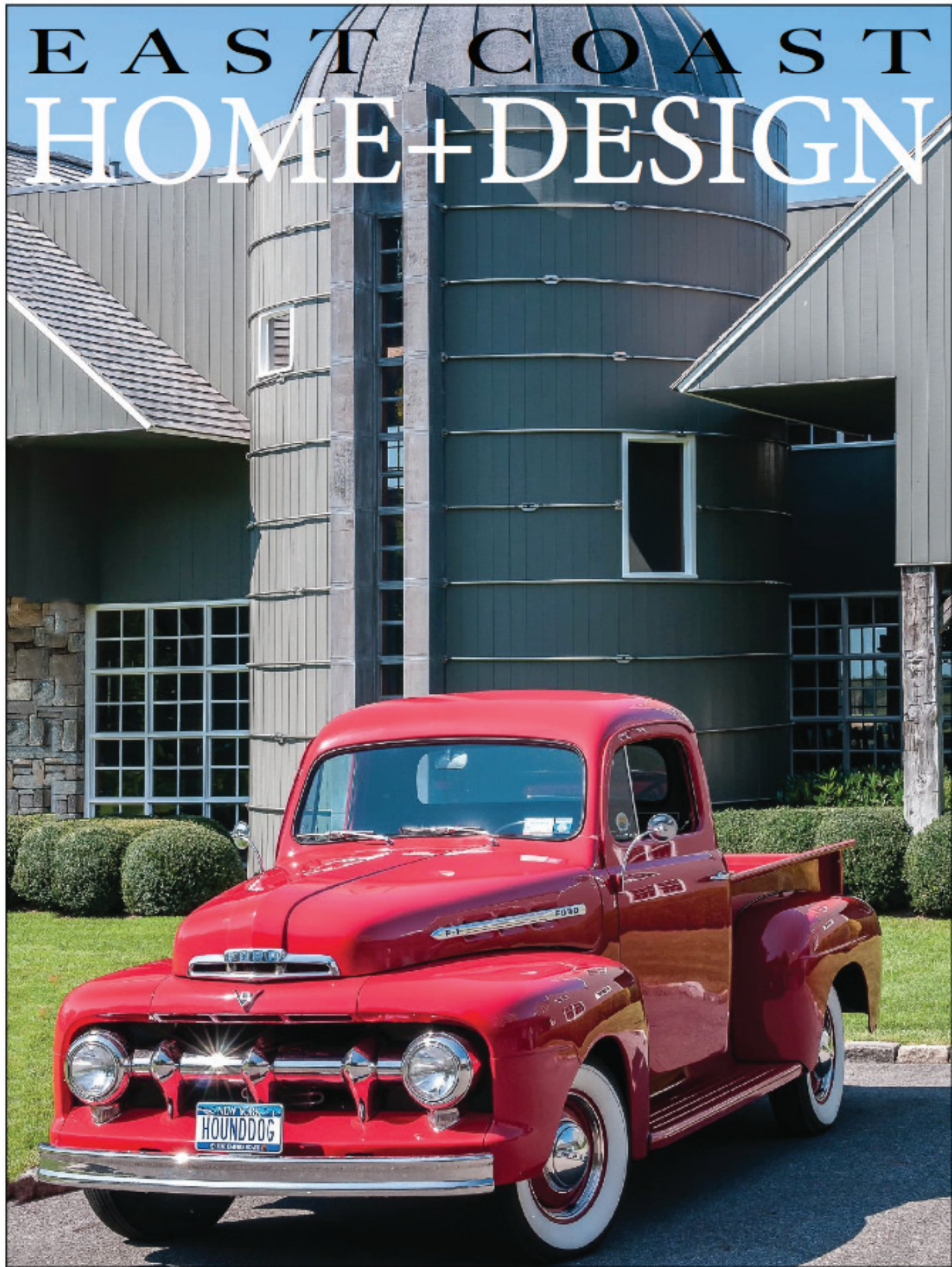


EAST COAST HOME+DESIGN





A sculptured wood and stone cabinet from Baker is placed in the foyer under an etched mirror to reflect the simple lines of a spray of white orchids, a choice of flower which recurs throughout the house.

OPPOSITE A close view of the cabinet shows the juxtaposition of smooth stone and sculptured wood.



TEMPORARY HOUSING

A DESIGN CHALLENGE WHEN A CAREER MAY BE A SIREN'S CALL

STORY BY SHERRI DALEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANE BEILES



The wife had a vision. Open spaces with gentle color throughout, crisp tailored accents, a long dining room table, fabrics that ask please to be touched, mirrors that reflect people and sunlight, and seating arranged so that even a dozen guests could have an intimate chat.

And all this had to be pretty much portable.

This is the assignment that designer Christina Roughan of Roughan Interior Design in Weston, CT, accepted. Husband, wife, and teen-aged son wanted to be in a warm and livable house for as long as dad's job allowed. As coach for a winning professional ball team, he could be lured away by rival teams and the house would be sold; so it had to appeal to buyers whoever they might be.

Keeping that in mind, Roughan needed to place in the house furniture, accessories, and art which were universally easy on the eye for potential buyers; but because her clients intended to live there for however long they could, she had to do so without being generic. She had to create an interior with furnishings that the family loved and that could be broken down and reassembled in a new home – or sold to a buyer with taste.



Earthy colors for the outdoor seating continue the off-white and beige color scheme of the interior walls and the seating in the house.

A stone patio overlooks the pool and a pond.



In the meantime, it had to be a family home. On one wall there are photographs of Italy taken when they lived there; there are dozens of trophies in a glass cabinet. The dining room table seats twelve because they're Italian and dinnertime is not an eat-and-run: it's talk, love, talk, argue, talk, love.

"We put the mirrors on the wall here," said Roughan of the slender dining room,

"because we knew the family would be hours at dinner and we wanted to make the room seem larger, no matter how many people were in it."

There are pieces in the house that rise above the ordinary. In the foyer, there is a cabinet of sculptured wood and stone, a Philippe Stark chair is pushed against a desk in a lilac bedroom next to a mirrored chest of drawers, and the chandelier





The living room is designer Roughan's favorite room, with the Ochre chandelier and rare mid-century sculptured bronze lamps by Laurel whose shape suggests a human form. Here is the coffee table covered in shagreen, leather made from the skin from a stingray's belly.



from Ochre in the living room is a circle of crystal clear light bulbs that may make guests think that that was what Edison had in mind all along. The mysterious Rothko-like museum frame print here is actually an abstract photograph by Bernard McWilliams of stretches of light that resemble a sunset, a choice Roughan's client fell in love with instantly.

Leather tabletops are common, but Roughan chose a unique granular leather called shagreen for the living room coffee table. Of all the exotic leathers, that which made from the belly of a stingray is the most underrated. It is highly durable (25 times more durable than cowhide) and has a unique supple texture. Shagreen and has been used for centuries for book

The informal dining area off the kitchen opens out onto the patio.

bindings and the scabbards of swords, where a sturdy grip was required, a wise choice for a table where guests and family will set drinks and dishes of food.

Texture is as important to the aesthetics of a home as color, and as much as Roughan created a collection of surfaces in the furniture – mirrors and Plexiglas, leather, wood, and stone – she also covered chairs, sofas and pillows in fabrics from Europe and hung Italian wool sheers from Corragio at the windows. The benches in the living room are covered in cordovan tapestry by Schumacher.

Roughan designed the pillows throughout the house and assigned the job of producing them to custom pillow-maker Kathe Williams who works out of New York. “I’ve been working with Kathe for over 18 years now,” Roughan said, “since the days I worked for Ralph Lauren.”

Roughan likes to make her clients happy, and in this case, her clients made her happy, too. “Working with both husband and wife was a joy, and I forged a real friendship with the wife. It was she who worked closely with me and my team. I think that friendship made the time I spent on this job less like work.

TOP The kitchen is as spare and lean as the rest of the house, but not without its whimsy. Roughan filled the glass canisters, not only with pasta from Italy, but with bite-sized Hershey’s chocolate.

RIGHT The dining room’s faux gold leaf mirrors enlarge a slender space.





“Simple, livable, chic.”

“I remember another thing that makes me smile,” says Roughan. “I was hauling stuff from the car to the house. That’s what you do when you’re a designer. You buy things and you haul them out of the store, you load them in the car, and later you unload the car and you haul the stuff to the house, upstairs and downstairs, and put them in the house where they’re supposed to be.

“But when I drove up to this house, the husband met me in the driveway and insisted he help. Here he is, this big celebrity coach, wrestling a table from me, telling me I shouldn’t be carrying heavy things. But that’s what I do, I told him. Designers

schlep! Nothing could dissuade him.”

There was also that sweet moment when Roughan was having a meeting with her clients -- and their Himalayan cats, Grace and Bob. Bob stretched his elegant pale beige furry self languidly across the bed in the master bedroom. “I’ve decided to paint the whole house to match the cats,” announced the mistress of the house.

The result is a warm home that shines with light.

“This is the vision that my client described to me,” says Roughan, who used her signature design sensibility to turn the vision into a real, live house. “Simple, livable, chic.” ■

Sherri has served as press liaison for a medical research firm, media contact for the late Mrs. Vincent Astor, and taught writing as an adjunct professor at local colleges, as well as over 15 years in an inner city school.
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ABOVE LEFT In an upstairs sitting area, there is a wall of photos taken when the family lived in Milan.

ABOVE RIGHT A guest bedroom is airy and light but masculine and opens out onto a patio which overlooks the pool and a pond.



ABOVE Bob the cat is a perfect match for Roughan's color choices. The Philippe Stark chair and mirrored chest reflect light, as does the starburst wall art, which is an iteration of the silvery wheels on the wall of an upstairs bathroom.

RIGHT Metallic accents repeat throughout the house; here in an upstairs bathroom, a mirror in a silver frame. Circular wall art was chosen instead of a painting or print to keep the look of this room crisp and clean.

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