

New England HOME

CT

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Luscious Looks

Connecticut designers show just how beautiful living can be.



To add to the living room's airy feel, designer Christina Sullivan Roughan removed crown molding above the French doors and hung the draperies as high as possible. The neutral palette of pale gray and white gets youthful energy with the occasional shot of sky blue.

GROWING ATTACHMENT

Text by James McCown | Photography by Michael Partenio | Produced by Stacy Kunstel

Classic and contemporary form a beautiful bond in a New Canaan house

where a young family intends to create a lifetime of happy memories.



LEFT: The house presents a classic, simple Georgian facade in keeping with its New Canaan location. **BELOW:** Polished nickel light fixtures sound a contemporary note in the entry. **FACING PAGE:** The traditional staircase gets a modern boost from the chrome-legged bench.

With its white clapboard and dark shutters, this Georgian-style house in the picture-perfect town of New Canaan is the quintessence of Yankee rectitude. But some pleasant surprises await inside, in an interior design that reflects the personalities and respective passions of a busy couple and their three children. “They wanted to be surrounded by beauty, and also to fill the house with objects that have meaning to them,” says designer Christina Sullivan Roughan of her clients. “They wanted each room to stand on its own.”

The sun-washed double-height entry sets the home’s light, airy tone with pale gray walls and a high-gloss trim. The polished nickel of the ceiling light and sconces has become an element that the Weston-based designer calls one of her trademarks.

PROJECT TEAM

Interior design: Christina Sullivan Roughan, Roughan Interior Design

Remodeling contractor: Marcio Silva, Silva Brothers Carpentry



Glossy black paneling brings drama to the library and evokes the feeling of an English men's club of the 1930s. A collection of crystal decanters on the mantel furthers the Anglophilic feel.

“The ambience really takes me back to my London years,” says the wife.





“Over the past twenty years I’ve gravitated to this over brass,” she says.

With its wainscoted wall and classic spindles, the staircase is as traditional as one would expect in a Georgian-style house, but Roughan’s contemporary accents give it a more transitional feel. A sleek, chrome-legged bench makes a convenient spot for sitting down to remove boots or shoes.

In the formal living room, the light and airy theme continues. Here, the soft gray walls stand as a backdrop to a collection of furniture in pale neutrals. Accent pieces—the upholstered bench that forms one side of the sitting area, the toss pillows that dot the Todd Hase sofa, and the abstract art above—add a shot of bright blue that gives the serene room some youthful energy. Roughan supplied additional interest in the mix of materials and textures, including the dark wood of the Asian-inspired cabinet that accommodates a bar and the aged-silver shagreen top of the cocktail table. A jaunty porcelain Apple Tree vase from the Nimbus collection by KleinReid



ABOVE: The husband’s own abstract painting anchors a bar area in the library. **BELOW:** The dining room features a round table custom designed by Roughan for the house; a graphic rug adds movement to the serene space. **FACING PAGE:** A dazzling Ricardo Rumi painting and a Lubomir Tomaszewski sculpture add contemporary flair to the library.



adds a playful note.

Roughan’s window treatment enhances the sense of height. “I wanted to make the ceilings appear as high as possible,” she says, “so I removed the crown molding above the French doors and mounted the white drapery almost to the ceiling. It really makes the space.”

The wife, a native of Michigan who spent time in London, credits Roughan with envisioning the most surprising space in the house: the library. When the couple bought the house, the room was finished in natural cherry-wood paneling. Roughan had the paneling sanded down then treated with multiple coats of stunning black gloss paint. A starburst lighting fixture on the ceiling, a collection of English crystal decanters on the mantelpiece, and a tufted leather sofa further the impression of a private men’s club in London, perhaps during the 1930s. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor would feel right at home here. “The ambience really takes me back to my London years,” the wife says.

Paintings in the room further a between-the-World-Wars design sensibility. An abstract impressionist canvas by Ricardo Rumi hangs on a wall opposite another abstract work of the husband's own making. "I studied art from a young age," he says. "I was originally an art major in college, then I changed to business. But I remain passionate about art and photography." In fact, in an artistic version of a man cave, he has a painting studio set up in the basement. "Art is a great escape for me."

The couple uses the formal dining room for frequent dinner parties around the glossy dark wood table designed by Roughan. "It was so important that the table could accommodate about a dozen guests who could all talk to each other. That's why it's round," Roughan says. A graphic rug adds movement to the otherwise quiet room, and a lantern-style polished nickel fixture illuminates the scene.

Like so many families, this one spends much of its time together in the open kitchen and family room area. A breakfast nook surrounded by windows off the



all-white kitchen is a favorite spot for casual dining.

In the family room, the neutral palette moves away from gray toward soft earthy tones. A taupe-colored Bermuda hemp wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries covers the walls, while wing chairs wear caramel-hued leather. Both echo the shades in the sturdy stone fireplace that anchors the space.

Roughan worked with the contractor, Marcio Silva of Silva Brothers Carpentry, to fashion what she calls a "turnkey experience" for her clients.

"As components came in, I stored them in a warehouse until they could all be installed at once, instead of piecemeal," she says. "So it was sort of *voilà*, here's your new house. Marcio was great working with me to do this."

For his part, Silva was very conscious of the fact that he would be doing his part of the project while the family was living in the house. "We cleared the job at the end of every day, like there had been nobody there," Silva says. "It was also great to have the clients right there, so when Christina was not around I could ask them questions about a particular task. Both the clients and Christina are real perfectionists."

The family had lived elsewhere in New Canaan before moving into the larger house, which had amenities they were looking for: a pool, a tennis court, and access to a neighborhood pond. They appreciate that the town has an illustrious design history.

"You've got the Philip Johnson Glass House and now Grace Farms," the wife says. "Both of these

Roughan likes to create a "turnkey experience" for her clients. "So it was sort of *voilà*, here's your new house."



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: In the family room, hemp wallcovering and wool carpeting enhance the cozy feel. Casual barstools in the kitchen offer an informal contrast to the dining room. Roman shades soften the brightness in the sun-washed breakfast nook.



have furthered my husband's and my interests in design."

And she and her family are so pleased with the way it all turned out, they're not going anywhere soon. "This is our forever house. It's where we will make our family memories," she says.

She wants her children to remember the

home fondly, an opportunity she missed as a girl. "When I was growing up, we moved twenty-two times. As someone who's never had an attachment to a house, I'm never going to leave this one." ■■■

RESOURCES: For more information about this home, see page 142.

The large pool, a tennis court, access to a neighborhood pond, and a big yard for playing attracted the couple, who have three children. An expansive rear porch offers plenty of space for warm-weather entertaining.

"As someone who never had an attachment to a house growing up, I'm never going to leave this one," says the wife.