



Featured in
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Set in Stone

By Ellen Sherman

DESIGNER SANDRA MORGAN
CREATES STURDY
BUT ELEGANT INTERIORS FOR
A HUSBAND AND WIFE AND THEIR FOUR BOYS

When a young Greenwich couple decided to live by the water three years ago, they didn't have to look far to find a home that fit their needs. At the end of a verdant road in a nearby town, a stately 1920s stone house was perched on a lawn overlooking a glorious expanse of the Long Island Sound. The site offered privacy and a play area safely removed from speeding cars-no small plus since the couple has nine-year-old twin boys and two older sons, ages 15 and 18.

But the real estate gods both giveth and taketh away. While quiet and secluded, the house contained a warren of smaller rooms that couldn't provide the kind of space this active family needed. And while the house was big on exterior charm, the interiors were rather dull.



In the wife's study, Cowtan & Tout's Harwood Toile covers the walls, windows and furniture

"It had the bones of a beautiful home, but without the details that gave it character and polish," notes interior designer Sandra Morgan, who has spent almost three years (and

counting) transforming its interiors. Morgan was brought to the project by architect Scott Soper, who was commissioned to oversee what would become a gut renovation.

"There was beauty in this house," Soper admits. "It just needed to come out and work in a more modern way." Accordingly, he removed walls and combined and expanded rooms to create more spacious living areas. In the process, he added a sunroom, master bedroom suite and children's playroom within the original structure, with the sunroom utilizing stone from the former exterior walls. A three-car garage was converted into a family room and mudroom, while a two-story addition was built with a garage on the ground floor and an exercise suite and guest quarters above it.



A reproduction of a Federal-style bull's-eye mirror adds a stately touch to the dining room.

"Scott did an amazingly seamless renovation," Morgan comments. "You really can't tell where the old part ends and the new begins." That seamless blending was not easy to achieve. The original stones had come from the property over 80 years ago and there didn't seem to be any more on the estate. Then a small renovation miracle occurred: While excavating to supply underground electrical service, a contractor uncovered a boulder. An obstacle, yes, but also a natural match to the home's stone exterior.

"It was a mixed blessing," Soper says. "For the next eight months the whole property basically became a quarry." After the stones were in place, Soper addressed the interiors, installing the type of charming details-crown moldings, millwork and coffered ceilings-the house had lacked.

"It gave it a fresh yet traditional feeling," Morgan says. "Where it had been plain, it now had character and polish." However, the house still lacked life. Morgan essentially had to start from scratch. "The owners wanted traditional, but they also wanted to make it fresh, young and comfortable," she recalls. "We wanted it to be lovely and warm, but it also had to work for a growing family of boys."

To that end, age- and gender-appropriate retreats were created. A billiards room paneled with rich, warm wood caters to the husband and his friends. A third-floor recreation area for the teenagers is another hideaway for the masculine set. "In some sense, the house is really kind of a big playhouse," Morgan says. The only exception is the wife's study, which is almost totally covered in a feminine toile. "The wife used to love to curl up by the fire and read stories to her sons when they were younger," Morgan says. "It's a perfect sanctuary for her."

While the family wanted classic, they didn't want dowdy. Lush blues, corals and greens dominate, echoing the owners' passion for the outdoors. Different patterns are used throughout, but one in particular, on club chairs in the living room, became the touchstone for the home. Early on, Morgan found a floral fabric with images of blue and white vases that seemed to embody much that was dear to the wife. "That kicked off the palette for the house," Morgan says. "The abundance of that print goes along with the 'up' feeling that the family has and the house evokes.

Three years have passed since work first began on the home, and details are still being added. "In a house this large you never really finish," Morgan says. Even so, the designer's carefully considered decor offers a sense of intimacy-even with five males running around. "I gave the house a cozy, feminine thread throughout, but with furnishings tough enough to stand up to masculine energy," she says. All in all, it's a rock house that rocks.



The curtains and cornices in the billiard room are Ralph Lauren's Allcraft Stripe fabric accented with a twisted Kravet rope trim.



The stone wall in the sunroom is part of the former exterior wall. The chair and sofa are covered in Winhall fabrics, and the landscape painting is by Kathryn Lynch.



The blues, corals and greens of Lee Jofa's Diamonds and Roses cotton chintz fabric on the master bedroom curtains and accent pillow echo the homeowners' love for the outdoors.



Framed seashell prints and a shell sculpture, all from Sandra Morgan Interiors, evoke the Long Island Sound, which the house overlooks. The covered

blue and green slipper chair is
also from Sandra Morgan
Interior