

INTERIOR DESIGN

# A GARDEN HOME MAKEOVER

*Furnishings from  
a former home are  
re-imagined inside  
a new abode.*

By Laurie Higgins  
Photography by Michael J. Lee

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** LINDA MERRILL  
DECORATIVE SURROUNDINGS

Designer Linda Merrill  
made the owners'  
existing furnishings  
and collections the  
star of the show.

WHEN THE HOMEOWNERS moved from a large house in Truro to a garden home in the Village at Duxbury, they didn't like the word "downsize." Instead, they like "rightsized," because the new home is more in line with their current lifestyle. Although the home had many great features—an open floor plan, vaulted ceilings and a loft, elegant built-in shelving, hardwood floors and moldings—it was awash in cream colors and cried out for a style update befitting the new owners.

"We loved the space," the homeowner says. "It's bright and sunny and open, but it is a different scale from the old one, so I knew I needed some help decorating."

The owners were particular about paint color, choosing a custom blue-green blend for the bookshelves and Benjamin Moore Sea Shell OC120 for the walls.





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For a matching pair, designer Linda Merrill reupholstered two chairs in "Island Coral" Thibaut fabric in beige and had the rolled arms of one chair reworked.



For a cohesive look, paint colors used in the living room are carried over to the kitchen: custom blue-green on the walls and Benjamin Moore Sea Shell OC120 for the newly installed wall bead board.

She hired interior designer Linda Merrill of Linda Merrill Decorative Surroundings in Duxbury. They met for lunch and hit it off immediately. "Linda was so much fun to shop with," the homeowner says. "I was really involved in the process and she really understood me."

**Past meets present**

The first thing Merrill did was ask to see photos of the Truro home's interior to help determine what needed to be replaced or added in the new home. To her delight, the homeowner had beautiful collections—special items picked up in her travels—and a lot of antiques.

## INTERIOR DESIGN

Selected for its traditional lines, the nine-arm C412 chandelier from Nauset Lantern Shop draws attention to the dining table made by West Barnstable Tables.



The owners' Oriental rug anchors the living room area while a "Bennett" Ethan Allen sectional sofa in Johnston Cream Herringbone further sets this room apart from the dining room.

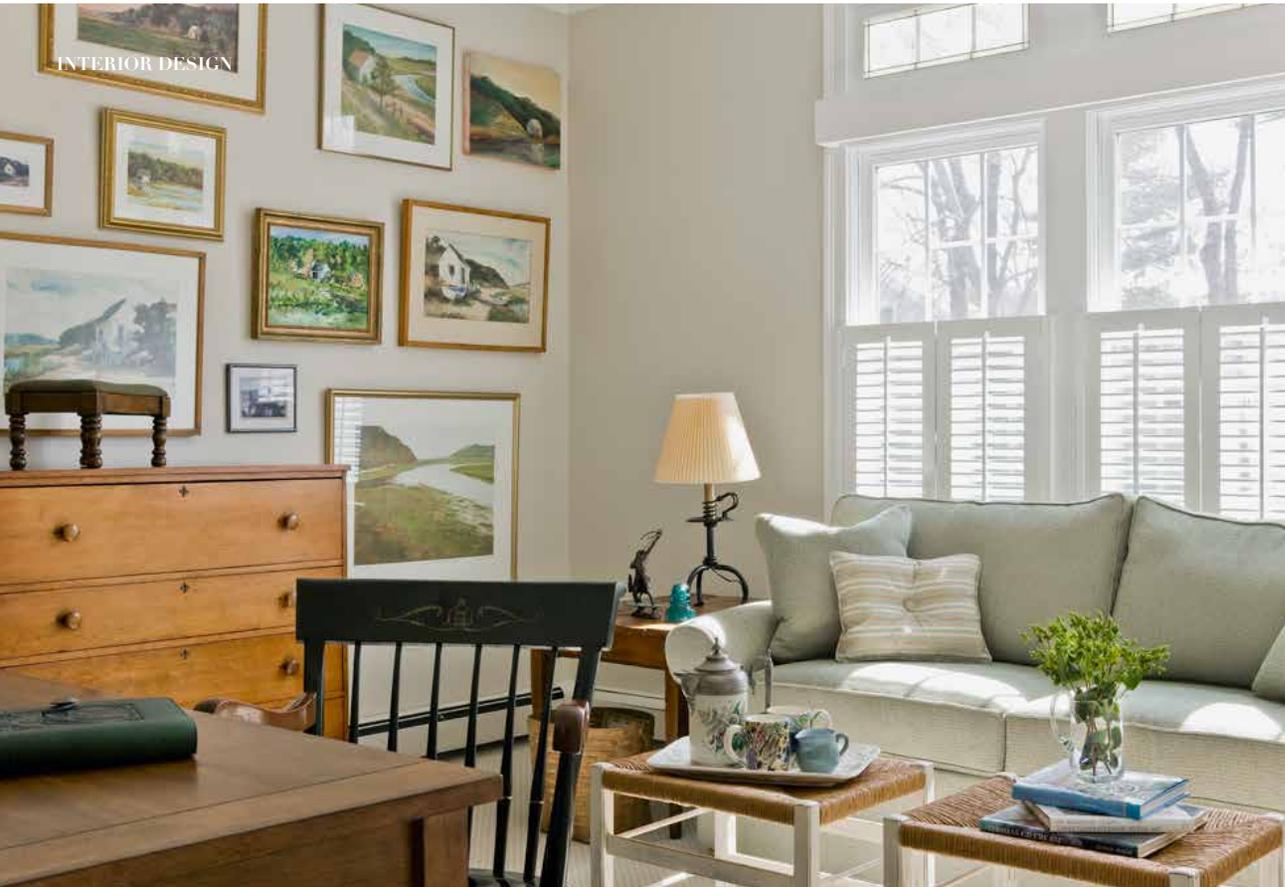
"She has huge collections of things that were sentimental and interesting to look at," Merrill says. "When she started opening the boxes, I was like a kid in a candy shop."

For the living room, Merrill used a beautiful Oriental rug as a jumping off place. The predominantly red rug integrates other colors, including a subdued shade of blue-green, which Merrill used as the background color for the bookshelves. Against this sophisticated hue, the homeowners' collections really stand out. They bought a white sectional sofa, and Merrill reupholstered two similar but not identical chairs in a matching neutral fabric to create a sense of unity.

### A kitchen color story

The same shade of blue-green was used on the kitchen walls. The homeowner's collection of antique earthenware jugs is displayed on top of the cabinets. Glass shelves on a small, angled wall were replaced with a new built-in jelly cupboard.

"The kitchen had wallpaper and lighter countertops originally," Merrill says. "We went with very dark, almost black, leathered granite countertops and a new white backsplash of bead board so there is a nice contrast."



Mixing old and new

Merrill enjoyed the challenge of complementing the homeowners' special old pieces with new furnishings. The dining room table, for example, is new but made from reclaimed wood to look old. For chairs the homeowner already owned, Merrill designed new cushions. The chandelier is new, but two paintings of the Pamet River are from the homeowner's former home.

More river paintings are displayed gallery-style in the library/den, which has a sofa-bed for guests. Another dual-purpose area is the loft overlooking the living room. Here, the husband created an office for himself, and Merrill painted an alcove blue as a guest room for grandchildren. Even though the space is small, it is colorful and cheery.

"We repainted everything because the homeowner was very particular about paint, even the off-white in the living room," Merrill says. "I always tell clients to paint swatches on the walls because the same colors don't look the same [in every room]."

Merrill always advises clients to pick a paint color they love, but encourages them to wait until the fabrics and furnishings are all chosen to finalize it. It's easier to match paint to fabric than it is to find fabric to match paint.

"People always rush the decision on paint," she says. "It really is a process of trial and error." ▲

Above: The first-floor den/guest room has a full-size Ethan Allen "Bennett" sleeper sofa upholstered in Chatterton Mineral and custom shutters made by New England Shutter Mills



Left: Tucked into a loft overlooking the living room, an alcove with guest beds is painted a space-defining Newburyport Blue HC-155 by Benjamin Moore.

Right: Calm and soothing, the master bedroom was painted Benjamin Moore Vale Mist 1494 to complement the warm, wood tones of the couple's antiques.



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