

# OPPOSITES **ATTRACT**

AN 1880S COUNTRY HOUSE  
IN CONNECTICUT BLENDS  
RUSTIC TEXTURES AND  
MODERN POLISH.



RENOVATION AND INTERIOR DESIGN BY **DAVID KLEINBERG** LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY **RENNY REYNOLDS**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PIETER ESTERSOHN** WRITTEN BY **LINDA O'KEEFFE**







## DAVID KLEINBERG

VIVIDLY REMEMBERS HIS FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE 1880S COUNTRY HOUSE HIS CLIENT, A HOLLYWOOD FILM PRODUCER, ACQUIRED IN THE FOOTHILLS OF CONNECTICUT. "OUTSIDE, IT was white for days," the New York designer says. His solution—to paint the pristine clapboard exterior "the creosote color of railroad tracks" and give it the appealing patina of a weathered barn—acknowledged the period architecture's integrity and modernized the house all at the same time.

Kleinberg took a similar approach to the interior structure, respecting its history but "remov-

ing the *ye olde*." He pickled rough-hewn beams, then offset them by upholstering most of the first floor's plaster walls in a nubby linen. He left timeworn white ceiling planks intact but updated floors with an ebony stain. While the new master bedroom and breakfast room are seamless continuations of the house, the expanded kitchen and the baths now exude a classic modernity.

"When you stay relentlessly in one period, the eye absorbs it all in a single glance," Kleinberg says. "Going against period introduces an energy

Linen-upholstered walls replicate the texture of plaster. **OPENING PAGES:** Line Vautrin mirror. Ceramics, Wilhelm Kage for Gustavsberg. Serge Roche obelisks and table. Antique chairs. Jean Perzel ceiling fixture. Urn, Alberto Giacometti. Curtains in Hinson fabric. Rug, Patterson, Flynn & Martin. **THIS PAGE:** Wall in Schumacher linen. Jean-Michel Frank chest and lamp. Diego Giacometti side chair. Line Vautrin mirror. **OPPOSITE:** Sofa, Anthony Lawrence-Belfair for DKDA. Jean-Michel Frank chairs. Diego Giacometti bench. Paul Dupré-Lafon table. Jean Royère floor lamp. Line Vautrin mirrors. Sculpture, Alexandre Noll.







Floors are stained a deep ebony to echo the new dark exterior of the house. George Nakashima table. Kaare Klint chairs. Serge Roche torchère and crystal sculpture. Albert Cheuret console. Ceiling fixture attributed to Jean-Charles Moreux. Pierre Chareau sconce. Candlesticks, Ted Muehling. Curtains in Edelman Leather suede. Rug, Patterson, Flynn & Martin.



“WHEN YOU STAY RELENTLESSLY IN ONE PERIOD, THE EYE ABSORBS IT ALL IN A SINGLE GLANCE. GOING AGAINST PERIOD INTRODUCES AN **ENERGY**”

that recontextualizes and vitalizes everything.”

As seen in his dazzling new book, *Traditional Now*, Kleinberg’s signature interiors are both posh and cool, exhibiting a relaxed formality that’s glamorous and smart. “Nothing is arbitrary, and there’s a certain correctness, a balance and symmetry in all my projects, but they fail if they’re not welcoming and user-friendly,” the designer says. “When anything takes itself too seriously, it becomes pretentious.”

This philosophy is also apparent in Kleinberg’s DKDA products, such as the rug collection he recently designed for Patterson, Flynn & Martin. “In this house,” he adds, “you feel comfortable sitting down anywhere, whether you’re dressed in a suit and tie or in gardening gear.”

The client’s passion for midcentury French design is evident throughout the rooms. Tailored furniture by Jacques Adnet, Jean Prouvé, Pierre Chareau, and Charlotte Perriand visually spars with exuberant accessories by Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Serge Roche, and Line Vautrin.

Kleinberg razed the 1970s pool house, making room for an old barn that was trucked to the site from a nearby location in the Connecticut countryside. Now sheathed in dark clapboard, the barn is an architectural soulmate to the main house. Inside, it turns into a viewing platform for the gardens and mountains beyond, thanks to Kleinberg, who replaced an entire wall with huge sheets of glass. Not content with one showstopping intervention, the designer also created a structure within the structure: In the middle of the new pool house is a modern log cabin containing a kitchen and bath, another marriage of past and present.

The client kept the house free of paintings and photography, so the designer used graphic sconces and mirrors as focal points. “The furnishings are shapely, textural, and tactile,” Kleinberg says. “That’s all the art this house needs.” □

Old timber for the new ceiling honors the house’s history. Bed, Anthony Lawrence-Belfair for DKDA. Linens, Nancy Stanley Waud. Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann wall lamps. Antique Scandinavian marquetry banquette with cushions in Donghia fabric. Paul Frankl chest. Charlotte Perriand table. Serge Roche chandelier and obelisks. Jean Royère sconce. Table lamp, Galerie Madoura. Roman shades in Travers fabric. Carl Malmsten chair. Rug, Patterson, Flynn & Martin.





The new breakfast room is a comfortable extension of the modern kitchen. THIS PAGE: Poul Henningsen ceiling fixture for Louis Poulsen Lighting. Jean Prouvé chairs. Tommi Parzinger table. Line Vautrin mirror. Fireplace and upholstered chair, DKDA. Rug, Patterson, Flynn & Martin. OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Dishwashers, Miele; Poul Henningsen light fixtures. Barn as pool house. Chairs, Anthony Lawrence-Belfair for DKDA; Mathieu Matégot metal table. Robert Thompson cabinet; custom sink and counter; mirror, DKDA; faucet, Dornbracht.

