

The cypress-paneled library of Michael Recanatì and Ira Statfeld's East Hampton, New York, house, which was designed by architect Frank Greenwald and decorated by Sharon Simonaire; the Chesterfield sofa and the leather pouf are by Simonaire, and the armchair is by Lucca & Co. Facing page: A circa-1820 English Regency rosewood book stand from Cove Landing and a stair model dating from the 1930s; the 1950s French chair is upholstered in a Bergamo fabric. See Resources.





PERFECT STORM

THANKS TO DESIGNER SHARON SIMONAIRE, AN ECLECTIC
CONFLUENCE OF STYLES SEAMLESSLY COMES TOGETHER AT AN
UNEXPECTEDLY COSMOPOLITAN BEACH HOUSE

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In today's world of renovation, there are all kinds of upgrades: plusher sofas, nickel-plated bath fittings, more fabulous wood floors. But the best example of the constant passion for home improvement lies in how two words—a verb and a preposition—got upgraded to a noun.

That is, teardown. Of course, given how quick some people are to pronounce a death sentence on existing houses, razing them immediately to build new ones that are twice as big, getting them decorated instantly, and moving right in, a noun was needed—and fast.

But what's the hurry? Not everyone is frantic for perfection Right Now. It was in the mid-'90s that Ira Statfeld and Michael Recanati bought a rambling, undistinguished ranch house on a prize piece of East Hampton real estate, steps from the Atlantic dunes, and, strange as it may seem, just moved in. Eight years later a totally new structure has at long last risen, and with the help of decorator Sharon Simonaire, the couple and their young son, Rafe, have that rare thing: a showplace that also feels as though they've lived in it for many years.

Well Wrought, a 1993 drawing by Richard Serra, hangs in the living area above one of a pair of linen-upholstered sofas by Simonaire; the mahogany dining table and leather side chairs are vintage Kaare Klint, and the 1930s copper-and-amber-glass chandelier is by Poul Henningsen. Facing page: In the office, circa-1926 Henningsen light fixtures are suspended above an antique French library table and leather bench from Lucca & Co.; the leather chairs are by Helge Vestergaard Jensen, and the 1940s steel cabinet is attributed to Jansen. See Resources.





"The house was in great shape and in a great location," Recanati says matter-of-factly. "The only real drawback was that it showed terribly—it was a suburban home in the middle of the Hamptons." At the time it was a summer house for Recanati and Stafeld, private investors who lived in Manhattan and traveled a lot. Two years ago, though, they decided to sell their apartment and relocate to East Hampton full-time.

After consulting architect Frank Greenwald about how to proceed, the couple settled on a floor plan that worked neatly with the original footprint. "We had the luxury of living in the house for a while," adds Recanati, "so we knew exactly what we wanted."

The plan was a kind of rancho deluxe, a series of pavilion-like rooms all connected one to another, with barely ten feet of corridor in the



entire place. "We basically came up with a fresh version of a shingled cottage," Greenwald explains. "We kept trying to pare it down, to make it cleaner and modern but with a familiar Hamptons-cottage feel to it."

And even though the house is laid out on a classical, symmetrical grid, it has an organic feel, without the usual rooms in their usual places. "It's how we live, not rules of architecture, that drove the layout," says

Recanati. Similarly, they followed no rules when it came to decorating. Statfeld, who oversaw the decor details, called on Sharon Simonaire, famous for her supremely understated brand of cool that blends East and West, modern and antique.

"Michael and Ira have amazing taste," says Simonaire. "They just needed a little help organizing their thoughts." Indeed, while the

Facing page: The kitchen's slatted barstool and pendant lights are by Ann-Morris Antiques; the stainless-steel refrigerator is by Sub-Zero. This page: Lotus, a pug, in the breakfast room; the mahogany dining table and French '40s rope chairs are from Mecox Gardens, and the antique French light fixture is from Ann-Morris Antiques. See Resources.





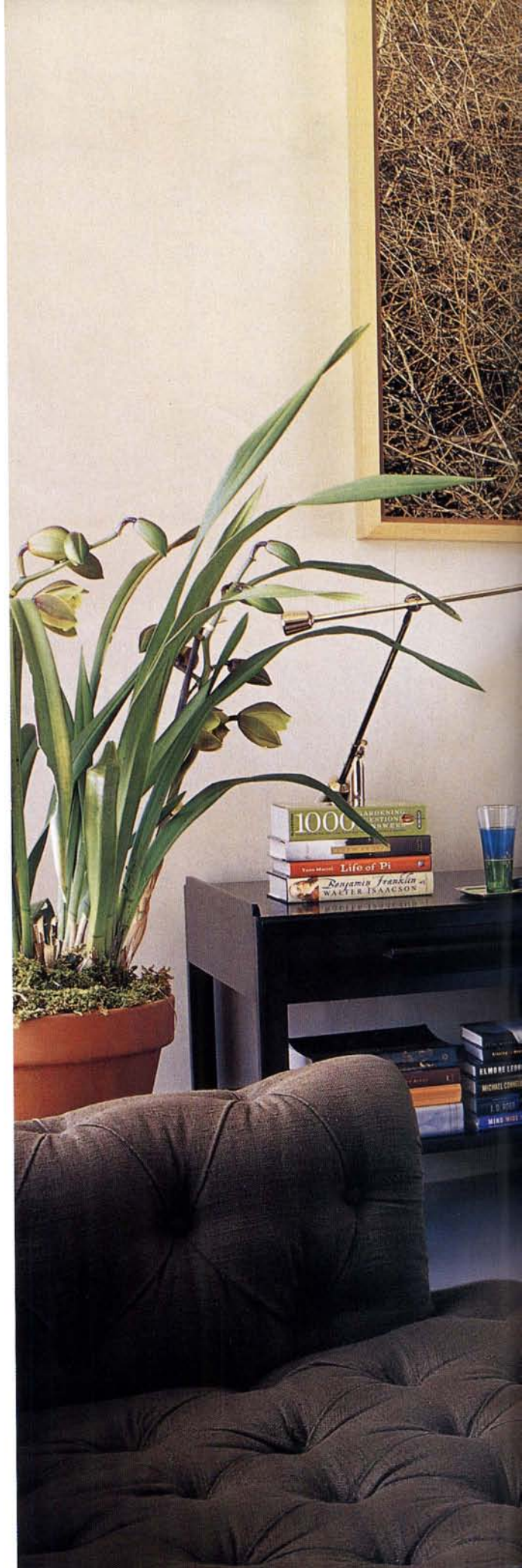
pair's enthusiasm for diverse styles of art and design—Danish Modern furniture, African artifacts, modern art, classical nudes—may make them riveting dinner companions, it's not always an easy mix to pull off. "We collect everything," says Statfeld, "but it all works together."

And other than the reclaimed antique floorboards, there isn't a single overriding visual theme. The living/dining room—a long, narrow gallery of a space that despite its central importance feels intimate—is a study in cool blues and dark browns, boasting a Richard Serra, a Buddha head, and a nude study around two marine-blue sofas at one end. And at the other, a long dining table, leather chairs, and a sideboard, all by 1930s Danish designer Kaare Klint, lend the room a hint of Old World without feeling Olde Worlde. The circular library is awash in golden paneling, punctuated with a tufted sofa, French '50s chairs in sherbet stripes of lemon and orange, and an Arts and Crafts antler chandelier. In the sunny breakfast room, also circular, are an English Regency-style table banked by 1940s rope-and-wood chairs atop a glittery mosaic-tile floor.

If most of the house isn't exactly beachy, the sleeping quarters draw the curtains on the sun even more. The master bedroom has thick draperies, walls of sepia-toned plaster, a leather-tufted bed, and a mammoth Dutch *kas*, or wardrobe. And the guest room has walls upholstered in warm Belgian linen, accented with pops of red. "There's something so cozy about rooms where you can shut out the sun for a change," Simonaire says. "You need that in a beach house."

But what's most remarkable about the place is that even though it's brand spanking new, the synthesis of styles, objects, and influences gives the impression of a steady evolution, as if the family had lived in the house for as long, say, as they've lived on the property.

Clearly, it was worth waiting for. ■





Simonaire designed the master bedroom's tufted bed, which is upholstered in Edelman leather and dressed in a mohair blanket by Hermès; the Dunbar tables are from R.E. Steele Antiques, and the photograph above the bed, *Untitled (Desert Scrubs)*, is by Richard Misrach. Facing page: A library chair by Mecox Gardens in the guest room; the circa-1830 French textile templates are from Ursus Books and Prints. See Resources.