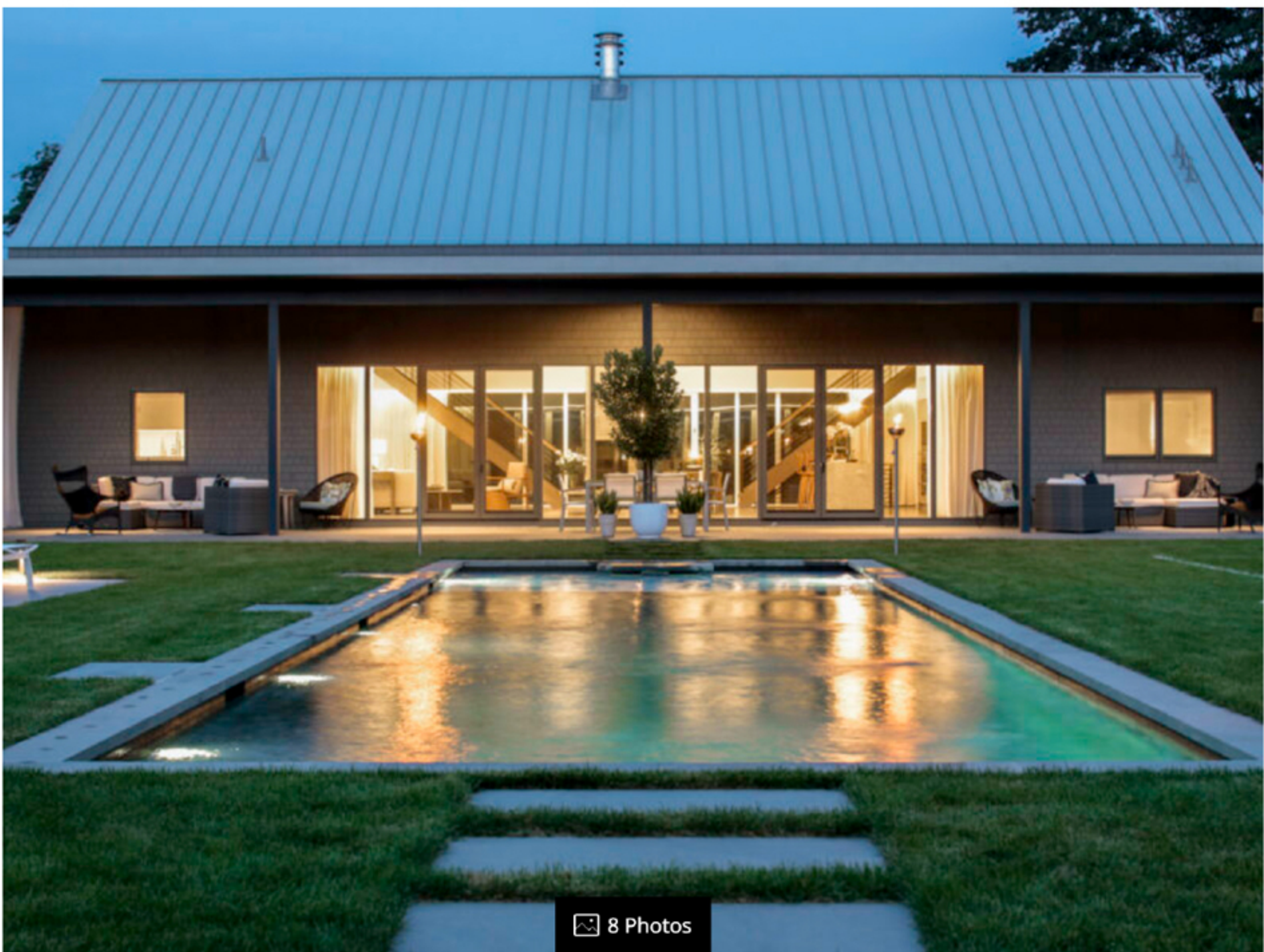


# Betty Wasserman Builds Her Dream House



## House Proud

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For Betty Wasserman, her proudest professional accomplishment is the highly personal Southampton getaway that she built for herself, her daughter Milly and their two poodles. But this onetime fine art consultant and dealer turned accomplished interior designer is no stranger to doing things on her own.

A single mom (“by choice,” she states clearly) who began her career at Bain & Company in Boston, Wasserman’s trajectory has been blessed by her finely tuned ability to set goals and achieve them solo. “At Bain, you learn how to figure out a business from the ground up,” she said. And that’s exactly how she approached the clean-lined modern farmhouse that is programmed to suit her needs to a T.

So much of the house is based on her own unique experiences. “I have always lived in lofts in the city,” Wasserman explained. “I still do, in Chelsea, so the floating fireplace wall is a nod to that.” It divides the living area from the dining area and kitchen and is artfully clad in soothing Pelle Grigio marble. A pair of staircases dominates the space, with one hovering above a dramatic glass floor that reveals a small glimpse of the house’s lower level. Both sets of stairs lead to respective guest rooms with en suite baths. Her gallerist past is expressed in the décor. There’s nary any color, just soft grays and whites with the subtlest touches of blue here and there. An installation of delicate white and gold porcelain flowers seems to flutter above the sofa. “I was working with my own budget, not my clients’. So there’s a lot of high-low,” she said.

The large open kitchen is a perfect illustration of that strategy. While all cabinet fronts are custom made, the innards are all from IKEA. There was no scrimping though when it came to the Sub-Zero fridge. “It cost as much as my first car!” Wasserman laughed. The same can be said about the Alison Berger Glassworks pendants that descend over the island from the soaring ceiling. They provide a decided sense of luxe. Off to one side of the kitchen is an intensely efficient small room that doubles as a pantry and home office, complete with refrigerated drawers for backup beverages and dedicated spaces for every imaginable serving piece, along with a cleverly outfitted work station that includes a concealed printer. The other side is Wasserman’s retreat: a Venetian plastered primary bedroom with a long banquette over more purposely outfitted cabinetry. “For all my shoes!” she explained.

Her bath is equally personal, with a completely open shower and tub at one end. The whole floor is heated and subtly sloped toward a lateral drain. “Once any of my clients see it, they all want a bath like this for themselves!” she said. A cozy study and powder room occupies the opposite corner of the house and can function as an additional bedroom.

The same kind of purposeful thought is evident throughout the lower level. “All my ‘tchotchkes’ are in one place,” Wasserman said, pointing to an orderly set of shelves set into a marble-clad continuation of the floating fireplace wall above. The big surprise comes next: a fully outfitted hair and nail salon. “It’s our favorite place to be. We’ll have Friday girl’s night,” Wasserman said. Equally purposeful is the ballet studio, as Milly is a longtime competitive figure skater. Now at NYU, she is a member of the university’s team that is currently in third place nationally.

The house’s exterior space follows is in sync with the interiors, with a large covered loggia for lounging and dining facing a perfectly centered pool and guest house. Every element, from the predipped cedar shingles — “They’ll outlive all of us,” Wasserman said — to the maintenance-free stand-seamed metal roof to the single line of pristine white hydrangea trees are examples of the kind of meticulous, solution-based thinking that define designers like Betty Wasserman. What is intuitive to her escapes most ordinary folks. Her triumphant house is a prime example of that talent.