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Classic
Accents



Handcrafted details and fine finishes with a traditional bent lend a timeless quality to these graceful homes.



Stable Qualities

Honest materials
and traditional
detailing lend
a convincing
aura of age to
a graceful new
home near Long
Island Sound.

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A plaster-look, wood-ornamented ceiling and a 19th-century rug dress the living room from head to toe in quiet luxury. Linen-and-silk draperies and a neutral color palette delivered via texture-rich furnishings and accessories reinforce an air of casual elegance.





THIS PHOTO: A tall 18th-century mirror balances the proportions of a custom limestone mantel in the living room. RIGHT: Arched 9-foot-tall French doors lend old-world verve to the home's exterior.



First impressions can be deceiving, as evidenced by this New York home. "We intended this house to look like an old carriage house that happened to be renovated—not a new house built to look like an old carriage house," architect Stuart Disston says.

Disston clad the home's storybook exterior in stucco, capped it with wood shingles, and embellished it with cedar shutters to present a weathered facade. "If we'd used synthetic materials, it would have always looked clean and dandy," he says. "But we wanted patina and those hairline cracks you get with real stucco."

Inside, Disston and interior designer Sherrill Canet played with volume and proportion to advance the notion that the house once performed a different role. Ceilings, for example, vary in height from 10 to 22 feet. "A true carriage house would have been lofted, so we made the kitchen two stories high," Disston says. In the entry, a wrought-iron staircase tucked under an eave hints at a former life. "It appears as though this was a found space we decided to work a staircase into," the architect says.

Throughout the house, walls are skim-coated with plaster, then glazed. Honed surfaces suggest age, quartersawn oak floors express grainy character, and hand-painted cabinetry exudes an artisan's touch. "There are many ways to add texture and mellow a new house," Disston says.

The graceful patina of the architectural elements complements the furnishings' family-friendly sensibility. "With three kids, this is a busy house," Canet says. "It's informal, but it's also gracious and chic." Fabrics such as chocolate-brown velvet and wipeable imitation suede prove it's possible to "have your cake and eat it, too"—even if the crumbs tumble to the sofa. "We wanted everything to be beautiful but not overdone," Canet says.

The home's muted beige-and-ivory color palette, spiced with chocolate, turquoise, and red, epitomizes the decor's easygoing elegance. "There's a real harmony between the modern furnishings and antiques," Canet says. "The house feels tranquil and soothing, but there's enough contrast and architectural detail to make it feel interesting."

“Everything about the house is beautiful yet straightforward. There’s nothing fussy here.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER
SHERRILL CANET



LEFT: The powder room's paprika-color grass-cloth wallcovering warms a scrolled iron sink base, which was repurposed from an antique French garden gate. BELOW: A beloved antique chinoiserie secretary inspired the library's intense color scheme. Cocooned by walnut paneling and a lacquered red ceiling, the room is grounded by a wool rug with leather insets. OPPOSITE: Antique French garden prints echo the patina of a floating staircase in the entry.





A lofty ceiling lined with dark-stained wood provides a striking counterpoint to beefy white trimwork in the breakfast room. Bamboo-style chairs gathered around a large 1970s linen-wrapped dining table repeat the overhead contrast between light and dark in simple yet dramatic fashion.





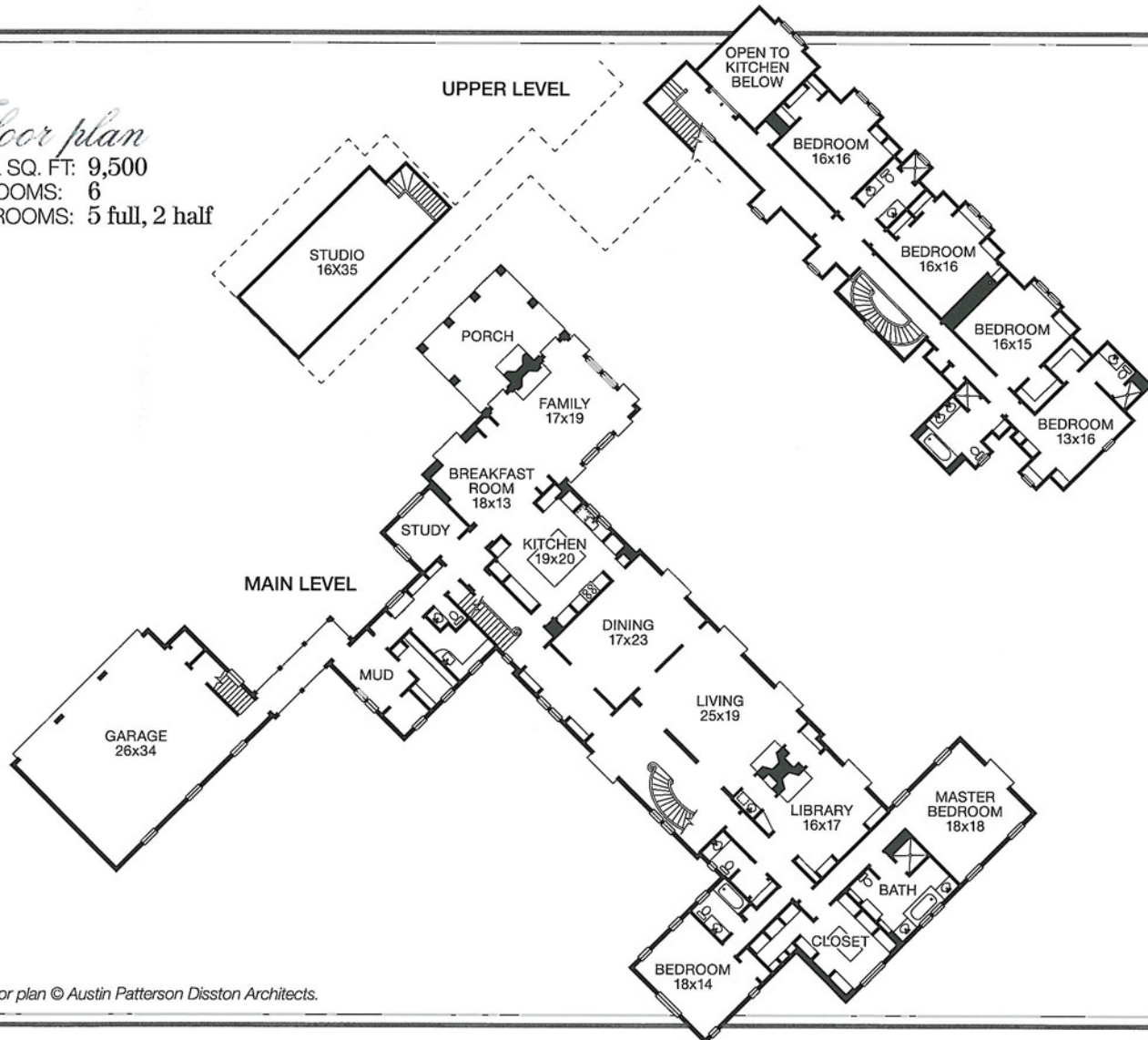




OPPOSITE: Recessed niches and a bank of arched windows nod to the kitchen's imagined carriage house origins. LEFT: Informal slipper chairs attired in a forgiving imitation suede highlight the blue tones in the formal dining room's hand-painted silk wallcovering. "A dining room is usually the least-used room in a house," interior designer Sherrill Canet says. "We wanted this room to be comfortable so the family would want to sit in it."

Floor plan

TOTAL SQ. FT: 9,500
BEDROOMS: 6
BATHROOMS: 5 full, 2 half



Floor plan © Austin Patterson Disston Architects.