

Say Goodbye to Hollywood

In New Canaan, Shelley Morris helps a California couple settle into the tranquil East Coast home of their dreams.

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In an effort to add more character to the residence, which was constructed in 2014, designer Shelley Morris suggested adding built-ins to a few of the spaces, including the living room.





LEFT: In the dining room, a light fixture from Studio Van den Akker hangs above a vintage Milo Baughman table and vintage chairs upholstered in a Maharam fabric. **RIGHT:** The existing kitchen was refreshed with Farrow & Ball Lamp Room Gray on the island, a pair of pendants from Obsolete, and Autoban for De La Espada barstools from The Future Perfect.

“My husband is from Darien, and I’m from Toronto, and we missed the seasons,” says the wife. “We always dreamed about Connecticut, so much so that we’d pin up Connecticut real estate listings in our Los Angeles house.”

Built in 2014 by the New Canaan-based architecture firm Wadia Associates, the residence was in impeccable condition, but the interiors needed some tweaking for the property to fulfill the

couple’s idyllic Connecticut fantasy. “I love old homes, so I wanted to impart character into this new house,” says the wife. “My husband and I love the Cotswolds and the English sensibility, so the idea was to inject a bit of that vibe.”

To assist with this tall task, the couple hired Westport-based interior designer Shelley Morris after scoping her out online. “There were a variety of styles on her website, and that told us



Even Hollywood can lose its allure, and for one entertainment-industry couple—she, an actress, and he, a producer and director—it was time for a new adventure on the East Coast. After a yearlong stint in New York City, the couple found themselves the new owners of a 10,000-square-foot five-bedroom house in New Canaan.





Adjacent to the kitchen is the family room, which in turn leads to a covered outdoor dining area. Comfort was key in this room, which features a custom sectional from Montauk Sofa, a cocktail table from Démiurge New York, a Lee Industries armchair upholstered in a Lee Jofa fabric, and a vintage wooden side chair from Avery & Dash Collections.

that she listens to her clients,” says the wife. “I love design, so I knew I wanted to be heavily involved in the process.”

The initial script called for lightening the dark wood flooring throughout, swapping out the stone floors in the kitchen for wood, taking the walls from a cool gray to a warm white, and adding built-in shelving in the living and dining rooms. But perhaps the most dramatic changes took place upstairs, where the primary bedroom and bath were gut-renovated (the bedroom was bumped out ten feet over an existing deck, and a tray ceiling was constructed to make the room feel even more spacious). Furthermore, an expansive bonus room was divided into two new rooms: an office for him, and a studio for her to tape auditions.

With the construction behind them, Morris and the homeowners could get to the fun part. “I think of home as a sanctuary and prefer calm, Zen-like spaces,” says Morris. “My client and I were on the same page. She doesn’t like a lot of color

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The wife’s favorite space in the house, the study, is painted in Farrow & Ball’s Mole’s Breath. A Thayer Coggin sectional is paired with a chair from Holly Hunt, an African table from Westport’s Bungalow, and a handmade Moroccan rug from Palace Oriental Rug of Wilton. The Zito B. Kare artwork was a wedding gift from the wife’s parents.



The homeowners created a gallery wall in the staircase using a mix of their favorite artworks and personal photographs. **FACING PAGE:** The walls and ceiling of the husband's office feature Portola Paints & Glazes's Roman Clay finish in the shade Meritage; a sofa from the set of the television series *Private Practice* was reupholstered in a Fabricut fabric.



LEFT: The primary bedroom received a gut-renovation that included pushing the exterior wall out ten feet over an existing deck and constructing a tray ceiling to open up the space even further; a vintage bench from Stamford Modern sits at the foot of the bed, and the Murano glass light fixture is from L'Antiquaire in Westport. **RIGHT:** The primary bath, which was also renovated, is sheathed in porcelain tiles and contains a Kallista tub and a walnut vanity.

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—INTERIOR DESIGNER SHELLEY MORRIS



INTERIOR DESIGN:
Shelley Morris,
Shelley Morris Interiors
ARCHITECTURE:
Wadia Associates
BUILDER:
Randy Sullivan,
Gatehouse Partners

and pattern either. We were going for light, fresh, clean, and cozy.”
Between their Los Angeles pad and their modern apartment in the city, the couple had amassed a nice mix of furnishings that they were keen on incorporating. “I believe in repurposing furniture, and she had bought some lovely things,” says Morris of the vintage, antique, and contemporary pieces. “And she unearthed even more great items during this project. I’ve been in the business for thirty years, and she actually introduced me to some new resources on the West Coast.”

Meanwhile, Morris took her client to some local Connecticut shops. “I love the hunt,” says the homeowner. “I could spend days upon days scouring the Internet for the perfect table. Sometimes you have to look at 1,000 wrong items to find the right one. I want to look around my home and see things that make me happy.”
Morris couldn’t agree more. “The house should represent the clients, not me,” she says. “When I say goodbye at the end of the project, I want them to feel like it’s their home.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see Resources.