

CLASSIC BEAUTY

*DESIGNER RICHARD MISHAAN USES
INGENUITY AND RESTRAINT TO CRAFT
A SOOTHING HOME THAT'S AS FAMILY-
FRIENDLY AS IT IS LUXURIOUS.*

BY JEAN NAYAR PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARCO RICCA



In the family room, a Chuck Price wishbone sculpture and Guida Gambone fern plate accent a white leather ottoman.

Step inside

the classic shingle-style Sagaponack home that Karen Silverman shares with her husband, two young children, and five dogs, and chances are the first thing you'll feel is an instant sense of serenity. "I like Zen-like, peaceful, clean spaces without a lot of tchotchkes," says Silverman, who collaborated with New York-based interior designer Richard Mishaan to curate many of the home's meticulously edited spaces. "Less is more' has always been my philosophy."

Inside, you're also likely to feel immediately comfortable, as the graciously proportioned rooms are furnished with a mix of easy-on-the-eye antiques and plush classic modern furnishings that seamlessly relate to the overall environs. "I also believe a home should feel like a home," she adds.

The Hamptons abode is the family's second home, a respite away from their primary residence in Manhattan, where Silverman's husband works in finance. The Sagaponack house was always intended as a family retreat—where all could enjoy some quality time apart from the hustle and bustle of the city, so a calm and welcoming family-friendly ambiance was one of the couple's top objectives from the outset. Yet, on closer inspection, there's also layer upon layer of subtle luxury, which elevates both the form and function of the home.

"It's like Italian menswear or an Hermès bag," says Mishaan. "When you first see it, you recognize the quality, but you're not assaulted by luxury and details. Instead, the more you look, the more they come to life."

The home's character and substance as well as its flow weren't always there from the start, however. Mishaan stepped in where previous designers had left off—keeping some pieces, but reworking them, starting fresh with new ones, and then reconfiguring the furniture layouts to genuinely support the way the family really lives. In the over-scale living room, for instance, a clutch of diverse seating groups now offer up gathering areas that serve different purposes on different occasions, while open circulation paths pull the large space together as a harmonious ensemble.

"The original layout just didn't work," recalls Mishaan, adding that although he added several new pieces, the altered arrangement enables the many furnishings to aesthetically cohere as a whole. The two sofas in the room were placed back to back so that when people were gathered there, they felt they were either on one side of the room or the other. "Instead, I

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In the oversize living room, diverse seating arrangements offer varied groupings that serve different purposes on various occasions.



Blue and purple striped fabric and a graphic work of art by Jim Dow help keep the homeowner's son's room youthful yet timeless.



broke up the furniture plan into conversation zones where people could interact comfortably, focus on one another, and feel a sense of warmth,” he explains. “I also added some new furnishings, so that now you can have four or five people gathered together to talk next to the fireplace, or you could pull up a couple stools and include a few more. You could also comfortably fill the room with eight, 10, or 14 people when there’s a larger party. Even the two high-back wing chairs are great for more intimate conversations with a business associate on a different occasion.”

The home’s subtle yet rich palette also contributes to the holistic sense of continuity. “It’s funny, in my mind, the palette is like a Japanese kimono or a Morandi painting, with lots of very complex, very subtle neutrals,” says Mishaan. Although colors are limited—mostly to brown, aubergine, and white—they’re present in an almost infinite array of shades and textures, which reflect or absorb light and inject the rooms with grace notes of nuance. The furnishings in the elegant yet cozy family room offer a case in point. Here, a huddle of ivory satin pillows shimmer against plush plum velvet cushions set atop the nubby espresso cotton-linen blend base of the amply scaled sectional. Two crisp white linen club chairs and a big white leather ottoman round out the furniture mix, which is accented with gourd urns—one 1960s French, the other vintage Japanese—plus a tabletop wishbone sculpture by Chuck Price and a 1950s fern plate by Guido Gambone, a contemporary of Gio Ponti.

Working closely with the owners, Mishaan deftly mixed existing pieces with new ones to reshape and enhance the form and function of other rooms, too. In the kitchen, he introduced new wood counters and stained them to match the floors to bring in more warmth. “Stone counters in a home with children feel too cold,” he says. In the dining room, a pair of antique Chinese temple chairs were moved from the entry to add touches of “whimsical fun,” says the designer, while older dining chairs were “reinvented” with trim pleated slipcovers, and new aqua-colored plates and lavender vases introduce fresh notes of color.

Bedrooms were also updated with a sense of tailored timelessness. In the son’s room, blue, purple, and white striped fabrics on pillows and ottomans bring youthful energy to new white classic furnishings that will grow as the boy matures. To brighten the tonal composition in the master bedroom, Mishaan also had the headboard and a Deco-inspired duo of swivel chairs reupholstered, and he brought in fresh energy with a lively mix of framed photographs. “The real-life scenes and mundane cityscapes offer a great juxtaposition to such an elegant room,” notes the designer.

In fact, throughout the restrained and tailored home, a few bold photographs enliven the atmosphere with zesty punches of personality—some are vintage black-and-white images, others are colorful and sometimes kitschy. “We are big collectors of art,” says Silverman, “but in this house we’ve only included photographs.”

Seen through divided-light windows, flowers from the gardens (which Silverman’s husband developed with landscape architect Edmund Hollander) bring additional pops of color into the rooms. Yet, outside, too, the palette is restrained with blooms in shades of mostly lavender and white that meld seamlessly with the hues inside. “It’s elegant and luxurious, and at the same time user-friendly,” says Mishaan, summing up the overall design. “And unlike many family homes, which have a lot of accessories and trinkets, here it’s the opposite. The family has a very restrained way of living, so that everything they have is in use.”

Less, in this beautiful and comfortable home, is indeed more. **H**



The open kitchen’s wooden island was stained to match the floors to add warmth to the all-white room.



Designer Richard Mishaan used a palette of brown, white, and aubergine, colors he calls “complex, subtle neutrals.”