cosy without losing the sense of fluidity between inside and out. A wall of German-designed (architects' code for simple but hi-tech) glass doors faces the water and opens onto a deck shielded >>



from the harsh New England wind by an extension of the living room wall.

'You want this kind of generosity of space and openness,' Yarinsky says of the project. 'But everything has to be carefully considered and controlled.' The architects went through six iterations of the wall design, each version of which toyed with ideas of shadow and the interplay between light and darkness, summer and winter, inside and out. It's a subtle intervention, though, and it's this subtlety that Yarinsky – and the clients – find most appealing about the project and its scale.

'What was really refreshing about working on this site is that it's a normal house; it's not bloated,' Yarinsky says. The clients wanted the house to be a third bigger than it is, but ARO, and the threat of higher construction costs, talked them down. Still, at 2,500 sq ft, it's a good size and feels twice as large due to its airiness.

The walls are in Alaskan cedar, the floor is unstained white oak, and the



SEA SENSE

Top (4), the wall dividing the living room and the master bedroom. Above (5), the terrace is open to the sea view

stone details are in Italian lava basaltina, hand-installed by a mason who was flown in specially. Vertical zinc walls round out the purposefully limited material palette, and three faceted skylights introduce both that all-important daylight and a moment of surprising detail.

It's this element of subtle surprise that runs through the entire design. Yarinsky mentions the control architects necessarily have, but mitigates that often treacherous moment of 'I want you to feel this' with a realisation that these interventions had to be subtle. 'I don't think it's appropriate to live in a statement on that scale,' he says of domestic architecture. And this house, with its quietly perfect moments – a bedroom skylight, an impeccable sense of proportion – is an argument in favour of simplicity and understatement. It might look quiet, but it speaks volumes. ✪

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