

APRIL 2012

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**WHAT MAKES
MOBY TICK?
(ART AND
ARCHITECTURE)**

ISABEL TOLEDO

Beyond the
inaugural ensemble

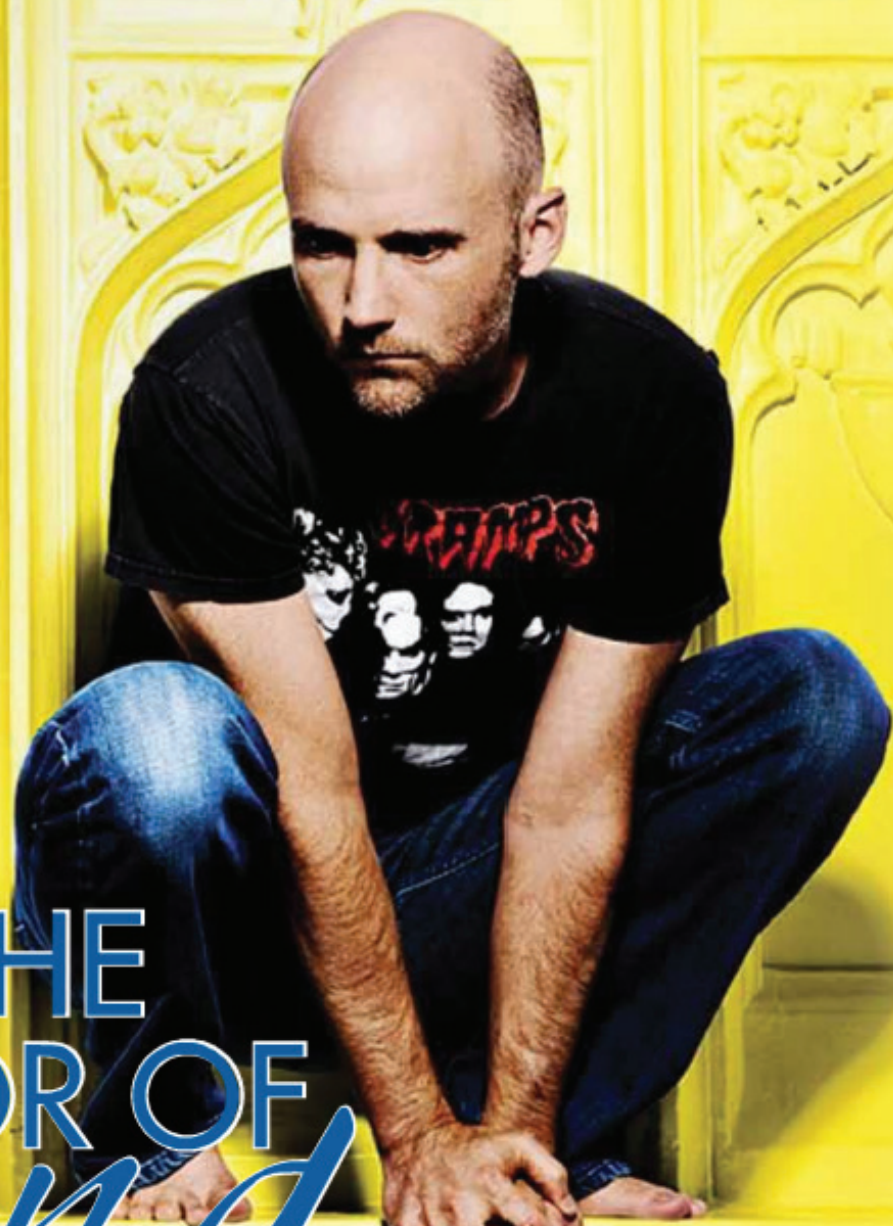
**CAPTIVATING
CENTURIES**

Brick, stone and clipboard

**THE HART
OF THE ABBEY**

Hollywood's Mother Dolores

**LARA SPENCER'S
YARD-SALE TREASURES**



IN THE
MANOR OF
Wing

DESIGNING HISTORY

By PATRICIA ESPINOSA

In the spirit of our historic homes issue, I've asked three Greenwich designers, each distinctly qualified, to offer his or her viewpoint when it comes to creating interiors for homes of a certain pedigree.

In her firm, Ellsworth Ford Associates, **Robin Kencel** has taken a special interest in preserving, restoring and renovating historic properties throughout the United States, as in the Phillip Johnson-renovated 1770s glass barn she decorated in Madison, Conn. Her designs endeavor to create beautiful interiors that complement the architecture, never competing or distracting from it.

Christina Roughan's work at Roughan Interior Design is marked by her timeless sophistication and her keen ability to mix classic with modern. Roughan believes that interiors are to be lived in and reflect

the people who reside in the spaces, even if the space happens to be an historic 1800s limestone townhouse in Manhattan.

Ralph Vuolo, owner of Ralph Vuolo Designs, has consulted on historic preservation, art and antiques. As co-founder of the Greenwich Neighborhoods Preservation Association, he has worked with the Greenwich Historical Society and The Historic District Commission to establish an historic district of 50 buildings and structures by a watermill. His favorite projects are those that merge new and old, bringing a fresh perspective to decorating with antiques like the featured dining room in this 19th century Cape Cod house in Rye.

With years of experience, each is committed to honoring the uniqueness of historic structures by creating designs that live in the present while respecting the past. Because good design never goes out of style.



Photograph by
Chi Chi Ubina.



Photograph by
Andrew French.

1. Be mindful of the scale and proportions of each room and the home overall. The departure point for decorating any historic home is understanding the architectural style, resulting in a harmony of the space and furnishings in it. In the photo above, the monastery dining table, high-backed upholstered dining chairs and luxurious sofas were designed to fit this Philip Johnson-renovated antique barn on the Connecticut shoreline.



Robin Kencel

2. Be responsive to opportunities that enable you to be consistent with the home's original architecture.

3. Select materials of a quality and personality that are consistent with those originally used in the home. The lady's master bath above took as its inspiration a 1930s Jansen lavabo, mirror and brass vanity. It took three searches to find a soft peach/pink marble that was similar to that of the bath pieces for use as flooring and tub surrounds.

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Photograph by Tocar.



Photograph by Thomas M. Ancker.



Photograph by Tocar.



Photograph by Thomas M. Ancker.

4. Stay true to the original charm and integrity of the home. Don't stray too far. The stairway of the Manhattan townhouse, above, was so glamorous, I wanted to keep it that way. I enhanced the traditional moldings by painting the walls an off-white (Donald Kaufman DKC-38) and the raised moldings and trim, gray (Benjamin Moore OC-22 Calm). I then chose a dark-gray center Italian wool carpet and a light-gray contrasting stripe boarder to highlight the edges of the stairs. These small details enhance the original charm of the house and allow the entry to flow gracefully. The architecture really becomes an art piece.

5. Understand the architecture of the home to get a clear direction of the design. As the photo, above, illustrates, the client wanted a happier and more open

place for her children to use as a TV area and a possible guest room. I accomplished this by keeping the existing architecture, removing the old Venetian plaster, adding new raffia wall covering and painting the ceiling white. When that was complete, the design was easy to achieve.

6. Design for function and beauty. Historic homes are notorious for spatial problems. That is why it is very important that each room function as it is supposed to. This should be a large part of your vernacular when determining the design of each interior. Interiors are not beautiful unless



Christina S. Roughan



Ralph Vuolo

they function.

7. Confirm town rules and regulations. Check with your city or town to find out its rules and regulations for renovating a historic home.

Some municipalities are more stringent than others.

8. Always use an expert for any architectural or structural repair and do your research.

9. Mix antiques with modern elements. The owner's challenge in the 19th century Cape Cod house, above, was to restore, update and open up this charmer. The dining room maintained its original

appeal with the new and old woodwork-blended together. The antique display cabinet is a family heirloom. We found a round 19th century English pedestal dining table and had custom contemporary chairs made. The pale sea-foam colors lighten up the space while making the antiques pop. The mirrors are 1930s and add light and glamour.

10. Shop antique stores and buy what you love. You can merge styles and centuries, and we have many to pick from. In the traditional center-hall colonial, above, in Greenwich, the living room is filled with antiques ranging from 16th century French to 19th century English. The finds include Chinese porcelain and a convex 18th century American mirror. The blend of periods and light colors gives the room a cheery feel.