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CLASSIC EXAMPLE

TRADITIONAL FORMS PEPPERED
WITH CONTEMPORARY TOUCHES
PROVIDE A FRESH BACKDROP FOR A
CONNECTICUT COUPLE'S HOME.

WRITTEN BY MINDY PANTIEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRIA GIOVAN

ARCHITECTURE / JOHN GASSETT AND JERRY HUPY, SHOPE RENO WHARTON
INTERIOR DESIGN / DAVID KLEINBERG AND LANCE SCOTT, DAVID KLEINBERG DESIGN ASSOCIATES
HOME BUILDER / BRIAN MACDONALD, DAVENPORT CONTRACTING
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / WESLEY STOUT AND ELISA MIRET-POLLINO, WESLEY STOUT ASSOCIATES

Design icon Albert Hadley believed decorating was “about creating a quality of life, a beauty that nourishes the soul.” To which his protégé—and design superstar in his own right—David Kleinberg would add, “In our world there are people who design rooms for Instagram. I design rooms for living.” That philosophy, along with Kleinberg’s signature ability to put a fresh face on traditional design, held instant appeal for a couple preparing to leave the Westport residence where they raised their three daughters in favor of a home with a more relaxed plan. “We wanted something that would work for just the two of us but that would also be a draw for our kids and grandkids,” says the husband.

The couple saw Kleinberg and his associate, Lance Scott, as the perfect pairing with local architects John Gassett and Jerry Hupy (who, ironically, the couple first discovered when vacationing down south). “We knew we wanted a team that included an interior designer who would select furnishings with the architecture in mind,” explains the wife, “as well as surround us with artwork and other pieces we’ve accumulated over decades.”

It was also important to the homeowners that the architecture remained consistent with the local vernacular, and Gassett and Hupy determined that a gambrel home best fulfilled this request. “You find gambrels throughout the Connecticut shore, and unlike the inherent grandeur of a Georgian, this style has a casual elegance that was perfect for them,” says Gassett. With its western red cedar shingles and painted iron-gray trim, the residence, which was constructed by general contractor Brian Macdonald and his team, is sited to have a welcoming street presence.

The friendly feeling flows inside. “One of the things that informed the interiors was their collection of art, items

and ephemera,” says Hupy of the homeowners. He and Gassett articulated niches and shelving to highlight the clients’ photography and collections, and then Kleinberg and Scott introduced custom-scale furnishings as complements. On one side of the living room, for example, a woven cotton sofa and an Andrew Moore photo share a niche, while on the opposite end in another alcove, a Tina Barney image and a Christophe Côme console are just steps from a table with turned legs. Such genre blending strikes at the core of Kleinberg’s “traditional now” philosophy, which emphasizes a classic approach while reflecting the current time.

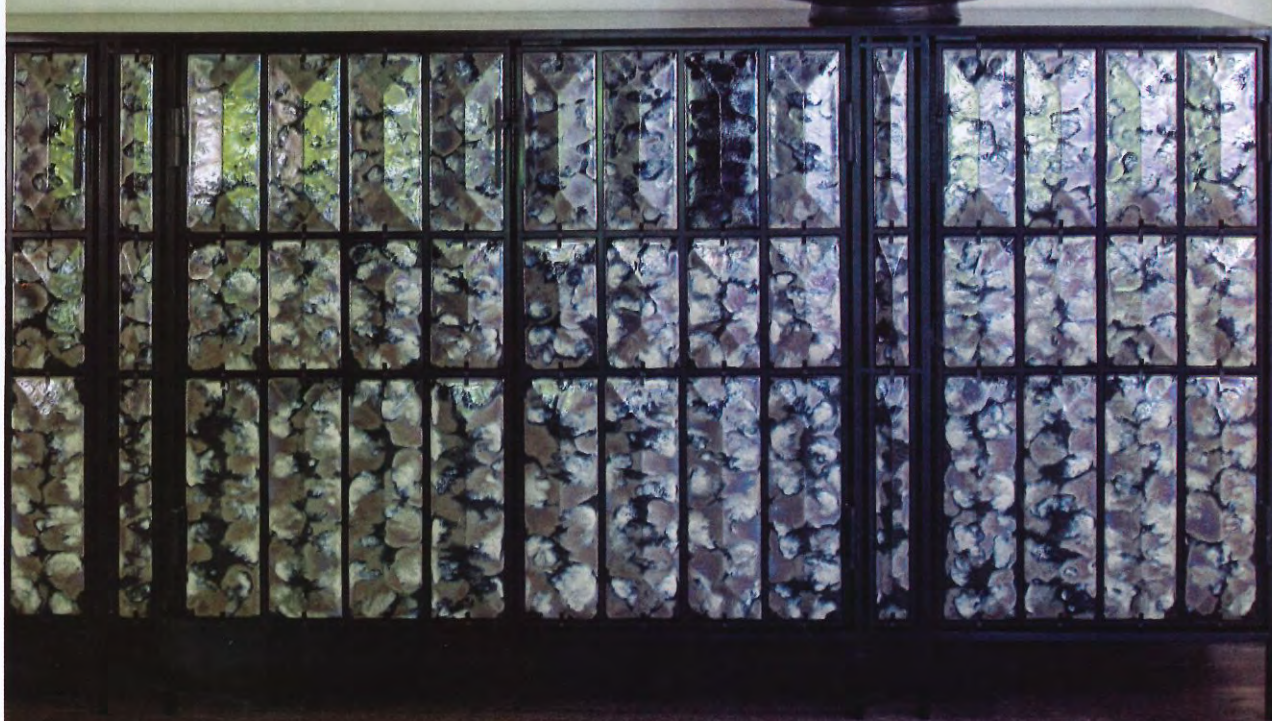
“In the 1980s I might have used chintz, but now I use a textural pattern instead,” says Kleinberg, pointing to the raised diamond pattern on the room’s armchairs and the nubby texture on the rug. Mixed metals—nickel-and-brass floor lamps in the living room, and stainless steel on the kitchen stove hood—add another layer of interest, and in the master bedroom, woven-silk walls enveloping a parchment-covered bed and a suede ottoman further illustrate his point. “You don’t have to have seven colors in a room to keep it from feeling bland,” he points out. “Texture is color.”

There was discussion at the start of the project over whether to have a separate formal dining room. That debate ended with a single, contemporary-leaning open space and two tables that expand to seat 24 as needed. Thanks to a thoughtful molding package, the generously scaled room retains a sense of intimacy. “Trimwork dramatically changes the proportion of a room,” says Hupy. “This room is sized to accommodate more than 20 people, but the detailing makes it also feel perfect for two people reading books.” Further upping the ante is the family room, where caned-back sofas, a vintage Italian light fixture and a stained concrete table harmoniously coexist. As Scott explains, “Whenever possible we took the traditional layout up a notch by including artisans who are working in the now.”

In keeping with the architecture, landscape architect Wesley Stout and project designer Elisa Miret-Pollino opted for a traditional landscaping approach in the front of the house that included a retaining wall fashioned from granite, and an expanse of lawn softened with ornamental grasses. “Conceptually we tend to keep the front of a house green and simple, and place color in the back where you can sit and enjoy it,” says Stout. The end result is a home that welcomes clean-lined modern interjections while still respecting the surroundings. “The older we get, the younger we want to appear, and I think that holds true for how we live as well,” says Kleinberg. “And just like us, our rooms should age gracefully.” ■

GENRE BLENDING STRIKES AT THE CORE OF KLEINBERG’S “TRADITIONAL NOW” PHILOSOPHY.

Architecture meets interior design in the dining room, where a niche was designed to create a frame for art. Here, a Tina Barney photograph shares the space with a Christophe Côme bronze-and-glazed-ceramic console from the Cristina Grajales Gallery.



Building on his theory that "texture is color," interior designer David Kleinberg set the stage in the living room with armchairs upholstered in Jim Thompson fabric and a hand-woven wool-and-silk rug from Patterson, Flynn and Martin. The slope arm sofa is from Anthony Lawrence Belfair.





Right: "They wanted a style of architecture consistent with their area of New England," says architect John Gasset, who, along with associate Jerry Hupy, designed a traditional staircase in keeping with the local Connecticut vernacular. The wainscoting on the landing walls bespeaks the level of architectural detailing throughout the house.

Opposite: "The first thing we purchased was a pair of pendants that span 42 inches in diameter," says Kleinberg about the vintage bronze dishes (there's a second in the living room) from 1stdibs. His firm designed the expandable polished-oak dining table, and the wing chairs are from Anthony Lawrence Belfair.



Opposite: The home's casual elegance continues in the screened porch where the teak-and-iron sofa and chairs by Munder Skiles tout fabric from David Sutherland. The custom iron-and-teak coffee table is also by Munder Skiles.

Below: "For the family room we piled up all these fabrics and thought, it's a lot—but we ended up using everything," says Lance Scott, Kleinberg's associate, about the caned sofas covered in Cowtan & Tout, and the JMF chairs upholstered in Jim Thompson. A Mary Van Cline sculpture rests on a custom steel-and-travertine console and the vintage Stilnovo pendant is from 1stdibs.





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WHO DESIGN ROOMS FOR INSTAGRAM.
I DESIGN ROOMS FOR LIVING.”

-DAVID KLEINBERG



Above: Landscape architect Wesley Stout and project designer Elisa Miret-Pollino paid attention to beautifying every aspect of the property, including the entrance to the side yard where a gravel path lined with day lilies, native inkberry and ornamental grasses leads to the pool and backyard.

Right: In the guest bedroom, touches of floral print through the use of Carleton V fabric for the drapes and Roman shades create a synergy between the indoors and outdoors. The soft blue of the Montauk bed linens serves as reminder that this is a shore residence.

