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this page: Beckoning from the living room, a Vladimir Kagan sofa in a Sandra Jordan alpaca wool ombré fabric cozies up to two midcentury Italian chairs from The Flat in Donghia fabric. The rug is by Merida Studio; the window treatments are crafted from fabric and custom embroidered trim by Holland & Sherry.



refresher course

A Greenwich home is **REFLOWED**—and spaces **REPURPOSED**—to reach its full potential



INTERVIEW WITH CARMiÑA ROTH, CARMiÑA ROTH INTERIORS, & WILLIAM EARLS, WILLIAM D. EARLS AIA ARCHITECT | PHOTOGRAPHER AMY VISCHIO

this page: Painted in Farrow & Ball, the foyer is topped with a Murano chandelier from Carlos de la Puente Antiques; the Tara Vaughan sculpture on the table is from Putnam & Mason. Hermès wallpaper and light fixtures from Circa Lighting adorn the powder room.

How were you introduced to the clients, Carmiña?

Carmiña Roth: A local real estate agent who had seen my work introduced me to her clients, who were moving back to the United States after a long stint in Europe.

How would you describe the original home? CR: The house is a brick Georgian Colonial-style home built in 1966. It had undergone at least one renovation by its previous owners who had added a wing to the residence. The clients were initially attracted to the great bones and proportions of the house and immediately saw its potential to suit their family's lifestyle.

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What did the project entail? CR: The project was executed in two consecutive phases. After the clients purchased the home in April 2016, we only had enough time to redecorate the house so that they could move in and get their three teenage daughters settled in time for school that fall. We primarily focused our attention on refinishing and retiling floors, painting the entire interior and designing window treatments and rugs. Everything was relatively cosmetic in nature during this phase.

How did you manage that? CR: The collaboration began with only one initial meeting with the clients to walk through the house together. They left me with a binder containing photographs of their existing home along with its contents, so we already had an idea of furniture pieces that we could incorporate into their new home. After the initial meeting, we worked primarily via email and phone as they were still overseas during this time. I would send comprehensive packages containing options for fabric swatches, rug samples and paint chips—we were very fortunate to have clients who were trusting of our vision. They quickly recognized the challenges of long-distance decorating and consistently made the many

decisions necessary to keep the project moving forward in the short time that we had. During this phase, we kept the original function of all the rooms the same, and the kitchen and baths remained mostly intact except for new paint. Fortunately, our clients were very pleased with the initial transformation of the house, and we commenced planning for phase two as soon as they moved in.

What happened during the second phase? CR: The clients moved into their home a few months after beginning the project, bringing with them a beautiful collection of largely French and Italian antiques that they had acquired while living and traveling abroad. We had completed the kids' rooms with all new furnishings, after which we could really focus on enhancing the rest of the house. During this stage, we analyzed each piece of furniture they owned for its suitability in the new surroundings. We began mixing these classical components with new contemporary elements, and that is when the present design really took shape. By that time, the clients had lived in the house long enough to understand its flow, and how they wanted to alter it to suit their lifestyle, so it became

below: Two arched doorways add architectural symmetry to the living room, which is wrapped in Silky Strings wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries. The clients' antique Italian chairs, upholstered in a green Loro Piana fabric, flank a blue leather Luteca Air sofa. A portrait of the family dog by collage artist Peter Clark was a birthday gift from the husband to the wife. **opposite:** The bar cart displays a cocktail shaker from Putnam & Mason and decanters from The Flat; the sconces by the fireplace are from Carlos de la Puente Antiques.





evident that it was time to collaborate with an architect to begin making structural changes. I introduced them to William Earls, an architect with whom I have worked several times. We began thinking about kitchen and bath renovations, which led to even more exciting changes.

What architectural changes did you make, and what was the thought process behind them?

William Earls: The house had an unusual layout. The family room was being used as an office. The kitchen had a huge island with a bend in it. There was a room to one side of the kitchen that was called the “drinks room” because it had a small bar in it, but that clearly wasn’t being used to its full potential.

CR: The wife wanted a new kitchen and more pantry space, which the current kitchen was lacking. The husband sometimes works from home, and he needed dedicated office space, which, again, the existing house didn’t really have. He was working out of the family room, but since it opens onto the kitchen, a popular family gathering spot, it was short on privacy and not conducive to taking important phone calls.

WE: We proposed a straightforward kitchen layout and took the bar

out of the drinks room and made that the dining room. We moved the office to the former dining room, using some of the space to create a new pantry, and widened the opening between the kitchen and family room. The powder room had a door that opened right onto the foyer. We created a curved wall in the foyer that leads to a vestibule to hide the powder room door. This wall mimics the existing curved staircase. We also added arched openings between the major rooms to give them a more classical feel.

Any other areas that needed updating? **CR:** We ended up renovating much of the core of the ground floor plus the master suite. The existing layout of the home had a large, formal foyer with marble floors. We reconfigured it slightly to allow for a larger powder room, and we replaced the marble floors with beautifully stained wood to keep the floor treatment visually consistent with the adjoining rooms. As mentioned, we also replaced many square cased openings between rooms with gracious arched doorways; additional ones were added between the kitchen and dining room and the dining room and living room to create better circulation between the rooms. The principal living spaces are now more oriented toward the beautiful

this spread: The "drinks room" was repurposed as the new dining room, with arched doorways now leading to the living room on one side and the kitchen on the other. Fromental hydrangea wallpaper speaks to the client's love of flowers; a photograph by J Henry Fair through Cynthia Byrnes Contemporary Art adds impact. The table is custom by Carmina Roth Interiors.





backyard and encourage indoor/outdoor living in the warmer months. On the second floor, we expanded the master suite to create a large master bath and two spacious his and hers dressing rooms.

Did the clients have any special requests? CR: The wife is an amazing cook, so a chef's kitchen was a top priority. We started by envisioning the ideal chef's triangle and the space between cooking stations, including how far the island should be from the refrigerator and range. We then selected cabinets from Waterworks and started visiting marble yards to view stone slabs. Every detail in this kitchen was carefully considered, from the appliances and the finishes to the customized bread and knife drawers. Our goal was to make this a truly functional kitchen—as well as a gorgeous one—for everyone in the family to enjoy.


Was that hutch in the kitchen an existing piece? CR: Yes, and it holds sentimental value to the wife and stores her silver and linens, so we designed the architectural changes to accommodate its placement. It adds an eclectic touch to the rest of the space, which is much more modern, and it preserves an element of their family history. I don't like when a room looks like it came straight out of a design showroom, and in this case, we were blessed with an existing collection of antiques that we wanted to incorporate into our overall design scheme.

How did the living room come together? CR: The room is quite large, but rather long and narrow with a fireplace oriented at the center of the main wall. We schemed the furniture placement carefully so that the seating plan would be centered on the fireplace, while equally utilizing the two end

zones of the room. The central seating area was further defined by adding a second arched doorway (there was only one to begin with) in the room connecting to the new dining room, creating a long, centralized wall across from the fireplace. Then we balanced the grand piano at one end of the room with a second seating area on the opposite side, where we placed a Vladimir Kagan sofa on the diagonal flanked by midcentury Italian chairs.

I love the artwork above the sofa! CR: The husband commissioned this piece as a birthday gift for his wife. The London-based collage artist Peter Clark composed this picture of the family dog out of memorabilia that had been collected by the family over time, such as ticket stubs and maps of places they have been. It was originally intended for a more casual area of the house, but once it arrived, we thought it would inject the perfect amount of whimsy into the formal living room, where it's juxtaposed with more serious antiques, such as a French Trumeau mirror over the fireplace and a gilded gold weathervane. It really makes the room!

How did you decide where to site the dining room? CR: The original layout of the house had the drinks room off of the foyer, between the kitchen and sunroom, and it contained a large wet bar and a set of French doors leading out to the back patio. Since the space wasn't really being utilized all that much by the clients, and given its location adjacent to the kitchen, we thought this would be an ideal place for the dining room. As previously mentioned, Bill added arched doorways to connect this room with both the living room and kitchen. He also placed transoms above the French doors to maximize the beautiful view to the backyard. It really is a jewel of a room. The hydrangea wallpaper is from Michael Berman's



“Orienting the rooms that the family spends the most time in toward the **BEAUTIFUL GARDENS** in the back completely changed the **ENTIRE FEEL** of the home.”

—CARMÍÑA ROTH

this spread: The new chef's kitchen features cabinetry through Waterworks, lighting pendants from Remains Lighting and Farrow & Ball paint on the walls. The architecture of the house now has many *enfilades*, or suites of rooms with doorways in line with each other.



this spread: Every detail in the kitchen was carefully considered, from the appliances and finishes to the customized bread and knife drawers. The modern look and feel of the space is juxtaposed by an existing hutch, which holds sentimental value to the clients; architectural changes to the space were made to accommodate its placement.





“Our clients had the wisdom and foresight to purchase a **CLASSICALLY PROPORTIONED**, solidly built house and shared our **VISION** of bringing it into the **TWENTIETH CENTURY** without having to do a total gut renovation.”

—CARMIÑA ROTH



this spread: The wall between the family room and kitchen was opened up a bit to create a stronger connection between the two spaces. Seated next to the built-ins, an Anthony Lawrence-Belfair sofa is covered in a Schumacher suede, and another sofa dressed in a bright patterned Schumacher fabric adds a touch of youthfulness and fun to the room.



new wallpaper line for Fromental and was a fun way to incorporate the wife's passion for flowers, as well as a way to connect it to the gardens outside. An antique lacquered sideboard is paired with a contemporary photograph sourced from Cynthia Byrnes Contemporary Art, which adds gravitas to the entire ensemble. Now this new dining room is used regularly, and the clients' daughters read and do homework there.

It's hard to believe the new library was once the dining room. CR: That room was inspired by my visit to the recently renovated Ritz Paris, where I was impressed by the painstaking restoration of a long corridor clad in exquisite blond cerused oak. That hall ends in an intimate drinks bar tucked away in the back of the hotel, where eggplant lacquered walls mingle with tangerine-colored accents. I brought back photos of the millwork and excitedly showed them to the husband, who was on board with replicating something similar in his library. I added those same accent colors through the textiles we used on the window seats, pillows and chair. A contemporary Remains Lighting fixture floats above the antique leather-topped Louis XVI desk, and bookshelves house a curated





this spread: A portion of the original dining room was transformed into the husband's library. Accessed by a cerused pocket door, the room is sheathed in millwork by CJS Millwork for a timeless look, and a Chesney's steam system fulfilled the need for a fireplace without affecting the home's façade. The chair, window seat and pillows are covered in Loro Piana wool fabrics.

collection of old books and Winston Churchill memorabilia. The room called for a fireplace between two existing windows, but we weren't able to place a vent without affecting the façade of the house, so we sourced a Chesney's steam system that looks just like a real fire. Paul Tallman, the contractor, and CJS Millwork really knocked the ball out of the park to make Bill's drawings come to life. Although the room was carved out of a portion of the former dining room, it now looks and feels like it has been there forever. Even the pocket door that opens into the foyer is cerused on one side and painted on the other, so it's a seamless transition.

How was the master suite expanded and updated? WE: We really wanted to add a more gracious master bathroom over an existing first-floor sun-room, but the town wouldn't allow us to add any additional square foot-

age to the house. We noticed that one of the bays of the four-car garage wasn't being fully used, so we proposed taking off the garage door and making the side a lattice wall so the garage wouldn't count as square footage. We added the master bath and created a covered porch out of that garage bay. That porch, which is near the pool, now houses all-weather cabinetry and an outdoor ping-pong table. The clients now say that every house should have a space like this!


CR: The original master suite had a large bathroom and two small walk-in closets. We took the space that had originally been the master bath and converted it into two large dressing rooms; the old walk-in closets became a small sitting room and office for the wife. In the bedroom, we only changed the ceiling trim, removed cove lighting and added new crown moldings. The client's Gustavian secretaire provided the cue for the room's serene color scheme of pale celadon and aqua. We reupholstered a pair of antique French bergères in a dark teal velvet to add a punch and repurposed their antique brown nightstands by painting them a pale ecru.

Speaking of colors, what inspired the palette seen throughout the house?

CR: We used a lot of silvery grays and blues with accents of amethyst throughout. The architecture of the house now has many *enfilades*, or suites of rooms with doorways in line with each other, so it's important that when you gaze through these elegant arched doorways, you see a hint of color that ties each room to the next. We carefully planned the paint schedule so that when you look two or three rooms deep, the colors subtly complement each other and work as one palette. For example, the foyer, which is at the core of the house, contains a large powder blue Murano glass chandelier and vintage Dorothy Draper stools flanking the front door, which are covered in dark purple Holly Hunt leather. To your left is the library containing eggplant and orange accents, and to your right is the living room, which includes similar tones of colors in the lighting fixtures, an ombré Vladimir Kagan sofa and a blue leather Luteca Air sofa. In this room, we also added some chartreuse accents to keep everything fresh, which can be seen in the clients' antique Italian chairs upholstered in a Loro Piana fabric and even more subtly in the custom Holland & Sherry embroidery on the window treatments. All of these bold colors play beautifully against the mostly neutral backdrop to create a sophisticated, layered effect in the spaces. There are lots of nuanced details, and this is what makes a space visually interesting.

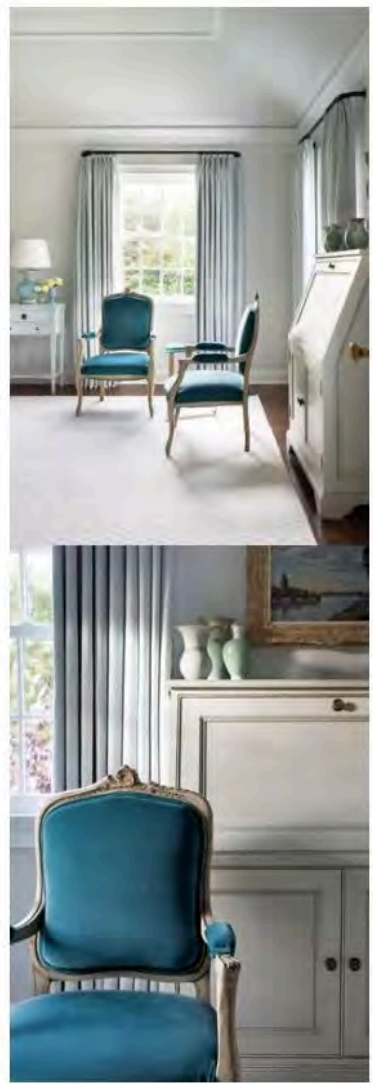
Bill, is there an element of the home that you really enjoyed working on?

WE: The house is a wonderful brick Georgian Colonial, but the existing entry portico didn't seem to be of the same caliber. We created a rendering for a more classically appropriate front entry portico. The client wasn't sure at first, but then he walked out to the driveway, took a look back at the portico and nodded in agreement that it had to be replaced!

A photograph of a study or office. The room features extensive wood paneling on the walls and ceiling. In the center, a bright red armchair sits on a light-colored, patterned rug. To the left of the chair is a small white side table with a vase of pink flowers. To the right is a wooden desk with a computer monitor and a large wooden bookshelf filled with books. A modern, multi-bulb chandelier hangs from the ceiling. On the far left, a portion of a wooden built-in seat with a blue cushion and a pink seat is visible. A fireplace is partially visible on the left wall.

“The clients were attracted to the **GREAT BONES** and proportions of the house and saw its **POTENTIAL** to suit their family’s lifestyle.”

—CARMIÑA ROTH

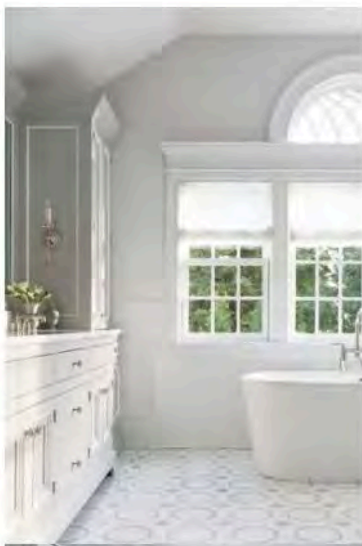


this page: To achieve a serene feel in the master bedroom, an existing Gustavian secretaire launched the soothing color palette of pale celadon and aqua. A pair of antique French bergères were reupholstered in a dark teal velvet, while the clients' antique brown nightstands were painted a pale ecru. The headboard is covered in a Holland & Sherry fabric, and the draperies are by Coraggio Textiles.

Did you run into any obstacles on the project, Carmiña? CR: We knew that timing was going to be tight in order to finish phase two during the clients' second summer owning the house. I give Paul Tallman a ton of credit for having everything seamlessly planned out, which minimized disruptions, and any small "surprises" were taken care of as they arose. I think the worst thing that happened was that the kitchen island was so large that the slab cracked during fabrication and had to be remade. This project is a testament to the great team working on it—Tallman

was excellent, Bill did a great job, and the clients were committed and patient. The clients always chose to do what would add the most value to the house and what would be the most aesthetically pleasing in the long run—truly dream clients!

What decision made the biggest difference in how the home functions? CR: Definitely moving the dining room. Orienting the rooms that the family spends the most time in toward the beautiful gardens in the back



this page: The new master bath, built out over the sunroom below, is outfitted with a luxurious tub, cabinetry and fixtures all from Waterworks. The flooring underfoot is from Greenwich Tile.

completely changed the entire feel of the home. All of the rooms now relate to one another through the repeated use of arched doorways, creating a wonderful flow between spaces. Our clients had the wisdom and foresight to purchase a classically proportioned, solidly built house and shared our vision of bringing it into the twentieth century, without having to do a total gut renovation. Thanks to open-minded clients, an extraordinary team and some imagination, we were able to achieve some extraordinary results!

—INTERVIEW BY LAUREN FETTERMAN

Resources:

Interior designer: Carmiña Roth Interiors, Greenwich; 203-987-5961; carminarothinteriors.com
 Architect: William D. Earls AIA Architect, Wilton; 203-762-7462; williamearls.com
 Builder: Tallman Building Company, Southport; 203-254-3055; tallmanbuilding.com
 Millwork: CJS Millwork, Stamford; 203-708-0080; cjsmillwork.com
 Landscape designer: Pat Miller Designs, Greenwich; 203-904-4777; patmillerdesigns.com