

NEW YORK HOME

STYLISH LIVING & DESIGN | MARCH-APRIL 2007

TOWERING ELEGANCE

GRAPHIC IN
GREENWICH

ECO-FRIENDLY
LUXURY



MARCH-APRIL 2007 Display unit 5/1



USA \$4.99 CANADA \$6.99

GREENWICH

SOFT TOUCH

DESIGNERS SUSAN
BEDNAR LONG AND
CHRISTINA SULLIVAN
USE CONTEMPORARY
CLASSICS TO IMBUE
A CONNECTICUT
GEORGIAN WITH
LIVABLE LUXURY



Elegance and ease combine in the Sunroom, which adjoins both living room and patio. Club chairs with Greek-key-shaped arms, brushed fringes, upholstery, and boldly bordered custom pillows encircled a graceful, round-top cocktail table with classic brass castors and fluted legs reminiscent of apostrophes. A new wool rug from Safavieh and simple, slightly puddle draperies—rarely pulled closed—add layers of softness.

Photographs by STEPHEN FREIHON • Text by MARJORIE E. GAGE

"The living room has a feeling of a luxurious salon, but it's not stiff or staid," says Susan Bednar Long. "The wall opposite the fireplace has a flat-screen TV." Conversation areas spring up on each side of the grand room's convivial two-way settee. A modern classic, Mies van der Rohe's crème-leather Barcelona chair mixes easily with pieces upholstered in velvet and woven wool. Pale, subtle patterned textiles are punctuated with splashes of silver and shots of blood red in pillows, fresh roses, and Chinese ceramics.



IN THE WRONG hands, a newly constructed 9,000-square-foot suburban mansion runs the risk of remaining a hollow cavern or transforming into a cliché-ridden salute to some long-dead decorator's sense of traditional style. The owners of this newly constructed Georgian-style home in the heart of Greenwich, Connecticut, wanted none of that.

"There are many imposing residences in the town of Greenwich," says designer Susan Bednar Long, president of Tocar, a Madison Avenue design firm specializing in creating comfortable, contemporary living environments. "But, when they came to us, the owners of this home were very clear: They didn't want a typical suburban dwelling filled with overstuffed, English-style furniture and antiques someone else picked out for them. They wanted to make good use of every room in the house, and they wanted every inch of the space to reflect their personal style and speak to the lives they lead—which are, in essence, very active family lives with busy career, young child, pets, and lots of good times together."

Bednar Long and her partner at Tocar, Christina Sullivan, suggested a simple solution—a timeless study in contrasts that layers dark with light, soft colors with cutting-edge designs, period-style architectural millwork with contemporary artwork and playful practical accents, such as the paneled home office's graphic, zebra-striped rug. "Tocar means 'to touch' in Spanish," says Bednar Long, "and creating intimate, textural, touchable spaces by blending modern and traditional elements has become a signature of all our design work."

In every room, Bednar Long and Sullivan conscientiously arranged seating in groupings devised to encourage conversation: A circle of chairs in the sunroom, facing sofas in the kitchen, and a two-way settee in the living room all invite friends and family to relax and linger. Above the three-car garage, four pullout sofas turn a treetop-level media room suited to movie screenings and Super Bowl gatherings into comfortable overnight accommodations for six. This "bonus room" has become a favorite family retreat, a coveted hideaway for holiday guests, and the scene for the kind of sleepover parties childhood dreams are made of.

Kids are always welcome in the all-white living room, too, of course, the homeowner is quick to point out. "Our 5-year-old just had a birthday party with 15 little kids—and two dogs—running all around, and the place survived unscathed," she reports with good humor. The sophisticated—and easy to clean—faux-ostrich leather Barcelona chair is one of her favorite places to relax and read with her son by the fireside. And the woven-vinyl floor covering in the kitchen makes the inevitable juice (and wine) spills easy to swipe up and forget.

There are no "KEEP OUT" signs posted here. "This is a sophisticated house—with a stone façade and classic proportions—but it is also practical and unpretentious. It is designed as a sanctuary for family and friends—not to inspire envy and awe in the neighbors," says Bednar Long. "That's exactly what's so impressive about it." SEE RESOURCES



"In 'real estate speak,' the big, empty, often-wasted space above the three-car garage is called the "bonus room,"" says Bednar Long. "The homeowners wanted to make this one useful." The husband told us, "I really want this space to be cool." So we gave them a surprise—a media room complete with TV, surround sound, a work table, built-in bar [not shown], and sofas that pull out to sleep six." Gray semigloss paint gives the space a warm shimmer, instantly creating an intimate mood. The room's a kick—and practical at the same time.

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ABOVE: Area rugs fabricated of graphic woven vinyl from Bolon protect the kitchen- and breakfast-room floors. Twin sofas, dressed in washable slipcovers, flank a rustic Irish pine trestle bench. The chinoiserie sideboard was made in Ecuador. **LEFT:** No stuffed shirt allowed in this cherry-paneled office, with leather desk and zebra-stripe wool rug. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Chocolate grass-Cloth brings depth to the dining Room walls. The polished-nickel Sconces and chandelier by Stephen McKay shed a modern Light, reflected in the ebonized Bulls-eye mirror.



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