

## TRANQUILITY



ANDREW HARNIK/EXAMINER

Michael and Deborah's Arlington home is a study of opposites melded together. Dark contrasts with light. Sleek meets rustic. Metal is mounted on wood, and glass reflects stone.

## Arlington family blends different tastes to reach 'in yo'

By **Merlisa Lawrence Corbett**  
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The Arlington County home of Michael and Deborah Sauri reflects the couple's contrasting personalities.

Michael Sauri, an award-winning remodeler, is a rock guitarist with a free-flowing persona who has been featured on HGTV's "Curb Appeal." Deborah Sauri is a graphic designer who guards her privacy and enjoys the Zenlike simplicity she learned growing up as a Japanese-American.

Together they created a home tranquil enough for Deborah, yet bold enough for her rocker husband. Their style can best be described as "in yo," the Asian equivalent to the balance of yin and yang.

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"What we wanted in the house was to really focus on opposites and contrasts," Michael said.

The contrast begins with the exterior, a modified Craftsman-style facade that blends in with the

bungalows that line the streets of Clarendon. The interior is a serene, Asian-inspired retreat.

The Sauris work from home, running their remodeling company TriVistaUSA. Michael began his remodeling business 10 years ago, after 20 years as a rock guitarist. He performed with the likes of Placido Domingo, David Byrne, Tom Ze and Fighting Gravity.

Although he is the face of the business, Deborah does a lot of work behind the scenes. "It's a team effort," Michael said.

While they each have great design aesthetics, they hired interior designer Robert Shields to help them create their interior space.

"We wanted the inside of the house to be nothing like the outside," Michael said.

Shields helped them improve upon the builder's design, which they agreed was too boxy and lacked imagination. It created a long, narrow hall that took your eyes from the front door to the back of the house.

"It looked like bowling alley," Shields said about the entrance. "The foyer was closed off"

### Resources

- » **TriVistaUSA**  
trivistausa.com
- » **Robert Shields**  
<http://robertshieldsinteriors.com/home.html>

Shields opened the floor plan and created an expansive foyer. Glossy dark wood floors with large planks provide a stunning contrast to all-white walls. "There isn't a piece of color on any wall in the house," Michael said.

Large Japanese-style doors are stained in the same dark color as the floors. Wrought iron railing adds drama to the staircase and the landing that overlooks the foyer.

A bathroom on the first floor offers an element of surprise. Instead of an oversized powder room, Michael had a spalike shower installed with a dark-colored stone inlet surrounded by polished Italian marble.

The large family room has 18-foot ceilings. The same stone pattern on the home's front exterior was

installed from floor to ceiling along a wall that included the fireplace and large flat-screen television. Large wooden beams on the ceiling above match the wood doors and floors.

The best feature of the family room is the towering, floor-to-ceiling windows flanked by flowing drapes with a woven texture that replicates the design of the stone on the walls.

"It's an open weave, heavily textured," Shields said. "Even when you close them, you can see through to the deck."

A large comfy sofa sectional was custom-made for the space. Shields selected huge tables made from tree trunks to give the room an earthy element.

The ultramodern kitchen features upper cabinets in dark wood and high-gloss white base units that create a seamless look with shiny white Zodiac countertops.

The master bath has several Asian elements, including a deep Japanese soaking tub that the Sauris' two children like to swim in.

Michael acknowledges that although he's a professional remodeler, Deborah influenced much of the design.

### From lemons ...

The Sauris purchased a 1920s Sears-style home in 2006 with hopes of transforming it into their dream house. But they discovered water damage so severe, the house was unsalvageable. Instead of tearing it down,



they chose deconstruction, a process by which a structure is disassembled piece by piece so every door, window, piece of lumber and flooring could be reused, recycled or donated. Doing this and adding other environmentally friendly remodeling techniques to their newly constructed home earned the Sauris a Green Home Choice Award from Arlington County. Michael Sauri was recently chosen as one of the "Big 50" Remodelers in the United States by Remodeling magazine.