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Sussan Lari Architect PC

This meticulous architect stays true to three design tenets when creating custom, dream homes in the Tri-State area: imagination, harmony and mystery.

MAKING *DREAMS* COME TRUE

Architect Sussan Lari
boasts an impressive background
in large corporate design, but now
makes dreams come true by
designing custom homes with
a whimsical inflection.

by Sanam Mechkat



Architect Sussan Lari, president and founder of Sussan Lari Architect PC, has taken to high aesthetics with her unique firm that specializes in custom homes within the Tri-State area. With a keen eye for design, Lari approaches each new project with a freshness of perspective that speaks to the individual character and personality of her clients. While motivating her clients to uncover their uniqueness every step of the way, Lari stays true to her own design philosophy, which she has built around three fundamental terms: imagination, harmony and mystery.

“Imagination must play a major role in the design process – I leave my mind open to every possibility before even sitting down to the drawing board,” Lari said.

Having graduated from the Urban Design Program of the University of Pennsylvania with a double master’s in architecture and planning, Lari has not always been in the business of designing dream homes.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: Brookville, NY. The entry courtyard of the home enclosed on two sides by the house, one side by stone piers and the other by a stone wall. The meticulously chosen outdoor lighting highlights the natural stone façade and provides a welcoming atmosphere for guests.

LEFT: A view of the Brookville home’s outside multi-leveled living complex including the pool, outdoor kitchen, seating area, fireplace and dining area gazebo.

ABOVE: View of backyard through the covered passageway.

All photos by Peter Rymwid.



Lari, who founded her own practice in 1992 with partner Farhad Mechkat, made the decision six years later to forgo designing for the corporate world for the more personalized world of residential architecture.

Having once designed for companies like KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, US Tobacco, PepsiCo and Exxon Office Systems, Lari realized that commercial projects did not provide her with the same sense of personal gratification that residential ones did. She described a feeling of disconnect in her corporate work - while her clients were in charge of the company pocketbook, they were seldom users of the finished space.

"For many, building a house is the investment of a lifetime," Lari said. "As with any big investment, the stakes are high and trust is essential. This is a responsibility that we take very, very seriously."

In the domestic realm, Lari felt it easier to impact lives with architecture through a more personal connection to both clients and the building process. She has become committed to fulfilling not only the functional needs of her clients, but also realizing their hopes, passions and dreams at a realistic level.

"My intent is to create a space that brings art into everyday practicality," Lari said. "Our goal is to unite aesthetic and functional features into a harmonious composition."

Essential to her process is an interactive relationship with clients, which allows her to coordinate their aspirations with her aesthetics. She described this balance as pivotal to the successful translation of their wishes into her design.

CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE: View of kitchen complete with two islands, and cabinetry and hood custom-designed by the firm and fabricated by the team.

View of Library, connected to the living room by a French door to be used as an extension of the living room. Built-in cabinetry is custom-made.

View onto one of four bedrooms from the bedroom hallway. Large linen closet is accessible from all the bedrooms.

View from the master bedroom anteroom into the bedroom hallway.

View of one of four bedrooms from hallway.





Lari's role, however, never ends with design development. Her projects involve a close collaboration with artisans, tradesmen and craftsmen from a vast range of backgrounds and specialties.

"During the actual construction phase, we act on numerous levels with specialists and consultants," Lari said. "We promote a work environment where all consultants act as members of one team."

Her "it takes a village" approach to the architectural process is perfectly exemplified by a custom high-end home the firm recently completed in Brookville, N.Y. The exterior of the home, for example, boasts four sizes of custom-cut Vermont stone in two shades. Similarly toned, handmade brick is woven into the matrix of varying stone cuts to create a subtly nuanced exterior that is unified into a harmonious overall appearance.

"Working closely with craft specialists, my intention when hand-selecting custom stone and brick was to create a sense of alluring mystery through textures, and not necessarily through color," Lari said.

Adding to the overall mystery of the home is the unexpected way in which it may be entered. An artfully designed courtyard greets the visitor first, before the home. Although large, the courtyard remains distinctly cozy, as it is enclosed on two sides by the house, on one side by landscape piers, and on the last by a stone wall. From there, still no main entrance is visible; however, a door has been placed discreetly to the side. One then continues under a brick archway and through a wrought-iron gate to arrive into a huge backyard designed for outdoor living.



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE: View of the master bedroom with custom-designed carpet.
View of master bathroom with free-standing clawfoot tub and custom-designed wrought iron picture window.
View of master bathroom including the toilet room, shower and steam bath.
Close up of window seat and cabinetry in the master bedroom.



“Clients are looking to create a lifestyle when they come to us; my form follows function, but also allows room for opportunity. I want my clients to explore their needs and desires while working with us to create something uniquely beautiful and, at the same time, full of possibilities,” Lari said.

Lari emphasized outdoor living by creating not only a courtyard, but also a backyard complete with swimming pool, dining room, paved barbecuing deck, outdoor kitchen, fireplace and plenty of room to lounge. Multiple levels allocate the space, which allows the differentiation of areas with distinct functions without the need for dividing walls.

Although the end result had effortless beauty, the creation of such a space was only possible after much work. Lari was faced with the difficult task of taking a long, very narrow stretch of land and turning it into a site where the entire family could gather. As the land came with an impossibly sloped topography, a center plateau was constructed for Lari’s design to be possible.

With stone walls on one side and a beautiful panoramic view on the other, the backyard retains a strong sense of privacy as well as coziness. On the outskirts of the plateau there is a four-foot drop, which was necessary for the construction yet beautifully incorporated into the design as an intimate walkway. The walkway circles around the whole length of the property and creates interesting garden walks, all with a view.

Staying true to her three tenets of design – imagination, harmony, mystery – Lari’s attention to detail and commitment to perfection come together to create a uniquely artistic space in the Brookville home.

Lari’s humanistic approach to custom home design is the perfect recipe for creating space where people enjoy lives, children grow and families flourish. *ALT*



THIS PAGE: View of the entrance hall and gallery. View of the gallery facing the library.

OPPOSITE: Garden walk surrounding the house.



