



A FRESH START

**IN CONNECTICUT,
TIMOTHY WHEALON INFUSES
A CHARMING 19TH-CENTURY
HOUSE WITH SUBTLE COLOR
AND UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE.**

INTERIOR DESIGN BY TIMOTHY WHEALON
GARDEN DESIGN BY WILBER & KING NURSERIES
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The owner of a two-acre property in Connecticut's Fairfield County tends to her English-style cutting garden, accompanied by her yellow Labrador, opposite: The 1860 house.

Lee Jofa's Persian Leaf wallpaper adds quiet pattern to the entry hall. 18th-century Chinese console, Charles Jacobsen. Lamps, Christopher Spitzmiller. Vintage Bibikabad rug, ABC Carpet & Home. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP:** The living room's custom sofa is in a Gastón y Daniela fabric with Samuel & Sons trims; slipper chairs in a Hodson McKenzie paisley; photograph, Nelson Hancock; walls in Farrow & Ball's Slipper Satin. Parsons table, Matthews & Parker; 18th-century chair (left), Demiurge; antique chair (right) in a Claremont velvet; artwork, Sarah Peters.



SHE AGREED TO BUY THE HOUSE sight unseen—a radical move for a homeowner who admits that she usually hates taking risks. “We were moving to Connecticut from Wyoming,” she says. “It was 1999, and the real estate market here was crazy, with all these bidding wars. My husband bought it before I could arrive.”

The renovation that ensued was far more in character—tasteful and low-key, if a bit cautious. The couple updated the white story-book home, which dates from 1860 and sits on two acres in Fairfield County, uncovering the original chestnut beams on the living room ceiling. An avid gardener, the wife created an English cutting garden with a disciplined palette of purple and white, filling it with hydrangeas, roses, clematis, phlox, and herbs.

Inside, the rooms were subtly furnished in an array of neutrals. And so they remained until recently, when she “realized it was time to press the refresh button.” She reached out to New York designer Timothy Whealon to create a new scheme that would quietly sneak pattern and color into the house without detracting from its sense of calm. “I liked his sensibility: timeless, classic, edited,” she says. “Just beautiful.”

But for the designer, pushing his client in new directions was a process of baby steps. “She is very artistic, has refined taste, and wanted to be challenged,” says Whealon, who specializes in high-end residential projects and has a line of rugs coming out early next year from Patterson Flynn Martin. “But at the same time, she was hesitant. She would constantly say, ‘Well, I don’t



LEFT: The kitchen's range is by Thermador, and the refrigerator is by Sub-Zero. Faucet, Rohl. Stools, Fair. White bowl, Astier de Villatte. Roman shade in a Kravet fabric with Claremont trim. Flooring, reclaimed antique chestnut. Ceiling paint, Farrow & Ball's Wimborne White. BELOW LEFT: The dining room's window seat has a cushion in a Fermoie cotton. Antique Gustavian chairs in a Holland & Sherry stripe. Tea set and tray, Ralph Lauren. BELOW RIGHT: In the butler's pantry, the matchstick blinds are from Maison de France, and the Roman shades are in a Kravet fabric with Claremont trim. OPPOSITE: Cotton slipcovers and an abaca rug take the dining room's formality down a notch. Custom table. Slipcovers fabric, Fermoie. Antique brass chandelier, Remains Lighting. Sconces, Ann-Morris, Inc. Plates, Richard Ginori. Glassware, William Yeoward Crystal.



A soft gray-and-white palette creates a tranquil mood in the master bedroom. Custom bed and armchair in a Les Indiennes fabric. Bed linens, Casa del Bianco. Bench in a Chapas Textiles fabric. The room is painted in Farrow & Ball's Pointing. **OPPOSITE:** A potting bench behind the house. Planters, Campo de' Fiori. For more details, see Sourcebook.



know if that's too much for me.' And you know me, I'm not exactly a fuchsia-in-your-face kind of guy.”

Whealon aimed for a “modern farmhouse feel—elegant but not too fussy.” He banished precious elements, removing the skirt from the couple's existing sofa and re-covering it in a sand-colored fabric—neutral, yes, but made quietly exquisite with a band of blue-green trim and nailheads along the bottom edge. He searched for patterned fabrics that were as serene as they were unexpected, settling on a soft blue paisley for the living room's Billy Baldwin-style slipper chairs, and large gray block-printed flowers on white cotton for the master bedroom's bed and seating.

Still, each decision was painstaking and deliberate. “It was hard,” the wife admits. “I was stepping out of my comfort zone.” And then came the standoff over the wallpaper: Whealon produced a swatch of a Persian-leaf pattern for the entry hall in a pale blue-gray on cream. It was anything but brash, but the client panicked. Can I live with this? she wondered. “She was terrified,” the designer says.

He explained how the soft hue would relate to the dove gray and pewter accents in the adjacent living room. “He showed me how it could work, and I decided I could live with it,” she says. “And now I think it's perfect.” □

