

New England HOME CT

*SPRING
AHEAD* LET THE SUNSHINE INSPIRE



FEATURES

SPRING 2023



This spacious New Canaan home—the dining table seats eighteen!—offers a family of former Manhattanites plenty of opportunity to stretch their legs...kind of like waking up from a long hibernation and discovering it's spring. See the story on page 120.

GAME

CHANGER

A cunning remodel gives a sporty New Canaan clan

room to spread out and spaces that promote togetherness.

Text by FRED ALBERT | Photography by JANE BEILES

Connecticut homeowners Rob and Kaitlyn Lowe wanted guests to feel like they could flop down and be comfortable anywhere, including in the living room, which designer Thom Filicia outfitted with a plush sofa and occasional chairs from the Thom Filicia Home Collection for Vanguard Furniture and a pendant light from Visual Comfort.





A nook off the upstairs hallway was turned into a library in homage to the home's original owner, a librarian who built a fireproof book vault in the basement to protect her collection; the vault now serves as a podcast studio for Kaitlyn. **FACING PAGE:** An arrangement of photos, maps, and mementoes turns a living room wall into a kind of family portrait. "On their own, these objects could end up in a box. When you put them all together, it creates this really amazing collage," says Filicia.



The onslaught starts in the early morning hours and has been known to last until well after supper. Cascades of kids charge through Kaitlyn and Rob Lowe's New Canaan property, trailing duffel bags loaded with hockey equipment, tennis rackets, or swim gear as they make a beeline for the backyard or race into the basement locker room to get ready for the next activity.



After moving from an Upper West Side apartment where son Rogan was literally living in the closet and a trip to the park was a major ordeal, having nearly two acres to spread out was a game changer for this sporty family of six—even if the 1928 house that came with it inspired nothing but indifference.

Fortunately, Rob, an investment banker, and Kaitlyn, an actor, had a secret weapon up their sleeve. New York interior designer Thom Filicia had been a friend of Rob's since childhood and was willing to take on the home's transformation, alongside Connecticut architect Rob Sanders. The latter added a new great room, expanded the bedrooms, and improved the home's flow, which had been compromised by a pair of ungainly modular additions. ("Essentially two double-wides on top of each other," Sanders explains with a shudder.)

Filicia was tasked with updating the interiors and making them feel more

"We can actually squeeze about eighteen people around this table, so that became the center of every gathering."

—Homeowner Kaitlyn Lowe



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: In the kitchen, an earthy patinated-steel hood and Waterworks tile complement cabinets painted Benjamin Moore Brewster Gray; the exuberant chandelier and tufted red-leather benches are from Sedgwick & Brattle, Filicia's to-the-trade showroom. The 1928 house was a mishmash of additions, so architect Rob Sanders unified it with new windows and moved the sequestered front door to a more prominent spot under a new rooftop monitor. "The minute you open the door it feels like the Lowes," says Filicia of the hip storm-gray entry hall.

cohesive without obliterating the home's quirkiness. "It was about tightening up the materials and tightening up the aesthetic," says the designer, who installed prefinished white-oak floors throughout and painted all the interior doors a pale blue, creating a clean, crisp

backdrop for a collection of unpretentious contemporary furnishings. Sanders removed a bathroom to create a new front entry that aligns better with the home's approach, while Filicia filled the resulting foyer with a dramatic ebonized-wood wallcover-

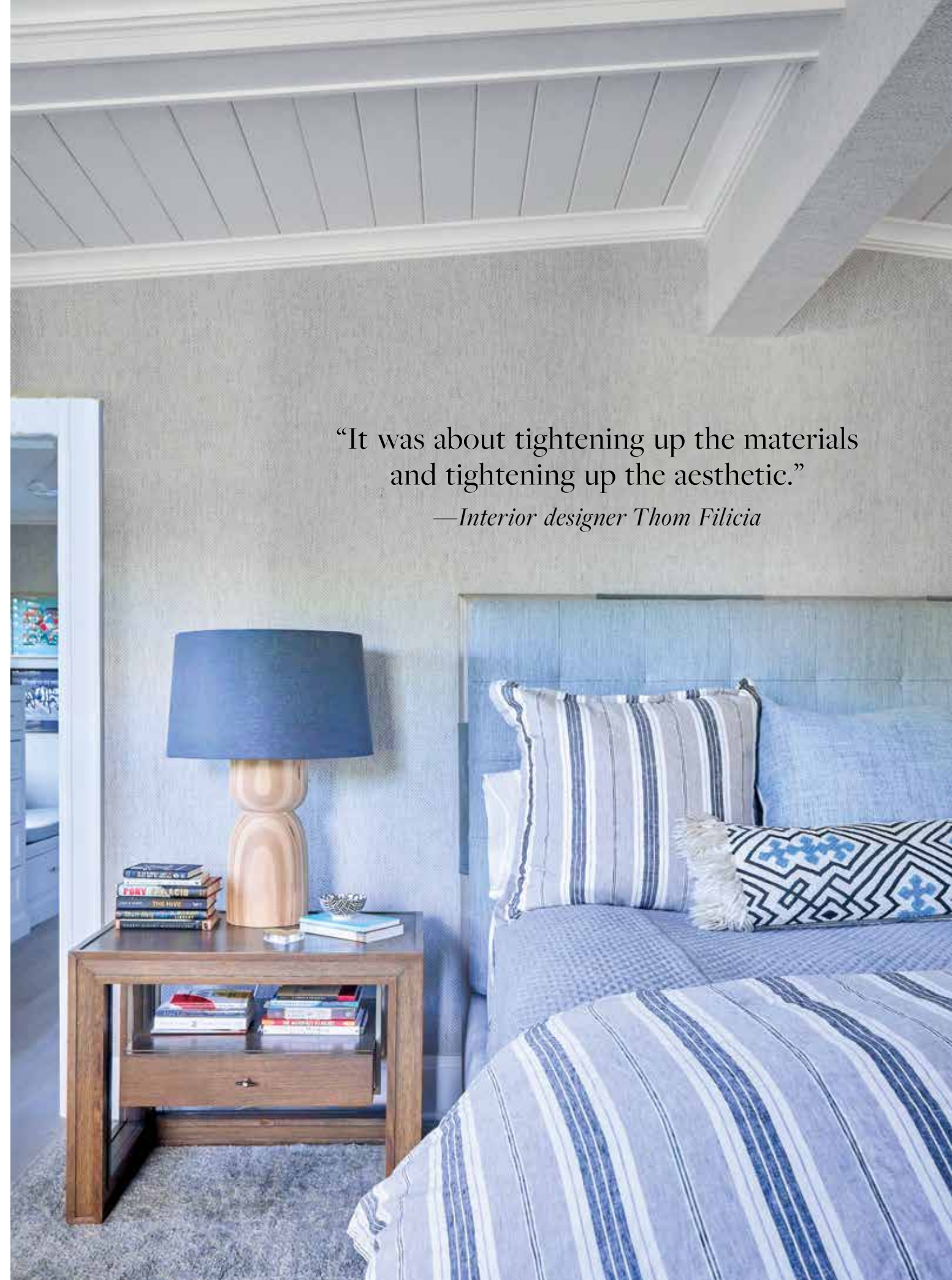


ABOVE: A standard eight-foot ceiling would have been too low for the new party-sized great room, so the design team sank the floor to gain height; surface-mounted lighting felt more appropriate to the architecture than recessed cans. **LEFT:** Need A Hand sconces from Sedgwick & Brattle illuminate a powder room. **FACING PAGE:** Serene colors and textural finishes help hide the primary bedroom's origins as a pair of prefab modules.



ing, a grasscloth ceiling, a Sputnik-style pendant, and a console table loaded with personal effects. "I love making rooms like that a little more dramatic, because you're only in them for a short amount of time, and you want them to be memorable," the designer says.

Around the corner, an array of family mementoes adorns the wall above the sofa in the living room, where watercolor hues and plush seating inspire relaxation. "This is their 'slow' living room," Filicia says, distinguishing it from the 'fast' family room on the other side of the foyer, where friends gather to play pool or crowd onto the sectional for sporting events. "I know the Lowes, and I know how they live," Filicia says. "If you're in that room with less than six people, then the power's out!"



"It was about tightening up the materials and tightening up the aesthetic."
—Interior designer Thom Filicia



A Visual Comfort chandelier illuminates the second-floor landing, whose stodgy colonial balustrade was replaced with a bolder X design that is repeated throughout the home. Doors are all painted the same shade of blue as the kitchen cabinetry to help unify the interior. **FACING PAGE:** Daughters Kalvyn and Jade stroll past the pool their parents added. The chaise lounges and chairs are from Lillian August.

Moving a staircase opened up the kitchen, which was still hampered by a pair of pesky support columns. Sanders integrated the posts into a floating L-shaped cabinet; the adjacent table, flanked by two benches, is the home's sole dining area. "This was one of the best decisions we made," says Kaitlyn, who rarely used the old dining room. "We can actually squeeze about eighteen

people around this table, so that became the center of every gathering."

The test of a good interior, Filicia says, is creating something specific to the people who live there. "If you didn't know Rob, Kaitlyn, or the kids, and you went through this house without them here, you would walk away with a really strong sense of who they are."

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURE: Rob Sanders Architects
INTERIOR DESIGN: Thom Filicia
BUILDER: Vita Design Group
LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Wesley Stout Associates

