

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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COVER: The master bedroom of a residence on Long Island. Architecture by Anthony Di Sunno. Interior design by Ann LeConey. Photography by Durston Saylor. See page 38. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The guest bedroom of art dealer Eugenio López's Los Angeles apartment. Interior design by Sally Sirkin Lewis. Photography by Mary E. Nichols. See page 120.

FEATURES

- 38 SEASIDE SANCTUARY**
A Colonial Revival Renovation on Long Island
Architecture by Anthony Di Sunno, MA
Interior Design by Ann LeConey, ASID
Landscape Architecture by Lois Sherr
Text by Judith Thurman
Photography by Durston Saylor
- 48 HOBE SOUND REGENCY**
The Florida Retreat of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Auchincloss
Architecture by F. Burrall Hoffman, Jr.
Text by Susan Mary Alsop
Photography by Dan Forer
- 54 THE ROAD TO BALI**
Indonesian Treasures Fill Bruce Carpenter's Javanese-Style Compound
Text by Carol Lutfy
Photography by Robert Reck
- 60 ARCHITECTURE: ALEXANDER GORLIN**
Adapting the Roman Villa for an East Coast Couple
Interior Design by Larry Laslo
Landscape Architecture by Edmund Hollander, ASLA
Text by Suzanne Stephens
Photography by Peter Aaron/ESTO
- 68 HEMINGWAY IN CUBA**
The Author's Moveable Feast at the Finca Vigía
Text by Joseph Giovannini
Photography by Angelo Tondini
- 80 REDEFINING THE LOFT**
Interlocking Forms Articulate a Manhattan Space
Architecture by George Ranalli
Text by Joseph Giovannini
Photography by Paul Warchol
- 86 BORLASCA REBORN**
A Singular Vision Restores an Italian Village
Architecture by Robert V. Arrigoni, FAIA,
of Backen Arrigoni & Ross
Text by Michael Mewshaw
Photography by Steven Brooke

continued on page 4



SEASIDE SANCTUARY

A COLONIAL REVIVAL
RENOVATION ON LONG ISLAND

*Architecture by Anthony Di Sunno, AIA
Interior Design by Ann LeConey, ASID
Landscape Architecture by Lois Sbrer
Text by Judith Thurman
Photography by Durston Saylor*





Twenty years ago a young couple with two small children decided to build a house in a potato field on Long Island. "Buy something old," his mother warned them, but they didn't listen. "We were too anxious to be settled," says the wife. Instead, they commissioned a contemporary clapboard with three bedrooms and a small guest wing, a barnlike playroom, which was soon cluttered with toys, and a family kitchen, where the husband, a hard-working businessman, could play chef on weekends. The

décor was informal—the couple collected American folk art and furniture—and nothing was so precious it could be spoiled by sandy feet, wet paws or spilled lemonade.

As the children grew up, they learned to swim in the pool, combed the beach and fed the swans that nested in the nearby pond. The family filled their albums with vacation snapshots. The husband's business flourished; the couple acquired residences elsewhere, traveled extensively and, for a while, lived abroad. They seriously collected modern art. But the weightier their lives

became, the finer their possessions, the heavier their responsibilities, the more they cherished the intimacy of their weekend refuge and the simplicity of its pleasures. "It's where I'm happiest," says the wife. "It's very private and very personal. The light, I think, is the most wonderful thing about it."

Eventually, however, the couple felt it was time to reevaluate their style of life in the country. They had, to say the least, outgrown the industrial carpeting in the playroom and the sliding-glass doors that led to the great

Fast Hampton architect Anthony Di Sunno and Alexander Greenwood and Elric Enderby of the New Jersey Barn Company renovated a 1970s Long Island house to evoke the Colonial Revival style. ABOVE: The door is from an estate that belonged to Benny Goodman.

"The owners didn't want the house to have a freshly 'done up' look," says New York designer Ann LeConey, who sought an understated tone for the residence's interiors. OPPOSITE: "The entrance hall nearly doubles the dimensions of its predecessor."





"In keeping with the wife's insistence on simplicity, we painted the walls in the living room rather than wallpapering them," says LeConey. An 1840 American portrait hangs above the late-19th-century mantel. Upholstered pieces are covered in Colefax and Fowler chintz and Schumacher linen. Rosecore sisal rug.

PERIOD DETAILS SUCH AS POCKET DOORS AND ELABORATE PLASTERWORK WERE SCRUPULOUSLY REPRODUCED.



ABOVE: Greenwood and Endersby incorporated architectural elements throughout the house, including the dining room's paneling—from a 1760 Connecticut tavern—which the husband had found years before. Contemporary photographs are on the walls.

sweep of the rear lawn. They were willing to tear the house down to its foundation and to invest it with new architectural distinction, but not to obliterate that deeper foundation of memories and experience that the rooms contained.

To preserve the "footprint" of their old house while radically restructuring it, they turned to East Hampton ar-

chitect Anthony Di Sunno and Elric Endersby and Alexander Greenwood, partners in the New Jersey Barn Company and experts in restoration carpentry, historic preservation and art history. "Our clients have excellent but very different taste," says Greenwood. "'Keep it simple,' the wife told us. But the husband wanted something grander."



Greenwood, Endersby and Di Sunno decided that a house in the Colonial Revival style first defined by McKim, Mead & White for the beachfront summer "cottages" of Long Island and the New England shore would accommodate everyone's mandates and those of the site. The style reconciled formality and comfort, the baronial tastes of the early



twentieth century and the quainter charms of the traditional Yankee summer place. "It was an eclectic style," explains Endersby, "sort of eighteenth century on steroids. It wouldn't be out of place, in a Colonial Revival house, to mix periods and details, or to create a compound of buildings from different periods, which is what we've done here."

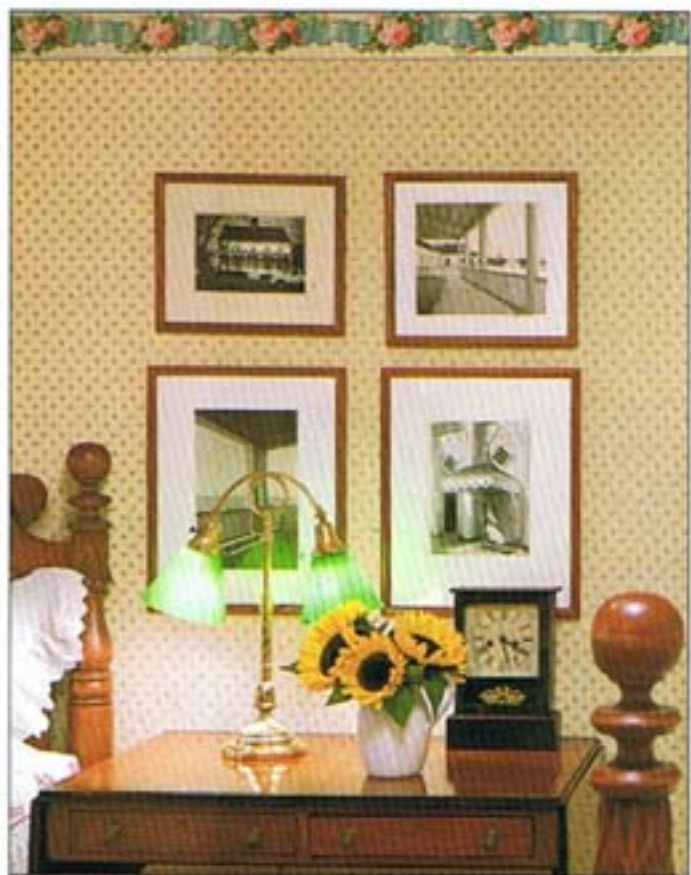
The partners, who specialize in architectural salvage, enriched the house with ornamental details from their archives, research and travels. The dining room has random-width pine floors and raised pine paneling from an eighteenth-century New England tavern. The game room was constructed of spare parts from a fine old New Jersey

barn. The Federal mantel in the master bedroom was saved from a historic farmhouse. Greenwood and Endersby doubled the dimensions of the entrance hall to accommodate a grand staircase and installed a newel post and balusters—three different turnings to each step—which arrived "in a big bundle" from a Colonial Revival house on the Con-

Vintage globe light fixtures, from a flea market, and glass-doored cabinets, latches and drawer pulls enhance the kitchen's early-20th-century feeling. "The wife is so happy with the yellow that she's considering painting other floors in the house," says LeConey.



"The period of the house is 1906," says Greenwood. "We were purists about the materials. But the fact that it was an eclectic era gave us more latitude." **BELOW:** Four-posters flank a sofa table in a guest bedroom. Brunswick & Fils wallcovering border.



necticut shore. Period details such as solid-cherry pocket doors, dentil moldings, elaborate plasterwork and double-hung sash windows—multi-paned above and single-paned below—were scrupulously reproduced, as were the solid-brass door and the hardware in the bath. "The one thing I have always wanted, apart from owning the Yankees," the husband confesses, "is a tray ceiling." He got his wish in the master bedroom.

After two years of construction, Greenwood and

Endersby still describe the house as "a work in progress, a movie being shot as the script is written." There is, however, no feeling of the improvised about the lucid interior design by the New York-based Ann LeConey, who has worked on several other residences for the clients. "We're the odd couple," says the wife. "I like things very plain. Ann likes things very formal. We do it her way." "Actually," says LeConey with a smile, "we meet somewhere in the middle."

Meeting in the middle

LEFT AND COVER: "The beds are where they always were," the wife says of the master bedroom. "And while we added many new windows, they frame the same views." A Greek Revival gilt mirror rests on the Federal mantel. Schumacher canvas on club chairs and chaise.



RIGHT: Di Sunno's design for the rear façade, which features a round dining porch, reflects the influence of McKim, Mead & White's early-20th-century houses. Landscape architecture is by Lois Sherr.





means that LeConey has upholstered the comfortable furniture in the reception rooms with “mellow” old-fashioned chintzes, mixed delicate patterns with large doses of white and yellow, left the floors bare except for the simplest of sisal rugs, used restraint with accessories and exuberance with plantings and given both the rooms and their inhabitants the maximum breathing space. “It’s so hard to decorate a new house,” the wife points out, “especially when it’s the reproduction of an old house. I think that’s why I wanted to

hang contemporary photographs, unpretentious folk portraits and family pictures: to make it feel more honest and less studied.”

The meticulously studied elements, however, compose a remarkably serene whole. The greatest single achievement of the architect and designers is to have altered so much while having changed so little. The owners’ bed still faces the same view, and the morning light still slants, exactly as it used to, through the new windows. The wife still reads in her old wicker

chaise, angled toward the sunset. The children still come home to sleep in the rooms they grew up in, each with its consolation: The elder has the better view, the younger, the larger space. The kitchen is where it was, at the heart of things, and the husband still works in his library with the weekend hubbub of ringing phones and barking dogs going on around him. The house is a happy marriage of grandeur and simplicity. It suggests that there is ultimately no greater luxury than coming home to a real life. □

Greenwood and Endersby are restoring an 18th-century Greek Revival church, left—moved to its current site from upstate New York—to be used as a private retreat for the husband.