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# BLUE STREAK

A HOME IN GREENWICH IS IMBUED WITH NEW LIFE THROUGH A RICH COLOR PALETTE AND VARYING TEXTURAL AND LAYERED ELEMENTS.

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**INTERIOR DESIGN** Susan Bednar Long, S.B. Long Interiors, Inc.

**ARCHITECTURE** Judith Larson, Allied AIA, Judith Larson Associates

**HOME BUILDER** Bill Gardiner, Jr. and Bryan Gardiner, Gardiner Group, LLC

**BEDROOMS 9 | BATHROOMS 13 | SQUARE FEET 20,000**



To scale down an otherwise monumental living room, design-build team Judith Larson, Bill Gardiner, Jr. and Bryan Gardiner created intimate seating nooks, such as this alcove appointed with a custom settee in Maharam and J. Robert Scott mohairs.



Apparently, “meant to be” doesn’t apply just to soul mates, but also to houses. After first falling for a Georgian-style estate in Greenwich, Connecticut, the prospective homeowners were called away to London, having to pass on their dream home. They returned stateside three years later, only to discover they were not completely over the one that got away. Fortunately, fate intervened: The beloved manse was once again up for grabs. “We toured the house for two hours and then went straight to the attorney’s office to ink the deal,” the wife says.

Tasked with the challenge of making the sizable home feel less palatial and more inviting was designer Susan Bednar Long, for whom this project marked the fourth in a string of domiciles she has thoughtfully

The elegance of the living room’s piano area is derived from a substantial mahogany piano and antique pedestal table. Its casual nature is owed to the sisal floorcovering, modern art and custom-designed velvet salon sofa.

The Gracie wallpaper was hand-painted, panel by panel, right in the dining room. To counteract the classicism created by the pairing of the antique sideboard with the wallcovering's chinoiserie motif, designer Susan Bednar Long hung a contemporary Matthew Pillsbury photograph.



*Above:* Long outfitted the bistro-style kitchen with globe pendants by Hector Finch Lighting and Mark Albrecht leather-woven barstools. *Left:* A 1920s French crystal chandelier above the dining table is at once noble and effervescent. George I mahogany side chairs are covered in horsehair from Holland & Sherry.

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composed for the family of seven. “I’ve seen their tastes evolve over the years,” says Long, who splits her time between Dallas and Greenwich. “They’ve become much more interested in antiques, for example, but they’ve always preferred cozy rooms with lots of layering.”

Making a space look and feel collected (think area rugs atop sisal floorcoverings and hung works of art in addition to hand-painted wallpaper) is second nature for Long, who cultivated the skill in her previous life as a store designer for Ralph Lauren. Here, antiques sourced from Paris and London contribute a certain timeworn gravitas to the elegant tableaux; the color blue, the wife’s favorite shade, is a beautiful constant throughout; a variety of textures, from rope to silk, add depth to each space; and an enviable assemblage of modern art provides an edgy counterpoint to the otherwise classic environs.



The designer showcased diverse finishes in the wife's master bathroom. For example, the blue Christian Fischbacher grass-cloth wallpaper is a textural departure from the polished nickel hardware from Waterworks and the all-glass antique Venetian mirror. The sconces are from Chameleon Fine Lighting.

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Those classic environs were created with the help of the home's original design-build team—Judith Larson, Bill Gardiner, Jr. and Bryan Gardiner—who worked on renovations for the current owners, including the master suite dressing rooms, his-and-her bathrooms and an arched beadboard ceiling in the family room. The team had also previously outfitted the living room, a majestic entertaining zone, with a collection of intimate gathering spots, among them a piano area, game quarters and seating nooks perfect for tête-à-têtes—all showcasing Long's talent for creating memorable design moments.

For instance, French chests in the central seating area flank a dark tufted velvet sofa, while an abstract black-and-white diptych painting unapologetically strays from the traditional setting. Zooming out, a



The design-build team incorporated another room into the renovated master suite, effectively doubling its size and affixed paneling to the walls and coffered ceiling for added period charm. The luxurious trappings include a custom mohair-upholstered bed and Fortuny fabric canopy.



The blue theme carries into the pool house, where Long put a coastal spin on the regal color with a ragged-stripe floorcovering by Patterson, Flynn & Martin and Turkana Rug Stripe Horizon fabric by Ralph Lauren Home on the chairs. Raffia walls and baskets complete the nautical vibe.



The pool house echoes the grand Georgian architecture of the main estate, though the columns offer a more casual welcome thanks to the comfortable Restoration Hardware furniture positioned right at the entrance. The pool is by Shoreline Pools.

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Venetian mirror and antique Murano glass chandelier come into view; they are dynamic in the presence of the room's rich upholstery. Deeper into the house, more examples of Long's stylish layering abound: In the husband's office, for instance, a stately antique walnut burl desk is a commanding presence, while a black-and-white photograph by Josef Hoflehner adds graphic impact to the wall. Those surfaces are also special in their own right, covered, as they are, in sumptuous nailhead-trimmed Ralph Lauren navy felt.

"I really like the way the color blue is interpreted throughout the house," Long says of the distinctive mood each room assumes depending on the particular shade of blue embellishing its finery. A curved sky blue-and-cream velvet sofa infuses the living room's piano area with Long's modern traditional signature. The wife's office gets its scholarly femininity from built-in bookcases painted in a serene steely blue strié, a tone echoed in the master suite, where its effect is more regal. The formal dining room's intricately hand-painted Gracie wallpaper is, appropriately, the color of Wedgwood china. And the foyer's wool gray-blue stair runner adds a dignified note to the space, which the design-build team appointed with soft rounded corners and a graceful arched opening.

Coming from the sculptural urns, trimmed hedges and clipped aerial trees of the formal outdoor landscape—composed by landscape designer James Doyle of Doyle Herman Design Associates, along with lead designer Taizo Horikawa, to match the grand Georgian architecture—the entry feels intimate, like a heartfelt gesture. "Our goal was to evoke elegance and warmth," says Larson. "It's like the house is giving you a hug." **L**