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Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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SHAPE OF
WATER

Make A Splash

At poolside, RH chaises, table and chairs are homeowner purchases, while closer to the pool house near the TV, Serena & Lily chairs are paired with a Bernhardt coffee table and side tables. The terrace is Hispania granite, while native bluestone was used for the pool coping and terrace banding. Nepeta fills the planting beds, which are edged with Tide Hill boxwoods. See *Resources*.



AWAY AT HOME

Colorful contemporary design fills a pool house with vacation vibes

BY CATRIONA BRANCA | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW FRASZ

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hen Emily and Jeff Hanlon wanted to add a pool house to their New Canaan property, they turned to Ralph Mackin of Mackin Architects, who had designed their colonial farmhouse and garage—which resembles an old stone carriage house—a few years earlier. “We used the garage as the inspiration for the pool house design, as if it was an old stone barn on the farm and repurposed,” says Mackin. “We also added a potting shed and greenhouse, with adjacent gardens and orchard, and a barn to complete the country farm feeling.”

To furnish their new pool house, the Hanlons called on longtime friend Jeanne Collins of JerMar Designs. “Our children are friends, and we knew each other well before embarking on the project. It is always helpful to have a deep sense of how a family lives and what inspires them, so it was a luxury to have that from the get-go,” notes Collins. Although the main house style is very traditional, this family wanted a colorful, creative vibe for their new entertaining space. “They wanted the pool house to feel more contemporary, relaxed and like a vacation getaway,” says Collins. “I completely embraced that vibe and had a lot of fun creating this joyful design.”

Beyond its expected use, the pool house functions as a place for entertaining and holiday gatherings, so it needed to have plenty of seating and dining space. “It also serves as a daily spa retreat, so the design needed to feel fresh and inspiring,” says Collins. “We outfitted it with a steam shower, TV, kitchen, guest bedroom, full bath, laundry and dining areas for a full staycation experience.”

A vaulted ceiling finished in a weathered gray-stained Hemlock selected by Mackin Architects plus white walls, sofa and chairs create the perfect canvas for a bold and vibrant palette. “The combo of orange, blue and super white is invigorating and happy, immediately



Easy, Breezy, Beautiful
(THIS PAGE) A Moooi pendant light sets a contemporary tone in the main living space, where sofas and chairs from Kravet are topped with custom throw pillows in Stroheim fabrics. The nesting coffee tables are crafted by GS WoodWorking, and the Bernhardt entertainment credenza is through Safavieh.
Stylish Dining (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM) The oak-and-metal table in the dining nook is custom designed by Mackin Architects, while the dining chairs are custom by JerMar Designs, fabricated by Classic Upholstery in a Stroheim fabric. Serena & Lily Riviera bar stools offer seating at the kitchen island. See *Resources*.

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signifying this space as a sanctuary designed for fun,” says the designer. “The brightly patterned throw pillows, dining chairs and cushions add personality to the space and almost work like pieces of art—inspiring with color and pattern. They play off the art and add to the creative ambience.”

Several pieces of abstract art also deliver a creative energy. “Art is an integral part of design, and here we have a beautiful collection of works from local artists, including Robin Babbin and Kelly Rossetti,” says Collins. “Their paintings are calming and serene.”

“I love the feeling I get when I enter this space,” she continues. “It is impactful for me to see how, when people enter, they visibly look more relaxed and breathe more easily—shoulders drop and they just look around in awe. It is a sight for the senses with the different colors, textures and patterns. The ceiling and all the big windows looking out to the incredible view brings a sense of calm that balances the sensory experience in the interiors.”

Outside, the pool, terraces, connecting masonry stairs and walls, as well as the fire bowl area were designed by Janice Parker Landscape Architects to fit the local vernacular. “Connecticut has been farmland for centuries,” says Parker. “This was a very New England farmland-inspired design.”

The outdoor “rooms” are perfect for relaxing, working and entertaining, while the firepit area is a real draw for evening gatherings. Additionally, according to Parker, “The entire family wanted to have a farm-to-table lifestyle and experience, in a beautiful and sustainable environment.” Now, throughout the summer, the family can harvest a variety of flowers, herbs and produce from the cutting and vegetable gardens by Aventine Gardens.

Concludes Collins: “The clients love having a resort-feeling retreat right on their property for their family and guests to enjoy any time of the year.” 🌸



The Big Picture

The new pool house and potting shed/greenhouse are located down the sloping property from the main house. A firepit area—complete with a FireFeatures firebowl—flanks the pool across from the pool house. The pool was designed by Janice Parker Landscape Architects and built by Wagner Pools. The fenced gardens contain flowers, vegetables and fruit trees. See Resources.