

# New England HOME CT

## *Sitting Pretty*

Luxe layers to suit the season





# FAMILY FIX

With a designer's help, a challenging space becomes a bright and inviting heart of the home.



Text by DEBRA JUDGE SILBER | Photography by READ MCKENDREE



Designer Kristen McCory overcame a challenging floor plan in this Farmington home with an arrangement that works for small and large gatherings alike. **FACING PAGE:** One of a pair of heirloom wing chairs refreshed with a broad blue stripe is joined at the fireplace by other vintage pieces collected at antiques markets around the region.



**T**rying to fit a square peg into a round hole describes the classic spatial mismatch. But a close second is that bane of homeowners everywhere: the L-shaped living/dining room where no amount of twisting and turning will produce a furniture arrangement that fits.



**LEFT:** Refreshing a mudroom bath meant swapping out the sink, countertop, faucet, and hardware while retaining the original vanity under a fresh coat of paint. Wallpaper by Thibaut adds new energy.



**ABOVE:** In the family room off the kitchen, an oversized Chaddock sofa offers a judgment-free place to relax within easy reach of a custom-upholstered ottoman ready to receive tired feet.

It was this puzzle that led Amanda Layden to designer Kristen McCory. Layden and her husband, Mike, had just purchased a home perched atop a ridge in Farmington. With five bedrooms, a pool, and magnificent bird's-eye views of the surrounding valley, the traditionally styled home was a perfect

fit for the couple, their two teenagers, and two doodle dogs. Except, that is, for the odd-shaped space that took up most of the main floor.

Previous owners had treated the space as three distinct areas, arranging seating literally back-to-back in some places.





**ABOVE:** Bright blue upholstery brings vintage chairs up to date around the family's heirloom dining table, while a green interior adds depth to built-in cabinets. In the background is the chaise that both divides and connects the long section of the room. **FACING PAGE:** Framed panels of wallpaper from The Mural Source form a lively backdrop behind a vintage dining hutch; the chandelier overhead is from Visual Comfort with shades from the Newport Lamp & Shade Company.

"That just isn't how we live," Layden says, describing game nights with family and her own book club gatherings. She told McCory, "We've got to family-ize this."

McCory summed up the situation. "It was basically about the floor plan," she says. "She wasn't sure where to take it."

But the designer was. McCory created a furniture plan that respected traffic patterns and maximized the stunning views from the room's many windows. It also hinged on

a critical piece—a chaise lounge positioned between what had been two separate seating areas in the longer portion of the room. Open on both sides, it serves to connect—or divide—the space at will.

The chaise, from Century Furniture with fabric from Romo, was among new pieces the designer and her client added to a mix that included the family's antique dining table and a pair of heirloom wing chairs that Layden had already revved up







*“THE SOAKING TUB IS MUCH MORE MODERN THAN THE REST OF THE BATHROOM.”*

*—Interior designer Kristen McCory*

**RIGHT:** A built-in dresser between two closets adds character to the hall that connects the bedroom and bath. **BELOW:** A deeply veined marble top crowns the custom rift-sawn white-oak vanity in the primary bath. Above, mirrored medicine cabinets add practical eye-level storage. **FACING PAGE:** “The bathtub was one of the first things we chose,” says the client, who stretched out in several showroom models before deciding on this one from Kohler.



with a broad blue racing stripe. “She really wanted a place where everyone had somewhere to sit,” says McCory, who added two swivel chairs to the mix. “It was about getting as much comfortable seating as would feel intentional,” she says.

McCory and her client also seized the opportunity to enrich the space with subtle textures in some places and lively patterns in others. An avowed Instagrammer, Layden deluged McCory with images of vibrant interiors she loved but lacked the confidence to pull off. With the designer’s help, those colors and patterns found a home in two powder rooms on the main floor. The two then shifted focus to the primary bedroom, where McCory tucked a custom window seat between two bookshelves to accommodate Layden’s favorite pastime.



The vintage bed in the primary bedroom is dressed in Matouk linens; the colorful window treatments are Cowtan & Tout's Rose and Hydrangea. **FACING PAGE:** A cozy window seat surrounded by books fulfills the client's longtime dream of a secluded spot to read—and offers Ivy, the family's dog, a place to nap. Shelves brim with favorite titles and the fruits of many antiquing excursions.



"I've always wanted a big window seat where I could sit and read," Layden says, describing the space as "a reader's paradise."

In the adjoining bathroom, replacement of an unwieldy deck-mounted tub with a sleek acrylic soaker set the stage for a down-to-the-studs makeover. Layden selected the Kohler model after trying out the fit on the showroom floor. "It's much more

modern than the rest of the bathroom," says McCory, but its simple shape complements the traditionally styled rift-oak vanity and classic basket weave of the tile floor.

Next up, says Layden, is the kitchen. Already she's sharing images and ideas with McCory. "You just catch your breath and get re-inspired," she says.

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

**INTERIOR DESIGN:**  
Kristen McCory,  
McCory Interiors