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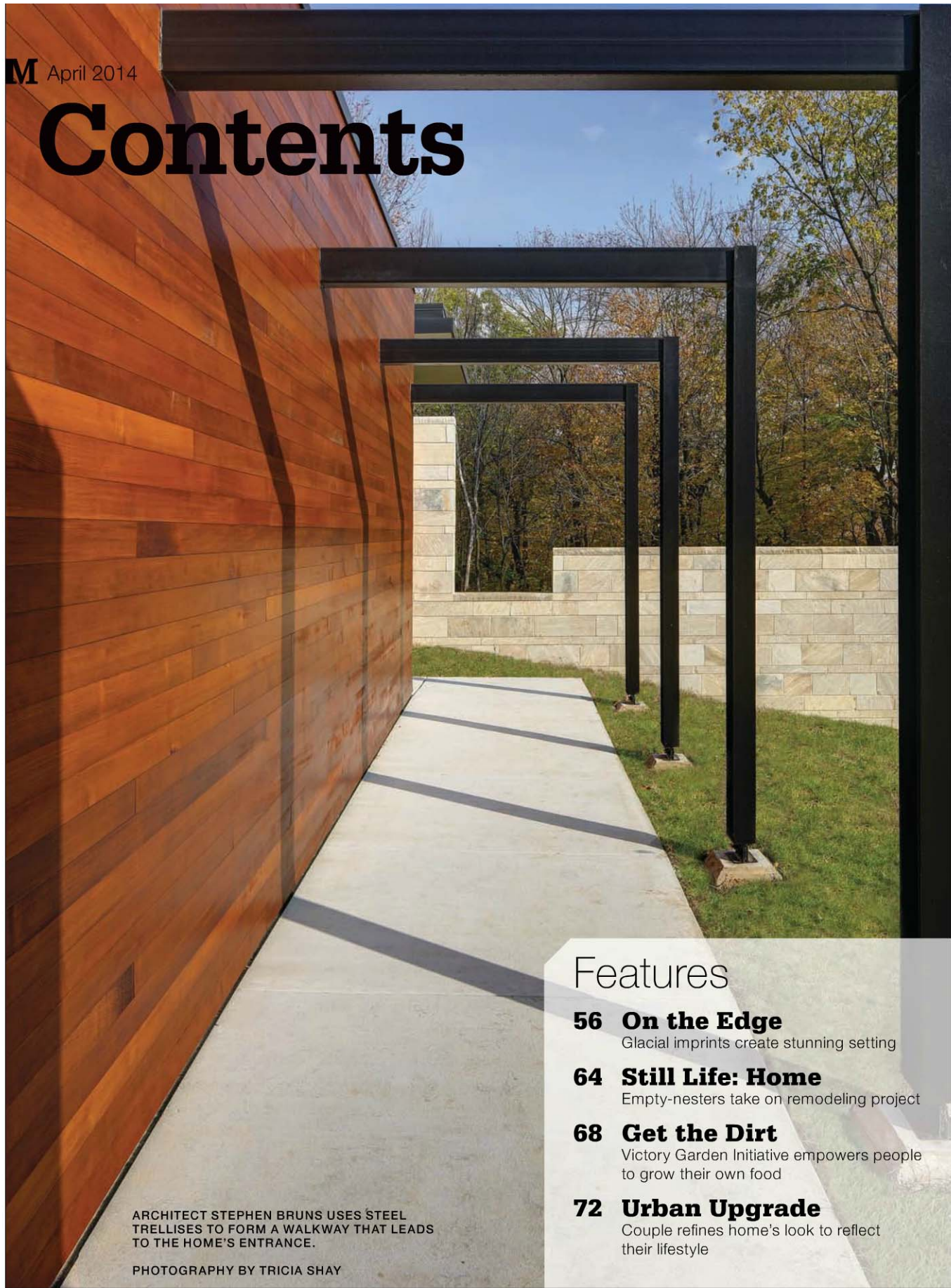


Natural Connection

Unique site inspires
Richfield home design

» HOME & GARDEN ISSUE

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRICIA SHAY

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Above: A series of steel trellises leads to the main entrance.
Right: Zinc panels hang like drapes on the exterior of the home designed by architect Stephen Bruns on land in Richfield.





On the Edge

GLACIAL IMPRINTS CREATE
STUNNING SETTING FOR
MODERN ARCHITECTURE

BY GUY FIORITA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRICIA SHAY

When architect Stephen Bruns visited the piece of land on which he was commissioned to design Fieldstone House, one thing was clear: The driving force behind the project would be the two glacial kettles on the property. “The owners told me they had bought the land because of its topography and wanted the house to reinforce the view to the kettles,” Bruns says.

At the top of the Richfield property, above the kettles, Bruns found the perfect spot, a flat grassy plateau with a nearly straight

tree line overlooking the kettles. “Originally we considered projecting the house into the forest but the owners felt very strongly about not wanting to cut down any trees. They wanted to tread as lightly as possible on the land, so we built the house oriented toward the kettles at the very edge of the woods,” Bruns says.

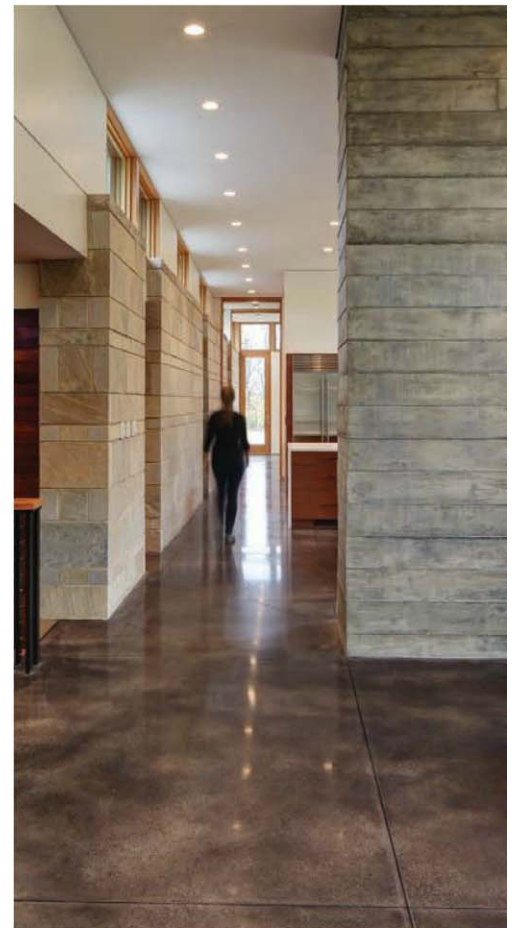
The result is all about the views. Entering the property, a visitor passes under a series of steel trellises and along a stone wall leading to the main entrance. The orientation of the trellises and a notch cut





in the wall serve to focus the eye on the forest and kettles below.

Extending through house on a north south axis and seamlessly connecting the interior to its surroundings, this wall keep the focus on the kettles and is the project's strongest design element. Bruns tried a number of materials and eventually found what he was looking for at a nearby quarry. "I wanted it to tie into the geological period when the kettles were formed. This piece was at the entrance of the quarry with trucks driving back and forth over it all day long — people had passed it by for decades," Bruns says. "It is actually the very top layer or crust of rock. It had been scratched, and, in a sense, naturally polished by the glaciers as they advanced and then receded over it, time and again. It is the perfect complement to the kettles," he says.



Every room of the house is visually and conceptually connected with a continuous stone wall, and the whole is connected to the site by the same. The fieldstone wall provides a balance point upon the ridge above two glacial kettles.

The kitchen is the heart of the open living plan, with warm rich, mahogany cabinets juxtaposed against crisp white quartz countertops.

Inside, the house is divided by an organizing wall with public spaces to one side and private spaces to the other. Entering the main living space, the eye is naturally drawn to the large windows and the kettles beyond. The main living space is dominated by a sleeve-like fireplace that adds warmth and serves as a divider between the living and dining rooms. "Since we already had the stone element of the dividing wall we never considered using stone for the fireplace," Bruns says. Instead, he used poured concrete and a technique called board forming where concrete is poured into a mold made of wooden boards. Once it's dry, the boards are peeled off and the process continues on up to the top. "As they're removed you can see the lines between each board and the wood grain is engraved in the concrete. It allows us to have a relationship between the stone organizing wall and other wood elements used in the home. It really helps to tie the whole project together."

Asked to choose his favorite space, Bruns says it is probably the living room. "Due to the inverted pitched roof, the living room has the highest ceiling. The 14-foot floor-to-ceiling windows are really spectacular." The homeowner agrees: The living room is definitely my favorite space in the house. The views are so stunning that I actually find it hard to read in that room. My eye keeps wandering to the kettles, but then again that is exactly what we wanted." **M**

The living room design capitalizes on the stunning property.

A custom-designed dining table is centered on two large windows and the adjacent two-sided fireplace.

For the architect, the stairway is one of the most important elements in the home, providing a functional vertical and visual link between the two levels. Here it also becomes a sculptural art piece that is enjoyed from multiple spaces and vantage points.



