

Sweet Retreat

MABLEY HANDLER INTERIOR DESIGN BLENDS ELEGANCE AND COMFORT IN A LIVABLE OASIS FOR A BUSY FAMILY IN BRIDGEHAMPTON.

BY JEAN NAYAR, PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC STRIFFLER



From the moment interior designers Jennifer Mabley and Austin Handler were enlisted to take on the interior design of this lovely new 8,500-square-foot home on Butter Lane in Bridgehampton, they were in sync with their clients. "It was a magical relationship and a wonderful collaboration because we immediately spoke the same language," says Mabley. With an easy harmony emerging between designers and clients from the start, it's hardly surprising, then, that the designers' influence ultimately stretched beyond the decor to the interior architectural finishes as well as the exterior and gardens.

"The owners are a family from New York and they were working with a local builder to construct the seven-bedroom home," says Mabley. "They had been following our work and called us early in the project to work with the builder to consult on finishing details, and as we went along we started working with them on hardscape elements and landscaping

and got involved with tree selection too," she adds. "We touched on the whole project, which made the experience very special for us."

Since the home was created to serve not only as a summer getaway for the family, who had just completed a renovation of their apartment in Manhattan, but also as a year-round weekend retreat, the owners wanted interiors that would be elegant yet approachable. "They instinctively have a lot of style and class, but they also wanted the rooms to be comfortable and relaxed," says Mabley. "It's a family retreat, not a museum, and they didn't want the interiors to feel intimidating."

To develop a sophisticated yet approachable ambiance throughout, the designers started by introducing key elements of substance—a pale oak paneling in the library, a custom vanity in the master bath and distinctive tiles and mosaics in all of the other baths, which distinguish each space yet unify them with connecting threads. They also chose different wallpapers





Clockwise from top left: Jennifer Mabley and Austin Handler paid close attention to custom detailing, giving the home a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing look; gray, blue and cream hues were used throughout to tie the interiors together seamlessly; the living room features a sofa and chairs by Kravet, a dining table by Julian Chichester. Opposite page (from top): The home's outdoor seating area and expansive lawn are perfect for entertaining; neutral grays and sandy cream wallpapeis enrich the home's rooms.



to enrich some of the rooms, including a deep blue grasscloth in one of the bedrooms, and a soothing neutral palette of soft grays, sandy creams and smoky blues in public rooms. Against this refined backdrop, an inviting mix of transitional-style furnishings, including a dining table from Julian Chichester and sofas and chairs from Kravet (which has produced a Mabley Handler line of fabrics and soon will introduce a furniture line from the design duo), sets a tone of understated elegance, while a cache of striking light fixtures, notably a pair of beaded chandeliers from Ro Sham Beaux in the dining area, injects notes of drama.



While the home was designed to be a place for the family to relax, it also serves as the setting for occasional special events hosted by the owners for larger groups of family and friends, so all of the guest rooms were fitted out with finishes and custom details with comfort in mind. Yet the master suite is the ultimate retreat. "It has a double chaise in the bump-out space, ideal for morning coffee or a quick snooze, as well as its own gas fireplace, which makes fall and winter weekends a bit cozier," says Mabley. "It's truly an oasis from the busyness of their city life." ■