

Beautiful,



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Timeless, Chic

AMY KALIKOW TRANSFORMS A FAMILY COMPOUND IN WATER MILL INTO A HAVEN

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“Calm and peaceful,” is how the interior decorator Amy Kalikow describes the mood she tries to conjure in her interiors. “No strong colors,” she says, “nothing that might overwhelm the nervous system.” By way of alternative, Kalikow prefers to channel the most natural of elements, namely sunlight. The result are spaces that feel bright, airy, and vibrant. Kalikow puts it another way: “When you walk into a home I’ve decorated, you should feel a sense of tranquility.”

A tranquility-inducing home is what she set about creating for an old college pal, who is an artist, and her husband. The couple had recently acquired a sizable compound in Water Mill, a roughly 12,000 square-foot new build that features a movie theater, an artist’s studio cum office cum-sanctuary, a sun room, and a gym. “When I walk into a home for the first time, I immediately get a feeling for its heart and soul,” says Kalikow. So it was with the compound: she and the owners shared a unified vision for the space, one that had lots of clean lines, a simple palette, organic forms, earthy textures, and characterful furniture, much of it custom-made, and one-of-a-kind objects. Most important of all, the décor would lend itself to a busy family with four children and lots of guests.

As a mother of four, Kalikow has no interest in creating rooms in which you can’t make a move for fear of causing a disturbance. “I don’t do precious,” she says. “I don’t ever want a client calling me and saying ‘I spilled coffee on my carpet so now what.’”

It so happens that carpets and wall paper that complemented the bleached wood floors were her starting points. “It’s important to me that a house feels cohesive,” explains Kalikow, “and once I picked the carpets, we went on to build the rooms from the ground up.”



In a manner of speaking, that is. In point of fact she began at the top, for two of the first pieces she found were a pair of jute wall hangings by a Paris-based artist that she had a hunch would make fantastic pendant lamps. So she had them wired and suspended them over the entrance hall stairway. At the bottom of the stairs, close to the front door, she positioned a sculptural wood bench by Christian Woo, chosen for its quiet appeal. “I didn’t want to put something big and bulky in that space, much less anything that would detract from the drama of the pendant lights and the staircase,” says Kalikow.

She took the same approach throughout, choosing her moments of drama with care. The dining room, for example, is fairly low-key but for a custom-made looping ropelike LED chandelier by Luke Lamp Company. Recalls Kalikow, “Basically, I saw it, and I’m like, oh my God, this is insane. What’s great about it is that you can arrange the illuminated ‘ropes’ into any shape you like.” The dining table is acrylic with a wood inlay — a practical choice, as acrylic is easy to clean, hard to stain, and practically indestructible. Practicality also rules the kitchen: quartz countertops and Gubi chairs with molded plastic seats (“so if you come in from the pool you’re not worried about leaving a watermark on upholstery”).



Amy Kalikow at work staging a kitchen.



As for the pool house, she decided it should do double duty as a game room and warmed to the owners' idea of kitting it out with a full-size shuffleboard court. Kalikow then added tufted sofas, an outside live edge coffee table with acrylic legs, and white built-in storage units stocked with masses of towels and glassware. A home office-slash-artist's studio in a converted garage stands at a remove from the fray. There the vibe is every bit as relaxed as it is in the pool house. No wonder Kalikow describes it as "a happy, peaceful place."

Nevertheless, peaceful environments aren't the work of a moment, and this one took a full year to complete. But when it was finished, Kalikow says, it matched what she and the owners had envisioned all along. During the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, the decorator recounts, she and her artist friend would put on masks and meet in the backyard of Kalikow's own house in Bridgehampton: "We'd go over what the house was going to look like: beautiful, timeless, and chic."