

# New England HOME CT



New Year,  
*New Heights*





# Comfort Zone

Soft colors and sensual furnishings bring a sense of warmth and calm to a modern house.

*Text by GAIL RAVGIALA  
Photography by JANE BEILES*



Architect Tanner White designed the entry staircase as a piece of functional modern art; the custom light fixture is a chimerical foil to its sturdy composition. The upholstered bench is one of many sensual accents interior designer Michelle Morgan Harrison placed throughout the house. **FACING PAGE:** In the family room, three large pendant lights, each a different size, ground the light-filled space.



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Black framing around the entry and windows brings modern references to the exterior. In the living room, strips of oak add warmth and interest to the fireplace, which is set between two banks of steel-framed windows; the curves of the club chairs and coffee table play against the straight lines of the wood slats and window mullions. The catwalk above the entry was designed to create an “old library” look in a distinctly modern space.



What the architect, interior designer, and homeowner achieved in this distinctive house in Greenwich is a study of yin and yang, of straight lines balanced with curves, of contrasts leading to harmony.

The intersection of old and new attitudes begins with the exterior. Tanner White, whose firm Tanner White Architects designed the 8,000-square-foot residence, calls it “updated traditional.” Shingled peaks familiar to the New England architectural landscape are dispersed on flat, modern datum lines to create the

A curved sofa and oval ottoman bring softness in form, texture, and color to the living room. *Vincent*, a portrait by Frederick J. Brown, is a favorite piece of art from the owners' collection. **FACING PAGE:** The dining room seats twelve to fourteen guests comfortably. The tabletop and base are irregular in shape with rounded corners, while the chairs are upholstered in a soft green velvet. The buffet is painted with Benjamin Moore Tarrytown Green in a high-gloss finish.



**“THIS IS A FANTASTIC MODERN HOUSE, BUT IT WAS COLD AND MASCULINE. MY JOB WAS TO WARM IT UP.”**—*INTERIOR DESIGNER MICHELLE MORGAN HARRISON*

illusion of a floating roofline. The cladding is a combination of shingle siding and accents of horizontal shiplap boards given a modern edge with black framing around the impressive double-height entry and ten-foot-tall tilt-and-turn steel-frame windows.

To a passerby, the house had a substantial, even stately presence. Inside, however, there was a new-construction starkness. “This is a fantastic modern house,” says interior designer Michelle Morgan Harrison of Morgan Harrison Home, “but it

was cold and masculine. My job was to warm it up.”

“This is my dream home,” says the owner, who with her husband had raised three now-adult children in a charming 1928 Tudor and a 1904 vintage house with low ceilings and dark rooms. At three acres, the lot gave White space to create a footprint with rooms laid out in a long, linear pattern, one after the other, so that each has glazing on two or three walls. All those windows filled the interior with much appreciated natural light.



“I WANTED A SANCTUARY, BUT I WANTED IT WARM AND INVITING, NOT IMPOSING OR FANCY. I LIKE THAT EVERYTHING IS SIMPLE.”—THE HOMEOWNER

“I wanted a sanctuary,” says the owner, “but I wanted it warm and inviting, not imposing or fancy.” She and Morgan Harrison accomplished that with soft colors, textured textiles and rugs, curvaceous furniture, and spectacular lighting fixtures.

“I like that everything is simple,” says the owner. Simple, yet sophisticated as in the two-story entry foyer where the sculptural oak, steel, and glass staircase is itself a piece of art. It is beautifully complemented by a custom Random chandelier by Bocci. Its twenty pendant lights in three shades of smoky gray and blue green hover in suspended animation like little crystal spaceships. The foyer is grounded by a catwalk on the upper level designed by White to bring an “old library” look to the

**RIGHT:** Curves and soft textures continue in a guest room that features a low headboard upholstered in white linen. Ripples, the swirl-pattern wallpaper, is from Phillip Jeffries. **BELOW:** White marble, a curb-less walk-in shower, and a soaking tub with a view make for a spa-like primary bathroom. **FACING PAGE:** Like the kitchen wall, the table base has a cerused-wood finish. Rather than a sink in front of the window as is typical, White placed the cooktop and hood there to allow the cook to take in the view.



distinctly modern space.

Throughout, the palette is a mix of subtle greens and soft mushroom tones. In the kitchen, cabinets painted Benjamin Moore Titanium, a pale gray with blue-green undertones, are set against the cerused-wood finish on the walls.

The kitchen opens to the family room, a light-filled space with windows on three walls and lovely views of the grounds and patio. A lush Moroccan-style rug adds texture, pattern, and warmth. “I never feel closed in in that room,” says the homeowner. “It is very Zen. I could stay there all day long.”

As for furnishings, “we had fun playing with shapes,” says Morgan Harrison, noting the many asymmetrical pieces in the living spaces. “This project let us create. The homeowner drove that. She has a very good eye.”

Although the house is open and airy, it has the cozy charm and inviting nooks reminiscent of the older homes this family has occupied. Yet, says the owner, “I sometimes feel like I am living outdoors.” That balance, she adds, “is pretty perfect for us.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**ARCHITECTURE:** Tanner White Architects  
**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Morgan Harrison Home  
**BUILDER:** SBP Homes  
**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Jennifer Anderson Design & Development