



Whimsical Cowtan & Tout fabric is used on a pair of English antique chairs. A David latesta glass coffee table opens up the space, while a garden stool repurposed as a side table is chosen for its perfect color.



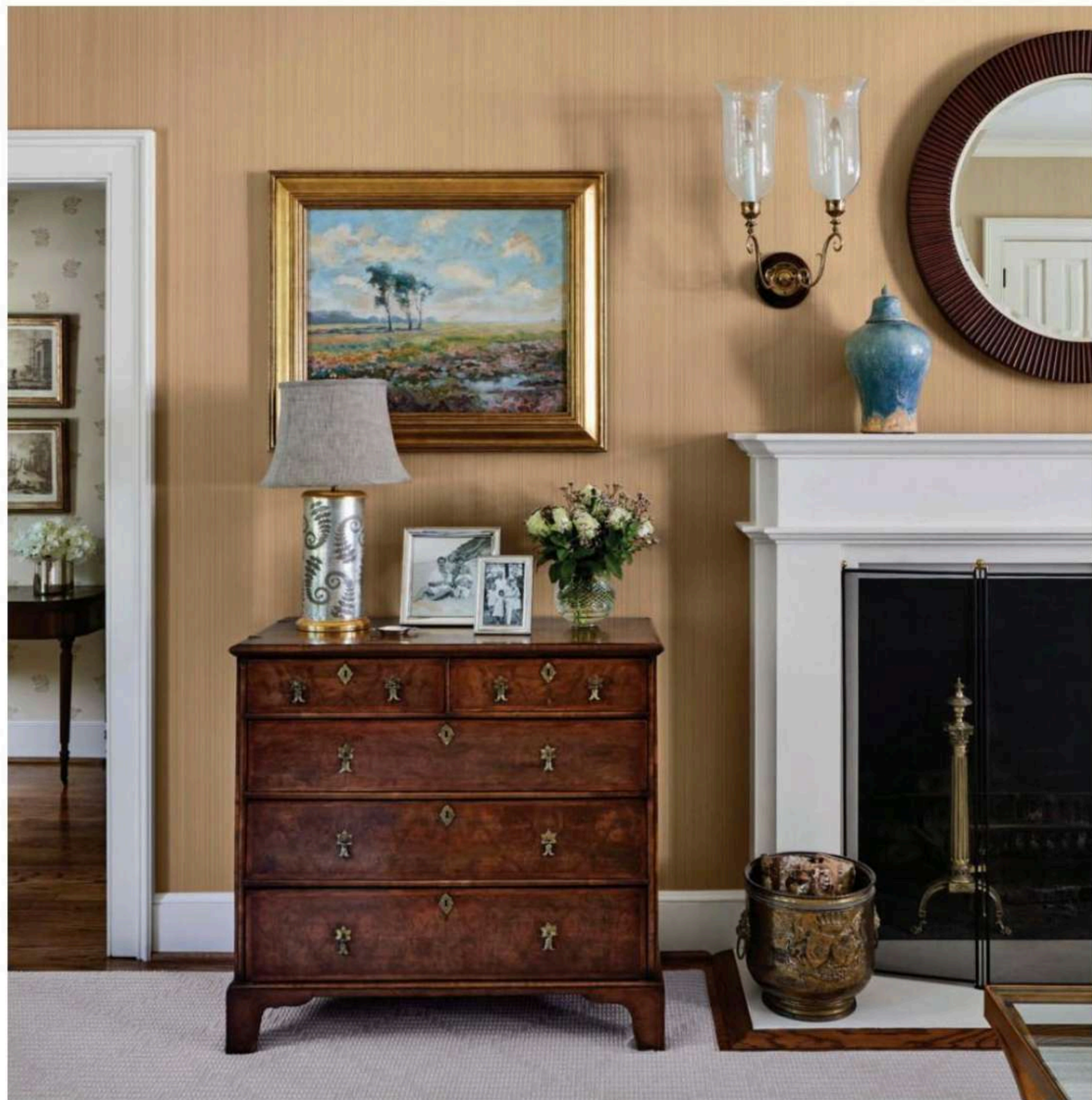
A HOUSE MATURES WITH ITS INHABITANTS

Designer Amy Andrews reimagines a contemporary Shingle-style home for a growing family with a world-class collection of antiques

Story by Meryl Siegman | Photography by Robert Benson

When a couple with three young children moved from London to New England in the early 2000s, they looked for a country retreat as a permanent family home that would accommodate their extensive collection of antique furniture and objects. Native Californians, they put physical and visual access to the outdoors high on their list of priorities. They chose a two-story house designed in the 1990s by Connecticut's own "Duo" Dickinson, located in the desirable Mid-Country East neighborhood of Greenwich, CT. The neighborhood itself was a perfect choice, having been developed for homeowners wanting a larger footprint on sizable lots, with houses spaced far enough apart to provide total privacy. Situated in a country-like setting and surrounded by protected lands, the area has a pastoral ambience that is home to gracious residences interspersed with scenic riding trails.

The owners hired Amy Andrews, the principal interior designer and director of Hilton Interiors, a full-service design firm based in Greenwich. Hilton Interiors is the result of many years of a successful collaboration between Amy and the architect Charles Hilton. With a career spanning more than 30 years, Amy is recognized for the beauty, functionality and warmth of her contemporary and timeless designs. Known for her comprehensive approach, she seamlessly blends



all the necessary elements of design to curate spaces that reflect the homeowners, their family and their lifestyle. Before long, the Greenwich homeowners and Amy forged a relationship that would last for more than two decades. What started out as a decorating project became more extensive as the children grew up and the house had to adjust to the needs of a maturing family. A work in progress over several decades, the home has the perfect ingredients to serve its inhabitants now and in the days to come: an iconic architect, an interior designer with talent and intuition, the clients' brilliantly curated collection of antiques, and even the land on which the house was built.

The American architect George "Duo" Dickinson, Jr. put his indelible stamp on the house nearly three decades ago. Dickinson, who describes himself as "a quirky, semi-traditional architect," has over 30 years of professional experience and more than 500 projects bearing his name. He is a colorful, well-known book author, journalist, blogger, lecturer and host of a monthly radio program about home topics.

"The house is on a gorgeous piece of land—an extremely lucky find," says Amy. Abounding with specimen trees, the property features a long, winding driveway, landscaped terraces, a pool and an old garden house from the original property. It is a quintessential example of Shingle-style design, made popular



at the beginning of the 20th century by the rise of the New England school of architecture, representing a renewed interest in Colonial American design. Although Victorian in style, Shingle-style homes represented a retreat from the highly ornamental Queen Anne architecture. With their distinctly American plain wood construction that blends into natural surroundings, these houses emphasize horizontal continuity both in their exterior details and in the flow of spaces within. Porches and large picture windows are used to invite a tactile interaction with the outdoors, evoking a romantic lifestyle.

"It was very important to the owners to incorporate the pastoral setting into their home," says Amy, "so I created a good flow between the indoors and outdoors." The expansive views of trees and lush greenery are visible from the home's many windows. "The view is all about the outside, with abundant light coming in," she says. "We used French doors



The room is dominated by the home's original Adirondack-style fireplace. Cowtan & Tout grasscloth wallpaper is part of the home's overall color and texture scheme for the walls. The vintage George Smith furniture is reupholstered with Colefax and Fowler fabric.



in many of the rooms, so the beautiful terrace and gardens can be seen from almost everywhere inside the house."

Amy's first challenge was to accommodate the owners' extensive collection of antique furniture in a house with contemporary lines. Her solution was to mix modern decorating and design with the existing items, which involved adding more modern furniture and reupholstering older pieces with more fanciful fabrics. "The couple had a huge investment in the antiques," Amy explains, "but they wanted an overall feel that was light and airy, so we added to them and gave them an eclectic feel."

The living room is a perfect example of Amy's design alchemy. She installed a modern sectional with cleaner lines that is not overly fussy. She added a glass David Iatesta coffee table to open up the space, and covered a pair of antique chairs with a whimsical modern Cowtan & Tout fabric. The side table is a repurposed garden stool that was chosen for its perfect baby blue color. The Schumacher rug was obtained from A.T. Proudian, a Greenwich-based family-owned carpeting company founded in 1923. Finally, the fireplace is offset by a beautiful antique chest, and a stunning landscape on the



wall picks up on the space's connection to the outdoors. According to Amy, the room has "a contemporary feel with a lightness that flows with the antique pieces."

Another challenge was designing the house to accommodate the children, two boys and a girl, as they grew older. When the family first moved in, the children were young. As one of the boys grew to be 6'4" tall, he needed a larger bedroom and bathroom. And over a decade ago, the family wanted to add more space—in particular, the wife desired a breakfast room—so a new addition was built. "All she wanted was a breakfast room," says Amy, laughing, "but she got a garage, game room and small workout studio thrown in."

The front entry features a contemporary Dennis & Leen console, and modern sconces and a wonderfully crafted mirror from the John Rosselli showroom in New York. The Thibaut wallpaper represents part of a scheme used intentionally throughout the house: the walls in each room have a distinctly different texture to accentuate the unique design of each space.

In the family room, a fireplace from the original home was retained to create an Adirondack feel, and the existing bookcases were used as a backdrop for the owners' collection of lovely, eye-catching objects. Cowtan & Tout grasscloth wallpaper was

chosen to pick up on the color of the stone. Amy incorporated the couples' vintage George Smith furniture into the design scheme, with the chair recovered in Colefax & Fowler fabric, consistent with the theme of blending the old with the new. To keep up with the evolution of the house, the window seats flanking the fireplace were redone three times over the years.

The dining room, with its lovely bay windows overlooking the terrace and gardens, has a traditional but comfortable and inviting feel. Amy included the owners' antique table, chairs and sideboard, but added a tall David Iatesta breakfast front with a modern flair to show off the collection of early 20th-century antique Rose Canton porcelain. "I added some new pieces to mix with the old to bring the room down to a younger vibe," Amy explains. "We had the chandelier custom-made and put down a new vegetable-dyed rug from A.T. Proudian." Amy describes the Lee Jofa window treatment as "really quiet," while the walls "absolutely glow with a little gold shimmer." A great space for any season, the dining room is a delightful setting, enhanced by the table's ability to expand from four seats to 10 to accommodate friends and family.

The breakfast room, the *raison d'être* of the new addition, features a custom plank table with self-storing leaves, so it can be expanded to service large groups. The textural chairs are



made from woven leather, and the grasscloth wallpaper adds another layer of dimension. But the most striking feature of all is the setting: "It feels like you're sitting in a greenhouse, with incredibly gorgeous views of the outdoors," says Amy.

The runner that goes up the stairs from the breakfast room to the game room above and continues through the room creates a sense of playfulness with its starry pattern. The game room itself features a pool table with customized blue felt to match the color scheme and A.T. Proudian rug. A Paul Ferrante chandelier is a modern take on a traditional iron fixture.



The pool table was made with customized blue felt to match the room's color scheme. The A.T. Proudian area rug has a matching runner on the staircase leading up from the breakfast room. The Paul Ferrante chandelier is a modern take on a traditional iron fixture.

The study—originally the daughter's bedroom but converted into an office when she moved upstairs—is a place of tranquility. The new design includes built-in bookcases and wainscoting to create the aura of traditional library, but with a light and bright look that ties into the rest of the house. Amy's team reupholstered the antique chairs, added Lee Jofa window treatments and covered the walls in a woven grass wallpaper to soften and modernize the space.

Finally, the master bedroom, featuring French doors and windows on three sides, has a light, breezy feel, accentuated by a beautiful cross-hatch hand-weave painted finish on the walls. The original wall-to-wall carpeting was retained, and an antique table from the family's collection was used in the room, so Amy livened up the feel by reupholstering the two antique chairs in a playful Cowtan & Tout fabric and adding a colorful contemporary Lorin Marsh lamp.

The gracious Shingle-style house has taken on and maintained the personality of its owners, growing and maturing along with them to reflect a modern lifestyle steeped in tradition.

Resources:

Interior Design
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Original Architect
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SPECTACULAR ON THE SOUND

Thompson-Raissis Architects' Shingle-style residence honors the past while embracing modern technology

Story by Meryl Siegman | Photography by Steve Rossi

A couple wanting to live on the waterfront found the ideal location on which to build their dream home—a place that would serve as a permanent residence for themselves and their children for years to come. Built in 2016, this exquisitely appointed house is situated in one of the most desirable and exclusive neighborhoods in Darien, CT. Though it is the smallest town on Connecticut's Gold Coast, Darien boasts 17 miles of coastline along the Long Island Sound, with views of Manhattan just 45 miles to the southwest. Located on just over an acre on one of Darien's many peninsulas, the home is sited to maximize views of the sound and to capture dramatic sunrises and sunsets year-round.

The owners of the property hired Scott Raissis of Thompson-Raissis

Architects (TRA) to design the home itself and its custom millwork, front entry court, pool area and surrounding hardscape. Founded in 1994, TRA has been at the forefront of residential architecture for nearly three decades. Its signature style blends classically inspired elegance with contemporary building practices and technology. Known for its modern interpretations of historic architectural styles, the firm creates homes that reflect the contemporary lifestyles of its clients while evoking environments steeped in tradition. Its owner and principal, Scott Raissis, has been practicing architecture since 1989. His expertise in classical residential architecture and construction made him the perfect choice for this project.

Scott designed the home to maximize the 180-degree water views, with its primary spaces facing the water. Surrounded by multiple gar-







The random-width, wide-plank white oak flooring on the ground floor and second story is supplied by Stephen Gamble Historic Floors and Finishes



dens populated by indigenous, salt-tolerant species of vegetation, the 8,000-square-foot, two-and-a-half story residence features five bedrooms, five full baths and three half baths. The finished basement houses a home gym, a full-swing golf simulator and an entertainment space complete with wet bar.

The entire design approach was based on the owners' desire for an authentic-looking Shingle-style home that is typical of the area. "With its Sanford White-inspired Shingle style, you would never think from looking at it that it was a new home," says Scott. The house incorporates the best elements of the classic Shingle-style architecture, including an asymmetrical façade, irregular roof lines, cross gables and wide porches. This style, representing a movement away from the lavish, decorative designs popular in Victorian times, was developed in New England in the late 1800s and was particularly popular at seaside resorts. Intentionally rustic, it evoked a more relaxed, informal lifestyle. Emphasizing grace and simplicity, Shingle-style homes were clad in plain wood shingles that typically blended into natural surroundings. Porches, balconies and large windows were prevalent, inviting a connection with the outdoors.

Attentive to his clients' desire that the house not look just built but rather have the character and feel of the Shingle-style homes in the

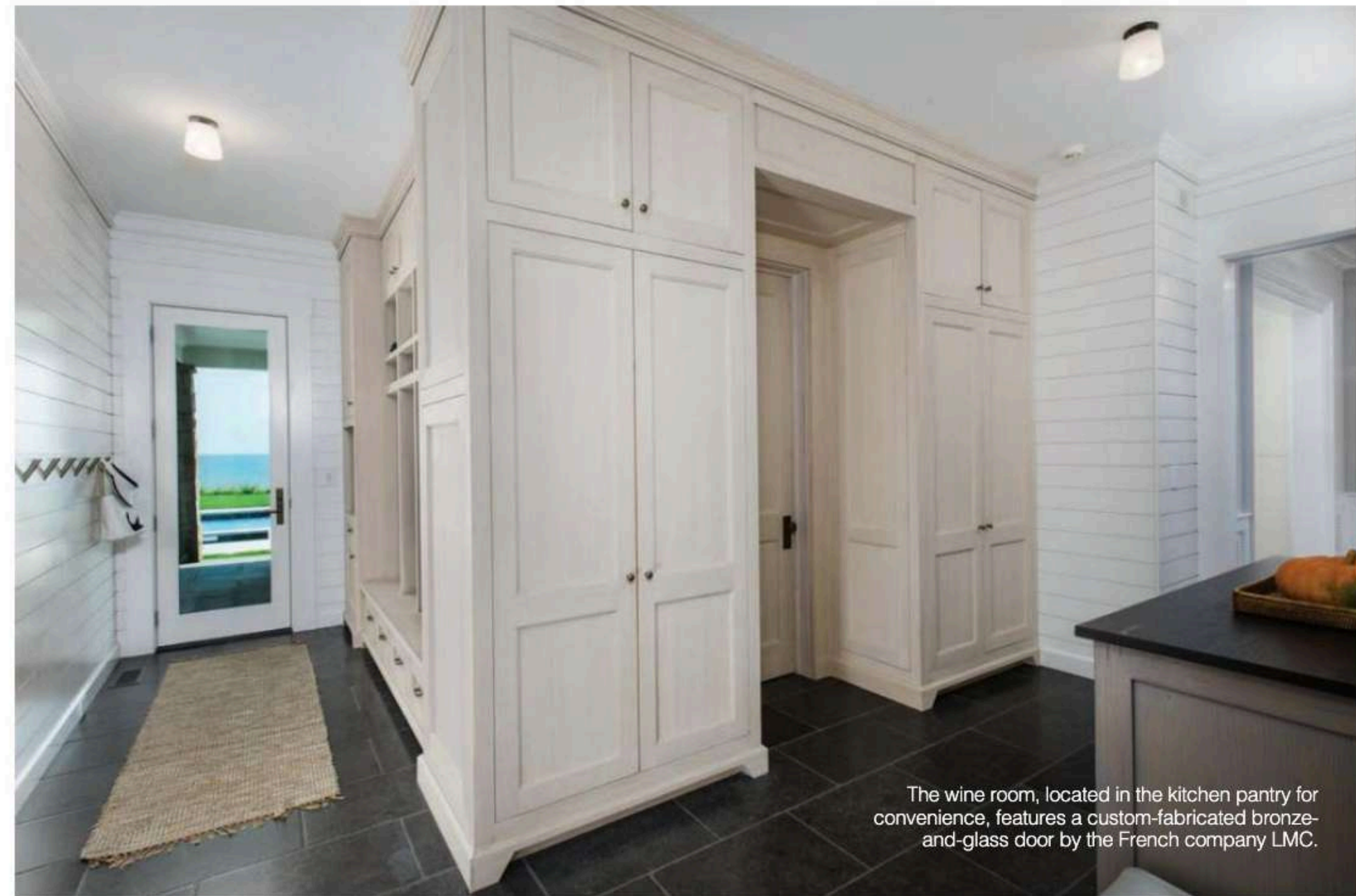
area, James selected material based on researching the style, components and detailing of the home's late 19th-century predecessors. Its roof and siding are made from white cedar shingles that were pre-dipped and given a weathered finish appropriate to the period, giving the wood a beautiful, aged appearance. The lead-coated copper flashing and custom chocolate-brown color chosen for the siding further contribute to the structure's authentic look. Additional details used to evoke the design and craftsmanship of a Shingle-style home include Palladian windows with a diamond-shaped muntin configuration and custom-designed pilasters, moldings, brackets, railings and balusters in keeping with the traditional style.

The stones used for the exterior were locally sourced. The architects were careful to leave only the weathered faces of the stone exposed, giving the cladding an antique feel and a beautiful patina, with colors ranging from a light, sandy beige to a dark espresso brown. Designers considered not just the materials themselves, but also to how to treat and install them to enhance their natural beauty and evoke the desired old-world character.

It was very important to the owners that the house be built with environmentally friendly materials and remain energy-efficient throughout the seasons, including the harsh New England winters. Thomp-



Chesneys USA fabricated the custom hand-carved marble fireplace.



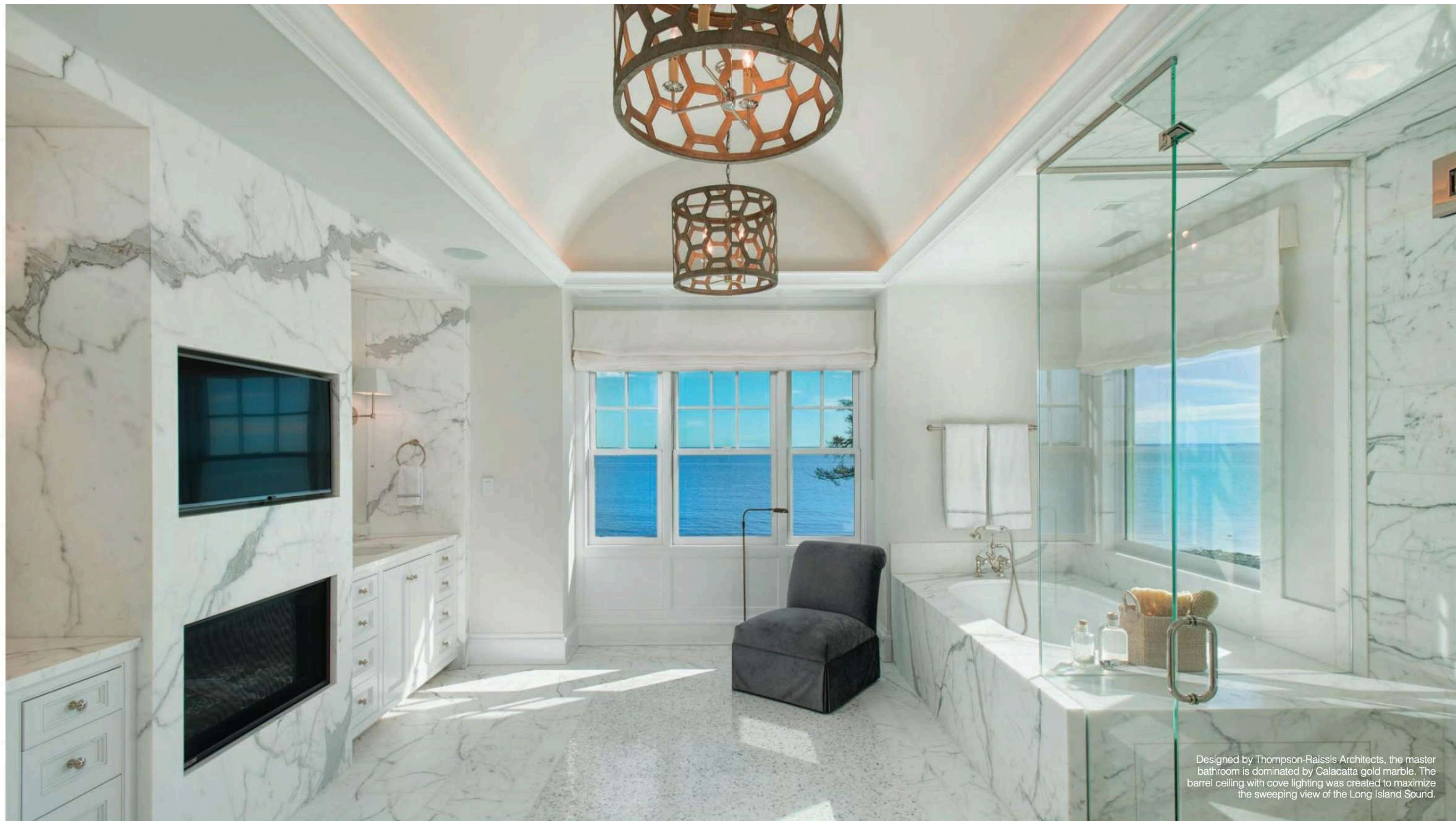
The wine room, located in the kitchen pantry for convenience, features a custom-fabricated bronze-and-glass door by the French company LMC.



son-Rassis Architects, with its long track record of designing homes incorporating state-of-the-art technology, designed its infrastructure using the most modern techniques available, including a geothermal heating and cooling system, obviating the need for unsightly oil tanks and AC condenser units. The team also installed heat-recovery/air-exchange systems, radiant heating and high-performance closed-cell spray foam insulation, allowing the home to achieve levels of heating and cooling efficiency uncommon in buildings of its size. They paid special attention to indoor air quality by choosing—whenever possible—paints, adhesives, insulation and other products that were free of volatile organic compounds. The entire back of the house, which faces the water, is lined with porches that are ideal for outdoor entertaining and also save energy by reducing the amount of sunlight hitting the house during the hottest months.

Another of the owners' priorities was a family-oriented home with spaces arranged to facilitate and enhance a shared living experience. Scott designed the house so that the family room would function as its core, with all the other rooms radiating out from that space. The result is an easy, welcoming flow from the family room to the kitchen, living and dining rooms, all with spectacular views of the Long Island Sound.

The owners also wanted the interior of their new home to be transitional with more of a modern feel, counterbalancing its traditional exterior design. Scott took a minimalist approach, choosing elements such as Calacatta marble to create a sleek and contemporary look, while using wide-plank white oak flooring in



Designed by Thompson-Raissis Architects, the master bathroom is dominated by Calacatta gold marble. The barrel ceiling with cove lighting was created to maximize the sweeping view of the Long Island Sound.

keeping with the home's Shingle-style roots.

Scott's vision for a home fully customized for his client and his clever approach to how the built environment is experienced are evidenced as soon as one approaches the structure's front door. Conceiving the optimal way to take advantage of the spectacular setting, he wanted visitors to experience the striking water views only after entering the

house. "The typical waterfront home has a direct view of the water at its entrance, but I didn't want to give away the view at the front door," Scott explains. "First, we did not use a glass door. Then we positioned the door so it is centered on the fireplace, but to both the right and left there are openings with three sets of French doors along the waterside view. Once you enter, you experience not only a view of the water, but a different view of it from each room." While the most

dramatic vantage point is from the central family room, those from the living room and library at the end of the hall offer varying perspectives. "As you take in the house, you experience a different view from each room, instead of just a vacuous space," says Scott.

While an interior design firm was hired to do the decorating—including the soft goods, curtains, paints, wallcoverings and fixtures—TRA

collaborated with the owners on the theme of each room, designing every detail to realize their tastes and desires. The grand two-story foyer, the gateway to the home, is the perfect reflection of the partnership between architect and client. Its sweeping master staircase features a white oak handrail and pencil-thin, hand-forged wrought-iron balustrades, creating a light and airy feel. The stone is travertine, with the fireplace mantel custom-made from limestone. The walls are





wainscoted two-thirds of the way up, with a decorative painting application to the field above.

The family room has an inviting feel, featuring custom millwork designed to wrap the walls with wood, eliminating the need for casing. The wood ceiling was designed with a deep board pattern, creating a genuine sense of warmth. The library doubles as a home office, fully paneled in rift white oak and opening onto a private porch with stunning water views. It also features a soaring cathedral ceiling and a Chesney USA hand-carved marble mantel. A second home office is cleverly tucked into the mudroom, which runs the entire depth of the house.

The master bathroom was designed around large slabs of Calacatta gold marble, which clad the bathtub, matching picture windows and divider between the two vanities. Two recesses in the divider house a TV and a gas fireplace. A barrel-vaulted ceiling with cove lighting was installed to maximize the breathtaking vista.

The outdoor porch is one of the loveliest spaces in this magnificent and thoughtfully designed home. Its floors and fireplace are bluestone from New York State. Above the fireplace is a custom solid-granite quarried mantel that is perfectly integrated into the stone veneer. The TV is discreetly hidden behind mahogany folding doors, while a ceiling crafted from five-and-a-half-inch wooden planks painted in white adds light and brightness. The automatic roll-down screens, perhaps the most enchanting feature, allow the entire porch to become screened-in with the push of a button.

With an outdoor fireplace and infrared heaters installed in the ceiling, the porch can be used year-round. It is the perfect spot for entertaining or lounging with the family while enjoying the view of the pool and the tranquil Long Island Sound beyond.

Resources:

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