

## studied simplicity

Iron rebar is woven in hand-dyed white light from south-facing windows. Neutral tones keep the space calm, while natural materials such as a raw green rug, linen curtains, and cotton upholstery add texture. Layered, inspired lighting from Crate & Barrel complements the new built-in bookshelves.

A Second Empire diamond in the rough exudes practical luxury after a skillful makeover

WRITTEN BY MALLAN O'BRIEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL D. LEE

▶ [VISIT OUR VIDEO BLOGGING PAGE](#)



IN THIS ROOM, a paper Poppo light fixture by Marc Spagnoli hangs from the ceiling, its glow appearing to float. On the wall are framed reproductions of vintage maps from the 1800s. A view across the entry hall into the dining room reveals a colorful palette with subtle color shifts.



SECONDARY ARTS: A pair of Massachusetts artist Marshall Moulton's and antique scientific instruments from Currier Collections in Boston add complexity to the living room's open design.



It's hard to tell whether this Second Empire house in the center of Concord, Massachusetts, is a big house that feels human-scale or a small house that feels mighty. With its 10-foot-high ceilings and mansard roof, the 1884 structure, the Yellow SE, South house, is white and ornate all over the same time. Its interior designer Lisa Therapopoulos, R., it's an architectural style in which "the full volume is experienced."

In line with that heritage, Therapopoulos, whose own Concord home was featured in *Design New England* ("Well-Being" January/February 2019), set to work laying out a calm and neutral interior plan that would be comfortable and elegant but never fussy. Her clients — a home-building developer and an at-home mom with a master's degree in holistic health — wanted to respect the history of the house but not dwell in

the past. Especially the recent past. The house, cited as a key intersection in scientific districts, was "biding its place in time," says the developer. With its classical exterior and listed status, the dwelling, which had been on and off the market a handful of times over the span of a few years, looked perfect.

But with its east-west orientation and location within walking distance of town, the light-filled house felt like the right fit for its new owners, whose three children were approaching and already in college. Although they didn't exactly determine — the house is 4,000 square feet — the couple were happy to give up the maintenance of a pond, stream, and barn on the 10-acre site they left behind in a more rural part of town.

**Shades of Green**  
 "When it comes to design practices that are healthy for people and the planet," says interior designer Lisa Therapopoulos, who planned her own home to address her clients' sensitivities. By being conscious of health and air quality, she says, "you can not only welcome home by what beauty, but your body can rest, relax, and appreciate." For this project, she specified natural paints from Farrow & Ball throughout and low VOC finishes for the brick floors. For the master bedroom, the best and slipperiest (but by no means shiny) of Concord, Massachusetts, she chose antique pine from Currier Collections in Boston, and vintage wood finishes. Keeping pieces more sophisticated and vintage items added where appropriate. "Not only is this strategy better for the environment," says Therapopoulos, "it tends to be more authentic, collected, and resonant with the design."



100 DESIGNERIDEAS.COM/2017/04/04/2017-04-04-01

Designer and clients agreed on a palette of muted colors with variations on light neutrals and stone tones on the walls and glossy complementary colors on the trim. "The tone is one of quiet sophistication," says Sharp, whose firm, Lisa Sharp Design, is also in Concord. "This envelope could be formal, but the clients wanted the luxury of comfort and ease — not formality." Although the scheme is monochromatic and there is a strong sense of continuity, each room feels distinct.

Sharp tapped the wife's love of gardening and nature to inform the design. For example, an oversize pendant made of meticulously hand-folded paper "lotus" makes a grand gesture in the living room. "The light fixture is about not being too serious in this traditional framework," says Sharp. "That's a theme throughout the house."

Luxury comes by way of studied simplicity, with textural changes repeating spaces and adding interest. "When you strip away the color," says Sharp, "you see all that 'dark light.'" In the living room, a sea-green rug transitions to the pale gray fluted column below on the chair and the soft beige linen curtains, while the black marble fireplace surround contrasts with glass screens.

In the family room, where a wall was removed, allowing light from the middle living room to flood the kitchen, new built-in bar stools, modern lines, lending elegance to the room.

Two ceramic vases, a cabinet, and a table lamp are all painted in Sherwin & Williams' "Dove." The monochromatic scheme has a calming effect on the psyche, says interior designer Lisa Sharp. The pendant lights by Thomas O'Brien for Visual Comfort became the room's focal point. In the living room, a pair of botanical prints by Michael Cummings add a touch of nature.





**THE MASTER BEDROOM** is a bright yet peaceful respite. Natural textures, such as the linen-blend upholstery on the custom bed, provide delicate sensory input. A Capiz shell chandelier from West Elm accessorizes the master bath (BELOW).



The kitchen was gutted and new custom cabinets by Crown Point Cabinetry of Claremont, New Hampshire, were taken all the way to the ceiling. The two cupboards framing the kitchen's north-facing windows have glass-fronted doors, which lighten the look and seem to expand the view. Large white pendant lights with brass detailing are a striking focal point above the island. Off the kitchen, a 375-square-foot deck was transformed into a year-round sunroom.

The simplicity of the palette endures in the dining room. Linen pendants and a trestle table offer both comfort and structure. Six-foot-tall, narrow botanical prints create a vignette by a bar cart. That rectangular geometry can be found in details throughout the space. "You might not be aware of it," says Tharp of the subtly repeated shapes, "but it means you experience the house in a different way — and have a sense of calm because of it."

FOR MORE  
DETAILS,  
SEE  
RESOURCES

For the master suite, a small bedroom became an elegant bath. A marble vanity and oversize hand-cut subway tiles are understated indulgences. To add "a little sparkle," Tharp sourced a Capiz shell chandelier.

Aside from her signature dramatic lighting choices ("Lisa made me appreciate lighting in a way I never had before," says the wife), Tharp allows spaces and people rather than a particular style to drive her work. "I don't have a look," says the designer. "I have ingredients. My inspiration comes from three things: architecture, setting, and the clients — who they are and how they want to feel in their space." In this case, she says, "they were ready to go spare."

"It's a big house, but it feels natural," says the husband. "We wanted a fresh start." ■

