

HOME, SWEET HOME

DESIGNED BY **MABLEY HANDLER**, A NEW FARMHOUSE-INSPIRED HOME IN WATER MILL WEAVES TOGETHER MEMORIES AND MODERNITY.

BY **JEAN NAYAR**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **COSTAS PICADAS**

As a talented pro-am ballroom dancer, Cary Mabley is often on the move, dancing in competitions all over the world. Yet her heart is ultimately where her home is, in Water Mill.

The reasons for her affection for her Hamptons dwelling are many. But chief among them is that it was designed specifically for her by her daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer Mabley and Austin Handler, the Hamptons-based design duo known for their gracious, timeless interiors throughout the East End. In addition, Cary loves the setting for its proximity to them: Her daughter and son-in-law live right next door. “It also reminds her of her earliest experiences of the Hamptons,” says Jennifer. “She grew up spending summers at the home of her grandparents on Coopers Neck Lane from the 1930s through the ’50s, and she wanted to recapture those traditions.”

Having lived full-time in other homes in the Hamptons since 2002, Cary was clear on the type of house she wanted in Water Mill and offered a “wish list” of ideas that contributed significantly to the overall vision. “She wanted a kind of hybrid house,” says Jennifer, “like a modern barn rather than a traditional shingle-style home, with airy, informal spaces; a funky, open layout; and large windows inspired by her childhood home—a colonial farmhouse in Wilmington, Delaware, which had large French windows that opened onto an apple orchard in the backyard.” She adds that her mother planted apple trees in her own garden in homage to her grandfather.

The interiors and palette were inspired in part by paintings in >>

The kitchen was designed to be the home’s communal hub, with a farmhouse table surrounded by inviting chairs featuring boldly patterned pink and purple fabric.



SPACE *BEACH RETREAT*



Cary's collection—works by Robert Dash (the renowned artist and horticulturalist of Madoo Conservancy fame) and local artist Elwood Howell, among others. "We wanted the spaces to feel serene and calm so the art would be the statement," says Jennifer. As a result, the designers decided to keep the colors beachy and light, with pale wood floors, white-painted millwork, a fireplace with a stone veneer and fabric accents, and furnishings in "garden tones, like frosty lavender," says Austin, which give the rooms pops of color that reflect Cary's personality. "She's a huge fan of bold color and bold prints," he adds.

The garden hues also connect the interior spaces

with the outdoors, where the octogenarian owner of the home spends much of her time "puttering around in the garden," says Jennifer, noting that her mother relied on the work of her late friend James van Sweden, a principal of the notable Washington, DC, landscape firm Oehme van Sweden, as inspiration for the grounds. She also chose most of the plants—including crepe myrtle and Japanese maple trees, astilbe flowers, and miscanthus grasses—herself. Says Jennifer, "This is where she wants to stay from now on, and it's right next door to our house, so it had to be a winner." *Mabley Handler Interior Design, 34 Head of Pond Road, Water Mill, 726-7300; mableyhandler.com* ■



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Jennifer Mabley and Austin Handler on the serene screened porch; a garden-based palette and works by local artists add vibrancy to the light, airy double-height living area; the grounds were inspired by the work of the late James van Sweden, a noted landscape designer in DC and a friend of the home's owner.

