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# STORY

History happily repeated itself for a Gladwyne couple who overhauled—for a second time—the 200-year-old barn they turned into a home 20 years ago

By Hilary Jay | Photographs by Matt Wargo

Sunlight streams through industrial-grade steel windows set into the new front wall of the barn. The blond maple slatted ceiling, offset by the gray limestone floors, was selected, in part, to reflect the light from outside. "We wanted something fresh and raw for the ceiling," says architect Michael Ryan. "We didn't want to be so obvious as to use sandblasted old barn wood. If you are redoing a barn, there are all these clichés you can fall into. I don't think we have one in here."





The bright colors of Robert Kelly's painting *Ledger Botanica VII*, LEFT, perk up the living room. An untitled piece by Randy Shull hangs above a collection of glass goblets, FAR LEFT.

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**M**OST PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH a renovation will tell you, emphatically, that they wouldn't want to do it again. Not Barbara and Leslie Kaplan. The Gladwyne couple embarked on their first major renovation 20 years ago, when Barbara saw the potential of a 40-by-50-foot Pennsylvania bank barn to become the loft-style space she had always wanted. Converting a down-and-dirty farm building into one-floor living with big, breathy spaces and a flood of natural light wasn't a project for beginners, but with the help of Stephen Kieran, partner of the Center City firm KieranTimberlake Associates, the Kaplans made a home of the former barn. But by 2001, Barbara was once again itching for a change. Her home office was jammed into the bedroom. The kitchen didn't accommodate

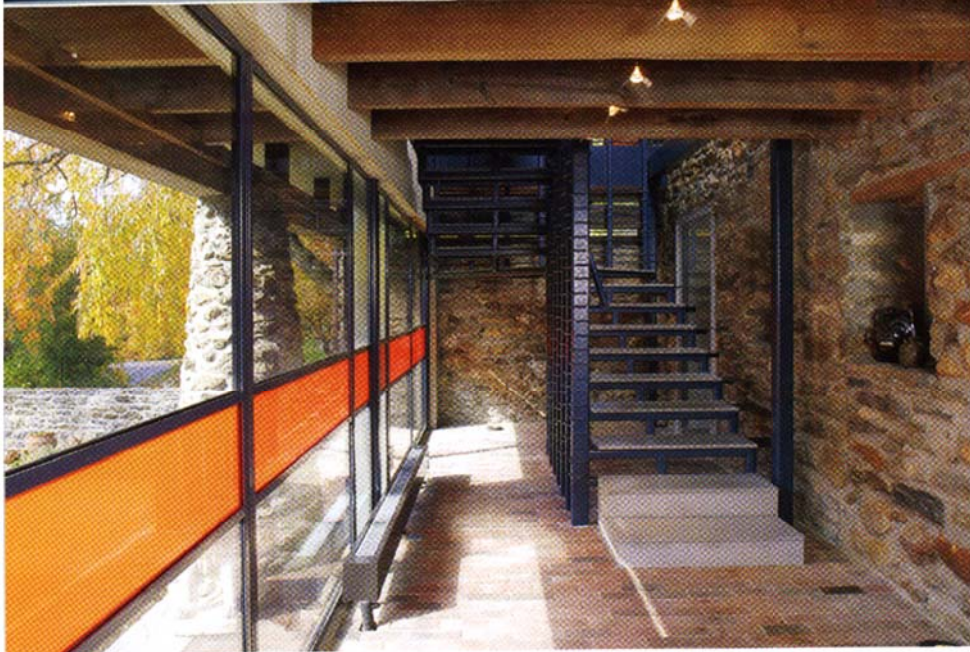


**A**tlantic white cedar covers the steel superstructure that was built into what is now the home's supporting wall, ABOVE. The stone pillars underneath are original to the 1800s barn.

**T**angerine-colored velvet Holly Hunt chairs make an intimate seating area separate from the open living and dining rooms, LEFT. The well-lit spot is a great vantage point to take in the view of the koi pond in the front yard.

**C**hris Jeffrey, project architect for Michael Ryan Architects, designed the sandblasted and blackened steel chandeliers that hang in the airy dining room, OPPOSITE, to complement the stone walls and studio-made table and sidebar by Vermont woodworker Dan Mosheim.





The bright orange stripe that runs around the lower glass expanse of the barn, ABOVE, gives an unexpected jolt of color to the space; Ryan designed the cantilevered steel-and-limestone stairs, RIGHT, that lead to the main floor; at the top landing is Bohumil Elias' glass sculpture *River Stand*, BELOW; a long, slim koi pond in the front yard, LEFT, is surrounded by gardens designed by Devon landscape architect Lisa Roth.



all of their friends who would stop in for a visit and inevitably end up cooking a casual meal with them, and no one used the upper floor living room at all. In the 20 years since the Kaplans originally renovated the barn, their needs had changed, and so had their budget and lifestyle. Even their taste in collecting had shifted as they continued to travel to places near and far.

Having grown accustomed to the barn's voluminous spaces, 200-year-old stone walls and infinite possibilities, the Kaplans knew moving to a conventional home was out of the question. They decided, improbably, to gut it a second time and start once again from an empty shell. "We love the building process," says Barbara. "We're both good at spaces, envisioning what could be there even when it's not. Seeing it through to the finished product is exhilarating. Every time you do a building project you learn something new."

The second time around, the Kaplans hired architect Michael Ryan, principal of a firm of the same name with offices in Loveladies, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, (continued on page 108)





The kitchen island, countertops and backsplash are buttery yellow quartzite, all from the same mountain in Italy. The multicolored veins of the quartzite echo the gray limestone floors (now equipped with radiant heat), walnut built-ins and barn stone. The room's openness extends straight up, with an unobstructed view to the original barn ridge 40 feet overhead.