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WRITTEN BY **CARA GREENBERG**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **TRIA GIOVAN**

THERE WAS NEVER ANY DOUBT AS TO HOW TO FURNISH THIS GEORGIAN-STYLE FIELDSTONE ESTATE IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY, CONNECTICUT. Set on five hilltop acres among mature beech trees, the house felt as if it had been there a lot longer than just three short years. The interiors, by celebrated New York designer Bunny Williams, would be unabashedly traditional, dovetailing closely with the classical architecture by Southport, Connecticut-based Mark P. Finlay, AIA, and with the homeowners' own sensibilities.

"It's a formal house that's wonderfully proportioned, and the clients came with some pretty English antiques that had been passed down to them by their families," says Williams, who pulled together the existing period pieces and added what was needed to fully furnish the 12,400-square-foot five-bedroom home.

The architectural design is steeped in the style of 18th- and early-19th-century England, whose symmetry and graceful details the architect appropriated, but made less stiff and more welcoming with innovations of his own. "Every element has traditional roots, but they're not necessarily copies of traditional elements," says Finlay, who worked with New Canaan, Connecticut, builders Ian and Scott Hobbs on the project. The idea for curved, covered hallways on the main level, for instance, came from the open porches of Mount Vernon—George Washington's home in Virginia—but Finlay enclosed them to create curved wings, like "embracing arms," as he puts it, on either side of the entry portico.



STYLE SELECTION
Formed from ceramic, a hand-carved gilt base with a Peruvian-inspired pattern exudes classic sophistication. *Chicken Feather Lamp [Blue]*, price available upon request; beelinehome.com

ARCHITECTURE Mark P. Finlay, Mark P. Finlay Architects, AIA

INTERIOR DESIGN Bunny Williams, Bunny Williams Inc.

HOME BUILDER Ian and Scott Hobbs, Hobbs, Inc.

BEDROOMS 5 **BATHROOMS** 8 **SQUARE FEET** 12,400



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 157

With all of the residence's sophisticated Georgian-era details—arched Palladian windows, the sweeping staircase in the central entry hall, the elliptical arch leading into the dining room, and so on—Williams was challenged to create interiors reflective of its formal exterior, while still suitable enough to be used as the full-time residence of a modern-day couple with two college-age children. The designer took the seriousness of the architecture down a notch by supplementing the gleaming inherited mahogany pieces, family silver, crystal chandeliers and the like with some “faded woods and the occasional painted piece.”

WELCOME HOME

The spacious entry hall takes on a regal aesthetic with its winding staircase, round rosewood table from designer Bunny Williams' BeeLine Home collection, a large blue and white temple jar and 19th-century brass urn from John Rosselli Antiques.



ELEGANT EATS

Ornate features in the dining room, such as the arched doorway and ceiling detail, give the space character. Williams balanced the owner's existing dining table, chairs and sideboard with carefully selected accessories like the chandelier from Alexander Cohane, etched glass hurricanes from John Rosselli Antiques and hand-painted wallpaper from Gracie Studio. The wool rug is from Beauvais Carpets.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 158

Lighthearted ceramic table lamps from her own BeeLine Home collection and lots of comfortable seating upholstered in understated modern fabrics also help to balance the interior mood. “There’s nothing gilded here,” Williams points out. “There’s just a sense of great quality, without it being too grand.”

In the living room, swagged and tasseled curtains crafted in Cowtan & Tout fabric nod to custom, while blue and white accessories, a coffee table finished in silver leaf, and a velvet aquamarine tufted ottoman lighten the area against the earth tones of the antique Tabriz carpet. The touches of blue foster a sense of place, alluding to the house’s location on Long Island Sound, which is visible from all of the main rooms.

Exquisite period-inspired wallpapers, such as the dining room’s vivid blue-green 18th-century-style, hand-painted paper with a Chinese scenic motif, enliven the house’s primarily neutral palette. “Coming from a neutral room into a room of strong color makes even more of an impact,” says Williams, who is always mindful of the flow of color from one room to the next. “If each room is treated in isolation, you can end up with a carnival.”



STONE SOPHISTICATE

Architect Mark P. Finlay, AIA, designed the Connecticut fieldstone-clad exterior to reflect the style of 18th- and 19th-century English architecture. A rounded balcony just off the master bedroom provides an alternative to back patio lounging. Finlay designed the landscape in conjunction with garden designer Howard Bunta of Larchmont, New York.



SITTING PRETTY

The elegantly detailed living room features a plethora of seating options, including three sofas upholstered in Brunswig & Fils, Cowtan & Tout and Pierre Frey fabrics, an A. Schneller Sons ottoman in Scalamandré aquamarine cut velvet, two wood-framed bergères from Bunny Williams and an 18th-century Italian fauteuil. Williams finished the room with colorful accessories from BeeLine Home and John Rosselli Antiques and striped Cowtan & Tout drapes with Samuel & Sons trim.



SUMMER DREAM

A 400-square-foot pool house with a gray Vermont slate roof rests next to an inviting outdoor pool (by Woodbury, Connecticut-based J. Cipriano & Sons) and lounge space. Outside of the pool, the owners can relax in patio furniture from Restoration Hardware.

STYLE SELECTION

Designed with Roman architecture in mind, Richard Frinier used wrought aluminum frames and Suncloth cushions to convey artful details through 20th-century technology. *Florentine Lounge Chair*, \$1,900; brownjordan.com



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 160

The great room, with its rustic, exposed beams and towering stone hearth, was kitted out in a casual way that lends itself to lounging. “That’s the room with the television, where the kids can flop down and watch the game, so I chose fabrics and furniture that would hold up to that kind of living,” says Williams. The space is grounded by two nutmeg-colored sofas—one of the owner’s existing collection, the other fabricated by A. Schneller Sons—upholstered in tweed and offset with durable wood coffee and side tables and an armchair re-covered in sage-colored Edelman leather.



CURVES AHEAD

A rounded hallway is decorated with glass lanterns from Vaughan Lighting and custom-colored yellow-striped wallpaper by Peter Fasano.



SLEEPING PATTERN

A yellow and white cotton fabric from Raoul Textiles forms the draperies and wallcovering in the soothing master retreat. Contrasting patterns in the Colefax and Fowler-upholstered chairs, custom-colored Stark wool carpet and 1940s hand-woven Parisian throw from Bunny Williams work together to set the room's welcoming tone. The Louis XVI-style bench is from John Rosselli and the four-poster bed is from Julia Gray.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 165

While the homeowners' contemporary lives influenced the design team's mission, traditional décor, by definition, doesn't brook much tampering with time-honored ways. "The homeowner's mother has great taste and very strong ideas about interior design," Williams says. "During the course of the project, I would often hear 'What's my mother going to think?' and 'Will she like this?' I was more intimidated when I finished the house about what Mother would say. When she loved it, we knew we were fine." **L**