

Gathering Grounds

A 1920s-era house in Greenwich is updated and expanded into a multigenerational retreat.

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Architecture: John B. Murray, Tim Middleton and Adam Platt, John B. Murray Architect Interior Design: Lee Cavanaugh and Ellie Cullman, Cullman & Kravis
Home Builder: Mark SanAngelo, Hobbs Inc. Landscape Architecture: Janice Parker, Janice Parker Landscape Architects

From the outside, the 1926 Georgian Revival in Greenwich looked promising to a Manhattan couple who was searching for a country house retreat for themselves, their adult children, and grandchildren. Overlooking a harbor off the Long Island Sound, the property's waterside setting besotted them, as did the classical exterior and fieldstone cladding. The interior, however, was less appealing. The layout was cramped and congested, with space monopolized by a maze of hallways, while the rooms felt staid, dark and not particularly family-friendly.

Recognizing an immense potential, the couple purchased the property then promptly engaged the trusted firms behind their primary Upper East Side residence—Cullman & Kravis and John B. Murray Architect—to update the house. In contrast to their city home, which boasts a serious mix of antiques and blue-chip art, the couple wished for their Connecticut abode to be casual and comfortable. More specifically, “they wanted open space, clean lines and nothing fussy or cluttered,” says designer Lee Cavanaugh. Before those wishes could be granted, the interior first had to be gutted, affording the opportunity to collaborate with the skillful team of general contractor Mark SanAngelo.

Notable changes to the structure include the addition of both a breakfast room and library, providing the family with more living space without compromising the historical character. “Each of the additions we did seamlessly matches the original 1926 exterior,” says John B. Murray, who collaborated with fellow architects Tim Middleton and Adam Platt on the project. The interiors are similarly reverential—but with a few twists and turns. Newly introduced architectural details, such as the three-story entry hall's elliptical staircase and the library's pilasters and rotunda ceiling, speak to the house's classical style while updated finishes (see: travertine flooring at the entry and light anigre wood paneling in the library and adjacent scotch bar) impart a more contemporary sensibility. “Everything was done with an eye toward simplicity, airiness and being pared back,” Murray adds.

Merging past with present similarly guided the decoration. Rooms are endowed with clean-lined, modern-leaning furnishings set against elegant flourishes like the living room's dramatic glass chandelier and Venetian plaster walls, both of which elevate the tone of the house. (“This is not a starter home in any way,” quips designer Ellie Cullman.) The team also specified numerous bespoke pieces from a stone-and-ebonized-wood console in the living room to a statement circular rug for the library. A healthy dose of antique finds, many of which are Art Deco to play to the age of the home, round out the characterful milieu. “If you go all contemporary, there is no soul,” Cullman surmises.

Views notwithstanding, the joyful-yet-sophisticated color palette is a focal point of the house. In the ground-floor rooms, serene neutral hues are enlivened by a range of blues that echo the water, plus coral accents for an element of surprise. In the once-gloomy lower level, the colors are even brighter and more layered as a nod to that level's recreational program, which encompasses a grandchildren's playroom, gym and game room. But the most vibrant notes of all come courtesy of the homeowners' art collection. Exclusively featuring the work of up-and-coming artists, its lighthearted presence matches the relaxed tone of the overall design. “The art really spoke to the whole project. It's bright, cheery and not too serious,” says Cavanaugh.

Naturally, one such grand transformation extends to the grounds as well, where landscape architect Janice Parker devised a series of graceful terraces with areas for lounging, dining, entertaining and swimming. Echoing the graphic, colorful mood of the interiors, Parker opted for a saturated and structured botanical palette. With dahlias, geraniums and pink-purple Summer Crush hydrangeas, “we created bold color strokes that don't look hodgepodge,” she notes.

Uplifting in every facet, the home—for which John B. Murray Architect received a McKim, Mead & White Award—will be featured as a chapter in *Cullman & Kravis: Interiors* (Rizzoli), the designers' monograph coming out this September. “It was great to get the team back together again,” says Cavanaugh. “The first project worked out so well, and we had the best time with this one.” ■



Blue accents, including an artwork by Julia Dault partnered with a vintage glass cabinet from Bernd Goeckler, enliven the entry hall, whose elliptical staircase was designed by John B. Murray Architect. The herringbone-patterned travertine flooring is from ABC Stone.



Left: In the living room, a painting by Cary Smith hangs above a bespoke stone-and-ebonized-wood console from Olicore Studio. The walls' Venetian plaster finish and a silk rug by Beauvais foster a sense of tranquility.

Opposite: The living room's seating includes sofas by Anthony Lawrence-Belfair and a pair of T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings chairs sourced via Lobel Modern. A concave mirror by Christophe Gaignon and limestone mantel from Jamb create an enticing focal point.



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The kitchen features an island finished in milk glass with silver strapping and quartzite countertops. Silver-toned stools from Cliff Young and a nickel light fixture sourced at John Salibello Antiques lend luster, as does the Wolf dual range oven.



Left: The husband displays his scotch collection in the aptly-named scotch bar, which features anigre wood cabinets, onyx countertops, a Waterworks tap and Nanz hardware. The Art Deco-inspired pendant light is a custom Cullman & Kravis design.

Opposite: A sofa and chairs by Anthony Lawrence-Belfair, a Lorin Marsh coffee table and an Art Deco side table complement the library's wood-paneled walls and lacquered domed ceiling. The rug is from Crosby Street Studios.



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The lively game room features a colorful mix of furnishings that includes a Crosby Street Studios rug, an armchair covered in Lee Jofa's Rain Dance print and art by Halsey Hathaway and Rico Gatson. A Phillip Jeffries wallcovering makes a neutral backdrop.



Above: The homeowners' grandchildren slumber in the bunk room, which the designers lightheartedly furnished with a reproduction Keith Haring chair from MoMA and a roman shade fabricated from both Schumacher and Kravet fabrics. The wall-to-wall carpeting is Stark.

Opposite: The playroom is a children's paradise with its jazzy wallpaper from Profiles and miniature ice-cream truck. Colorful geometric carpet tiles by Flor and yellow velvet poufs from Crate & Barrel provide soft surfaces on which to sit and play.



The designers worked closely with landscape architect Janice Parker on the outdoor terraces, including this fire pit lounge surrounded by hydrangeas. The chairs are by Janus et Cie. Paul Ferrante lanterns flank the doorway.

