



COMPO RESPIRE

After enjoying rental homes in Westport for several years, Robin McGarry's client—a New York family—decided to purchase a home in close proximity to Compo Beach for summers, weekends and holidays. The family is raising three young children, so a prime consideration was that the house accommodate a live-in nanny as well as host both sets of frequently visiting grandparents. This extended family philosophy thrives well here, thanks to Robin McGarry & Associates' insightful attention. Although the client wanted a sophisticated look, the house nonetheless needed to be eminently livable and comfortable enough to address the subsequent large family gatherings.

BY MEG MCAULEY KAICHER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ORION BISHOP





"We try to defy quick categorization by using a sophisticated mix of textures and shapes, creating simplicity out of complexity, and strength through subtlety," says McGarry. "With attention to detail, rooms are elegantly understated."

As this Westport haven was to be an extension of the family's New York City home, McGarry skirted the typical beach clichés. Instead she cleverly transformed this conventional spec house by gently reflecting her clients' love of heritage.

McGarry embraced the use of saturated colors, atypical of Connecticut homes. Utilizing the prevalence of many vendors now sporting vibrant European palettes, paint and fabric design selections became a playful exercise with color. As seen in the blue-violet master bedroom, the use of unpredictable colors presents a diversion from the ordinary.

LEFT Sleek, elegant dining space offers matte chocolate walls offset by ethereal Venetian plaster ceiling by master craftsman Robert Schwarz that fades like the sky. Italian pendants and mother-of-pearl candlesticks shimmer.





OPPOSITE Living room colors of caramel and russet are anchored by Tibetan wool carpet sourced through rug expert Alix Perrachon.

LEFT Silk drapes, velvet dot pillows, a sculptural lamp and artwork juxtaposed against elegant neutrals update this room.

The master bedroom's use of rich colors radiates with passion and elegance: sumptuous furnishings crafted of silk, wool and leather materials envelop inhabitants. A custom bed with upholstered headboard and frame was fabricated by the fine craftsmen at Classic Upholstery in Norwalk, who upholstered several pieces for this project.

Fabrics and furnishings throughout are luxurious and very cosmopolitan. However, McGarry's sensible selections also are durable and forgiving

enough to withstand the active family lifestyle.

With a tacit understanding of the unconventional yet traditional family focus, McGarry's team created an ideal extensive kitchen space centered on a cozy, modern banquette. Master craftsman Robert Schwarz built an exquisite walnut pedestal table for maneuverability; McGarry married it with washable herringbone ultrasuede upholstery in the breakfast eating area. Both the inviting coffee-colored banquette and custom citrus chairs were made to Mc-



RIGHT Chocolate leather sofa accessorized with crewel work and silk-striped pillows. Wicker coffee table repeats bold round shape of lamp shade.

OPPOSITE Iron chairs upholstered in floral paisley complement Tibetan carpet and breakfast banquet with custom walnut table by Robert Schwarz.



Garry's specifications by experts at Classic Upholstery.

As McGarry considers client input instrumental, she suggested the children pick their own bedroom themes to reflect their personalities. Symmetry and classic design work to create a sense of girlish grandeur in one daughter's bedroom: lyrical ribbons hand-painted by Ridgefield artist Marcia Simha relate back to the ribbon swirls on the bedding. Round shapes gracefully repeat with bed newel posts, dresser knobs, painted gate cut-outs, and circle flowers on pillows, developing a comforting rhythm.

Expert workmanship by Simha is

highlighted with another hand-painted floral in the second daughter's bedroom. Further attention to detail is demonstrated by the striped lampshade, striped bedding and striped window shade. Orderly details present soothing comfort through square shape repetition.

On the lower level, a playroom is separated by a stylish tempered glass partition. This pleasing-to-the-eye construction (also crafted by Schwarz) offers design mindful of safety by closing off access to exercise equipment.

The guest room is lavish enough to be mistaken for a master suite. This alluring space elicits special warmth and







OPPOSITE Serene blue-violet master bedroom balances masculine and feminine with flowered bedding, leather armchair and sleek lamp.

LEFT Soothing space evokes tranquility enhanced by gentle repetition of classic shapes.

BELOW Creative hand-stenciled floral by renowned Ridgefield artist Marcia Simha in child's bedroom.

ensures that guests always feel welcome.

Superb accessories such as the elegant hand-embroidered starburst bedding ensemble as well as the whimsical bird and red pleated pillows were sourced locally at Bedroom Matters. McGarry feels strongly about supporting local proprietors. All the home's hand-knotted area rugs were purchased through expert rug consultant Alix Perrachon of Larchmont; most of the flowers were arranged by local artist Danna DiElsi from The Silk Touch in Norwalk.

McGarry controls the unfolding of each project like an orchestra conductor: all the parts must work in har-

mony for the job to succeed. Critical components are expert organization and defined coordination.

"We greatly enjoyed working with Robin," says the client. "First, she takes the time upfront to understand the client's preferences, which avoids delays later. She then translates those discussions into a consistent design theme with multiple options. Second, she can deliver a turn-key solution. Since our primary residence is in New York, we needed to be able to make critical decisions on the weekends, but had to trust the details to Robin."

Central to McGarry's design process is a studied business approach. By







critically assessing each project's budget at its onset, McGarry is able to establish a clear working plan to suit client vision and schedule. Every project begins with a preliminary budget, approved by the client, covering all aspects of the project and the range of possible associated costs. This financial guideline serves as the framework from which the rest of the plan develops. It also prevents a job from spiraling out of control financially, a primary concern of many clients.

With this element of precision underlying the design process, McGarry assures each project's integrity as a professional business project achieving client goals. Although the firm always has followed this process, during these economic times the format is especially relevant. ■

Meg McAuley Kaicher may be reached at Capital Consulting Group, (203) 554-5300, or megmk@optonline.net.

OPPOSITE The exercise studio is cleverly set off from children's area by a transparent partition.

BELOW A sense of girlish grandeur seen in the lyrical hand painting of renowned Ridgefield artist Marcia Simha.

RESOURCES

Robin McGarry and Associates

11 Riverfield Drive
Weston, CT 06883
203-454-1825
www.RobinMcGarry.com

