



Contemporary style, combined with street writing design, meets old-fashioned in the master bedroom.

CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

Nature does its thing in a minimal Highland Park home

By Pamela Sherrod • Photographs by Tony Berardi

California living in the Midwest? That's what a young couple sought when they built their 6,100-square-foot dream house on a 1½-acre wooded lot in Highland Park.

Their request was a simple one. When the native Chicago couple thought of California, they thought of being in a wooded, natural setting, and they wanted that feeling of being one with nature to continue within their home.

Architect Ernest Grunsfeld III, known for his contemporary single-family home designs, and interior designers Bill Olafsen and Elise Schreiber helped to provide the family with a minimalist environ-

ment to complement the landscape outside.

The interior, sparsely decorated, plays second to the outdoor scene that is part of every room.

Floor-to-ceiling windows wrap around the first level of this two-floor home. These windows extend from the master bedroom suite to the family room off the kitchen.

From these windows you see the swaying and bowing weeping willows. There's also a lush green sweep of grass that sparkles from the sunshine that peeks between the trees.

"They wanted to be close to nature and to have a home that had elegance and practicality about it," says Schreiber. "They also wanted the feeling of a northern California residence made of natural materials."

"But they didn't want it to be rus-



The wraparound sofa and these timber...



A bronze "totem" table lamp doubles as lighting and sculpture on this living room console



Old French chestnut timbers make up a plank kitchen table.

tic," Olafsen adds.

Natural themes are seen in the fossil stone that frames the wood-burning fireplaces in the living room and master bedroom, and in the built-in rift oak paneling and storage cabinets that do double duty in these adjacent rooms.

The sophisticated, clean-lined furniture of contemporary designers such as Dakota Jackson and lighting designers Tom Scarf and Diane Fraser carries out the simple themes of this home, which includes four children—an 11-year-old daughter and 7-year-old triplets (two sons and a daughter). There are also two dogs, a Labrador retriever and a Dalmatian.

But without knowing, one would never guess children or pets live here. The only hint is a trip to the upstairs bedrooms, where the children's rooms show their interest in the solar system, Michael Jordan and birds.

The only room on the first floor that indicates children also live in this "company ready" house of order is the family room, where dogs are in an original portrait by Robert Rauschenberg. Another Rauschenberg work hangs in the



A willow tree welcomes visitors to this California-style home.

dining room, and a modern painting by Bill Brice is displayed on one of the living room walls.

A playful and innocent spirit is also seen in the hall bathroom where a sketch by Chicago outsider artist Lee Godie hangs on a wall.

Small decorative touches make this spare home a little richer—the Burmese bowl of green marble apples on the black granite dining

table and the three-timber (old railroad ties) cocktail table in the living room.

"There is a sense of privacy here, a sweetness and simplistic, minimalist feel," Schreiber says. ■

RESOURCES

Interior design—Olafsen-Schreiber Design, Chicago.

Built-in entertainment custom cabinets—Highland Park Millwork Inc.,

Highland Park.

Painting—Peacock Decorators, Forest Park.

Window treatments—mesh roller shades by Paul Parenteau, Parenteau Studios.

Landscaping—Scott Byron and Co., Lake Bluff.

Living room: Chartwell sofa; console table and "totem" table lamps, both by Corbin; three-timber cocktail table by Mimi London; sofa fabric by Giant; green leather chairs upholstery by Marco; iron candlesticks; woven black sisal container—all at Holly Hunt Ltd., Merchandise Mart; area rug by PWV Studios—Ombre Inc., Chicago; antique carved Philippine wooden bowl—Decora; custom metal, aluminum and stone wall sconces—artists/designers Tom Scarf and Diane Fraser—Artemide; Cedric Hartman's anodized aluminum and brass floor lamps—Jack Lenor Larsen; bonsai—H.D. Ltd., Lake Forest; Bill Brice painting—L.A. Louver, Venice, Calif.

Master bedroom: Metal bed—personal collection; whitened oak desk and chair by Sam Marx—B.C.Holland, Mart; fabric bed covers and drapes by Mimi London—Holly Hunt Ltd., Mart; brushed nickel desk lamp by Cedric Hartman—Holly Hunt Ltd., Mart; orchids from H.D. Limited, Lake Forest.

Kitchen: Virter stacking chairs by Dakota Jackson—Holly Hunt Ltd., Mart; custom plank table of old French chestnut timbers—Elux C. Putting (gallery closed), New York.