

# white on white...on white

The palest of the pale prevails at Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz and Brian E. Boyle's house for friends in Sagaponack, New York







To hear Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz tell it, the house his friends purchased in Sagaponack, New York, was a total turkey. "Like a really bad version of the Sydney Opera House," he says, rolling his eyes while describing an early-1980's folly of intersecting triangles. "I told them to tear it down immediately." But owners Steve Brown and Steve Saide thought the quirks might be workable. "Benjamin hated the crazy angles, but we fell in love with them," Saide says. As CEO and head designer, respectively, of the rental service Furnished Quarters, the couple opted for a short-term trial—five years—before giving up. "Ultimately, it didn't serve our needs but proved too costly to renovate," Saide explains. So he

and Brown decided to raze it after all. To help rebuild on the 1½-acre site, just a five-minute walk from the ocean, Noriega-Ortiz tapped Brian E. Boyle, AIA, a firm with a New York office down the hallway from his. The two have collaborated since the '80's, when both worked for *Interior Design* Hall of Fame member John F. Saladino. "Brian makes the magic happen," Noriega-Ortiz says. Boyle offers kind words in return: "Benjamin trained as an architect, so he really gets it. I help him express himself, and he pushes me further. We're a great team." The 6,700-square-foot cedar-shingled house balances communal areas with private space for hosts and guests alike. Taking cues from a Palladian villa, the

**Previous spread:** In a house that Brian E. Boyle, AIA, and Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz built and furnished in Sagaponack, New York, custom acrylic light towers divide the double-height salon into vignettes. One features a custom table in acrylic and faux leather and a pair of vintage Warren Platner armchairs, virtually the only seating not upholstered in vinyl. **Top, from left:** A Malaysian driftwood bench sits near the Zen garden's hot tub. In the salon, a custom wing chair and an acrylic side table are grouped near a Portuguese-style vintage chair. **Bottom:** A catwalk with a glass balustrade connects the four guest suites.

**Opposite:** Laid over flooring of 2-foot-square Jerusalem limestone slabs, a custom acrylic shag rug anchors the salon's mix of custom and vintage seating.







**Opposite:** Below custom glass chandeliers, the dining room seats 16. A vintage Edward Wormley credenza supports antique sundials, probably French.

**Top:** The kitchen features quartz-composite counters and acrylic-faced cabinets. **Bottom, from left:** A custom ottoman was designed at exactly the width of three of the courtyard's limestone pavers; behind, upper and lower windows are unified by continuous painted casing. An antique glove mold is displayed along the catwalk, with its flooring of rift-cut oak.



U-shape plan centers on a double-height salon overlooking a courtyard and lush landscaping. One wing houses the sprawling master suite. The other wing encompasses the breakfast room and service areas, followed by the sunroom, which functions as a quasi pool house. Capped by hipped roofs, both ends of the U are articulated to look like freestanding pavilions. "It breaks up the bulk," Boyle says. "The architecture combines traditional materials with modern detailing like slim-framed windows."

Although the easygoing layout supports big gatherings effortlessly—cocktail parties, candlelit dinners for 16—the exterior looks restrained, even demure.

Draped with cascading ivy, the windowless front facade features a slanted portico sheltering a 16-foot-tall aluminum-plate door coated in black automotive lacquer and bisected by a vertical glass slit. "It's a bit forbidding," Boyle admits. "But it's private, like the hedges surrounding nearby estates." The door opens to a long corridor sloped imperceptibly up. "Very Corbusian," Noriega-Ortiz notes. It's also invigorated by a James Turrell-inspired play of daylight through high windows.

The hall leads straight to the salon. As if the enormous tilt-and-turn windows and sliding glass doors weren't enough to unite indoors and out, the same 2-foot-square Jerusalem limestone paves

both salon and courtyard. "It's the color of Hamptons sand," explains Noriega-Ortiz, who actually used a handful as a color sample. Tiles inside are warmed by radiant heating as well as by a shag rug the color of sea salt. "Steve and Steve fought me on that," Noriega-Ortiz says. "They preferred to leave the gorgeous stone bare. But my argument was: What's sexier—a person naked or wearing a bikini? Sometimes you must hide to reveal."

The shag anchors an artful mix of furnishings upholstered in white faux leather—ornately carved Portuguese-style vintage wooden chairs, boxy custom sofas and club chairs. "The monochromatic scheme lets you appreciate the





furniture more sculpturally," Boyle says. Indeed, the decor is almost entirely white, from this room's marble-topped Eero Saarinen side table, acrylic light towers, and throw pillows covered in Mongolian lamb to the master bedroom's monumental headboard. The designers even powder-coated every screw and faucet in the house. (Although the sunroom's plaster fireplace surround is indisputably tinted black, that's only to hide soot.)

Ethereality and serenity were no small considerations for owners inundated at their jobs with the minutiae of interiors. "They're flooded with product on a daily basis, so this is a reprieve. But it's a white house that's well used, not treated with preciousness," Noriega-Ortiz says. No worries if a guest spills red wine in the dining room. The two tables are topped in wash-and-wear faux leather, and that same vinyl covers the seating—the Portuguese-style chairs again, mixed with acrylic-legged sofas. In the kitchen, counters of creamy quartz composite and

*In the sunroom off the pool, a chaise longue accompanies Philippe Starck's La Bohème stool, which doubles as a side table. Steen Østergaard designed the 1950's armchairs. The found-object sculpture of a seated man is by Leo Sewell.*

cabinets clad in white acrylic withstand messy cooking.

Less hard-wearing than the limestone flooring in public areas, light-stained rift-cut oak planks appear in the sparsely furnished master bedroom—a retreat reached via a hallway that starts in the den, then continues between two bathrooms, slipped behind frosted-glass sliding doors. Long sight lines are a Palladian trick, Noriega-Ortiz notes: "We love axes!" Boyle adds, "The hall connects to other parts of the house while allowing privacy."

Guests have privacy, too. Joined by a catwalk over the salon, two pairs of upstairs guest rooms offer en suite baths and high-walled roof terraces. "Great





for nude sunbathing," jokes Noriega-Ortiz, a frequent guest. And perhaps the only spots where the color scheme changes from white to, er, buff. ■

#### PROJECT TEAM

CHRISTOPHER CAMA; BRENDON FARRELL; OTIS GLAZEBROOK; BRIAN E. BOYLE, AIA. SEE/ARCH: LIGHTING CONSULTANT. SUSAN DEKLEVA DESIGN: LANDSCAPING CONSULTANT. AUDIO INTERIORS: AUDIOVISUAL CONSULTANT. S.L. MARESCA & ASSOCIATES: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. GREGORY M. COLEMAN CUSTOM WOODWORKING: WOODWORK. INNOVATIVE STONE: STONEMASON. O'DONOHUE & ASSOCIATES: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

#### PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT PLEXICRAFT: CUSTOM LIGHT TOWERS (LIVING ROOM). CLASSIC GALLERY: CUSTOM SOFAS, CLUB CHAIRS (LIVING ROOM), CUSTOM TABLES (DINING ROOM), CUSTOM OTTOMANS, CHAIR CUSHIONS (SUNROOM), CUSTOM SOFA, OTTOMAN (DEN), CUSTOM HEADBOARD (BEDROOM). THROUGH HEATHER &

COMPANY: SIDE CHAIRS (LIVING, DINING ROOMS). THROUGH R.E. STEELE ANTIQUES: PEDESTAL CHAIRS (LIVING ROOM), TABLE (SUNROOM). SHAW THROUGH ARONSON'S FLOOR COVERING: CUSTOM RUGS (LIVING ROOM, DEN). CASUAL WATER: HOT TUB, POOL (EXTERIOR). THROUGH COLLINS AND McCULLOUGH: WING CHAIR (LIVING ROOM). KNOLL: PEDESTAL TABLE. THROUGH GLEN LEROUX ANTIQUES: CREDENZA (DINING ROOM). ABYU: CUSTOM CHANDELIERS (DINING ROOM), CUSTOM PENDANT FIXTURES (KITCHEN, BEDROOM). SILESTONE: COUNTER MATERIAL (KITCHEN). COOPER LIGHTING THROUGH LIGHTING BY GREGORY: SCONCES (EXTERIOR). THROUGH PLANTER RESOURCE: PLANTERS. DONGHIA: OTTOMAN FABRIC. THAYER COGGIN: CHAISE (SUNROOM). KARTELL: POLYCARBONATE STOOL. ANDERSON TOOLING CO.: CUSTOM DOOR (ENTRY). THROUGH GUSTAVO OLIVIERI ANTIQUES: COCKTAIL TABLE (DEN). JANA BENNETT INTERIORS: CUSTOM CURTAINS. NESSEN LIGHTING: CUSTOM LAMPS (BATHROOM). HASTINGS TILE & BATH: SINK FITTINGS. ALPHA CRAFT: CUSTOM MIRRORING TABLE (BEDROOM). THROUGHOUT MQ WINDOWS THROUGH NORTSHORE WINDOWS: CUSTOM WINDOWS. BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.: PAINT.

**Top, from left:** The aluminum-plate front door is coated in automotive lacquer. An oil on canvas by Linda Stojak hangs in the den. **Bottom:** The quartz-composite vanity in the master bathroom is lit by custom lamps in glass and powder-coated nickel. **Opposite:** In the master bedroom, a fiberglass lounge chair faces a custom acrylic pendant fixture 8 feet long.

