CT C&G

Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

COTTAGESGARDENS.COM | FEBRUARY 2021

COLOR REMIX

NEWEST RUGS

+

ANIMAL PRINTS

GREEN ACRES

A sophisticated take on country living makes this the place to be

BY **DAVID MASELLO**
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PETER MARGONELLI**

Farm Living When these homeowners wanted to build a new house (THIS PHOTO) whose roof lines echoed the profile of the surrounding Litchfield hills, they called on architect Allan Shope. Landscape design is by Ana Hajduk of Singing Brook Gardens. The pool area (BELOW) is furnished with Tucci umbrellas, B&B Italia chaises, Dedon sofas, loveseats and chairs. *See Resources.*

WHILE MOST HOMEOWNERS go shopping for furnishings and accessories, the owner of this Kent home also went shopping for boulders. She recalls the architect, Allan Shope, calling one day and asking her to meet him along the side of a road in Litchfield County. "I drove from our home in Westchester, where we were then living, not knowing exactly what he wanted," she recalls. "But he'd said there had been an avalanche on a hillside and that the owner of the land had offered Allan the chance to come and get whatever he wanted, for free. When I got there, Allan told me to pick out my favorite boulders that were tumbled all over the hill."

Shope recognized the grade of stone and their hues as perfect building materials for the house he was designing for the couple. Many of those stones were used to fashion a massive fireplace and chimney in the living area, an architectural element the homeowner says, "appears to just rise up from the earth." Indeed, the stone element appears so natural to the house and landscape that moss and lichen still peek out from edges. "The rocks were fitted together like puzzle pieces," notes the homeowner. Other boulders collected that day were used as hardscaping by the pool and as adornments throughout the property, which comprises 214 acres.

When interior designer Eve Robinson first met the clients, she was a bit startled by how they wanted to live. The couple had established a working vegetable farm (though the land is now devoted exclusively to growing flowers), and they envisioned the rooms of their new home filling with sheep and chickens, as much as with family and friends. "As the design process went on," says Robinson, "their desire for finer things prevailed." The animals were welcome to roost and nest in comfortable quarters outdoors. "The whole project and idea kind of reminded me of the old TV show 'Green Acres,'" says the designer, "where sophisticated homeowners have the idea to start a new life in a small country town."

These homeowners have enthusiastically embraced their new rural locale, growing colorful anemones, peonies, roses, lilacs, hydrangeas, snapdragons and other flowers typical to the Northeast. They and their staff at what is known as Anderson Acres Farm, sell blooms to the Connecticut Flower Collective

Natural Fit (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM OPPOSITE PAGE) The vaulted main living area is lit with natural light and Jeff Zimmerman's pendant through R & Company. A pair of Holly Hunt sofas are backed by Holly Hunt consoles—the one on the right is topped with Japanese lamps from the 1970s through Studio Van Den Akker; the custom floral-motif rug is from Fort Street Studio. In the dining room, a BDDW dining table is surrounded by Holly Hunt chairs. David Wiseman's Glacier pendants orbit above the tabletop; Ochre sconces provide further light. *See Resources*.

Pops Of Color The den assumes a jewel-like presence, the result of furnishings and accessories that include Osborne & Little's fabric on a Jens Risom sofa, an Azadeh Shladovsky pouf, Tai Ping rug and Maya Romanoff's handpainted wallpaper. The artwork is by Brian Rutenberg. *See Resources.*

Simply Stylish (THIS PAGE) Jerry Pair shelving is used in the mudroom, where a Paola Lenti custom rug is placed atop porcelain floor tile from Stone Source. **Warm Welcome** (OPPOSITE PAGE) The home's entry is announced by Hervé Van der Straeten's bronze pendant lamp through Ralph Pucci and a rug from Judy Ross Textiles. Some 250 butterflies adorn the wall, an art installation by Paul Villinski. A pair of Demiurge New York slipper chairs are covered in Mongolian lamb fur. *See Resources.*

and individual stores, as well as to the public in a weekly sale in their on-site barn. "During the height of Covid," says the homeowner, "that market became especially important to people in the community. 'This event is the highlight of my week,' is something we heard often."

In collaborating closely with the homeowner, Robinson became quickly aware of her client's penchant for artisanship and detail, as well as the color blue. "It's one of my favorite colors," the homeowner admits. "It's soothing, it has a connection to water and nature and sky." One of the stated goals the homeowner gave the architect was for a house that was intimately and constantly connected to its natural locale. The very roofline of the house echoes the undulations of the nearby Litchfield Hills, while views from every room embrace the outdoors.

Meanwhile, in addition to a flood of natural light, Robinson introduced sculptural chandeliers and lighting sources in every room—from a bird's nest–shaped one in the foyer to a tree-like branching expanse in the living room. "I often regard lighting as jewelry," says Robinson. "Bringing in incredibly special lighting pieces is a way to finish a room and really make it sparkle."

Robinson and the client collaborated most conspicuously on the main staircase, as much a practical architectural element as a sculptural one. "The client wanted to push the envelope, in terms of design," says Robinson, "and we did that with the staircase." After Robinson designed it, the client had the novel idea to soften the treads with pieces of blue leather, stitched with white threading. While goats and sheep are not negotiating the stairs, the couple is. As the client says, "We added padding beneath each tread, and it feels really wonderful on our feet every single time we go up and down the staircase."

Master Class (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM THIS PAGE) Blue Holland & Sherry draperies make a dramatic statement in the master bedroom, where diaphanous Loro Piana bed hangings are complemented by Casa del Bianco bedding. The Jens Risom chair and ottoman are upholstered in Zinc Textile fabric. In the master bathroom, a vanity anchored by a pair of Stephen McKay sconces is complemented by an Ann Sacks wall mosaic. Alongside the window, a Waterworks freestanding tub is provided privacy with Pierre Frey draperies backed with Pollack sheers. *See Resources.*