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modern glamour

LYNNE SCALO'S
DRAMATIC DESIGN
IN **RIDGEFIELD**

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A sunken lounge adjacent to the kitchen is drenched in sunlight thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows and a glamorous globe light that reflects the room's colorful accents, making reading the morning paper a cheery affair.

by SUZANNE GANNON photographs TIM STREET-PORTER

show stopper

Part designer, part director, **Lynne Scalo** transforms the interior of a historical Ridgefield Victorian into a colorful, light-filled space steeped in drama



An early 19th-century Victorian gets a fresh look from shots of color and contemporary furnishings, including a carpet with a geometric pattern.



Five minutes into a conversation with Lynne Scalo and you're not surprised she once worked on stage. Backstage, centerstage, and in the wings, the self-described "theater rat" is a one-woman design spectacular.

"I express a client's story through interpretation," says the coltish and pony-tailed Scalo, who began fashioning her own furniture designs 12 years ago and then made the transition into a complementary and simultaneous career as an interior designer. "I'm the writer and the director."

A decade into her second craft, she says, her clients come to her because they "appreciate the beauty" of her work. The relationship begins with somewhat of a mutual casting call and then progresses to a place in which Scalo ultimately calls the shots. And her clients pretty much give her carte blanche.

The clients, whom the designer describes as "extraordinarily joyful," are a young couple with three children



above The spacious, sun-filled kitchen affords ample room for both cooking and entertaining. opposite: A rock-crystal pendant chandelier takes centerstage above the dining table. A breakfast displays glassware and dinnerware.

and a penchant for art and theater. Their house—a candy-wrapper of Victorian whimsy with pink window casements, red shutters, avocado siding, and a periwinkle porch ceiling—dates to 1826 and sits on a main drag of historic Ridgefield, a community founded in 1708 when 24 families from settlements on Long Island Sound bought the uplands from the Ramapoo Indians.

Upon getting the job, Scalo went to work on her set, taking her cues from the client’s directive—“kid-friendly with an elegant vibe”—and from existing objects such as a stained-glass window, which she used to determine a color way. In addition, she wove in historical touches, such as a marching-soldier motif that refers to the area’s Revolutionary War legacy and the 1777 Battle of Ridgefield, which sealed the town’s fate in the history books.

“I used objects of an appropriate scale and was very careful in editing and choosing just the right pieces,” she says, adding that her use of color blocking created a historical reference implemented in a more graphic way.

The result is a modern décor with sudden shots of color—a blood-red day bed, magenta accent pillows, a blue-patterned carpet—and varied uses of texture—hide and hair rugs, felted pillows, a velvet headboard, a Lucite coffee table, and damask and grasscloth wall coverings—that constitute a surprise ending of sorts for a structure approaching its 200th birthday.

“Art is progressive and traditional, something that lasts 200 years,” she says. “What I do is traditional too. Everything is based in historical reference.”

Traditional elements are indeed readily apparent on a stroll through the house. A square dining room with a corner cabinet for displaying china and silver is finished in flocked-velvet damask wallpaper in a deep royal blue and features English tea service in the style of George III and a mirror made of Italian glass. In the office, a leather lolling chair from her own collection serves as a reading nook beneath a pressed-tin ceiling and a crown cornice featuring Revolutionary War soldiers. On several walls,





left and below:
A large study features a leather lolling chair from Scalo's own collection and a crown cornice decorated with a Revolutionary War detail.
opposite: Scalo mixes traditional and modern elements to effect a fresh vibe. English tea service in the style of George III contrasts with a contemporary table with a shimmering base. The walls are covered in a flocked damask paper. The mirror is Italian glass.



*"I used objects of an **APPROPRIATE SCALE** and was very careful in **EDITING** and **CHOOSING** just the **RIGHT PIECES.**"*
—LYNNE SCALO



she used Venetian plaster for a surface that is entirely "wipe-able."

Upstairs in the master suite, where a window onto the street presented a challenge, Scalo devised a curtain wall and placed the bed, with a luxuriant and oversized tufted headboard in blue velvet, in front of it. To develop her color scheme for the room, she centered on an intricately detailed Palladian window located in the master bath that features elements of pink, blue, and green. She reflected these hues in a mercury-glass mirror, walls fin-

ished in platinum leaf, petite opalescent tiles in the bath, a Missoni-like bed coverlet, and a graciously curved Louis XV-style chair covered in an upholstery that mimics a thicket of green grass.

Throughout the house, Scalo capitalized on arched doorways and high ceilings, installing gracious draperies in the den and the dining and formal living rooms, as well as a kitchen chandelier with delicate rock-crystal pendants. She expanded horizontal spaces with sofas that are low and long and free of ornamentation and fancy sil-



above and right:
In the entry,
Scalo's color palette
transitions from neutral
tones in the front of the
house to brighter colors
in the rear.



above: Visitors to this 1826 Victorian are likely surprised by its contemporary interior. In a living room with high ceilings, Scalo employs neutral tones and sleek, low-slung contemporary pieces from her own collection.

houettes. And to give the home a timeless feel, she chose furnishings from a mix of periods, including, among others, Louis XIV-inspired chairs with heart-shaped backs in the coral-colored guestroom, a glittering 70s-style disco ball light in the bright white sunroom off the kitchen, and a mid-century-influenced console in the den.

"I always know what the outcome will be," says Scalo who cites the abstract Expressionists Mark Rothko and

Franz Kline among her influences. "I make it happen by putting together lots of chips and blocks."

Many of those chips and blocks can be found at her eponymous shop, which she calls a retail studio, located in downtown Westport behind a tiny portico. It features a nearly exclusive array of her own designs. There is a bench covered in Mongolian lamb's wool, a lacquered chagrine console, a tufted gray sofa, a chandelier featuring



crystal vases of various shapes and sizes, and a pendant fixture made of topaz globes.

"I have a desire to create; it turns me on," she says. "I want to be around inspired people."

From her Westport base, Scalo has completed projects for clients in far-flung places like London, Frankfurt, and Southampton, as well as many closer to home in Greenwich, New Canaan, Southport, and Darien.

You could say the theater rat has mounted her own traveling road show. **ab**

RESOURCES

Lynne Scalo Design, 203-222-4991;
lynnescalo.com

Scalo shows her hand in the upstairs guest bedroom, where she injects a sense of whimsy with a heart-shaped Louis XV chair, a red daybed, and a grasscloth wall covering in coral. **below, left:** A Palladian window in the master bath inspires the entire color scheme for both the master bath and the master bedroom. **opposite:** Scalo performs a trick of the trade, hiding a street-facing window behind a panel of drapes. She gives the room color with a plush, blue-velvet tufted headboard, a Missoni-esque coverlet, and a Louis-inspired chair covered in a grass motif.

