

INTERIOR DESIGN ISSUE

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MAY 2014 | \$5.95

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with international
correspondent
Evan Osnos

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A series of textures across three spaces adds visual interest: a tufted custom sofa in the living room; a twig table found in London and placed on overlapping cowhide rugs in the front hall, and the hand-blown, glass-fronted sideboard in the dining room. *Opposite:* A triptych of mirrored disks framed in white-washed teak reflects sunlight that streams in through large dining room windows.



COMING FULL Circle

One Greenwich couple proves that you can
indeed come home again

by **SUZANNE GANNON**

photographs by **TIM STREET-PORTER**

Sometimes you have to leave a place to realize how much you were meant to be there. This could be said for one half of the couple that owns this white Colonial built in 1922. It was inspired by Mount Vernon, the gracious manse with grand columns that still sits on the Virginia bank of the Potomac River and that was for nearly forty years the home of George Washington.

Down a narrow lane lined with stones dug up decades ago and studded with trees with twisted trunks, this house, only a short distance from Greenwich's main drag, was home to the owner, her two siblings and her parents for seventeen years. In 1987 the family moved out, and twenty years later, "by happenstance" her husband says, the house went on the market. Already residents of Greenwich, the couple—he an attorney, she a former cable executive—were in the midst of



clockwise from above: Encased in original paneling and a smoky-blue, textured wall-covering, the library features a collection of historical letters and photographs. • The 1922 center-hall Colonial was inspired by Mount Vernon. • Blue glass sits atop a chrome and glass console table.

house-hunting in the area, and she recalled her fondness for her old home. They purchased it and moved in with their two children. The circle was complete.

“My favorite part of the house was the view from my bedroom window, which looks out over the backyard, rock garden and pool,” says the owner, whose daughter now sleeps in that bedroom. “[I remember] my father building the detached garage and my putting my handprint in the wet cement. The handprint is still there and I see it every day.”

And So It Begins

Measuring just over five acres in total and located not far from downtown Greenwich, the property includes a pair of rental dwellings you can hardly see: a pool (the amenity favored by the owner’s son); a tennis court where she played many a set (a few of them against Ivan Lendl) and where her daughter, ranked on the national circuit for juniors, now practices; a gardening shed; and a coop of

exotic chickens that supply fresh eggs daily.

Inside, the house encompasses 9,000 square feet that a few years ago became the canvas for interior decorator Lynne Scalo to appoint.

“I saw pictures of Lynne’s work in a magazine and just knew we would be a great match,” says the owner. “[Then] I went to her shop and fell in love with all the pieces in her store. I didn’t have an appointment, but Lynne immediately understood what I had in mind for the house. We were off and running from the very first day!”

“It’s a gradual work in progress,” says Lynne. “Having a client with an eye for art made things easy.”

With a sweeping gesture toward the décor in the entry hall, which cuts through the house from front to back like a bolt of light, Lynne says, “This [design] mixes the story of the house—the old, the new, we incorporated them into an updated environment.”

There is a Federal-style bench the owner received from her mother, and glass console with curved chrome legs,



At the rear end of the large living room, designer Lynne Scalo created another venue for conversation with comfortable club chairs. The wall presented an opportunity to add an element of glamour with a sculptural series of round mirrors that mimic bubbles aloft in the air.



The well-appointed living room is ready to entertain. Lynne calls the sofa, tufted on all sides, her "marshmallow" sofa. In the foreground is a pair of wing chairs embellished with gleaming nailheads.



A chandelier of striped glass spheres hanging at varied heights.

an Edvard Munch on the wall, and a gold and silver mirror with a Queen Anne motif and an antiqued patina.

“This house has such elegant proportions,” says Lynne. “This is old Greenwich.”

The patina of age is underscored by the careful placement of older pieces that hold meaning for the owner. A small trunk that dates to the 1800s and spent some of its life in the owner’s brother’s bedroom found a new home in the library. In the guest bedroom, there are an antique desk and rocking chair that were residents of the house when the owner’s family lived there.

The Colonial has history for the designer as well. Years ago she was hired by a previous owner to make some improvements. As she approached the house on the day she was to take a look on behalf of the present owners, she says, “I had the sense that I had been here before.” Validating her memory was the set of window treatments she found inside. She had installed them.

Lynne says it helped that her current client not only had an eye for art but also that she shared her love of silver, and silver balls in particular. Shiny spheres can be found in nearly every room of the house: above the stairwell in the front hall dangles a chandelier of gleaming balls aglow with light and suspended at varying heights; on the dining room table, balls are used as a centerpiece; and in a gallery adjacent to the dining room, mirrored concave disks are arranged on a triptych of wood-framed panels where they reflect the light that streams through the dining room’s French doors.

As a marked contrast, just off the front hall is a cozy library that departs in both palette and materials from the light and reflective appearance of the rest of the house. Dark, brooding and more likely to absorb light than broadcast it, the room shows the designer’s versatility.

Encased in dark wood paneling original to the house,

the library features silk-velvet draperies that block the sun with a sheen, and a smoky wall-covering that Lynne thought would showcase the owner's most notable collection: a curated selection of letters and autographed photos from presidents, historical icons like Albert Einstein and the Apollo astronauts, European royalty and first ladies such as Dolly Madison, Eleanor Roosevelt, Abigail Adams, Mary Todd Lincoln and Jackie Kennedy. The letters are etched in their own hand or pristinely typed and each is mounted beside portrait photographs cropped to fit a perfect oval.

Modern times are not far away, however. Beneath the sofa, Lynne placed a white rug of woven cowhides threaded with glinting silver strands that she says is completely kid-proof. Its owner concurs, attesting to a recent spill that was easily sponged away.

Lynne's signature glamour and lush brushstrokes are everywhere: in the black velvet wing chairs studded with silver nailheads and gleaming chrome legs; in the soft, suede-like sofa, reminiscent of a classic English one but tufted inside and out and bowed to envelop its sitter; in the dining-room sideboard that is fronted by hand-blown glass panels like mirrors. All reveal her appreciation for craft.

Elegance and glamour come in handy when the residents are entertaining, sometimes for friends, sometimes for philanthropic causes. Guests might enjoy Manhattans or bubbly in the spacious living room—in the old days likely known as the drawing room—luxuriating in the comfort of the wing chairs or the tufted



Rachel and Jack
snuggle up with the
family dog, Murray





The sunny game room accommodates two tables for players and plush chairs with footrests for referees or spectators. The black and white tile floor is a nod to an old-fashioned conservatory.





The centerpiece of the kitchen is a shiny stainless-steel island with a Carrara marble top. • *Opposite:* Lynne's touch for luxuriant fabrics and materials can be found upstairs in the master bedroom as well. Here she chose a faux-fox throw for the bed and hung an African feathered headrest on the wall. The curves of the oval bedside lamp echo those of the one-of-a-kind French table beneath it.

sofa while admiring Andy Warhol's "Watercolor Paint Kit with Brushes" above the fireplace. It's a flourish of color among serene hues and was used by the artist as the original from which he created a series of 500 as a benefit to the blind in New York City in the 1980s. In addition to several large abstracts in a variety of media, there is also the profile of a horse, whose sinuous contours are reflected in a curvy floor lamp. Lynne says the composition gives the room "an energy, a mood."

When the dinner bell rings, guests can migrate to the dining room, where pale blue Venetian plaster lends a magical touch. The motif of a chandelier of glass balls is echoed in delicate sconces that feature glass globes on slim metal rods.

Every home needs a place to play. In this case it is the sunroom, once known as the solarium, which the owner's father added on to the main structure. Equipped with two Lucite game tables designed by Lynne, it is equally appropriate for standard-fare matches of Scrabble and backgammon as well as late-night games of poker. High-backed chairs help players stay alert into the wee hours—which comes in handy when a game is on the line and an opponent threatens a royal flush. An

armchair and matching footrest, covered in a faux lamb's wool so soft you'd be tempted to take it home, provides a nice spot for napping.

Should anyone tire of Scrabble and opt for Words With Friends, there is a first-floor lounge just off the kitchen that houses a large powdery-purple sectional sofa perfect for kicking back with an iPad (which can often be found wedged between the cushions). A large-monitored computer is on hand.

As for the design and decoration process, Lynne says, "It's a dialogue, a conversation, a collaboration. It's the client's home."

For a client who has now called this house "home" twice, the dialogue ended quite beautifully. **G**

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