

JANUARY 2003

DESIGN TO INSPIRE

# HOUSE & GARDEN

## HIGH STYLE

IN A  
MOUNTAIN  
RETREAT

**GREAT IDEAS!**  
HOW TO  
DESIGN THE  
FRONT YARD

KNITTING  
FEVER HITS  
HOME DECOR

CHOOSING  
THE PERFECT  
WINDOW

ALL ABOUT  
CAMELLIAS






# CULTURED PEARL







## designer savvy

The exterior architecture, opposite page, and entry hall, this page, blend classic detail with a modern attention to bright, airy space.

## trade secrets

**FURNITURE** The ca. 1740 carved pine consoles in the entry are attributed to Matthias Lock.

**RUG** A wool Oushak from Beauvais Carpets, NYC.

**ACCENTS** Chinese Export urns from Seidenberg, NYC, sit in the entry, and an 18th-century French Aubusson hangs over the stairs. The chandelier is 19th-century Dutch.



THERE MAY BE NO arguing about taste, but that has never stopped anyone from doing it. Interior design and architecture have many competing aesthetic camps. Some love texture and ornament; others insist on clean lines and surfaces. One party favors warm, intimate rooms; another demands bright, airy spaces. There are those who look abroad for historical influences and those who prefer all-American design references. The various groups usually find little common ground. So it is refreshing, in a day when any sort of comity is scarce, to see several bickering aesthetic viewpoints reconciled subtly and successfully in a house on the north shore of Long Island, New York.

The owners are a professional couple—he's an investment manager, she's a former attorney—who have five young children. When, a few years ago, they began to outgrow the contemporary open-plan house they had lived in for a decade, the two started searching for property on which to construct a new house. They found a wonderful site with sweeping frontage on Long Island Sound that was once part of a Vanderbilt family estate. (It even included the old Vanderbilt garage.) The question then became what sort of place they would build. She was for the antique look. "When you've lived in a modern house for ten years," she explains, "you hunger for something with texture and tradition." But he "loved the openness" of contemporary design and worried that an old-fashioned house would feel dark and confining.

For the exterior, the couple turned to Hamptons-based architect Francis Fleetwood, who weighed their concerns and desires and devised a residence in what might be called Shingle Lite style. Popularized by Charles Follen McKim and Stanford White in the late nineteenth century, the Shingle style was inspired by the homely, shingle-clad structures of the Colonial era. "It's our first truly American





**designer savvy** The enormous living room is taken to comfortable scale by judicious choices of color and furniture.

**trade secrets** **FURNITURE** George II mahogany chairs, center, attributed to Giles Grendey, flank a George III tray table. The coffee table was made from a 19th-century Chinese panel; piano by Steinway & Sons. **FABRICS** The club chair, right, is covered in Velluto Chablais by Grey Watkins Ltd. Drapes are Sandur by Travers & Co. **RUG** A wool Sultanabad from Beauvais Carpets. **ACCENTS** Georgian-style chandeliers and 19th-century sconces are from Nesle Inc., NYC.







## designer savvy

Painted paneling and cupboards lend intimacy to the library, this page, and 18th-century English oak floors temper the grandeur of the entry, opposite page.

## trade secrets

**FABRIC** Edelman leather covers the ottoman in the library; the sofa is in Lebeau by Travers. The club chairs are covered in Fonthill's Tiberio. The drapes are Fonthill's Antonova in red/neutral, and the blind is La Roche in Coralio by Old World Weavers. **RUG** A ca. 1900 Oushak from Safavieh Carpets, NYC. **ACCENTS** Library chandelier from Mora & Upham, London; in the entry, amber hurricane lamps from John Rosselli International and a mahogany Austrian bench from O'Sullivan Antiques, NYC.

The interior is, if anything, an even more impressive design alloy. The owners worked with Tony Ingrao and colleague Randy Kemper, two New York-based decorator-designers known for their innovative take on traditional decors. "The interior is about a hundred years earlier—mid- to late Georgian—than the exterior," Ingrao says. "The object was to create a classic environment that wasn't stuffy—a youthful approach to a traditional interior. We didn't use silk, only cottons and wools, to keep it family-friendly."

"The clients wanted elegance, but a low-key elegance," Kemper says. "Many people buy huge houses and never go in some of the rooms. These clients live in every inch of their house." Almost every space offers an example of tempered grandeur. The lofty entrance hall contains a dramatic stairway (Ingrao modeled it on one in an eighteenth-century house in Charleston) and is highlighted by an enormous brass William IV chandelier with 28 arms. But English oak flooring softens the monumentality of the space. (Old-world oak has a richer, denser grain, Ingrao explains. Polishers from France were brought in to give the boards a deeply layered finish.) "When you have high ceilings, you want something that pulls them down," one owner says. "Marble doesn't do that."

There's a similar effect in the living room, a huge space anchored by a staggering 36-by-18-foot Persian carpet. Taken outdoors, the rug might cover half a tennis court. But in situ, the claret carpet somehow brings the room to human scale. Light-toned paint and floral upholstery, in colors suggested by the secondary hues in the rug, balance the decor perfectly.

The dining room is the one unabashedly luxe space in the house. It is furnished in chinoiserie, the eighteenth-century emblem of the worldly and

architecture," Fleetwood says. The low-slung rooflines, punctuated by gables, turrets, and porches, "give people a sense of place and roots." The sturdy construction materials—in the case of the Long Island house, a Connecticut fieldstone base, red cedar shingles, and a slate roof—"speak of permanence," he says. "The only thing that dates the house is the size and number of the windows."

While McKim kept his Shingle mansions cool and dim with limited fenestration, Fleetwood's clients wanted an atmosphere as airy and bright as that of their modern house. The architect provided high ceilings and large windows, as well as bays and second-floor porches, that allow sunlight and offer splendid water views. "The Shingle style is very flexible," Fleetwood says. "Because these houses are asymmetrical, you can have fun with the design."



“PEOPLE HAVE A GREEDY EYE.  
THEY WANT TO SEE MORE AND MORE.  
**YOU SET UP A VISTA,**  
THEN GIVE THEM SOMETHING ELSE”  
—TONY INGRAO, INTERIOR DESIGNER







exotic—Chinese Chippendale chairs, export porcelain and Meissen figurines, and, impressively, genuine Georgian wallpaper recovered from a London house. When dinner is served by candlelight glinting off the crystal chandelier, the pink wallpaper, with its pheasant and floral print, creates “the most amazing atmosphere,” Ingrao says.

Ingrao designed the moldings and surrounds, taking a sheaf of wheat motif, for example, from an eighteenth-century Maryland house. In the entry, a Mannerist glyph that looks like a Lego block was inspired by moldings in such places as the White House and Monticello. “There’s detail upon detail,” Kemper says, “but it’s so subtle it reads as simple.”

Ingrao, who last October opened his own antiques and fine art gallery in Manhattan, admits to being “a neurotic about detail.” But people, he explains, “have a greedy eye. They want to see more and more. You set up a vista, then give them something else to look at.”

These clients seem satiated. “Before we moved in, my wife promised we could move back to the old place if we weren’t comfortable,” the husband says. “But this felt like home right away. There’s no place I turn that I’m not happy.” >

### designer savvy

The delicate colors in the dining room are best enjoyed by candlelight.

### trade secrets

**FURNITURE** Mahogany Chippendale chairs surround a ca. 1800 dining table. The inlaid mahogany sideboard is late 18th century.

**FABRIC** Scalamantré’s Province on the chairs.

**WALLS** 1700s wallpaper from Christopher Hodson Ltd., London.

**ACCENT** Chandelier from Marvin Alexander Inc. Sources, see back of book.









# TRADE SECRETS

## GEORGIAN STYLE: Eighteenth-century English design married grace and innovation, and today's decorators embrace the tradition

The English Georgian period spanned more than a century, from the accession of George I in 1714 to the death of George IV in 1830. It's no surprise then that "Georgian style" included many looks as interior design evolved. At first, heavy Baroque forms were in vogue. Then Rococo was the rule—often spiced up with Gothic and Chinese motifs. Later, neoclassicism caught on. But, throughout, proportions drawn from ancient Greek and Roman models supported decorative details with grace and strength. —SABINE ROTHMAN



### plain and fancy

Entrance halls often featured marble or stone floors, but most rooms had simple wooden planks. Cavendish Grey's kiln-dried French Baked Oak flooring, above, offers an antique look without stain, owing to the baking process. Turkish carpet, \$9,899, ABC Carpet & Home, NYC.



### sound surround

Before central heating, a fireplace was essential for warmth and light. The mantel reinforced architectural fashion. This carved pine, 20th-century design, inspired by one of Robert Adam's, is from Wm. H. Jackson Co., NYC.



### INTO THE FIRE

Accessories—screen, fender, and andirons—complement a striking fireplace. (Sconces and mirrors, which enhance the light, were also once part of a well-equipped scheme.) English polished brass andirons from Wm. H. Jackson Co.

## CREWEL WORLD Embroidered fabrics were prized in Georgian times, as they are now

While Ingrao and Kemper used a variety of floral fabrics in the Long Island house, their crewel curtains were the loveliest touch. These samples feature crewelwork on different scales. 1 Yellow Carnations Vine and 2 Vine with Peonies, linen-cotton blends based on 18th-century textiles, are both from Chelsea Editions. 3 Lee Jofa's wool Queen Julie crewel, also historically grounded, offers bold pattern and color.





I

## CHIP'S CHAIRS

In 1754, Thomas Chippendale published *The Gentleman & Cabinet-Maker's Director*. This book disseminated his work to other craftsmen and to patrons, and cemented his reputation as a master carver and cabinetmaker. Even now, the Chippendale name is synonymous with Georgian furniture, especially chairs with whimsically carved, pierced splats.

1 Chippendale armchair #5045, \$4,757, from Baker's Stately Homes Collection, is a reproduction of a ca. 1750 piece. 2 Chippendale armchair #2142A, by Arthur Brett & Sons, through Wood & Hogan, Inc., has a touch of chinoiserie. 3 Smith & Watson's Chippendale armchair #D-181, with fretwork legs, from a ca. 1760 antique. 4 George III Mahogany armchair #5245, \$3,313, Baker's Stately Homes Collection.



2



3



4

## BURN BRIGHT

Brass and crystal chandeliers, lit by candles, were sometimes ornate to suit grand rooms, but often simple, like this six-arm chandelier #PGR-105, \$4,800 (\$5,250 wired), from Price Glover Inc., NYC. It is an exact reproduction of a mid-18th-century English model.



## details, details

Before plaster casting techniques improved in the late 18th century, cornices and crown moldings were usually carved wood. Focal Point Architectural Products creates period details in polyurethane. From top: Nicolson House, Georgian, and Governor's Palace Fretwork.



## COLOR CONCEPTS

As the 18th century progressed, dull greens, rich yellows, and rusts gave way to cool blues, grays, and soft browns. These Farrow & Ball colors are typical of the mid-Georgian era. From left: Menagerie was for orangeries; Calke Abbey inspired Pea Green; India Yellow was once produced from cows fed on mango leaves. Sources, see back of book. □

