

EAST COAST HOME+DESIGN



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You have a beautiful landscape of gardens surrounding your home; please tell us about the design aesthetic? Our garden consists of two different approaches; it is divided into many outdoor rooms. This inspiration comes from Tintinhull, in Yeovil, Somerset, UK. The borders in our garden were inspired by the borders at Wisley Gardens in Surrey UK., which is the flagship garden of the English Horticultural Society. It is an hour ride from London by train. These two gardens had a profound effect on my wife Gool and myself.

You opened up your firm 30 years ago, how has your firm evolved in designing homes? The evolution in many ways is similar to the design of the early automobile to the sleek design of the present. We have gone from designing homes which were predominately shelter to today's homes which are a reflection of our client's station in life as well as a terrific place to raise a family and entertain family and friends. The creature comforts of the home can be compared to the creature comforts of a luxury automobile.

What or who inspired you to become an Architect? The question really should be what inspired me to become an architect. The answer is the beautifully designed, carefully built homes, public buildings and squares of the 1950's Bombay which rival the buildings in London. As you may know Bombay was the jewel of the English Empire. I thought how wonderful would it be if I could take their lead and make a similar contribution that would stand the test of time, just as the home I grew up in and the buildings and the public squares that filled my life. There was a wonderful cohesiveness which I couldn't verbalize at an early age but affected me fondly.

Your firm is known for New Classicism can you please explain what that means? New classicism simply means classicism that is transitional – clean, airy, light and still valid. My clients want a connection to history but do not want to live in heavy overly encumbering, dark homes. One client said it best “I do not want to live in my grandmother's home.”

Name a destination that you would like to travel to and why? There are many destinations. I would love to visit the Sydney Opera House, Vienna, Prague, St. Petersburg and a few other European cities. The Sydney Opera House is a master piece of modern architecture. Even though it is a huge structure it has the feeling of flight, due to its design and construction. The Eastern European capitals on the other hand are exciting because of the texture and scale that they offer. Anyone who has visited the main square in Brussels knows exactly what I am talking about.

What brought you to America and how did you end up in New Canaan? As a young boy I would regularly visit the Library of the United States Information Service in Bombay, now Mumbai. I saw progress – I saw a rapidly changing world of which I wanted to be part of. The green fields, beautiful towns with painted clap board houses and the happiness on the people's face in America which inspired me to come here. I also wanted to get away from my parents and the joint family system of living. After earning an undergraduate degree in architecture I applied to a few graduate schools in America and was fortunate to be admitted to Columbia. There I was very fortunate to have Victor Christ-Janer as my design professor. He brought out the best in me and upon graduation offered me a job in his office in New Canaan. This is how I came to New Canaan.