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Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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HOBBI AWARDS

A FRESH POINT OF VIEW

Kitchens That Inspire
New Designs For Lighting
Interiors With Personality

Near And Far In a sunroom/family room, defined by a dramatic Palladian window, objects and furnishings reference the homeowners' many international trips, including a brass chandelier and sconces from Morocco and a pair of lounge chairs with a pattern that evokes zebras they saw on a photographic safari to South Africa. The extra-long sofa is from McKinnon & Harris. Accent tables are from Gabby. See Resources.



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Mediterranean Magic (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Landscape architects Doyle Herman Design Associates designed the rear terrace with a mix of lawn panels and brick inlays to soften the space. This antique well head, made of rossa verona marble, is surrounded by lamb's ear and Alchemilla mollis. Perfect for entertaining, the terrace has views of the Goodwives River. The original pink marble pathway was lifted and reconfigured into an updated design. See Resources.

Party Perfect

Every space is a potential dance floor in this house that's constantly filled with hustle and bustle

BY **DAVID MASELLO** | INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY **COSTAS PICADAS** | EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NEIL LANDINO JR.**



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HEREAS MANY FAMILY MEMBERS might gather in the evenings to watch a movie together or retreat to separate quarters to work on computers, this Fairfield County family often goes dancing. Disco dancing, to be precise. In what was once the library of this circa-1925, Mediterranean-style house, music is pumped out on a state-of-the-art sound system so that the parents and their four children, along with friends and myriad cousins, might dance together.

Although there is not a revolving mirrored ball in what is now referred to by the family as the disco library off the entry foyer, the home's interior designer, Greenwich-based Cindy Rinfret, installed a chic, multi-armed brass and glass light fixture affixed to a modern take on a coffered ceiling. Both the clients and their children wanted this to be a big party house, where, as the client herself says, "we can have fun every day, entertain friends, but also be 'us.'" Rinfret stresses, too, her client's wish that "nothing be or feel at all stuffy, but instead playful. There's always a hustle and bustle inside the home."

Perfect For Entertaining In the dining room (top), a custom table is surrounded by Ironies chairs through Jerry Pair; custom patched-hide area rug is through J.D. Staron. The butler's pantry (left) has millwork by CJS Millwork, stone top from Connecticut Stone and cabinet hardware from Waterworks. See Resources.

Kitchen Cachet A custom brass and stainless-steel hood by Focal Metals anchors one end of the kitchen. Colonial Bronze brass hardware adorns the cabinetry. Rubinet faucets are through Klaffs. Gregorius Pineo hand-forged lanterns are through Holly Hunt. See Resources.

Always At Home Rinfret chose an armless daybed from Baker Furniture for gatherings of many people in the living room (THIS PHOTO). Formations chandelier is through Holly Hunt. Orange swivel leather armchairs are from Lee Industries. The area rug is from Beauvais Carpets. See Resources.



“When I started working with Paulo and Cindy on the renovation, my goal, the whole time, was to make a house where memories are made in every one of the rooms”

Sweet Spot In an alternate area of the living room (TOP), the designer reupholstered the client’s own chairs using Holly Hunt and Fabricut fabrics. Table lamps on a Bliss Studio console are from Currey & Co; etagere is from Mr. Brown Home; wall sculpture is an antique Curtis Jere. **Pattern Plays** In the powder room (RIGHT), Maya Romanoff wallcovering complements tile from Greenwich Tile & Marble. Visual Comfort sconces flank a mirror from Worlds Away. See Resources.





What was originally built as a spacious suburban house meant to replicate an Italian villa more typical to the Mediterranean coast than the banks of Darien's Five Mile River was not, however, an anomaly of the time. "There was a long tradition of substantial, well-detailed Mediterranean houses built in New England," says Paulo Vicente, a Fairfield-based architect who doubled the size of the house to its now 9,000 square feet, taking much of the structure down to the studs in the process. "Architecturally, we can't make an exact version of such a residence in Darien, given our climate. Our goal for this expansion and renovation was to create the kind of courtyard you'd find in an Italian Mediterranean villa and have rooms that overlook water; in this case the river."

Vicente and Rinfret worked together, too, to fashion an interior floor plan that was both traditional yet open. "She wanted to be able to use every room and not just have some rooms be ones that you pass by and look into," explains Rinfret.

Rinfret took exterior cues for much of her work inside the home. The blood-orange tiled roof, for instance, is referenced in a daybed and armchairs in the living room. Vicente's choice of blue-gray shutters on the exterior are echoed in the disco library's painted bookcases, contemporary artworks and

Poolside Pleasure (LEFT) The towel-room floor is lined with handmade, glazed Moroccan tile by Mosaic House from Greenwich Tile & Marble. **Outside Living** (TOP LEFT) A custom-designed quadripartite bench by DHDA is a perfect fit in front of the outdoor fireplace. Mediterranean perennials (TOP RIGHT)—such as iris, salvias and lamb's ear—border the edge of the terrace. **Let's Dance!** (OPPOSITE PAGE) In the disco library, a brass chandelier from Neptune Glassworks illuminates a space to dance and a curved sectional from Kravet. Two-toned wood flooring is through Historic Floors. Steel doors are from Portella. See Resources.



Bedroom Bliss (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM) In the master bedroom, a Dessin Fournir hand-blocked turquoise and metallic wallcovering backs a custom velvet bed with nailhead trim. Bedside table is from Made Goods. An antique chaise offers a restful spot by the window. See Resources.



furnishings in a Palladian-windowed family room, one of the chief architectural additions to the home. While many architectural and decorative details hark to Italian motifs, such as a printed Venetian-style wallcovering in the master bedroom, it is in the family room, in particular, that a more international feel is established, reflective of the family's wide-ranging global travels.

"By complete coincidence, the client and I had been in Morocco at the same time," says Rinfret. "She bought an incredible Moroccan chandelier and I bought sconces, all of which now light the room in a very sexy way at night. The jewelry of any house is the light fixtures. The hardware you use tells you immediately about the quality of the house as a whole."

Another conspicuous detail introduced throughout by Rinfret are various metals—antique brass, satin nickel, and wrought iron that appear on everything from interior French doors, master bath fixtures, and hardware on a kitchen island as vast as a Mediterranean isle. "I like to mix metals in my projects," says Rinfret. "Metals don't date a house. The material grows into the interiors and ages well, assuming a patina."

The client points out that while the house already has a certain history to it in that silent screen star Rudolph Valentino once lived there, it is the history that she and her family will create that matters most to her. "We had already lived in the neighborhood 10 years," she says, "and always admired the house for its villa style. When I started working with Paulo and Cindy on the renovation, my goal, the whole time, was to make a house where memories are made in every one of the rooms." ✨

Bathing Beauty (TOP) An oval Waterworks tub takes pride of place in front of the window in the master bathroom. Blue marble floor tile is from Walker Zanger. Brizo faucets are from Best Plumbing Tile & Stone. See Resources.

