

FRESH START

DESIGNER **JOHN BJØRNEN** HELPS AUTHOR **PATTY MCCORMICK** AND HER HUSBAND, **PAUL CRITCHLOW**, DEFINE THEIR NEXT CHAPTER OF HAMPTONS LIVING WITH A HAPPY NORTH HAVEN HOME.

BY JEAN NAYAR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COSTAS PICADAS

As the author of several critically acclaimed novels, Patty McCormick knows a thing or two about starting new chapters. And with her influence, the new home she shares with her husband, Paul Critchlow, in North Haven stands as a reflection of a turned page in the story of their own lives.

“My husband worked on Wall Street and was on the cusp of retiring, and we sold our apartment in the city, as well as a country home in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, because it wasn’t lively enough,” explains McCormick, who had also summered over the years, with her husband and now-grown children, in a home they shared in Southampton. They sold that house, too, in search of a more casual context and found what they were looking for in a renovated ranch overlooking Fresh Pond.

“It was close enough to everything in Sag Harbor, but away from everything, too,” McCormick says. For Critchlow, “It appealed to us in its simplicity—I fell in love with it at first sight.” In their renovation, adds McCormick, “the previous owners had a lot of affection for Japan,” and they’d added a separate two-story extension and refreshed the interiors throughout with a soothing Zen quality. “We didn’t need to mess with that—all we did was lighten the floors,” she says.

The couple did start fresh with the interiors, however, and called on designer John Bjørnen, who helped them define the rooms with a mix of mostly >>

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In the breezy dining area, a quartet of Hans Wegner Wishbone chairs surround a custom walnut table that echoes the countertop island in the adjoining kitchen.

SPACE *BEACH RETREAT*



Against the soft, sandy palette of custom sofas and oak and leather midcentury chairs, a silk and viscose ikat rug energizes the living room with bold color and pattern underfoot.



A new two-story wing connects to the renovated ranch house, bringing additional space and fresh form to the original dwelling.

new custom and off-the-shelf furnishings. “Patty had always loved Hans Wegner’s Wishbone chairs, and in a ’70s ranch house, it’s natural to embrace classic Midcentury Modernism,” says Bjørnen. “So, with a nod to the Scandinavian aesthetic, we found a nice Zen-meets-midcentury vibe with walnut and oak woods and textiles and textures that give the rooms warmth.”

“We wanted a counterpoint to our travels,” explains McCormick, who has spent a lot of time in Asia and other parts of the world, which have inspired some of the complex and socially challenging tales she writes. “We wanted spaces that were calm, quiet, and uncluttered.” Yet, thanks to the shots of color and pattern of pillows and throws and vibrant works of art—including a bold piece created by their daughter when she was a child—the spaces are also happy and fun.

Now that they’ve settled in, the home is so comfortable for the couple that they actually

spend more time here than in the city. McCormick writes in the loft space of their Hamptons house, which doubles as a shared home office/entertainment area and features a balcony perch from which to look out onto the water beyond. Friends and family come to visit “for sliders, corn salad, and beer by the pool,” says McCormick, who loves the guest- and pet-friendly house, crediting Bjørnen for creating spaces that make a statement without being too precious.

For his part, Bjørnen attributes most of the home’s unique flavor to his clients. “They’re some of the warmest, brightest, most empathetic people I’ve ever known,” he says. “They really wrote the story of the house, and I got to start it with them with a jumping-off point. But I think they’ll be here for a very long time, and there are many more chapters yet to be written.”

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A pair of Harry Bertoia barstools add modernist function to the kitchen island—topped with a thick walnut slab.