

A photograph of a row of lounge chairs with white cushions and rolled-up towels, situated next to a swimming pool. The background is a dense line of green trees. The word "Space" is written vertically in a large, white, serif font on the right side of the image.

Space

COMFORT ZONE

DESIGNER BIRGIT KLEIN MERGED FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCENTS WITH SUBSTANTIAL FURNISHINGS AND FINISHES TO REFASHION HER HAMPTONS HOME WITH INTONATIONS OF HER EUROPEAN ROOTS. *BY JEAN NAYAR*

Living and working for global clients in New York, Los Angeles and London, designer **Birgit Klein** is at ease in any urban context. Yet, in many ways—given her upbringing in Germany—she's a country girl at heart. "Growing up in Germany I was surrounded by lush green trees, forests, beautiful beaches, fresh air and understated natural beauty," she says. So when her work brought her to the Hamptons for the first time several years ago and she came

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Clockwise from top left: Klein created a cozy niche by topping a chair with plump pillows and a chunky throw. In rolled hues of taupe, cream and gray, Klein covered wood tables and floors. Side-covered ottomans and a diffused lamp gave the living space a European-inspired, modern touch. Opposite page: Klein revamped the '80s-era kitchen with rich materials such as Carrera marble counters and Brazilian slate floors.



...CONTINUED across a house for sale on a secluded 1 1/2-acre lot in Wainscott, she immediately knew it would be the perfect place for her two young children to experience nature in the same way she did in her youth. "It reminded me of my roots," she recalls. "I loved the property so much." And in no time, she and her husband, Andrew, plucked it up for themselves as a family getaway home. While the grounds and location were ideal—"You can easily walk to the beach or the shops in Wainscott," says Klein (who's known as Kie to family, friends and clients)—the house itself was hardly her idea of a fairy-tale abode. "It was built in

the '80s in a modern style that looked like boxes on top of boxes, and the pool was in the wrong place," she recalls. So she worked with a contractor to strip the house to the studs and foundation and start fresh. "I wanted it to be both stylish and family friendly, and it needed to have an office and be large enough to accommodate another family as guests," she says. Priority number one was expanding the footprint and devising an open concept to improve the flow of the living spaces. To make it comfortable for all, the couple chose to add a wing for guests and create a cinema room, a gym and a play room with a pool

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL DOOK

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From top: Comfy furnishings covered in French and Belgian linen and a new fireplace clad in reclaimed wood bring a relaxed sense of warmth to the living room; the couple replaced the modern facade with classic shingle style, added a guest wing and repositioned the pool.

...CONTINUED table for their kids, Karlie and Luca, and they replaced and reoriented the original wide pool with a long rectangular one, where Andrew can now swim laps. And in contrast to the former house's boxy form, they also reshaped the exterior to reflect the area's classic shingle style. With the overall architectural scheme in place, Klein turned her attention to the interiors, which most clearly reflect her particular

talents and tastes. "Instead of the beadboard, white slipcovers and seashells you often see in beach houses, I wanted the inspiration to come from classical architecture and create spaces with an easy, elegant European feel," says the designer. To that end, she deployed rich materials like Brazilian black slate, cerused wood and bronze to add substance to the spaces, then peppered rooms with custom pieces made in France

and Belgium, including a pair of white cabinets in the dining room and a beautiful bespoke bench in the living room. She also mixed these elements with contemporary pieces, metal accents, textured From top: Comfy furnishings covered in French and Belgian linen and a new fireplace clad in reclaimed wood bring a relaxed sense of warmth to the living room; the couple replaced the modern facade with classic

shingle style, added a guest wing and repositioned the pool. Belgian linens and baskets and streamlined contemporary architectural features, such as the tour de force of the living room—a central double-height fireplace clad in reclaimed wood planks—to infuse the interiors with a sense of modern comfort. "Every time the children come here, their eyes light up, they're so happy," says Klein. "It feels like home." ■

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CROOK