

# THE REAL ESTATE ISSUE

# STAMFORD

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**AGE OF ELEGANCE**  
Three Designers Bringing  
Romance Back to Your Closet

**YOU'VE BEEN SERVED**  
Dining at Cilantro  
and Noir Stamford

**WHAT'S YOUR  
HOME WORTH?**  
A Market Report

# MODERN CLASSIC

AN ANTIQUE  
HOME DESIGNED  
FOR TODAY



**Divine Dining**

By treating the ceiling like a fifth wall, and using La Fiorentina paper from CP & J Baker to adorn it, the rest of the room came together to include the vintage table and chandelier, and recovered Ikea chairs

# MASTERFUL MIX

The past meets the present in this North Stamford Colonial



Jill Saunders with her dog, Benny; a view of the foyer from the front door; the living room

BY **CAMILLA A. HERRERA** • PHOTOGRAPHS BY **AMY VISCHIO**

Pimlico Home co-owner **Jill Saunders** recently invited us into her new Federal-style antique Colonial in North Stamford. Since moving in more than a year ago, she has been working with business partner **Melissa Lindsay**, who also heads Pimlico's interior design services, to create a haven of color, comfort and warmth, and execute a vision that honors the history of the house and the elegance of its interior design. By combining heirloom pieces and family favorites with new acquisitions and select alterations, says Saunders, her house is now a home.

This work-in-progress—Saunders already has a kitchen redo mapped out in her head—has been a labor of love, she says. And so far, it's also been creatively exciting and fulfilling to bring out all the charm and beauty of this period

gem. To hear her delight when she describes her home and the changes she's made to it is infectious.

The work also mirrors one of several design aesthetics behind their successful New Canaan boutique and interior design business, Pimlico Interiors. The way Saunders explains it, she and Lindsay “looked at everything with fresh eyes” in the context of existing spaces to determine what to bring in, what to “freshen up” and what to leave untouched. Doing so brought forth the inspiration to fashion looks that “are distinctive yet cohesive.”

Saunders is delighted with the progress, so much so that she, along with Lindsay, was happy to share more. Read on; you too may be inspired by the creativity, the historical elements of this house, the palette and fabric choices, the tasteful design, and Saunders' favorite things.



#### Floral Foyer

View of the dining room from the entryway, which houses a pendant light from West Elm, and console, mirror and bench from Pimlico Home (see previous page), all framed by Romo's Black Edition Luiza wallcovering

#### What attracted you to this house?

**Jill Saunders:** [My husband, Wayne, and I] loved the character of this house. The moldings, the wide-plank hardwood floors, the four fireplaces. It was the opposite of the very plain 1950's ranch we [previously owned] in the Mid-Ridges. We also loved the land. We now have a flat acre that when we first moved in a year and a half ago, begged for a dog.

#### What inspired the changes you've made so far?

**JS:** Some were practical. The original staircase to the second floor was incredibly steep. Our contractor—from MTC Construction in Stamford—appreciated the historical charm of the stairs but pointed out that walking those steps every day wouldn't feel very charming after awhile. We also had three entrances to the dining room, one of which was off those steep steps. He suggested changing the pitch of the stairs and closing up that entry.

The aesthetic changes were inspired by the feel of the house. Melissa [Lindsay] and I spent time in each room and realized some rooms needed to be quiet, and others, like the dining room, needed to be moody and dark. We wanted the house to feel cohesive but still wanted each room to feel special.

We also uncovered more original hardwood flooring in the entryway that [a previous homeowner] had cemented and covered with tile. The powder room was completely gutted except for the wainscoting. What was there before was a little bit too "country" for me. It all had to go!

#### How did you decide on color palettes?

**JS:** With some of the rooms, notably the living room and master bedroom, we wanted the floors and original molding to stand out, so we kept the walls quiet using Benjamin Moore's Ivory White. The dining room screamed that it wanted to be dark. Melissa knew that a graphic paper with a small-scale architectural print would look amazing on the ceiling. We found GP & J Baker's La Fiorentina paper first, and the paint choice was inspired by the colors in the paper. »

**Mood Is Set**  
The dining room  
from another  
angle, with host  
chairs, accessories  
and buffet sourced  
from Pimlico  
Home. Artwork  
courtesy of  
Heather Gaudio  
Fine Art



### Powder Room

Vintage sconces and artwork along with Fil d'argent wallpaper by Hermès and a mirror from Pimlico Home give this completely-redone space a vibrant elegance. "I don't even remember what this looked like before."

### Living Room

After adorning this area with a sofa, side tables, lamps, chest and cowhide rugs from Pimlico Home; vintage swivel chairs; artwork courtesy of Heather Gaudio Fine Art; and a lucite ottoman from Artistic Upholstery, this room is now Saunders' favorite. "We brought in some of these stronger colors [to] punch it up a bit."

### Master Bedroom

Boasting one of the home's four working fireplaces, high ceilings, repainted grasscloth wallpaper—"I love the texture and feel"—new bedside tables from Pimlico Home, and vintage lamps, this street-facing room is another favorite. "You don't hear the noise [from the street]. This house is built solid."

### Living Room

The lucite fireplace—"we use it all the time"—framed by restored original molding painted in high gloss "to give it more shimmer," blends past with present. Modern art by Zaria Forman courtesy of Heather Gaudio Fine Art lends further whimsy and warmth to this area.



## Jill's Picks



### My favorite part of my job is...

looking at fabric and wallpaper—the colors, the textures, the myriad combinations. You can go crazy with color or stay completely subdued with neutrals. I love how it's all so limitless.

### If budget were no object, I'd buy myself a...

Picasso, specifically "Head," which he painted in 1927 with oil and chalk on canvas. I saw it at the Art Institute of Chicago and fell in love. It's the screensaver on my iPhone, so I can look at it and dream.



### Right now I'm reading...

*Fever*. It's a historical-fiction account of Typhoid Mary. She was a cook and typhoid fever carrier who infected most of high society in New York City at the turn of the twentieth century.

### The coffee table book I never tire of looking through is...

*Fendi Baguette*. The textiles, the color combos, the embellishments—all so inspiring!

### My ideal dinner party guests would be...

Robin Williams, Eddie Murphy, Steve Martin, Joan Rivers and Don Rickles. I would just want to laugh and laugh!

### And I'd serve...

Filet mignon. What else? **S**

In the entryway, Romo's Black Edition Luiza wallcovering was the perfect balancing point between the depth of the dining room [to the left] and the floating feeling of the living room [to the right].

### What design rules from work were followed in the changes already made?

**Melissa Lindsay:** When I work on an antique home, it is critical to bring in the right dose of modern glamour, just enough to add another layer of depth to the interior spaces but not so much that it overtakes the authenticity of the house. For example, the traditional pattern of the entry foyer has just a touch of metallic sheen that accentuates the space in an appropriate way. If these walls were papered in say, a geometric metallic, it [might] overwhelm the house and 'steal the show'. The right balance of organic materials such as wood with modern elements such as lucite, metal and mirror, is absolutely key in an old home.

### What design rules were broken?

**ML:** The living room layout was challenging because if we centered the seating arrangement in the room, it would be off-balance with the fireplace. Old homes are quirky—and my motto is embrace the quiriness. The fireplace was the focal point for the furniture arrangement; we then balanced the asymmetry on the opposite wall with an over-scale piece of art. It was hard on the eye not seeing the sofa centered between the two windows. But the right scale piece on the wall tricks your eyes. I love how design can do this—it's like magic.

### Jill, what is your favorite room?

**JS:** It would have to be my living room. I love the moldings, the fireplace, being able to see both the entryway and part of the dining room while curled up reading a great book. The room also feels so light, while still maintaining a warmth that I think is essential to any home.

### What details are you most proud of?

**JS:** The wallpaper on the ceiling in the dining room makes the room feel like "wow." The room is so sophisticated, and I think if we didn't treat the ceiling as a fifth wall, it would have been a big miss.

### What would be your dream purchase for your home?

**JS:** An in-ground, heated, saltwater pool with a built-in spa. Talk about total luxury!

### Which piece have you had the longest?

**JS:** The buffet in the dining room. It was the first piece of stylish, quality furniture we purchased through Pimlico after my husband and I moved in together. In our last house and the condo before that, we used it as a media cabinet. Now the third home is the charm. We actually get to use it for the purpose it was intended.

### What does "home" mean to you?

**JS:** Home is the place you'd rather be over anywhere else in the world. I am beyond fortunate to have found my home.

### What season do you enjoy most at home?

**JS:** I would have to say winter, sitting in the living room, cozying up to the fire, watching the snow fall outside. We have a barn on the property, and it's honestly picture-perfect when dusted with snow. The old hardwood floors give the entire house a beautiful warmth, and you can't beat the holidays here. It feels like something out of an old movie, with all the mantles decked and trees in both the living and dining rooms. It's magical, really.

### What's your next project?

**JS:** We may go outside next. I would love to put a covered seating area outside with a fireplace and outdoor TV next to our existing patio. Imagine how great fall and football season would be sitting out there with friends, snacks, s'mores!