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The awe-inspiring beauty and strength of Mother Nature serve as the guiding principles for the design of a couple's ultimate home on the Long Island Sound. *Written by Elaine Markoutsas / Photography by Jeff McNamara*

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ON THE COVER: In the entryway of a Manhattan home, architect Mary Burnham replicated the original architectural detailing with rope molding. A rug by Kate Blee for Christopher Farr, a console by Hervé Van der Straeten and vases by Robert Kuo create a stunning welcome. *Page 260*

INTERIOR DESIGN / **LINDA RUDERMAN, LINDA RUDERMAN INTERIORS, INC.**
ARCHITECTURE / **DON H. AITKEN, SHOPE RENO WHARTON**
HOME BUILDER / **KEN BACCO, BACCO INC.**
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / **JANICE PARKER, JANICE PARKER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

COASTAL RETREAT

RISING FROM A RUGGED STONE OUTCROP ON THE WATER, A HOME BUILT FOR A COUPLE LOOKING FOR A FRESH DESIGN BLENDS SEAMLESSLY INTO ITS ISLAND-LIKE SETTING.

WRITTEN BY **ELAINE MARKOUTSAS** / PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JEFF MCNAMARA**

Limelight hydrangeas spill over the stone retaining walls of a property overlooking the Long Island Sound, adding lush texture to the landscape; in the walled garden are tall Robusta junipers. A covered terrace boasts sunset views to New York City and features a fireplace that is also part of the master bedroom suite.

The rock is imposing: craggy, but softened by tufts of cordgrass. It's a commanding presence amid the Long Island Sound, one steeped in history—an astonishing 600 million years in age. Seduced by the site, a couple from Greenwich, Connecticut, who had always wanted to live by the water, quickly enlisted a formidable design team—designer Linda Ruderman, architect Don H. Aitken, landscape architect Janice Parker and builder Ken Bacco, who has since retired—along with art curator Margot Stein, owner of Margot Stein Gallery, to create their dream "bucket-list" home, a comfortable place to host their family of three grown children and seven grandchildren. The property informs the palette with references to the beach and water through pale peach, dusty aqua, beiges and creams. "Every room you walk into faces water," Ruderman says. "We wanted to embrace the view, not upstage it."

Nature, however, wasn't as welcoming. "It was a very challenging site," Aitken says. "The 1.8-acre property seems almost island-like but is connected back to the shoreline by a sandy causeway." The restrictive outline of the rocky grounds, along with stringent FEMA regulations, provided little flexibility for the layout of the house, he says, "but worked to our advantage with living spaces on the first and second floors facing south, toward the views of the Long Island Sound." The 10,000-square-foot "stone country estate"—as the team refers to it—is built to last in environmentally challenging conditions. All exterior doors and windows are solid mahogany, and the roof is slate instead of a more vulnerable wood shingle.

While the wife has a passion for antiques, the couple embraced a cleaner look for the interiors that Ruderman punctuated with Biedermeier style. A key aspect was bringing in silk and wool rugs from Orley Shabahang, which

Chunky stone pillars anchor a serpentine stainless-steel-and-cable stairway leading to the water. Plantings include spreading English yews with pockets of mixed creeping sedum, thyme, delosperma and purple fountain grasses.

The footprint of the living room dictated a symmetrical layout. Here, designer Linda Ruderman placed sofas back to back, separating them with a console, and mirror-imaged most of the furniture; the cocktail table is Bel-Air by John Boone and customized by Ruderman. Two custom Biedermeier wooden armchairs are upholstered in Weitzner's Marisol fabric. The stools are custom Biedermeier from Gaisbauer in Westport, Connecticut, and the custom rug is from Orley Shabahang.

An intimate sitting area off of the guest bedrooms hosts Pershing chairs with custom walnut legs from Edward Ferrell and Lewis Mittman, teamed with a bronze Josef coffee table featuring a glass top from Studio Van den Akker. The playful seagull artwork, titled *Rare Bird*, is by Sibel Kocabasi.

Below, left: An early-19th-century Italian Biedermeier chest purchased at Cedric Dupont Antiques in Palm Beach, Florida, stands to the left of the living room fireplace, which features a custom limestone mantel from Chesney's. A zebrawood mirror from John Boone hangs above the chest.

Below, right: Instead of a traditional stairwell chandelier, the homeowners opted for an artistic cascading piece by Sharon Marston that features 610 handblown glass orchids and garlands of 18-karat gold in amber tones.

A dramatic ocean view shares billing with another chandelier by Marston, this time above the dining room's white lacquered table from Daniel Scuderi. An 84-inch vintage gilded-walnut starburst convex, purchased at Carl Moore Antiques in Houston, hangs above a dark walnut console with gilt doors from Jean de Merry.

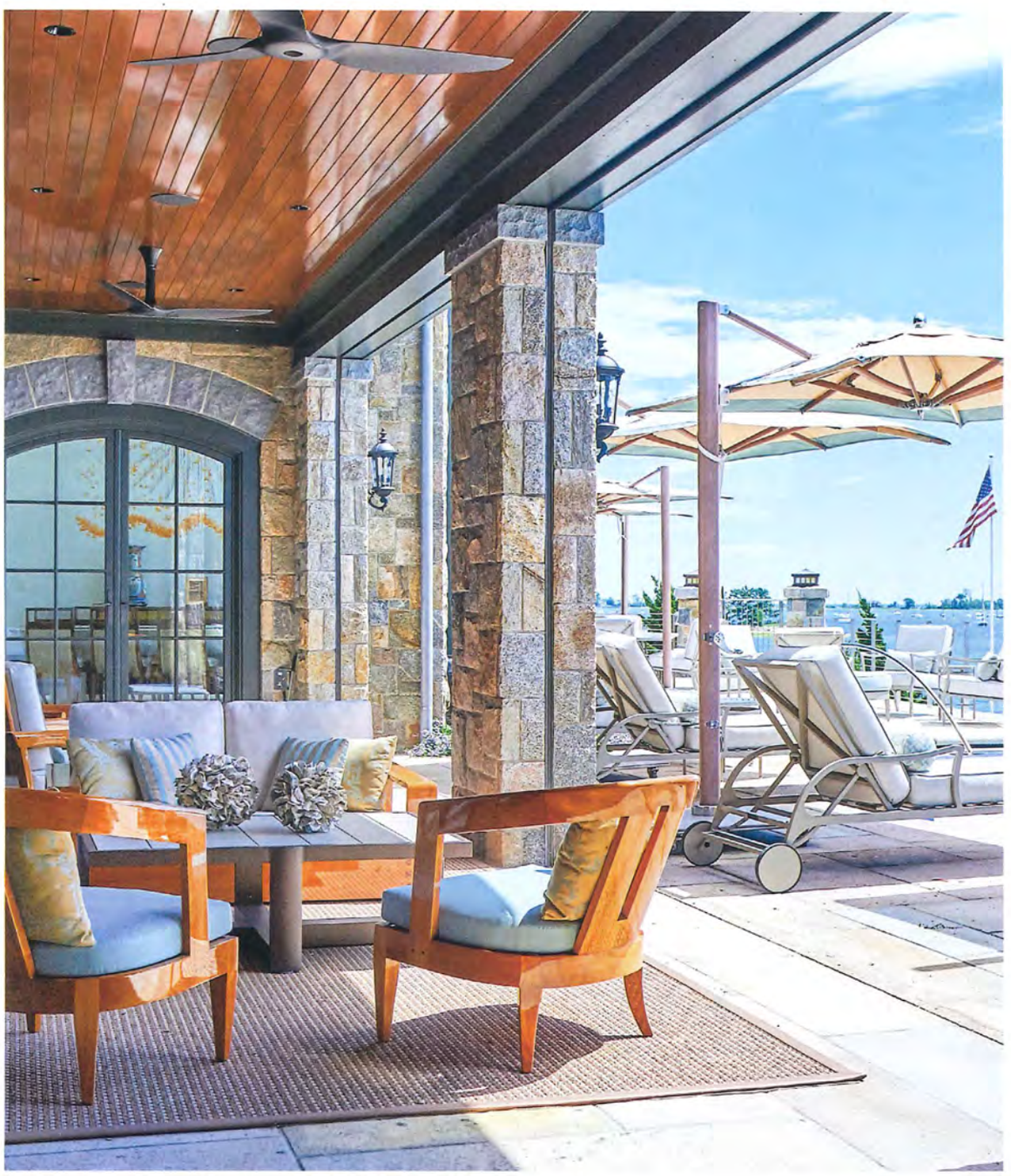
are handmade and washed for softness. The wife fell in love with the look when she saw an ad for the company in a magazine. "I love the modern aesthetic," she says, "and I wanted a more eclectic style."

The long living room suggested a divided layout that's largely a mirror image, with a custom limestone fireplace on one side flanked by a pair of early-19th-century Biedermeier chests and custom John Boone convex zebrawood mirrors. Ruderman introduced large glass coffee tables so as not to draw attention or interrupt the eye span, creating a flow through the space. Although the dining room dimensions are modest, its volume deceives, with a 22-foot-high ceiling and an 18-foot-high window with a southern view the designer did not want to block. Her solution to fill the space: a handblown amber glass chandelier by London-based Sharon Marston. The light fixture has various-sized glass bells that are gradiently hued, from light at the top to dark at the bottom, hanging on fiber-optic LED strings.

In the kitchen, Ruderman prepared for large family gatherings with a custom banquette built into the back of a curved island teamed with an oval glass-and-walnut table. A decorative painter finished cabinetry in a distressed taupe and cream, and the designer maintained these neutral tones in the adjacent family room, which boasts a stone fireplace wall.

Outside, Parker followed the lead of the site for the landscaping. "The architecture is this rock," she says, referring to the grounds. To accent the land, Parker employed local native granite and fieldstone veneers for

Calacatta Caldia marble tops the kitchen's 4-by-14-foot island, which has curved banquette seating built into it. A custom oval table from Daniel Scuderi handles large gatherings; the polished-nickel Compass pendant lights are from Waterworks.



The loggia, accessible from the living room, dining room and office, features comfortable teak lounge chairs and a sofa from Sutherland finished in marine gloss, like the ceiling. For relaxing on the terrace, sun chaises from McKinnon and Harris are sheltered by Tuuci umbrellas.

hardscaping and designed a serpentine stair with landings that offer delightful pockets of plantings with sedum and thyme. "I wanted to bring in some crunchy, interesting texture and color closer to the house," she explains.

But the wife also wanted roses and an English garden—no small task on the ruddy, weather-beaten site, which had lost much of its precarious vegetation to Hurricane Sandy. "Native plantings needed to be salt-tolerant," says Parker, who delivered a lush, romantic cottage look in the more intimate areas around the house with hardy Rugosa roses and blooms such as Montauk daisies. Hydrangeas spill out in borders: macrophilus mopheads, Limelight, some Nikko Blues. "I was grateful to create raised plant beds, with flowers and seasonal display," she adds. And in this coastal setting, "an infinity pool was a no-brainer," Parker says, pointing out how the pool seamlessly blends into the sound.

One of the most beautiful terraces to take in this view is from the master bedroom, a tranquil space in an envelope of blue-green watery hues. "You feel like you're on a boat," the wife says. Upholstered walls create a cozy ambience, and a custom Biedermeier-style bed adds a warm element. French doors on both sides lead to a curving porch, where there's an outdoor fireplace and a killer view of New York City. It is the ideal place to end the day. "My husband and I go around pinching ourselves," the wife says. "It's sheer perfection—a dream come true."

The turreted office is appointed with a custom CEO Maverick desk by Dakota Jackson as well as a pair of Eames chairs. Wire Custom Lighting's Milano Andre fixture, with frosted diffusers and a polished-nickel frame, crowns the room.

A custom walnut four-poster bed in the master bedroom nods to Biedermeier style. Walls are clad in Hodsoll McKenzie damask in watery shades of blue; the pattern repeats in the quilted duvet from Home Boutique of Greenwich in Connecticut and in the custom rug made by Marc Phillips. The reeded bedside chest with a stone top is by Nancy Corzine, and the mercury glass lamp is by Allan Knight.

The mother-of-pearl Aphrodite wallcovering from Maya Romanoff adds a shimmery glow to the powder room with its layering of handcrafted capiz shells. A simple sink is set into an onyx-bronze-and-nickel console from Sherle Wagner; the bronze-framed mirror is also from Sherle Wagner.

Soft greens and beiges create a soothing atmosphere in a guest bedroom. Zimmer + Rohde's Dunning Embroidery fabric was used for the duvet, and Kemble Embroidery, also by Zimmer + Rohde, covers the camelback chair from Custom Interiors along with the valance and pillows. Kravet's Tremont bench sits upon a Stark rug in Lichen.

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–LINDA RUDERMAN