

HOUSE ON THE BLOCK

# Livin' la Villa Vuoto

BY KATIE MAVRICH  
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If director Tim Burton were to design a whimsical family house, this would be it. Nestled behind lush green foliage at the end of a gravel road, the bright yellow stucco exterior of Villa Vuoto is barely visible to anyone. Though it's a shame passerbys won't be able to admire the avant-garde curves and singular architecture that are the brainchild of West Coast architect Matthew Schluéb, it might be for the best — if the creation were visible from the main roads, Villa Vuoto would attract curious visitors on a daily basis.

Matthew and his wife, Julianne, chose to build their dream home in Wexford so their son could attend North Allegheny schools, and selected the lot for its seclusion. The home was designed for Matthew's family of three, by the family of three, who left their minds open to anything and everything. Julianne's Italian heritage was the impetus for the clay tile roof, hand-troweled stucco, mosaic tile, Murano blown glass, and Venetian plaster.

Matthew employed the use of feng shui and reduced the number of total rooms by creating functional, multi-use spaces. The pantry off of the kitchen, for example, is huge, but it also includes a washer and dryer.

Because American Indians lived in circular spaces — believing that such shapes evoke natural forms, movements, and cycles — Matthew chose to emulate these concepts in Villa Vuoto primarily for his son's benefit. In addition to circular rooms, Matthew installed spiral staircases and porthole windows and skylights. According to Matthew, his son will profit from being "raised in a house that will enhance his spatial cognition while developing a deeper understanding of his environment."

Coating the interior design of the villa are extraordinarily saturated colors. Bright purple, green, yellow, and blue give each room its own intensity. The blue master bedroom is extremely spacious with a walk-in closet that opens up into a brilliant bathroom, complete with a hot tub. Natural light bounces off the bathroom's multi-toned blue walls, giving the impression of being at the bottom of an aquarium rather than the top of a home.

A fun, fantastical structure, Villa Vuoto will be an asset and conversation point for the Wexford community for years to come. ☺



Schluéb Architecture  
[www.FinalMove.com](http://www.FinalMove.com)  
724.934.7868