

## THE HOME FRONT



Clockwise from left: the entrance; the informal dining area; Harvey Makadon and Ray Powrie.



# A Clear Merger of Equals

With twin entrances, the home of two Massachusetts doctors celebrates its historical origins as two side-by-side duplexes

BY JULIET CHUNG

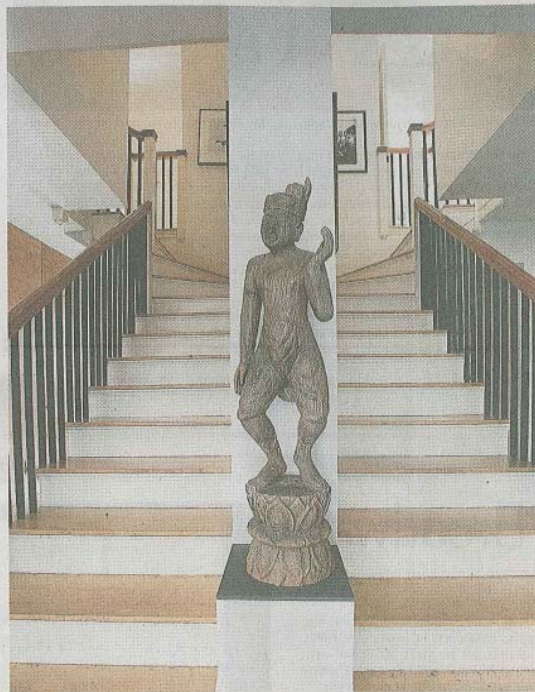
*Brookline, Mass.*  
**FIRST-TIME VISITORS** might do a double-take when approaching Harvey Makadon and Ray Powrie's Dutch Colonial: The couple's renovated home is fronted by twin, side-by-side entrances.

Upon closer inspection, though, only one is an actual door; the other is a large window that looks like the door. (A screen door, doormat and hanging overhead light offer clues about which is which.) Once inside, visitors are greeted by mirror-image staircases, both leading to the second floor.

"We like that sort of humor," said Dr. Powrie, 48, an internist and professor at Brown University's medical school. He and his partner Dr. Makadon, a 64-year-old internist and clinical professor at Harvard Medical School, added that the twin entrances were also a way of maintaining the modest character and scale of their 3,000-square-foot, four-bedroom brick-and-clapboard home.

Originally two side-by-side duplexes built as servants' quarters for a nearby estate, their newly combined house remains modest in comparison to the sprawling mansions in Brookline's Chestnut Hill neighborhood. Owners in the area include New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft and Larry Lucchino, chief executive of the Boston Red Sox. A six-bedroom, 3,800-square-foot Colonial house on the next block is on the market for \$3.3 million.

Dr. Makadon had lived in his half of the house since the early 1980s. When the longtime neighbor next door said she was moving out, the couple made an offer; the duplex never hit the market. They closed on her half of the house for \$600,000 in 2006. The roughly eight-month renovation, completed in 2007 for an additional \$600,000, turned the couple's 1,700-square-foot, two-bedroom duplex into a



home nearly twice as big, with two new guest rooms, an additional bathroom and powder room and more space for the study and public living spaces downstairs.

Most renovations that involve taking over an adjoining apartment focus on disguising the blended nature of the space—not emphasizing the fact. Maryann Thompson, the couple's Cambridge, Mass.-based architect, said the dualistic approach,

which she presented to the couple along with options to combine the entrances and staircases, immediately suggested itself as a way of playfully referencing the home's history.

That sense of playfulness peeks through the rest of the home, where Ms. Thompson knitted together the units in a more conventional manner. A foyer in the front and a kitchen in the back on the ground floor connect



Mirror-image staircases, left, and a statue from Chiang Mai; a Robert Polidori photo and Bertioia chairs in the sitting area.

the two former duplexes. Upstairs, which houses three bedrooms and two baths, an expanded study does the same.

Ms. Thompson also opened up the home's interiors by replacing sections of the building's exterior brick walls with mahogany-framed panels of floor-to-ceiling glass. Glass walls flank an informal dining nook off the kitchen that looks out onto an ipe wood deck and a garden dotted with Japanese maples and columnar beeches. Works by artists including Nan Goldin and Lucian Freud mix with pottery and statues the couple picked up on their travels.

A native of the Philadelphia suburbs who came to Boston for his internal medicine residency, Dr. Makadon bought his half of the house in 1983 because he loved the neighborhood and location, a quick commute to the Boston hospitals where he worked. When he bought it, the duplex had one bath, with no bathroom or closet space on the ground floor.

"It was a total wreck," he said, recalling that the roof had holes. Working with an architect friend, Stuart

Lesser, soon after moving in, he updated the bath and turned three bedrooms into a study, bedroom and closet space.

In 1991, Dr. Makadon and Mr. Lesser worked together again to add a large living room, deck and bathroom on the ground floor, plus a makeshift guest bedroom, screened porch and bathroom in the walkout basement. Dr. Powrie, a Canadian whom Dr. Makadon met that same year at a medical conference, moved in shortly later. "I added the addition, and then Ray," Dr. Makadon said. "Ray gradually moved in. It was like, all of a sudden, he was here."

Their latest remodel was their bid to create a home the next owner might not tear down, the couple said. They liked the experience so much, they worked with Ms. Thompson to design and build a modern, four-bedroom vacation house in Cape Cod, with lots of glass and deck space.

The couple said they're now done with any major renovations, though they don't count out small projects. "I love this house," Dr. Makadon said. "I can't imagine ever leaving a house like this."

Photographs by Bob O'Connor for The Wall Street Journal