

A G R A C I O U S R E T R E A T

Poised on the shores of a private lake,
this classically-inspired brick manor house
is off in a world of its own.



“IN THE FAST-PACED WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE, IT IS PARAMOUNT FOR PEOPLE TO COME HOME TO TRANQUIL SPACES WHERE THEY CAN BE REENERGIZED.”

Everyone should be so lucky as to have a true country estate that is within reach of a major city, but blissfully off on its own. Such is this manor house which is set on a lake in eastern Connecticut at the end of a narrow, tree-lined drive.

As dreamy as it sounds, it's not so simple to create a manmade environment that is big and useful, but at the same time, fits in with the landscape and doesn't compete with the views—both inside and out. In fact, the quest was not only not to compete with, but to draw attention to the serenely scenic woods and shiny lake waters.

It was this mission of carrying out the owners' dreams that Weston-based Robin McGarry embraced when she came on board as the house was being framed. A more perfect match could not be made. McGarry (of Robin McGarry Interior Design) believes that "...in the fast-paced world in which we live, it is paramount for people to come home to tranquil spaces where they can be reenergized."

PREVIOUS PAGE: Most of the fabrics in the library—including the chairs and the window treatments—are Rogers and Goffigan. The club chairs to the left are by E.J. Victor. The rounded edge gives them an updated look as opposed to an older traditional appearance. Truly making the room is the hand-knotted, vegetable-dyed Karim rug.

LEFT: The gentleman's master bedroom includes a peaceful reading corner with a masculine chair and a small retro walnut table from the owners' collection.

RIGHT: The mirror reflects a painting on the opposite side of the Great Room in the living area. It is autumn foliage by American artist Joseph Raffael, very much like the deciduous trees outside the house. The table includes iron bases that were rescued from an old family table that had been in a vacation home for years. The top is mahogany, made by Artifact Design Group in Wilton. The chairs, from Artistic Frame, were custom finished to match the table. The rug below is a hand-knotted Megerian, the twin of which is in the living area (fraternal, not identical twins, however).







One of her very first concerns was the size of the mouldings in the house. “The [mouldings] the builders were going to use were too small,” she explains. “It’s very common for people to go too small in the trimwork as well as furnishings.” Early on, she also had a significant challenge with the mouldings that resulted in an extremely creative solution. The main level of the house has very large windows that overlook the lake and the owner wanted draperies to be able to cover them. Aware that traditional application of valances would not work, as the draperies would be cumbersome in opening some French doors also on that level, she created drapery pockets under the mouldings to conceal the truss rods.

An ongoing challenge throughout the 11,000 square foot house was to balance the large scales of the rooms with the appropriate detail and furnishings to make each one feel comfortable. McGarry created layouts in every single room that were scaled just right to give the feeling of gracious comfort.

When you first enter the home, you step into the Great Room, which encompasses the living and formal dining areas. While segregated, the two merge beautifully, both sharing unencumbered lake views.

McGarry accomplished this “marriage” between the two areas and the outdoors in a variety of ways. For example, with

PREVIOUS PAGE LEFT: Even the game room is made up of subdued, calming colors. Here you see a simple seating area in the room.

PREVIOUS PAGE RIGHT: The living area is part of the Great Room which you step into after entering the house. Chests on either side of the fireplace are from a family estate. The painting by American artist Joseph Raffael brings the outdoors in. To the left of the fireplace you see an Audubon print, one of several throughout the house. The coffee table is from the Althorp Collection, which includes reproductions of pieces from the English Spencer family’s old manor house. The hand-knotted Megerian rug is part of a matching pair, the other being under the dining room table.

LEFT: Simple lines and a soft color palette create a very uncluttered and relaxing family room.

the smart placement of art, she brought the outdoors in. Above the fireplace in the living area hangs a painting of autumn foliage by American artist Joseph Raffael. Not only is it reflective of the surrounding scenery but is actually reflected in a mirror on the opposite side of the Great Room, on the wall running parallel to the dining table. She placed a pair of hand-knotted Megerian matching rugs (not identical twins, however) in both the dining and living areas, nicely pairing the two areas.

Rugs are used throughout the house to break up the large spaces. She also warmed up the large rooms and broke them down to manageable sizes with her choice of furnishings, along with heirlooms from the family collection and some very simple, but elegant pieces carefully arranged.

She brought in some manor-like pieces to add to the estate feel of the house including a coffee table in the living room from the Althorp Collection, a new line introduced by Princess Diana's brother, Earl Spencer. The collection includes reproductions of pieces from their old manor house.

Much of the tranquility of the house is created with the use of soothing colors in every room. All of the tones are very soft and restful to the eyes. There are no bright colors. The artwork is very subdued as well. Throughout, there are Audubon botanical prints adorning the walls.

The master suite, which opens to a balcony overlooking the lake, almost seamlessly merges with the soft natural colors outside. Even in the game room, there is a feeling of refinement and calmness with a soft color palette.

The house is indeed a haven, off in a world of its own.

RIGHT: The master suite opens to a balcony overlooking the lake and surrounding woods. Here you can see the drapery pockets that McGarry designed with the mouldings to conceal the travis rods. The colors in the room are soft and refined with the exception of a few features including the custom-made mahogany headboard which was stained very dark. Wood lamps in the room were painted in antique to match the tones in the room.

