

Hendricks Churchill

MARATHA STEWART Living

Betting on the Farm

By Rima Suqi

Photographs by Chris Mottalini

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Open Invitation

The Katons love hosting friends for weekends at their 14-room 1820 farmhouse. Like the rest of the place, the formal entry is a mix of old and new. The staircase, light fixture, and front doors with cast-iron decorative screens are all original. The family added French pocket doors leading to the library, and an antique Persian runner from Reservoir's retail showroom with the design firm Hendricks Churchill.

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When a New York City artist and her family stumbled upon a 200-year-old farmhouse in Sharon, Connecticut, their real estate agent warned them to steer clear of the timeworn (to put it mildly) property. But intrigued by its solid bones and original details, they launched into a gut reno to preserve the place's character and forge something entirely new: a cool, comfortable retreat.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS MOTTALINI | TEXT BY RIMA SUQI



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Rewriting History

Left: Purdy gathered vintage dining chairs from various sources, including antiques stores in the area.

She chose similar ladder-backed, rush-seat styles and painted them black for a cohesive look. The Moooi light fixture above the table mimics the glow of the fireflies that dot the landscape at night. Below: Purdy designed the dining-room wallpaper from census documents from 1820, the year the home was built. "This house exists because of the names on that paper," she explains. The collection of brass candlesticks once belonged to Josh's parents and grandparents. A mix of colored tapers adds an eclectic touch.



Priority Seating

Above, left: The Eatons lounge in their backyard on mahogany Adirondack chairs handcrafted by their builder, Seth Churchill, who also made the table in the dining room (above). Left: In the kitchen, stools by Eric Buck pull up to the counter, which is lit from above by Workstead pendants. The custom cabinets were painted in Farrow & Ball Purbeck Stone; the island itself is a darker shade: Farrow & Ball Mole's Breath. Says Rafe Churchill, "We wanted it to stand out as a piece of furniture on its own."

Hendricks Churchill

THE FIRST TIME Purdy Eaton visited Sharon, Connecticut, she'd come to see a friend—on what turned out to be “a brutally cold February weekend,” she says. Despite the weather, Purdy, an artist whose work is shown in galleries across the country, was smitten with the town of about 2,700, situated just east of the New York border. To her, Sharon offered “all the good things of a small town—friendly people and access to nature,” plus an easy commute from New York City, where she and her husband, Josh, who runs an investment firm, live in a Tribeca apartment with their children, Sawyer, 14, and Huxley, 11. By the weekend's end, she'd decided to book a place in town for the summer.

A few weeks into their rental—an idyllic time the family spent swimming at Mudge Pond and hiking—she noticed an intriguing house for sale. An 1820s center-hall Colonial, it came with several outbuildings and 50 acres of land. The catch? It had been vacant for years and fallen into such disrepair that the real estate agent was reluctant to show it. The basement was overrun with mold and puddles, a wall was painted with a mural of what looked like ghosts, the brickwork on the chimney's exterior was unstable, and a family of mice had moved in and gotten very comfortable. “It would be a really big project,” the agent said.

What she didn't know was that both Purdy and Josh had grown up on farms—she in Indiana, he in Washington State. They were drawn to the stirring landscape, the house's beautiful floors and moldings, and the fact that it was a five-minute drive to the center of town. As far as they were concerned, it would be an ideal second home where their kids could run freely and everyone could unwind.

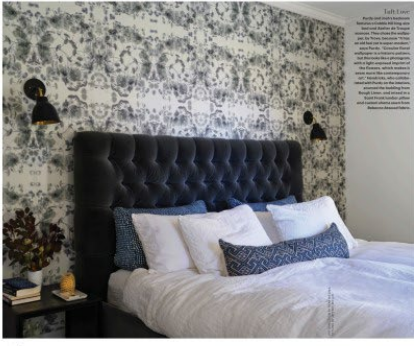
Still, the realtor insisted they meet with Rafe Churchill of Hendricks Churchill, a local architecture-and-interior-design firm, before making an offer. She knew he could identify any deal-breakers—he had experience working on old homes, often with his brother Seth, who owns a custom building company; and his wife, Heide Hendricks, who does the interiors.

Seeing past the wear and tear, the team embarked on a top-to-bottom renovation, pulling off the ornate shutters, rebuilding the chimney, raising the kitchen ceiling, and adding a side entrance and interior French doors. Despite the fact that almost every change required approval from the local historic commission, the job took less than a year.

In that time, Purdy says, “Rafe created a home for today without destroying its original character.” She did the same inside, merging inherited pieces with finds from Etsy, eBay, and antiques shops, and making life easier with up-to-date kitchen appliances. All along, she says, her family felt obliged to “honor the history of the house, while we leave our little mark.” In return, the home shaped her, inspiring pieces about “the interaction between humans and nature, the idea of stopping to take in the environment. That's what this house has given us,” she says. “An expanded moment in a sliver of time.”



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Edith's Room
The room's design is a mix of vintage and modern. The wallpaper is a classic floral pattern, and the tufted headboard is a nod to traditional design. The blue patterned pillows and the black sconce lights add a contemporary touch.



Edith's Room
The room is a mix of vintage and modern. The white bed and yellow chair are classic pieces, while the white wall and ceiling are modern touches.



Edith's House
The house is a small, single-story building with a gabled roof. The blue exterior and white roof are classic touches.



Edith's House
The room is a mix of vintage and modern. The blue wall and orange sofa are classic pieces, while the white ceiling and wall are modern touches.

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MARTHA STEWART
Living

Instagram's Eva Chen Shares the High-Impact Design Decisions That Made Her Family's Connecticut Cottage a Home

The social media expert and children's book author worked with multidisciplinary design firm Hendricks Churchill to bring the space to life—reading nooks, oversized art, show-stopping wallpaper, and all.

By Sarah Schreiber
Photographs by Chris Mottalini
October 20, 2021



Hendricks Churchill

For Instagram's Eva Chen, Director of Fashion and Shopping Partnerships, style makes more sense when it's hanging in a closet—the vast world of interior design is more of a mystery. "I feel generally confident with style and fashion. I feel indecision less when buying clothes," she says. "I think a lot of people are this way, but I feel less confident when it comes to interiors. The scale, the height, the cost—every decision matters."

The first decision came easy: When she and her husband, Tom Bannister, set off into the undulating hills of Connecticut's Litchfield County to find their young family a home away from the bustle of her native New York City, they stumbled upon a miniature United Kingdom (Bannister hails from there). "It reminded Tom of England in many ways," explains Chen. "When you go to England and you go to the countryside, you see these rolling fields of green. It's a different shade of green, it's more verdant—like Kelly green—but you just feel really at peace." When they arrived at the property in question, a Cape Cod house nestled inside a bucolic yard, they discovered dragonflies buzzing across a pond (pun *not* intended); Chen felt the space inside her brain expand. "I could see myself being cozy there and, in theory, sitting by the fireplace inside," says Chen, "while in action, stopping children from running *into* the fireplace."

It felt like home, but Chen knew she'd need help to make it so. Upon the recommendation of their real estate agent, they began to work with Heide Hendricks and Rafe Churchill, the husband-and-wife team behind Hendricks Churchill, a firm that specializes in restoration. "They are intellectuals and walking design historians," Chen says, noting that she knew she could trust them not to create a "display house" (she wanted a space that could roll with the punches). Churchill and Hendricks identified the pain points quickly. "The house was built in the '80s and it had good bones," says Hendricks, "but a few of the spaces were challenging—they weren't ideal for a young family. [Chen and Bannister] needed spaces where everyone could be within their sight-lines—you're still in the kitchen, but you can see the kids in the living room, and so on."

Together, the team made a series of high-impact decisions that changed the flow, aesthetics, and purpose of the Connecticut cottage, resulting in a space that holds Chen and Bannister's multigenerational family (her parents visit and stay regularly) with ease. Below, Chen and Hendricks walk us through the top-level choices that made this house in the hills a home.

Modifying Good Bones

The house was, for the most part, logistically relevant, says Hendricks. "It had a great circular floor plan—you walk in the front door, and if you turn right and *keep* turning, you'll end up back at the front door—that we wanted to improve." (The updated floor plan, walls and all, says Chen, is what she misses when she is at home in New York City, in an apartment with an open layout.) As for the other structural modifications? Hendricks and her team unified the interior's architectural styles to make the home feel of one voice; enlarged openings with restraint,

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keeping some on an intimate scale to ease transitions; and worked around budget tankers, like the second story's wood floor (it couldn't withstand a refurbishment, so they turned to a reviving high-gloss paint, instead).

They also took down a wall separating a sunroom ("It occupied the best view of the house," Hendricks explains) from the main living area, a major decision that now allows the family to gather *en masse*. "In fact, that's a perfect example of contemporary living for a multigenerational family," continues Hendricks. "They can all hang out in this space; there are different sitting and reading areas. It's a living room in the truest sense of the word."



Experimenting with Pattern

Chen fought the dining room's Antoinette Poisson wallpaper—arguably the most visually dynamic pattern in the cottage—on multiple occasions; Hendricks says she convinced her on the third try. "It was so different from my usual aesthetic, which is soft and gray," explains Chen. Hendricks knew that the print encapsulated the scheme of the house—her firm specializes in "color and palette play"—and as the other rooms began to come together, Chen saw it, too. Now, the wallpaper "exudes an Old-World feeling in that intimate setting and beckons you inside."

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says Hendricks, noting that despite the dining area's smaller size, its expanded openings ensure the print is always in your periphery, wherever you are on the first floor.

Hobbies First

For Chen, who is also a children's book author, and her clan, reading is the predominant pastime of choice. Carving out spaces (corners, window seats, hallways) to spend time with a good book was paramount during both the renovation and decorating processes. "Any time the kids are quiet, I get suspicious—where are they?" laughs Chen. "On a good day, they are curled up in one of these nooks reading." The team prioritized placing these vignettes in virtually every room, including the kitchen; they are filled with giant bean bags and pillows, covered in kid-resistant fabric, that feel like clouds (some were sourced from John Robshaw, a local who lives a few towns over). Hendricks pushed for this—the plusher, the better. "I asked Heidi, 'How many pillows does one person need?' I didn't get it then, but I do now. They make reading spaces so much more enjoyable," explains Chen.

Finishing Touches

Hendricks and Chen communicated mostly during the "witching hour;" they sent visuals, patterns, and pieces via text and spent plenty of time talking through antique and art choices. "We'd be on eBay or Etsy, or even on websites looking for estate sales," says Chen, noting she still messages Hendricks about paintings. "I now realize how important it is to have art on the walls. It sounds basic, but it *does* really make a home," she continues. As for her favorite piece? A living room-defining mural, sourced from Tappan Collective, that was a happy accident. "It's a huge yellow piece—it anchors the room," notes Chen, adding that she and Bannister, who enjoyed the art hunt, weren't truly aware of its scale before its arrival. "We had to reschedule delivery three or four times because the truck it came on was so big, it couldn't fit down the driveway." It was worth it, though: "When I look at that piece now, it's something that really sets the mood of the house."

Needs to Serve

When making any home-related choice, Chen asked herself the question, "How do you want to use your time off?" and decided accordingly. These moments away are precious, she says. "We knew we wanted to spend time as a family. We wanted quiet and the ability to be close to each other," she shares. This is also the high-impact tip she has for other prospective house buyers: "Think about the needs that have to be served—and that's advice for not just the house hunting process, but also for life. What do you need to restore yourself? Find out, and then do that."

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Living MARTHA STEWART

This Eclectic Greenwich Village Apartment Is a Bibliophile's Dream—It's Full of Reading Nooks

By Caitlin Brown
Photographs by Chris Mottalini
March 8, 2021



Hendricks Churchill

With New York City's storied Greenwich Village neighborhood as the backdrop, this family-oriented apartment feels that much more like a treasure box. Designed by Heide Hendricks of Hendricks Churchill—who had previously worked with these clients to transform their Long Island beach house into a year-round refuge—the space is, in some ways, a relic of the past. "Our clients had already combined two apartments in their pre-war Greenwich Village building with the help of architect Harry Gutfreund, but the space now needed a finished layer of furnishings and color," Hendricks explains of the project.

She set her sights on creating a comfortable home dotted with reading nooks—a must for the book aficionados who live there. "I loved how much the family reads, so the project was [focused on] creating spaces to foster intellectual thought," Hendricks explains. The north-facing apartment would never receive a ton natural light anyway—a challenge that ultimately aided the design, allowing the furnishings and layout to revolve around "hunkering down" in the cozy space.

For these clients, cozy did not connote neutral: Take one quick peek inside their funky, modern space and it is clear that they were not interested in an organic palette. Instead, Hendricks introduced inspired colors throughout the interior. "The color palette of the home follows a design convention of ours. You enter through a dark room and go into a larger, lighter room, which makes you feel like you're coming out of a cocoon," she shares. "Following the bohemian lounge-inspired entryway, the paints were scaled back to lighter tones in the living and dining room, with the brightest room being the kitchen," she shares. Ahead, Hendricks walks us through the completed space and offers a further glimpse into the design process.

Old Becomes New

The moody entryway, painted in Moles Breath by Farrow & Ball, reveals the client's antique heirloom divans; she inherited the piece, which she reupholstered in a Donghia fabric. "The compass chandelier by Apparatus Studio is a nice stylistic foil to the antique divan," designer Hendricks notes.

A Multi-Use Space

Anyone familiar with Manhattan real estate knows that square footage is the ultimate luxury, and in this case, Hendricks and her clients made use of every inch. "The living room was large enough—for a New York City apartment—to become a versatile, multi-use space," she says. "Knowing the couple works from home, I wanted to give them a large library table, lounge area, and library, anchored by a refreshed fireplace from Chesney's," Hendricks explains.

Turkish Rug

The antique Turkish Berber rug was chosen with intention; its colors offset the deep jewel-tones of the sectional and red leather chair. The expansive bookshelves also make a statement. "The space is about fostering creativity—truly a respite for bibliophiles," says Hendricks.

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Sophisticated Art

"It was a pleasure to work on this project because the clients have such wonderful taste, a love of fine rugs, and a genuine global aesthetic based on extensive world travel," divulges Hendricks. "They have a sophisticated taste in contemporary art; their collection includes Elizabeth Peyton, Sally Mann, Gregory Crewdson, Alec Soth, and Nick Cave."

Light-Reflecting Paint

"We used Farrow & Ball paint throughout because of their organic materials. The colors are moody and responsive to light conditions. They refract light in a way that's truly unique to the brand," explains Hendricks. Here, the dining room feels neutral, but full of depth in Hardwick White.

Books Everywhere

A built-in bookcase gives yet another nook a library vibe (note the steel reading lamp tucked onto a shelf).

Steel-Framed Windows

Original steel-framed windows are one of the apartment's most identifiable features. They allow the limited, but soft light to artfully stream across the interior.

A Kitchen Nook

Thanks to an airy coat of Farrow & Ball's Borrowed Light, the kitchen is the brightest room of them all. Keeping consistent with the theme of nooks and cozy corners, Hendricks warmed up the heart of the home with plenty of greenery, vibrant textiles, and contemporary art.

Simple and Serene

The primary bedroom receives the most amount of light throughout the day; sunbeams arc off of the simple linens and streamlined furnishings. "I embraced its freshness by keeping it more monochromatic and pared down," shares Hendricks.

Limestone

On the opposite side of the bedroom, a stately mantel has major design impact. "The fireplace is original limestone and is a luxurious detail we accentuated with a comfortable lounge chair," says Hendricks.

A Space to Grow In

Hendricks selected the furnishing and décor for a young girl's room with longevity in mind. "The vintage daisy lamps from the 1970s are playful, but sophisticated enough for her to hold on to through her teen years," she shares. The rug is a Swedish vintage kilim by Marta Maas

Hendricks Churchill

Fjetterstrom, sourced from 1stdibs, which plays perfectly with a custom pillow, covered with Jennifer Shorto fabric.

Bold Color in the Bathroom

A bright wallpaper from Pierre Frey Toile packs a major punch in the bathroom.

A New Connecticut Home with Serious Vintage Charm

Baker and cookbook author Jessie Sheehan's happy place is at the butcherblock island in her yolk-yellow kitchen, rolling out dough for her signature biscuits and pies. She invites us into her Connecticut getaway, where traditional details come alive thanks to vibrant, Shaker-inspired colors and modern amenities that make it a weekend retreat she and her family never want to leave.

By Elyse Moody
Photographs by Roland Bello
October 31, 2018

martha stewart



The memory of a slamming screen door in Robert McCloskey's classic children's book "[One Morning in Maine](#)" guided Jessie and Matt Sheehan in their search for a Connecticut escape. The full-time Brooklynites wanted a rural-feeling spot where they could kick back with their two sons on weekends and holidays, and do more of the things they love: Jessie is a lawyer turned baker and author, most recently of "[The Vintage Baker](#)" (Chronicle); Matt is an urban farmer and environmental educator. Their fantasy was McCloskey's simple cottage, with the sort of midcentury kitchen kids dash through to grab a snack on their way to the next adventure.

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But they couldn't find the house they wanted, where they wanted it. "The kinds of homes Matt and I love are very old, but in a town like Sharon, Connecticut, all the beautiful old homes are right on the road," says Jessie. So, working with Rafe Churchill and Heide Hendricks, the husband-and-wife duo behind local design firm [Hendricks Churchill](#), they decided to start from scratch on a wide-open plot that had been part of a dairy farm. The Sheehans spent two years camping there in an Airstream on the weekends, deciding exactly where to build. Then they devised a plan for an updated, evolved version of a historic house. The result has all the same charm but is spacious, eco-smart, and close enough to town for a milk or sugar run.

Just like Jessie's recipes, the place takes vintage ideas and runs with them. The trim and doors are painted in traditional Shaker colors, and the walls are covered in semipolished Venetian-style plaster. Architectural salvage yards and antiques stores were their go-to sources for fixtures and lighting, with a Flos pendant light in the dining room as a rare exception. The result could pass for a 19th-century gem till you notice the generous proportions of the rooms and doorways, and all the sustainable features, from solar panels to a rainwater cistern to a standalone Frigidaire freezer, where, in true storybook fashion, Jessie stores surplus berries for the winter.