

second homes + small(er) spaces issue

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PASSION PROJECT

by MARY CLAIRE COLLIER photographs STACY BASS

With a blend of luxury and livability, a young family gets the home of their dreams.

For designer Lisa Friedman, the design process is not unlike the process of finding the perfect partner. “When I work with clients, I say, show me what you really don’t want, and leave everything else open. Otherwise, I feel like it’s almost like going to Match.com,” she laughs. “You just keep dating the same guy.” Her advice to stay open-minded and let things evolve naturally is as sage in regard to creating the home of one’s dreams as it is with finding a soul mate.

After moving from the city, it took this young family several years of renting in Westport before finding a property they clicked with, and although they loved the grounds, the house itself wasn’t exactly right. Luckily, unlike a Match.com mate, one *can* change a house to suit their tastes.

“There’s a handsomeness to the home,” says Friedman of the 1939 Colonial, “and we tried

this spread: In the great room, Friedman uses a mix of old and new. Nubian pottery sits below *The Eye* by artist N. Orlovski. A Mattaliano Chair through Holly Hunt is upholstered in de Le Cuona fabric.





Custom leather ottomans can be tucked under a Gregorius Pineo cocktail table when not in use.



above: "I don't walk into a room and choose a color palette," says Friedman. "It just evolves." Once two smaller rooms, the great room now holds a Formations daybed covered in Holly Hunt Great Plains fabric, and a striking Gregorius Pineo cabinet.

to respect that through the whole process."

The home's age and design did present some limitations, but the designer's challenge—as well as inspiration—was to create as much space and function as possible. "It was important for me to integrate the classic look with a transitional, contemporary vibe," says Friedman.

Since the outdoor space was what drew the couple to the home in

the first place, she took great care to respect its look. "We enhanced the beauty, but we didn't redesign it," she says.

In the heart of the home, the designer took down the wall between two rooms, raised the ceiling by several feet, and lined the walls with French doors to create one magnificent great room. She also relocated a fireplace to an outside wall and made it two-sided, with one façade



facing an outdoor seating area. The back stairs were removed to create space for a laundry room and full mudroom, and the master suite was completely reconfigured.

When it came to furnishing the rooms, the husband directed the look of the home, while his wife was more concerned with it being functional for their two young boys. “I think he had in his mind what he thought was going to be a luxurious, sophisticated home; and she wanted a great home to raise a family in. But what that meant to them evolved as the process went on: What does luxurious mean? What does functional mean?” says Friedman.

She gave him high-end, sophisticated pieces, from custom paint selections down to the door hinges, but also made it comfortable, inviting and functional—so both husband and wife have the home they envisioned.

“There’s a **HANDSOMENESS** to the home, and we tried to respect that through the **WHOLE PROCESS.**”

—LISA FRIEDMAN



this spread: "I wanted the illusion of height" in the custom kitchen, says the designer. Karen Berkemeyer helped her locate a statuary marble backsplash with the right lines to enhance the look. Friedman also fit a desk and linen bulletin board into the small space.

But creating the home of their dreams didn't come without some serious prep work. Before any shopping was done, Friedman drilled down on floor plans, creating as many as three or four for each room to create the optimal balance and flow for the space. "To me there's no creativity with function. Function is the intellectual part of this process, and that's what I do first," says Friedman.

Then, armed with her guides, she and her client set upon the Holly Hunt showroom to begin the creative process, where Friedman showed him her interpretation of their style: beautifully designed revised classics. The color palette "was created very organically. It chose me," says Friedman. The furniture, however, is almost all custom-made to fit the home.

The kitchen is another completely custom design that makes great use of space, and includes contemporary details like a stainless



farm sink, modern faucets, and a custom gray wash on the cabinets and island. The marble backsplash was located at ABC Stone after searching for nearly five months to find the perfect slab with the movement they wanted.

In the master bedroom, an artisan tile installer seamlessly integrated an infinity drain into a chevron pattern of Helsinki marble tiles. Lefroy Brooks hardware and faucets, and a custom-made vanity with water-resistant leather hardware from Holland & Sherry, enhance the high-quality look and feel that runs through all of the spaces.

“Artwork was definitely the voice of the home,” says Friedman. She and her clients enlisted Mar Silver as their art consultant, using Silver’s gallery to source most of the artwork now on display throughout the house. “She shared the same vision,” says the designer, whose clients took care to choose pieces with which they felt an emotional connection, which would travel with them wherever they go next.

above: In the husband’s office, a print of Brigitte Bardot hangs above a comfortable leather sofa with nailhead trim. An Eames Executive Chair sits behind the custom Mattaliano desk. opposite: A hand-blown glass bell jar chandelier by Alison Berger hangs above a dining table from Mar Silver Design.







"I have an **EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT**
to each and every piece. Handing
over the key is a **BITTERSWEET**
moment for me."

—LISA FRIEDMAN

this spread:
The master suite is totally recon-
figured from the original version.
The homeowners now enjoy a
simple, striking marble bathroom
with top-of-the-line fixtures, and
a bedroom with fireplace and
multiple places to relax.



opposite: The handsome grounds were what attracted the homeowners to this house at first, so their new design enhances the original look, rather than making big changes. New outdoor furniture by Michael Taylor is upholstered in Holly Hunt Great Outdoors fabric.



What brings it all together, though, is editing. Friedman carefully selected every piece, and her restraint gives each piece room to breathe. “It’s like taking off that one last accessory before you walk out the door. That’s what I tried to do,” she says.

When she’s put so much time and passion into something, it’s easy to see how the designer can feel as connected to the spaces she’s created as the family that will live in them. “Because of the way I design, I have an emotional attachment to each and every piece. Handing over the key is a bittersweet moment for me,” says Friedman, who proved to be a very successful matchmaker for her clients and their home. And haven’t we all gotten the advice that it’s best to be introduced by a friend? 

RESOURCES

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Design assistant: Kristi Buell

Builder, Milton Development, miltondevelopment.com

Architect, Mary Beth Woods Architect, marybethwoodsarchitect.com

Karen Berkemeyer Home, karenberkemeyerhome.com

Mar Silver, marsilverdesign.com

Klaff’s, klaffs.com