

COLOR ISSUE

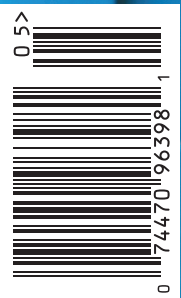
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COLOR STUDY FASHION HOUSE HAUTE STUFF
BLACK & WHITE **LILAC LUST** **BOLD BLOOMS**



below left: Removing a steep, unneeded staircase made space for an additional powder room on the first floor. The Waterworks vanity and tile from Karen Berkemeyer Home make a reference to an older time. **below center and right:** A restored brass door knocker welcomes guests at the front door, which is painted in L'eau Blue from Fine Paints of Europe's Mount Vernon Collection from Ring's End. **opposite:** The foyer's hot pink Barneby Gates wallcovering is accented with sconces by Jonathan Browning for the Bright Group. "If the scale were different, those sconces would be like regular Colonial sconces, but they're stretching tradition," says Whitcomb. The natural-and-ebonized-ash entry table was custom-designed by Havilande Whitcomb Design and built by Richard Bissell.

INTERVIEW WITH HAVILANDE WHITCOMB, HAVILANDE WHITCOMB DESIGN & ROB SANDERS, ROB SANDERS ARCHITECTS | PHOTOGRAPHER JANE BEILES



NEW AGED

OLD and NEW HARMONIOUSLY UNITE in this 1760s home that tells a COLORFUL STORY

How did the clients find you?

Havilande Whitcomb: I had a project in Wilton that was featured in a magazine. It was a new build that included a building that looked like an old barn. Inside the barn was a personal art gallery that was very modern, and I think it was this combination that caught the clients' eye. Those are the lucky moments, when the right person sees something. They're a young couple with children, moving here from Brooklyn, and I was delighted that they wanted to take on an old house.

Rob Sanders: I had done a fairly extensive renovation on the house ten years before for the prior owners. We did the kitchen, some bedrooms and baths, the family room and the loft office as part of that project. When the prior owners sold the home to these clients, they referred them to me.

The library is a cozy retreat at the end of the day with a Jan Kath rug, vintage tables and Christopher Hyland fabrics on the tufted sofa. **opposite:** The library's new bookshelves showcase some of the clients' treasures. A Julian Chichester chair in a Romo fabric is paired with a side table from the Antique and Artisan Gallery. "I feel like every room has a reason to be in it—each one is beautiful, but there's a livability factor," says the homeowner. "Whether we're in the mood to have a drink in the library, or if it's a brighter day, sit in the living room with the shuffleboard table and watch the kids run around, there's a reason to circulate through the house. I love that."



“When we first met Havilande, we said we wanted
‘**ENGLISH ROCKER** retires to the countryside and
revamps a **FARMHOUSE.**’”

—HOMEOWNER





opposite: A custom rug by Jan Kath grounds the living room, and a resin-and-walnut table designed by Havilande Whitcomb Design and fabricated by Westmount Group anchors the space. Beams throughout were exposed and carefully restored by Jason Funicello of Kettle Ridge Construction. **above left:** Romo fabric-covered vintage Arts and Crafts chairs from the Antique and Artisan Gallery flank a Julian Chichester side table. **above far right:** The living room's pair of vintage chairs in a Christopher Hyland fabric are from Stamford Modern. **right:** A former screened-in porch, now an extension of the living room, houses a shuffleboard table for fun game nights. The large painting is by Marco Grassi.



This house must have taught quite a history lesson. RS: The fairly ancient front part dates back to the mid-1700s, and the kitchen/bedroom wing dates back to the late 1800s. The previous owners renovated in 1982 when they moved in, and then we came in in the early 2000s. HW: There was a lot of adding on over the years, as often happens. There is so much history in a house like this, so we carefully decided what we wanted to keep, what we wanted to restore, what we wanted to replace and what we wanted to add. When you start peeling away layers, you find things like old wallpaper, layers of paint of all different colors

and periods, and newspapers stuffed into walls. It makes you very aware of a home's history.

What changes did you end up making? RS: We renovated the ancient part of the house, which hadn't been done before. We removed a small stairway, which allowed us to create the master suite upstairs, and we purged some of the bad ideas from the '80s, like wagon-wheel half-round windows and odd cathedral ceilings. We carefully replaced the windows—they're indiscernible from the original historic ones—and we made the





above: The dining room chairs, a modern interpretation of a traditional design, are done in a pale gray lacquer. The maple-and-blackened-steel sideboard is from BDDW, and the custom mesh draperies with hand-stitching were designed by Havilande Whitcomb Design and fabricated by Soft Furnishings Design.

right: The wet bar's existing cabinetry was reimagined with new dark countertops, high-gloss Benjamin Moore Black Jack paint, satin brass hardware and a Waterworks bar faucet.



A historic beehive fireplace, once used for cooking, is now a cozy place to read. The stone mantel, wood surround and hearth were added to create a cohesive look. The well-orchestrated color palette can also be appreciated from this vantage point. "There's color, but there's a common thread to those colors as you move through the house," says the homeowner. "If you're in the family room looking toward the library, you can see the blues, reds, and pinks repeat themselves. They're not exactly the same, but you can see the common thread."





“We unified different **ARCHITECTURAL** elements with finishes and color. We knew our color would be in the **ARTWORK, FABRICS AND RUGS**, so we went with light walls and warm gray trim.”

—HAVILANDE WHITCOMB

fireplaces work. We focused on enhancing the historical parts of the house, and there was this wonderful dialogue between old and new that we worked with Havilande and the clients to create.

HW: It was a great collaborative process—we wanted to be very respectful of the architectural character of the house. For the base, casings and doors, we decided which ones we were going to go with. We also unified different architectural elements with finishes and color. We knew our color would be in the artwork, fabrics and rugs, so we went with light walls and warm gray trim. There were raw wood timbers, old stone pieces, old oak flooring of varying widths and lengths, and ceilings of different heights, so it was about making transitions smoother. We knew that if we could get all of that really quiet and let the architecture speak for itself, then whatever we put in it would be able to stand by itself.

What look and feel were the clients after? HW: I think it was character and soul that the clients were looking for, but I would definitely characterize them as modernists. When they first approached me, it was, “Can we do something in an old home that would feel like us?” The husband is a musician who has guitars, they have some very interesting artwork, they like color, they have photographs of the Rolling Stones and Blondie. When I saw how they were living in Brooklyn, it gave me a strong sense of who they were. They wanted to be in a family neighborhood in a comfortable house where everybody could run around and feel relaxed. The loft they had been in had been somewhat industrial, and she specifically said, “I’m not really into ‘glam.’ I want curated things, but not in that particular direction.” As we were looking at things, that reminded me to circle back to our point of view. When we put new things in the house, it was about whether or not they felt like they should be there. Every detail was considered.

Were any existing pieces brought over from their loft? HW: Other than the bed and the big chest of drawers in the master bedroom, all of the



above: The existing kitchen received a facelift that included a new tile backsplash and fixtures from Waterworks and new perimeter countertops. Crisp white paint on the cabinets, a warm black on the islands and new hardware transformed the look. **right:** Counter stools by McGuire sit underneath an Apparatus light fixture at the wood-topped island. **opposite:** The family room has a soft J.D. Staron rug underfoot and features fabrics by Pollack and Schumacher. The custom banquette in the casual eating area was designed by Havilande Whitcomb Design and covered in a Maharam fabric.



furniture was new. Some of it was vintage, restored or recovered; some of the wood pieces are Tucker Robbins. In this case, we wanted to have a few references to old things—for example, in the dining room, the new Maxine Snider chairs have a vertical style on the back that looks like it's making a reference to something old, but it very clearly has cleaner lines than that. Everything needed to have a clean line but be crafted, handmade or have materials that looked like they were made by hand, not manufactured in a factory. Lighting in particular was something we had to think very carefully about. It's attached to the house, so it's not the same as an accessory or a piece of furniture. We chose some new fixtures, and we wanted more modern shapes yet not take it too far into "glam."

Did you need to tackle the flooring? HW: That was something we worked on a lot. In a house like this, the floors can be different ages, and there was reclaimed wood in the most recent addition. We worked with New England Custom Floors to unify and refinish them. We matched the reclaimed wood and put in new reclaimed wood in two areas where the

old floors were in bad shape. Before all of the furniture went in, the floors were crazy-looking in a way. There was a moment of panic, like "We're going to have to stain everything dark because nothing is going to match!" But New England Custom Floors worked with us to neutralize the tannin in the oak, and once we did that, we thought, "This is so cool." When the clients saw all of the character in the wood that came out during that process, they really loved it, which was great—some people wouldn't have liked how un-uniform it is.

The entrance to the home is so striking, too. HW: When we picked the front door color, I suggested that we look at historic colors, since a lot of them are really strong and bright. This color came from the Mount Vernon Collection from Fine Paints of Europe, and we loved the idea of having a white Colonial with a bright blue door. If you're driving by, it gives you a hint of what might come inside, because I don't think you would expect an interior like this if you saw the old house. The foyer wallcovering is from an English firm, and I loved the hot pink/magenta





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The family room's existing built-ins were removed in favor of an open media storage piece in custom fumed oak and satin brass; a Tucker Robbins table sits in the foreground. Most of the home features Benjamin Moore's White Dove on the walls with warm gray trim in Farrow & Ball's Elephant's Breath, a combination that grounds the house with the floor stain and old beams and keeps the look from trending too formal.





“I really got a strong sense of **SATISFACTION** that comes from caring for something old and **INTERPRETING** it for a young family who really cared about it.”

—HAVILANDE WHITCOMB

above: The loft office, located above the family room, is furnished with a vintage Danish desk from the Antique and Artisan Gallery. A new banister and slender wood spindles updated the look of the staircase. **right:** One part of the attic was turned into an additional hangout space and music room. A large window seat of color-blocked cushions discreetly conceals air-conditioning ducts. **opposite:** The guest room is crowned with a fun “Retired” license plate to remind guests to relax. Furniture and accessories in the room are from Serena & Lily and Anthropologie.





color with the antler pattern. Strong pink is one of the colors the clients love; it's used in a few spots, and little touches of it go into adjacent rooms.

The blue library tells quite a story as well. HW: This room is one of the smaller rooms. It's also probably one of the oldest original rooms in the house that's intact, and we added bookcases and paneling to unify it. We wanted this kind of French blue on the walls, so knowing we had this color idea, we went looking for slightly irreverent things, slightly funky color combinations, for furniture and fabrics. I love how the rug is grounded in this, the way it references older, original patterns, and it has touches of yellow, orange and pink along with dark blue. We found some really cool vintage pieces as well.

I love the game table off of the living room! HW: This area had been a porch, then an enclosed porch, and now it's part of the room, and those vertical timbers in the living room were the edge of the old house. Since this area was long and narrow, the clients said, "We've always wanted a shuffleboard table—it's the perfect space." I went looking for shuffleboard

table makers and found one at Boutique Design New York. They do a version with modern lines and those cool legs, and we chose the finishes. The clients love to have friends over, and it's so much fun to play.

Did you renovate the kitchen? HW: It was refurbished and given a facelift. The layout and quality of the cabinets were good, and the previous owner had been a professional cook, so the appliances were good quality as well; we just wanted to freshen the feeling of the space. It was ivory, brown and hunter green before, so we painted it white and black, added the black-and-white tile and changed the cabinet hardware. The middle island has a white marble top, and the white cabinets now have black countertops. We left the other island with the wood countertop, as it went with the floors.

Are the kitchen, breakfast nook and family room open to each other? HW: Yes, and a lot of these colors had to speak to each other. The clients definitely wanted some color, and I took cues from their artwork. That little print over the banquette? That was an influence on the colors here.



above left: The master bath and dressing room were created when the unneeded staircase was removed. Now, a Victoria + Albert tub and a chair from Astele in Westport are an inspired duo. **above center:** The custom vanity is in Benjamin Moore's Rock Gray, while the paneling is in Benjamin Moore's Graytint. Sconces are from Hudson Valley, and accessories are from Fig in Westport. **above right:** The wife's dressing area links the bath with the couple's new closets. The vintage sconces are from 1stdibs, and old structural posts, exposed during construction, were left as visual remnants of the original home. **below:** Removing a wall in the master bedroom expanded the space and enabled the addition of a comfortable seating area. The custom chairs are upholstered in a Holland & Sherry wool bouclé, and the drapes' Rosemary Hallgarten ombré alpaca linen in Lilac brings in a touch of purple.





above: Another hint of purple comes through with pillows in a Michael S Smith fabric, and the clients' art collection includes this photograph by Yael Shachar printed on board over the restored fireplace, one of several in the home. "There's a feeling of being a steward of this old house," says the homeowner. "We had an idea of what we could transform it into, and we had amazing help to actually do it. There have been roughly 200 holidays celebrated in this home, and we've given it a new life that, I hope, the next owners will want to continue caring for."

The custom sectional in the family room was made for that area because it's a long, narrow room, and there's not even a coffee table because the kids are playing there all the time.

Tell me about the master bedroom. HW: This room is above the living room, so it's a long space. We had those comfy reading chairs made and found those vintage nightstand lamps from Irwin Feld, which can stand up to that dramatic bed. The Rosemary Hallgarten alpaca panels are really simple window treatments, and there's a bit of purple in the room, and a bit of softness, with the black and white. The artwork above the fireplace is pretty funky and cool, and when I first met them and fell in love with their artwork, I thought, "OK, so we're moving into this 1760s house. This is really interesting." I think that image says a lot about them.

What is your takeaway from this project? HW: I really got a strong sense of satisfaction that comes from caring for something old and interpreting

it for a young family who really cared about it and was involved in the process and all of the careful decisions we made along the way. Having a great architect and builder helped everything go pretty smoothly. The clients told me that when their friends have come over to see them since they moved, they say, "Oh my gosh, this feels so much like you." Hearing that really meant a lot to me. —INTERVIEW BY LAUREN FETTERMAN

Resources:

Interior designer: Havilande Whitcomb Design, Westport; 203-227-7902; hwdesignllc.com

Architect: Rob Sanders Architects, Wilton; 203-761-0144; rsarchct.com

Contractor: Kettle Ridge Construction, Bridgewater; 860-799-7149; kettleridgeconstruction.com

Floors: New England Custom Floors, Westport; 203-227-2819; newenglandcustomfloors.com

Painter: Castano Painting, 203-918-1453