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Writing Samples; Articles

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Property: Elegant Expanse

Elegant and stately, from the street the house would seem to be simply another Ward Parkway manse. Perhaps more understated than most but still a suitable neighbor to the Tudors, Georgians and “plantation homes” that line the boulevard.

Just a few steps from the semi-circle drive and through the double bronze – yes, bronze – doors, however, and your expectations are completely upended. Built in the 1960’s, the 11,000 square foot home was completed with an attention to detail, respect for materials and a design integrity more often found in turn-of-the-20th-century homes. The closet doors in the circular entry and the landing above are curved, matching the geometry of the walls for a California-inspired look and effect – bright and airy, with light filled galleries for showcasing art.

Extensively remodeled in 2006, the four-bedroom home accommodates gracious living and entertaining. A single occupant, a couple or a family with children would be equally comfortable and ‘at home’ in this extraordinary property.

And its surprises are seemingly endless. The home is equipped with three complete kitchens: a service kitchen on the main floor; a professional, all stainless kitchen on the lower floor with wine room that is accessible to the dining room above by an elevator, so caterers and servers can work more

efficiently; and an outdoor kitchen on the third-floor living space, complete with wine cooler, sinks, refrigerator and freezer.

The lower level is a vast space that would make James Bond – Daniel Craig’s incarnation, not Sean Connery’s – feel at home. Sleek and contemporary in design and layout, it includes a fitness center connected to the first floor’s Master Bedroom by a spiral staircase, wet and dry saunas, showers and a television projection system. The laundry room is equipped to care for and store all household linens, the cedar closet and the house manager’s office are all astonishingly large and, through cunning design, discreetly tucked away from the living space. A second formal dining room boasts a reflecting pool and fountain, along with a state-of-the-art air filtration system that allows the owner and guests to smoke without disturbing anyone

else in the room ... or the rest of lower level, for that matter. A large family room is perfect for family entertaining or grown-up cocktails.

Another unexpected, high-tech touch is found in the main floor's Master Bathroom. There, another bronze door that lets in light and exits onto a private terrace. The flip of a switch cause liquid crystals in the glass to immediately 'frost' for privacy.

The biggest surprise of all, however, is the enclosed, two-story atrium, which is filled with natural light – and a swimming pool. The pool is cleaned by a copper and silver ionization process that eliminates chlorine smells; the effect is one of being in a small, exceedingly private and elegant spa.

The house is close to the Plaza and Brookside, parks and country clubs, so nightlife, fine dining, shopping and family entertainment are all within easy reach. "This home provides a soothing, peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city at the end of the day," says Gail Cluen of The Mitchell Group/Reece and Nichols, and partner Diane Zimmer agrees. " You really have to experience it to understand."

Sidebar

Pooling Talent

Shopping around for a home with a pool? "Older pools are generally just like older houses," Bove & Beyond's Michelle Pruitt says. "[They're] better built, especially if they're gunite (a kind of concrete). You really can't inspect a closed pool, though," she cautions. "If you buy a house and the pool is closed for the season be sure that the pool is covered in the home warranty."

Most pools are affected by weather, and surrounding trees around the pool can mean even more frequent care and cleaning. That's why if you travel frequently and are out of town for up to a 4 or 5 days at a time using a pool service may be a good idea. "While [pool care] really doesn't take that much time, you have to be home to do it," Pruitt says.

Be sure and ask a hired service about the latest trend – saltwater. Saltwater pool systems actually use salt rather than chlorine tablets. But it's not like the ocean: Users can't taste the saline content. The systems require less frequent maintenance and, even better, most existing pools can be converted.