

MAY-JUNE 2008

VERANDA





A STUDY IN

INTERIOR DESIGN BY BENJAMIN NORIEGA-ORTIZ ARCHITECTURE BY THOMAS J. PIRKL



hamptons getaway

CONTRASTS

LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY GROUNDWORKS LANDSCAPING PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANTOINE BOOTZ TEXT BY ELIZABETH GAYNOR

A HOME IN THE HAMPTONS MOST OFTEN CONJURES IMAGES OF THE TRADITIONAL SHINGLE STYLE WITH WHITE TRIM. ROOMS ARE CENTERED AROUND FIREPLACES, FURNITURE IS OVERSTUFFED

and covered in chintz, and the garden is just as flowery. Designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz of Manhattan turned that image on its head for two homeowners who were up for a fresh approach.

Both Debra Melman and Gloria Sacchi enjoy careers related to the home industry. Melman's advertising firm represents real estate clients nationally. Sacchi is executive vice president of a mortgage brokerage-banking firm in the luxury marketplace. "We knew what we wanted and where we wanted it," says Sacchi. The women presented a wish list to the architect and the designer that included such original notions as a kitchen in the living room, an upstairs lounge, a spare master bedroom and a three-car closet—a walk-in equal in space to that of the three-car garage below—with a laundry room.

The result is a house reminiscent of shingle style but with space reassigned to accommodate the lifestyle of owners who entertain frequently. "A lot of people build these houses and then spend all their time in one room. Debbi and Gloria really use the entire place," says Noriega-Ortiz, who was assisted by Sarah Anderson-Magness, one of his senior designers. His penchant for monochromatic schemes dovetailed with the owners' request for dark brown floors offset by lots of white paint and upholstery: "To me, white is a color. If I'm going to use it, I'm going to use it all over."

The loftlike living room, which runs the length of the house, features solid, soft shapes with as much variation in material—wool, cotton, vinyl, polyester—as in texture—flat, tufted, quilted, pearl-studded—as in shading—seven tones from cream to chalk. The black coffee table seems to grow out of the bare oak floor, the glossy finish of both as strong as espresso.

Contrast some of Noriega-Ortiz's bold moves—the strict black and white living room, bright saffron formal dining room and lustrous bedroom featuring a ten-foot-high headboard—with his delicate touches. He specified eighteen-

foot sheer panels to soften the soaring height of the entry hall, a Swedish side chair with a fleecy goat-hair seat and clusters of teardrop crystals attached to a custom chandelier that at night appears to float over the foyer.

In tightly focused color schemes, he casts the rooms as well-proportioned volumes, not merely collections of things: "If you use one color in abundance, shapes and forms become important. Then you can manipulate scale, style, pieces with different price tags." His method invites some of his clients' humbler possessions into his compositions, side by side with more rarefied new fittings. Melman and Sacchi delighted in his suggestions to organize a wall grid of their artwork and to paint a vintage player piano a glossy white, creating a glamorous corner.

Noriega-Ortiz's all-saffron, all-brown or all-white room treatments play with shape and tweak the emotions as you experience his design. "He nailed the look we wanted," Melman extols. "We love his passion." □

OPENING PAGES AND COVER: Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz designed loveseats in Gulf Fabrics faux leather. Back-to-back Room & Board sofas and daybed in microfiber. Ralph Lauren Home table. Drexel Heritage chairs. Gretchen Bellinger fabrics on pillows. Wisteria lamps. Royale draperies. **ABOVE:** Debra Melman's grandmother won piano on "The Price Is Right." **OPPOSITE:** Royale sheers. Chandelier by Noriega-Ortiz with ABYU Lighting. Country Swedish chair; seat in Sacco Carpet goat hair. Stone Yard table.



NORIEGA-ORTIZ: "IF YOU USE ONE COLOR IN ABUNDANCE, SHAPES AND FORMS BECOME IMPORTANT."

RIGHT: Dining room's saffron fabrics stand up to furniture with strong lines. Crate & Barrel chairs in Larsen velvet. Desiron dining table. Ripple curtains of Crezana Design's silky chiffon span wall of windows. Ceiling fixture with dangling crystals by ABYU Lighting washes walls so they shimmer at night. Embroidered silk by Zimmer + Rohde has been stretched and hung as art above sideboard by Room & Board. Lamp by The Design Studio. Flowers throughout house by Steven Wine.





ABOVE: Open kitchen at one end of living room invites guests to perch while meal preparation is under way. Viking griddle. Sub-Zero refrigerator. Noriega-Ortiz designed curtain of beads by Ball Chain as "chandelier" around Zephyr stove hood. Plexi-Craft barstools. OPPOSITE: In kitchen, custom banquette with pillows, all in Kravet stripe, runs length of room. Plexi-Craft white acrylic tops on black metal bases with Room & Board chairs that offer view of swimming pool.







PREVIOUS PAGES: Master bedroom suite coverlet and shams in Romo silk-velvet. Mirrored bedside tables. Ostrich pillow made by ABYU. Noriega-Ortiz designed tall headboard in fabric by Classic Cloth; dust ruffle in same fabric. Chairs from Room & Board. Stool by Philippe Starck. Lamps with Swarovski crystal trim by ABYU Lighting. Shag rug. ABOVE AND LEFT: Man Ray photographs in guest room. Feathery lampshade by ABYU Lighting on antique base. RIGHT: Room & Board bed. Bed linens by Nancy Koltes. Restoration Hardware lamps. Mirrors by Crate & Barrel. Royale voile sheers. Bedside tables by The Design Studio.





THESE PAGES: Upper and lower porches span back of house. Pergola for alfresco dining. Gentle steps extend length of 40-foot pool and descend from checkerboard terrace in setting where strict geometry orders space. West Elm chaises and chairs with white cushions in Sunbrella fabric. Louis Ghost chairs by Philippe Starck. Custom banquettes against house. Custom hot tub. Tent pavilion by Frontgate. Wood-burning fireplace.

