

# Serene Sanctuary

DESIGNER JESSICA GERSTEN CRAFTS A SOOTHING REFUGE FOR A BUSY FAMILY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON COMFORT.

BY JEAN NAYAR  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY COSTAS PICADAS

The home's refresh is meant to make the space feel like an escape from the craziness of everyday lives.



From the moment he purchased his home in Wainscott almost 20 years ago, Chris Schlank has seen it as a soothing escape from his hectic life in Manhattan. "It's a refuge," says Schlank, a founder and managing partner of Savanna ([savannafund.com](http://savannafund.com)), a New York City-based real estate company that repositions and develops new residential and commercial buildings in Manhattan. But much has changed in the real estate magnate's life

since he first moved into the home almost two decades ago. So he recently enlisted designer Jessica Gersten ([jessicagersteninteriors.com](http://jessicagersteninteriors.com)) to work with him to give it her touch.

"The home is part of a 30-acre preserve that my mother bought in 1982," says Schlank. "When I bought this property from her in 2000, I originally wanted to keep its farmhouse quality and tried to raise it 16 feet in the air in order to dig out a basement for use of my kids and create

more space," he explains. But when he realized the effort was not destined to succeed, he started over and rebuilt the five-bedroom home in a traditional Shingle style with a modern layout and influences inside.

"I always wanted the home to be very calm and bright," says Schlank, who was married to his first wife when he bought it and raised his children there in summers. His new wife, Amy Zhen, a commercial

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