

MONVACELLI

DAVID KLEINBERG  
INTERIORS





# DAVID KLEINBERG INTERIORS

WRITTEN WITH MAYER RUS  
FOREWORD BY THOM BROWNE AND ANDREW BOLTON







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## FOREWORD

BY THOM BROWNE AND ANDREW BOLTON

David is fond of saying that he is the “evil spawn child” of Sister Parish and Albert Hadley, the revered interior designers who were his mentors for sixteen years before founding his own practice in 1997. There is some truth to David’s characteristically wry (self-)observation, for the singular way he envisions his inimitable interiors is filtered through the cerebral and analytical left brain of Hadley and the emotional and instinctual right brain of Parish. From Hadley, he gets his sense of scale, balance, and proportion as well as his discipline, precision, meticulousness, and fetishistic attention to detail; and from Parish comes his sense of color, texture, layering of materials, and playfulness as well as his emphasis on comfort, practicality, and highly evolved principles of applicability and appropriateness. These chromosomal comminglings have equipped David with a rather special skill, a kind of superhero power that is distinctly his own: to “see what isn’t there yet.” This preternatural gift stems from his insatiable curiosity and constant questioning: What if, why not, what could it be? His exquisitely discerning and discriminating furnished landscapes provide physical and tangible answers to these metaphysical questions.

Leafing through the pages of this book, it is difficult if nigh impossible to accurately date David’s interiors—they exist out of time and space. This spatiotemporal elusiveness is partly a result of David’s remarkable adeptness at effortlessly and seamlessly merging historical styles, creating formal and conceptual connections that defy easy chronological and geographical categorization. There is a democratic (fl)air to his interiors, a distinct lack of hierarchy that prevents your eyes from resting or settling on a particular piece of furniture. The platonic harmony that pervades each and every room in this volume emanates from his holistic and symphonic approach, an approach that extends beyond aesthetics to experiences. For David, how a room is “lived in” is just as important as how it is “looked at.” In this way, he is not unlike a couturier, who is constantly negotiating the formal and functional elements of dress. And like a couturier, collaboration is central to David’s design philosophy—collaboration with his clients as well as his fabricators, for interior design, like fashion, is an inherently collective endeavor. Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel once said that “an interior is the natural projection of the soul,” and this is precisely what David achieves in his calm, restrained, and understated furnished landscapes—a projection of his own soul as well as those of his clients.



# THE NEW WORLDLINESS OF DAVID KLEINBERG

BY MAYER RUS

At a time when standards of every kind are slipping, David Kleinberg is the exemplar of what it means to be a proper American interior designer. He embodies the increasingly vanishing virtue of building a room not by shopping but by thinking, not by “Like”-ing but by looking. He is a designer of the old school in the way that makes the new seem pallid and staid, a designer attuned to the enduring vivacity of beauty that is bone- rather than skin-deep. Intensely immersed in history, his work is the corrective to the spreading ill of scroll-and-swipe design, demonstrating how the erudition and worldliness of the past don’t simply enhance but enable vitality in the present. He offers the elixir for a cultural moment where novelty too often trumps knowledge, a moment where many designers have apparently failed to learn what any Renaissance painting could teach them: without background, without perspective, their work is destined to be superficial.

It has become a familiar trope to draw parallels between David Kleinberg the man and David Kleinberg the designer—refined, exquisitely tailored, elegant. But that surface comparison misses something more subtle and more intrinsic. Beneath the natty suits and old-world manners is an extraordinary emotional intuition that guides his designs. Along with his vast experience, that emotional intuition allows him to synthesize his clients’ needs and desires and “Give ‘em what they never knew they wanted!” (to borrow a quote from Diana Vreeland that hung on the bulletin board of his mentor Albert Hadley). He conjures spaces that are personal, evocative, functional, and timeless, yet capable of evolving—spaces that just *feel* right.

Kleinberg’s resume, like his tailoring, is impeccable. Apprenticed to several greats of American decorating, including but not limited to the eponymous founders of Parish Hadley, he is one of the last designers who learned the ropes—and tassels, and trim, and millwork—directly from those most knowledgeable. He reminisces about studying antiques through discourse with the great antiques dealers, perfecting drawing by standing at a drafting table alongside Albert Hadley, working in a studio where someone pulling out a book to show you this detail or that idea was *de rigueur*. His unalloyed appreciation for the work of those who came before informs his designs without constraining them.

In addition to having digested the classical rules of form, scale, and proportion, Kleinberg has absorbed the deeper truth that keeps them vital: knowing the rules allows you to break them. He is the most traditional of iconoclasts, or, put another way, the avatar of a New Worldliness: an American decorating idiom bringing the best of the past to bear on the questions of the present through an egalitarian connoisseurship that couples appreciation for craftsmanship and ancestry with a youthful disregard for strict orthodoxies of nation and era. Kleinberg’s designs embody a distinctly American ethos, building on values that stretch backward from the Enlightenment to create something fresh, dynamic, and modern.

Kleinberg designs for people who move in a world where “social” and “media” are not always joined at the hip—and when they are, his clients are likely to be the ones responsible. These are people who could work with anyone but choose him, repeatedly. Edith Wharton once opined, “There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.” Her analogy about the transmission of light and truth serves as an apt description of the decorator/client relationship, especially for Kleinberg. One of the reasons for his many repeat clients is his ability to be the mirror, reflecting each client’s desires in their interiors in very particular and intimate ways.

Kleinberg’s capacity to reanimate classical design elements in thoroughly contemporary, surprising ways is one of the special pleasures of his work. The confidence to embrace the unexpected and the taste to know when you’ve found it—that is the quintessence of David Kleinberg. Such discretion allows him to create spaces untethered to a single decorative style or era but unified by his thorough understanding of classical principles and modern needs. Eschewing the familiar iconography of modernism represented by Eames chairs and spartan rooms, he focuses instead on the modernist movement’s underlying ideals of clarity, openness, and flow. His interiors are fresh without being outré, contemporary and exciting without being bizarre. His work reflects a profound grasp of modernism not as a sharp break from the past but as a continuation of a proud heritage of exploring and responding to how people do—and could—live. With a kind of alchemical magic, he transposes the feeling of distant, nostalgic longing into a contemporary idiom, playing the chord of history on modern instruments.

There is a choreographic quality to Kleinberg’s work, a close attentiveness to the circulation of ideas, images, and people that pervades all his projects. “I like rooms where you can travel through them and don’t have to turn around to leave,” he has said, a simple



statement that simultaneously articulates a design philosophy that registers the past through a steadily forward-looking gaze. His rooms are designed to move you literally and figuratively, to be experienced from multiple points of view. Objects circulate through his projects as well, prized pieces from his clients' collections getting recontextualized, and treasures with entirely different pedigrees being brought together in conversation. He marshals objects from different eras—of history or of a client's life—to create rhythms that endow each project with a thematic continuity that may be subtle but so deeply rooted that it is felt even if not consciously perceived. Like a reprise of George Balanchine's famous command to "See the music, hear the dance," Kleinberg's interiors invite you to see the rhythm and feel the beauty. And like most Balanchine ballets, the designer's interiors don't have a specific plot or narrative; what binds them is the continuity of line, gesture, and movement.

Another hallmark of the designer's practice is its unpretentious practicality, another distinctly American virtue. The great decorator Billy Baldwin summed it up best (of course): "Decor must be, as the French say, *séant*, or suitable. Nothing is in good taste, regardless of its cost, unless it suits your personality and the way you live." That same spirit of pragmatism animates Kleinberg's richly layered interiors. As much as they are eloquent and beautiful, the spaces he designs are comfortable, welcoming, and brilliantly tailored for each client. His interiors feel effortlessly natural and right, obscuring the deeply intellectual apparatus that went into their creation. That is the gift Kleinberg gives to his clients, the gift of acumen, respect, listening, and clarity of vision that allows him to read into their needs the feeling of homecoming, even to an entirely new home.

Reflecting on his storied career, Kleinberg time and again returns to his early days working alongside Albert Hadley: "We would stand next to each other at a drafting board and we would say, 'What should this be? Could the stairs do this? What about? What if?' The great what ifs in design—that's how I learned." In Kleinberg's hands, "What if?" is not a mantra for the abstract process of creation but a question put within parameters, the place where the deific hand of inspiration reaches out to touch the mundane hand of practicality. It also represents one of America's least regrettable founding principles—what if there were a place without a king, what if there were a place safe for new ideas, what if we could take the brilliance of the Old World and transplant it in new, more vital soil? That optimism steeped in erudition is one of the defining features of Americanism—and the epitome of David Kleinberg.





## SUTTON PLACE

I've known the fashion designer Thom Browne for more than thirty years, since the time before he began making clothes. In fact, he often sweetly tells people that I was his first or second client when he began making suits. At some point long ago, he said that if he ever got to a place where he could buy a home that was worth doing, he hoped we'd work on it together. Lots of people say lots of things, but Thom really meant it. Many years later, he called to tell me that he and his partner, Andrew Bolton, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum, were looking at places in New York City, and they wanted me to accompany them on the journey.

The house they eventually settled on is a distinguished residence on Sutton Place originally designed by architect Mott Schmidt for Anne Vanderbilt in the early 1920s. I knew the place well as it is located just a couple blocks from my office. Plus, I had done another Mott Schmidt townhouse in Manhattan years earlier. Our original thought was that we could do a minimal renovation and simply furnish it, but I think we all knew that we were being deliberately naïve. Thom really doesn't do anything halfway. He and Andrew had a vision of returning the house to its original design, so we started by taking out the previous owner's decorative additions. Eventually it turned out to be a near-gut renovation: new baths, new kitchen, new floors, replacement windows, the removal of a terrace conservatory, and a complete configuration of the servants' quarters on the top floor to accommodate a new primary bedroom, bath, and dressing area.

Thom and Andrew never shared a single reference image for the interiors, but their approach was crystal clear. If there's one word that best describes the sensibility of this house, it's pristine. The house is classical, historic—it's not cozy per se, but it's not cold. The furniture layout in the living room, for instance, is classic English drawing room, but the pieces themselves span several centuries, styles, and attitudes. There's a pair of gilded English Sheraton-style settees flanking a Diego Giacometti table in front of the fireplace, along with a George

The facade of the early 1920s house that architect Mott Schmidt originally designed for Anne Vanderbilt.







**ABOVE:** An eighteenth-century leather-top octagonal table and eighteenth-century English gilt-framed mirrors occupy a landing. **OPPOSITE:** Augustus Saint-Gaudens's sculpture of Diana rests on a Gilbert Poillerat marble-top center table in the entry.









Nakashima live-edge walnut coffee table and tailored upholstery. In the drawing room, an early eighteenth-century English japanned bureau cabinet stands next to a bronze chair by Claude Lalanne. The mix in the sitting room includes a pair of Jacques Quinet cocktail tables, a vintage Swedish flatweave rug, an Edward Wormley midcentury sofa, and Märta Blomstedt lounge chairs covered in sheepskin. In the dining room, one table is English Regency and the other is a 1965 Nakashima design. The effect of these various time-spanning juxtapositions could have been jarring, but instead the mood is surprisingly harmonious, a by-product of Thom and Andrew's fixation on precision, line, and proportion.

The downstairs kitchen was an unfortunate 1950s renovation. The brief for this space was very clear. Thom wanted it to look like an old English back-of-house kitchen, with ceramic tiles floor to ceiling, a big work table, and a glazed wall partition to an anteroom with a breakfast table. We excavated to get better ceiling height, and we dug out the window wells to usher in more daylight. What was once a rather grim space is now quite welcoming. The big gesture in this house was the conversion of the top floor into a completely new primary bedroom, with a terrace that faces a communal garden and looks out to the East River. Andrew's sole request for this project was a space with a fanciful Chinese export-style wallpaper, and the bedroom turned out to be the perfect spot. You wouldn't think that a traditional scenic wallpaper would be the right backdrop for a Nakashima live-edge black walnut headboard, but it works. The room feels like a secret garden for Thom and Andrew's private enjoyment.

The artworks from the clients' personal collection reinforce the back-to-the-future ambience. There are pieces by William Merritt Chase, Georges Rouault, Norman Rockwell, Édouard Vuillard, Duncan Grant, the Miaz Brothers, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and many others—a decidedly eclectic mix that once again feels perfectly appropriate for the house as well as the homeowners. Once you step through the front door, you have a very clear picture of who lives here. That's the definition of successful decorating.

**PRECEDING:** In the sitting room, a pair of eighteenth-century George III settees flank a low table by Diego Giacometti. A 1948 egломise mirror by Robert Pansart hangs above the fireplace, and the coffee table is by George Nakashima. Architectural details added by DKDA reinforce the Georgian-style architecture. A portrait by John Singer Sargent rests on the mantel. The painting to the left is by John Kirby. **OPPOSITE:** Regency klismos chairs join a circa-1800 English table beneath Jansen sconces in the dining area. Painting by Georges Rouault.











**PRECEDING, LEFT:** A George I japanned bureau cabinet attributed to John Belchier, circa 1715, is paired with a Claude Lalanne Chaise Bambou bronze side chair. **PRECEDING, RIGHT:** An Anh Duong self-portrait hangs in the vestibule of a mirrored powder room. **ABOVE:** Original mahogany paneling in the library is enhanced by brass grillwork added by DKDA. **OPPOSITE:** In the library, an eighteenth-century Georgian mahogany sofa is paired with a Diego Giacometti coffee table, and a rococo mirror hangs above a Regency mantel. Painting by Henry Keppelmann.

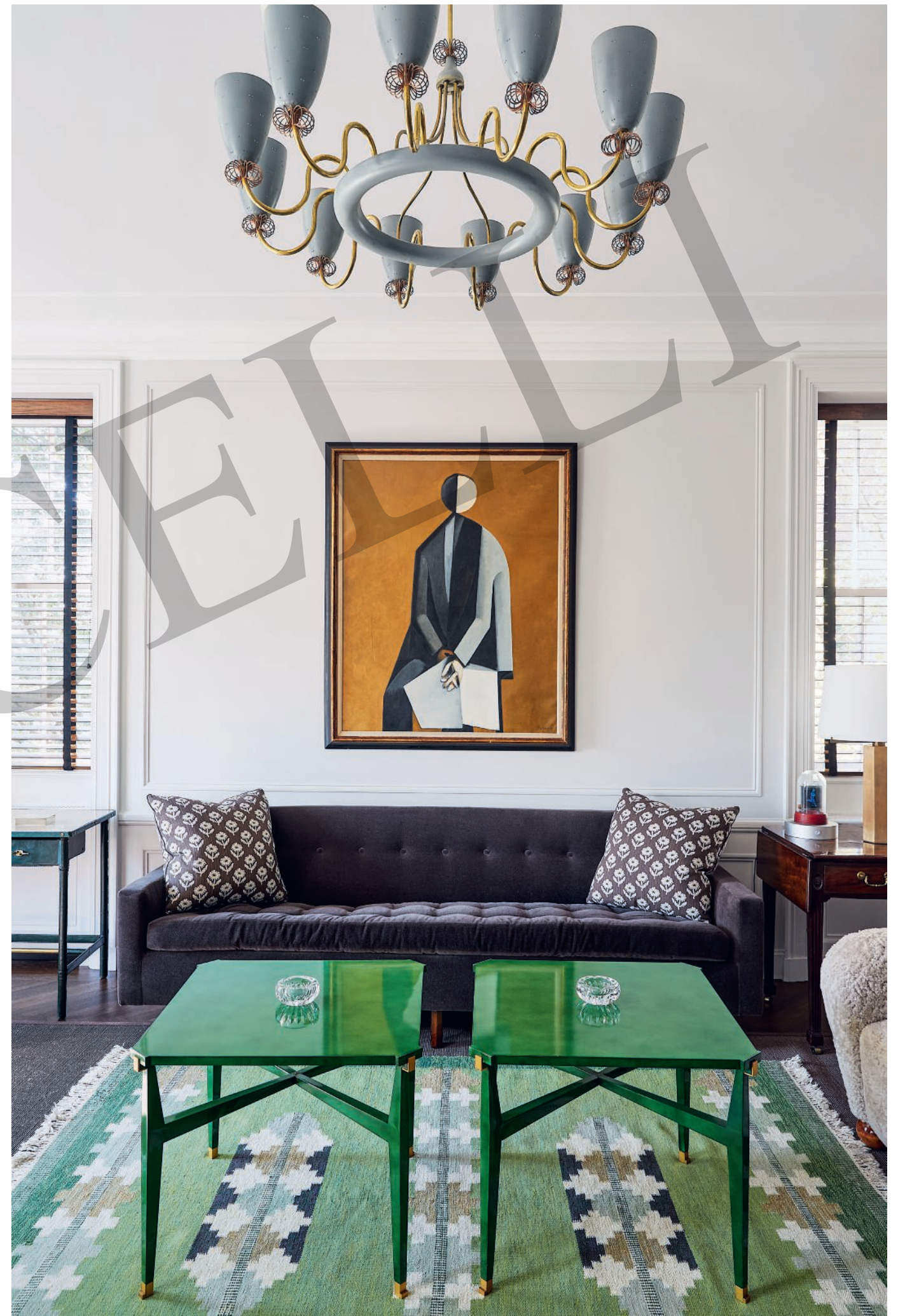




**RIGHT:** The completely reimagined cooking space is designed to evoke a traditional 1930s English back-of-house kitchen. **OVERLEAF, LEFT AND RIGHT:** A pair of green-lacquered low tables by Jacques Quinet sit on a vintage Swedish flatweave rug. An Edward Wormley sofa, Märta Blomstedt lounge chairs, a Paavo Tynell chandelier, and a card table and chairs by Jacques Adnet round out the decor. The paintings are by Duilio Barnabè (above the sofa) and Joseph Stella (above the étagère).











A settee by Jacques Adnet sits beneath a Michael Rothenstein painting on the upper-floor stair landing.



MONACO

**OPPOSITE AND OVERLEAF:** In the primary bedroom, Gracie scenic wallpaper is complemented by a late-nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts gilded mirror, a Louis XVI–style marble mantel, a George Nakashima walnut headboard, a Jacques Adnet chest of drawers, and Maison Tisserand sconces.











ABOVE: A walnut-framed daybed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar resides in the mirrored dressing room.  
OPPOSITE: The primary bath is sheathed in arabescato marble.





## GEORGETOWN

One of the most gratifying aspects of my work is helping clients curate collections of exceptional decorative art. This apartment in Washington, DC, has one of the very finest collections, filled with furniture and objects that can genuinely be described as important. My client, a smart, sophisticated woman active in philanthropic circles, was moving from the suburbs into the city to begin a new chapter in her life. Her children were grown and, like them, she was moving on. But before our work together could commence, she made what seemed to be an odd request: Could I visit her parents at their home in Virginia? This was a mature woman, clearly not under the thumb of her parents, but she valued their opinion. Her father was a man of a certain age, handsome and fit, a major real estate developer and former chairman of the board of the National Gallery of Art, and her mother was a painter. They underwrote operas and theater. These were people of substance.

I flew down to Washington and was driven out, over the bridge and through the woods, to this beautiful farm in Virginia horse country with a golf course, a riding paddock, and llamas. Their neighbors were Paul and Bunny Mellon. We sat down to a lovely lunch that started with cold soup. It was all very elegant. The whole experience reminded me of the people I used to work with in the Parish-Hadley days and how they'd behave. Honestly, I was struck by a wave of nostalgia, and eager to get this commission. I flew back to New York, and the next day I received a call from the client saying that everyone enjoyed meeting me and that I should send a contract. Apparently, I'd been vetted, successfully.

My client's new apartment was located in a building still under construction when we started the project. It was a duplex, overlooking the Potomac, not vast but a very nice size for a single person. There wasn't even a floor plan, so it was literally just a white box. What designer doesn't love those words—white box? So much potential to create exactly what we envision. And this client definitely had a vision. She wanted something different from her old house, a place with a fresh point of view. She imagined stone floors, and since we were doing stone floors, why not do stone baseboards? And if we're doing stone floors and baseboards,

A graphic wall hanging by Olga de Amaral anchors the stair hall.







why not do stone door casings, and then pair them with sleek, highly figured rosewood doors instead of panel doors? For hardware accents, I took her to meet Erich Theophile. It was love at first sight. She was fascinated by his work on historical restoration in Nepal. As a collector of antique jewelry, she immediately grasped the quality and artistry of his work.

The most exciting part of our design adventure, naturally, was building her collection. Some of the furnishings in the apartment came from her previous home, which contained wonderful Art Nouveau and Wiener Werkstätte pieces. We were able to incorporate her Tiffany lamps, lovely pieces by Majorelle, and other treasures. The rest we collected patiently over time. In my business, there is no greater luxury than time, and the care that went into assembling this collection was truly extraordinary. We spent the day with the Lalannes at their home and studio outside Paris. We made annual pilgrimages to the antiques fair in Maastricht. We worked with the most interesting dealers in Europe and America. She wanted to know everything, and she was painstakingly deliberate about the things we bought. Our first acquisition was a suite of four Giacometti chairs. When she asked me where I envisioned them in the apartment, I said they were destined for the breakfast table in the kitchen. She looked at me as if I were nuts. But I asked her, Where will you sit every day? The breakfast table, of course. She got it.

Over the years we collected amazing things—a parchment cabinet by Jean-Michel Frank, Alexandre Noll pieces, Lucie Rie ceramics, Alexander Calder sculptures, a Maria Pergay console, a rare Giacometti Égyptienne lamp in pink plaster, and signature designs by Paul Dupré-Lafon, Eugène Printz, Jean Besnard, Pierre Chareau, and Jules Leleu. My client sadly passed away before this book was complete, and her estimable estate was sold at a single-owner auction at Sotheby's. It was heartbreaking, but at the same time beautiful, because that's what great objects do. They go out into the world and live again.

**OPPOSITE:** Grounded by a modern limestone floor, an enfilade features a Diego Giacometti plaster hanging light and pair of Maeght Foundation chairs along with a François-Xavier Lalanne sheep sculpture. **OVERLEAF:** The living room is outfitted with a Jean-Michel Frank parchment cabinet, an Yves Klein Monogold table, Paul Dupré-Lafon side tables, a Diego Giacometti bench, and a rare Tiffany Studios Poppy lamp. Artworks include Anish Kapoor's *Mirror Glow (Spanish Gold)*, 2017; Antony Gormley's *Stand III*, 2008; and Alexander Calder's *Les Ailes Brisées* (maquette), 1967, and *Red Pennant*, 1966.







**OPPOSITE:** Claude Lalanne's unique *Structure Végétale* Candelabra, 2013, occupies a corner of the living room beside a Jean-Michel Frank parchment cabinet. **OVERLEAF:** A Sylvain Subervie chandelier hangs above an Art Nouveau dining suite by Charles Plumet and Tony Selmersheim, circa 1900, with candelabra by Kathy Taslitz. The console is by Maria Pergay. Artwork by Edmund de Waal. **PAGE 46:** A Diego Giacometti Maeght Foundation chair sits in a hallway. **PAGE 47:** A powder room features Eugène Printz sconces and a unique Claude Lalanne *Choupatte* sculpture.



















PRECEDING, ABOVE, AND OPPOSITE: Furnishings in the library include a center table by Philip and Kelvin Laverne, a pair of Pierre Chareau stools, a Diego Giacometti Berceau low table, and a Claude Lalanne crocodile armchair.





Custom terrazzo flooring grounds the kitchen. A custom DKDA table is paired with Diego Giacometti chairs in the breakfast area.





A bar and sitting room are furnished with Majd Bazerji stools, an Ado Chale low table, and Jean Besnard vases. Artworks include an Antony Gormley standing sculpture and a nineteenth-century Mano artist Liberian mask for the Poro Secret Society.







**ABOVE:** Outside the primary bedroom, an Alberto Giacometti Égyptienne lamp rests on a Jules Lelev cabinet, and a François-Xavier Lalanne sheep sculpture stands beside a Diego Giacometti table. **OPPOSITE:** The primary bath is crowned with an illuminated vaulted ceiling. **OVERLEAF:** The primary bedroom features Diego Giacometti's Table Racine au Grand Duc, circa 1967, a Tor Wolfenstein sofa, and a Tiffany Studios Dragonfly table lamp.









## CONNECTICUT LAKE HOUSE

This Connecticut lake house is the third project I've done for these clients, a lovely, unpretentious couple with three grown children. Their primary residence is in Florida, but the first project we did for them was in New York City. They'd purchased one of the last unbuilt plots of land on Candlewood Lake, where they'd been enjoying summer vacations away from the sultry Florida heat. The property was beautiful but challenging, with myriad building restrictions and setbacks stipulated by the community. I knew we needed the right architect to take maximum advantage of the spectacular site.

I immediately reached out to Tom Kligerman and gave him the project brief. I told him I've worked with these clients for the last twenty years, and they're really wonderful people. But I warned him that this would be a small house, a modest summer cottage, with lots of programmatic requirements, including bedrooms for the clients' children as well as their parents. I didn't think we could build more than three thousand square feet. I was concerned that the job simply wasn't big enough for Tom's practice, which typically takes on houses of a much grander scale. But Tom surprised me. "I love a small project," he confessed. "A small project has a beginning, a middle, and an end."

Of course, Tom turned out to be the right man to design a perfect, compact retreat nestled in the trees. The house has genuine strength and character, but it doesn't impose itself on the land. It feels like a true lake house. To underscore its quiet presence, we made the bold choice to stain the exterior black and allow the architecture to recede. A red Dutch entry door provides a cheeky accent to the dark palette while subtly nodding to the humble barn structures that influenced the architecture.

The clients are real bibliophiles, so we decided to make the entrance hall a proper library for their incredible collection, with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves and expansive windows with

The dark palette of the exterior allows the house to recede in its wooded setting.  
Architecture by Thomas Kligerman.





ABOVE: A red Dutch entry door nods to the humble barn structures that influenced the architecture.



OPPOSITE: The curved entry hall does double duty as a library.



views out to the lake. Tom had the wonderful idea to make the corridor curved, which adds to the sense of discovery and surprise. As for the aesthetic direction and interior appointments, we'd already done two other projects for these clients, so we had a basic sense of what they respond to. But they weren't interested in a rehash of their homes in Manhattan and Florida. The New York apartment feels more modern and, appropriately, a bit more formal. Their home in Florida is located in a contemporary high-rise above the ocean, so that one is even cleaner and more severe. Here, they wanted to lean into color and woodsy country comfort.

The interiors are a foil to the house's dark exterior—light, bright, and airy. The walls are basically neutral but the trims and accents are done in a variety of colors. One room is a Turkey red, which I think is a very Connecticut color. Another room is teal blue, and another eau de Nile green. There's definitely color, just not raging color. The furnishings are a mélange of twentieth-century European and American designs, all of which share a modesty of form and clarity of line that feel right for a country home. We mixed English and American Arts and Crafts designs, and we added contemporary pieces you might describe as Modern Craftsman, pieces that feel made as opposed to manufactured. We also used lots of handcrafted Pewabic tile in the bathrooms, on fireplaces, everywhere tile is appropriate. I discovered Pewabic while visiting Martha Stewart's house in Maine, the old Edsel Ford estate. After a quick tutorial from Martha, I learned that the company has been making their wonderful wares in Detroit since the turn of the last century. The tile has a very specific texture and color palette that seems to complement the easy, relaxed mood of a country home.

Of course, no Connecticut lake house would be complete without a proper screened porch for games and gathering, which, in essence, is the spirit of this unfussy, multigenerational getaway. Picnics, pickleball, and paddleboarding on the lake; friends and family; places for retreat and places for togetherness. This is casual, gracious summer living at its best.

A Kaare Klint armchair for Carl Hansen & Søn sits beside an eighteenth-century Italian walnut refectory table.





The living room is outfitted with 1970s Danish wingback chairs, a 1940s Roger Capron coffee table, a rope mirror by Adrien Audoux and Frida Minet, and a 1939 Josef Frank floor lamp. Artwork by Graeme Black.







**ABOVE:** Detail of the 1940s Roger Capron coffee table. **OPPOSITE:** Seating in the living room includes a 1970s Danish wingback chair and a 1940s Italian lounge chair by Pier Luigi Colli.







**ABOVE:** Detail of the balustrade. **OPPOSITE:** Lundy pendant lights from the Urban Electric Company hang above the island in the bright, airy kitchen.





Chairs in the style of Kaare Klint pull up to a 1940s Guillerme et Chambron dining table beneath a Chiltern Quad hanging fixture by the Urban Electric Company. The footed 1920s Mikrokosmos urn is by Olof Hult.





In a sitting room, a custom DKDA sectional is joined by a pair of Guillaume et Chambron armchairs, a Lance Thompson coffee table of blackened steel, and a pair of 1950s Bruno Mathsson side tables of rippled glass and oak.





MONVA

A bedroom features a Bouquet chandelier by Le Klint and a seventeenth-century Italian writing table.







**OPPOSITE:** The primary bedroom is furnished with a midcentury palisander-frame chair and a custom C.J. Peters chandelier in the style of Alberto Giacometti. **ABOVE:** A 1960s Swedish carved pine chair by Jacob Keilland-Brandt sits in the primary bath. **OVERLEAF:** In the sunroom, Richard Allen coffee and dining tables are joined by Bielecky Brothers rattan chairs and an authentic Kennedy rocking chair.









The Connecticut lake house is nestled discreetly among the trees.



## PARK AVENUE

This project, a classic Park Avenue apartment for a young couple with two small children, came to me by way of architect Peter Pennoyer. Peter had taken the wife to see several homes he'd designed, and she responded enthusiastically to an apartment that Peter and I had worked on together. I recall the first time she visited my office, this chic young woman wearing the most perfect, tailored A-line dress with beautiful daytime jewelry. She'd taken such care in her appearance and how she presented herself. I immediately thought, I hope this woman hires me because I know what her home should look like.

The apartment was, as they say, in estate condition, so we embarked on a full-scale gut renovation, down to the cinder blocks. Peter is extremely collaborative and open to our ideas. He's a great classicist, incredibly knowledgeable about design history. I like to pare things back, to make them a bit more contemporary. We both wanted to honor the classic Rosario Candela building, to keep the apartment rooted in time and place, but somehow to make it appropriate for a young family with little kids.

When we began the project, the wife showed us images of places she liked, beautiful Haussmann apartments in Paris with discreet, cream-toned backgrounds, but decorated in a more contemporary fashion. That was our starting point. We decided to mix fine eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antiques with new pieces custom fabricated by artists and craftspeople we admire. You grasp the sensibility in the living room, where a pair of gilded Georgian chairs sits in front of these wonderful golden-bronze coffee tables by Ingrid Donat. There's a great chandelier of abstracted leaves and branches by Rosie Li, a young designer based in Brooklyn, a fire screen by Marie Suri that nods to Art Deco and French designs of the 1930s and '40s, and a Robert Goossens mirror. The whole place is a conversation across centuries, a dialogue between the best of the past and the best of the present.

We tweaked the traditional walnut-paneled library by using mahogany for the interior of the bookshelves in a subtle play of materials. Then we added a very contemporary coffee

**OPPOSITE AND OVERLEAF:** A 1940s Barovier & Toso chandelier surmounts a Laurence Montano bronze table in the entry. The wall-mounted sculpture, *Untitled*, 2012, is by Anish Kapoor.







table we designed of cast resin. The brass chandelier recalls the shape of an antique fixture, but it's almost like a child's line drawing of a chandelier, with embedded LED lights. Of course, the placement of a television is a constant struggle. Here, we concealed it behind the mirrored wall. I don't have a strict philosophy about how you handle televisions. Nobody really loves seeing a TV, but they're part of our lives, and it would be disingenuous to pretend we don't have them. I think the most important thing is that they're installed thoughtfully, not simply plunked on a wall with wire hanging out.

In the dining room, we designed two tables—one rectangular, the other circular—using mahogany and blackened steel. If one large table is needed, the circular one splits apart and the two halves can be placed at the ends of the rectangular table to create one big racetrack table. A pair of eighteenth-century English giltwood-and-crystal chandeliers crown the room, and the demilune table is French. The focus is a large painting by Lisa Yuskavage of a woman holding a teacup, her bare breasts front and center. The client was slightly hesitant to hang it there, but the bright yellow color was perfect against the silvery-gray background, and the teacup somehow made it feel appropriate for the space. We all agreed that the picture was so good in the room that no one could take issue with it. And after all, if it was a Bouguereau of a naked woman with putti, you wouldn't be offended by it.

One of the atypical aspects of this project was that we never really discussed the art collection until the very end, when we were down to tabletop accents and the odd lamp here or there. Other than an Anish Kapoor destined for the entrance gallery, I really had no idea what they had. When I finally asked the wife if she'd been thinking about art, she produced a folder of images and the first thing that came out was this fantastic Joan Mitchell painting that now hangs in the living room. Then I saw a beautiful Richard Serra oil stick drawing, a Yayoi Kusama, and other incredible things. I was blown away. I had absolutely no idea which end of the pool she had jumped into. My only thought was, Well, this works for me.

In the end, I think we accomplished what we set out to do—designing an apartment that feels right for Park Avenue, right for a young family, and right for the moment we're in. There's a certain formality in Peter's architecture and the interior design, but it all feels fresh and relevant. It's truly a home.









**PRECEDING:** The living room is furnished with custom DKDA sofas, George III chairs, Ingrid Donat cocktail tables, a silk carpet by Edward Fields, and a Rosie Li chandelier. Paintings are by Joan Mitchell (at center), Franz Kline (at left), and Suzan Frecon (at right). **OPPOSITE:** Lacquered pocketing doors with brass and nickel inlays lead to the dining room. **ABOVE:** A neoclassical Jamb mantel is surmounted by a 1970s Robert Goossens mirror and a vintage sconce by Max Ingrand for FontanaArte.









**PRECEDING:** In the dining room, neoclassical chairs surround a DKDA mahogany-top table beneath an eighteenth-century chandelier. Artworks are by Lisa Yuskavage (at center) and Georg Baselitz (at left). **OPPOSITE, LEFT, AND ABOVE:** The oak paneled library has shelves lined in walnut with bronze details and a geometric silk carpet by Edward Fields. A Luminaria chandelier in brass by Analogia Project is reflected in the mirror above the mantel, behind which a television is concealed. The black steel stools are by Michael Pohn.





ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: A Miriam Ellner verre églomisé screen with gold and palladium details separates the kitchen and breakfast area.





A.J.T. Kalmar chandelier and a Maison Jansen desk grace the primary bedroom.





## ASPEN MOUNTAIN HOUSE

My first project for these clients was a very traditional townhouse in Greenwich Village. That was twenty-five years ago. We were all much younger then, and traditional decor somehow felt like the mature, grown-up choice. About twelve years ago I did a classic Shingle Style house for the couple and their children out on Long Island. This ground-up Aspen retreat is our third project together, and the clients were looking for something decidedly more contemporary. They had commissioned Simon Elliot and Alex Klumb of CCY Architects, who are known for synthesizing nature and culture, mountainous terrain and modernist rigor. Our interiors work in tandem with the architecture, simultaneously accentuating the airy modern spirit and balancing the strong, tailored lines of the architecture with furniture and fabrics that stress warmth, comfort, beauty, and above all, ease.

The clients were very clear about their desire to limit the materials palette—one type of wood, one type of stone, and so on throughout the house. They wanted to reduce the visual noise and not be distracted by too many textures, patterns, and colors. Being known for my edited approach to decorating, we were all of one mindset. Many of the decisions we made responded to choices by the architects, like the dark gray porcelain tile they used for the floors on the main level. The palette for our rugs became a bit darker, and we employed more grays, blues, and silver tones in the fabrics and finishes. Overall, the mood is sophisticated but very user-friendly. This is a house that's meant to be enjoyed year-round, with minimum fuss or formality.

**OPPOSITE:** A custom Osvaldo Borsani-style bench is paired with a Jamie Gray floor lamp in the living room. **OVERLEAF:** The approach to the house is marked by a Not Vital sculpture visible through the modernist glazing. Architecture by CCY Architects.











In houses with broad expanses of glass, especially houses set in gorgeous landscapes, designers often say that the view is the art. Here, the art is the art. Robert Rauschenberg, David Hockney, Sol LeWitt, Alexander Calder. The husband really drives the collecting program. He's a quintessential collector. He doesn't buy things that he thinks will look good on a particular wall or above a particular sofa. He buys things that he has an emotional connection to, things he loves. He sent pages upon pages of inventory from the collection, and although he acquired certain pieces with Aspen in mind, he confessed he had no idea where they would land. There's a suite of thirty-two photographs by Olafur Eliasson that measures roughly eight by eleven feet, and a Rosenquist almost as big. We found the perfect spots for both. Surprisingly, the husband did not come out to the house for the installation of the art. If I had questions, he told me to call or text him. That's trust.

Indeed, so much of this project came down to trust. The clients, as always, were heavily involved in the design process, and they definitely had opinions. But they were also willing to step back and ask for our opinion. What do you think this room should be? Which fabric do you prefer? That kind of mutual respect, which we cultivated over a quarter century of working together, is incredibly gratifying. I think it brings out the best in our work. The same goes for our relationship with the architects, which was extremely collaborative. You see the results in the harmony of the architecture, interiors, and landscape. And yes, the majestic views are part of the art.

**OPPOSITE:** In the entry, a mirror by Nicolas and Sébastien Reese hangs above an Apparatus console. Artwork by Sol LeWitt. **OVERLEAF:** The living room features a KGBL bench, side tables in the style of Pierre Chareau, and table lamps by Mathilde Pénicaud. The wall hanging is by Olga de Amaral. **PAGES 108–109:** Spare, refined forms in the living room include 1970s stainless steel chairs by François Monnet, Jacques Jarrige floor lamps, custom coffee tables of white oak, and a Blanche Jelly side table. Artwork by Robert Rauschenberg.















**PRECEDING:** A view of the living room looking toward a grid of photographs by Olafur Eliasson.  
**OPPOSITE:** Ingo Maurer's Luce Volante pendants hang above a custom dining table with inlaid brass and a Carlo Scarpa-style base. Artwork by David Hockney





By the fireplace, a custom sectional in the style of Adrian Pearsall is joined by a classic Gerrit Rietveld Utrecht chair and a coffee table in the style of Heinz Lilienthal. Painting by Romulo Mallio.





MONVACE

A James Rosenquist painting commands the stair hall. Bench by Videre Licet.







**ABOVE:** The primary bedroom is outfitted with a custom DKDA bed and lounge chairs, nightstands by the Bright Group, and 1960s lamps by Inge-Lise Koefoed. **OPPOSITE:** In the office, a Jason Miller pendant light hangs above a custom DKDA leather-wrapped desk.







ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: A guest bedroom is furnished with an Osvaldo Borsani chaise longue, a Bari Ziperstein side table, a bed by Dune, Bourgeois Bohème sconces, and Wüd Furniture side tables. Tapestry by Alexander Calder.









**ABOVE AND OPPOSITE:** The media room on the lower level has a Trigon billiards table by 11 Ravens.  
**OVERLEAF:** A view of the lean, horizontal structure by CCY Architects.







## EATON SQUARE

This project had a somewhat peculiar beginning. Out of the blue I received a call from a gentleman asking if I'd be interested in discussing a job in London, specifically the combining of two flats he was buying on Eaton Square. It sounded like a great opportunity, and I responded with an enthusiastic yes. He said, "Great. I'm standing in the bookstore, looking through your book. How's two o'clock?" He came to my office that very day, with my previous monograph in hand, and everything fell into place from there.

The two apartments were in estate condition, having not been renovated in many years, but they had wonderful, tall ceilings and lots of promise. Because of the building's age and stature, there were certain restrictions about what we had to maintain—namely the plaster crown moldings and ceiling decorations—but that was not a concern as we definitely wanted references to the historic architecture. The real attraction in joining these two apartments was having three principal rooms—the living room, library, and kitchen/dining room—all facing the square through massive double-hung windows, three in each space. The primary bedroom, guest accommodations, and a small study look out to the garden behind the building. We worked on the architecture and layouts with the London-based firm Donald Insall Associates, who have extensive experience renovating historic buildings. Except for the moldings and ceilings, we completely gutted the spaces down to the old lath.

The client had responded to earlier projects of ours in which we blended antique pieces with modern elements, balancing period charm with a distinctly contemporary sensibility. The big gesture here was creating these very tall, double door openings between the three main rooms, which gives you this amazing longitudinal view across the expanse of the apartment. When we talked about the palette, the client discussed the rooms in terms of seasons rather than particular colors. He imagined the kitchen/dining room having a winter palette—icy tones, silvers, and touches of gold. The living room represents spring, with notes of bright, fresh

**OPPOSITE:** Crowned by a Parisienne chandelier by Ozone, the drawing room is furnished with a custom daybed, a Belfair sofa, and 1960s Bitossi table lamps. **OVERLEAF:** A cloistered atmosphere permeates the library, with its linen-covered walls, Maxime Old armchairs, Lawson setback armchairs, and Apparatus floor lamps.









yellow and green. The library has russet and earth tones that evoke fall. It was such an interesting, poetic way to think about color.

For the living room, we chose a bold, angular chandelier that would play against the organic plaster decoration of the original ceiling. We also selected a low, Art Deco-inspired daybed that would not disrupt the sight lines between the living room and library, as well as gilded nineteenth-century armchairs, contemporary resin drum tables, and a sculptural Ron Arad chair, all of which mingle amicably in this wonderful, lofty room. Artworks from the client's existing collection—paintings by Sterling Ruby and Tadaaki Kuwayama, an Andreas Gursky photograph—seemed tailor-made for space. The library has a more cloistered atmosphere, with walls upholstered in a woven linen, a slightly modernized chesterfield sofa, a mirror by Sam Orlando Miller above the fireplace, and linen curtains trimmed with pierced and embroidered openwork suede. The bespoke mahogany bookcases appear to peel away from the walls. While referencing traditional wood-paneled libraries, they maintain a distinctively modern spirit. The very small Henry Moore sculpture with red thread is, for me, the most extraordinary object in the apartment.

For the kitchen, the client wanted something slightly more glamorous and reflective than predictable marble, so we found this reverse-painted and glazed glass that we used for the backsplash and the range hood. The lacquered cabinets have brass inlays that dress them up a bit. The primary bedroom is deliberately spare and serene—white on ivory on cream—with a custom mahogany-and-parchment bed. I've always admired traditional English black-and-white marble bathrooms, so our design here, with its polished mahogany door and nickel trim, is our riff on that archetype.

Although my client works in the world of finance, he has a poetic side animated by his heritage and his very discerning eye. When a designer describes something as client-driven or a client request, it's usually meant to excuse something that isn't exactly ideal for the space. Here, the ideas that were client-driven really led to interesting choices and solutions that frankly would not have been my first impulses. And that's the nature of a great collaboration: it always takes you to someplace unexpected, someplace you'd never find on your own.

**OPPOSITE:** Looking out to Eaton Square, the library has triple pinch pleat curtains with mica embroidery on the leading edges. **OVERLEAF:** The passageway from the drawing room to the library is flanked by artworks by Sterling Ruby (at left) and Tadaaki Kuwayama (at right). Custom benches in the style of André Sornay sit below.











**ABOVE AND OPPOSITE:** A mirror by Sam Orlando Miller surmounts the fireplace in the library. **OVERLEAF:** In the living room, drum tables of cast resin are flanked by gilded nineteenth-century Swedish Gustavian chairs.











**ABOVE AND OPPOSITE:** Michael Anastassiades pendant lights hang above custom DKDA tables and chairs in the kitchen and breakfast area. The lacquered cabinets are inlaid with polished brass.







**OPPOSITE:** A vintage Italian chandelier from L'Art de Vivre crowns the primary bedroom. **ABOVE:** A polished mahogany door with nickel trim leads to the marble-cloaked primary bath. The sconces are by Jonathan Browning.



## EAST HAMPTON

This is a story of metamorphosis and the power of strategic interventions to elevate the ordinary. My clients—a cultivated Englishwoman and her South African expat husband—had relocated to New York City from their home in Seattle. I designed their Manhattan apartment after their building superintendent took them to see another unit I'd recently renovated in the same building. We became fast friends, and they called me once again after they purchased a well-located but architecturally undistinguished Shingle Style house in East Hampton. Of the three requirements cited by Vitruvius for any well-designed building—firmness, commodity, and delight—the structure ticked one or perhaps two of the boxes, but delight was certainly missing. The exterior had several awkward details badly in need of resolution, and the interior was, frankly, a Sheetrock palace, devoid of distinctive details and proper millwork. And so we gutted the place. Completely.

Our emendations to the outside of the house included replacing the existing slender, round columns, unhappy and anemic, with larger square columns better suited to the Shingle architecture. The new columns made the house feel more grounded. We also enlarged the central window on the upper-level facade and added a more elaborate shingle pattern to the gable as a small nod to the great East End Shingle Style houses of the 1920s. On the inside, we banished the Sheetrock by covering the walls and ceilings in beadboard and simple lattice paneling that feels like a modern interpretation of more traditional country house paneling. The process effectively added weight and substance to the interior envelope.

The wife was a keen collaborator on the interior design, armed with a multitude of references and ideas gleaned from her English upbringing as well as her travels abroad. The Belgian designer Axel Vervoordt had worked on the family home in Seattle, and several pieces from that house made their way into this project. The mood is refined but relaxed, as every good country home should be. The dining room exemplifies the worldly mix that gives this house its special character. A Paavo Tynell chandelier hangs above an antique French

Botanical prints by Hugo Guinness hang above an eighteenth-century English settee.





**RIGHT:** In the living room, custom millwork bookshelves by DKDA frame the limestone fireplace. An eighteenth-century English table holds a pottery lamp. A contemporary iron mirror by Marie Suri hangs above the mantel.  
**OVERLEAF:** Another seating group in the living room is anchored by a saffron yellow Moroccan rug and a custom ottoman by DKDA in deep red. A nineteenth-century oval-back chair adds a delicate note to the robust colors.









The dining room has neoclassical oak chairs and a seventeenth-century portrait by Dutch artist Justus Sustermans.





Hans Wegner Wishbone chairs surround an antique oak table  
in the informal dining room off the kitchen.





dining table surrounded by trim neoclassical chairs à la Jean-Michel Frank. Asymmetrical paneling suggests a slightly tweaked version of classic American country houses, while a Dutch commode, Austrian sconces, and an Old Master portrait give the room a gloss of continental élan.

There's a sunny quality to the house, partially due to the splashes of yellow that travel from rooms on the first floor to the level above. The primary bedroom, with its four-poster canopy bed and pretty fabrics, riffs on the signature bedrooms designed by Billy Baldwin in the 1960s. The brown-and-blue guest bedroom is perhaps my favorite room in the house. The space reminds me of old *House Beautiful* under editor Lou Gropp, who used to dedicate entire issues to how to use one or two specific colors. I think brown and blue are a great combination. Both bedrooms speak to my experience working at Parish-Hadley. Albert Hadley had a wonderful way of using handprinted fabrics and wallpapers based on very simple, restrained archival designs. Nothing was ever too loud or too aggressive.

The biggest gesture in the house is the entirely reimaged kitchen, which had been rather dark and ungainly. We installed an eyebrow dormer on the ceiling at one end of the space, and created a giant dormer for clerestory windows above the working part of the kitchen at the other end. The influx of natural light coupled with new pale wood cabinetry completely transformed the complexion of the space, giving the kitchen a vibrancy that matched the spirit of the other rooms. The outdoor spaces, designed by the late landscape designer Jack deLashmet, buoy the home's happy mood. Jack installed a wonderful pergola and a lovely cutting garden as well as an allée of trees where you can sit at a big picnic table with benches on a gravel pathway, as if you were in the South of France.

Altogether, the home reflects a well-lived life, with beautiful things collected from different places and at different moments in time. The decorative mix is eclectic, but it's not a pastiche. Everything works together to tell a story—a story that bridges the past, present, and future.

A vibrant red artwork by Donald Sultan hangs above an overscale custom sofa by DKDA. Three Tommi Parzinger stools offer places for snacks and feet.





In the stair hall, a late nineteenth-century English oak partners desk is centered in a bay window. A graphic twentieth-century dhurrie carpet adds a strong contemporary element to the space.







**ABOVE AND OPPOSITE:** In the upper stair hall, a painted nineteenth-century Dutch table is flanked by a pair of French side chairs. The composition is completed by the blue-and-white porcelain lamp.



A Tommi Parzinger chandelier is a contrasting focal point to the robust eighteenth-century Italian armoire and bombé chest of drawers.







**OPPOSITE:** A custom four-poster tester bed by DKDA is lined in a brown-and-white Zina Studios print.  
**ABOVE:** In the primary bath, floors are tiled in custom colored cement tiles to set off the all-white palette



MONA

A rich brown-and-blue floral by Zina Studios sets the tone for the guest room. A painted French mirror hangs above the sofa.

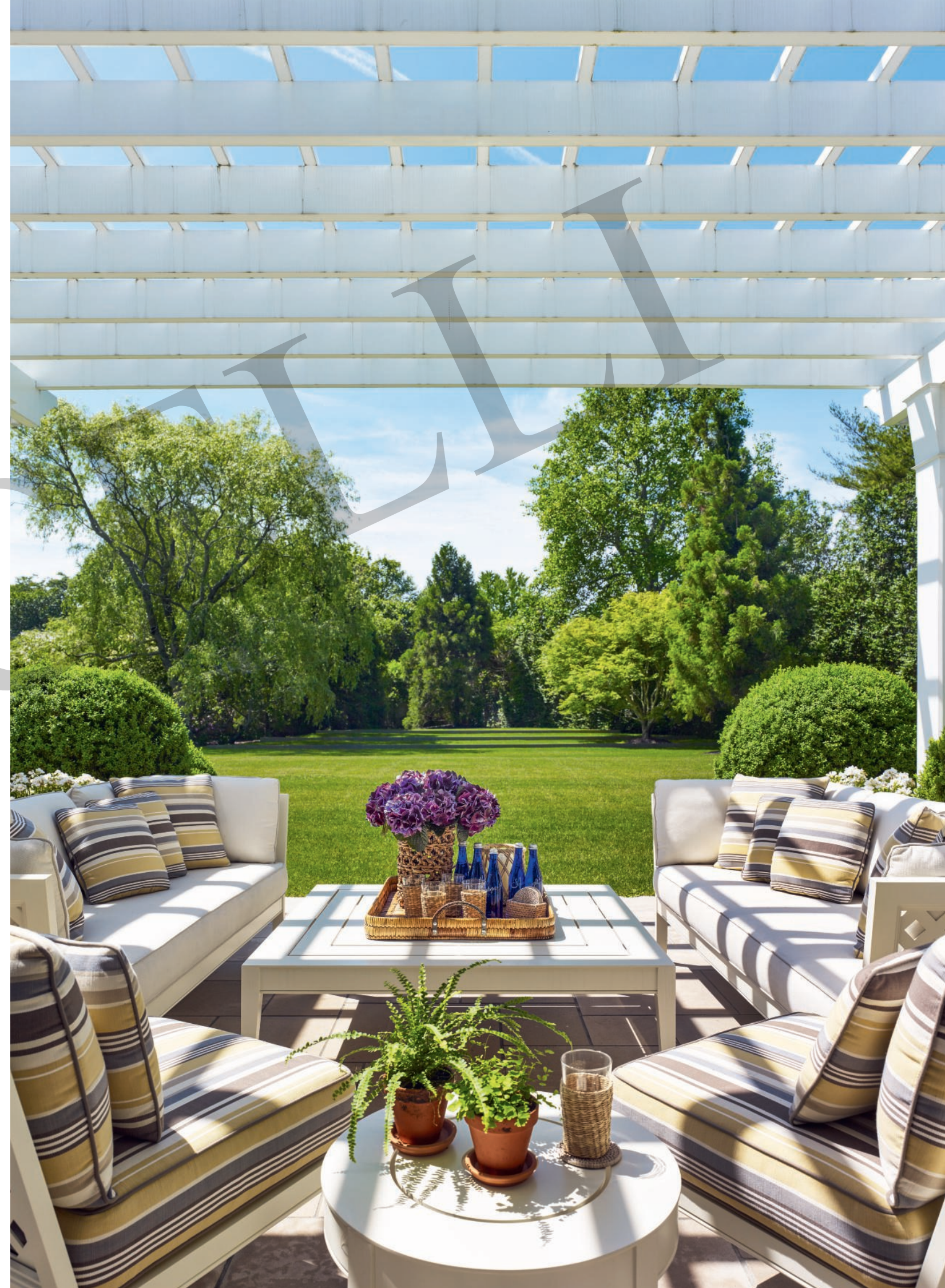




A nineteenth-century English barley twist four-poster bed is hung in a custom-color Zina Studios floral print. Wool sisal carpet is a neutral ground for this somewhat traditional scheme. A painted nineteenth-century French bench upholstered in brown leather sits at the foot of the bed.







Outdoor furniture by McKinnon and Harris in Perennials striped fabric creates a welcome seating area in the garden.



## PALM BEACH

I'm enormously proud of the longstanding client relationships I've cultivated that span multiple decades and many homes. This Palm Beach house is the seventh project I've done for these clients, and the third in Palm Beach. The clients promised that this is their last one, but I hope not. Their previous residence was a classic Mediterranean-style house located on the ocean. They decided that living on the ocean was simply too troublesome—the maintenance required is never-ending—so they found a property on the Intracoastal and set off on a new adventure. In this instance, the wife said she'd always wanted a Regency Revival house, which is the other style most closely associated with Palm Beach. She wanted the color scheme of the house to be predominantly whites and silvers and grays. Even the iron entry door is painted gray instead of the expected black. She was very clear about her vision.

The structure dated to the 1960s, and it looked very different than it does today. We took everything down to the cinder blocks and steel beams, and we devised a completely new design around the existing core. You can see from the exterior that the house is now every bit Regency Revival in spirit and detail, very symmetrical and mannered, with a certain formality that feels appropriate for Palm Beach. Architect Michael Perry was our partner in this transformation. I think of this place as a big little house, or a little big house. The clients' children are grown and spread across the globe, so it's really a home for two people. But the owners are great entertainers, and the wife loves throwing parties and doing the table and flowers herself. She'll host a dinner for eighteen and still be on the golf course during the day without skipping a beat. The house had to be equally gracious and accommodating for large groups as it is for just the two of them. Fortunately, at this point in their lives, they have a real understanding of how they want to live and entertain in Palm Beach.

The entry hall, which is not very large, has a limestone floor with graphic insets of polished black marble and dark gray onyx. It's a big gesture for a relatively small space, but I think it heightens the sense of scale. The rock crystal chandelier, like so many of the pieces we used, was repurposed from a previous residence. It's my belief that good things travel, and I can

**OPPOSITE:** A custom console of resin cubes by Studio Nucleo is flanked by armchairs in the style of Paul Dupré-Lafon.  
**OVERLEAF:** DKDA worked with architect Michael Perry to reimagine the house's facade in Regency Revival style.









**RIGHT:** The living room features a pair of chaises by Garouste and Bonetti and a pair of photographs by Thomas Ruff, *r.phg.s.05\_II* (at left) and *r.phg.s.05\_I*. The Monogold table is by Yves Klein. **OVERLEAF:** Artworks by George Condo flank an Olafur Eliasson wall sculpture at one end of the living room. **PAGES 178–79:** A painting by Oscar Murillo hangs on the wall at right. Kam Tin polished brass Cloud tables were sourced through Maison Rapin.















point to every piece of furniture that has migrated from earlier projects. To get to the living room, one had to travel through a windowless interior gallery, essentially a tunnel with no real purpose. We decided to install the biggest skylight we could possibly engineer, so the space now feels as if it might have been an interior courtyard that was enclosed at some point. The room has fluted plaster walls, comfortable seating, and a baby grand piano, which the wife learned to play as an adult. This formerly awkward, transitional zone now functions as a music room that gets plenty of use.

The living room is more than forty feet long, with a wall of pocketing glass doors for a full embrace of the outdoors and views to the lake. There's a fireplace at one end and a pair of doors to the family room at the other. The challenge here was mitigating the scale. We broke up the ceiling with a series of coffers in two sizes that create a rhythm across the vast plane. There's plenty of room for multiple seating groups, but we wanted to make sure that the center of the space is activated so that people don't simply congregate on one side or the other. Our solution was to place a bar in the middle of the space and make it a gathering spot for cocktails or after-dinner coffee. The bar is made of gray lacquer with bronze trim and illuminated shelves, and it really does make a nice addition to the social activity. The decor—united by an understated palette of neutral tones and textures—encompasses signature pieces by the likes of Yves Klein, Mattia Bonetti, and Ingrid Donat, accentuated with vivid artworks by Olafur Eliasson, Thomas Ruff, and others.

The rest of the home follows suit—great furniture, both old and new, great art, and more than a touch of glamour. My favorite moments include the Studio Drift chandelier of dandelion seedpods that floats down from a skylight in the dining room; the rounded, lacquered niches in the family room; the iron-and-glass staircase inspired by an early-twentieth-century hotel I visited in Verona; the silk curtains with woven lower panels that suggest a ladies' couture detail; and a lovely dressing room enrobed in pale peach lacquer. There are beautiful moments and dazzling things everywhere. This is the kind of house that cannot be fabricated from whole cloth. It reflects a lifetime of traveling, looking, collecting, and exploring the meaning of living graciously.

**OPPOSITE:** With bronze trim and illuminated shelves, the living room bar is finished in lacquer by Mary Kuzma. The stools are by Powell & Bonnell. **OVERLEAF:** Crowned by a Studio Drift chandelier, the dining room features a Rashid Johnson painting above a Jacques Adnet sideboard. Bubble sconces of alabaster and brass are by Galerie Glustin.









**ABOVE:** In the gallery, a dark gray lacquered door sets off the warm white ribbed plaster walls. The Christophe Côme console with amber glass inserts is surmounted by artwork by Alberto Biasi.  
**OPPOSITE:** A painting by George Condo commands attention.







**ABOVE:** The ladies' powder room is wrapped in panels of verre églomisé. The pendant lights are by Apparatus.  
**OPPOSITE:** Artworks by Brice Marden line the stairway.







RIGHT: A Chuck Close self-portrait commands the home office. OVERLEAF: Artworks by Hiroshi Sugimoto (at left) and Chun Kwang Young (at right) flank the passageway from the family room to the living room.









The bar is outfitted with a custom DKDA banquette and dining table. The chairs and bar stools are by Mondo Collection.



MO

An Atelier Areti pendant light hangs above the kitchen island.





**RIGHT:** The primary bedroom is crowned with a Laurel Blossom chandelier by Rosie Li. The custom nightstands and television cabinet are by Chapter & Verse. **OVERLEAF, LEFT:** A painting by Nir Hod graces the sitting area of the primary bedroom. **OVERLEAF, RIGHT:** A vintage Murano globe chandelier from Jean-Marc Fray illuminates the dressing room.











A water feature with custom tiles depicting local foliage in monochromatic relief engages both upper and lower terraces.





The west-facing pool loggia, with furniture by JANUS et Cie, takes full advantage of sunsets and offers a view back toward the house.



## FIFTH AVENUE

This Fifth Avenue apartment evolved from a creative dialogue with the homeowners, a Connecticut-based husband and wife, both of Persian ancestry. I'm used to introducing my clients to different furniture styles and makers, new artisans and craftsmen. On this project, my clients really introduced me to Persian art, a subject I knew very little about. Their collection speaks to their Iranian heritage and upbringing, as well as their support for contemporary Persian artists working across the globe. They have work by prominent European and American artists as well, but for me, the immersion in Persian art was the real discovery.

The apartment, located in a good prewar building, was in estate condition, and necessitated a full-on gut renovation. Happily, we were able to do a lot of the interior detailing ourselves, working in close collaboration with architect Stephen Wang. The homeowners were very involved in the process—they had lots of interest and opinions. All of us agreed that the interior architecture should reflect the context of a prewar building, but in a way that felt a bit more modern and distilled. Of course, that's the way I approach most things. I wanted crown molding, cornices, baseboards, and door casings that spoke to a particular time and place, yet somehow reimaged in an updated vocabulary.

I'm not ashamed to say that the design of the entrance gallery floor was completely lifted out of *Entryways of Milan*, one of my favorite design books. We rendered it in limestone, black marble, and gray onyx. If someone were to ask me what I love to do, I'd say it's taking luxurious materials and using them in a controlled, restrained way that still feels nuanced.

**OPPOSITE:** Artworks by Le Corbusier (left) and Hans Hofmann (right) are installed in the entry hall alongside consoles and a chandelier by Hervé Van der Straeten. **OVERLEAF:** The entry hall also includes works by Ali Banisadr (at left) and Hadieh Shafie (at right) along with an Antony Gormley sculpture.













Here, the richness of the stone is tempered by the precise geometry of the pattern. The living room is a bright, airy space bracketed by two big statements. One wall has a massive dome painting by Y.Z. Kami, an Iranian American artist who lives in New York City. The fireplace wall opposite is clad in a mosaic of beautiful, hand-silvered mirrors by Kiko López, which we commissioned. The palette for the living room is deliberately quiet, which lets the art shine, and the seating arrangement includes three generous corner banquettes so that guests can be entertained in a very comfortable, communal way typical of Moroccan and Persian hospitality.

The dining area is essentially an internal room, with little access to natural light. Our idea was to lean into the darkness to create a moody, cloistered space for intimate dinners. We covered the gently curved walls in a dark graphite, textured Venetian plaster, and we installed a cove light overhead that gives the ceiling a floating quality. The effect makes the room feel bigger than it actually is. The library has shots of burgundy in the carpet and upholstery fabrics, a nice contrast to the natural color of the textured oak walls. The bookshelves are interspersed with illuminated vitrines that display pieces from the clients' collection of Persian terra-cotta antiquities. A more subtle color animates the bedroom, where the walls are upholstered in a glazed linen in pale seafoam green. The space is very quiet and serene, and once again, the artworks really come to the fore. Of course, that's what gives this apartment its special character, this highly personal collection of art. It's the soul of the home.

**PRECEDING AND OPPOSITE:** The living room features Ingrid Donat coffee tables, custom DKDA sofas, and a mirrored mosaic fireplace surround by artist Kiko López. An Alexander Calder mobile is joined by a Theodoros Stamos painting to the left of the fireplace. The painting to the right is by Fernand Léger. **OVERLEAF:** The opposite side of the living room is anchored by a Y.Z. Kami painting. The lounge chairs are by Kimberly Denman.









MO

A sculpture by Manolo Valdés presides over the dining room.  
The artwork at right is by Monir Shahrudy Farmanfarmaian.







ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: An artwork by Parviz Tanavoli is installed by the entry to the kitchen.  
OVERLEAF: A Helen Frankenthaler painting has pride of place in the library. Studio Van den Akker side chairs pull up to a mahogany partners desk with inset leather. Knotted chair by Marcel Wanders.







Apparatus pendant lights flank a Reza Derakshani painting above a custom bed. The artwork at left is by Farhad Moshiri.







**ABOVE:** Molded gray glass side tables from Belgium and a custom Marie Suri fireplace screen occupy a corner of the primary bedroom. **OPPOSITE:** The primary bath is clad in book-matched marble.





## SAG HARBOR

All decorators will tell you that, if they're lucky, they find like-minded clients and go on a lifelong journey together. Over the years, I've done at least six houses for this client in England, America, and the Caribbean. The latest was an 1840s Egyptian Revival house in Sag Harbor out on Long Island, one of several extraordinary Egyptian Revival structures clustered in the village. I try to work in a lot of different styles and develop design solutions that respond to different types of architecture, different locations, different climates, and so on. All the designers I've looked up to and respected in this business—Albert Hadley, Henri Samuel, Jacques Grange, Alberto Pinto, Mark Hampton—were people who could design in remarkably different idioms. They could do something modern or something historic, something relaxed or something formal. That's always been the way I wanted to work, so naturally I found the prospect of taking on this eccentric piece of architecture very appealing.

My collaborator on this project was architect Martin Sosa, and together we set out to update the house for modern living while still preserving its idiosyncratic character and architectural integrity. The homeowner has a deep interest in architecture, but I had to work hard to convince him to preserve the Egyptian Revival moldings, door casings, and other quirky interior details. He found them a bit odd. But we ultimately decided to keep them, and we were all happy we did. Our first order of business was tearing down an ungainly 1960s addition, which looked like someone had hitched a mobile home to the house. In its place, we designed a much more sensitive wing for a new kitchen and breakfast room, with twelve-foot ceilings and beautiful, soaring windows. It has the feeling of a traditional English scullery. The floors are black limestone, the walls are tiled, and the cabinets are made from scrubbed oak with iron fittings. The client is an exceptionally gracious host—he loves to cook and entertain—so the new kitchen became the warm, welcoming heart of the house.

**OPPOSITE:** The entry hall has Jamb fixtures and a painting by Patrick Procktor.  
**OVERLEAF:** A painting by Sally Michel Avery, the wife of Milton Avery, hangs above the fireplace.









The homeowner had recently been divorced, and he and his wife had divvied up the contents of at least three houses, many of which landed here. There was a lot of English furniture, dark oak, mahogany, classic things. It reminded me of that upper-crusty British attitude toward decor—you don't buy furniture, you have furniture. Frankly, it was a fun exercise figuring how to redeploy all these wonderful pieces in a way that felt fresh and modern. We definitely wanted color, but rooms in this kind of historic home are typically small in scale, so we were careful to use the colors we chose judiciously. We kept the walls largely neutral and painted the millwork, wainscoting, and door and window casings in shades of blue and green with a gray, almost drab undertone. The effect is very calm and grounded. The art, like the furniture, has been collected over decades, which adds to the layered quality of the interiors.

Overall the home feels more like a country house than a beach house, which is appropriate given that the client uses the place throughout the year. Nothing looks too shiny or out of the box. It has a sense of European savoir faire balanced with an unpretentious ease that feels distinctly American—the best of both worlds.

In the dining room, the homeowner's collection of vintage black-and-white photographs, arranged above an English oak sideboard, creates a strong graphic element.







**RIGHT:** Chairs by Christian Liaigre surround the dining table. **OVERLEAF:** The library offers many comfortable places to sit and read, including a custom buttoned seat sofa. A reproduction English mantel in black-and-white marble adds architectural gravitas to the room.







**RIGHT:** The kitchen addition benefits from expansive fourteen-foot ceilings, pale oak custom cabinetry with black steel banding, and polished black limestone floors. A pair of 1920s American factory stools reinforce the somewhat industrial sensibility of this working kitchen. **OVERLEAF:** The breakfast area is defined by wall tiles from Urban Archaeology set with black grout to form a gridwork pattern. The owner's collection of English earthenware is displayed on oak shelves. Nineteenth-century English oak Arts and Crafts chairs sit at a twentieth-century American steel worktable.











**ABOVE:** In the upper hall a nineteenth-century Chinese console displays a pair of late nineteenth-century ceramic pagodas.  
**OPPOSITE:** Custom millwork painted a rich blue lends this room a nautical built-in aesthetic that give it its name—the Captain's room.











**PRECEDING:** In the primary bedroom a custom-designed desk by the owner was fabricated in a British boatyard. Wide plank beadboard paneling defines the walls. The Hollywood portrait above the fireplace is by Milton H. Greene. **ABOVE:** Custom millwork leads to the primary bedroom. **OPPOSITE:** The primary bath is outfitted with limestone mosaic floors and a double sink from Waterworks. **OVERLEAF:** A pair of Lutyens-style benches in the pool garden offer a view of the rear facade of the house, and the impressive brick chimney and outdoor fireplace.









Doors and trim painted in Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe and furniture with classic lines lend the guesthouse a tailored air.





## UPPER EAST SIDE

My relationship with these clients did not have a very promising start. The couple originally called me to ask if I'd be willing to redo a couple of rooms in their home outside New York City. The wife and I had a lovely conversation on the phone, and I thanked her for her interest, but I told her that piecemeal renovations are really not what I do. It's not that I have a minimum budget or space requirement, but my interest is in making coherent projects—homes that tell a complete story. She was very gracious, and we left it at that. Frankly, I never thought I'd hear from her again. A short time later, however, she reached out again to discuss another project: designing an expansive Manhattan apartment from scratch in a building still under construction on the Upper East Side. Now that sounded promising.

It turned out that her husband, who has many business interests, had a hand in developing the building, and there were several options for which unit was best suited for their family. We ultimately selected one with a 2,800-square-foot wraparound terrace and floor-to-ceiling walls of glass. It was incredibly bright and airy, and it had the potential for the kind of indoor/outdoor connection that is so rare in the city. We designed the apartment from top to bottom—every floor, every molding, every detail—but our first order of business was overhauling the layout, which simply didn't have the right flow. I like rooms that you can travel through and not have to turn around to leave. This apartment had a lot of dead ends. Fortunately, the clients understood the importance of circulation and allowed us to reconfigure the space entirely.

The entry hall is a classic case of turning a disadvantage into a feature. There were a couple of odd beams and ductwork that could not be moved, but we didn't want to bring the ceiling down to an awkward height. So we concealed the beams within a hovering oval in high-gloss white lacquer, a kind of mammoth surfboard with integrated lighting, and finished the ceiling with shimmering gray Venetian plaster. Then we borrowed a page from the great British architect Robert Adam, whose floor patterns often reflected his ceiling designs. In this case, we mirrored the oval shape in a floor of limestone and marble mosaic tile. The unexpected

Artworks by Pat Steir (at left) and Richard Artschwager (at right) grace the entry. The console is by Mattia Bonetti. DKDA collaborated with Orsman Design on the ovular ceiling and limestone floor.





**RIGHT AND OVERLEAF:** The furnishings scheme in the living room encompasses coffee tables by Apparatus (in the foreground) and Maria Pergay, and a tiered side table by Hervé Van der Straeten. Artworks include a Helen Frankenthaler painting (above the sofa), an Antony Gormley sculpture, and a work by Philip Guston (at rear). A Steen Ipsen ceramic sculpture rests on the Apparatus table.









entry gallery feels a bit glamorous, with door panels of reverse-painted glass, a Mattia Bonetti console, and an enviable Pat Steir painting.

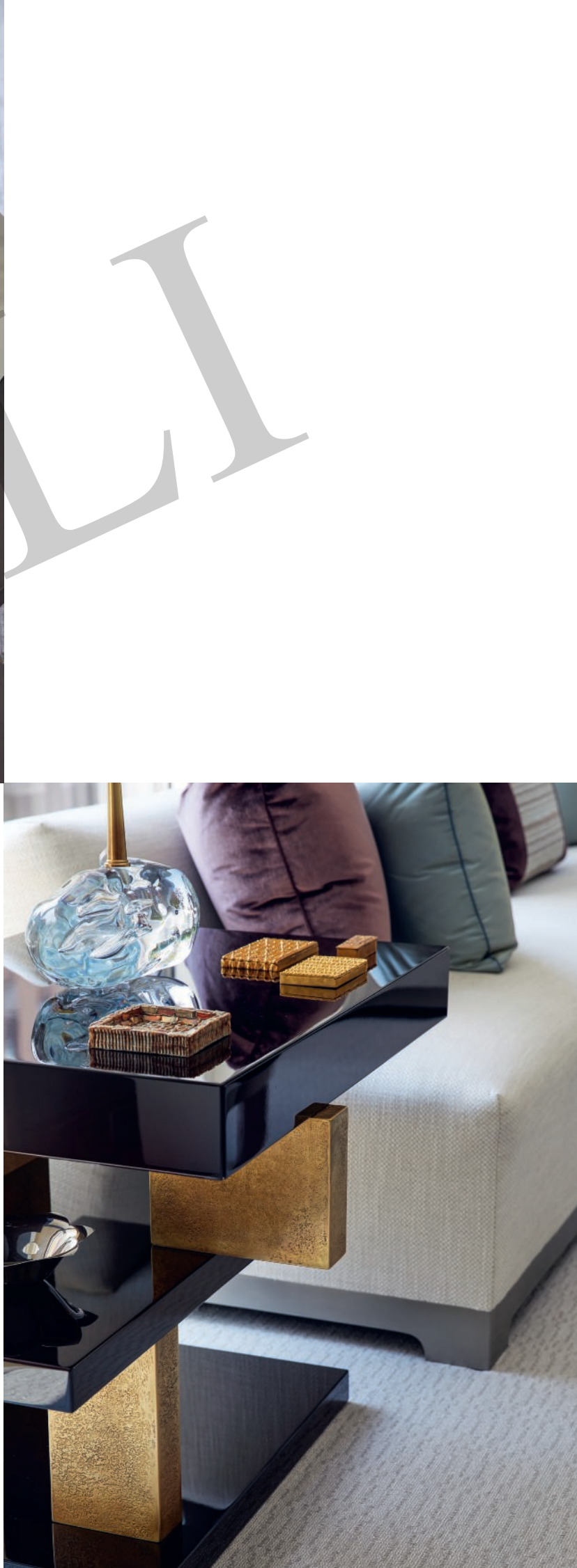
The clients' previous pied-à-terre was in a prewar Park Avenue building. They wanted this apartment to feel more contemporary, both to align with the spirit of the architecture and to showcase their estimable art collection, which includes works by Helen Frankenthaler, Philip Guston, Richard Artschwager, Adolph Gottlieb, and other artists of that caliber. The interiors express the traditional ideals of luxury and connoisseurship in a language that feels modern, elegant, and unpretentious. One example would be the built-in bar, which has cabinet fronts of straw marquetry applied in a fresh, geometric pattern, and a translucent cast-resin countertop with embedded crystalline forms.

In the dining room, we covered the walls in mica panels, which reflects light so beautifully. A dining table of lacquered wood set on a glass base adds to the luminous quality. In the family room, we extended the lines of the custom anigre-and-nickel bookcases with bands of nickel that run across the upholstered walls so that the cabinetry feels fully integrated into the room envelope. We used the same silvery fabric on the walls and the armchairs, which fosters the room's serene mood. The Kenneth Noland painting above the sofa is an added bonus. The palette throughout the home is purposely restrained, a symphony of whites and off-whites, which lets the art collection take center stage. Nevertheless, we didn't want the apartment to feel like a cold, white gallery. The endless variations in tones and textures, the architectural details and moldings, the layering of the decor—they all underscore the sense of a classic, distinguished New York City apartment of the old school, reimagined to be in tune with the rhythms and rituals of contemporary life.

Built-in display niches with hand-silvered backgrounds set off a collection of twentieth-century Murano glass. A custom leather-covered card table is surrounded by Raphaël Raffel-style lacquered armchairs in fabric by Toyine Sellers. A cabinet by Christophe Côme with ceramic tile panels holds a small sculpture by Sol LeWitt and a Jean Dubuffet hangs above.







**OPPOSITE:** A Philip Guston painting is installed at one end of the living room. **ABOVE AND RIGHT:** Details of the Maria Pergay and Hervé Van der Straeten tables.





**OPPOSITE:** A Rosie Li chandelier hangs above a custom Studio Van den Akker table in the dining room. The niche, clad in mica panels by Mary Kuzma, has sconces by Felix Agostini. Painting by Morris Louis. **ABOVE:** The wet bar features cabinetry with straw marquetry faces and a resin countertop with integral sink. **OVERLEAF:** A Kenneth Noland painting commands the library. The ceiling fixture is by Atelier Alain Ellouz.









**ABOVE:** The powder room has polished nickel trim and inset panels of textured Venetian plaster. The custom sink vanity of polished nickel and onyx is set against clear mirror with a pair of Max Ingrand sconces. **OPPOSITE:** A view of the enfilade from living room through to family room emphasizes the sight lines created with careful planning.





The kitchen has custom millwork of high-gloss lacquer and polished mahogany doors. The center island in brushed stainless steel is balanced by a geometric hanging fixture by Modulightor.





In the primary bedroom, walls are upholstered in Jim Thompson silk. A custom-upholstered headboard is flanked by Holly Hunt wall lights. The carpet is by Edward Fields.







**ABOVE:** A sitting area in the primary bedroom has a coffee table by FontanaArte and German, early twentieth-century silver candlesticks. **OPPOSITE:** In the primary bath, polished nickel outlines the mirrors and marble walls. The ceiling light is by Jean Perzel and the white lacquered dressing stool is custom.





**OPPOSITE:** Artworks by Rachel Whiteread (left) and Mark Grotjahn (right) hang in the wife's office. **ABOVE:** The husband's office is outfitted with a custom DKDA desk, Vladimir Kagan armchairs, a Jacques Jarrige lamp, and an Edward Fields rug. Painting by Adolph Gottlieb.





The terrace is furnished with seating and tables by Sutherland. The landscape is by Hollander Design.





## DAVID'S EAST HAMPTON GARDEN

Although I've worked with many of the best contemporary landscape designers throughout my career, I had never in my life made a garden myself before I purchased my home in East Hampton. I grew up on Long Island in a suburban house with a front yard and backyard full of azaleas and marigolds, but that's a very different thing than having a garden. My Hamptons home occupies a long, slender piece of land, roughly four acres, with the house tucked discreetly at the far end of the property, accessed by a lengthy driveway that runs along one side. When I bought the place, there really wasn't a garden to speak of, just a house and an odd pool and a few acres of derelict trees, brambles, and weeds. From the beginning, I had a vision of what I wanted the garden to be, but realizing that vision was a different matter altogether.

Early in the process I worked with my friend Hal Goldberg, a landscape designer who sadly passed away in 2017. We discussed the basic structure of the garden and the types of plantings and native species that would be appropriate for the area. I've always admired the composed, architectural gardens created by designers like Dan Kiley and Reed Hilderbrand, which had a big influence on what I hoped to accomplish. Hal and I began by planting around the front of the house to screen the cars and garage. We also cleared endless trees and shrubs from the property as a first step in taming the wilderness to provide a fresh canvas for what was to come. Hal had the idea of planting a series of these skinny oak trees, trained into the shape of cedars, to create a structure that defines one side of the garden.

One of my first orders of business was to reorient the pool, which, due to a complicated web of easements, jutted out from the house at a bizarre angle. After navigating the insane labyrinth of local building codes and bureaucracies, I was finally able to build a pool on axis not only with the house but also a lone crabapple tree that existed in the middle of the garden. That tree now sits at the center of a lawn defined by four square beds of ornamental grass in

Astilbe and ferns line the drive.

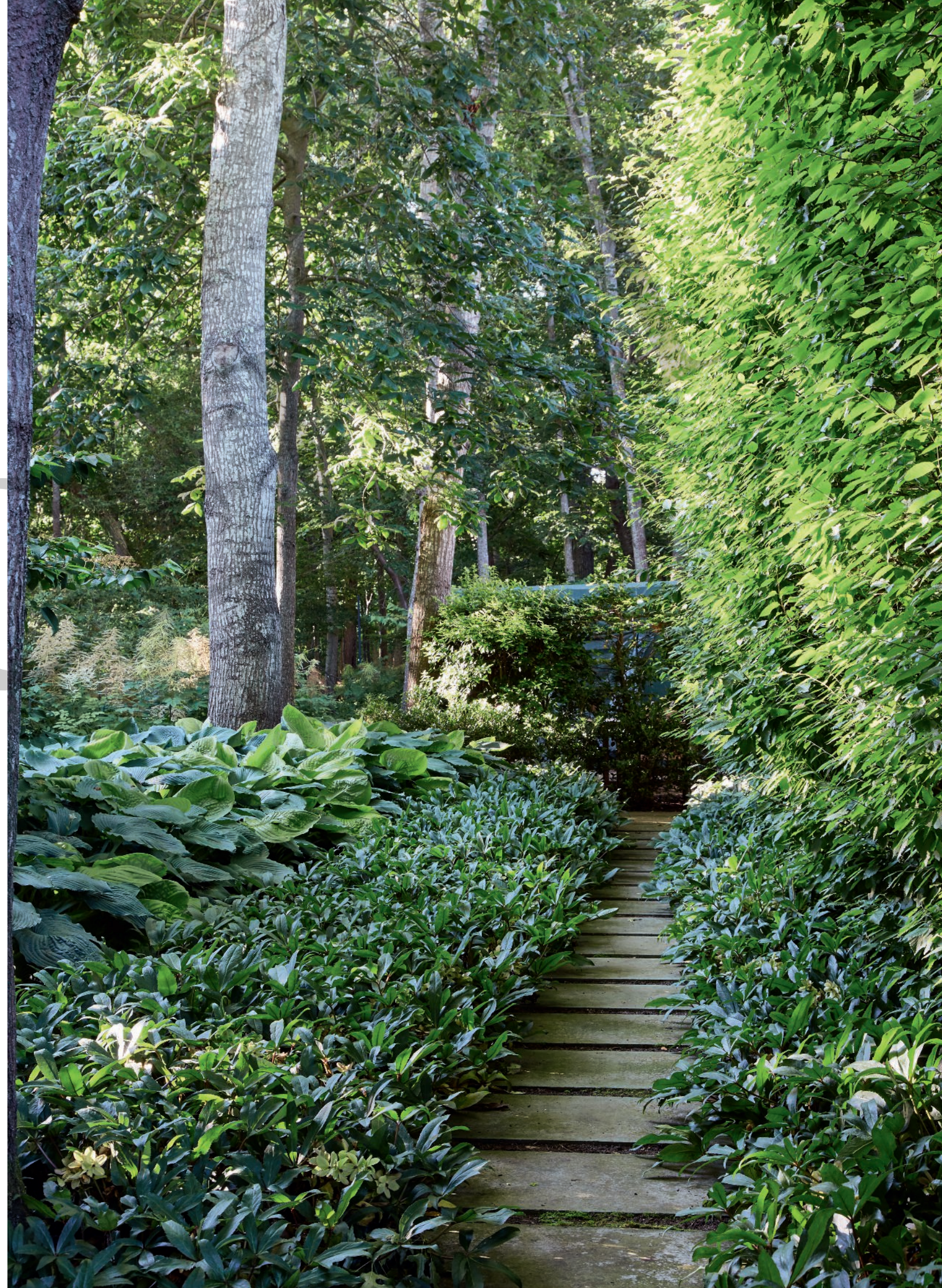


a graphic, architectural configuration. Beyond that lawn, my plan was to develop a sprawling meadow planted with wildflowers. Simple enough, I thought. Around the time I was conceiving the meadow, I had a dinner party and one of my guests was Martha Stewart, who was naturally curious about my plans. When I told her that I wanted to do a meadow, which would be easy to plant and maintain, she told me that I had it all wrong, that a meadow was one of the hardest things to do. For some reason, I just decided that she didn't know what she was talking about, but of course she was absolutely right. My first attempt at making the meadow was a disaster.

At that point, I began working with landscape designer Abby Lawless, who corroborated the fact that I had done everything wrong. We spent the next couple of years preparing the land properly and doing all the necessary things to create a good meadow. It's now a beautiful field of Queen Anne's lace that you traverse through a series of pathways. Abby also helped me put in a lovely cutting garden at the far end of the property as well as a shaded area beneath a giant oak, which I call the drum circle. I'm a firm believer in people needing interior designers because a professional designer's experience is something you can profit from, and I've definitely profited from Abby's experience. As much as I knew how I wanted the garden to be structured, I had no idea of what you actually put in the ground.

A garden is always a work in progress. When I first went on this journey, I thought that four acres didn't seem like very much land, but I was totally naive. Even if you have only a quarter acre, it's still real work. But my garden gives me enormous pleasure. While I don't love the pain and suffering it takes to get from New York City to the Hamptons, I'm always very happy when I'm here. I go down the driveway on Thursday night, if I'm lucky to escape the city, and I don't come out until Monday morning.

A bluestone path bordered by hellebores and hostas leads to the rear part of the garden.







**OPPOSITE:** A nineteenth-century French settee sits below a crab apple tree centered between geometric beds of ornamental grasses. **ABOVE:** Tall pin oaks define the south border of the garden, with Limelight hydrangeas in the background.

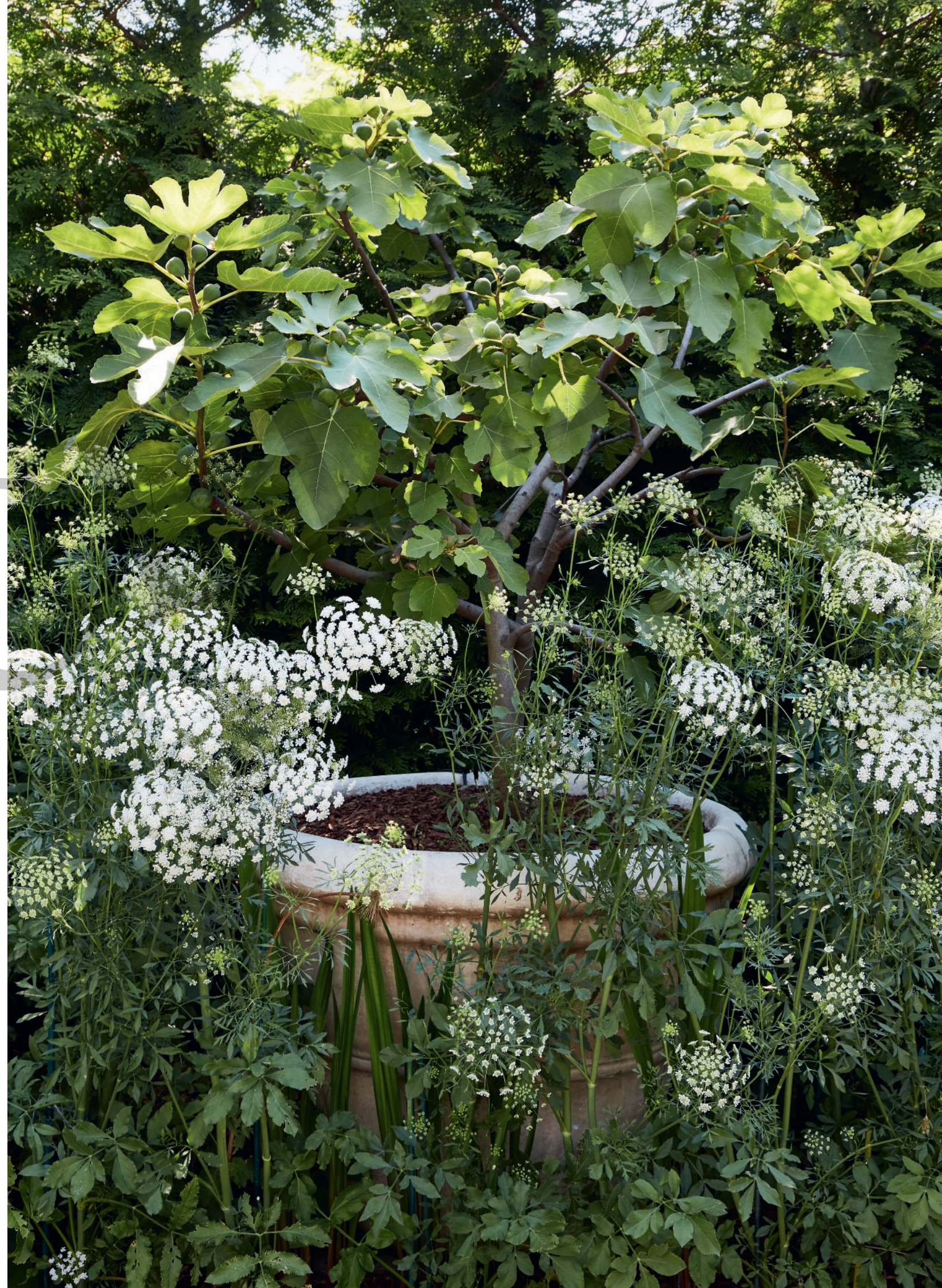








**PRECEDING AND ABOVE:** The cutting garden offers a bounty of dahlias and zinnias all season long. **OPPOSITE:** A potted fig tree is nestled in Queen Anne's lace. **OVERLEAF:** A mowed path leads through the meadow.









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