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Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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# Season of Change



# PERSONAL BEST

RAISING THE BAR ONCE AGAIN, DESIGNERS MARY FOLEY AND MICHAEL COX CREATE AN ELEGANT, TIMELESS INTERIOR TO MATCH THEIR CLIENTS' LIFESTYLE

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE ROSS

AS SEEN IN  
**CTC&G**  
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**In The Zone** Designers Mary Foley and Michael Cox divided the living room into three zones. A Ralph Lauren sofa is upholstered in a Pollack fabric through Victoria Hagan Home. Lounge chairs are upholstered in an F. Schumacher wool plaid. The room's soothing palette of blues, greens and creams is pulled from the vintage Marc Phillips rug. Triangle ottomans are custom through Peruvian Touch. See Resources.





“When you hire a designer, you are handing your life over to someone else,” says Michael Cox. And he should know. Cox and partner Mary Foley run Foley & Cox, an interior design firm that has been creating beautiful and serene spaces for more than 15 years.



It's safe to say that if you have to hand your life over to anyone, Foley and Cox will not disappoint. The design partners would say they don't have a signature style, exactly, but if you look closely at any of their projects, you'll see a common thread: sumptuous, elegant and comfortable interiors. There's an underlying tone of quiet sophistication, but each project is uniquely its own. “We work toward creating a sense of timelessness. We don't believe interiors should be trendy,” says Michael. “Most importantly,” he adds, “we try to make it personal. We get to know how our clients live and what they love.”

For clients who bought a Greenwich property intent on transforming it into their dream home, the designers had no trouble getting to know their tastes and personalities. This was the designers' fourth collaboration with the couple. In this case, the challenge wasn't getting to know them, but rather transforming their waterfront property into the house they always wanted. They brought in architect Cormac Byrne, with Jones Byrne Margeotes Partners, to gut the interior and modernize the exterior by changing the color palette to a more natural shingle color and reconfiguring the entrance. The original interior, with awkward flow and a lack of windows, seemed to forget the house was ideally situated to take in the spectacular water views. “Most of the work was interior,”



**Settle In** (ABOVE) Foley and Cox designed a custom window seat, covered in a Holland & Sherry tweed, for one of the cozier seating areas in the living room. **Well Lit** (TOP LEFT) Custom mirrored sconces in the living room are from Remains Lighting. **Palette Play** (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) Architect Cormac Byrne changed the color of the exterior to a more natural shingle style and reconfigured the front entrance. **Warm Welcome** (OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT) Designer Michael Cox. Ottomans covered in an Elizabeth Eakins stripe are tucked under a round table from Ralph Lauren Home in the foyer; the framed mirror is from Aero Studios. See *Resources*.





**Check It Out** (ABOVE) The living room's curtains are made from Holland & Sherry's Savile Row Check—a subtle pattern that adds color, but does not distract from the water views. Cage table lamp is through Baker. **Wide Open Spaces** (BELOW LEFT TO RIGHT) Architect Cormac Byrne widened the kitchen and opened it up to the views. The kitchen's upper cabinets are home to the client's collection of white pitchers. The breakfast room table is from Mecox Gardens. See *Resources*.



**Yin And Yang** Custom Sunroom slipper chairs through Martin Albert Interiors are piped in leather, balancing out some of the room's more feminine touches, such as the embroidered floral pillows. See *Resources*.







says Byrne. “We wanted to open up the floor plan and make it more graceful and add windows to maximize the views on all three levels—even the basement has a water view.” Among other things, Byrne gutted the kitchen and moved the original staircase (all ornament and brass), replacing it with a more classic shingle-style version, so the entrance became less intrusive and captured the view. The main living space, once two stories, was brought down to one creating a much more intimate feel.

Foley and Cox approached the interiors in a similar vein. “The challenge was to make the spaces feel more intimate,” says Cox. Of the scaled down living room, he says, “It’s still a very grand room with big windows and substantial proportions, but we wanted it to feel homey, welcoming and comfortable.” Once the key elements were decided—the designers worked with the contractor until the exact tone of the wood floors was correct, and with the painters on that perfect shade of warm white—Foley and Cox layered soft, muted blues, greens and creams. “We took all the colors from the patterned rug and put them in different

pieces of furniture. It’s a lot of pattern and texture, but it’s subtle so it all softly blends together creating an inviting envelope,” says Foley. They upped the cozy factor by carving out three living spaces. “It’s one room with a different feeling in each area, but it’s still cohesive,” says Cox.

A sunroom off the library is the one spot the designers and Byrne left alone. “You really feel the view and the power of the landscape in this room,” says Cox. It’s also a little more feminine and casual: Floral embroidered pillows mix smartly with slipper chairs piped in an unexpected leather. And it houses some of the wife’s collection of English biscuit jars. “This was a new house, but they wanted it to feel familiar,” says Foley. “We always like to unearth things and use them in different ways. The wife was pleasantly surprised to see their collections presented in unexpected ways in their dream house.” It’s these seemingly small touches that turn a Foley and Cox interior into a highly personal experience. “We base a project on the client’s lifestyle—how they live and what they love,” says Cox. “It’s very emotional and very gratifying.” ☀



**Master Class** (TOP) An area rug from Patterson, Flynn & Martin grounds the master bedroom. The custom tufted headboard is covered in a Clarence House linen. **Well Balanced** Bell jars discovered on 1stDibs hang at different heights above the dining room table (OPPOSITE PAGE). The teak cabinet is from ABC Carpet & Home and is a strong foil to the room’s Holly Hunt embroidered linen wallpaper (RIGHT). See Resources.