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When they renovated their New Hampshire home, Roger and Sandy Wells chose to preserve its classic Greek Revival facade.

Right: Heather Wells helped with the design of her parents' home.

BY ELIOT NUSBAUM

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL PARTENIO

PRODUCED BY ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK



reversing course

A DESIGNING COUPLE
ROUND LIVING

TAKE UP YEAR-
ROUND LIVING AT THEIR SUMMER PLACE.

The great room was a family project: Roger designed the fireplace (of old foundation stones), Heather did the interior design, and Sandy chose the palette and accent pieces. The comb-like limestone sculpture above the fireplace is from Spain. **Opposite top:** An attached barn was moved to a corner of the property and made into an office for Roger's design business. **Opposite bottom:** Roger works on his own landscaping.



for 30 years,

roger and sandy wells made the

long drive from their home in Philadelphia up to New Hampshire for the weekend. About 11 years ago, they decided to reverse the process, choosing instead to find a home in New Hampshire and making occasional trips back to Philadelphia.

Sandy says she and her family, which includes four siblings, have been vacationing in New Hampshire for more than 35 years and always loved it. So, one day while vacationing in the Granite State, she said to Roger, "I don't want to go home." And with that, they bought their first house in New Hampshire. Then one day a few years ago, Sandy drove by a wreck of a house on Lake Kezar in the small town of North Sutton. "It was a wreck, but it intrigued me," says Sandy. Plus she loved the idea of frontage on the lake. She made an appointment for her and Roger to see the ramshackle home right away. They bought it that same weekend.

It has proven to be a great impulse. A home on Lake Kezar has meant a life of swimming, boating, canoeing, and just lounging on the dock for not only Sandy and Roger but also for their three children, as well as their extended families. Sandy's siblings all now live in the area, as does Roger's mother.

Sunnyside, as the couple have dubbed their home, was a fine example of a Greek Revival farmhouse "accessorized" by a whole row of more or less falling-down outbuildings—all attached to the rear of the house in classic New England fashion. Something had to be done. So Roger, who is an architect and landscape architect, and Sandy, who is an interior designer, put their heads together





The dining room, original to the house, was left pretty much alone—including the wood floors and the original wavy glass in the windows. The walnut table and iron chandelier are among Sandy's antique finds. In contrast, the landscape painting brings a modern freshness to the room.

Right: A circa-1800 blue-painted open cupboard from Maine in the front hall shows off Sandy's collection of yellow canaryware and painted tole.



Sandy, left, and Heather share a moment in the kitchen with the Wellse's dog Gertrude. Heather designed the kitchen and purposely chose black paint for the woodwork to make the space stand out at the end of the great room.

Opposite top: With its rustic soapstone sink and granite backsplash, the pantry is the ideal spot to display Sandy's collection of decorated stoneware and wire baskets. The rooster is an antique weather vane.

Opposite bottom: Books and decorative pieces fill the open shelves of the built-in cupboard while the closed storage below handles kitchen necessities.



with their daughter Heather, who is also in the design business—her own architectural and interior design firm has offices in Boston and Chicago.

"With the help of our daughter Heather, we came up with the idea of leaving the original front of the house intact while gutting the rear," explains Roger. "We tore off some of the falling-down attachments and, in their place, added a great room, master bedroom suite, screened porch, and garage. Now, from the road the house looks old and unchanged, with a series of three peaked roofs stepping back from the front of the house."

The great room is a large two-story space offering views to the lake and anchored by a fireplace made with old foundation stones. Roger was the principal architect, Sandy was the color specialist—choosing the accessories from her collection of antiques—and Heather brought in the furniture. "They both like things that are old," says Heather, "but I brought in a more modern sophistication to the house." Sandy chose a palette of what she calls fall tones—beiges and soft browns—to create a comfortable family living space.

The kitchen fills one end of the great room. The woodwork of the island, which includes a sink and a dishwasher, and the cabinetry against two walls are painted black over a nutmeg stain. "The result looks very slightly distressed," says Sandy. Heather actually designed the kitchen and suggested the black paint to give the area a strong presence in the big white room.

The dining room was left alone as much as possible, "but it does have its own design zingers," says Roger. "The windows



antique hunt

Any time is prime antiquing time for Sandy, but she especially recommends hitting the shows throughout New Hampshire during Antique Week, the first full week of August. Among her faves for good finds in New England are **The York Antiques Gallery**, Route 1, York, ME 03909 (207/363-5002), and **Antique Associates at West Townsend**, 473 Main St., West Townsend, MA 01474 (508/597-8084).

Sandy satisfies her craving for fine hooked rugs at **Country Braid House**, 462 Main St., Tilton, NH 03276 (603/286-4511). One of her private sources, **Jeff Good**, who repairs, cleans, and sells hooked rugs, is so into them he has landscaped his garden to look like one. To schedule an appointment, contact him at jmandspgood@aol.com.



have their original wavy glass, and the floor is original." The room itself is traditional and simple. At its center stands an antique walnut single drop-leaf table dating to 1810; the table is surrounded by four reproduction Windsor chairs. A large-lipped redware bowl from Sandy's pottery collection suits the antique-inspired decor, as does the old Oriental carpet. The iron chandelier is also one of Sandy's antique finds. The elegant old windows are covered with simple wood blinds. Enlivening the room and adding a fair amount of its own zing is a modern painting, a surprise element that adds color.

Like the rest of the house, the master bedroom is a comfortable, relaxed space configured as a diminutive version of the great room, says Roger. It is furnished with a metal canopy bed, a white linen upholstered chaise longue, and a selection of antiques from Sandy's collection.

Completing the transformation of their lives, the Wellses took one of the structures that was cut from the rear of the house, moved it to the back of the property, and converted it into an office, making it possible for this designing couple to live the weekend life year-round. ■

For more information, see sources on page 195.

Top: Antiques and sunshine warm the master bedroom and bath.

Left: Located in the original part of the house, the guest room is a charming space furnished with more of Sandy's antiques. The room's quaint casement window, which is original, helped persuade Sandy and Roger to buy the house.