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AFTER ROUNDS OF "IMPROVEMENTS," AN EAST HAMPTON HOME FINALLY GETS A PROPER MAKEOVER: NEW OWNERS, A SENSITIVE DESIGN TEAM AND SOME MUCH NEEDED PEACE AND QUIET



BY KRYSSTIAN VON SPEIDEL  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANASTASSIOS MENTIS

Defying the old chestnut that bigger is better, the owners of a tidy 1920s farmhouse challenged the once-prevailing tear-down mindset and instead launched a gut renovation—only the privet was spared. The result is a charming home—perfectly positioned within easy walking distance to the nearby Maidstone Club. This is the quiet side of the East End.

After spending the past six years enjoying sweeping views of the Hudson River in a Frank Lloyd Wright–designed home in Garrison, New York, the owners, a onetime fashion executive and his wife, decided to give East Hampton a shot. As luck would have it, this former farmhouse was their first showing. Thirty houses later, they returned, convinced of its perfection.

"We didn't want a huge house on a not-huge property," says the wife. "We wanted a house with character. And when we saw this one, sitting on this lovely piece of land, we were charmed by its nooks and crannies."

Upon move-in, the new owners didn't plunge immediately into renovations. Instead, the pair became intimate with the house's idiosyncrasies.

**Gatecrasher** | A large, potted Japanese maple was moved from the entry gates (LEFT) to near the pool in order to provide a more open entrance to the property.

**Inside Out** | Grasses soften the impact of an outdoor fireplace (ABOVE). Designer David Kleinberg furnished the area with teak furniture from David Sutherland. The upholstery is a weather-resistant Kravet Soleil canvas. See *Resources*.



"It was the best decision we made," she says. When it was time, her instincts told her to relocate the swimming pool from the front of the property to the rear. Despite it being surrounded by a tall privet hedge on three sides, there was a significant lack of privacy in the original configuration. The move also allowed greater leeway for landscape design.

The couple turned to Dickson DeMarche of Laurel Rock Development to create a plan for the one-acre grounds. DeMarche's design philosophy called for a "loosely neat" lawn, hence the choice of a classic, rectangular pool surrounded by easy-to-maintain shrubbery and grasses.

The owners credit New Leaf Landscape for the realization of DeMarche's plan, as well as its continued maintenance. "Color was really important to me, particularly to have color throughout the year," says the home's owner. New Leaf's Ivan Roman worked with flower-garden designer Hope Herrlin to create focal points throughout the nuanced, roll-

ing terrain. The firm also relocated several large specimen trees, including a Japanese maple and an old-growth oak, in order to optimize their impact on the property. "We had to work our magic to ensure that nothing happened to the oak tree, which is a favorite of the owner," Roman says.

With the grounds groomed, the couple called their longtime decorator, David Kleinberg, who had outfitted their Fifth Avenue residence and the house in Garrison. Kleinberg's straightforward approach, and his understanding of their taste and lifestyle underscored the decision.

The designer recognized at once that, although the house had been renovated several years earlier, these renovations detracted from its key attributes. "There was something off balance about it," says Kleinberg, who oversaw a gut renovation. The roofline was straightened, a screened porch added and ceiling heights raised throughout. This last innovation eliminated a seven-foot-high crawl space, creating dramatic 16-foot ceilings upstairs.



**On The Move** | The decision to relocate the pool (TOP LEFT) from the front yard to the back of the property allows greater privacy and encourages morning swims. The streamlined outdoor furniture mirrors the aesthetic in the living room. **Lap Of Luxury** | As seen from the patio, the pool (BOTTOM LEFT) looks toward the property's extensive privet. Rounded bushes and grasses are a foil to the pool's linear design. **Uprooted** | Thick privet hedges (THIS PAGE) were moved and replanted during the renovation. See Resources.



**Dine And Dandy** | Deco-era André Sornay dining chairs (LEFT) contrast with a custom glass tabletop meant to evoke vintage sand glass. The table base is from Profiles. **Art And Artifact** | Primitive urns (ABOVE) lend texture to the Indiana Limestone fireplace surround and hearth, designed by Kleinberg. **Benched** | A detail of a wooden bench (BELOW) in the living room. **Point Of View** | A custom sofa is upholstered in Lee Jofa's Mars fabric in beige (OPPOSITE) and the linen area rug is from Patterson, Flynn and Martin. The set of lamps are circa 1960s from John Salibello Antiques. See Resources.



"We were mindful of not expanding the envelope of the house," notes the designer. Only the screened porch increased its original footprint. The master suite's redesign added a generous bath, which still causes the wife to swoon. "It's yummy and romantic," she says.

Kleinberg was able to include much of the furniture and accessories from the owners' previous country residence, something both parties felt was logical and comfortable. The designer refreshed the upholstery with a neutral palette of cotton and linen wovens and added zippy patterned cushions. "If you made good purchases to begin with, they're still good the second time around," he emphasizes.

Custom-made beadboard panels were installed in the living room to give it texture and substance as well as provide the vertical scale the new interiors demanded. "We wanted to add patterns—but keep them subtle."

Speaking to the finished product, Kleinberg echoes the sentiments of the homeowners: "It's exactly the kind of environment that makes sitting in three hours of traffic all worthwhile." 🌟

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