

A HEARST CONNECTICUT MEDIA GROUP PUBLICATION

\$5.00

HOME

DESIGN+DECOR

OCT 2017

ANIMAL HOUSE

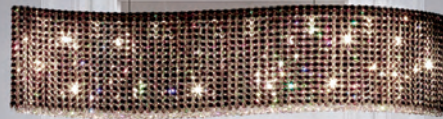
Suburban
Farming

ART ATTACK

Frames
That Fit

GETTIN' HYGGE WITH IT

Nordic
Nuance



SIGHTS FOR SHORE EYES

Capturing Nature on Canvas

Inner peace.

Create a place to relax and unwind with the **Maitland Sofa** from Stickley. Impeccably hand crafted in a combination of top grain leather and rich fabrics — for years of sophisticated style.

STICKLEY AUDI & CO.
FINE FURNITURE SINCE 1900

Brookfield, CT 203.885.0954 | Farmingdale, NY 631.770.3910
complimentary interior design service | stickleyaudi.com

- OVER -
130
YEARS OF
INNOVATION

IT'S NOT JUST A JOB WELL DONE

It's a chapter in your life's work

With high-quality products, professional color tools and a national network of support, you can rely on PPG PAINTS™ to deliver the expertise that helps you uphold your reputation.

MANOR HALL

Our Paint **YOUR PRIDE**

15 CONNECTICUT-AREA LOCATIONS. FIND YOUR STORE AT PPGPAINTS.COM/STORE-LOCATOR.

The PPG Paints Logo is a trademark and the PPG Logo is a registered trademark of PPG Industries Ohio, Inc.
MANOR HALL® is a registered trademark of PPG Architectural Finishes, Inc. © 2017 PPG Industries, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



**HEARST CONNECTICUT
MEDIA GROUP**

Paul Barbetta
Group Publisher & President

Barbara T. Roessner
Executive Editor

Rich Campanaro
Vice President, Retail Advertising

Alison Zaret-McGrath
Vice President, Finance

Frank Horvath
Vice President, Circulation

Ron Darr
Director of Operations

Doreen Adams Madden
Editor, Home Design + Decor

Robert DiGioia
Special Projects Director

Carol Mihelik
Art Director

Rosemarie T. Anner
Meg Barone
MaryEllen Fillo
Bob Horton
Joel Lang
Caitlin Mazzola
Lidia Ryan
Contributing Writers



Connecticut Post
Greenwich Time
New Haven Register
Stamford Advocate
The News-Times
The Norwalk Hour

Table of Contents

6
Keeping up with the neighbors
A look at design styles across the nation.

14
Sights for shore eyes
Capturing nature on canvas.

22
We've got the place surrounded
The gates of Greenwich.

28
Light reading
New Preston's Studio Steel.

32
Clement time
A talk with interior designer and gallerist Gilles Clement.

Cover Photo:
Schonbek & KLAFFS

Top: Photo by Carl Vernlund, submitted by Kerianne Smith of Three Trees Interior in Old Lyme.
Bottom: Credit: Lisa Bousquet Photography





50

Underfoot

Finished basements a boon to property values.

55

Coop de villa

The backyard as barnyard.

60

How to start with art

Hanging around the house: art in your living space.

66

Thread counts

Proper linens make the bed.

72

Wood, warp and weft

Carpet, hardwood floors or both?

78

Slim gym

Scaled-down workout spaces and equipment for the home.

80

Match Game 2017

Pairing contractors with projects.

86

Chestnut or cranberry?

Popular palettes for the holidays.



Celso de Lemos linens. Photo courtesy of Lynnens. Credit: Fabrice Demoulin.

38

The mattress, foundation for a good night's sleep

The rest is up to you.

72

Photo courtesy of Kellydesigns.



Shutterstock

45

Thread counts

Proper linens make the bed.

46

Cold storage

What to do with plants for the winter.





Swing States

Decisive home design trends
from coast to coast

By Caitlin Mazzola



In this picture you can see the smooth tub shape is played off against the intricate texture of the carved table in a bathroom in San Francisco. The simple white walls and subway tile is accented with split-faced marble tile, which is very three-dimensional. The lighting is used to create a “texture” to the wall in addition to providing the light needed to see at the mirror. Credit: Peter Medilek Photography.

What makes a house a home?

The family that resides inside, of course. The many qualities of a home’s inhabitants are reflected to visitors through its décor. Whether the look is made up of family heirlooms, contemporary pieces, or everything in between is a personal choice.

Home décor trends across the country can serve as inspiration. From right here in the Northeast, down south to Texas and out west to San Francisco, here’s how people are choosing to individualize the look of their homes.

Warm metals, bright colors add pop to New England homes

Here in New England, décor is trending toward color and metals, according to Jody Myers-Fierz.

Myers-Fierz, an interior designer and founder of Westport-based Color Concept Theory, said warm metals like copper, brass and gold “are very big.”

These metals, especially copper and gold, can be used to dress up the bathroom. She’s seen copper, gold and brass incorporated beyond the powder room into hardware like knobs and handles, as well as in light fixtures.

Antique brass and copper are in, too, while polished nickel and chrome for hardware and appliances appear to be on the way out.

Myers-Fierz added that she’s seen people diverting from neutrals and taking chances with color, like cobalt blue and sea foam green.

“People are into color again,” she said. “They’re making bold choices.”

Those wary of going too bold with hues can choose to accent neutral rooms with a splash of color. Myers-Fierz suggested adding color to a kitchen island, backsplash or a wall



Above: Bold wall coverings in trendy cobalt blue pack a punch in this kids' bedroom. Photo by Doug Burke, submitted by Tori McBrien of McBrien Interiors in Fairfield. **Below:** The green cabinet featured in this foyer illustrates the Northeast trend of incorporating color into furniture. Photo by Carl Vemlund, submitted by Kerianne Smith of Three Trees Interior in Old Lyme.

covering in the home office, bedroom or bathroom. Even just a hint of tint or a daring print in accents like throws, pillows and carpets can add character to a room.

As far as furniture goes, people are going for a transitional look. Pastels are starting to make a comeback, heralding back to the décor of the 50s and 60s. Myers-Fierz is also seeing clients opt for a Scandinavian twist in their furniture – think wooden legs, furnishings that really let you appreciate the handiwork.

An escape to simplicity in the Bay Area

Similarly, folks in the San Francisco Bay Area are using furniture where you can see the workmanship, according to interior designer Sarah Bashford. They are also turning to handmade goods, incorporating pottery, linen and natural materials in their home décor. These items evoke a simpler time, when our lives weren't ruled by the Internet.

"We're surrounded by tech in the office," Bashford, an interior designer and principal at Bashford Design in San Francisco, said. "The speed is fast, we're inundated by social networks. There's trend toward simplicity in people's homes – an escape from the madness."

Bashford noted that requests for home office design (like cabinetry and storage) have dropped. She attributes this to people taking their work straight to the sofa, which might seem convenient, but adds to tech overload. This feeds the desire for simplicity.

That yearning is reflected in a reduction in color in décor. "There's a lot of white on white on white," Bashford quipped. There's been a





UNITED HOUSE
WRECKING
THE UNEXPECTED FIND

INTERIOR DESIGN | CUSTOM FURNITURE | VINTAGE | PATIO

535 HOPE STREET STAMFORD, CT 06906
UNITEDHOUSEWRECKING.COM | 203-348-5371



Above: Wall coverings can be used to make a bold or colorful statement in the bathroom and in the bedroom. Photo by Doug Burke, submitted by Tori McBrien of McBrien Interiors in Fairfield. **Left:** The master bathroom in this Houston high-rise condo is cloaked in slabs of Calacatta marble. Interior designer Connie LeFevre of Design House redesigned this bathroom to be more functional, but the light marble brightened up the space, too. Credit: Emily Minton Redfield.

renewed focus, instead, on decorating with texture, like large format tiles and split-face marble.

Using LED lighting is also popular. Small strips can be used in tricky places, like under a cabinet, Bashford said.

“In this way, you’re decorating with light, in a range of tones, but not color.” It makes people feel calmer, she added.

Though these concepts tend to pop up in her work, Bashford stressed it’s important to remember that in San Francisco, it’s trendy to not pay attention to any trends. The area is flooded with so many influences from all over the world, people take from the cultures surrounding them, borrowing from other styles and blending.

“We want the home to reflect our individuality,” she said.

Of course, that looks different to different people. There’s never a week that goes by that the staff Bashford Designs doesn’t incorporate something totally new into a client’s décor – like blowing up a photo to use as wallpaper, or using kids’ art as decoration.

Trending toward contemporary in the South

Down south, people are starting to change their lifestyles – and it’s reflected in how they choose to decorate their homes.

Diane Cowen, architecture and home design writer for the Houston Chronicle, said baby boomers in the region are downsizing. They’re selling their very traditional homes and opting for smaller spaces with contemporary and modern touches.

One important detail to note is that the scale for downsizing in Texas is quite different from other parts of the country. Homes in the South can be big – 8,000 square feet to 9,000 square feet is the norm, Cowen said. To downsize is to find new digs in the 3,000 square-foot-range range.

“Our scale is different. Everything is bigger in Texas,” Cowen said. The desire for new and smaller (by southern standards) living

PORCELANOSA®

TILE / KITCHEN / BATH / HARDWOOD



WALL TILES ICE NEBRASKA TEA

FLOOR TILES SEEDWOOD NEBRASKA TEA

With its high quality and beauty, Seedwood is a wood-look porcelain tile collection that evokes the true elements of natural hardwood. Seedwood is available in 11 different shades and has 4 complementary accent tiles. Visit your local Porcelanosa showroom for more information.



TILE



MOSAICS



KITCHENS



BATH



HARDWOOD & LAMINATE

PORCELANOSA®
TILE / KITCHEN / BATH / HARDWOOD

· PORCELANOSA · VENIS · GAMADECOR · SYSTEM POOL ·
· L'ANTIC COLONIAL · BUTECH · NOKEN · URBATEK ·



PORCELANOSA RIVERSIDE

1063 E. PUTNAM AVENUE | RIVERSIDE, CT 06878

203.698.7618

WWW.PORCELANOSA-USA.COM



Above: In this picture you can see natural linen upholstery with leather, natural grass woven rug, re-purposed windmill cog used as end table, vintage metal trunk used as coffee table and a simple natural color palette in a home in San Francisco. Credit: Peter Medilek Photography. **Left:** This home in Houston's River Oaks enclave may have been built in the 1930s, but it's been updated with a more contemporary built-in banquette in the living room. Interior designer Cathy Chapman brought in a midcentury modern-inspired table and added custom window treatments. Credit: Julie Soefer.

spaces means more modern homes are being built, and older homes are undergoing remodels and updates. Exteriors may look traditional, but there's a lot of modern design happening inside, Cowen said.

People want carefree, high-tech fabrics and materials, like hard-to-scratch quartz countertops, stain-resistant velvet and Calacatta marble in the bathroom.

Cowen has also found that when people downsize, they're opting to buy new furniture. They'll work in some old pieces, she said, but boomers are looking for a "fresh start," which includes transitional and contemporary pieces.

There's also "a touch of midcentury modern" in many of the homes she's written about lately, Cowen said.

As for color, people in the South area decorating similarly to folks in San Francisco – neutral.

"People think Southerners want color in their homes, but I don't see that so much," Cowen said. "I'm seeing a lot of gray and a lot of ivory."

In any room, a neutral backdrop calls for a showpiece. Cowen said she's seen high-end light fixtures, custom doors and beautiful window treatments like Roman shades with "gorgeous trim" used as accents. "Just really incredible touches," she added.

These trends in color, materials and furniture combine for "classic and elegant homes that are comfortable and calming."

Caitlin Mazzola is an online producer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.


RING'S END
Since 1902



Benjamin Moore[®]

ARBORCOAT
PREMIUM EXTERIOR STAIN

REfresh
YOUR HOME



RingsEnd.com

800 390 1000



Luminous Landscapes

Nature captured from an artist's interpretive brushstrokes

By Joel Lang

For 20 years, Janine Robertson of Madison had a successful career painting murals and trompe l'oeils for commercial and residential clients.

"I've painted oriental rugs on stairs," she recalls of a trompe l'oeil job that unlike some others at least kept her safely on the ground. "I used to have scaffolding. Sometimes I painted on ceilings."

Then about seven years ago, when her daughter was transitioning from high school to college, Robertson decided she'd make a transition of her own: from painting for clients to painting for herself.

Ever since studying art in college, back in Buffalo where she grew up, that was how she saw herself. "Fine art, maybe gallery representation, that was always the goal," she says.

She chose to concentrate on landscapes and now, looking back, would seem to have quickly made it. Her landscapes are sold at the Maple and Main Gallery in Chester, where she's had three solo shows since 2014. Last year she joined the elite ranks of Elected Artists at the Lyme Art Association, who its website describes as "the best of the best...torch bearers of the American representational tradition."



Credit: Lisa Bousquet Photography



Credit: Lisa Bousquet Photography

But Robertson's transition was hardly effortless. "I took classes at the Lyme Art Association. At first I was like a fish out of water," she says surprisingly.

How could that be? How could an artist whose paintings can deceive the eye, whose murals were often landscapes, need more lessons? Robertson's answer is itself a lesson in painting.

"I had the skills, but I was working in acrylic. Then I switched over to oil," she says. "It's kind of an opposite process. If I was creating a landscape in acrylic, I would work from the background to the foreground, because it dries so quickly you build up layers.

"But with oil you don't work that way. With oil I start with the darks and I put the lights in last. So I don't work background to foreground, because the paint doesn't dry for days. It would get muddy."

To complicate matters, and perhaps to separate herself from other landscape painters, Robertson also decided her canvases would be metal, either aluminum or copper.

"There's much more luminosity in the metal

panels and I think they hold the pigment differently. It's more vibrant, more pure" she says. "Aluminum is like painting on glass. So every brush stroke shows. I like that too."

She got her inspiration from David Dunlop, a well-established landscape painter who sometimes worked on metal and whose work she first saw at the Susan Powell Gallery in Madison. Dunlop was known for more than his painting though. As a faculty member of the Silvermine Guild Arts Center in New Canaan, his lectures on landscape art had led to invitations to speak at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and to two public television series. The first, *Landscapes Through Time with David Dunlop*, won a 2009 Emmy.

Robertson was soon making a weekly drive from Madison to New Canaan to study with Dunlop and continues to take workshops he leads. Dunlop for his part is effusive in his praise for Robertson, partly because he's seen what he called her "ruthless perseverance" in learning to use her hands and her eyes differently.



Experience unparalleled talent and unique opportunities to be part of our next Maestro search

October 14 & 15, 2017

Tchaikovsky & Rimsky-Korsakov

Lidiya Yankovskaya, *Guest Conductor*
Stefan Jackiw, *violin*

November 4 & 5, 2017

Beethoven, Ravel & Stravinsky

Daniel Hege, *Guest Conductor*
Orion Weiss, *piano*

December 9, 2017

Music from Handel's *Messiah*

Ted Sperling, *Guest Conductor*
MasterVoices chorus

At the Basilica of St. John the Evangelist,
Stamford

February 24 & 25, 2018

Brahms, Copland & Saint-Saëns

David Lockington, *Guest Conductor*
Joshua Roman, *cello*

March 17 & 18, 2018

Haydn, Mendelssohn & Schumann

Paul Watkins, *Guest Conductor*
Benjamin Beilman, *violin*

April 21 & 22, 2018

Tchaikovsky & Saint-Saëns

Rei Hotoda, *Guest Conductor*
Cecile Licad, *piano*

May 5, 2018

World Stage Piano Recital

Stephen Hough, *piano*



CALL 203.325.4466
www.stamfordsymphony.org

Saturdays at 8pm • Sundays at 3pm at the Stamford Palace Theatre





“The very mark making” brushwork skills a painter needs, Dunlop says, are akin to those of a pianist’s touch on the keyboard. “If you’re a pianist, you begin by having a fairly constant touch. As you develop skills, your sensitivity of touch becomes much more finely tuned and it’s the ability to discern nuance that makes the difference in excellence.”

He extends his analogy for the importance of touch, and other skills acquired through practice, to include surgeons and elite athletes. “If you’re Serena Williams, you don’t have a tennis racket in your hand. (The racket’s) an extension of who you are ... your mind, your neural system.”

In Robertson’s case that means that, “If she were to return acrylics, they would blow away all her previous acrylics because her skill set is so much more finely tuned.”

The other part of her re-training, learning from past masters, learning to see differently, taught lessons non-painters might find even more surprising.

Left: Boundless, Oil on Aluminum, 36" x 24"

Below: When Morning Comes, Oil on Aluminum, 18" x 24"



"Nobody learns how to paint landscapes by walking in nature," Dunlop says. "They learn to paint landscapes by looking at other painted landscapes. Then they walk in nature and when they see a correlation, they go, 'Ah, ha! That looks like a picture to me.' They develop a vocabulary, a pictorial of form."

Dunlop introduces more analogies. A painter like a poet must know forms and like a jazz musician must have a feel for improvisation.

Robertson is a plein-air painter, spending hours outside just like 19th century French impressionists. Her favorite locales are the Connecticut shoreline, the Hudson River Valley and Maine. Her salt marshes look like those around Hammonasset State Park, which she frequently visits. But don't be deceived.

"I don't think anyone is really interested in looking at the painting and looking at the scene and looking back at the painting," she says turning

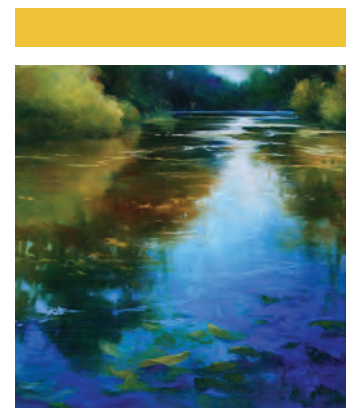
her head from side to side. "I think they care about a lovely painting. So most definitely you have to tweak the composition."

Besides her brushes and paints, one of Robertson's most important tools is a camera. She often takes pictures of the scene she is painting, but not as a memory aid.

"When I do a painting I may take four or five images of salt marshes and throw them on the floor and then I'm going to come up with the best composition that I can by looking at the mixture," she says.

"Same thing with the sky paintings I do. I may look at four or five cloud patterns in photos I take and again I toss them on the floor and let the paint do the work. It all happens organically."

At home, she showed off a Connecticut River painting she was working on. Trees in the background were strangely blue, while those in the right foreground reflected light orange on the water. She said she'd "laid the foundation" of the painting



Pond Reflections II, Oil on Aluminum
24" x 24"

Style, Quality, Service from Westchester's premier supplier of carpets, fine wools, rugs, hardwoods, luxury vinyl tiles, and window treatments.

Family owned and operated since 1948, the business has evolved into a full-service design center used by the area's top interior designers and featuring a complete line of products for all flooring and window needs, both residential and commercial. See the beauty of our expert installations on [Facebook.com/Kantersdesigncenter](https://www.facebook.com/Kantersdesigncenter).

VISIT US DURING OUR FALL SALE



99 Fulton Street, White Plains, NY
914.949.6517 • Kanterscarpet.com





Top: Wandering, Oil on Aluminum 30" x 40" **Below:** Hydrangea, Oil on Aluminum, 8" x 10"

outside in a day. But that it would take many more hours to complete.

"Most of the painting happens very quickly and it goes very slowly after that," she says. "So that I can get the main scene of a painting down outside and then I bring it home and let it dry. At that point it becomes a build up of glazed layers and details and it could take weeks after that to finish a painting."

Robertson has also begun to take commissions from public and private clients. One of the most prominent is the Yale-New Haven Hospital network. She's proud her work is chosen for hospital settings for its sense of "tranquility and quiet."

The last seven years have been ones of transition for her family as well. Robertson's daughter and a son have both graduated from college and gotten jobs. And her husband, Scott, recently retired from his career with the Johnson & Johnson company, allowing them more leisure time together.

But the exploration of Robertson's creativity and talents continue as well. She was looking forward to a week-long workshop in Rockport, Mass., led by Dunlop and then in October to a workshop with Julian Merrow-Smith in Provence, France

Merrow-Smith is a painter of still-lives, landscapes and portraits known internationally for his Postcard from Provence project in which he does a painting a day.

Looking forward to the trip, Robertson says she's been to France before but not to paint. "I'm excited. It's like camp and you come home with a body of work," she says.

Joel Lang is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



R.R. Builders
CUSTOM HOME BUILDING & REMODELING

New Home Construction • Renovations/Additions • Home Management
info@rrbuilders.com • 203-972-6100 • RRBuilders.com



photos: Jane Beiles Photography



Photo courtesy of Grand Entrance

Gates of Greenwich

Egress to elegance beyond

By Rosemarie T. Anner

All photos from a book entitled *The Gates Of Greenwich* by Thelma Nichols Geary, Cheryl Geary Schultz, Kimberly Lynn Schultz, and Patricia Munson Duncan, self-published on Xlibris.



Gates are cropping up all over Greenwich, proliferating almost as fast as the chipmunks in your tomato patch. They punctuate driveways, garden paths, swimming pools and orchards. Wrought iron, mahogany, and steel, they feature a host of designs, whether copied from the historic ironwork found throughout the world or created from the fertile imaginations of gifted craftsmen.

Every month, it seems, a new set of gates appears in the driveways to mansions that grace the streets, lanes and byways of the town, but hidden from public view are some of the most charming gates to be found in the community.

Crafted by tradesmen or gardeners, these are often simple structures that lead the walker into sweeps of perennial beds or green expanses, to allées of apple trees, onto docks and piers or beneath arches laden with roses and clematis. Many of these smaller gates appear in a book, *Gates of Greenwich*,

self-published by four gates-besotted writers and photographers, which you can buy at the Historical Society in Cos Cob.

At one time, in the era of the grand estates of Greenwich, there were some pretty impressive entrance gates to be seen throughout the town. In Old Greenwich, Innis Arden, for example, home to J. Kennedy Tod and his exotic pets, a pair of black bears, sported a pair of very ornate wrought iron gates heavily filigreed with swirls. Today, Tod's land is a popular town park called Greenwich Point, and the entrance is staffed by a



beach-pass matron in a ticket booth. The gates have been preserved and stand majestically at the first tee on the golf course of the Innis Arden Golf Club.

There were not one but two sets of gates that once admitted President Grover Cleveland and the glitterati of the day to Commodore Benedict's palatial 30-room villa at Indian Harbor. The estate boasted greenhouses and palm houses, as well as Benedict's yacht, the Oneida, anchored at the dock. Today, at the top of Milbank Avenue on Putnam Avenue stand rigid gates at an apartment complex. Emblazoned with a gold initial, M, they mark the entrance to an extensive homestead that was owned by Jeremiah Milbank.

A heady portion of the new gates now found in Greenwich are by Jozef Custom Ironworks out of Bridgeport and by Grand Entrance out of Mount Kisco, NY. Jozef Witkowski was trained as a designer and forger of handcrafted iron in his native Poland. He is so passionate about his work, that when he was contacted by Donald Landsman of Greenwich to fabricate 7-foot-high gates he himself designed, Witkowski was thrilled because it was so original. The design was complicated and difficult to fabricate particularly in bronze, a material Witkowski suggested for its longevity and resistance to corrosion.



It moves your shades, so you don't have to.

PowerView® Motorization from Hunter Douglas is a remarkable system that moves your shades according to your schedule.* Just program your personalized settings with your smart phone or tablet. Plus, it now integrates even more seamlessly with other home automation systems for a truly connected home. To see PowerView in motion, contact us today.

PowerView Motorization is compatible with these and more:



LAURA'S

DRAPERIES, BEDSPREADS & MORE

Laura's Draperies, Bedspreads & More
345 Main Ave
Norwalk, CT 06851

Our 28 years in business is a testament to our decorating talents & the service we offer our clients.

203-847-2838

www.LaurasDraperiesCT.com

With this ad only, purchase 5 PowerView shades and get a FREE Hub to operate your shades with your mobile devices.

Call Now to Schedule Your FREE In-Home Consultation

HunterDouglas Gallery

*The PowerView App and additional equipment required for programmed operation.
©2017 Hunter Douglas. All rights reserved. All trademarks used herein are the property of Hunter Douglas or their respective owners. 4345784

A sculptor adept at welding, Landsman went to the Bridgeport forge and foundry where Witkowski also casts sculpture and made a sample of what he had in mind. The execution of the final product was an exercise in collaboration and constant revision.

Landsman's gates replicate the soft movement of branches gently swaying in a breeze. Look closely and you will see that the spokes are thicker at their base and gradually taper toward the top of the gates just as branches do in nature. Welded joints resemble tree elbows. Fascinating as well is the absence of straight bars securing the spokes. Instead, Witkowski devised a serpentine rod quivering between the branches. Today the whimsical gates shimmer with a silver/green patina.

Another creative mind in the conception of gates for his home is Roberto Chiappelloni. Owner of Manfredi Jewels in Greenwich, Chiappelloni is no stranger to beautiful designs. A dozen or so years ago, while on a hunting trip in upstate New York, he spotted an intricate small farm gate that captivated him.

He knew he had found the perfect design for his own gates in Greenwich. He searched for a company that could execute his sketch. He went through a few failures — "people didn't know how to make



Vaughan-Bassett
furniture company

Experience the Spector difference
127 years of selling comfort

SPECTOR
FOR OVER 127 YEARS
Furniture & Mattress Gallery

385 Main Street, Ansonia, CT 06401 /// 203-734-2525 /// SpectorFurniture.com



them!” — until he found one man in Port Chester, NY, (now long gone) who was willing and anxious to do the job. Chiappelloni had to hold his hand every step of the way. Today, those wrought iron gates — there are two sets of them — have mellowed to a bluish/green hue and handsomely complement the owner’s Mediterranean residence.

Many Greenwich gates are replicas of historic pieces that Grand Entrance owner Don Gore has photographed on his travels, particularly in New Orleans. That city literally swarms with lacy wrought iron architecture. While other people were snapping away at monuments in the city’s famous cemetery, Gore was focusing his camera’s eye on the floral and leafy fretwork in the French Quarter that he will have his Portuguese craftsmen replicate. He estimates that 40 percent of his business is in Greenwich, which boasts a number of his mahogany gates as well as wrought iron.

The “gating” of Greenwich will undoubtedly continue, particularly since they offer security and privacy as well as beauty. Many gates come fully mechanized with cameras, phone eyes, card readers, telephones and lighting. First and foremost, they are a splendid sight, particularly when a set of gates opens simultaneously. So don’t be surprised when drivers stop their cars and pull out their cellphones to photograph them. After all, they are true works of art.

Rosemarie T. Anner is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



BEFORE THE **PRETTY** COMES THE **GRITTY**

Renovate with confidence with **Sweeten**, a free service that matches you with the best general contractors for your project, and provides personal support until the job is completely finished.

Go to sweeten.com/ct or call 212.671.1713 to post your project and get started, plus find cost guides, expert tips and real-life reno stories with amazing before & afters.



SWEETEN

Renovate fearlessly.



irons

AND THE

FF



WIRE

Old world meets
modern lighting in
New Preston, CT,
with the team at
Studio Steel

by Robert DiGioia

I promise, no allusions to Hephaestus and Prometheus...too easy and hyperbolic. The reality of this New Preston atelier supercedes any m

Studio Steel Lighting's gorgeous hand-wrought iron chandeliers, sconces and lanterns may be found in design centers and retailers from California to Klaff's in Fairfield County. Steel has been written about in national magazines like Southern Accents and New Old House. My old buddy, Spencer Hardy, is the co-owner and chief craftsman, along with partner Matt Archer. Spence and I used to hang out in New Haven 25 years ago. Haven't seen him since, but was happy to catch up on the phone recently.

It was in 1991 that Studio Steel was born, from Spence's photography studio in Norwalk. Expanding into set design and styling for some of his advertising clients, he fell into lighting and taught himself to work with metal. "We for the most part use old-world techniques," explained Hardy. "Some pieces require forging. But our production process primarily entails bending iron over wooden forms ("gigs") to create a specific shape...a graceful arm, for example." Crystals at times are incorporated into his creations.



Like a circle in a circle. One of Studio Steel's Devino 12-candle chandeliers.



A 3-tier chandelier is perfectly suited to this large rustic space.



Entrances and exits are easily found when crowned with a lantern.

Crystal belongs in the dining room, from the Envers line.



two to three weeks of labor can sometimes be invested into the production of a chandelier, especially the larger types with 20-30 candles. Its Fleur and trademark Bell models have proven most popular. Studio Steel accommodates “off the rack” resizing requests, even making house calls, to ensure the installations fit a room’s space perfectly. “Don’t want to end up with a pimple on an orange,” deadpanned Hardy.

After a stint in LA, Studio Steel came back to the East Coast, downscaling its 5,000 square-foot West Coast manufacturing facility to Bantam. The retail showroom is in New Preston. Hardy observes that the majority of his designer, architect and homeowner clients “webroom” – research merchandise online – before coming to his shop and purchasing. And interior designers are

becoming facilitators...connecting artisans directly to consumers. The typical Studio Steel customer owns multiple homes and is seeking accessories and accents that blend modern finishes with a country look. Steel doesn’t engage in e-commerce, and prices range from \$500 to \$20,000.

Spencer describes his lighting’s genre as “traditional to transitional,” and when asked about trends, noted lanterns have been in demand over the past year. For a taste of his otherworldly wares, please visit StudioSteel.com. Or better yet, stop in if you find yourself in the northwest corner of the state.

Robert DiGioia is Hearst Connecticut Media Group Creative Director.

A Conversation with **Gilles Clement**

Curator of Contemporary Art & Design

By MaryEllen Fillo



Photos courtesy of Gilles Clement Designs

Gilles Clement is a renowned interior designer and more. The French-born decorator, who owns Gilles Clement Designs, credits his Parisian background and his accomplished parents' artistic skills as contributing to his skill and savvy when it comes to the work he does.

A graduate of Fairfield University, Clement had not planned to begin his design business when he did. A successful music producer, it was a tragedy that unexpectedly realigned his professional life and nearly 10 years ago, he began his business, gradually expanding to include an art gallery, a showroom in Greenwich and offices in Westport and Paris.

A firm believer that what looks best, not what is fashionable, is the only way to approach decorating a room, Clement offers some insight into his business, his likes and dislikes when it comes to decorating, and why, despite the budget, it is best to use money wisely and hire a professional when it comes to decorating your own space.

MEF What was the first room or space you ever decorated? How old were you?

GC The first room I ever decorated was for my parents and I was 20 years old. It was their kitchen. I did it as a surprise for them while they were on vacation. They loved it.

MEF Had you always planned to be a designer?

GC I actually was a music producer first. A very successful one in Paris, London and New York. I had 22 people working for me and thought that was going to be my life. Then I met a girl and we came to New York and she started working with me. We became engaged and the company continued to do well. As we were preparing to get married she was killed in a plane crash. I could not continue in the business without her. I lost my drive.





Living Room. ©Jane Beiles

MEF How did interior design become our new career path?

GC I had studied at Fairfield University and has always thought that maybe when I was 60 or so, and burned out because the music production business is exhausting, I would perhaps do interior design. It just happened sooner than I planned. Rob Hardy from the interior design school there thought I was very talented in that area and I think he gave me my passion for design. I began working for other designers, opened my own business in 2008, my retail store in 2010, my art gallery in 2014 and my flagship store in Greenwich in 2017.

MEF How would you describe your style and has it changed over the years?

GC My style is come from my background. I was born in France and part of a Parisian aristocratic family. My parent's salon was the center of the family. My parents are both successful

painters and I was raised in a very international setting. There were always famous artists and designers at my parents' homes so I was exposed to a lot of art and design. I consider my style to be both eclectic and traditional, a worldly mix of old and new. I use a sensibility that combines styles and in my work, it is not uncommon to see an 18th century home with antiques combined with something more contemporary.

MEF I think one of the age-old discussions when it comes to using an interior designer is what happens when the client has one idea and the designer another. How do you handle that?

GC People come to me for my ideas. They usually love my style and respect my work so we already have a rapport. I do respect who they are and their ideas and my job is to translate their sensitivity and desires into design. I think I am a more worldly designer than I was when I started. And like most every artist/designer, I have matured with time.

decorative plumbing | lighting | tile & stone



BENDER

Bridgeport | Hartford | New Haven
Norwalk | Torrington | Waterbury

lighting now available in Norwalk www.BenderShowrooms.com



The flagship showroom in Greenwich. ©Jane Beiles

MEF What room or space are you proudest of and which project would you like to forget?

GC Honestly, I am proud of all my projects. I give each and every one 100 percent. I think one of the projects I am proudest of is a French architecture design I did in Greenwich. There is not much I wish I could do again nor anything I would like to forget. Usually my projects are very sought after. I approach every project as if it were my own. I have no regrets. I give the same dedication and love and enthusiasm to every project I take on. This is not just a job to me.

MEF You are successful and accomplished and have a who's who list of clients. But for the average person, hiring a decorator is probably out of the question financially. Any advice?

GC People think they can do their own decorating but they can't. Hire a designer. You need a professional. Figure out your budget and then find someone willing to work for that. There are a lot of young, hungry designers out there that are good and not so expensive. You don't build a house yourself. You hire professionals. And that's what you should be doing when you decorate the inside. If you want something special and unique you need help. In the long run, you save money because you ultimately have the space you want.

MEF Again, being in style is usually on the minds of people who are really into their home décor. So what is "in" now?

GC I read what my colleagues are doing but I never care what is in or not. For me what is beautiful and what is interesting and what is special and unique is what I appreciate and focus on. I never care

what the trends are. A 500-year-old painting is beautiful and always will be. It doesn't matter if it is on trend. How can you consider the acrylic Lucite on trend when decorators were using it way back in the '30s in Hollywood. If something is well- designed it is timeless. Often my inspiration comes from fashion. I love fashion and I like to think my interiors are fashion forward. You dress a room the same way you dress a women. It is not about trend. It is about how something looks in the room or on the person.

MEF If you could decorate any space in the world, from any time period, what space or room or building would it be?

GC The Hotel de Crillon, an absolutely fascinating Parisian traditional building. I love Parisian architecture. Especially from the 18th century.

MEF What is your favorite color?

GC I do not have favorite. It is like asking which is your favorite child? The answer is I have no answer. In my work, it depends on the project. I love white, but I also work with very bold colors. I love black and white together. I also love purple. I know this has been a very eclectic answer.

MEF What is your favorite room in your house?

GC My favorite room in our house is my family room. It is the room we use the most and one I designed. It moves me every time I walk into it.

MEF Your venture into decorating came from a tragedy. Is your life happier now?

GC Oh yes. I am married and it is thanks to my wife that allowed these 10 wonderful years to happen. She is my partner in the business and has contributed so much to that and to me.

MEF What is something most people don't know about you?

GC I am a very seasoned wine collector. But even as French man, I love the American cabernets

I was devastated.

MaryEllen Fillo is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Propane and Heating Oil Delivery and Service

38 Commerce Street, Norwalk, CT 06850

203-247-4406 • www.devinebi.com





Photo courtesy of Melissa Lindsay,
Pimlico Interiors of New Canaan.
Credit: Amy Vischio

MATTRESSES

FOUNDATIONS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

By Meg Barone

In the Hans Christian Andersen fairytale *The Princess and the Pea*, a tiny pea is placed under 20 mattresses on which the princess is forced to spend the night to test her physical sensitivity and prove her royal worthiness to marry a prince. The princess tosses and turns all night; that sleep deprivation leading to her “happily ever after.”

For the rest of us there is nothing happy about lack of sleep, which can lead to “an increased risk of developing chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and frequent mental distress,” according to the website for the Centers for Disease Control. “Insufficient sleep has become a health problem in America,” the website says, adding that “Individuals should make getting enough sleep a priority and practice good sleep habits.”

Sleeplessness can be caused by a variety of problems not all of which are easily resolved with the selection of a good mattress. But, experts say, it’s a good place to start. Mattress selection is a personal consideration, a very personal choice, said Dr. Eric Gentry, a pulmonologist and

sleep medicine specialist with the Fairfield County Sleep Center in Fairfield, which is affiliated with Bridgeport Hospital.

“A mattress should be a comfortable experience for the individual; that’s paramount.” The mechanism behind the mattress is also important especially for those who may have medical issues that require “positional incline,” Gentry said, meaning they could benefit from an adjustable bed.

Sleeping on 20 different mattresses – one at a time of course – might be too many to try but lying down on multiple mattresses before making a final selection is a great idea to Patty Drew. She is the owner of Norwalk Mattress Company, a family owned and operated business which



Sferra Giza 45 Stripe – 100% Egyptian Cotton – highest quality cotton available in the world. Photo courtesy of Lynsens, Greenwich.

has manufactured its own mattresses since 1918. That means next year the company will celebrate 100 years in business; that's five times as long as Rip van Winkle slept in the Washington Irving story.

"Comfort is a personal thing. There is no one mattress for everyone. Everyone's body size, shape and weight is unique," she said. Because of that Drew doesn't think it's wise to purchase mattresses over the Internet. She won't even sell mattresses over the telephone. Drew thinks everyone should shop for a mattress in a showroom and spend at least 20 minutes on each mattress under consideration. "It's so subjective," she said, and it's an investment. "A third of your life you spend in bed," (or should) she said.

Anthony Montero, general manager of Sleep Etc in Stamford and Norwalk agrees that people should shop for mattresses in person. "When you're shopping for a mattress there's probably a reason for it. You're waking up feeling tired and achy. Your lower back is bothering you. You're not getting the quality of sleep you used to," he said. Not every mattress will meet someone's needs and some will work better than others, Montero said. A professional will take into consideration your sleep habits, including sleep position, limit the options so the selection process is not overwhelming, and help pair the best type of mattress with the person, he said.

And it definitely can be overwhelming. There are hundreds of types of mattresses made from a



**AMBIENCE.
WARMTH.
QUALITY.
COMFORT.**



Whether we are installing gas log fireplaces or boilers, repairing air conditioning or delivering quality heating oil or propane to your home, you can be assured that our guarantee of quality and exceptional customer service backs every transaction.

Our promise is as real as a handshake and it's as good as it was over 70 years ago.

Mitchell
Since 1945.



(800) 237-3835
nemitchell.com

CT Lic. #390200 HOD #145
Westchester #24318-H11
Putnam HVAC #11
Putnam LP #03

HEATING OIL

PROPANE

ELECTRICITY

HEATING & COOLING



Photo courtesy of Sleep Etc./Carpe Diem.

variety of natural, organic, and man-made materials. There are a number of styles of mattresses including inner spring, pillow tops, memory foam, hybrids, gel mattresses, air beds, and waterbeds, although the latter are not nearly as popular as they were in decades past, according to George Zito, owner of Rubber Match in New Haven, one of the first places to sell waterbeds back in the 1970s.

Mattresses come in a variety of textures from soft to firm. Complicating matters today are the number of options available. Are you looking for a regular mattress or one with smart bed technology? There are mattresses today that not only include adjustable lumbar support, foot and head support and firmness, but there are mattresses designed to monitor heart rate, breathing, and movement. Some

bedding companies are infusing their mattresses with diamond dust to help cool memory foam, which can conduct body heat.

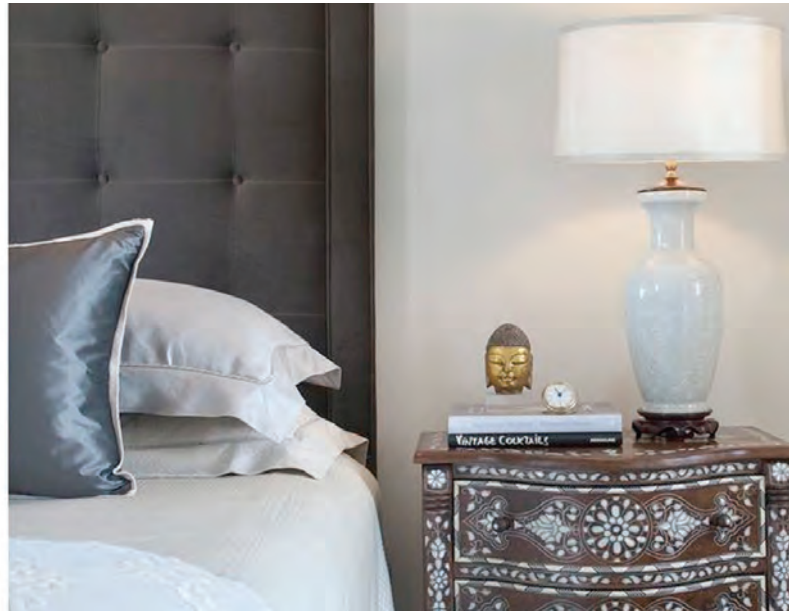
Mattresses also come in a wide variety of prices, from an economical \$199 queen-size mattress that Zito sells on the low end of what he offers to the Hastens recently unveiled handmade Vividus mattress, which sells for \$149,000, and is billed as “the finest and most exclusive bed in the world.” Another Hastens mattress made of “the purest flax, wool and cotton, slow-grown Swedish pine and genuine hypoallergenic horsehair,” is priced at \$49,500.

“It’s not just about the bed being hand-made or the materials they use the Swedish beds really do feel more comfortable and support the body much better,” Montero said.

Sleep Etc carries a \$30,000 handmade Carpe Diem Swedish mattress – which some people refer to as “the Rolls Royce of all beds” – as well as other luxury mattresses and more affordable models. “We try to carry the best in every price range,” said Montero, whose inventory includes a practical \$399 queen mattress. Montero said he has also seen an increased demand for natural and organic bedding. “It has skyrocketed in the last five years,” he said. So has interest in adjustable sleep systems.

Norwalk Mattress Company is one of the few manufacturers that not only makes standard sizes but also accommodates custom mattress needs. “Each individual mattress and box spring (standard and custom) are built one at a time on a table by skilled craftsmen right in the same building as the showroom,” Drew said. They can create a mattress that fits an antique frame, a four-poster bed, a family heirloom and European-style beds, all of which have different parameters than American-made beds. A representative of the company will travel to a customer’s home to measure their non-standard bed frame.

Drew said the company uses natural fibers including breathable cotton and Joma wool from New Zealand, as well as Talalay latex foam rubber processed for bedding by a company in Shelton, from the



Greenwich Village Guest Bedroom. Courtesy of Tiffany Eastman Interiors, LLC. Credit: Tim Lee Photography



PATTY'S PORTICO

Outdoor Furniture Restorations & Sales

- Wrought Iron
- Teak Restoration
- Brown Jordan
- Salterini
- Woodard

Powder Coated Finishes (Pickup and Delivery)

www.PattysPortico.com

140 Highland St., Port Chester, NY 10573 • 914-935-8839



Greenwich Village Master Bedroom. Courtesy of Tiffany Eastman Interiors, LLC. Credit: Tim Lee Photography

syrup of a rubber tree in Malaysia. “It’s perfect sleeping material. It’s all natural, it’s anti-microbial, dust mite-resistant, and biodegradable, and it’s extremely long lasting,” she said. A good quality bed should last about 15 years, she said, whereas some national brand factory-made mattresses have almost half that lifespan.

Reducing the causes of insomnia and purchasing a supportive mattress can put an end to counting sheep and late night kitchen runs for cups of warm milk. To that end, Gentry said it’s not enough to have the most comfortable mattress with the optimal support for your body and the proper bedding and linens. They need a proper setting as well, one that provides a dark, cool, quiet environment.

Wayne Giles, M.D., director of the CDC’s Division of Population Health, suggests other lifestyle changes such as “going to bed at the same time each night; rising at the same time each morning; and turning off or removing televisions, computers, mobile devices from the bedroom, (all of which) can help people get the healthy sleep they need.”

Meg Barone is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Ben Krupinski Builders | 13 Arcadia Rd. Suites 11-15 | Old Greenwich, CT 06870
chris@bkbuilder.com | 203-990-0633 | bkbuilder.com

MAKE THE BED

With The Right Linens

Choosing the mattress that best suits your body type and sleep needs is not the end of the process. It's a license to continue shopping because then it's time to dress the bed.

As with mattresses there are myriad factors to consider including color, fabrics and textures; whether to select trendy colors or tried and true whites and neutrals, whether to go with natural fibers or synthetics.

Tiffany Eastman, an interior designer in Fairfield, said a bed should have its own personality while also tying in to the aesthetic of the rest of the bedroom. She infuses personality by incorporating custom items such as high-end linens. "Most people gravitate toward hotel bedding, very lux, and in white and neutral colors," Eastman said.

White bedding is the most desirable because white gives the feeling of freshness and cleanness, according to Diana Sawicki, a Westport-based interior designer, although, she added, bright, cheerful colors have found their way into bedding. Sometimes it can be bold colors in accent items, such as throws and pillows, or it can be more subtle.

While Lynne Jenkins of Lynnens in Greenwich admits 85 percent of her sales are of white bed linens, she's seeing a trend toward white sheets and pillow cases trimmed with an Atlantic blue or citron green. Lynnens does custom embroidery work there at the shop. Jenkins is also seeing interest in millennial pink paired with gray or a taupe color, not just in trimmed edges but with sheets, duvet covers, pillows, and other bed linens.

People are going with softer colors in the bedroom mixing warmer blush tones with cooler grays, said Melissa Lindsay, an owner of Pimlico Interiors in New Canaan. "If the palette is more neutral it's important to have those neutrals be stronger in texture," Lindsay said.

That's where choice of fabric comes into play. A cashmere, wool, cotton or chenille throw at the end of the bed is the best way to add color, texture and patterns, Sawicki said.

There are bed linens come in silk as well, but Eastman said silk is not very practical for bedding, and since many people are trying to balance sophistication with practicality

they want fabrics and designs that are aesthetically pleasing but also washable, and low maintenance.

Sawicki said cotton percale feels cool on the skin but because of the way the fabric is woven it does not absorb color well so it is usually only available in whites and off-whites. Those who want color in the bedroom should select cotton sateen, which takes color much better.

Sawicki said people are going for a more tailored look in the bedroom using mid-century modern-influenced furniture and very contemporary beds eliminating the fussy or fluffy bedding, bed skirts or dust ruffles, and cutting down on the number of decorative pillows for a cleaner, more sophisticated line.

Lindsay said a long lumbar pillow can add visual interest and it's a cleaner look than lots of smaller pillows. It's also a way to add a fun fabric and color to bedding.

According to Jenkins, people are looking for texture and color but they are not big on patterns or florals. Sawicki prefers solid colors on a bed and saves prints for wallpaper, drapery, chairs, a throw pillow, or a rug. "Look at the whole room and make the bedding part of the whole room," she said. Jenkins said people do not change the color scheme of their bed linens very frequently, nor do they have to, because bedding is tied to the color and décor of the room, which also does not change seasonally. "Wall color is probably not going to change for a number of years," she said.

Although Jenkins does sell sheets off the shelf half of her work is custom, including making custom sheets and bedding to fit custom mattresses. "We play off a curtain pattern or a headboard pattern or we pick up the colors elsewhere in the room," she said.

Lynnens also sells mattress pads including a special climate controlled pad that adjusts to a person's body that was developed through the astronaut program. Lynnens also sells pillows and Jenkins said people try out pillows in her shop just as they would mattresses in a mattress store. "All inhibitions go away and they snuggle up with pillows," she said.

— Meg Barone



RRRRR...

Before blooms dies away...

By Meg Barone

Mandevilla, hibiscus, and jasmine provide a proliferation of vibrant color and fragrance in New England gardens each summer, generally from their position in decorative containers on patios, terraces and balconies.

It doesn't make much sense to plant them in the soil because with the arrival of colder weather in autumn these temperamental tropic and sub-tropic botanicals need to find warmer accommodations. "You want to get them inside before the overnight temperature reaches 45 to 50 degrees. Fifty degrees is the line in the sand," said Will O'Hara, perennial

manager for Van Wilgen's Garden Center, which has nurseries in Branford, Milford and Old Saybrook.

Serious gardeners may have a small greenhouse, where those sensitive plants can winter over. Some people have an atrium or solarium in their house that provides a sunny spot to keep them happy until they can be moved outdoors again next spring once the danger of frost has passed. A sunny window in any room and watering once a week will do for angel's trumpet, citrus trees, and other tropical plants.

If your house lacks a spot sunny enough then encourage the plant to go dormant in the winter and





All photos: Shutterstock

coax it back to life next spring, O'Hara said. Trim the plant back to a foot or less depending on the plant, and store it in a cool, dark basement or garage. It still must stay in an area that is about 50 to 55 degrees, no lower than that. Do not fertilize them over the winter, he said.

Keeping tropical plants alive during the winter is not the easiest thing to do, according to Eugene Reelick, owner of Hollandia Nurseries in Bethel. One of the reasons is the lack of humidity in our homes. "They dry out so much. Plants, particularly tropicals, absorb moisture out of the air," he said. Reelick recommends putting a humidifier near the tropicals in your house. That will aid with the moisture content in the air, which is not just great for the plants but for people, too, he said.

Keep an eye on local weather forecasts and try to anticipate a cold snap because Reelick said there is work to do before bringing tropicals inside. He recommends making sure they are fungus and insect-free, especially if you have year-round houseplants that could get infected or infested. Apply a systemic fungicide and insecticide while the plant is still outdoors. Then during the winter months use an organic oil insecticide and fungicide inside to maintain a cleaner and healthier plant.

Those unable to resolve a plant care problem on their own are encouraged to bring a leaf to a local garden center or to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, where the issue can be diagnosed. But, Reelick said, make sure to seal leaves or other plant material in plastic bags to prevent any insects or pathogens from

infecting other healthy plants. "We don't want (insect pests or plant diseases) in our greenhouses," he said.

Although cold-tolerant plants are designed to withstand harsh temperatures even they could use some tender loving care before winter arrives. It's hard to know what guidelines to follow any more since the northeast region has experienced increasingly unpredictable winters with extremes of temperatures in recent years. But the experts say gardeners should continue to follow the recommendations set for their particular garden zone, which in southern Connecticut ranges from 6 to 7, according to the hardiness zone map devised by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Wait until flowering shrubs have finished flowering before trimming them, although some can be pruned in spring as well as fall. "My rule of thumb is to cut back the herbaceous plants and leave the woody plants alone," said Diane Hartlin, of Village Greene Gardens in Guilford, which uses organic practices. In other words, anything with a stem can be cut back. Anything with a stalk should not. Woody plants take energy from the dormant wood to get them through the cold winter, she said.

Hartlin suggests leaving roses intact in the fall. Don't cut them back until spring. And be careful not to over-prune hydrangeas, she warns. If people cut back too much in the fall there will be no blooms in the following two summer seasons. "New growth coming out of the base has to become old wood before you'll get another bloom," she



said. Next spring you can cut them going back from the top a couple of leaf junctions to round it out or give it a nice shape. “You can always take more off but you can’t put anything back on,” she said. You can cut about a third off a plant without compromising it, Hartlin said.

The prevailing thinking about cutting back ornamental grasses has changed in recent years, O’Hara said. Experts now recommend leaving them alone for two reasons. It’s aesthetically more pleasing but more importantly, O’Hara said, “By leaving the tips of the plant up it protects the crown, or bottom, of the plant from winter or snow damage.”

While many people rake leaves, bag them and set them curbside for municipal pick-up, O’Hara lets his fallen leaves stay in flower beds. “I’ve always had good luck leaving leaf clutter on top of perennials. It helps protect against frost and snow damage,” he said. O’Hara said and crepe myrtles should be wrapped, and shrubby bamboo – like nandina, should also be wrapped or mulched. Roses also benefit from some mulching around the base of the plant.

For roses, Hartlin said she makes a mound around the plant using two parts peat moss and one part cow manure. For those who live near the beach, Hartlin recommends harvesting seaweed. Come next March work it into the soil around roses to help nourish them.

Reelick said the leaves of broadleaf perennial shrubbery like hollies, rhododendrons and mountain laurels can be sprayed in the fall

with an anti-desiccant, which provides a protective coating to evergreen foliage to keep moisture in the leaves and prevent them from wilting. Reelick said it’s also important to wrap the trunks of flowering pear, cherry and plum trees with four-inch corrugated drainage pipe to discourage deer from rubbing their antlers against the trunks.

“That ultimately causes the demise of the tree years down the road,” he said. Reelick said only younger trees need such protection.

While winterizing your sensitive plants take time to plant bulbs this fall. “The fall is an excellent time for planting. The soil is still warm, the air is cool, and the roots will actively grow,” Hartlin said. She adds a good amount of compost to the hole she digs for the plant. O’Hara suggests mixing a bone meal-based fertilizer in with the bulbs, one or two teaspoons per bulb. “That will help set them up for the spring,” he said.

Fall is also a great time to purchase plants because many perennials are on sale this time of year. They may not look their best but get them in the ground this fall and come next spring they will reward you with colorful blooms in your garden.

Meg Barone is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Photos courtesy of Sweeten.

FORGOTTEN NO MORE

Basement Renovations Add Living Space

By Bob Horton

The big news in basements and attics is that they no longer have to look and feel like basements and attics.

The days of transforming damp, dark basements into slightly less damp and dark rec rooms are long gone. Think instead of day spas and home gyms, all with ample natural light streaming through full-sized windows and doors.

And attics are more and more becoming the hideaway home office, or a creative space, not the place to store your seasonal clothing or stuff you just can't seem to part with but will never use again.

"These parts of the house are becoming real features spaces, not just an afterthought," explained Jean Brownell, founder and CEO of Sweeten, an online firm

that recruits and vets general contractors and then connects them with homeowners who have posted projects at sweeten.com.

"We recently had a client who turned their basement into a day spa," Brownell continued. "There was a beautiful living area with a comfy couch, a steam room and an infrared sauna."

Technology and new products have helped lead this basement and attic renaissance, as have homeowners' desires to get the highest use out of every available square foot. Basements and attics have always been the low hanging fruit when it comes time to finding more living space.

But before you start laying out your new day spa, or searching to learn just what an infrared sauna is

**Curtain call's 2017-2018 season
 at Sterling Farms in Stamford
 Great live theatre...at a fraction of NYC prices!**

AREA PREMIERE
 of this new stage adaptation!

**Guess Who's
 Coming to
 Dinner?**

Disney NEWSIES
 THE BROADWAY MUSICAL

**DAMN
 YANKEES**

**THE BOYS
 NEXT
 DOOR**

**KEEP
 CALM**
 The Sun Will
**Come Out
 Tomorrow!**
 (Get the hint?)

**THE MAN
 WHO SHOT
 LIBERTY
 VALANCE**

**KEN LUDWIG'S
 A COMEDY
 OF
 TENORS**

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's
SUPERMAN
 The Musical

**SISTER
 ACT**
 A HEAVENLY MUSICAL!

**IS HE?
 DEAD.**
 A NEW COMEDY BY MARK TWAIN
 ADAPTED BY DAVID IVES

PERFORMING ARTS, EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS FOR ALL AGES,
 are offered after school, evenings and weekends all year 'round!

Discounted FLEX PASS SUBSCRIPTIONS offer savings of 25% and more off regular adult prices.

Pre-season Sale: Use code CT17 and save 10% of Single Tickets. (Certain restrictions apply; expires October 31, 2017)

The Sterling Farms Theatre Complex - 1349 Newfield Avenue - Stamford

203-461-6358

www.curtaincallinc.com



and how it works, you need to do some basic calculations to see if your basement or attic is ready for conversion to full-on living space.

“The key to renovating either an attic or basement is to really understand ceiling height,” Brownell said. In addition to being CEO of Sweeten, the New London native is also an architect who trained at Cooper Union in New York City. “You need to check with your local building department to determine the code requirements for living space,” she said. “Also, walk your space with an architect or a general contractor. They are best equipped to help you get the most out of the space you have.”

New advances in insulation and vapor barriers have made it possible to keep basements dryer than ever before. New, breathable materials mean water escapes through the walls rather than getting trapped in them, where it would create conditions that could lead to mold and mildew.

“Moisture control is really key,” Brownell said. “A wet, damp basement is the last space anybody wants to be, but now because you can get a really good vapor barrier, damp and basement are no longer synonymous.”

Moisture was also the problem presented by basement windows and doors. If there were any windows at all, they were small and often did not open. Homeowners and builders alike wanted the windows permanently sealed to guard against water.

Improved sealing material makes full-sized windows and doors a much more viable option for homeowners. This has led to deeper and wider excavations away from the foundation, opening swaths from the foundation walls. The bigger windows and doors let in loads of

natural light, eliminating the other traditional basement condition: below ground darkness.

“The light changes everything,” the Sweeten CEO said. “People did not want even the risk of an entry point for water. But now they trust the new technology and are willing to put big windows in the basement. We have even had some clients that build a little patio or sitting area off the basement.” That works well on sloped lots where the ground naturally tilts away from the house, but the desire for more light filled basements also has contractors getting more creative with excavating and terracing.

Lighter and dryer basements have led to a complete re-thinking about how to incorporate basement design into the overall house plan. The beloved “open concept” floor plan now applies to rooms within the foundation walls as well. People are creating bars and eating areas that open into an in-home theater space.

This trend has also spawned new products that greatly enhance these rooms, such as the aforementioned infrared sauna. Traditional saunas operate at very high temperatures and heat the human body from the outside. Infrared light is part of the total spectrum produced by natural sunlight, and people for years have recommended infrared heat lamps for heat therapy. However, the lamps were cumbersome and extremely hot. That, and they made one feel like a French Fry awaiting dispensing at MacDonald’s.

Infrared saunas use infrared waves instead of the old, hot infrared lights. Manufacturers cite a NASA study that says these rays are particularly good for the human body. Apparently, they penetrate 1.5 to 2 inches into the body, providing a deeper, more penetrating heat than a traditional sauna. Now you can sweat from inside out.

Yet more warmth in the basement is available through so-called ventless fireplaces. These come in various shapes and sizes and fit flush in the wall, much like an aquarium. Alcohol gel packs provide fuel that burns so cleanly, no ventilation is required. There is no expensive chimney to build, no soot buildup to clean. And when the fuel cell is spent, one recycles it and inserts a new gel pack. And the manufacturers say the gel fuel even crackles when it burns, so one gets the warmth and the nurturing sound of burning wood without the mess of real wood.

I can envision a wonderful fall day spent in my new basement, enjoying an infrared sauna and then relaxing in front of my ventless fireplace listening to the gel crackle. I’ll never think of knotty pine paneled basements with quite the same nostalgic longing.

Bob Horton is a freelance write for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.





Shutterstock

Poultry Popularity

Chicken coops hatching
all around neighborhood
backyards

By Joel Lang

Shutterstock

“Chickens is the big thing,” says Bruce Benedict, president of Benedict’s Home and Garden in Monroe, a business his grandfather started in 1940.



“It’s leveling off now, but the last couple of years it was phenomenal. Chickens started first, then bees started. Bees are definitely still hot,” he says.

Benedict is standing in the chicken supply aisle of the main salesroom. He points to shelves of chicken snacks that he calls “chicken crack.” One is labeled a probiotic digestive aid put out by a company called Hentastic. There’s also wooden eggs to discourage chickens from pecking at live ones. “Chickens are cannibals, you know,” he says. And plastic leg bands are available in various colors.

“The leg bands tell us who’s who,” he explains, meaning the ages of chickens in a flock. “They’ll live eight to 10 years,” he says, a life span that can lead to painful partings. “People are people, their chickens become their pets,” he says.

Benedict’s doesn’t just carry chicken supplies. It also sells what might be called backyard starter kits: baby chicks and houses for them to live in. Spring is busiest, when several thousand 16-week-old

chicks are sold, very often in small batches. Four to six is a common number for a beginning backyard flock.

For their shelter, Benedict’s relies on Bird in Hand Pet Structures, a company in Pennsylvania Dutch country whose website says it began making “hand-crafted” coops in 2007, about the time chickens started invading backyards.

Buyers can browse a 56-page catalog, “The Hen House,” that offers five basic styles, including Quaker, Dutch, A-Frame, Lean-to and Tractor. The tractor coops come on wheels, so they can be moved to a fresh pecking area. Prices are in the \$1,000 to \$4,000 range, but buying a coop is like buying a car. There are lots of extra options to consider. Not to mention local ordinances.

“It’s home rule out there,” says Benedict, whose company delivers hen houses all over Fairfield County, usually on trucks equipped with forklifts.

“But do people always follow them?” Benedict asks of the rules. His question is rhetorical, and so is the follow up. “What zoning officer is going to go out an deal with a crowing rooster?”

Roosters are banned from backyards in many towns. Despite their crowing, they play no role in

Photos courtesy of Benedict’s Home & Garden. Benedict’s, in Monroe, offers numerous styles of henhouses and chicken coops that have become popular with suburbanites.



egg production. Otherwise local rules are complex.

The City of West Haven recently adopted a chicken ordinance that, according to a news report, mandates coops can be in backyards only, on lots of a quarter-acre or more. It also requires a permit for each chicken and allows for a \$100 fine should one cause a nuisance.

The City of New Haven, which is known for its Livable City Initiative, details its ordinance in an online “Best Practices Manual for Chicken-Keeper.” Section f specifies that, “No

hens may be kept inside any structure used for residential purposes.”

Most of the manual is intended to be helpful, devoting several pages just to coops, with links to online sites for do-it-yourself designs or pre-built structures. The primary concerns are the chickens’ health and safety.

Benedict describes New Haven as “very pro backyard.” Bridgeport too “has a good number of chickens,” he adds. “In Easton and Fairfield it’s horses.”

He introduces two staff members, Phil Cyr and Shari Manely, who know a lot about coops and why “chicken keepers” need restraints like New Haven’s rule f.

“Most people start out saying ‘Maybe I want four.’ Then they have 20,” says Manely.

“When you have a customer who buys multiple coops, you know they’re getting into it,” says Cyr.

“Rhode Island Reds are a popular breed. They’re hardy and they’re good if you have kids. They’re pretty calm,” says Manely. “You can train them. Some people put them on their laps or shoulders.”

That says Cyr is why, “They have chicken diapers.”

Also, he says, “they have chicken saddles.” Huh? “To protect the hens from roosters.”

Bottom: Rhode Island Reds are a popular backyard chicken. Shutterstock





3DAYBLINDS®
YOU'LL LOVE THE TREATMENT

CUSTOM BLINDS, SHADES, SHUTTERS & DRAPES

Fall in Love with Great SAVINGS!

HURRY!
Limited
Time Offer!



Soft Roman Shades & Cafe Curtains

BUY 1
GET 1

50%*
OFF

ON CUSTOM BLINDS,
SHADES & DRAPES

FREE In-Home
Design Consultation
NO OBLIGATION

Call To Schedule
(475) 999-2232
or visit
www.3dayoffer314.com



Horizontal Sheer Shades



Drapery / Roller Shades



Shutters*

SINCE 1978



AS SEEN ON TV



WE DESIGN



WE MEASURE



WE INSTALL



YOU RELAX®

*This offer must be presented at the time of purchase. Offer valid on 3 Day Blinds brand products only. Buy 1 window covering and receive the 2nd one of equal or lesser value at 50% off! Offer excludes Shutters, Special Orders, installation, sales tax, shipping and handling. Not valid on previous purchases or with any other offer or discount. Offer Code BGXB. 3 Day Blinds holds the following licenses: AZ ROC 264398, CA #1005986, CT HIC.0644950, MA #184680, NJ #13VH09390200, OR #209181, PA #PA107656, Rockland County #H-12401-34-00-00, WA #3DAYBDB842KS. © 2017 3 Day Blinds LLC.

That's assuming the flock has a rooster. Manely says when chicks are sold in sets, there's no gender guarantee. "People do return roosters," she says.

Besides protection from the weather and good ventilation, a coop and its fencing must be sturdy enough to keep out predators. "Foxes, raccoons, stray dogs, hawks — everybody loves chickens," says Benedict.

Benedict's hardly has a monopoly on coops. Walsh's Country Store in Seymour uses the same supplier. The Barn Yard Store in Bethel also sells pre-fab coops. At the Tractor Supply store in Orange unassembled kits cost a few hundred dollars.

Then there are homemade coops, which can be hard to find since the law consigns them to backyards. What's more, in suburbs with two-acre zoning, a backyard can cross-over into mini-farm status. For the last several years, Westport's Wakeman Town Farm has coordinated a chicken coop tour, like a tour of private gardens.

Phyllis Bender, a Westporter recommended by the Town Farm as an expert chicken keeper, has not been part of the tour. Her coop



wouldn't win any beauty contests, but if her chickens could talk they would tell you it's state of the art.

In fact, they do talk, at least to Bender. The four of them, Millie, Maggie, Abigail and Black Star, begin a chorus of gentle clucking when they see her. "Hi girls, you have visitors," she says, picking up 6-year-old Millie, and handing her to a guest to admire.

The chickens, two Mille Fleurs and two Australorps, both breeds described on the My Pet Chicken website as sweet and docile, are in the first of three fenced in enclosures that surround the two-room hen house proper. There is a heavy emphasis making everything predator-proof.

"I believe in redundancy," Bender says, pointing out the double layer of thick wire covering an exterior coop window. "Don't use chicken wire, it rusts," she says.

Netting over the outdoor pens protects the chickens from airborne attacks. The netting is the kind used for baseball backstops, and its two-inch spacing just big enough to let leaves to fall through. Doors set low in the fencing allow the chickens to explore the Bender's heavily treed lot. Out there, more wire is strung from tree to tree, like clothesline, to deter hawks.



The actual hen house has a dull gray exterior, but the inside is camp cabin rustic. One chamber is for roosting and the other for nesting. The floor is covered with a thick layer of shavings, like the kind used in horse stalls. Fans in the roosting room are aimed towards windows, so as not to blow directly on the chickens.

It's a precaution against respiratory disease to which chickens are prone, Bender says. Studies also have shown they seem to do better with a background noise of music or human voices. To meet that need, Bender keeps an old Sony radio in the nesting area.

Bender acquired her first chickens about 17 years ago. They came along with some guinea fowl that were her original interest.

The coop was built by a friend who sidelines as a carpenter.

"Most people modify a shed," she says, adding "There's gorgeous chicken coops in South Hampton."

"They are definitely pets," she says, mentioning a Wilton veterinary who treats chickens, and has a recovering rooster that Bender is tempted to adopt.

"If he stops crowing, I'll get him," she says.

Joel Lang is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Top: An Australorpe chicken. Shutterstock
Bottom: Mille Fleur 6-week old chick. Shutterstock

Norwalk Mattress Co., Inc. Since 1918

145 West Cedar Street ~ Norwalk, Ct. 06854 ~ 203-866-6913

Showroom Hours: Mon thru Sat. 9am to 4:30pm

NorwalkMattress.com

SHOP SMALL
-&-
support local businesses



**Hand Made by
True Master Craftsmen**

The Tranquility Sleep System



**Our Exclusive Design Offers Individuals
The Ability To Select The Firmness
They Prefer, On Either Side Of The Bed.
Hand Made With The
Finest Natural Materials.**

*Hand Made Naturally
For 99 Years*



**Studies Have Proven,
Sleeping On Natural Materials
Provides A Healthier More
Rejuvenated Night's Sleep.**



Photo courtesy of Liz Tardif, Cherry Street Art. A brilliant painting perks up a monochromatic interior.

Art Affair

Buy What You Love

By Rosemarie T. Anner

Buy what you love. You hear that repeatedly from gallery owners and art dealers. It's their mantra. They tell patrons that a painting should resonate intensely with them. The swirl of brilliant colors in an abstract may elicit a cheerful lift, a seascape may be calming, the stampede of horses exhilarating.

The emotional relationship that a buyer senses when he or she views a work of art is key to the longevity of the piece in the home, says Liz Tardif, an art consultant and the director of the Bruce S. Kershner art gallery in the Fairfield Public Library. "Original art enriches our home and work environments," she says. "Art influences the personality of a room more than any other design element, which is why I believe every interior design project should start with art."

"It's a combination of heart and head," adds Sissy Biggers, owner of Southport Galleries and a Realtor when she dons another hat. "I see that reaction with first-time buyers, how they respond to a piece. Then they make the decision to buy that art. I remember when my husband and I bought our first painting...the thrill of it. And when we hung it in our home, I would detour to look at that painting and I always thought I was in someone else's house."

"You need to have an emotional connection to

a work of art," agrees Jan Dilenschneider, an expressionist artist who comes from a family of artists. She says she finds it disconcerting when someone buys a piece of art because they think it will increase in value. "You need to love art, you need to participate in the work. The painting you buy will always fit into your life if you love it."

Not surprisingly, when the interior world specified gray and beige for interiors, rooms begged for excitement. With their pulsating bursts of color, abstracts bring focus and drama to those monochromatic schematics, says Dilenschneider. On the other hand, people looking for a twist on the traditional may be attracted to such artists as Rob Brooks, whose hyper-representational works earned him the sobriquet, Hopper on Acid, from Southport Galleries. "His American scenes just leap out of the frame with color, vibrancy and detail," says Sissy. And work that depicts local scenes is always very popular, she points out.

But where does one begin? Knowledge and



Photo courtesy of Liz Tardif, Cherry Street Art. All consultants agree that you should buy what you love – art that speaks to you.

preferences are key in guiding the buyer, say all three of our experts. Before you venture out the door, cautions Tardif, set your criteria: style inclinations, budget constraints (new and emerging artists are more affordable, of course) and size limitations.

“I feel it is much more effective to narrow down what you’re looking for and then I can direct you where to go for the kind of art you want,” says Tardif. “Working with a professional is important because that pro will help focus on what you like. It takes a lot of time to visit galleries, and there are so many mediums today that a potential buyer can easily become confused. A pro will help cut down on wasted time ... use money to buy intelligently.” Just don’t lock yourself into a box with strict limitations of choice.

Buying art for your home is an exercise in relationship, education, preference and collection. Do your initial research online, suggests Dilenschneider. See what appeals to you. Is it abstract, impressionism, expressionism, or Old Masters? Does oil speak to you? Or are you more attracted to watercolors, or ink, or perhaps mixed media. Go to art galleries, art shows and fairs, become familiar with local guilds. And when you visit these sites, talk to the artist. That personal connection often influences a purchase.



Stratford Antique Center

A Multi-Dealer Group Shop Featuring

- A fine collection of antiques & collectibles
- 16,500 sq. ft. of dealer space
- Approximately 200 dealers
- Gift Certificates available




400 Honeyspot Road, Stratford, CT
(203) 378-7754 • Fax (203) 380-2086
<http://stratfordantiquecenter.com/index.htm>
stratfordantique@aol.com

“Come Visit The Big Blue Building!”
7 Days a week OPEN DAILY 10 - 5
 Closed Easter, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving & Christmas



Adrienne Micci-Smith
203-444-9181
curtaincallct.com
itscurtainsforyou52@yahoo.com

DRAMA FOR YOUR WINDOWS AND MORE!



We strive to collaborate with our customers; we know from experience that they know what they need and like; our job is to show them all their options.

Specialize in the design and fabrication of custom window treatments, draperies, valances, Roman shades, bedspreads, cushions, and pillows.

We carry, measure and install Hunter Douglas blinds, shades and shutters.





“It’s so much fun to put an abstract in a traditional early 19th-century home,” points out Dilenschneider. A buyer will say, “I want to brighten it up and art will do that in one instant.”

Now that abstract art by such artists as Kim Romero is on the uptick in acquisitions, women painters of that medium are enjoying a wave of popularity, so much so that Southport Galleries will host an exhibition in October titled “Abstract Women.”

Some galleries will allow patrons to bring a work home and live with it for a few days. “Let’s get it in the house, hang it over the fireplace, or in the dining room, let them keep it for a couple of days,” says Biggers. “It’s amazing how often that seals the deal.”

Dilenschneider suggests going one step further: Start a collection. Focus on an artist or a region or both, a medium or a time period or both, etc. Analyze why a piece of art appeals to you. Is it because of the subject matter, what it says, how it is painted, or because the colors just bring joy into your life? The beauty of this approach is that your collection will have a *raison d’être* and as an informed buyer who can identify common threads, you become sophisticated and purposeful in your pursuit of art that appeals to you. Moreover, says Tardif, you will have a collection that cannot be seen anywhere else. It is unique to



Photo courtesy of Southport Galleries. A painting by Robert Brooks, above the mantle, becomes the focal point of this room.

*Perfection in stone
and tile for your home*

STAMFORD
MARBLE IMPORTS COMPANY
12 Camp Ave • Stamford, CT 06097

VANITY TOPS • KITCHEN COUNTERTOPS • FIREPLACE SURROUNDS • TABLES • ITALIAN MARBLE
LIMESTONE • NATURAL STONE • GRANITE • PORCELAIN & CERAMIC • CUSTOM FABRICATION & INSTALLATION

203-322-5457 • www.stamfordmarble.com



Photo courtesy of Jan Dilenschneider. Hamburg Cove in Lyme is a favorite setting and subject for artist Jan Dilenschneider's paintings. Pictured here in a private residence are the first two she did in a series of 13 works she painted for an exhibit in Old Lyme.

A CLEAN HOME STARTS WITH A QUALITY VACUUM.

The **Sebo AIRBELT E3** is a compact, ultra-quiet and lightweight **canister vacuum** with an innovative design. The **E3** features an optimized internal pathway that provides powerful suction for optimum cleaning performance.... It also comes with a 7-foot tapered suction hose that provides extra maneuverability for users.

Three-Step, Hospital-grade Filtration - It features a pre-motor filter, a three-layer Ultra Bag, an S-class, exhaust microfilter, and a tightly-sealed casing.

COME TRY ONE OUT ON DISPLAY!

7 YEAR PARTS & MOTOR WARRANTY

VACUUM MART
Largest Selection of Vacuums, Bags, Parts & Supplies

Always Remember We Service What We Sell!

9 Keeler Street, Danbury • (203) 748-1004
www.bensvacuummart.com

HOURS: TUES-THURS 9:30-7:00 • FRIDAY 9:30-5:00 • SATURDAY 9:30-3:00

Simplicity Miele Sirena SEBO PERFECT Electrolux MD CENTRAL VACUUM Air-Storm® ORECK

you. Just don't lock yourself into a box with strict limitations of choice.

Tardif is not of the mind set that you should stick to one mode of painting. "Absolutely mix genres," she advises, because that makes for a more interesting home interior. But don't use your home's interior to influence your purchases. Why do that, she asks? Furnishings come and go with the style trends of the moment, but art endures forever. Even owning just one prized work of art can bring years of emotional and visual delight.

Once you have done your due diligence, "take the dare," says Tardif. The important thing is to buy what you love.

Rosemarie T. Anner is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Courtesy of Liz Tardif, Cherry Street Art.

presenting
FALL 2017 COLLECTION



introducing >
THE COMFORT CLUB

Our new loyalty program offers 20% savings every day and exclusive access to special offers & services. Contact a signature store or visit mgbwhome.com for details.

**Mitchell Gold
+ Bob Williams**

GREENWICH | NEW YORK CITY | MANHASSET | PARAMUS | MGBWHOME.COM

FEATURING: MAJOR ARM CHAIR, DAX ROUND PULL-UP TABLE, POWER SHAG RUG



A PLACE TO DREAM – Scandinavians know that cozy, often romantic resting and reading areas are central to well-being and the imagination. Credit: Edie van Breems.

Hygge

Finding
your

Transition back to comfort and simplicity in your home

By Caitlin Mazzola

Hygge – pronounced “hue-gah” – may be hard to say, but it’s not a difficult concept to grasp. Considering the height of political turmoil the last two years have brought us, or the fast and inescapable encroachment of tech in our lives, this may very well be the best time for the people of the United States to wholly embrace hygge.

Hygge puts a word to the Danish penchant for creating comfort and coziness. The idea has manifested itself in American books and magazines as pillows and linens, soft blankets and scented candles. But there’s more to hygge than enjoying a warm cup of hot chocolate near the fireplace, burrowed in fleece as rain pelts the window.

For Rhonda Eleish, hygge captures a sensibility she grew up with. She is part of the duo behind Eleish van Breems, a Westport-based company specializing in Scandinavian antiques, furniture and custom interior design. She and her business partner, Edie van

Breems “both come from this perspective of enjoying life and the comforts of home.”

Eleish has family in Stockholm – in fact, her great uncle K.W. Gullers was a famous post-war photographer in Sweden; her great aunt Ingvor was a textile specialist who served as an advisor for the queen’s dollhouse collection. Van Breems is a quarter Swedish. Hygge is in their DNA.

To Eleish and van Breems, hygge in the home means a space that is supportive of your life.

“It needs to be well designed. It’s beautiful and supports your life in form and function,” Eleish said.

Both women give credence to the idea that today's fast-paced world of unknowns may have inspired Americans to turn to hygge and the Danish lifestyle it represents, one that's often cited as the happiest in the world.

"People just want to come back and re-center," said van Breems. "Hygge is leaving the rat race to find that spot – your center – to get inspired to create something better."

Creating that center – your sanctuary – means understanding what brings you comfort and establishes balance in your life. "It's specific to you," van Breems said.

It could be memories of eating Grandma's famous homemade lemon cake, or your favorite pair of pajamas, or even hosting friends and family to foster a sense of community.

Once you settle on your idea of cozy contentment, it's time to bring it home and create an environment that supports your life, embracing your sense of hygge.

Eleish and van Breems offer another concept to hone in on your journey to finding hygge – its Swedish counterpart, lagom.

Lagom, Swedish for "just the right amount," means "creating a life that is good, but not in excess," Eleish said.

It's a way of life for Swedes to appreciate what they have – less is more. This plays into creating a space that supports your life and comforts. Take a look at what you have in your home, Eleish suggested. What are your essentials and what can you live without? Having too much stuff can hinder finding your sense of hygge.

Ben Soreff sees this struggle in people's homes all the time. As a professional organizer for House to Home Organizing, a company that services Fairfield and Westchester counties and beyond, he often acts as the first step for folks wanting to create a more peaceful living space.

"We need to create that space" for hygge, he said. "When there's clutter, the home stops



ROOM TO BREATHE – Scandinavian interiors maintain a balance of positive to negative space with minimal clutter and broad areas of empty floor space. Credit: Edie van Breems.

being about happiness and comfort, and it becomes about stress."

Soreff came to learn about hygge after a bout with KonMari Method, lifestyle guru Marie Kondo's popular plan for de-cluttering. In his experience, KonMari-ing (evaluating everything you own to see if it brings you joy and discarding items that don't) was difficult for clients to stick to. Hygge, on the other hand, gives them a mission – to create a sanctuary within the home that's their own. That's an idea a person can carry out.

There's a reason it's a way of life for people in Denmark, Soreff said. "It's really

common sense."

If it wasn't easy, people wouldn't do it, he added. Soreff believes in creating habits to keep an organized home, and embracing hygge is a good habit to have.

"Ultimately, we want relationships with people – not objects, not stuff," he said. So you need to make the decisions about stuff that you might not have made in 30 years.

That's not to say you can't keep items that do contribute to your sense of hygge, like family heirlooms and other sentimental pieces that can add personality to your home.

In terms of décor, hygge is a "transition



STAMFORD DOWNTOWN

PARADE

SPECTACULAR

★ Presented by Stamford Advocate ★



Sunday, November 19, 2017 – 12 noon
Stamford Downtown

Watch the balloons inflate!

Saturday, November 18, 3-6pm Summer & Hoyt Streets

Sponsored by

Point72 Asset Management



David R. Martin
Mayor

For information call: 203-348-5285

stamford-downtown.com

Backpacks and large bags are subject to police search. Please leave them at home.

FRED FLINTSTONE TM & © 2017 Hanna-Barbera; KUNG FU PANDA © 2017 DreamWorks Animation LLC. All Rights Reserved;
MR. POTATO HEAD © 2017 Hasbro; PADDINGTON BEAR™ © 2017 Paddington & Co. Ltd.;
THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR © 2017 Eric Carle & Penguin Group USA



back to comfort and simplicity,” van Breems said. It’s a response to the “wonderful – but sometimes cold – modernism” in home design that’s been popular over the last decade or so.

The pendulum is swinging from super modern to transitional, but it’s not going completely back traditional, Eleish explained.

“We don’t want to go back to traditional – it’s too heavy and too dated.”

What you want, she said, is both contemporary and classic – a clear and elegant interior, punctuated with traditional designs.

Eleish pointed to European interiors as inspiration. “They’re so cool and chic.” Why? Europeans have the confidence to mix modern and antique.

“There isn’t so much of a disposable mindset” in Europe as there is in the U.S., she said (there’s that lagom concept again). Great grandma’s 18th century armoire can hold its own with an Eames-style chair or a

Hygge evokes images of coffee by candlelight and other cozy scenes. Credit: “Creative Commons Hygge på Bodega” by Jacob Bøtter, licensed under CC BY 2.0.
Link to license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/> or <http://bit.ly/1mhaR6e>



39 SODOM ROAD, BREWSTER • 845.279.1474
www.creativedesigncustomkitchens.com



Lucite coffee table. There's no need to go out and replace something old if it's something that makes you happy.

On the other hand, if you've inherited furniture you despise, lose it.

"If it's bugging you every day, it's not going to bring you harmony," Eleish said.

Furniture made with natural materials in designs that will last can help bring nature into the home, which can "nurture the soul," van Breems said.

Whatever hygge means to you – candles and coffee, wooden furniture, hosting family at the holidays – it just needs to support the life you want to live.

"There's no right or wrong with hygge," van Breems said. "It's you."

Caitlin Mazzola is an online producer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Perhaps hygge means, to you, memories of Grandma's famous homemade lemon cake. Credit: "Creative Commons Lemon cake" by Kamil Kaczor, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Link to license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/> or <http://bit.ly/1mhaR6e>

season of style
SAVINGS EVENT

Wrap up your holiday décor now and save.

Pirouette® Window Shadings

\$100 REBATE*
ON QUALIFYING PURCHASES OF
HUNTER DOUGLAS WINDOW FASHIONS

Make sure your home is holiday ready by ordering beautiful new Hunter Douglas window fashions today. Rebate savings are available on select styles, 9/16/17 through 12/11/17. Ask for details.

HunterDouglas



337 Westport Ave. Norwalk
1/3 mile East Stew Leonard's
203-849-1089
www.duc-interiors.com

FREE INSTALLATION
with purchase of
Luminette® Pirouette® Silhouette®
Vignette® Duette® Shutters

HunterDouglas **Gallery®**

*Manufacturer's mail-in rebate offer valid for qualifying purchases made 9/16/17–12/11/17 from participating dealers in the U.S. only. Rebate will be issued in the form of a prepaid reward card and mailed within 6 weeks of rebate claim receipt. Funds do not expire. Subject to applicable law, a \$2.00 monthly fee will be assessed against card balance 6 months after card issuance and each month thereafter. Additional limitations may apply. Ask participating dealer for details and rebate form. ©2017 Hunter Douglas. All rights reserved. All trademarks used herein are the property of Hunter Douglas or their respective owners. 17Q4MAGPIRC1



Photo courtesy of J.D. Stalon of Stamford.
Rug by Frank Pitman Designs.

FLOORED

by stylish new trends

By Lidia Ryan

Kids, pets, mud, dirt, high heels, chairs moving in and out from the dining room table – these are all arch nemeses to your home’s floor, perhaps the single most beat-up part of the house.

Yet, the floor can make or break the look of a room, so it’s important to make the right design choices when picking a finish or floor covering.

Home design and flooring experts weigh in on today’s flooring trends:

The new age of the area rug

Area rugs are not what they used to be – with consumers having access to high-end designs and up-to-the minute trends these days. It’s one of the things Kelly Anne Sohigian, owner of Kellydesigns in Fairfield, finds most exciting.

“I love and am so excited about all the new constructions and offerings in rugs. Rugs can be so expensive and there are so many new offerings with new fibers that make them durable and affordable,” she said. “You can change things out more often because you’re not throwing out a \$10,000 rug. You can

play a little more and have more whimsy and style. It opens up the door for more creativity and personality when you’re designing a home.”

Jakub Staron, owner of J.D. Staron rug and carpet gallery in Stamford, calls this a double-edged sword, though. “The whole industry is in absolute turmoil,” he said.

“Suddenly everyone is aware of colors, trends, fashion. The consumer knows more and is more fashionable,” he said. “Guys are suddenly not afraid to go shoe shopping. Suddenly everyone is fashion conscious.”

What this means, is that now consumers can go to places like Restoration Hardware, Pottery Barn and even Target and Home Depot and find very on-trend and very affordable rugs. This leaves designers looking for something unique to offer their clients—something they can’t buy themselves.

Finding character in flooring

Staron started his career as a rug weaver in Poland; after attending vocational school he went



Photo courtesy of J.D. Staron of Stamford. Rug by Frank Pitman Designs.

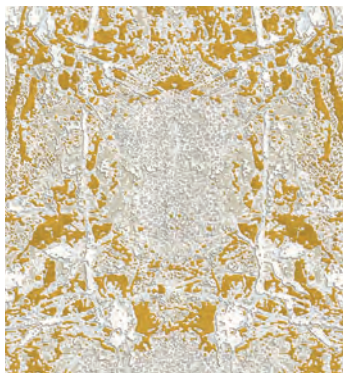


Photo courtesy of J.D. Staron of Stamford.

on to study at Parsons and Hunter College in New York City. It wasn't his first choice of career, though.

"I was adamant to make it as a painter, but no one wanted to buy my paintings," he said. "And everyone wanted to buy my rugs."

Today, he owns J.D. Staron with a flagship location in Stamford and others in Paris, New York, Boston, London and Los Angeles. His designs are favorites among local interior designers looking to get something truly-one-of-a-kind for their clients.

"I spend about four months a year in India, and I sit in remote places with the weavers and tell them how to do it. I get unusual yarns from around the world and create our own weaves," he said. "A big part of my creativity comes from my restlessness. Fashion and clothing inspire me; and travel."

Sohigian said she looks to J.D. Staron and other galleries like Westport Carpet when her client wants something unique and has the money to spend on it.

Staron believes clients look for something that has a story – something of interest about the weaver or how the piece was created – and that's what he's known to provide.

What's on-trend?

Sohigian, who has been an interior decorator and home stager in Fairfield and Westchester counties for 14 years, stays on top of trends by heading to national trade shows to see what's new with manufacturers.

The big trends in rugs right now are pops of bright color, natural fibers and geometric or lattice prints. The big colors, according to Staron are deep blues, gold and emerald green. Sohigian has also been seeing modern Persian rugs.

What's out? "Gray on gray is out and silver and white. People are so fed up with it. I'm so fed up with it," said Staron.

Carpeting is also not as popular as it was in the '70s and '80s, but both Sohigian and Staron still see it used in bedrooms. In fact, Staron has launched a new line of wall-to-wall carpeting to combat a market full of "aesthetically displeasing" carpets.

Sohigian advises those who do find themselves in a situation where they have an "aesthetically displeasing" carpet and can't rip it out, to layer area rugs.



Come Visit our Showroom!

PUTNAM DESIGN

"FINE KITCHENS & INTERIORS"

www.putnamdesignllc.com

406 East Putnam Ave • Cos Cob, CT 06807 • 203 661-1766



Basement renovation in which “woodlike” tiles for flooring and polypropylene carpet for stairs (indoor/outdoor) were used. Photo courtesy of Kellydesigns.

Hardwood flooring is the most popular finish across the country, and in New England, that means everywhere from the living room to the bedrooms, kitchen and even the bathroom – kind of.

One of the trends she’s seeing with bathroom tile is a new kind of tile that looks like wood. “You’d have to actually get down and touch it to know it’s not wood,” she said.

In other areas of the house, longer planks of wood give the room a more spacious feel, Sohigian said. Natural wood is also on trend.

Go light

When it comes to the color of hardwood floors, the trend is getting lighter and lighter. The deep brown, almost black, stain that has been in style is getting phased out in favor of lighter medium browns. Sohigian predicts that in the next year or so, we will even start to see white.

Hardwood floor is a huge investment and re-staining it is a process that kicks homeowners out for four or five days, so picking a “trendy” hardwood that could go out of style may not be the most practical choice.



DEVINE FACADES
STONE AND PVC TRIM
AND MOLDING

DEVINE BROS.
Inc.



Strong.
Durable.
Respected.

38 Commerce Street
Norwalk, CT 06850

203-866-4421
www.devinebi.com



Sohigian recommends picking an oak floor in a medium stain that isn't too dark or too honey-colored.

"It would be the right thing to do because it'll stay timeless and classic, and you can do any kind of décor with that. And it has lots of longevity," she said. "A couple years back pine was in style and the problem with that is it's a soft wood so it can crack."

Connecticut style

Staron characterizes Connecticut's home décor style as conservative.

"People think Connecticut is New York, but it's not. We don't sell crazy abstract contemporary things it is New England it is still much more conservative than the city," he said.

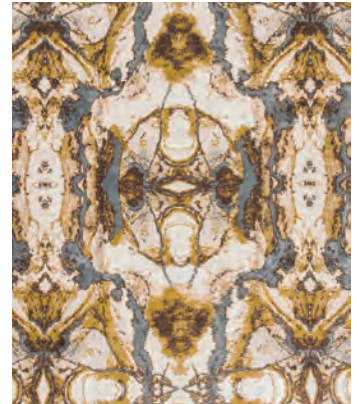
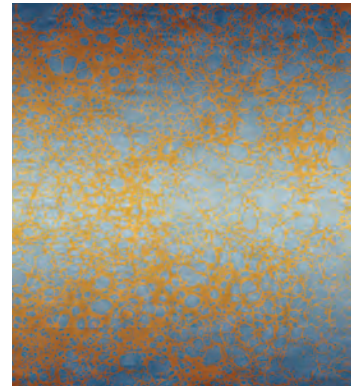
Sohigian touts rugs made with stabilized yarn that makes them soil resistant and ideal for high traffic homes or homes with pets.

"The bulk of my clients tend to be young families, so that's what I would recommend for children," she said.

That's also another reason she steers clients away from dark wood floors—every speck of dust and pet hair shows.

"When you're in Connecticut you don't care as much about design; you care about comfort and the kids and what's going to happen when they puke on the carpet," said Staron. "You want more peaceful, quiet things. You're in a more settled and steady part of your life and the object your home reflect that."

Lidia Ryan is an online producer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.



Photos courtesy of J.D. Staron of Stamford.

Inspired Interiors...

ARCHITECTURE
DESIGN + STUDIO

COMMERCIAL DESIGN • RESIDENTIAL DESIGN
PROJECT PLANNING • RENOVATIONS • MILLWORK

NY & CT

www.architexturegroup.com | 203.722.3545



Home gyms rethink the need for heavy equipment

By Lidia Ryan



Shutterstock

In today's world, things that were once considered luxuries are becoming more and more accessible. We now have apps that allow us to basically have private drivers and courier services. And thanks to the changing world and changing trends in fitness, a home gym is now not only accessible to everyone, but can actually be more affordable than a gym membership.

Less is more

The days of heavy equipment are over as treadmills are being replaced with yoga mats. Sabine Schoenberg, a contractor in Fairfield County and Jennifer Hallock, an interior designer working from

Connecticut and New York City, have both found that people are moving away from home gyms filled with machinery to calm spaces geared toward calisthenics and body-weight training.

"I have seen a lot of houses over the years where people would put massage rooms and big steam systems and big saunas in the lower level," Schoenberg said. "Those days are kind of over."

This makes having a home gym much more affordable for the simple fact of not having to buy expensive workout equipment, but also because any room can be made into a makeshift gym – it no longer has to be a large designated space – though

most home gyms are still built in the basement.

“It’s a very exciting. It’s a much more affordable and usable-for-everyone type of a world these days,” Schoenberg said. “[A home gym] is your personal environment. You set it up custom-tailored for you. The home experience now exceeds the health club.”

As with many things, Hallock says homeowners’ eyes can be bigger than their stomachs when it comes to home gyms, but one of her top tips to designing a home gym is for the owner to focus on his or her current workout routine and build around that.

“Only bring in equipment that you need,” she said. “It can be tempting to bring in equipment that looks great and sounds good, but you want to be practical and save space save and money.”

In terms of aesthetic, Hallock leaves it up to her clients to decide how they want their home gyms to look but she recommends keeping the room light and bright; a mirrored wall is also important.

Go high-tech

One of the biggest changes in the fitness space is the use of technology as apps bring any fitness class under the sun into people’s homes. Schoenberg said the top thing everyone needs in their home gym is a smart TV or a space to hook up a laptop.

“You can be canoeing in Egypt, cycling tour de France, running along Great Wall of China,” Schoenberg said. “The virtual side of things is quite fascinating.”

Hallock also advises making sure the room is wired with the proper electrical voltage necessary to keep it well lit and to power all electronics.

Where working out at home used to be a somewhat isolating experience, Schoenberg said technology has allowed the social component of the gym to come into the home.

“I had a client who moved from the West Coast and she couldn’t connect with fitness instructors here; she really liked hers on the West Coast,” Schoenberg said. Instead, she turned to technology. “Via Skype they did their workouts.”

Make it healthy

Of course, working out is all about getting healthy, so Schoenberg emphasizes the importance of making a home gym a healthy environment in itself. This means having a fresh air system and keeping the area well ventilated.

“Ultimately you’re doing this for your health,” Schoenberg said. “Make sure you know what it means to be sweating down there.”

Lidia Ryan is an online producer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.

Photo courtesy of KellyDesigns. Kelly Anne Sohigian of Kellydesigns created a home gym in Pound Ridge, NY, by adding rubber flooring, a wall of mirrors, a TV and some equipment. But most of the room was left open for yoga and gymnastics.





All photos courtesy of Sweeten.

Home renovations

Avoid a morass of *mistakes*

By Bob Horton

In many home renovation projects, one of the biggest headaches comes right at the beginning: how to find a reliable general contractor who will develop realistic budgets and stick to reasonable project timetable?

Most people ask friends, family, or neighbors to recommend tradesmen they have used. But getting names is just the start. How do you assess the contractor's track record? Does the firm do design work as well as contracting? Can the project really be done for the amount I have budgeted? How qualified are the subcontractors in his or her network?

You expect contractor-supplied references to check out, otherwise he or she would not have offered their names. So how do you find more objective evaluations?

Jean Brownell, an architect and entrepreneur, will tell you she has the answer, at least if you live in Fairfield County or New York City. Brownell is the founder and CEO of Sweeten, a company that recruits and independently evaluates general contractors, and then matches them with homeowners who have posted projects to the firm's website, sweeten.com. The service is free to the homeowner; contractors pay Sweeten what it calls a success fee.

Since starting in NYC in 2011, property owners have posted more than \$500 million in projects to the



HAND CRAFTED BY THE AMISH



*Your Home.
Your Way.*

**BIG SAVINGS and LARGEST
SELECTION of Kitchen and
Dining Room Furniture**

Dinette Depot

Largest Display of
Dining/Kitchen Furniture in CT
Family Owned Since 1991



Across from Brookfield Costco gas station

**227 Federal Rd. • Brookfield
203-775-3032
dinettedepot.com**

Mon-Tue-Fri & Sat 10am-6pm
Closed Wed
Thur 10am-6pm • Sun 11am-4pm



BOOKCASES | PANTRIES | GARAGE SYSTEMS | ACCESSORIES | CUSTOM DESIGNED CLOSETS | SIMPLE TO ELEGANT | HOME OFFICE AND MUDROOM AREAS | ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS | MELAMINE & QUALITY STAINED WOOD SYSTEMS

THE AFFORDABLE CLOSET EXPERTS




*Free In-Home Consultation
Factory Direct*

203.847.4179

Visit our showroom: 6-B Muller Park
Norwalk, CT 06851

BOOKCASES | PANTRIES | GARAGE SYSTEMS | ACCESSORIES | CUSTOM DESIGNED CLOSETS | SIMPLE TO ELEGANT | HOME OFFICE AND MUDROOM AREAS | ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS | MELAMINE & QUALITY STAINED WOOD SYSTEMS

website, according to the company. Sweeten has also seen steadily growing demand for its services in Fairfield County since opening there last year.

“Fundamentally, what we’ve changed is, we have allowed people to trust the renovation process. And that’s on both sides, the owner and the contractor,” Brownell said.

“Homeowners are very nervous about the renovation process. They don’t trust that they will make the right decision or that the contractor will do what is promised. And contractors do not trust that the homeowners will hire them if they give them the real price and the real-time schedule,” Brownell says.

Educated as an architect at Cooper Union in New York City, Brownell held a global architecture position at Coach, the worldwide leather goods retailer, and won a chairman’s award there for her work streamlining the retail construction process. So, she had reason to be confident she could choose the right contractor to renovate her Brooklyn brownstone in 2007.

“I hired the wrong contractor,” Brownell says of her own job. “This part of Brooklyn was still the frontier, and I just went with the wrong guy. And I thought, ‘how could this happen to me? I’ve spent 10 years

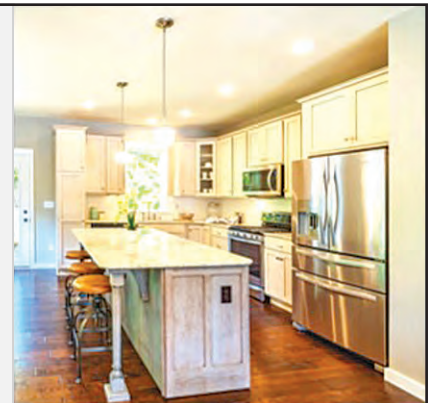
in the business, I have an architecture degree, and I still made this mistake. How do regular people do this?”

Brownell set out to answer her own questions.

“It really comes down to our vetting process,” Brownell explained. “We recruit contractors. We control the entire selection process. We check the quality of their work in previous projects. We ask each GC to give us four past clients. We talk to those clients directly and ask lots of questions to really understand the basis of the recommendation.”

“Contractors also have to let us do third party background checks, both civil and criminal. And in order to work with us, they have to agree to work transparently,” the CEO continued. Sweeten is looped in on all communications with the homeowner. Most contractors who make it through our process accept our conditions; if they are comfortable working with the transparency we demand, they are not part of the network.”

As for homeowners, Sweeten helps manage their expectations. Owners are asked to complete a project description that includes as many specifics as possible as well as a general description of what they are trying to do to their living space. “A human being reads every single project that is listed on our site,” said Brownell. “Our system flags any



Your Invitation to *WOW!*
Dazzling Kitchens • Elegant Baths
Custom Floor Plan Design

Building custom modular homes in Connecticut and Rhode Island for 36 years, we offer more features as standard and a simplified building process. Come meet us in our Fairfield Design Studio to learn more about The Smart Way to Build™

www.ctvalleyhomes.com

1949 Post Road

Fairfield, CT 06824

203-690-1678



MENDEZ
Cabinet Refacing

GIVE YOUR
KITCHEN
—a—
Facelift

PROFESSIONAL
CABINET RESTAINING,
REPAIRING & REPAIRS

ALL WORK GUARANTEED
BATHROOM & KITCHENS
EXPANDING CABINETS
AVAILABLE

SOFT CLOSE HINGES
DRAWER REPLACEMENT
SAVES TIME AND MONEY

Fully Guaranteed

FALL SPECIAL 10% OFF

Free Estimates Gladly Provided
Antique Restoration-Furniture Repair
203-449-7419 • Serving Fairfield Connecticut



Fall Discounts

We will beat any reasonable price

TREE WORK
Specializing in
difficult take downs
60' Bucket truck
Big and small take downs
Stump grinding
Land Clearing
ANYTHING • NO WAITING!
Owner present on all jobs

Little Stevie's

Third Generation

FULLY INSURED **203-300-0376** LIC #638286
18 Years Experience
SENIOR CITIZEN, VETERAN, LAW ENFORCEMENT
AND EMERGENCY PERSONNEL DISCOUNTS

misalignments between dollars and scope of work or timeline. We then share articles or other information with the owner to show them why either their budget or the size of the project needs reconsideration.”

Once a listed project is contractor-ready, Sweeten’s algorithm selects three contractors it deems most appropriate for the given work. The project is then shared with the selected contractors and the homeowner gets the information about the contractors. “Both sides have to opt-in to the project. That is one of our real important keys.” Sweeten assigns a project manager to each assigned project, a sort of spirit guide for both the homeowner and the contractor.

Sweeten put me in touch with a very satisfied client from Cos Cob, Joel Hasbert, an actor and voice-over artist. He is just finishing a gut rehab of a bathroom that turned out to be a much more complicated job than either he or the contractor first thought.

“I first heard of Sweeten from either a Facebook ad or an email, when we were living in the city. When we moved to Cos Cob about a year ago, and decided to renovate this bathroom, I went to the website and it had just started to offer services in Fairfield County,” Hasbert said. “They hooked me up with somebody who has been awesome and that’s really what we were looking for,” he said.

“We live in a 117-year-old house and we knew that once we

started stripping it down, tearing it apart, we might find some issues. And we really did,” Hasbert said. His Sweeten guide kept in touch, the contractor communicated well, and the job is nearing completion. “At one point the Sweeten person contacted me when all the rotten wood and studs were revealed. He wanted to be sure I understood what needed to be done. Both Sweeten and my contractor paid great attention to the details.”

Brownell hopes to lead Sweeten into eight more metropolitan areas by 2020, but she feels a particular pride in expanding to Connecticut. A native of New London, Brownell was not your typical 12-year-old girl. She would save her money to re-carpet her bedroom. And once, armed with a new cash stash from babysitting, she visited the local furniture emporium to convince it that of course she should be able to buy furniture on the lay away plan.

“I am just a renovator at heart, I guess,” she says, laughing at the memories of her 12-year-old self. “I’m really excited about how we are doing in Fairfield County. It is like a homecoming for me.”

Bob Horton is a freelance writer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.

Answer to win:

The first person to call in and answer correctly to this trivia question will win a 40 sqft Calcutta Gold Quartz kitchen counter top.

Question:

How many children does our president, Carlo Vona Jr. have? and how old are they?

**Only one winner to claim prize!
Terms and conditions apply.**

203-353-9119

PARAMOUNTSTONE.COM



Think Pink

New color hues blossom this holiday season

Pink and blue might not immediately evoke thoughts of holiday décor, but you'll be seeing a lot of it come winter.

By Caitlin Mazzola





Above: Red and silver are on display in this collection by Fairfield-based Holiday in a Box Shop. Credit: Brian A. Pounds, Hearst Connecticut Media. **Below:** Silver and metallics are mixed in with traditional red baubles and garland on the mantelpiece. Credit: PJ & Company Staging and Interior Decorating.



That's because glamour created by the use of colors and metallics is one of the trends that interior decorator Patti Stern predicts will be big in holiday decorations this year.

Rustic touches and classic decor round out the looks expected in the upcoming holiday season. Stern and Fairfield-based interior designer Kelly Sohigian offer their advice on how to spice up your trimmings this December.

Style it up with glamorous metallics and nontraditional colors

Perhaps inspired by rose quartz, one of Pantone's Colors of the Year for 2016, people are incorporating pinks into the season that's traditionally dominated by red and green. Others are opting to sprinkle their festive décor with aqua and navy blue, and even going as deep-hued as fuchsia.

Bridging the divide between customary and contemporary are metallics, white, silver and gold – especially gold.

“Gold is big,” Stern, who is principal at PJ & Company Staging and Interior Decorating in Cheshire, said. “We’re going to see a lot of gold accents.”

The key to going glamorous without getting gaudy is to balance the look with a neutral backdrop.

“Brown is the new neutral,” Stern said. It can be used in combination with metallics to tone down the glitz. Think brown leather with gold trimmings or shiny, decorative baubles.

Gray and taupe are also great neutrals to work with, according to Stern. A light-colored living room is the perfect showcase for such a vibrant color scheme.

Bring nature indoors to inspire rustic charm

If the glitz and glamour of pinks and metallics don't suit your holiday vibe, opt for another trendy look: rustic.

Give your home an earthy feel by incorporating branches and pinecones into your décor, said Sohigian, who is the founder of the firm Kellydesigns in Fairfield.

Don't be afraid to add artificial greenery – like trees, wreaths or garland – to your seasonal trimmings to bring a long-lasting, natural look indoors.

“The newer artificial greenery is done so beautifully, it's so realistic,” said Sohigian. “You need to touch it before you realize it's not real.”

Stern suggested using nature in unexpected ways. Adorn succulents like a cactus with burlap, lights and fake berries, or fill lanterns and urns with pinecones, birch branches and faux berries to accent either side the front door. Tie a burlap bow around your wreath or outdoor planter.

Use the mantelpiece, tables and entryways as stages for vignettes featuring wooden animals and other natural materials, like pinecones and sprays, Stern added. These displays unify the rustic style throughout the house.

Return to basics for a classic look

Glitz and rustic chic may be trendy, but never underestimate the allure of clean, classic holiday décor.

Plaid is still very popular to use in decorating, Stern said. Velvets and jewel tones complement a traditional red and green color scheme.

Cream, black and white with red can also create a timeless look, Stern advised.

Incorporating candles is an easy way to add elegance to any room. Stern also suggested filling apothecary jars with candy, bows, ornaments or pinecones to add an antique touch.

And don't forget seasonal holdovers – orange and white pumpkins and gourds can be used beyond Thanksgiving to decorate the kitchen, Stern said.

As for outdoor displays, Sohigian's noticed people are moving away from big blow-up snowmen and Santas. Instead, they're opting for a vintage look, mixing in strings of Edison bulbs with traditional lights.



A classic holiday color scheme on display. Credit: PJ & Company Staging and Interior Decorating.

KEEPING YOU WARM AND SAFE FOR 100 YEARS AND COUNTING.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Leahy's
FUELS INC.

1917 - 2017

PROPANE GAS & FUEL OIL
203-748-3535 • www.leahys.com

Providing quality and expert installation of gas and oil furnaces, boilers and hot water heaters.

Ct Lic. 401821
HOD #205

130 White Street
Danbury CT

BIOHEAT
Go Green with Leahy's

SAVE UP TO 50%
on our
Huge Selection
of **SCRATCH-N- DENT**

CALL TODAY
203-775-7066
203-743-6321

Open Sundays - Brookfield Location Only

BUZAID APPLIANCE
20th **SCRATCH-N-DENT CENTER**
WWW.BUZAIDAPPLIANCE.COM

TWO LOCATIONS
FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED

227 FEDERAL RD., BROOKFIELD
ACROSS FROM COSTCO
203-775-7066

125 SOUTH ST.
DANBURY
203-743-6321

MONDAY-FRIDAY 9AM-6PM • SATURDAY 9AM-5PM • SUNDAY 10AM-4PM



Wreath made of magnolia leaves. Photo information: "Creative Commons Wreath" by Tony Alter is licensed under CC BY 2.0.
Link to license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/> or <http://bit.ly/1mhaR6e>

Grouping of strands of smaller lights makes for a “nice glow effect,” Sohigian said.

She added that people could turn to unexpected natural elements – like eucalyptus or magnolia leaves – to spruce up garland on the railings or a classic outdoor wreath.

Your turn: Get started on your 2017 holiday look

With such different trends popping up in holiday décor, how do you decide which style to go for?

It’s easy – let your home inspire you.

“The prettiest rooms reflect the colors that are used in the home,” Sohigian said.

Think about the palette of your everyday look. Play off what you have. Ask yourself, what are the colors in the room, and how can you complement them? Stern suggested.

Consider your own style, Stern said, and give it a holiday twist. Are you traditional? Adding rustic touches to your tried-and-true decorations can keep your look on trend.

Take stock of the décor inventory you already have, Sohigian said. See if it’s still usable – and if you still like it.

Then decide what to update – add some color, or sparkly ornaments, sprays or picks.

Overall, make sure your holiday look is true to your overall style – the personality you infused into your everyday décor.

“Look at overall design of your home,” Sohigian said. “It should carry through with the type of decorations you use.”

Caitlin Mazzola is an online producer for the Hearst Connecticut Media Group.

THE ADDRESS you are looking for...

— FIELDSTONE VILLAGE —

**LUXURY.
LIFESTYLE.
LOCATION.**

We Saved
The Best For Last!
Fieldstone Village Has
25 REMAINING

Low Maintenance Active Adult Homes
Designed For One Level Living
1700 - 3300 Square Feet
Customizations Available
Starting at \$424,900



FIELDSTONE VILLAGE

An Active Lifestyle Community

fieldstone-village.com

BROKERS ARE WELCOME

203.795.3732

1025 Grassy Hill Road, Orange, CT

Open House Daily. 10-5 pm

Or By Appointment

Homes Similar to Photos. Some items shown are optional.



Beyond Boundaries.



HORIZONTAL BOARD FENCE
A clean, modern-style fence that provides privacy while maintaining an airy, open feel.

FENCES | CABLE RAIL | DRIVEWAY GATES | ARBORS & PERGOLAS | SPECIAL PROJECTS
DEER FENCE | ENGLISH GARDEN FENCE | TREE HOUSES | REPAIRS

137 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT 06877

203-210-7447 RiversideFence.net

