



Left to right: In her design of a McLean home, Kristin Peake created a cozy reading nook in lieu of a formal living room; the foyer leads to a stylish family room. PHOTOS: STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG



**What's the secret to making guests feel at home?**

Today's floor plans have created a new dynamic in entertaining. It's no longer about gathering in formal living and dining rooms, which have been replaced by more livable house layouts. Designing homes with entertaining in mind, I always include bar areas, outdoor kitchens and game rooms—all of which foster inclusivity for any occasion.

—Kristin Peake, Kristin Peake Interiors



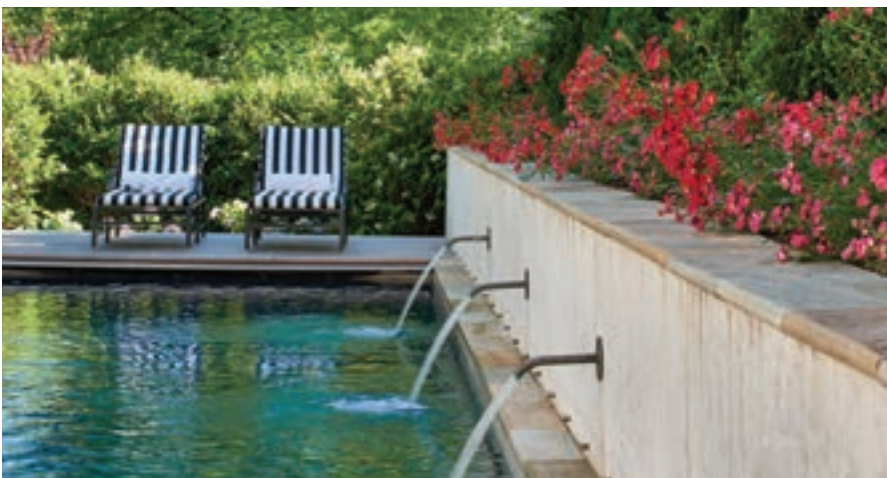
Shingles mingle with stone on the rear façade of a custom Maryland home constructed by Pyramid Builders and designed by Vincent Greene Architects. DAVID BURROUGHS



**What has changed the most in custom-home building?**

The concept of outdoor living has evolved. Homeowners increasingly seek transitional spaces that seamlessly blend indoor and outdoor areas. With the advancement of retractable-door and -screen systems, clients are able to experience this openness regardless of climate restrictions. A dining room, kitchen, living room or even a bedroom can now easily transform and create a connection to the environment around it.

—Bret Anderson, Pyramid Builders



Jennifer Horn designed a lap pool and hardscape to blend with a client's stucco, Mediterranean Revival-style home in DC. ANICE HOACHLANDER



**How much value do clients place on eco-friendly landscaping?**

Twenty years ago, most homeowners likely associated environmental sustainability with native plants. But today there is a far more sophisticated understanding of landscapes as part of a larger ecological system. As a result, our clients are committed to managing storm water responsibly and reducing erosion on their properties.

—Jennifer G. Horn, RLA, Jennifer Horn Landscape Architecture LLC