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House Beautiful

WHAT
MAKES A
ROOM
GREAT?



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on it is so fresh.

STEVEN GAMBREL: I will confess that blue and green are colors that the homeowners and I react to in general. But this house is next to the ocean, an inlet, and a lake. Everywhere around it is water, sky, reeds, grass. I tried to take what was given to me via the environment—very pale, atmospheric blues and greens, or as I sometimes say, sky into water into tree.

But what about the bright green walls in the family room? I've never seen a green like that in nature, except maybe in a *National Geographic* picture of exotic frogs.

In that room you have a Pop Art version of nature—a copper green hitting a true blue. It's easier for me to use colors like these when they're framed. With a raised panel detail, you can use a brighter color because it's broken up by white—and it's framed like a painting, not bleeding into infinity. It gives a punchier, crisp edge to the room. Of course, as soon as the room is painted, you feel like it's too much, but then the colors calm down when you layer them with textiles and furniture.

This house works on many levels. It's relaxed, yet meticulously detailed.

Besides beauty and spirit, my office is really focused on the way a house works. We like to label and organize linen closets. We figure out the way people should hang family photographs in a hallway. Pantries are labeled for products. In the family room, we have antique Belgian bins that store board games. I try to provide the most functional background possible so that my clients can have the freedom to live in the moment. If the weather is suddenly cool and gray, they know they can pull up a table and eat in front of the fireplace.

What makes a room great?

A point of view. This means you come up with an idea for a scheme and you determine what the use of the room is and its overall spirit—and you stick to the concept until you bring it to fruition. You don't deviate along the way, which means you can't buy everything you fall in love with.

What's the deal with you and midcentury modern furniture? There's quite a bit of it here, including classic signed pieces.

I used things from every decade of the 20th century and a few from the 21st. It's not the pedigree I was looking for—it's more about clean and simple. I wanted everything to have a chunky, useful, casual quality to it, and a similar level of detail. I didn't want the contrast of pieces with too much intricacy.

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**WHAT MAKES
THIS ROOM
GREAT**

THAT ROPE
CHANDELIER

THE MIX OF
LIGHTING FIXTURES

OPEN SHELVES

BLUE LEATHER
CUSHIONS ON THE
DINER STOOLS



**WHAT MAKES
THIS ROOM
GREAT**

THE GIANT PHOTO,
LIKE A WINDOW
WITH AN OCEAN
VIEW

THE WAY THE BED IS
DRESSED

A TAILORED LOOK IN
DREAMY BLUES

OLD SCIENTIFIC
LAMPS SHAKE IT UP