A photograph of a two-story house with a large, multi-paned windowed addition on the left side. The house has a dark roof and light-colored siding. A brick terrace with a table and chairs is in the foreground. The interior lights are on, and the sky is dark. The text 'the sky's the limit' is overlaid in the center, and 'A BACKYARD ADDITION MAKES THIS VIENNA, VIRGINIA, HOME MORE COMPATIBLE WITH THE LANDSCAPE.' is in the top right.

A BACKYARD
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the sky's the limit

Walls of floor-to-ceiling windows in the towering two-story addition, plus an open terrace that replaced a screened-in porch, transform this house in the woods. The property abuts a wildlife preserve, and the mammoth stone fireplace and the cedar-shake roof add to the rustic look.

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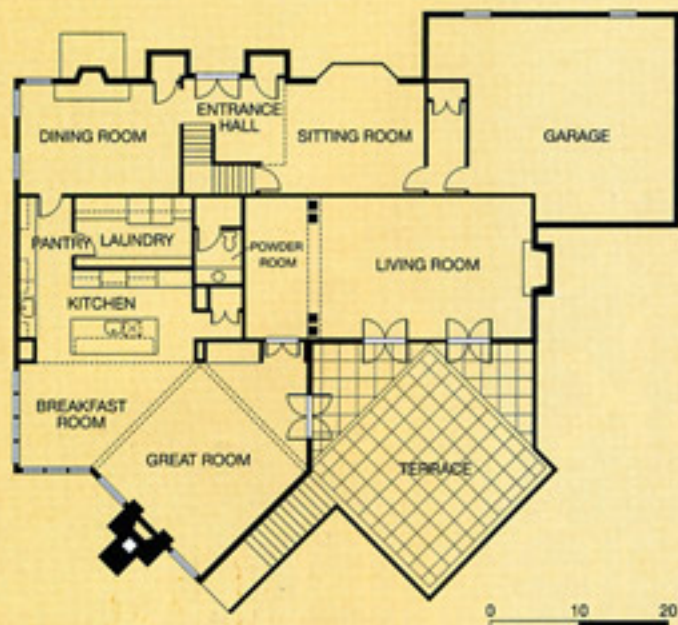


An addition brings new light

The spectacular scenery—wooded and filled with deer—of this six-acre Vienna, Virginia, property prompted the owners to build a windowed addition in order to let the light and the outdoors become permanent guests in their home.

To give the early-1970s eight-room house this picturesque window on the wooded world, architect Joseph E. Wnuk, AIA, of McMurray-Wnuk-Spurlock in Washington, D.C., transformed the boxy suburban spec home into a free-form tour de force. He created a free-flowing layout and turned the screened-in porch in the back into an open flagstone terrace. In keeping with the home's Tudor-style stucco-veneer front, Wnuk designed a two-story towerlike addition, which was canted at an angle to maximize the light in the back of the home coming from the east and the west.

"We had three goals," Wnuk says. "We wanted to enhance the light, because even during the day, the house was always dark; we wanted to remodel the kitchen, which was poorly laid out and dark; and we wanted to redo the master bath, which was not convenient in terms of planning."



TOP: The most prominent feature of the original house was the screened-in porch, which blocked the light and made the inside dark year-round. **ABOVE:** The new plan includes an open layout for the first floor and the two-story addition. **RIGHT:** Although it is at basement level, the light-filled exercise room is completely surrounded by nature.



and life to a house in the woods.



The new floor plan includes a walk-in pantry, laundry room, dressing room, sauna, exercise room, family room and entertainment center, and home office. The master bath and kitchen were significantly expanded and the other rooms were completely renovated.

"This, along with 8-foot-tall double-hung windows, opened up the whole house," says general contractor Tom Glass, owner of Glass Construction Co., also in Washington. "We also added skylights and French doors to rooms that were otherwise dark and drab."

Recessed lighting in the ceiling and under the kitchen's overhead counters, along with surface-mounted low-voltage lighting over key areas, including the dining table, fireplace, and mantel, also help in brightening the reinvigorated living spaces.

Even the basement-level exercise room was designed to take in the view: Two walls have floor-to-ceiling windows, and the third is covered with mirrors. "That way, the owners can see out and also see whether they are doing their exercises correctly," says Wnuk.



TOP: The dining room, great room, and kitchen became one functional space.

ABOVE: The layout of the old kitchen, which included a central island, was inefficient, and the dark cabinetry and fluorescent lighting on the ceiling made the room extremely dark.