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EDITOR'S LETTER



elcome to the latest issue of Design + Decor, where transformation and inspiration come together to showcase the epitome of luxury living. In this edition, we delve into the art of creating dream homes, highlighting stunning before-and-after projects that epitomize elegance, sophistication, and innovation.

In our pages, you will find detailed stories of remarkable renovations and builds, each meticulously designed to meet the highest standards of luxury. From grand estates to chic urban penthouses, our featured projects demon-

strate how thoughtful design and expert craftsmanship can transform any space into a masterpiece.

Our team has curated a selection of inspiring projects that exemplify the perfect blend of aesthetic appeal and functionality. We have gathered insights from leading architects, interior designers, and builders who share their expertise on the latest trends, materials, and technologies in the luxury market. Whether you are planning a major renovation or building your dream home from the ground up, you will find invaluable information and ideas to elevate your project.

We also explore the emotional journey of homeowners as they navigate the complexities of construction and design. These personal stories provide a glimpse into the challenges and triumphs of bringing a vision to life, offering inspiration and reassurance to those embarking on their own home improvement journeys.

In addition to our project features, this issue includes expert advice on selecting premium materials, optimizing layouts for luxury living, and incorporating the latest smart home technologies. We also present a curated collection of high-end furnishings and accessories that add the perfect finishing touch to any space.

At Design + Decor, we are committed to celebrating the creativity and innovation that define the world of luxury home design. We hope this issue inspires you to embark on your own transformative projects and turn your home into a sanctuary of beauty and comfort.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of discovery and transformation. Enjoy the issue, and may your design dreams become a reality.

Best.

Matthew J. Kolk Editor-in-Chief

DESTGINATION DESTRICTION NEW JERSEY NEW YORK

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 4 | 2024

TRANSFORMATIONS

Stories by Danielle Porter

DEPARTMENTS

- 10 Editor's Letter
- 14 Ask the Experts
- 94 Profile

12 Melange

22 In the Field

MELANGE Looking Ahead Embrace the essence of Fall and Winter with Hommes Studio

Imagine sinking into the embrace of a plush velvet sofa as the world outside cools down. Living in softness is all about creating a sanctuary of warmth and comfort in your home. *hommes.studio*











1. Giulia Sofa is a modern mid-century style sofa. This luxury sofa promises to be the absolute protagonist of a modern living room project. 2. Tapis Pastel #13 is a pastel rug that mixes mid-century modern vibes with Memphis Design style. 3. Duna Side Table is a sculptural travertine table that a modern living room can-t live without, neither do you. 4. Verona is an artistic bed designed for interior lovers and design collectors. Verona embodies contemporary elegance and craftsmanship, featuring a marquetry headboard made using the marquetry technique with abstract and raw shape patterns of inlay wood inspired by modern art. 5. Lisola Armchair Khaki & White is a modern outdoor seating piece. A unique outdoor chair created by the most refined design with delicate details makes it an authentic modern design piece for an outdoor area. The Lisola Armchair Khaki & White has the comfort of indoor furniture but is designed with outdoor materials. Paired the Lisola Armchair Khaki & White with Lisola Sofa will elevate your outdoor living area. 6. Malaga Bedside Table Inspired by the unconventional and surprising world of Pablo Picasso, the wooden center table blends the 20th-century artistic movement Cubism with ancient woodwork. The marquetry side table is made by skilled artisans using natural materials and preserving traditional techniques and celebrates the arts & crafts movement.



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MASTERING CUSTOM HOME QUOTES WITH PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE

Story by Meryl Siegman

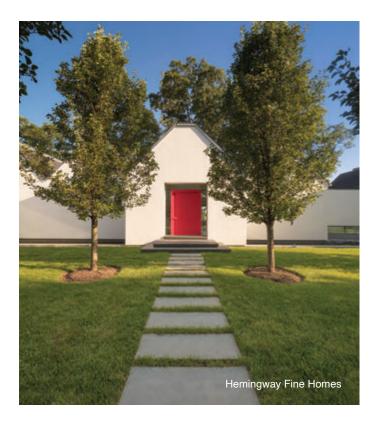
uilding a custom home is an exhilarating yet challenging endeavor, particularly for first-timers. With so many details to consider, it can be overwhelming to know where to start. But don't worry, we've got you covered! We reached out to two of the Northeast's top builders for their expert advice.

Scott Hobbs is the son of Mike Hobbs, the former president and owner of Hobbs Inc. Scott followed in his father's footsteps by becoming the owner of the New Canaan, CT-based company along with his brother, Ian. He also serves as a project executive, with over three decades of experience under his belt. The company has been creating custom, high-end residential homes in the tri-state area for over 70 years, setting new standards in luxury living. Peter Sciarretta

Hobbs Inc.

Scott Hobbs

Peter Sciarretta, the CEO of Hemingway Fine Homes in Greenwich,



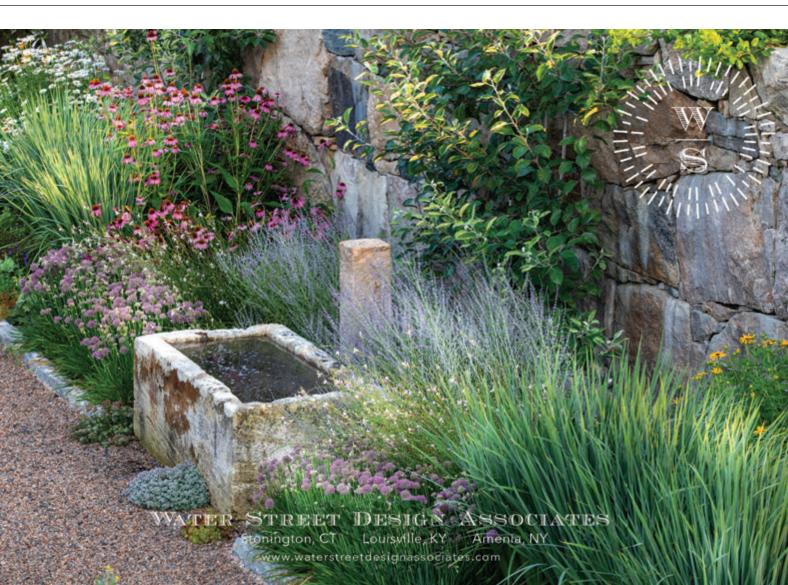
CT, is the son of Founder and President Sal Sciarretta. During his 30-year tenure at the company, he has grown it into an award-winning, high-end residential construction company, overseeing the planning, design, and development of homes throughout Connecticut. As he likes to say, "We don't leave until the job is done. End of story. The buck stops with me."

We sat down with Scott and Peter to get the scoop on the bidding process.

Design + Decor: Is there a difference in the estimating/budgeting process among production, semi-custom, and custom builders?

Scott: It is important to understand the different products that these three categories provide. Production building appeals to the mass market in which price is very important. Custom builders offer a specific product to a specific client who has not been able to find anything on the market to meet their needs. Semi-custom is closer to production: Some items are customizable, but it might be limited to three different packages that specify appliances.

Peter: Production building is offered to the open market, has limited design options and is price sensitive. Hemingway is a high-end custom builder. We create unique budgets for unique homes. In our presentation, the goals and objectives are laid out deliberately and methodically to add value and advance the project from bidding to construction. When getting a package to our client, time is always of the essence. So instead of solely waiting in queue for our contractors, suppliers, and vendors to provide us with quotes,





we employ construction estimating software that provides expert takeoffs. It is a very effective and responsible way to estimate the project and submit the bid package on time. We leverage our excellent relationships with suppliers to get value-added pricing and we highlight which costs are estimates and present the buyout, often with a lower cost value, after the bid is submitted. Production building is less complicated. The construction, level of details, and finishes are repeated. The builder has an exact duplicate of the house they have built, and the real costs are known. Semi-custom is closer to production, because choices are limited, and their costs are already fixed.

What are the key elements of a custom quote?

Scott: It is vitally important for clients to understand the fee structure and what it covers. They should find out which individuals in the builder's company will be assigned to their project. With custom homes, there is a lot of paperwork and documentation, so they should be familiar with who is doing that work and



how they are being paid. The answers to those questions will not only affect price but also the schedule and quality of work.

Clients should also pay attention to allowances, those budget categories in which the design has not been finalized and the builder can provide only an educated guess to which he is not bound. And finally, they should make note of the list of exclusions from the bid.

Peter: I'd start with timing. The builder must provide authentic dates for the commencement of construction and its completion date. Second is the cost analysis detail. The construction cost must be transparent and fully broken out. It is then layered with a backup page that organizes the areas of construction into different categories, such as the Kitchen, Study, Primary Bedroom, and Landscape Development separate from the home. That way, clients can see their costs broken down with real and relatable data. Finally, the builder should provide a list of VE (value engineering) options. That means taking the architect's plan and advising the clients about other equal alternatives that would preserve the architectural integrity of the project but lower the cost.

How many quotes should a customer get?

Scott: I don't think a quote is the right way to go in the custom home building world. Instead, clients should get recommendations for reputable builders, and then interview them to understand their processes and who will be assigned to their job. They should then solicit fee-based proposals for direct costs that the contractor controls; they should be able to get competitive bids from multiple vendors for each trade. Competitively bidding custom projects at the builder level is very expensive even for the owner and can lead to poor outcomes. **Peter:** I recommend interviewing four builders, narrowing the choices down to three bidders with one rising to the top based on value, performance, and quality of construction. When receiving a Hemingway bid, it's like getting three in one. That's because we bid the project out to three subcontractors, suppliers, and vendors, looking for the best quality and lowest cost for each trade item. We are very transparent and show clients the backup on which we built our bid upon.

What are some red flags in a quote that a client should look out for?

Scott: Discrepancies among budgets from different contractors. If a number is significantly different than the others, it is important to understand why. Usually it's due to greatly varied concepts of what work is required to meet the clients' perceived needs.

Peter: One red flag is the enumeration of something that isn't specified in writing. A perfect example is "we included 65 recessed lights". A recessed light can be a blue non-dimming large, flanged stock fixture verses an architectural fixture. The way a builder figures allowances is another red flag. Unless agreed to and submitted to all bidders equally, there is no real measurement from one bid to another. Also, beware of non-transparent accounting. The cost shown for a trade item, such as wood flooring, should be the actual cost of the work with the GC fees added separately. Not a "lump sum number with everything included".

Tell us how you mastered the art of custom home quoting.

Scott: We are top quality builders and do not sacrifice quality. While some builders might bid a project once every three to five years, Hobbs prices dozens of projects annually. We want customers to make informed decisions. It is our goal and objective to add value to the project, cost and timing.





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Peter: Three generations of construction experience along with high technology software. Hemingway does not substitute inferior lower cost bids for quality construction. Lastly, we use real data from appropriate venders and subcontractors and create detailed record-keeping. We track how we do on our estimates versus what the ultimate budgets are and record all that information in a database. It helps us to understand current pricing and meet budget expectations.

What should clients know about current zoning and permitting laws?

Scott: You cannot start the process soon enough. Clients should also understand what is required to get a permit. They will greatly benefit from having a professional team of architects, engineers, and contractors working on this issue as early as possible.

Peter: Clients should know that zoning and permitting laws are always changing. What your neighbor did last summer to their residence doesn't mean you can legally do the same thing today. This may affect the way they use the construction options, and can affect the location, spec, and cost of an item. File early as building departments can be understaffed with hundreds of applications in queue.

How do you account for material pricing fluctuations during the bidding process?

Scott: We are in close contact with all our vendors to stay on top of when price increases are scheduled. This was





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almost impossible from 2020 to 2022, but things have greatly stabilized. We discuss with clients if they want us to build in escalators or whether we will just deal with them as they come out throughout the project since they are inherently unknowable.

Peter: We present the cost of labor as a fixed cost and materials as an allowance. When we buy the materials out, we have the homeowner pay the actual cost of fluctuating items so it's fair and transparent. We pass on builders' discounts to our clients for giving us the flexibility to make allowances.

Please share some advice with our readers going through the process of building a custom home.

Scott: Interviewing potential builders is vital. You want to understand their process for both building and managing the costs of the project. Ideally you should learn who will be involved in your project. It is worth visiting the contractor's office to better understand the organization. Check out their financial situation to make sure that they will make it through your project and be there to honor any warranties or maintenance issues in the future.

Peter: I would remind them that custom construction is a choice and at the end of the day the construction journey should be fun. Let's get the project right and not rush. Clients will remember the big picture: Performance, Details and the Quality of Construction.

Resources:

Hobbs Inc. Scott Hobbs 27 Grove Street New Canaan, CT 06840 203.966.0726 bobbsinc.com Hemingway Fine Homes Peter Sciarretta 115 Mason Street Greenwich, CT 06830 203.625.0566 bemingwayconstruction.com



IN THE FIELD

ALFRESCO ALLURE

Story by Danielle Porter | Photography by Jorge Gonzalez-Guillot

or the landscape designers at Rosalia Sanni Design, creating luxury outdoor spaces is an inherent part of their day, and this Westchester County home is no exception. The open-minded clients had one goal set when they met with Rosalia Sanni and Stephanie Rustici to have a clean and contemporary space that aligns with their lifestyle and compels them to spend more time outdoors. The design team certainly delivered.

As Rosalia shared, "They wanted a sophisticated and contemporary outdoor space where they could entertain, enjoy conversation, and enjoy cooking and dining." From the oversized outdoor dining table shaded by the custom pergola to the luxurious outdoor kitchen and intimate fireside lounge, each area of the landscape has been thoughtfully curated for an engaging experience that provides a holistic aesthetic and flow from the home's interior.

When it comes to creating spaces that appear as effortlessly

elegant as this, we sat with Rosalia and Stephanie to hear about their approach and the strategies they use to bring luxury to the outdoors.

Luxury Infused: Intuitive Enhancements

When it comes to the little luxuries, it's all about seamless integration at every level—you don't know it's there until you need it and you'd miss it if it weren't there. Here, heaters by the pergola are designed to blend into the infrastructure while speakers are thoughtfully concealed for an always functional and always beautiful experience.

Similarly, the outdoor kitchen uses the duality of under-counter lights for a pretty effect at night while also providing ample lighting for the work surface. Surrounding the outdoor kitchen and dining space is a newly heightened stone retaining wall that meets the level of the dining seating. Again, duality is in play, as this attractive wall can serve as overflow seating during large gatherings without the clutter of extra furniture.



The Outdoor Kitchen: Creating a Culinary Haven

Every well-designed outdoor kitchen checks off the core boxes—prep space, grill, and refrigeration—but how can you elevate the experience? Stephanie is a bit of a "grill guru" on their team and recommends thinking about the outdoor kitchen as "an extension of your house—you don't want to be going back and forth while you're cooking."

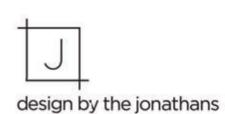
From prepping to cleaning up, having the resources you need at your fingertips is key. Integrating trash or recycling within the cabinetry of your outdoor kitchen or including a wine cooler for fresh beverages on hot days or



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even keeping the dishwashing outside with a sink can make all the difference in your outdoor living experience. Once you are made aware of all the possibilities, what can you do without in an outdoor kitchen?

Simply put, "anything you're not certain that you'll use – trendy appliances and features, while interesting, take up valuable space. So if you aren't sure it fits with your lifestyle and will be used frequently, it may not be worth integrating it," Stephanie shared. During the pandemic, homeowners were adding restaurant details to their homes and adopting trends like pizza ovens, icemakers, smokers, and even warming drawers. These can be wonderful enhancements in an outdoor kitchen, but the reality for most homeowners is they will use these elements minimally, if at all. Be realistic: Weighing the investment and the space a particular feature will take up to ensure it is the right fit for you.

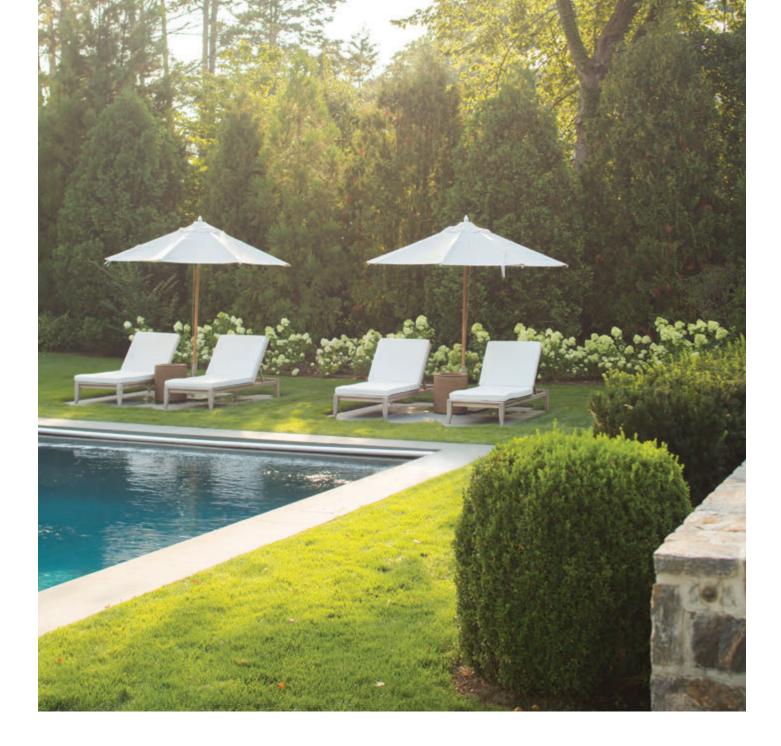
The Material Palette: Luxury Redefined

Materials used in outdoor spaces should be durable, weatherresistant, and properly installed to ensure they'll stand the test of time. When selecting materials, it's about finding the right balance of natural materials and manufactured materials to achieve your aesthetic. There is no singular solution here, but taking cues from your home's interior and your landscape can lead you in the right direction.

At this home, the design team elegantly balanced contemporary finishes in the custom pergola, furniture, and even the patio pavers alongside more rustic materials to craft the low walls and outdoor kitchen. It's this balance of rustic and refined that makes this patio



DANIEL CONLON A R C H I T E C T S 203-544-7988 Wilton, CT



space the perfect blend of the luxury interior and the natural outdoors. This patio's balance of textures—from smooth wood and sleek slate to natural stones and gravel—brings a bit of the inside out for a consistent experience.

Setting the Scene: Outdoor Furniture

Quality is king when it comes to outdoor furniture and all furniture selected should specifically be rated for the outdoors. Brands like Janus et Cie, which is classic and contemporary; Dedon, which is more whimsical and softer; to McKinnon and Harris or Sutherland Furniture, each have great core and feature pieces, and all offer durable, outdoor specific options for the outdoors that they love. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. There are so many options out there, it can be a challenge to narrow them down and synthesize them. Here specifically, hospitality-grade furniture was the focus, to achieve a long-lasting, low-maintenance backyard. Instead of cushions on the dining chairs, a mesh is used for easy wipe downs and cleanups. Likewise, the couch can easily be wiped down yet cushions are appropriate for comfort, and are easily replaceable.

Bringing Elegance to the Outdoors

No matter your aesthetic, no matter your palette, no matter your budget—an elegant and luxurious outdoor experience that is an extension of your home can be within reach. It's even closer if you have Rosalia Sanni Design on your team! The real trick is, as Rosalia shared, "design a space you'll use and you'll keep up with the maintenance. If you keep up with the maintenance, as minimal as it may be, that space will live on for years to come."



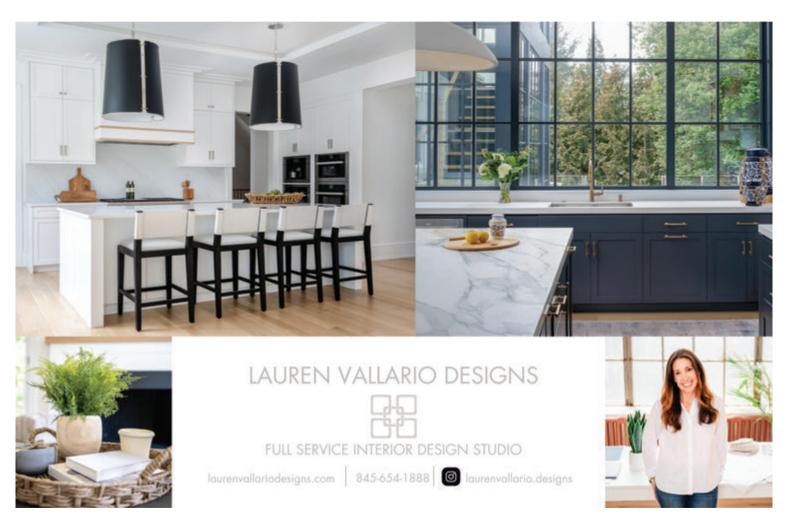
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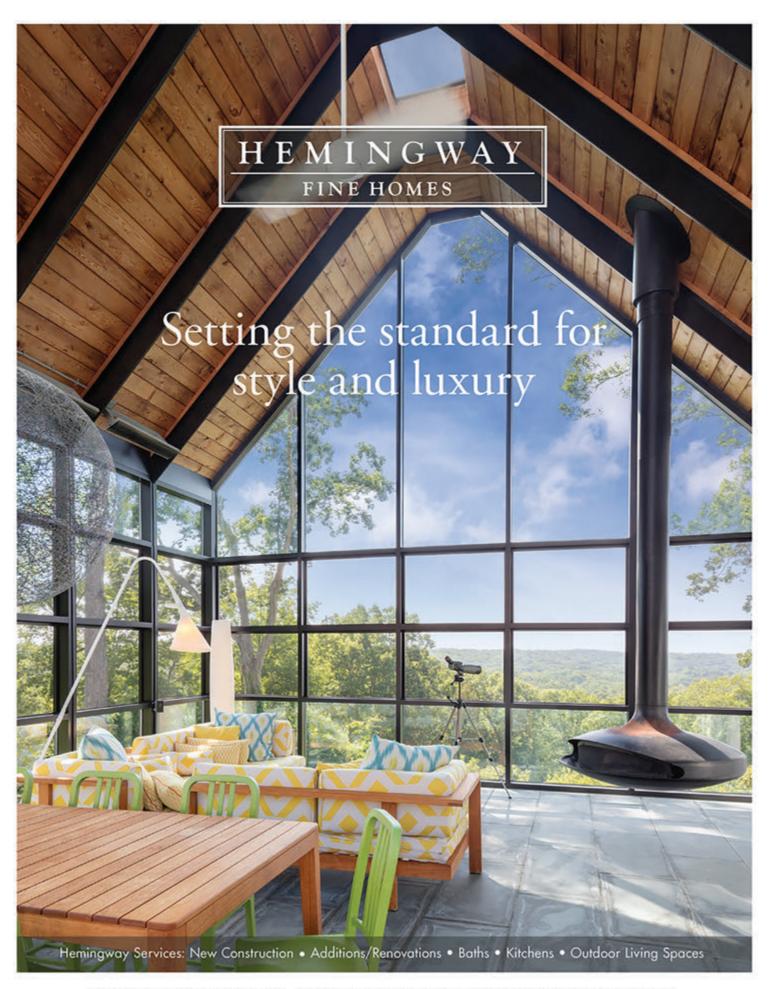
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Jan Hiltz Interiors Jan Hiltz + Christine Hiltz

2024 AMAZING TRANSFORMATIONS Design + Decor: Exploring Extraordinary Transformations with Their Creators

Stories by Danielle Porter



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esign + Decor: It's almost hard to believe that the before and after show the same space the transformation is

stunning. What was your client looking for when you were brought on for the project?

Jan: Thank you. We're quite pleased with how this project came together. The clients had lived in the home for about 20 years. It was a builder grade home when they bought it, and they hadn't changed much. With their kids grown and moved out, they wanted to invest in the home and make it what they always wanted it to be. This bathroom renovation was all about opening the space, particularly the enclosed shower, embracing the height and volume, and making it light, bright, and beautiful.



t certainly is beautiful. What can you tell us about the details and materiality?

Christine: The palette is fairly neutral here with the whites and creams, but it has depth. We did the antique mirror detail on the drawers and doors, which, when paired with the gold and gilding, became a seamless transition from the primary bedroom into this space.

Jan: Bringing these spaces to life takes trust from the client, and she went out of her comfort zone with us to mix metals here. From the polished nickel to the crystal knobs to the gold detailing, it can be a leap, but the way it all comes together—she was thrilled with it.

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hat a great feeling that is! Looking back, what are your favorite parts of the design?

Jan: We really opened up that shower. It felt a little like a cave before and now it's beautifully connected. The entire bathroom

opened up and appears much larger, bright, and airy! We did this floating bench detail, and there was a little concern about whether it was sturdy enough. One day during construction, the contractor and I sat on the bench together and took a photo and sent it to the client and said, "OK, I think we're good." It was one of those funny moments where you just find the joy in what you do.

Christine: The lighting here was really a wonderful transformation. Before, it felt so dim that even looking in the mirror you couldn't see well. From the wall sconces to the overhead lighting, to even opening up the shower to allow the lighting to penetrate the space—it's so drastically different. The chandelier is a gorgeous finishing touch, almost like the perfect piece of jewelry that completes the look.

Jan Hiltz Interiors LLC Jan Hiltz + Christine Hiltz, Interior Designers 21 Bridge Square, Westport, CT 06880 203.331.5578 janhiltzinteriorsllc.com

Wadia Associates Dinyar Wadia

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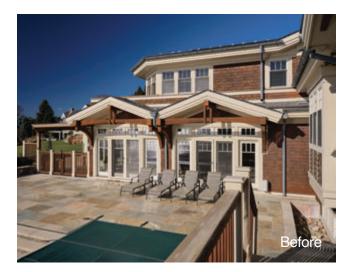


esign + Decor: This is quite the transformation. What were the clients looking for?

Dinyar: The clients wanted to create a space that would better support their lifestyle. They have a large family and enjoy activities together as well as entertaining. The original home was dated but traditional, and many of the spaces were closed off from one another, which was not conducive to that lifestyle.

> hat sounds like a big undertaking. Would you consider it a full gut renovation?

It was extensive, yes, but we would describe it as more of a "sympathetic renovation." The existing house was still home. We worked to modernize it to keep up with the young clients' lifestyle while respecting and honoring some of the existing character. For example, we removed walls to create an open concept but maintained many of the intricate moments throughout.



ell us about the great room and how you created the entertaining environment the family was looking for.

The indoor space really hit the mark in achieving a true entertaining space with the living room, dining space, and kitchen open to one another. This experience is amplified by its direct connection to the outdoor lounge and dining spaces through a wall of doors. The doors are panelized and slide open to create a near-seamless connection from the interior space to the outdoor lounge, dining, and infinity pool.











t's quite remarkable. What can you share about the materiality that was selected and how that supported the connection and such an active lifestyle?

All finishes and materials we selected were conducive to an active, yet luxurious lifestyle. We used glazing techniques on the walls, which were strong enough to handle day-to-day activity, and fabrics and furniture that could sustain a multitude of uses, yet all complementary to sustainability and beauty. Our goal was to adhere to the active family and their entertaining style, and still provide a stunning platform to support it. All the transitions of the space are seamless and inviting.



Wadia Associates Dinyar Wadia, Principal 134 Main Street New Canaan, CT 06840 203.966.0048 wadiaassociates.com

Lara Michelle Beautiful Interiors Lara Michelle

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ere they looking for a particular color palette, and how did you integrate it?

They requested a warm, neutral color palette with a mix of contemporary and traditional details and subtle pops of accent colors. We lightened the wood floor and brought in a coordinating wood tone at the dining table with a modern brushed brass base. This concept of mixed materials was carried throughout the room. The buffets had brushed gold, leather, and even mother of pearl integrated. esign + Decor: What prompted this impressive transformation?

Lara: The family loves to entertain. They're young and busy, and they enjoy hosting dinner parties and festive holiday gatherings. The original space was quite modern and cold. It didn't align with their personal taste—so they wanted it to feel brighter and warmer and more inviting.





ow did you bring in the pops of color they requested?

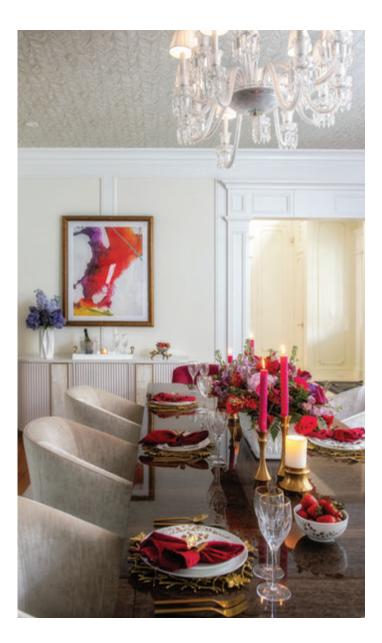
We wanted the color to be impactful but sophisticated, so it was all about balance. The silk drapes are off-white and gray but trimmed with the merlot color that we chose for the accent color. We took the same approach with the seating— the majority of the chairs are white, but the two at either end of the table are this bold merlot tone that really stands out. It works well with the neutrality around the rest of the space.

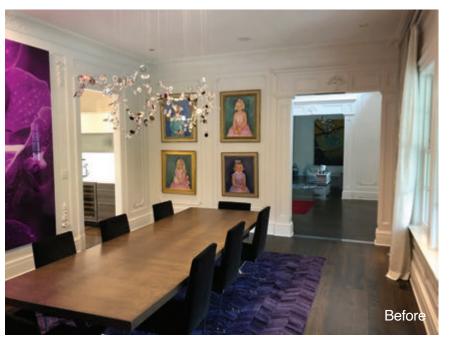




peaking of neutral, the fireplace is quite stunning. What can you tell us about the design?

The fireplace was a big change in this room. The original was this massive, gray slab of quartz on the wall—very imposing and dark—the opposite of what they were looking for. So that material came out, and we created this custom-designed mantle with elegant but simple details. Interestingly, the mantle itself was laser cut out of a singular, solid block of travertine. It was quite the artistic endeavor!





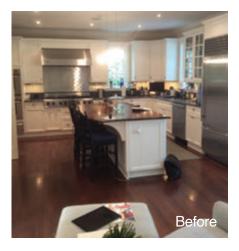
Lara Michelle Beautiful Interiors Lara Michelle, Owner and CEO 914.939.5777 LaraMichelle.com

Photos by Chuan Ding

Form Ltd. John Leontiou



esign + Decor: What a wonderful transformation. How did this project come about? John: Aesthetically, the homeowners wanted a clean space with lots of daylight coming in. Functionally, they were looking for more storage, better accessibility, and to have space that better accommodates the whole family. They like to entertain and as it was, the kitchen really didn't support that. So we essentially needed to create more space while adding privacy to the home office, which



was next to the kitchen.



ow exactly did you create additional space for the kitchen?

There was a butler's pantry, which was completely closed off from the kitchen. We

took down the load-bearing wall between the two spaces, and integrated a structural beam to create one cohesive space. The laminated glass pocket doors increased privacy at the home office without taking away from the kitchen, as the reflectivity of the glass brought light throughout the space. Speaking of light, the space is much brighter than it was.

hat do you attribute this to?

To add daylight, we enlarged the window over the sink and added a window on either side of the range, as

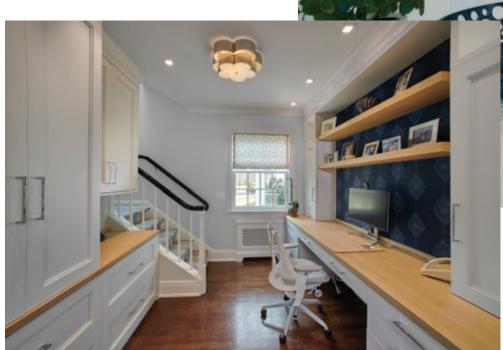
well as expanded the sliding patio doors. Adding in these connections to the exterior, coupled with the crisp whites in the cabinetry and countertop, and the reflective materials all worked together to make the space light and bright.



ow did the rest of the materiality play into the aesthetic?

White was the primary focus when going for the light and

bright aesthetic, and it was important to get whites that worked well together. The wood floors ground the space and bring a sense of warmth, while the feature blue millwork at the kitchen island brings a soft color to the space. The clients opted to bring that same color into the upholstery on the counter stools as well.



11



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Form Ltd. John Leontiou, Partner 32 West Putnam Avenue Greenwich, CT 06830 203.869.6880 formlimited.com

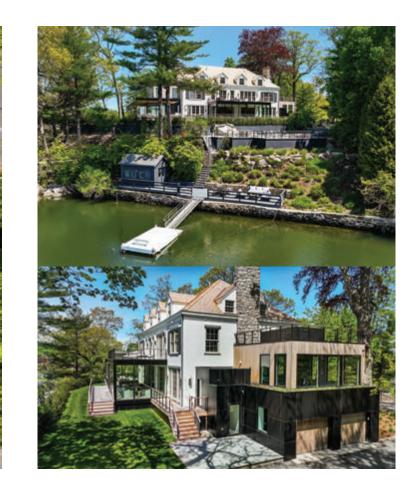
Photos by Paul Gelsobello Studios



esign + Decor: What a beautiful home. Did the clients already own it?

Anthony: The clients were moving from New York with their two young children, and they found this home. It checked all the experiential boxes (basketball and tennis courts, a pool, boat and water access, walking trails, etc.), but the Mediterranean aesthetic of the bedroom was not in alignment with their taste. They loved it enough to purchase and renovate in place, so we worked together for six months creating a plan and began renovating the day they closed.







he aesthetic is a drastic shift, and it looks like your work included additions?

Yes, the existing home is a concrete structure, and we added two wings—one on each side of the house. The additions are modern in design. They have full height glass walls, crisp and clean details, and a flat roof—it's quite the juxtaposition with the existing architecture and highlights the layering of these modern elements on the traditional. Gardens on top of each roof do a really nice job of softening the contrast and embracing the existing structure.















ow did the materiality come into play in marrying the two distinct exterior aesthetics?

The exterior design is distinct, but at the interior, the designer and architect highlighted the modern aesthetic. There is rift and quartered, 10-inch-wide wood plank flooring throughout the home, covering about 10,000 square feet. It's beautiful. The remainder is fairly subtle—a lot of white and black for contrast, mixed with mid-tone grays and warm woods to balance it out and make it feel welcoming and inviting.





ooking back, what would you say is your favorite part of this project?

At the back of the home, about 50 feet of sliding doors create this unbelievable indoor/ outdoor connection. They span the dining room, the entry hall, the living room, and the family room. The wraparound deck we added works with the doors to support an indoor-outdoor living experience—there are covered spaces, a built-in barbecue, lounge seating, and a dining area. The way all of this sits perched above the sea and the views over the cliff to the water are just phenomenal.



DeRosa Builders LLC Anthony DeRosa, Owner 792 Pacific Street Stamford, CT 06902 203.769.1804 derosabuilders.com

Photos by: Kirt Washington, KW Photography

Design by the Jonathans Jonathan Gordon

E cs tit te w to

esign + Decor: What a beautiful kitchen! What can you tell us about the client and what you were brought in to do?

Jonathan: We've worked with this particular client in the past and had done other rooms in the home. He has a fairly modern, masculine, industrial aesthetic that we have a lot of fun with. The kitchen space was previously cut off from the rest of the home and didn't work well as he loves to entertain and host gatherings. We were brought in to open it up and make it more functional for his lifestyle.



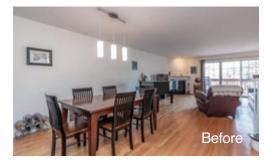
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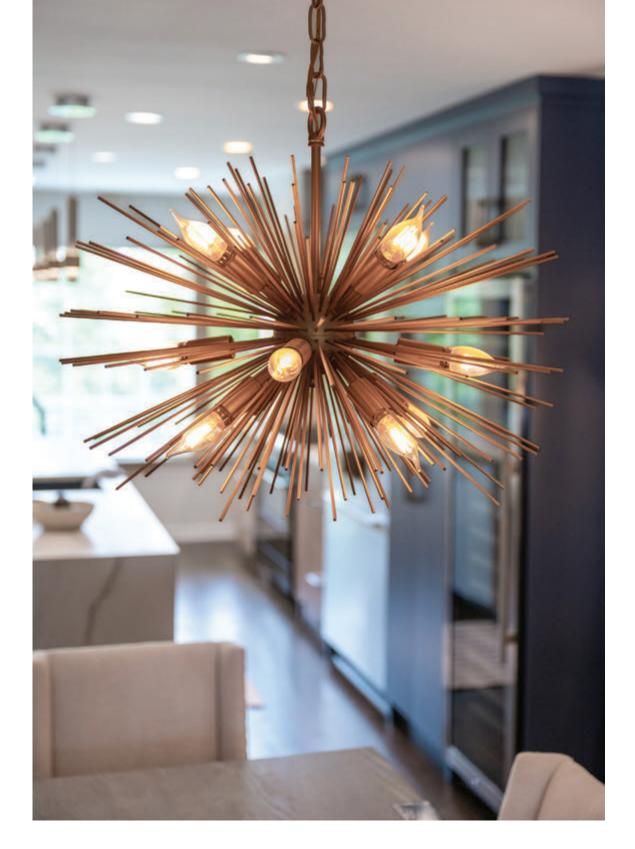
an you share a bit of the strategy behind creating the experience he was looking for?

It was firstly about opening up the space. We removed two walls—one between the kitchen and dining room and another that created the hallway to the front door. With these walls out, the kitchen windows threw light throughout the whole space, and it's pretty spectacular. From an entertaining perspective, the kitchen has a similar amount of cabinetry, but the way it's optimized and organized really increased the functionality of the kitchen overall.









S

peaking of cabinetry, the color combination is gorgeous. Can you share some details about the palette you pulled together here?

The palette is all about playing with texture and tone—from the cabinets and appliances to the backsplash. We paired blue painted cabinets with a white-washed walnut base cabinet and contrasted that with the crisp, white stone counters and range hood. The real feature here is the machined-metal mosaic backsplash that was also used on the face of the island. It's something you don't

see every day and sets the space apart while tying everything together.

t truly does! Looking back, what was your favorite part of the project?

Because we had a relationship with the client already, he shared his inspiration with us and then trusted us to turn it into something amazing. He was involved in the process, but he put his trust in us, and when that happens, our creativity is free to design spaces like this—where it's truly greater than the sum of its parts.





Design by the Jonathans Jonathan Gordon, Lead Designer 85 Willow Street New Haven, CT 06511 203.557.3205 thejonathans.com















D

esign + Decor: What a lovely landscape. What can you tell us about the prop-

erty?

DJ: Interestingly, this property is set along the Mystic River and had been owned by the clients' family previously. It was sold long ago, but the clients purchased it and wanted to build their retirement home here. They have a lot of grandchildren, so a lawn where they could play was important. They also wanted access down to the Mystic River in a way that felt integrated with the property as well as a variety of colorful plantings.



ow extensive was the earthwork to achieve those goals?

We did a good deal of earthwork, particularly to adjust for the existing slopes, which were drastic throughout the site. What was nice is we were able to pull boulders that could be intentionally repurposed in the design, including those two large stones that frame the path to the river.



ow were you able to address the slope and change in elevation between the home and the river?

We approached it through a series of terraces—we created layers that felt intentional and natural but weren't visually distracting. The retaining walls that supported the terraces felt natural, and we worked to repurpose stone that was excavated where it made sense. This terrace approach also allowed us to create a series of garden rooms that are integrated along the way, which are both functional and visually interesting.













hat stands out to you, looking back, as the most successful part of the project?

The way we were able to capitalize on the natural features of the property. We created a lot of natural outdoor garden rooms that

allow for experiencing the property from different perspectives. The plantings here were also extremely successful—once you hit spring and summer—the floral display is vibrant and ever-changing. It is always beautifully curated, particularly with the river as the backdrop.

Waterstreet Design Associates LLC DJ Noyes, Principal 530 Stonington Road, Suite 107 Stonington, CT 06378 860.415.9913 waterstreetdesignassociates.com

Photos by: Waterstreet Design Associates, LLC



D

esign + Decor: What can you tell us about the property and what you were brought in to do?

Daniel: It's a very interesting building. It was originally the headmistress's residence for a private school and is attached to an adjacent home. It required us to secure zoning changes and variances to execute the plan and vision. Our clients, a professional couple with young children, loved the location and the property but needed to enhance the house to fit their lifestyle, including adding living space and home office space for each of them.







ounds like a major undertaking—how drastic were the renovations?

It was essentially a gut renovation, and then some. To start, we reutilized the existing family room as the new kitchen and then added both a new eating area and family room. The tired deck in the back was replaced with a covered outdoor living space, and we added a new informal entry to connect the mudroom, pantry, and home office space above the garage. We added a bedroom and two baths upstairs. At the end of the day, we renovated just about every inch of the space.





on a historic aesthetic and home drastically change, or was that

ith all this work building, did the character of the

maintained?

While we, for the most part, modernized the layout and upgraded the home to align with the clients' needs, we did work to preserve some special elements of the original building. The existing windows have a Queen Anne lite cut that we replicated in the new windows, and period interior trim profiles were matched. We also repurposed two sets of antique exterior doors to create a bifolding divider between the entry space into the new family room.









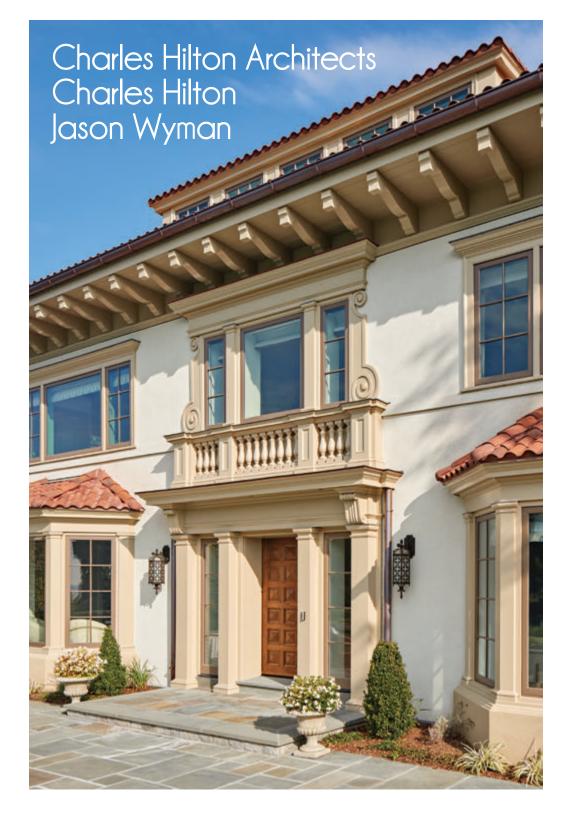
hat had the biggest impact in making this renovation what it is today?

Definitely the stairs. Originally, the stairs were adjacent to a small den.

To get upstairs, you had to walk through this space. It was awkward. We opted to reverse the stairs entirely—it was a big change but made all the difference in the world. Now, the stairs land in the perfect place, central to the laundry, mudroom, kitchen, and family room. They transformed the organization of the entire plan and made the building work.



Daniel Conlon Architects Daniel Conlon, Architect P.O. Box 418 Georgetown, CT 06829 203.544.7988 dconlonarchitects.com



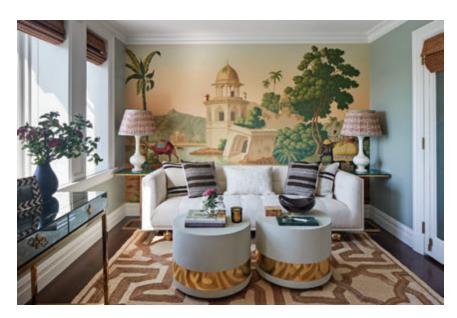
D

esign + Decor: Share with us how this project came to life and what your clients were hoping to achieve.

Chuck: The clients, a couple with two young children, came upon this home while looking to start a new chapter outside of New York City. This is their first home, and they were captivated with the views of Long Island Sound and were motivated to revitalize this

1910 Mediterranean home. It had been through some piecemeal renovations over the years but was in need of a master plan and comprehensive updates.









Η

ow extensive were the upgrades to the home?

The home was largely gut-renovated to improve the

efficiency and flow of the space, and to modernize the performance and finishes of the home. The sunroom was completely demolished, redesigned, and replaced, and the exterior was brought down to the sheathing and redressed with elements and ornamentation that fit with the traditional Mediterranean aesthetic. The primary goal was to unify the house by leaning into this aesthetic through materiality and details in the new design.



hat's quite vast in scope. Did the client set priorities or goals to help guide the process?

Yes. Beyond creating a better functioning layout and upgraded aesthetic finishes, they wanted to improve the energy efficiency of the building as a whole. Since we had taken down everything to the studs, even the exterior, we had the opportunity to spray-foam the exterior walls and add a variety of other energy-efficient features, which drastically improved the performance of the building envelope.









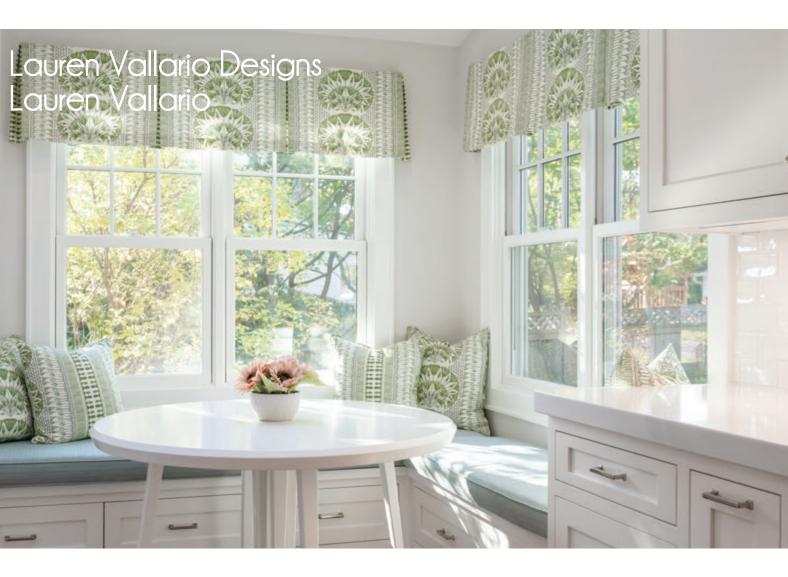
hat will make such a difference in the years to come. Looking back, what is your favorite part of the work that

was done here?

The main entry is easily our favorite part of the project. Initially, it lacked a sense of prominence and definition. We wanted to create a sense of place, enhance the verticality of the exterior facade, and also give a subtle introduction to the materiality within the home. The stained, custom walnut entry door is framed by a two-story millwork element that achieves this beautifully. The picture window above not only introduces additional daylight into the space, but from the interior it provides stunning views from the primary suite out to the Sound.

Charles Hilton Architects Charles Hilton, Principal Jason Wyman, Architectural Designer 170 Mason Street Greenwich, CT 06830 203.489.3800 hiltonarchitects.com













esig hear thei reno

esign + Decor: Let's start by hearing about your clients and their goals for this kitchen renovation.

Lauren: They are empty nesters who had raised their three boys in this Darien, CT, home. The boys had all moved out, and this is one phase of a series of renovations we did to update the home overall. The kitchen was original, and their appliances were starting to fail. Ultimately they wanted to take the opportunity to improve the kitchen and get a space that they really wanted and enjoyed.









t's still an all-white kitchen, but it feels so much brighter. Can you share a bit about how you achieved that?

The original kitchen had a lot of white, but it was small and dark. We couldn't relocate the kitchen, so instead, we focused on opening it up to brighten it. The original kitchen had four access points— the breakfast nook, the powder room, the basement, and the family room. We enlarged the entry to the breakfast nook where these large windows allow daylight to flood into the space, and it makes the whole space feel larger.

t truly does! Can you share information about the finishes?

The aesthetic here is classic white kitchen. The white Shaker-style cabinets have a timeless pull in polished nickel. That tone of the polished nickel is picked up subtly in the countertops, which are white quartz featuring a warm gray veining. Lastly is the backsplash—an elegant, white subway tile that has a subtle texture to it. In the breakfast nook, we brought in some soft greens, which really bring the outdoors in.



hat was your favorite part about this renovation?

My favorite part was also the most challenging part—the size

of the space. It's a small kitchen, but this new layout is really efficient and the changes we made were impactful, but it didn't necessarily take away from the kitchen where they raised their kids. It still has a history that lives within it.

Lauren Vallario Designs Lauren Vallario, Principal Interior Designer 652 Glenbrook Road Building 4, Suite 3-312 Stamford, CT 06906 845.654.1888 laurenvallariodesigns.com Photos by:Tracy Wind Photography



D

esign + Decor: How did the clients' lifestyle influence the renovation?

Judith: The clients are retired, longtime New Canaan residents with one child in college. Having purchased the home as a young family more than 23 years ago, they felt this was an opportune time to update it. Their love of cooking and entertaining for larger gatherings of family and friends influenced the work we did.







or the scope of the project, what spaces were included?

The biggest change was creating an open connection between the original kitchen and dining room. We moved the dining room to what was originally a sunroom adjacent, which allowed the newly expanded space to become a larger and more functional kitchen. What's particularly beautiful is how the light now floods from front to back of the home now. Also open to the kitchen is the family room, where we integrated a new gas fireplace and set of bookcase built-ins. The extent of the renovation meant new everything-lighting, plumbing, flooring, cabinetry and counters, and even Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances.





hat motivated the clients to make these big changes?

Their kitchen felt dark and their dining space was

underutilized. They love to cook and entertain, and the home just didn't support that lifestyle in the way that they desired.

id the clients have any particular goals in mind?

The primary goal was a kitchen with more space for cooking—both

functionally and for entertaining purposes. Aside from that, there was a desire to bring in natural light, which we achieved by opening up the space, but also adding in large picture windows for the family room.



T



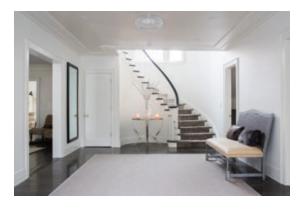
an you share a bit about the design details as well as your favorite part of the finished design?

These clients are seasoned travelers with a collection of fun, unique, and playful art as well as some handblown glass pieces (such as Simon Pearce Waterbury pendants), so creating a neutral backdrop to be a canvas for those treasures was important. The white cabinets and trim are classic, and the Taj-Mahal quartzite is neutral but quite stunning. My favorite part is the dual islands. The elevated look and experience provide a space and place for everything.

Judith Larson Associates LLC Gardiner & Larson Homes Judith Larson, Principal Designer 97 Dans Highway New Canaan, CT 06840 203.972.1409 gardinerlarsonhomes.com









esign + Decor: This is a beautiful transformation. What exactly were you brought in to do?

Chris: The clients are empty nesters who moved from Westchester County, NY, to Greenwich, CT, looking to create their dream home. The property is beautiful and includes a tennis court and a small cottage, although this project was focused on the main home. Working with Architect Mahdad Saniee drawing the project itself entailed bringing the entire house down to the studs, we did new windows, doors, siding and roof, and even did a large addition to the home as well.

Domus Constructors LLC Chris Shea

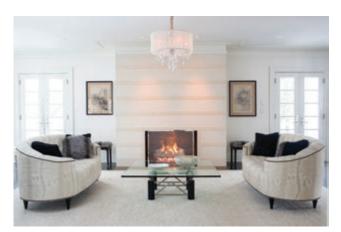














hat's quite an undertaking. What were they looking to achieve with the renovation? Overall, they wanted this home to be an amazing place they could entertain—that's a part of their lifestyle. The great room—which encompasses the kitchen, living room, and dining room—is their ultimate entertainment space. It's very cool. Aesthetically they want-

ed it to be light and bright but with depth in the materials, to have a lot of visual impact. And functionally, they wanted it to operate seamlessly so every system is modernized and







ith that much work, were any spaces more challenging to bring to life?

Those stairs were certainly a unique experience to build. They are very modern and not your standard construction—they are meant to look as if they are floating. Overall, the only way we could support them was by integrating a lot of steel and getting clever with how we concealed that steel. Really, when you see it, it doesn't look like it should function and stay up, but it does! Also, the millwork in the great room—the way it's hung is fairly unique and was challenging to work through, but in the end it's a really special moment in the home.



ooking back, what would you say is your favorite part of this project?

Honestly, being able to do as much work as we did while maintaining the character of the home was special. Even with the addition, it was important that the character remained. While we modernized it, we maintained its original character and introduced design elements that allowed enhancement of the home to integrate with today's luxury living standards.

Domus Constructors LLC Chris Shea, Managing Partner P.O. Box 181 Greens Farms, CT 06838 203.852.6789 domusllc.com



esign + Decor: Can you share with us a little bit about the clients and what they were looking for?

Amy: They had both recently retired from professional careers and moved from Westchester New York to Weston Connecticut. They were ideally looking to have a more country lifestyle in retirement, particularly as she is an avid gardener. She also loves to bake, and he makes a mean espresso, so creating a kitchen space that was conducive for both was of high importance to them.







t's a lovely transformation. Did they have any particular goals in mind?

The design was focused on creating more storage and workspace in the kitchen. By integrating the island, we were able to achieve both. They also wanted to have a more fluid access point to the outside patio. We created this by modifying the existing L-shaped counter along the window and dining room into a counter and an island, effectively giving a more direct route to the patio door.





peaking of the islands, the material change is beautiful. Can you share your approach with the finishes here?

Her favorite color is purple, and knowing she would be spending a lot of time in this space, we wanted to bring that in. The kitchen cabinetry and counter are a classic white, and the mosaic backsplash ties into that white along with warm grays and a subtle plum tone that perfectly coordinates with veins in the island countertops. In addition to the counter, all the finishes at the islands are a feature, from the wood-stained cabinets and darker hardware for the faucet—both islands create a really stunning moment in the space.

ooking back, what is your favorite part of the finished design?

I love the way the walnut islands ground the space and respond to the purple accents. Walnut naturally can have a purple cast depending on the choice of glaze, so it helped the color story here.

The classic white design of the perimeter cabinetry along with the new window and French slider bring in plenty of light to help bring this space to life.

Karen Berkemeyer Home Amy Eisenberg, Designer 175 Post Road W Westport, CT 06880 203.454.0032 karenberkemeyerhome.com

Photos by: Joe Buzzeo

Before

Garage Living Rich Cunningham Glenn Zimmerer 0

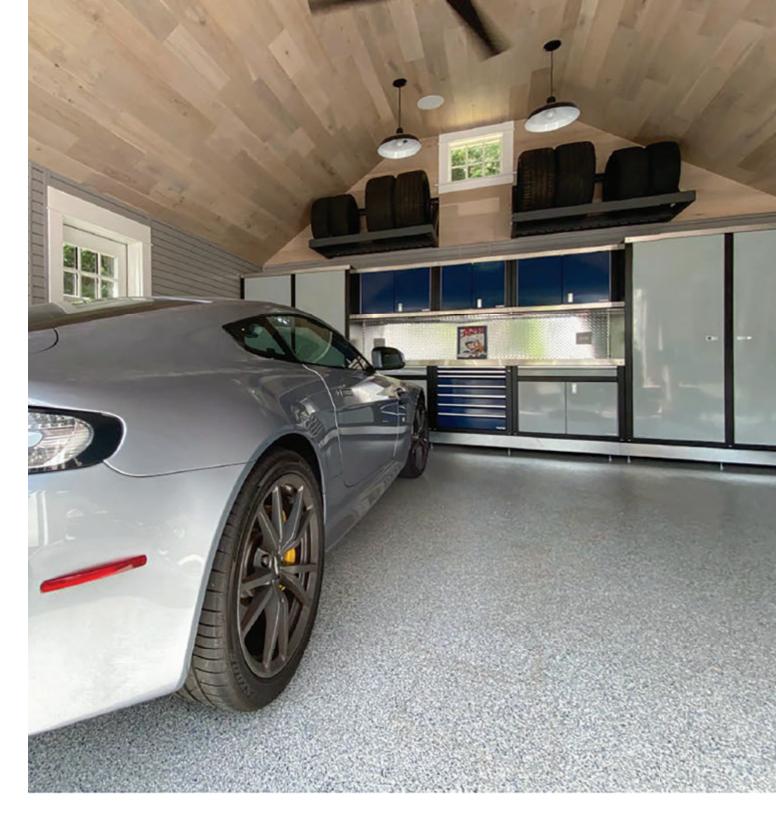
esign + Decor: Who knew a garage space could be so beautiful! What can you tell us about the project? Glenn Zimmerer: Like many of our clients, they have a beautiful home, nice cars, and a lifestyle they want to maintain, but the garage was underutilized. That's what Garage Living is about—elevating your garage to the same aesthetic and level as the rest of your home. When you think about it, most homeowners primarily enter and exit their home through the garage, so it should be nice. This particular client wanted a clean, beautiful garage that is organized and feels like an extension of their home.



onsidering that a consistent aesthetic with the home is important, what materiality did they want integrated into the garage?

The clients were drawn to the Harbor Designer Series, which features nautical colors (blues and grays) inspired by the coast to conjure feelings of peace and tranquility. We then worked closely together to customize the look and make it their own. Those colors also came through as a deep blue accent in the slatwall and the storage. The flooring has Garage Living's long-lasting proprietary coating, and it pulls in the colors nicely. The rest was neutral, and we integrated the wood at the ceiling and end wall to create a sense

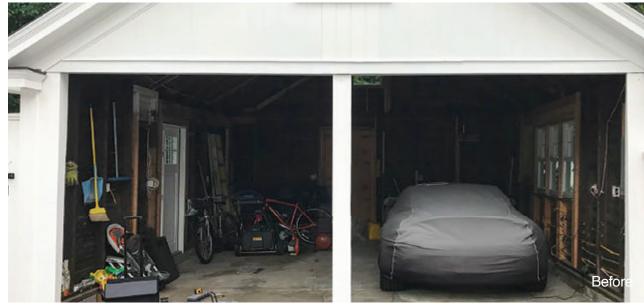




It's quite the transformation. Looking back, what was your favorite part of the project?

Making their dream a reality by providing them with the gift of organization and lifestyle improvement. This particular project prioritized creating an organized space where they could have their cars parked and access to everything they need. We did a lot of customization to make it truly their own.





an you share a bit about the systems and organization methods that were used?

Along the outside walls, we used slatwall storage panels. These are always a great solution because they provide a finished look and a flexible storage solution. The storage cabinets are our GL Rally cabinetry, which gives them storage solutions that always look nice, and we integrated a heavy-duty tire rack above, along with the beautiful garage doors. The diamond plate baseboards are another feature. While they aren't so much about organization, they keep everything clean and protect the walls over time.

Garage Living Rich Cunningham, Owner Glenn Zimmerer, Senior Design Consultant 203.945.0750 136 Water Street, Norwalk, CT 06854 garageliving.com/connecticut

Photos by: Garage Living

Austin Ganim Landscape Design LLC Austin Ganim Eva Chiamulera

esign + Decor: What were the clients looking for when they brought you on board for this transformation?

Eva: This project was unique. From the very first meeting, it was evident that the focus of this landscape masterplan was on their family rather than the physical elements of the landscape. It wasn't simply about creating a sequence of outdoor living areas but rather establishing an environment that embodies their sentiments. These outdoor living spaces are a symbiotic extension of the interior spaces of the house where children can play, family and friends will gather, and memories will be made.





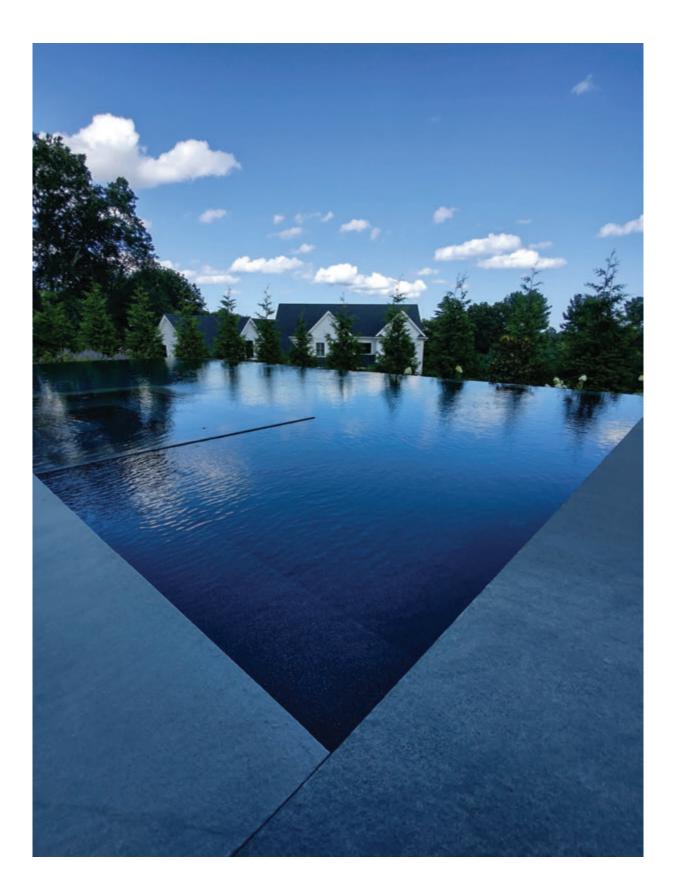




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hat's a beautiful approach. What kind of outdoor spaces did they want to see created here?

From the rear of the house, where the interior kitchen and living room are, one descends down through a series of terraces integrated into the hillside. From the dining and sitting areas, one step down leads to the outdoor kitchen and pool area, while farther down the slope, a fire pit patio provides views of the waterfall created by the pool's negative edge. Tucked at the basement of the home is a walkout patio, which is a quiet retreat from the active backyard.









he terrain here is quite interesting. Did that prove to be a challenge when designing the landscape?

It was both our primary challenge and a great opportunity for us to create something unexpect-

ed. This property gently slopes away from the road and drops off diagonally across the rear yard, where a wide hedgerow embankment separates the upper and lower fields. The series of terraces embraces the terrain, ultimately creating a space where they can experience the exterior spaces of their home as intentionally as the interior.



hat can you tell us about the plantings?

The diverse array of plantings range from the arcs of evergreen trees used for privacy to the blooming shrubs and perennials, which

provide seasonal accents between each space. We integrated an herb bed near the kitchen and a vegetable, berry, and fruit tree garden tucked into the lower hillside. The large lawn was graded for tennis and other sports.

Austin Ganim Landscape Design LLC Austin Ganim, Owner Eva Chiamulera, Landscape Architect 320 Kings Highway Cutoff Fairfield, CT 06824 203.333.2003 austinganimlandscapedesign.com

Vulcan Development Group LLC Teymoor Tahbaz



esign + Decor: What is the backstory to this remarkable transformation?

Teymoor: The couple have three children in college, and they were downsizing into this home in Greenwich. The challenge was that this is a spec home and they wanted to give it a custom feel-particularly in the basement. They wanted to finish it in a way that aligned with their lifestyle; he's an avid wine collector, they're both into wellness and working out, and they love to entertain. So, the guest bedroom and bathroom were a must. We had a lot of functions to fit into this area, but they wanted it to feel very



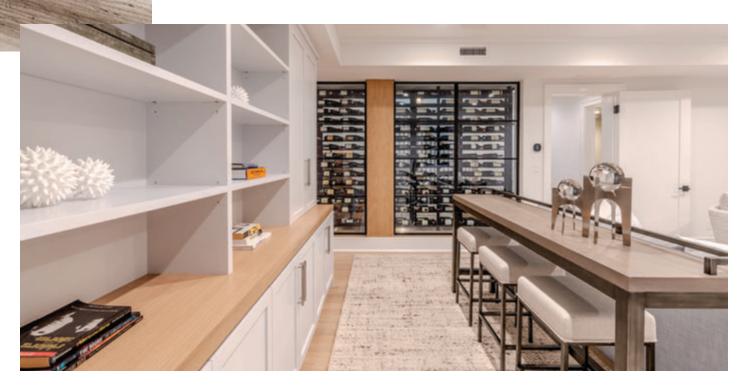




ow did you manage to bring all these functions together?

We certainly got creative with space and prioritized a light and bright aesthetic so it didn't feel like a basement. Opening up the stairway made the basement feel more connected to the upstairs and allowed light to flood down here too. The bedroom and

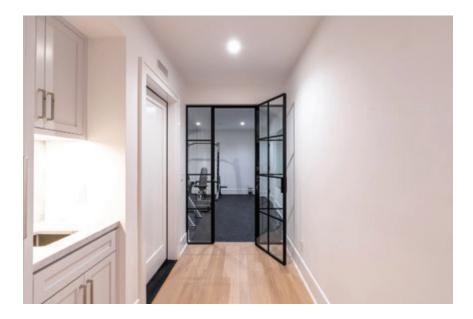
fitness space are more private and closed off, as functionally that makes sense. In the media room, that needed to feel open and connected, so we used the wine storage/display component to create a transparent room divider that was also functional. The final piece came out brilliantly.













t truly did. Was it custom designed?

Quite so. I had a hand in designing a large portion of that element. We used glass and steel partitions from Poland. By setting it raised above the floor, we can keep it lit from below. We did have to work around some structural columns, which we turned into these very intentional oak column moments that add warmth while tying into the palette.

he palette is very clean and almost minimal. What was the goal?

We worked with Jodi DeLuca Designs on the finishes, and we wanted to create a cohesive and consistent look with the rest of the home. From a color perspective, shades of white prevail here, but they are balanced with the warmth of the engineered white oak floors, some soft grays and crisp black detailing, which is the perfect contrast. Overall the space is neutral, bright, and modern—but warm and welcoming.

Vulcan Development Group LLC Teymoor Tahbaz 203.979.6336 vulcandevelopmentgroup.com

PROFILE

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PROFILE



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