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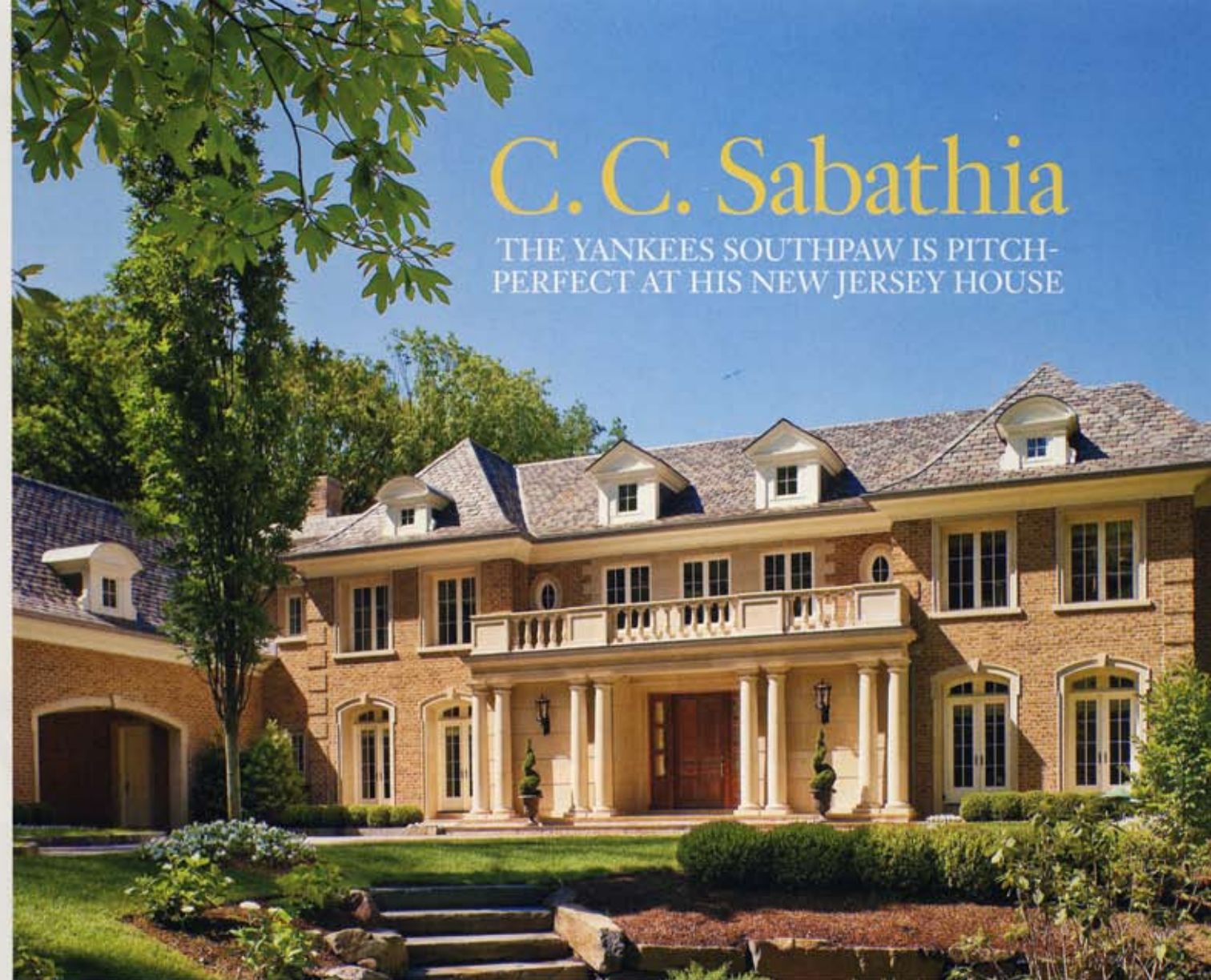
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C. C. Sabathia

THE YANKEES SOUTHPAW IS PITCH-PERFECT AT HIS NEW JERSEY HOUSE

Architecture by James Paragano, AIA | Interior Design by Martin P. Mitchell, ASID
Text by Michael Frank | Photography by Durston Saylor

When the New York Yankees signed the “gentle giant” C. C. Sabathia to play for their team in 2009, the six-foot, seven-inch-tall pitcher, his wife, Amber, and their three children found themselves having to shift quickly into all-out house-hunting mode. Although Sabathia had played for the Cleveland Indians and the Milwaukee Brewers, he had always kept a home—and his roots—in his native California. “Friends and family mean everything to me,” Sabathia says. “It

was hard to leave my folk, my place and even the weather behind.” The professional enticements were pretty powerful though: a formidable new contract, talented teammates and a chance to bring his famous left-handed pitch to the fabled Yankees. But a key missing piece, obviously, was the right kind of house, which for Sabathia meant “somewhere I could come home to after tough games and find everything perfect, easy, warm and welcoming. It had to be big and varied enough inside for

“To me home is about being comfortable with family,” says New York Yankees pitcher C. C. Sabathia (right, with his wife, Amber, and Cherry). The couple share an 18,000-square-foot house (above), designed by architect James Paragano in Alpine, New Jersey, with their four children. OPPOSITE: “There is a good deal of flow between all the common areas, and it seemed wiser to limit the palette so that they would not feel busy or chaotic,” designer Martin P. Mitchell says of the hues he chose for the great room. The painting is by Starlie Sokol-Hohne. Stark carpet. Kravet patterned pillow fabric.





“We are real homebodies,” she says. “We wanted a house we could live in until our kids go off to college.”



us to get through those winters too.”

Sabathia doesn't hesitate to say that what sold him on the Alpine, New Jersey, place that he and his wife visited when it was about half completed was the indoor basketball court. The multitalented pitcher used to play basketball himself (and football as well), but what struck him was the sense of possibility: a room where he and his kids could play all kinds of ball and ride bikes and be together all winter long. “I saw that space,” he says, “and everything just clicked.”

What Amber Sabathia saw was a chance to put her own mark on a house that suited her growing family—a fourth baby would come along in the summer of 2010—while

being beautifully located on a large parcel in leafy New Jersey. “I really wanted the house to feel like it was made for us,” she says. “While it was under construction, C. C. visited once a month, but I went so often that C. C. began to wonder why every last workman knew my name!”

The house the Sabathias settled on had originally been designed by James Paragano for a young client in the entertainment business and was, as the architect describes it, “fairly grand and classically correct but in a restrained way.” The mixture of French Neoclassicism crossed with a modern sense of relaxation appealed to the Sabathias, who nevertheless sat down with Paragano and Martin P. Mitchell, the

designer who had helped them with their home in California, and came up with a plan for modifying the house to dovetail with their own wishes and needs.

The most significant organizational change involved the creation of a closet for Sabathia, who has more shoes—by far—than his wife. “Basically what I did was annex the upper volume of the two-story great room,” the architect explains. “It felt quite radical to the Sabathias, but they ended up with a cozier living space and a handsome closet for C. C., and one that was nicely, and logically, attached to the master suite.”

Other changes to the house's floor plan involved creating a spa area and a salon,

“We told James and Martin that what we wanted was a house that was kid-friendly, classic but modern—yet not so modern that it felt hard,” says Amber Sabathia. ABOVE LEFT: Mitchell incorporated an aquarium into one of the family room's walls. Kravet sofa and drapery fabrics.

ABOVE: The study serves as Amber Sabathia's office, where she holds meetings for the couple's foundation, PitCCh In, and as a trophy room for the many awards C. C. Sabathia has won, including his 2007 AL Cy Young award. RIGHT: One of the Sabathias' requirements was a salon.



Mitchell came up with a palette that would be congruent with the house's classical lines.



complete with his and her shampoo bowls and chairs. "C. C. and I meet at the pedicure station in the middle of the room," Amber Sabathia says with a laugh. "But, honestly, time is at a real premium with us. We have four kids; we have crazy travel schedules; we administer our own charitable foundation, PitCCIn, which encourages inner-city kids—like C. C. and

I were once—to play sports, stay in school and follow their dreams. Having your hair done at home may seem like a luxury, but it makes a lot of sense logistically." When it came time to plan the interiors, Amber Sabathia reminded Mitchell that the couple wanted a house that would be elegant and timeless, and also easy and inviting. "We are real homebodies," she

says. "We wanted a house we could live in until our kids go off to college." Mitchell came up with a palette of grays, whites and beiges that he felt would be congruent with the house's classical lines, organization and detailing while feeling understated and modern enough never to go out of fashion. For the furniture he favored materials, like macassar ebony, that

"It's ideal for someone who wants a traditional home with a modern feel," Paragano says of the house. **TOP LEFT:** The master bath. Baldwin cabinet pulls. **ABOVE LEFT:** Adding a second floor above the great room gave C. C. Sabathia a new closet, providing plenty of storage for his extensive sneaker collection. The space boasts a dry bar with a microwave and Sub-Zero refrigerator drawers. Lutron shade system. **ABOVE:** Mitchell designed an oversize bed for the master bedroom. Bedside lamps, Uttermost. Christopher Guy mirror.



ABOVE: Seating in the basement recreation room overlooks the indoor basketball court, which is complete with an electronic scoreboard. RIGHT: The pool area was placed on axis with the entrance. The fireplace's arch echoes the form found throughout the house. Brad Meumann was the landscape architect. Perennials fabrics.

had enough tooth to them to hold up to the interiors' volume and detailing. "The house has a lot of trim, a strong architectural language of its own," the designer says. "I felt the job of the decoration had to integrate, connect and soften."

Mitchell had fun too: in the enormous aquarium he got to install in the family room; in the study displaying Sabathia's ever-expanding baseball awards; in the screening room whose ceiling has the birth constellations of each member of the family arrayed in the fiber optic lighting; and most of all in Sabathia's haberdasher-like closet, where tennis shoes are presented like jewels. "It's a pretty cool room," C. C. Sabathia concedes. "And what's more, as I say to Amber, if she ever puts me in the doghouse, I'll just move into my closet. I could live there for weeks." □

