

SISTER SISTER



Pat

WORK SURFACES
Because she likes to cook, Patricia Yannuzzi's kitchen features professional-grade appliances.



SHOWPLACE Barbara Spano cooked for her family for 28 years, "so now my kitchen is mostly for show."

Who says you can't go home again? These sisters live side by side under one roof, right where they grew up.

Barb



Written by **LAUREN PAYNE**

THEY WERE ALWAYS CLOSE, BUT IT WAS A TWIST OF FATE THAT BROUGHT sisters Patricia Yannuzzi and Barbara Spano together again. Following the death of their parents, the sisters went through near-simultaneous divorces. That was when the two decided to revisit their childhood home in the heart of Westfield to figure out how they could live there again. "This house has been in the family for years," says Yannuzzi. "The property was available, so why would we want to go anywhere else?"

The house was purchased by their father in 1946 from the adjacent First Baptist Church for the whopping sum of \$1, then moved around the corner to property owned by their grandfather. Decades later, after years as a rental property, the house was in disrepair. "It was falling apart," says Spano. Exploring the concept of renovating it and actually living together, the sisters approached local architect Carol C. Hewit. The problem was that "prices to renovate were outrageous," says Spano.

"The house had already been converted into a two-family," says Hewit, "and it had little bits of rooms. Plus, the sisters didn't like the top-and-bottom thing—they

Photos by **MELABEE M. MILLER**

both wanted to walk in the front door." The best thing to do, she says, was to knock it down and start over. So they did. Designing a mirror-image, railroad-layout was challenging because the new house had to be built on a narrow 33-foot lot subject to strict zoning laws. "Now, you look at the house and you'd never know it was a two-family. With its expansive front porch, it blends in with the norm in Westfield."

Then, the fun began: enter interior designer Tammy Kaplan of Images in Design in Cranford. "The sisters have completely different taste and different ideas," she says.

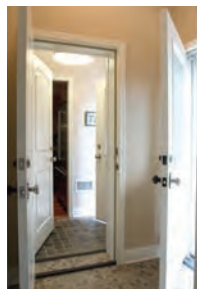
"I wanted my place to look like a New York City penthouse," says Yannuzzi. "Lofty, open, and contemporary, but comfortable." Spano wanted to incorporate Asian flair. "I knew I wanted a Shoji screen and bamboo floors," she says. The sisters had all their appointments together, says Kaplan, despite looking at different styles. "It was a true group project—each space has a style all its own. The only thing they have in common is functionality"—which in a relatively tight space is important.





A CONTEMPORARY HAVEN A lot of living is packed into 1,380 square feet of space. Patricia Yannuzzi's contemporary home features (a) spray lighting and aluminum shutters in the dining room, (b) a mosaic tile fireplace and leather sectional in the living room, (c) a freestanding soaking tub in the middle of the master bath, and (d) a sleek, custom-built powder room. The master bedrooms (e) were designed for style as well as maximum storage.

ASIAN INFLUENCE Barbara Spano's home began with the shoji-screen window treatment (a) in the dining room. The table has the same glass top as Yannuzzi's, with a different base. Chairs are also the same, upholstered differently. The fireplace surround (b) is a granite slab; wooden blinds are rich cherry. The powder room (c) features an elaborate wallpaper; the master bath (d) has furniture-grade cabinets and tub surround. Each master bedroom (e) has a custom dresser under the windowsill.



The door connecting the two homes through the kitchens (above) is usually kept closed so each sister has privacy. "We may call each other and ask 'What's on TV?' but we don't watch together. We live separate lives," says Patricia Yannuzzi.



RESOURCES: Interior Designer Tammy Kaplan (interiordesignernj.com) guided the sisters through their individual projects. The architect was Carol Hewitt, PE, AIA (908-789-9417).