



PICTURE PERFECT

AS SEEN IN
CTC&G
Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

THE QUEST FOR THE IDEAL GETAWAY ON LONG ISLAND
SOUND HAS A VERY HAPPY ENDING

BY **EVA HAGBERG** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **JEFF MCNAMARA**



The Long View The edge of the pool (THIS PAGE) merges almost seamlessly into Long Island Sound beyond, while limestone paving and plants were introduced by Devore Associates. On this thin strip of land (OPPOSITE PAGE), architect, designer and landscape designer worked with profound limitations to produce this spacious and restrained family home detailed in Alaskan yellow cedar shingles and a stone veneer base crafted from Native Stone through Connecticut Stone. See *Resources*.



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HE QUESTION WAS ALWAYS: ‘Is it going to be perfect?’ Lesley Lowe recalls. The New York-based interior designer, whose umpteenth project with the same clients was this Compo Cove house that she collaborated on with architect McKee Patterson of Southport-based Austin

Patterson Disston Architects and landscape architect Diane Devore, is conjuring up the amount of pressure—good pressure!—the clients put on her. Their vision for a Connecticut summer house with room for their family was something “dreamy, warm, neutral,” which seems straightforward until you realize that the beiges couldn’t have any yellows; the taupes couldn’t have any green; and every single finish needed to be...perfect.

Patterson was the design architect for the project and faced significant issues given that the house is accessible only by foot traffic and that the local association exerted a lot of aesthetic input. “It’s extremely restricted, so space is always the issue,” he says. The design challenge was to figure out how to maximize the space, how to work with a fairly straightforward program, how to ensure that the clients had a yoga room (the husband is “very adamant about his yoga”), and how to keep prioritizing the view and access to the fresh saltwater air.

Lowe and Patterson worked closely together—Lowe bringing her experience working with the clients on projects in Montecito and New York City’s Time Warner Center, and Patterson bringing his decades of architectural experience and history of working with the clients on an earlier project. Structural challenges—like where exactly the stairs would go, and a central fireplace that in initial plans bisected the space—were worked through in collaboration between the two and their clients.



Airy Entrance (THIS PAGE) A pendant from Frontgate illuminates the entry foyer; the rug is through Crate & Barrel. **Space Saver** (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) Architect McKee Patterson designed this two-and-a-half story house—the pointed top floor is a movie room—to maximize space while operating within local restrictions. The fencing and pool enclosure is through Garon Fencing Co. **Giant Steps** (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM) Landscape architect Diane Devore designed grass-covered steppes leading to the pool and grill area. See *Resources*.





Easy Access (ABOVE, TOP TO BOTTOM) In the kitchen, a Chilewich floor mat demarcates the workspace, which is furnished with Sub-Zero and Miele appliances, plus faucets from Brizo. Heath Ceramics dinnerware lines the kitchen shelves alongside a Wolf range. See Resources.

Open Plan (RIGHT) Home Nature wooden bowls adorn the kitchen island. In the dining area, a custom Desiron table is paired with Arden Home chairs and glass pendants. The fireplace is crafted from limestone through Connecticut Stone. The living room is furnished with Thayer Coggin swivel chairs, a custom coffee table from Arden Home and an end table through Sunpan. The Perennials rug is through David Sutherland. See Resources.







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—McKEE PATTERSON**

“In many ways, it laid itself out,” Patterson says. The main bedroom went on the second floor facing the water, kids’ bedrooms went into the back, and the living room, dining room and kitchen all connected on the first floor. Reorganizing the layout led to less space on the second floor for bedrooms, which everyone ended up agreeing on. Lowe points out that the owners wanted to prioritize spaces for gathering over private spaces, which led to their accepting smaller bedrooms in favor of a more expansive lower level, in exchange for moving the staircase to the side. Despite a general feeling of openness, size was an issue. “There’s a very tight limit on how big you can build, and a very tight limit on how tall you can build,” Patterson explains. A workaround was to do two-and-a-half stories, that half-story being a usable space whose exterior shape fits into the classical aesthetic nature of the neighborhood and whose interior houses a movie room.

That sense of airy interior modernism and classical exterior is threaded together in the landscape architecture by Diane Devore of Devore Associates. Her team brought in plants that “were indigenous to the salty environment





Considered Compositions (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM LEFT) A holly hedge planted by Devore Associates helps create privacy. Doors lead to the children's rooms and a bathroom boasting cement floor tile from Ann Sacks; articulated windows operate as a clerestory, drawing light into the bedrooms. In one of the children's rooms, a PBteen bed rests on a rug from Aronson's Carpet. Desk chairs from ABC Carpet & Home and a Serena & Lily rug bring calm serenity to the home-office space. See *Resources*.





Great Heights (TOP LEFT) A Moooi Random pendant light illuminates the family room, where hand-embroidered pillows from India adorn an RH sectional. The ottoman is through Room & Board; the rug is from Serena & Lily. An RH lamp tops a Crate & Barrel side table. *See Resources.*

Suite Retreat (ABOVE AND BOTTOM LEFT) In the master bedroom, a custom bed from Alexander & Sons Upholstery is detailed with Robert Allen fabric. Lee Industries chairs covered in a Matthew Williamson for Osborne & Little fabric sit on a braided rug from Aronson's Floor Covering. Limestone walls, floor and countertop from ABC Stone bring a seamless calm to the master bathroom, which is outfitted with a Room & Board vanity stool and Waterworks accessories. *See Resources.*



and that would withstand if the waves came in, or if it flooded.” That hardiness is found in the American holly hedge, some native grasses, a few perennials for summer color, and a limestone terrace because, Devore says, “they wanted something cool underfoot.” Again working within size limits, Devore created a sense of spaciousness by working with different grade levels, raising the pool and adding grass steps to create an area where the couple’s children (and their friends) could run around. “The hedge provides privacy, but you don’t even realize that it’s enclosed,” she says.

And that’s where the real success of the project lies. At first, it might seem like a fairly straightforward New England shingle house, with a kicky second-and-a-half story and an extraordinarily gracious interior. But the trick is in how the house ends up looking both like it belongs on its thin strip of site, and also remains utterly contemporary. “It was really a lot of work to do something that looks so simple in the pictures,” Lowe notes. And the client’s response? “I walked in with a punchlist,” Lowe recalls. “She turned around, and said, ‘it’s perfect.’” 🌞