

# New England HOME

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*Plein Air*

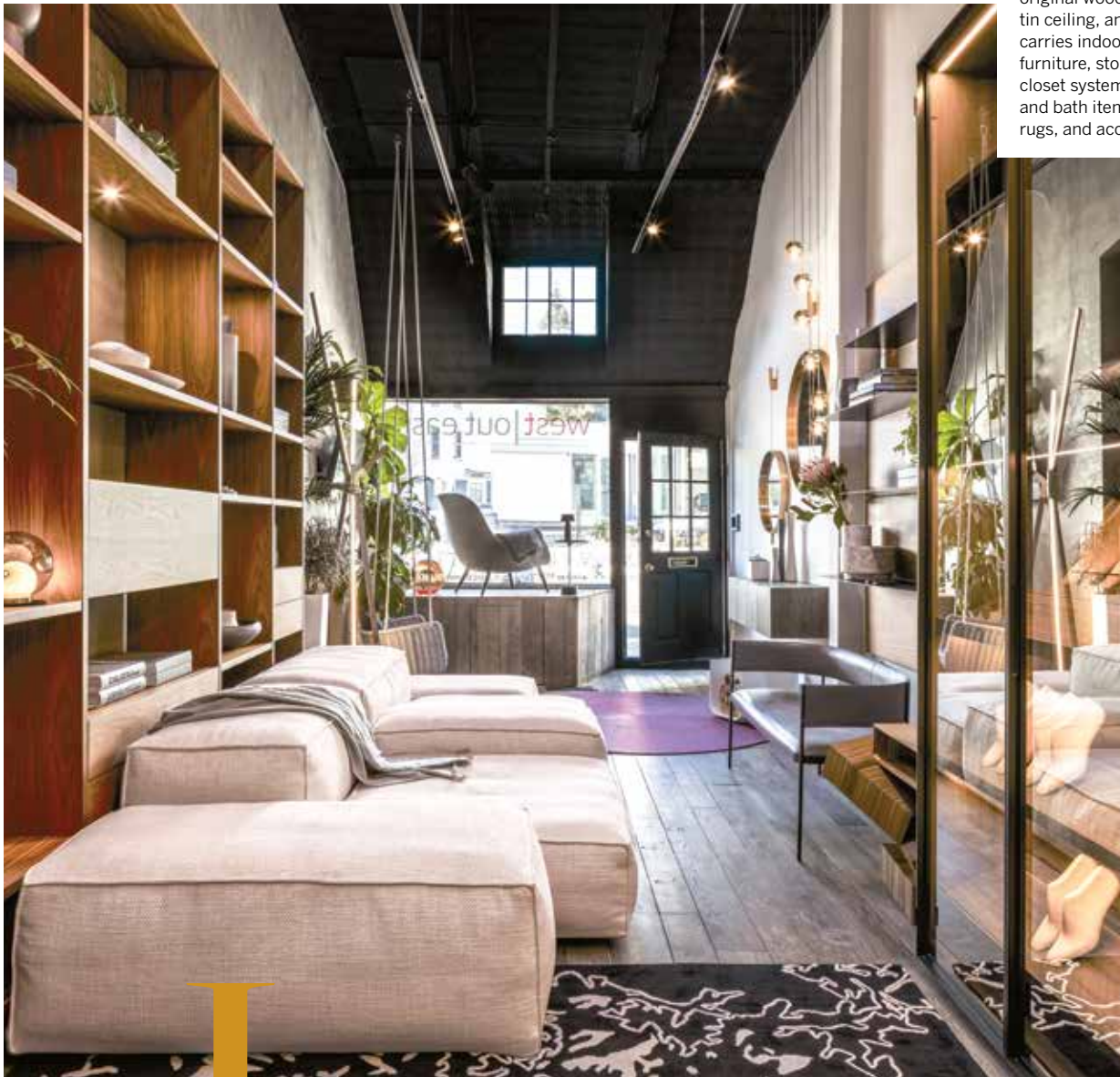
BREEZY & INVITING



# A New Direction

Architect West Chin brings his signature minimalist aesthetic to a storefront in Westport. BY ALYSSA BIRD

The 1,200-square-foot showroom, which features original wood flooring, a tin ceiling, and brickwork, carries indoor and outdoor furniture, storage and closet systems, kitchen and bath items, lighting, rugs, and accessories.



It might seem crazy to open a shop during a pandemic, but for New York-based architect West Chin, launching a Westport location of his well-established retail arm West | Out East was simply a natural

progression for his business—and one that he had been thinking about for a couple of years. Back in 2018, Chin got his first taste of the town while on his way to a site visit in Rhode Island. “My team and I stopped

for dinner in Westport, and I thought, How have I never been here before?” recalls Chin. “I fell in love with the creative downtown, from its restaurants to its art galleries.”

After one potential storefront fell through, Chin put the idea for a Westport outpost on the back burner and continued to focus on his practice and the East Hampton and Manhattan retail locations, which launched in 2014 and 2015, respectively. It wasn’t until the pandemic hit that the architect’s dream of a Connecticut branch was renewed. “So many people started moving out of the city to places like Connecticut, including one of our New York managers,” he recalls. “Instead of losing her, I told her to look for spaces, and she ended up finding something perfect.”

While the new 1,200-square-foot showroom, which opened last September on Riverside Avenue, carries the cool, minimalist furnishings



**LEFT:** When you walk into the space, an Adagio swing by Paola Lenti greets you; the planters are from West | Out East’s own line, FTF Design Studio. **BELOW:** Because the shop offers closet systems, owner West Chin keeps drafting supplies on hand for designers who arrive with clients in tow, looking to draw up plans on the spot.

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IN THE BACKSTREETS OF LONDON.”*

*—SHOP OWNER AND ARCHITECT WEST CHIN*





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Texture plays a key role in West | Out East as evidenced in this outdoor dining chair and portable lamp by Paola Lenti, one of Chin's favorite brands due to its durability. Living Divani's Family chairs welcome guests outside the Westport shop, which is made to feel like a cottage or an artist's studio. Mirrors by Living Divani and a multi-light Bocci pendant hang above a wall-mounted console by Porro.



synonymous with West | Out East, there's a noticeably different vibe. "East Hampton is meant to be a beach house, Manhattan is a duplex apartment, and Westport is more like a cottage or an artist's studio," explains Chin. "It almost feels like it could be situated in the backstreets of London. It's different from our aesthetic, but I like that juxtaposition of old and new."

Case in point: a rustic background featuring original wood flooring, a tin ceiling, and painted brick sets off sleek indoor and outdoor furniture, storage and closet systems, kitchen and bath items, lighting, rugs, and accessories from such brands as Paola Lenti, David Weeks Studio, Boffi, and the firm's own line, FTF Design Studio.

"Connecticut is similar to the Hamptons in that people tend to have more traditional or transitional homes," says Chin. "Not everyone knows how to pair contemporary furniture and finishes with older houses, but this showroom is an example of how you can do that without jeopardizing the integrity of the architecture. It's all about having a more comfortable, modern lifestyle."

West | Out East, Westport, [westouteast.com](http://westouteast.com)