

A HOME'S TEAM EFFORT
GENTLE GIANTS ON THE ROAD

SUSANNA SALK'S DESIGN SECRETS
SPINNING VINYL HEAVEN

Litchfield

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Team Effort



LOCAL DESIGNERS HELP TO MAKE A FAMILY'S VISION BECOME REALITY

ALL TOGETHER NOW The MacLeans perched on the front porch: Gretchen holding Daisy; Mac with Maddie, Tucker, Mimi, Malcolm, and Kit (missing from photo is five-month-old Lily). Family dining area in the kitchen features a table from J Seitz, chairs from Housatonic Trading Company.



CLEAN & SIMPLE White cotton upholstered chairs from J Seitz flank the original fireplace. Sitting atop a striped rug from Serena and Lily is a wooden coffee table from Restoration Hardware. A view of the front of the house. The original island was retained. Vintage lobster poster was discovered in Wisconsin.





Design has always been a passion for Claudia Kalur. She has a master's degree in Egyptian archaeology, studied in London and Egypt, and worked as a researcher at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She stayed on as a researcher, but knew that one day she would follow her heart's desire.

Her husband Steven was having career issues as well. After being a private-aircraft broker for many years, and living in New Jersey, he decided to fulfill his own dream of becoming an architect. "He would come home and lay out plans on the floor and move furniture and create rooms and I decided that I wanted to do that, too," says Kalur.

A few years after switching careers, Steven was offered a job with an architectural firm in Connecticut. Claudia eventually took a job at Privet House, now located in New Preston. "I learned so much there, it was a wonderful experience," she says. "When my daughter was born, I designed her first bedroom. When a friend saw what I had done, she asked me to do a room for her daughter as well. That led to more clients." And her career began to take hold. Claudia formed her company, CFK Interiors, and Steven began F+H Architectural Design and Consulting.

Both Kalurs are now doing what they love—and occasionally get to work on a project together, as they did recently on a house in Washington. "We've collaborated before," says Steven. "And have the rare fortune to love working together. We have our differences but we tend to always like each other's solutions even if we might not have come up with them on our own."

When Mimi and Malcolm MacLean bought their house in Washington, they chose the Kalurs to take on the renovation and design project. The MacLeans had once owned a house in New Preston, and the couple to whom they had sold their house had used Claudia's services, so they knew what her work was like. "The MacLeans live in Pacific Palisades, California, most of the year," says Claudia, "so much of the consultation was done via email and telephone. Swatches were sent back and





forth, plans were viewed and discussed via conference calls. But it all came together. There were times when they didn't like a particular piece so I would continue looking and sometimes they would trust me even if they weren't thoroughly convinced."

"It was a tribute to Claudia and Steven that everything worked so smoothly," says Malcolm. "She would come over, take photos and we'd discuss. We were here last summer and got quite a bit done, but there was a lot of trust involved."

Malcolm runs a real-estate private-equity business based in Japan as well as a private investment company on behalf of his family. Mimi is part of the investment company and is also a founding consultant and executive director of Beautycounter, which specializes in beauty and non-toxic personal care products. The MacLeans, who had lived in Darien for 11 years, were visiting friends in Litchfield County and fell in love with the area, to the point of purchasing a house in New Preston. "We loved being in the country, but when we moved to California, we sold that house," explains Malcolm. "Three summers ago we came back east for two weeks and realized we wanted to live here part of the year. When we saw the house in Washington we knew it was where we wanted to live."

The house is an impressive antique Colonial built in 1820. It sits on 20 twenty acres and features four bedrooms, two fireplaces, a studio and barn, a pond, mature gardens, and beautiful stone walls. The MacLeans have five children and two dogs, and there was enough space for everyone. "We were attracted to the property itself," Malcolm says, "and because the house was built well and had been maintained structurally, we felt we could bring it back to its original glory. We did end up putting in a pool, a stone barbecue, and an outdoor kitchen." The previous owner had lived in the house for 30 years and it had not been renovated during that time. While it had good bones, it needed an update. The challenge is always how to reinterpret the space for the new owner while maintaining the integrity of the original structure. "The house was still full of furniture

when I took on the project,” says Claudia, “so I had to see beyond that and prescribe what would work for Mimi, Malcolm, and their children.”

First came the paint: Claudia introduced a lighter, brighter palette, especially in the children’s rooms. The boys love fly-fishing so she picked up on that and incorporated the motif into the décor of their bedroom. The girls love fresh, happy colors and pink always fills the bill. Structurally there were not many changes except for bathrooms, which had to be extended and made more practical. This is where Steven Kalur worked his magic.

“The MacLeans knew what they wanted and while we set a budget, they were realistic about what renovating a very old house entails. As soon as the bathrooms were measured we sat down to discuss what they were after from the new bathrooms. We all agreed that we wanted them to be clean, elegant and as light as possible. The tricky issue of low head height in the master bathroom was solved by creating a cozy alcove for the under-mount bathtub. We decided to make the most of the original spaces rather than doing demolition,” Steven explains. He did manage to free some of the budget to be used for niceties that the client craved, such as heated tile floors and a towel warmer. “The kitchen was another instance where storage and space were at a premium,”



BLENDING IN The family room is painted in bracken slate by Benjamin Moore. Vintage sofa and chair are upholstered in Perennial Outdoor Fabric. Striped pillow and throw are from Privet House. Master bathroom features an alcove for the bathtub and custom cabinets painted in Benjamin Moore Winter White. The upholstered bed is from Crate and Barrel, matched up with a chair from Pottery Barn.



PRETTY IN PINK The girls' bedroom features pink- and white-striped wallpaper from Serena and Lily; white painted chest from Land of Nod; beds are from Pottery Barn; pillows are by Madeline Weinrib from Privet House. In the boys' room the black iron beds are from Restoration Hardware; blankets from Ralph Lauren; the mounted fish reflects one boy's favorite pastime.



Kalur explains. "We retained the existing cabinetry and simply repainted it. Everyone loved the original black and white floor in the kitchen and since it was in good condition we left it intact. The long butcher-block counter was refinished and reused as well."

The project took about a year and a half to complete. The MacLeans and their children are extremely happy at their summer oasis. The most popular spot for the family to congregate is the screened-in porch, but they also love the new outdoor terrace and fireplace and, of course, the pool.

"We try to be outdoors as much as possible," says Malcolm. "We spend a lot of time on Lake Waramaug where we have a boat, water skiing and occasionally fishing. My oldest son plays for a lacrosse club called the Connecticut Chargers based in Darien. The other kids play a lot of tennis."

Malcolm grew up in Boston and Mimi in New Jersey, so they began life as East Coast people and are pleased to be back—at least for part of the year. "It's wonderful to be here," says Malcolm. "We love being outdoors but are just as happy on rainy days to go to the movies or spend time indoors. But the concept of space and greenery is very special in this part of the country. Things move a little slower and that is a really nice thing." ■

