

WORLDLY

A photograph of a modern, single-story house at dusk. The house has a light-colored exterior and a dark blue shingled roof. A large, multi-paned window on the left side of the house is illuminated from within, showing a warm yellow light. To the right, there is a covered patio area with a stone floor, featuring outdoor furniture and large glass doors leading into the house. A stone path leads from the foreground towards the patio. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall atmosphere is serene and modern.

A former journalist turned professional designer moves to Westchester and finds a whole new world of design.

BY JENN ANDRLIK • PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL JOHNSON

DESIGN



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hen she moved with her husband and three children from Los Angeles, designer Sharon Rembaum had already lived quite the worldly life.

She grew up in England, worked at BBC radio in London in her early 20s, then moved to Israel to anchor the English nightly TV news. From there, Rembaum moved to LA, where she worked for NPR station KCRW covering hardcore current affairs and news. She also fell in love with the city.

"When it became clear that traditional journalism was going through a major change, I decided to evaluate what I wanted to do for the remainder of my career," says Rembaum. "I have always had a passion for design and architecture, particularly interiors, so I enrolled in UCLA's interiors architecture program, ArchID."



Clockwise: Designer and homeowner Sharon Rembaum used large windows throughout to show off the lush, green landscapes. Construction was needed after a harsh winter, which allowed Rembaum to add a second story. The interiors are modern and sophisticated.

While she attended school, Rembaum worked on several residential and nonprofit commercial projects. As her kids grew older, she and her husband wanted to send them to public schools, so they decided to move to Westchester, which is known for its stellar public schools. A year later, she launched her eponymous interior design business, Sharon Rembaum Design, in Scarsdale.

"I think Westchester is beautiful," says Rembaum. "Parts of it remind me of England: lush, green landscapes; gorgeous gardens; rivers; and, of course, the architecture are all quite similar. It's very different from California, where I spent much of my adult life.

"The advantage we have here is the way the

Westchester landscape changes with the seasons. We can use larger windows, which allow more light and the changing colors of our surroundings to enter our homes throughout the year. As a designer, my goal is always to create spaces that are both beautiful and functional. Westchester's natural beauty is something I try to bring into my design projects."

This 5,500 sq ft home is Rembaum's own. She wanted to leverage as much of the existing foundation and structure as possible. However, the severe winter of 2014-'15 caused significant damage, forcing her and her husband to rebuild most of the house. They ended up adding a second story during reconstruction.



“My role as a designer is to help my clients explore their style preferences and express them in their homes beautifully and cost-effectively.”



Sharon's *BEST DESIGN TIPS*

“One of the most important things in design is scale, and that is not always easy to understand or achieve. Homeowners often purchase a rug or a sofa that is too big or too small for a room.”

“Try not to furnish a room with pieces that match. Mixing it up always makes a space more interesting.”

“Another thing is lighting. Incorrect brightness, temperature, or placement can ruin even the most beautiful space.”

“When painting a room, try to choose three to four shades of the same color. Buy sample cans and put the different shades on the wall before you decide. Paint can appear very different in a space, depending on the light, surroundings, and time of day.”

“When choosing fabrics for window treatments or more expensive furniture pieces, always ask yourself, *Will I like this in five years?* Sometimes a muted palette or just some texture goes a long way. You can always go bold with accessories, which are easier to change down the road.”



Rembaum's design aesthetic is "eclectic," which you can see in her own home, thanks to the unique pieces and layered look.

The lines are clean and more modern than traditional, which is Rembaum's personal style. However, she describes her design aesthetic as "eclectic." Her interiors have a layered, curated feel. "I appreciate multiple styles and believe that the key to good design is being able to mix them in a cohesive way," says Rembaum. "At the same time, I truly believe that a home should feel both beautiful and comfortable for the people who live in it."

Although construction on the house took only 10 months, the family took occupancy in February 2016; furnishing it has taken longer. "Since this is my home, I'm being selfish and am holding out for things I really want, where possible," says Rembaum. "The living room is a good example of this. I love to start designing rooms with some defining element, and I'm currently looking for a piece of art that will determine the palette and direction I go in select-



Where Sharon Shops for *ACCESSORIES*

“**Current Home** in the Golden Horseshoe is great and very close by.”

“Locally, I like **Sarza** in Rye. It has a wonderful selection of accessories and other things mainly from Africa.”

“I often spend weekends just walking through interesting neighborhoods in **New York**, looking for cool things.”

“In New York City, **Michele Varian** always has interesting finds.”

“For rugs, **Christopher Farr, Stark, and Marc Phillips** are some of my favorites.”

“**Allied Maker** in Brooklyn is one of my favorite places for lighting.”





In each room, including the kitchen, there is a mix of materials and finishes, which gives the design depth and warmth.

Where Sharon Shops for *FURNITURE*

“**Holly Hunt** is timeless and classic. Other stores that I like are **Room** in Greenwich and New York, **Putnam & Mason** in Greenwich, and **Ochre**, a London-based company that has a showroom in New York.”

“I’m a huge fan of vintage lighting, furniture, and art. I can literally spend hours on [**1st Dibs**] and **Incollect**, sourcing things.”

“I love **Lawson Fenning**, **Galerie Half**, and **JF Chen** in LA and often just go to their websites for inspiration.”

ing furniture and accessories.”

As with every project and house, there are challenges. The biggest challenge here was the lighting, which Rembaum describes as “one of the most important components of design.”

“I wanted light fixtures that were very expensive. I could not afford them,” says Rembaum. “As a result, I spent hours sourcing fixtures that were beautiful and within the budget. This led me to discover new lighting companies based here in the States and all over the world.”

One thing working in her favor was the beautiful property, which helped her decide to start with the windows. “I knew from the beginning that I wanted big windows, to allow lots of light and incorporate as much of the outdoors into the interior experience,” says Rembaum. “Everything else came from there.”

The rooms Rembaum has finished are true to her philosophy of creating something aesthetically pleasing but also livable and functional. But they didn’t come together overnight. “I wish I could say that it’s easier to design for myself than for a client,” says Rembaum. “In reality, it’s the same. I am a bit of a perfectionist, and I pay a lot of attention to detail. Designing is a process that sometimes takes time, whether it’s your own space or someone else’s.” ■■