

# Connecticut COTTAGES & GARDENS

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## EAST COAST DESIGN

COLOR CONFIDENCE IN NEW CANAAN

CLEAN AND GREEN ON LONG ISLAND

COLLECTOR'S VISION IN WESTCHESTER

ECLECTIC ART IN PALM BEACH





**Clever Curator** | To give her client's environmentally friendly second home on Long Island a beachy, exotic vibe, designer Alicia Orrick chose a mix of contemporary and antique furnishings to intersperse with items gathered on the couple's worldly travels. The design objective is achieved in the living room (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE), where modern Plexi-Craft chairs pair with a table recycled from a fallen tree. See *Resources*.



# CLEANING HOUSE

A GREENWICH DESIGN TEAM CRAFTS A SECOND HOME TO REFLECT ITS ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS RESIDENT

BY MOLLIE MAGILL | PRODUCED AND STYLED BY COREY GRANT TIPPIN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRUEN



**After-School Special** | The one exception to the home's airy, light-filled aesthetic is the cozy study (THIS PAGE), which transitions from a work space for the husband to an evening hangout for the family. Lindy Weaver designed cabinetry to hide unsightly printers, scanners and cables from sight. A pine wood table is nestled behind a family-friendly Edward Ferrell & Lewis Mittman sofa that's covered in a plush Rogers & Goffigon linen canvas. See *Resources*.



I call it my 'out-of-body experience,' says Fairfield County resident Rhonda Sherwood of one of the most memorable years of her life. "I built a house, fully decorated the house and started a non-profit organization, all while simultaneously raising three kids. It was such a great feeling."

The whirlwind experience began fall 2007 when Sherwood, a longtime environmental health activist, began planning a benefit for Mount Sinai's Children's Environmental Health Center, where she is chairman of the board. The center was founded by pediatrician Dr. Philip Landrigan, who studies toxins in the environment and their effects on children's health.

As Sherwood began recruiting like-minded green individuals to work on the organization's first fundraiser, she also began interviewing interior designers for her family's second home on Long Island. After a dozen interviews left her emptyhanded, a friend recommended Alicia Orrick of Orrick and Company. "There was an instant rapport," says Sherwood, who felt Orrick could deliver the beachy, exotic vibe she imagined for the home—a departure from the Gracie-style wallpaper and traditional furnishings adorning the Fairfield County first residence.



**Right Feel** | "The dining room has the least architectural excitement, so we needed to infuse it with some texture and excitement with the grasscloth wallcovering," says Orrick, who also chose a graphic Madeline Weinrib area rug to add a visual punch (ABOVE). The lighting fixture, a coral chandelier (made from coral that had washed up on shore rather than the harvested variety), is another nod to the homeowner's eco-friendly philosophy. A utilitarian table is dressed up with crystal candlesticks from Dovecote. See *Resources*.

A move-in date of the following July demanded that Orrick and her team coordinate the design of the interior architecture with the furnishings. Weekly job meetings became a reprieve from the "enjoyable craziness" of Sherwood's benefit planning and proved an efficient forum for Orrick to tap into the homeowner's vision and her vault of eco-friendly resources amassed from her previous experience renovating homes. Sherwood recommended eco-friendly materials including a non-toxic tile adhesive called Laticrete, and low-VOC (volatile organic compound) Farrow & Ball paints for the walls and trim. All wool mattresses from Natural Bed would be paired with SDH's organic linens. For some

rooms, Orrick turned to Elizabeth Eakins' natural fiber rugs, which were used throughout the home along with natural grasscloth rugs.

Exceptions were made for must-have pieces, including a contemporary white lacquer console in the dining room and certain non-organic fabrics whose patterns were "just right." A high-gloss paint was chosen over low-VOC counterparts for cabinetry in the kitchen, designed by Lindy Weaver, who also designed millwork in the study, the master bedroom closets and all of the bathrooms. "I felt that the kitchen was important because it's a high-traffic area and I was using white cabinetry, which is less forgiving," says Sherwood. "You don't want to always be like, 'Oh, is



**White Washing |**  
“Rhonda wanted the kitchen (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE) to be as light and bright as possible,” says Weaver. Because formaldehyde is often found in cabinetry, it was important that it be “out-gassed,” a toxin-extracting technique, before installation. See *Resources*.



**Center Of Attention |**  
Because the couple enjoys entertaining, Weaver designed the kitchen around a 10-foot-long island to provide plenty of prep space, good work flow and extra seating. In its former life, the pendant lights illuminated the inside of a French factory. See *Resources*.





this organic? Is this organic?’ Don’t obsess; just know that you can make smart choices. You have to live your life.”

A palette inspired by the soothing colors of the nearby ocean and beach was given subtle twists. “There are places in every room where the eye has a chance to rest on the lighter, neutral fabrics but is kept awake by some accent colors,” says Orrick. For the dining room, that meant a pop of red from a chandelier crafted from coral that had washed up on shore, and dashes of blues and purples perk up the third-floor guest bedrooms. Furnishings, both new and antique, were sourced locally from Connecticut retailers, as well as those in New York City, Long Island and Nantucket. “We tried to balance between old pieces and very sleek contemporary pieces and mix them together in such a way that made the other look great,” says Orrick, who also incorporated exotic *objets* the travel-loving couple had amassed on trips to South America, Europe and, most recently, Morocco. Landscape artwork reflects the natural beauty of surrounding Long Island locations, and framed maps from Florence in the husband’s study echo those in their Connecticut home.

Once all was in place, Sherwood employed a toxin-flushing technique called “outgassing.” “You close all the windows and doors and turn up the heat to about 90 degrees Fahrenheit

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**Wrap And Roll** | An entrance off the kitchen dining nook (OPPOSITE AND BELOW) leads to a covered wraparound porch (LEFT), where the family spends time in summer when they inhabit the home. Entertaining can shift between the indoor and outdoor spaces, furnished with durable JANUS et Cie pieces (LEFT). “It’s like another room,” says Sherwood. “From now on, I’d only want a house with a deep porch.” See [Resources](#).







**Soothing Sleep** | “It’s the sheets, mattresses and towels you need to be organic,” says Sherwood. “You aren’t rubbing your body on anything else!” With that philosophy in mind, she selected all-natural-wool mattresses and organic linens for the bedrooms, including the master (ABOVE) and the third floor guest bedrooms (LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT). **Water Logged** | The soothing, beachy vibe transitions from the master bedroom into the bath (TOP LEFT), where small prints of shells and corals contrast with the oversized chandelier. See Resources.

to force the toxins in the wood and finishes into the air. Afterwards, you open all the windows and cross ventilate your home to clear the air,” explains Sherwood, who recommends performing a “smell test” to determine whether there are toxins permeating the air inside. However, it’s the outdoors that sees the most action during the summer months, when the family inhabits the home. A wraparound porch 14 feet deep is frequently used for entertaining and acts as a perch for watching the kids play in the saltwater swimming pool, which Sherwood hopes to have switched over to an all-natural version by this summer.

The completion of the home didn’t curtail Sherwood’s collaboration with Orrick and her team, who both attended the sold-out benefit (which raised more than \$200,000) and donated to the all-green silent auction. “The two projects were interwoven together,” says Sherwood, who also sought donations from new friends at Elizabeth Eakins, SDH Linens and Farrow & Ball. “It was the culmination of a lot of hard work.” 🌟

*For information on the 2009 Mount Sinai Children’s Environmental Health Center benefit on May 13, contact Meghan Bullock, (212) 241-6145, meghan.bullock@mssm.edu.*

**Roomy Retreat** | The long, narrow floor plan of the master bedroom was divided into a sleeping area (OPPOSITE RIGHT) and sitting area (THIS PAGE). Tactile elements enliven the muted tones in the form of a woven armchair, iridescent pillows, and a leather ottoman Orrick designed for the space. See Resources.