



## Editorial Features

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### Love Me Tender

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DESIGNER IS ON DEADLINE? THANKS TO A BEAUTIFULLY EXECUTED TURNAROUND, BABY BLUES AND WHITES ABOUND IN STAMFORD.



### AIN'T GOT THE BLUES

A lot can happen in two months: seasons change, jobs are gained or lost, people fall in love. For

Greenwich-based designer Sandra Morgan, two months is the length of time that defined the tightest turnaround in her 20-year career.

The players: a couple looking to downsize from their large Georgian in Westport. They had raised their family there and had chosen this smaller Stamford home as their new East Coast base; they have another home in Palm Springs, near their adult children. They had seen Morgan's work on the Internet, and one rainy Saturday afternoon last year they visited Morgan's retail showroom, SM Home.



"I loved the way she mixed things-traditional with contemporary. I loved that everything was bright and airy," says the female homeowner, who had never worked with a professional designer before. She wanted a break from doing her residences herself-and she was taken with Morgan's Swedish-style furnishings with a modern twist, including Gustavian antiques and repros.

The challenge: moving into the house in 60 days. "One thing that helps designers all the time is when a client comes in with a book full of tear sheets with comments written on the them. The wife had that. I read all of them," says Morgan, who saw a strongly defined aesthetic emerge from the binder: Swedish-style painted furniture, lots of texture, modern pieces with aged finishes, lots of white and lots of blue.



DESIGNING WOMAN (click photo for larger view)

"Sandy and I had very similar taste. Within a week of our first meeting, she already had fabrics and pictures of pieces. Basically, we almost did the house that afternoon!" the wife says, laughing. "My husband said, 'I never want to see green again!'" she adds, joking about how a green-and-white palette dominated their much larger previous home.

The 4,200-square-foot Shingle-style house needed to be dressed from head to toe; the owners had sold most of their furniture, bringing with them only a few large antique botanical prints, a couple of oil paintings and some accessories. "We wanted to include the Swedish color palette-varying themes on blues and whites and soft grays and pastels-and we wanted a fresh, young, uncluttered look, a comfortable place where every room would be inviting," Morgan says. "Nothing dark-everything clean and fresh."



BLUE DREAMS (click photo for larger view)

Tactile elements such as linens, silks and sisals were selected to create hands-on spaces that can be formal on command. "I wanted this to be a house where we would be comfortable using every room," says the wife. Morgan opted for interesting texture over complicated pattern-look around carefully, and you're hard pressed to find a weave with more than two colors.

What Morgan calls the "geometry and clarity" of Swedish design allowed for flexibility: its clean lines with little ornamentation can be played as antique, modern, or both. "They loved the feeling of age and mellowness, and yet they wanted a fresh feel to their environment, almost like a modern traditionalism," Morgan explains. She points to the dining room, with pearlized white walls and a pearlized blue coffered ceiling. Below, there's a rusticated sideboard in a Swedish-style patina, as well as a glass-and-metal table of Morgan's design that unfolds between Restoration Hardware chairs. Adding to the mix is a dramatic black chandelier and a few botanical prints, all pieces carted along in the move. The effect is a little bit glam and a little bit traditional. "They loved weathered patinas, as far as finishes were concerned. And amid this comfy, textured backdrop, they wanted clarity and a little sparkle," Morgan says.



Morgan crowns the master bedroom, set on the first floor, as another favorite spot. (The house has three guest bedrooms upstairs.) "They said that they wanted their bedroom to feel like a fantastic suite in a great hotel," she says. "It's such a deliciously comfortable cocoon." Pale lavender walls envelope the blue-and-cream details, and soft Kravet draperies add to the plush setting. And where creature comforts are in question, Morgan gets the gold: The wife requested space where she could style her long, lovely hair. "She didn't want to be doing her hair when the steam shower was going," says Morgan. Now, two salon-like vanities-one in the master bathroom and another in the master bedroom-provide enviable storage and seating.

As for the husband, he sought a suitable place to hang out and watch sports. "He met me in New York, and we sat in so many sofas and chairs, it was like the Princess and the Pea-testing, testing, testing!" Morgan recalls. "We definitely had to make sure his comfort level was a 10." It is, thanks to a library with dark paneled bookshelves and silver-blue raffia walls. "I had the curtains up and the carpets laid and they could watch the football game in absolute comfort," Morgan says.

Now, nearly a year later, the owners look back fondly on the wizard-like transformation. "We do travel a bit, and one of the ways to test whether you like your house is when you come back from a trip, when you walk in and get your first impression all over again," the wife says. "I'm always very happy to come home."