

# WESTCHESTER home

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## Fabulous Interior Designs

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## The Mix, Mastered

A center-hall Colonial in Rye goes from grandmotherly to gorgeous, thanks to a clean, transitional design with an antique touch.

Ken Gemes had worked with these clients for years, helping them transform homes from Bronxville to Greenwich, Connecticut. But when they bought this vintage Georgian Colonial in Rye, he knew he had his work cut out for him. "It was hard to see past all the stuff that was going on," he says: endless yards of busy floral fabrics, from carpets to curtains; heavy furniture; dark paneling; and an indifferent addition on the back. The space felt low and flat. Still, "they knew the bones were good, that we could turn it into something more visually appealing and comfortable."

Gemes started, literally, at the entrance. He replaced a Victorian-style front door featuring oval glass with a solid door flanked by leaded sidelights based on a 1923 Bronxville house the owners had long admired. (Architect Dean Davis designed the new supporting structure.) "The rest," says Gemes, "was cosmetic." He darkened the wood floors and lightened the walls to give a feeling of height, used crisp, geometric-patterned fabrics that are more Wearstler than Waverly, and installed light fixtures with a fresh, almost edgy, feel. In the living room, where custom-made furniture was downscaled to the space, he used a spa-like sea-glass palette. Dark paneling in the addition got light paint. Each room has a subtle tonal color for a quiet statement. The new dining room is almost unrecognizable, its overly formal look replaced by grasscloth on the walls, sisal carpet, a Deco-inspired table and chairs, and a shell chandelier. Finally, he turned a double-height back stairway, part of the addition, into a soaring segue to the upstairs bedrooms.





Sea glass-toned public spaces mix upholstered Hickory Chair furniture with the owner's antiques. Philip Jeffries grasscloth wall covering and an Oly seashell chandelier give the formal dining room a casual feel, while a new back stairway has Langhorne carpet and a Festoni fixture.



This doesn't mean "old" was ignored. Gemes combined new pieces with the clients' 18th-century antiques acquired in London. "If you have things that are really interesting and have a special history to them, work them in," he advises. "Cherry-pick the nicest pieces and then do sleeker dark-wood pieces with them. Everything has to work together."

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