

## 276 Hobart Ave History – The making of a dream resort steps away from Manhattan, Newark Airport and excellent schools

During the summer of 2013 we started considering moving out of our Tribeca apartment and changing our usual summer plans of going to the Hamptons. We were dreaming of the possibility to build our own retreat closer to the city. With our two kids reaching school age and our hectic work life we felt we needed a place where we could enjoy our time together with family and friends while still being close to Fedora's office in New York and to the airport. Pier's need to connect at odd hours to the different worldwide offices of his own business also implied the need for a home office remote from the main house.

We came across this very unique property and we very quickly developed an ambitious vision: creating a dream-compound that would cover in a station-based fashion all of our needs and habits while providing a homogeneous ambience and a sense of enclave, seclusion and unmatched privacy.

We identified "zones" we could assemble functionally and seamlessly: the outdoor pool and entertainment area with decks and mahogany-wrapped pergola around the pool, the stand-alone carriage office, the garden in between, the main house and surrounding deck, the all around green landscape providing a feel of perspective and several unobstructed vantage points. We needed land to allow for outdoor activities like pool and tennis, and to host large groups entertainment events all year round, with plenty of functional spaces like separate and dedicated decks all around the property which would serve as cocktails patios and outdoor serving areas. Indoor we also needed two home offices and the ability to entertain large indoor dinner events and other occasions, like a pool game, or a wine tasting. We also wanted to make sure everyone in our family could have their own space, and common areas where the family could gather for a movie, a board game or to just talk and be together.

When we found 276 Hobart Ave, we were also faced with a style challenge. How to rejuvenate a 100 years old Tudor house and maintain its historical beauty while making it functionally modern? We thought of a creative use of glass, a way to lighten the Tudor style while enhancing the large spaces and views within the property.

At the beginning of 2014 we embarked in a 2 years long project that radically revolutionized the property while at the same time strictly preserving the original details of the historical location. Colors, materials, spaces, were all redesigned to at the same time preserve and innovate.

- For the pool area we wanted to create the feeling of being in the Hamptons or in Australia during the hot summer, so we thought of a very large wooden-covered pergola that could create a covered all-day-long living space to be enjoyed from spring to fall. The huge barbecue area, the bar with the oversize TV, the pool house with kitchen, fireplace and outdoor shower and the beautiful pergola with outdoor fireplace made the Pool area such a dream escape. We have hosted countless day and evening parties there.
- For the carriage, besides creating an isolated office and sport function on the second floor, we wanted the building to contribute to the overall outdoor dynamic by being able to "serve the garden and the pool" during large gatherings. During a full reconstruction of that building we "traded" the old carriages garages for a state of the art kitchen facing the garden and pool area that a chef and his team could use to serve more than 100 guests at the same time. To further help that function we provided this kitchen with a fully sliding glass system that could allow for the kitchen to be communicating openly with the garden and the pool area. To enhance the feeling of space from the carriage and connect it more to the greater outdoor area we used glass to make stairs and to create a closed glass room that could allow the view even during the cold

weather. For the glass room in the carriage house we envisioned a seating area backed by a fireplace where we could lay down, rest and sip a glass of wine at the end of a long working day.

- We also wanted to have a warm place during the winter. An extensive renovation of the main house created a fully new basement with pool and wine cellar, a live-in master bedroom combining several pre-existing rooms, enhancing the light and sense of space through several windows with different angle views on all the property, a large dining and living area backed by a new ample deck that allowed for many different occasions and uses (including watching the Superbowl or having a 30 people formal dinner for Thanksgiving!). The open floor design of the first floor eliminated the small rooms that are typical of older houses and created a flow that allows for space and entertainment, with light and amazing views on the outdoor.

We have to say that this vision came to us once we found the property. Originally, we were just looking for a large lot that allowed us to place a tennis court, something Pier has dreamed of his entire life. The very extensive renovation process involved approval for several variances from the town. As part of such a process we committed to an overall attractive landscape plan that provided absolute privacy and inability to see the court or the property from the street. To do so we fully re-graded the land and planted more than 300 trees all around the perimeter to achieve full screening from any and all sides, resulting in a fully secluded and safe property.

We have also identified several additional modifications that could be made to the main house, and also commissioned and finalized a complete breath-taking redesign, with full architectural plans. Our priorities have now changed and we would be happy to pass the “baton” to the next inspired family.

276 Hobart Ave is a very unique property, functional and practical for a family that is looking for great indoor / outdoor space to work, study, travel (30 minutes to New York, 15 minutes to Newark Airport, 5-10 minutes to the best public or private schools in NJ). But most importantly for us, it’s been a place where we hosted countless formal and informal events, being it 10 or 200 people. It’s a place where at the end of the day or the week we could relax, close the gate and pretend we are on vacation, anywhere in the world. It’s a true resort and so private that it’s easy to forget stress, traffic, train and focus on just being with family and friends and enjoying life.



