



MASTER PIECES

Ron Scinto, Mari Ann Maher and Mark Candido

The Antique & Artisan Center

OF *Best* BEST

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW CHERRY

Who's the best? Readers, designers and even our editors weighed in on where they go when they need the top linens, tableware, flowers, furniture and more, and not to our surprise, we saw a common theme: It's the shops that are just as serious about their business as they are about having fun that are the most successful. Choose a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life. Well, if that old saying is true, these shops must be on a permanent vacation.

The proof is in the pictures. >>



WINNER Best Antiques Center:
THE ANTIQUE & ARTISAN CENTER

69 Jefferson Street, Stamford
203-327-6022
stamfordantiques.com

A favorite of casual shoppers and well-known interior designers (Miles Redd told us he never misses it when he's in Connecticut), this 20,000-square-foot building is packed with great pieces from every period. "It's truly one-stop shopping for the most chic antiques. Mari Ann Maher has done nothing but improve what was already close to perfection. I look forward to using their in-house upholstery service—what a brilliant concept!" says Allison Caccoma of Caccoma Interiors.

WINNER Best Art Gallery:
AMY SIMON FINE ART

1869 Post Road East, Westport
203-259-1500
amysimonfineart.com

As if she hadn't already, we think her win really "cements" Amy Simon's reputation as a major player on the art scene. Specializing in contemporary pieces from emerging talent to Blue Chip, her main focus is helping people acquire art, whether it's one perfect piece or a whole collection of them. She makes recommendations and house calls, gives customers access to her network of appraisers and restorers, and encourages them to take pieces home on approval to make sure they are the right fit. Don't forget to ask about the inventory in the back room, too. An added bonus: She's also next door to the Westport Shake Shack.

WINNER Best Gifts: PIMLICO

48 Elm Street, New Canaan
203-972-8166
pimlicohome.com

Owners Melissa Lindsay and Jill Saunders have a gift idea at every price-point for even the pickiest of recipients. "We found this great rock crystal necklace for a very hard-to-buy-for friend of mine, and she gets complimented on it wherever she goes. It's so unique, just like all of their stuff," says Marnie Miller. Fellow New Canaanite Krista Tully agrees: "Pimlico is my go-to spot for chic, elegant hostess gifts. The Seda France 'Japanese Quince' candles are a huge hit."

TIE FOR WINNER Best Bath Fixture Showroom: WATERWORKS

23 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich,
203-869-7766
waterworks.com

and PORCELANOSA

1063 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich,
203-698-7618
porcelanosa-usa.com

For stylish bath fixtures, shoppers need only drive down Greenwich's Putnam Avenue—either direction will get you to a fabulous showroom filled with great selections. Whether you're in the market for Porcelanosa's European simplicity with a modern edge, or the classic luxury of Waterworks, it's no question that you'll come away a winner.

WINNER Best Paint and Wall Coverings: FARROW & BALL

32 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich
203-422-0990, and
396 Post Road East, Westport
203-221-3117
farrow-ball.com

Our readers know that paint and wall coverings can make or break a room, and Farrow & Ball's two Connecticut showrooms

"We are doing extensive renovations to an old New Canaan farmhouse and Rob Rizzo at Cobble Court is our design consultant. His knowledge and experience with renovation and design have been an enormous asset. He is extremely talented and a pleasure to work with." —Jodi S. New Canaan

are fabulous resources for top quality and color selection, as well as guidance from their team of experts. Both offer an in-home color consultancy service, too. "These paints are so well-edited," says designer Julie Nightingale. "Skimming Stone and Cornforth White are two of my favorites, but you can't go wrong with any of them!" Lynne Tarkowski of Fairfield has a common dilemma: "The only problem with Farrow & Ball is that the colors are so rich and fabulous that it is hard to narrow it down to one, (but my personal favorite is their French Gray)."

WINNER Best Children's Furniture: IKEA

450 Sargent Drive, New Haven
888-888-4532
ikea.com

A perennial favorite for college dorms, children's rooms, and the occasional accessory, if you can keep your cool and follow the assembly directions, there's no place better for furniture for temporary situations. "I throw their sheepskin rugs around every project. And the Malm series of chests of drawers is also very modern...you can line them up side-by-side against a wall for a built-in look," says interior designer Julie Nightingale of Nightingale Design in Rowayton. Get lunch beforehand at Pepe's Pizza on Wooster Street, and then grab a handful of Ikea's one-dollar frozen yogurt cones for the kids to eat while you shop for their spaces.

WINNER Best Traditional Furniture: COBBLE COURT

13 South Avenue, New Canaan
203-972-7878
cobblecourt.com

Cobble Court's knowledgeable, personal service is what keeps customers coming back time and again. Rob and Steve take the time to get to know clients and then design rooms around their individual lifestyles and budgets, and they do everything from kitchen design to helping homeowners choose artwork. "They have a great selection of upholstery and a great sense of creating a well-coordinated room," says Robin Lord, who used their decorating services on two of her homes. "Rob has incredible taste and

is so approachable. Everything they do is of the very best quality," says Elizabeth Zea of New Canaan. (She also recommends the burgers at Station Eats a few doors down.)

EDITORS' PICK Best Traditional Furniture: LILLIAN AUGUST

32 Knight Street, Norwalk
203-847-3314, and
85 Water Street, SoNo
203-838-0153
lillianaugust.com

Need furnishings now? We advise you to hit the SoNo outlet to pick out pieces right on the floor at a fraction of the retail price, but don't miss the extensive offerings at the flagship store, where you're always welcome to grab a complimentary coffee and cookie!

WINNER Best Stone Showroom: GAULT

11 Ferry Lane West, Westport
203-227-5181
gaultstone.com (also a Bethel location)

Our readers know they don't have to get stuck between a rock and a hard place (pun intended) when choosing stone for floors, patios and other projects. Gault makes it easy to find something they'll love. Fairfield resident Christopher Cahill was looking for something "not too white, not too brown, not too gray," for his patio renovation project, and it's no surprise that Gault, with its huge selection, was where he finally located stone in this elusive hue (by the way, it's called "native" gravel).

WINNER Best Home Accessories: DOVECOTE

56 Post Road East, Westport
203-222-7500
dovecote-westport.com

Our readers' love affair with Dovecote is long-standing. There is so much style layered on top of style in this store that if one were to go in without an objective, it would be very easy to leave with a whole new room. (Luckily for customers, that can be arranged through their interior design service as well.) Owner Sarah Kaplan makes frequent trips to France to find pieces with *je ne sais quoi*, and customers flock to her store to see what new and fabulous things

she's found lately. "My current favorite find is Alexa Pulitzer's stationery line," says interior designer (and well-known Dovecote super-fan) Sam Allen. "If it's good enough for Tory Burch, it's good enough for me!"

EDITORS' PICK Best Home Accessories: WHITE BIRCH STUDIO

3 Sconset Square, Westport
203-557-9137
whitebirchstudio.com

We feel our blood pressure go down every time we enter this space. For organic but modern design with longevity, there's no match for White Birch. Susan Anderson's deft blend of pieces is modern but never too trendy, and oozes simple elegance.

WINNER Best Garden Shop: TERRAIN

561 Post Road East, Westport
203-226-2750
shopterrain.com

You may remember that the editors of this magazine—and the residents of Westport—awaited the grand opening of Terrain with great anticipation, and now, we can't stay away. The store has everything from garden tools to tableware to a nursery to our fave Nothin' But granola bars. Customers can also enjoy a local, organic meal at its top-notch cafe. "Terrain is a visual feast. I love that it offers classes in making beautiful terrariums, and support local artisans (I noticed Francis Palmer pottery on my last visit)," says designer Lauren Muse of Muse Interiors in Cos Cob, who has spent many a Saturday browsing around the store. *Athome* Creative/Editorial Director Amy Vischio even spotted A-List judge Victoria Hagan there—the best shops the best!

WINNER Best Lighting: THE ACCESSORY STORE

69 Jefferson Street, Stamford
203-327-7128
stamfordshades.com

With more than 4,000 lamp shades in stock, you may not need to take advantage of their customization service, but if you have something really special in mind, The Accessory Store is the place to go. Customers can also purchase designer fabrics at sister store The Antique & Artisan Center, located just across the parking lot, at a fraction of NYC prices to create their custom pieces. The staff also give lamps a safety check at no additional charge when you bring them in for a proper shade fitting, and in many cases can rewire them while you shop.

WINNER Best Tabletop: JULISKA

465 Canal Street, Stamford
203-316-9118
juliska.com

Husband-and-wife team David and Capucine Gooding head up this playful brand, and it's

LIVING ART

Amy Simon Fine Art

Makeup: Norman Bryn



Yes, that's really Amy Simon on the pedestal! Go behind the scene and see her transformation which took 4.5 hours. athomefc.com





DESIGNED TO A TEA

Capucine and Dave Gooding

Juliska

Hair: Kim Irlyn
Makeup: Nadia Smith of Beauty Bar
Dave's Clothes: Jay Kos
Set Styling: Juliska Visual Team

QUEEN OF THE COVERLET

Liz King with the Prince of Prints John Robshaw

The Linen Shop



Set/Mattresses:
The Clean Bedroom,
Westport,
203-292-9275,
thecleanbedroom.com;
Floral headpiece: KD&J
Botanica, Westport,
203-226-0202,
kdjbotanica.com; Ladder:
The Antique & Artisan
Center, Stamford,
203-327-6022,
stamfordantiques.com;
Liz's hair/makeup:
W Salon, Westport,
203-256-2300,
wsalonwestport.com

clear that they're at the top of their game when they're having fun together. New in store are Delft Blue pieces, which you can pick up on your way to the J Cafe for a bite (David tells us the cappuccinos are killer). The shop is one of designer Carey Karlan's (Last Detail Interior Design, Darien) go-to shops for styling photo shoots, but it's hard to stay focused on just what she came in for. "The store is truly an inspirational feast for the imagination. While shopping for clients and photo shoots I often find myself getting a little gem for myself, too!"

WINNER Best Linens: THE LINEN SHOP

21 Elm Street, New Canaan
203-972-0433
the-linen-shop.com

More is more to owner Liz King, who has as much personality as she has linens packed into her diminutive store. And in-the-know New Canaanites wouldn't dream of going anywhere else to outfit their dining tables and beds. Lynn Jackson Quinn lauds the shop's informed and friendly service: "It's like going to a stylish friend's home for a trunk show or holiday boutique." Shoppers also stop by for gifts for babies, brides, and everyone in between. "I needed the perfect birthday gift for my 14-year-old niece, and found an adorable pink zigzag patterned cosmetic bag at The Linen Shop. They suggested adding a lime green monogram, and it made the bag very special. She loved it!" says Bradley Berger from New Canaan.

EDITORS' PICKS Best Linens: FIG
66 Post Road West, Westport
203-227-8669
figlinens.com

Have you seen this place on Sidewalk Sale day? We may have synced our watches and skipped lunch to get there around 11:30 before the rest of Westport gets all the good stuff. Amy Vischio scooped up an ikat cotton robe that does double-duty as a beach cover up there—twenty bucks well spent!

and THE CLEAN BEDROOM
1869 Post Road East, Westport
203-292-9275
thecleanbedroom.com

When you spend as much time at The Organic Market as we do, it's hard not to think about going organic in other areas too. The Clean Bedroom offers customizable mattresses and pillows that keep customers healthy and happy.

WINNER Best Framer: SAMUEL OWEN GALLERY
378 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich
203-325-1924
samuelowengallery.com

We hear the name Samuel Owen a lot when we're working on feature stories, so it's no surprise that the gallery was voted into our

"My favorite part of Terrain is the opportunity to meet the small batch artisans that are behind the product. I recently met cookbook authors Yvette Van Boven and her husband Oof Verschuren, who were in Westport to lead a small cooking class and tasting." -Jennifer Kanter, Westport

Best of Design issue. An insider tip from a frequent shopper: Their floating frames in white, black and silver make just about any piece of artwork look even better.

WINNER Best Upholsterer/Workroom: CHRIS UPHOLSTERY
73 Main Street, Norwalk
203-849-7716
chrisupholstery.com

At Chris Upholstery, every job gets the same dedication and attention, no matter how big or how small. In addition to upholstery services, the staff are also experts in creating custom furniture and window treatments, updating existing pieces for their customers, or in creating something that's exactly what they envision. A wide selection of quality fabrics and decorative accents including piping, cording and tassels are available, and there's nothing the staff won't create for their customers.

EDITORS' PICK Best Upholsterer/Workroom: ARTISTIC UPHOLSTERY
321 Westport Avenue, Norwalk
203-849-8907

When you can't afford a screw up, go to Artistic Upholstery. It's no wonder why they're the go-to upholsterer for designers (and our own Amy Vischio). Whether you're working with fabric that costs upwards of \$200 per yard or not, you want it done right the first time, and Andy knows just how to make any piece look its best.

WINNER Best Storefront/Most Creative Window Display: DOVECOTE
56 Post Road East, Westport
203-222-7500
dovecote-westport.com

That striking white façade sets Dovecote apart from other stores on the block, but the ever-changing window displays are often what draw shoppers off the street and through the door. Stylist Ronny Carroll and the Dovecote team create displays that show off the shop's current inventory, but sometimes pieces move so fast they're gone before they make it to the window! "Sometimes I leave on a Friday and think I will use a fabulous French armoire in the

window, only to come in Monday and find out it has sold," says Carroll. With windows as head-turning as these, it's a surprise they aren't redesigning daily.

WINNER Best Outdoor Furniture and Accessories: LILLIAN AUGUST
32 Knight Street, Norwalk
203-847-3314
lillianaugust.com

Lillian August's fashionable furnishings aren't limited to the indoors. The store's selection of modern and traditional dining sets, armchairs, tables, sofas and stools make it a snap to live and entertain stylishly all spring and summer long. When you have comfortable, great-looking furniture out on the deck or patio, the warmer weather gets even more inviting.

WINNER Best European Antiques: CIRCA ANTIQUES
11 Riverside Avenue, Westport
203-222-8642
circaantiques.com

Although it's clear that readers love Circa's antiques and accessories, the store is also a favorite for custom furniture and exclusive imported lighting. "I love the Nautic line of Belgian lighting at Circa Antiques. I bought the Annet sconces in polished nickel and they are so chic yet understated," says Kate Hogan of Cos Cob. Designer Susie Earls loves the selection of "rustic yet sophisticated" furniture and lighting, and that she can customize pieces. The store recently launched a new "Astele" line of custom furniture and lighting and will soon be expanding to several design centers across the country, but you can get it here first!

WINNER Best Antique/Vintage Furniture: THE ANTIQUE & ARTISAN CENTER
69 Jefferson Street, Stamford
203-327-6022
stamfordantiques.com

It seems readers really can't get enough of this place for the best in antiques and more. It's our Best of Design big winner, topping the list in three categories. In short: If you didn't know about this hot spot, consider yourself clued in!

WINNER Best Pillows: WEST ELM
37 Main Street, Westport
203-226-2311
westelm.com

West Elm has made a big impression since arriving as a pop-up shop in late 2011. Its earthy, modern furniture and accessories have high style and affordable price-points, and its pillows come in tons of patterns and colors—florals, chevrons, embroidered, metallic—the list goes on. Changing up pillows is one of the easiest ways to change the look of a space, and when they're this chic and budget-friendly, it's a no-brainer to stop in every season to give your rooms a new look.

EDITORS' PICK Best Pillows: HB HOME

23 Lewis Street, Greenwich
203-629-4999, and
1 Sconset Square, Westport
203-226-8777
hbhomedesign.com

Feeling uninspired? Stop into HB Home and leave energized by their creative vignettes, top fabric selections and pillows galore. Patricia and Dan are known for their stylish interiors, and their store doesn't disappoint.

WINNER Best One-Stop Shop for Decorating: LILLIAN AUGUST
32 Knight Street, Norwalk
203-847-3314
lillianaugust.com

With rugs and carpets, fabrics, furniture, accessories, window treatments and lighting in a huge range of styles, plus its in-house interior design service, Lillian August is designed to bring everything homeowners need to create the spaces of their dreams together in one place. Their new trade program is pretty stellar too; designers enjoy their own entrance and area to create design projects with all of Lillian's resources at their fingertips. Could they make things any more convenient?

WINNER Best Kitchen Appliances: AITORO
401 Westport Avenue, Norwalk
203-847-2471
aitoro.com

Need to turn up the heat in your kitchen or morph your TV room into the main attraction for family and friends? Meet Tony of Aitoro. He's filled his 15,000-square-foot showroom with model kitchens, appliances and electronics that will have you cooking in no time. The best part is that you can try before you buy. And don't miss Tony's warehouse in the back of the store! Amy V. is awaiting Aitoro's delivery of Sub-Zero refrigerator drawers for her new studio. They are big enough to house drinks for a small crowd!

**WINNER Best Wow Pieces:
THE ANTIQUE & ARTISAN CENTER**

69 Jefferson Street, Stamford
203-327-6022
stamfordantiques.com

Walk in the door, and you'll immediately see why this is the best place to find one-of-a-kind, knockout, drop-dead gorgeous pieces that will make a room and impress all of your friends. Designers and homeowners alike flock to this mecca of good design from all time periods. For chairs, benches, art, tables, and even jewelry that you can't find anywhere else, the A&A is the way to go.

WINNER Best Contemporary/Modern Furniture: BEL MONDO

222 Post Road West, Westport
203-557-8118
belmondowestport.com

It didn't take long for discerning shoppers to recognize that Bel Mondo is the place to go for contemporary pieces, as well as for ideas for putting rooms together. The shop's restored and new custom pieces are not mass-produced, so customers can be sure they'll never experience the dreaded "My neighbor has the exact same sofa as me" scenario, and everything is arranged in vignettes to spark ideas for mixing them together. If you want to take it up a notch, the store also offers a design service, but the owners are happy to offer in-store advice on accessories and gifts at any price-point too.

EDITORS' PICK Best Contemporary/Modern Furniture: DESIGN WITHIN REACH

711 Canal Street, Stamford
203-614-0787 and
36 Elm Street, Westport
203-227-9707
dwr.com

We love that DWR has brought mid-century modern classics back to life for the (stylish and design-minded) masses, and introduced us to new designers like Brad Ascalon. Something else we love: Shoppers are encouraged to kick back and try out the furniture before they buy.

WINNER Most Popular Store Owners: MELISSA + JILL OF PIMLICO

48 Elm Street, New Canaan
203-972-8166
pimlicohome.com

Shoppers call Melissa Lindsay and Jill Saunders "wealths of design information," and love that they can drop in and ask for their advice and guidance on all things home and hostess. "They are always available to help with everything from the smallest purchase to designing custom furniture. I even called the store once to ask their choice of the perfect ivory paint color...they were more than happy to oblige!" says Elizabeth Thomas of Greenwich. "Pimlico is my

favorite home design store. Jill and Melissa are the best—friendly, helpful, and up to date on all the latest and greatest trends," says Pamela Wisinski of Pamela Wisinski Interiors in Darien.

WINNER Best Hardware: KLAFF'S

28 Washington Street, South Norwalk
203-866-1603 (additional locations in Westport, Danbury and Scarsdale, NY)
klaffs.com

Klaff's has been helping clients find just the right hardware, lighting, tile, and stone for nearly a century. "Recently, we went to Klaff's to order a replacement for our kitchen faucet, and the designer told us that we could purchase just the broken part and not the whole fixture. This saved us hundreds of dollars, time and frustration. What a great client service experience!" says Stamford reader Tammy Davis. And a tip for the trade: If you're looking for custom hardware, Klaff's carries A-List Sponsor MS Design's door, wardrobe and cabinet knobs.

WINNER Best Stationery: M MILESTONES

32 Forest Street, New Canaan
203-801-0020
mmilestones.net

Your stationery, and your party invitations, for that matter, says a lot about you. And for stylish, colorful paper goods, M Milestones is Fairfield County's favorite shop. Readers have also scored fun notebooks, luggage tags, cards and gifts there, as well as monogrammed totes and necklaces, and customizable iPhone cases that you can put your initials or photos on.

WINNER Best Place to Eat While Shopping: AUX DELICES

Darien, Riverside, Greenwich and Westport locations
auxdelicesfoods.com

Aux Delices takes the cake for readers' favorite place to grab a quick bite en route to their next store. "At Aux Delices I always get the baguette with mozzarella, fresh basil and tomato. I would have one every day if I could," says GMA anchor and Greenwich resident Lara Spencer. "Wait...I practically do."

WINNER Best Garage Doors: TOWN & COUNTRY DOOR

15 South Street, Norwalk
203-563-9300
townandcountrydoor.com

Family-run Town & Country Door is all about personalized service and quality workmanship. Whether you're looking for something in stock or semi-custom, or you're interested in Town & Country's beautiful custom carriage doors, they'll help you find the best style for your home and budget.

WINNER Best Tile Showroom: WATERWORKS

43 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich
203-869-7766
waterworks.com

For timelessly stylish surfaces, Waterworks has selections in glass, stone, ceramic, and concrete. "One of my favorite tiles of all time is the exquisite non-tempered glass Repose tile, exclusive to Waterworks," says Alicia Orrick (Orrick & Company, Greenwich). "It is luminous installed floor-to-ceiling in a bathroom and is an artful shimmering backsplash for a kitchen. The store has everything I need to design a kitchen or bath, and the service is so friendly and inspiring that I look forward to each visit."

EDITORS' PICK Best Tile Showroom: GREENWICH TILE & MARBLE

402 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich
203-220-6176
greenwichtileandmarblect.com

Vita takes tile and stone to another level with a showroom that is so well-vetted that there really are no poor choices. On Amy V.'s search for shower tile, Vita sized up her "likes" and "look" in minutes and pulled out the perfect pick on the first try.

WINNER Best Rugs and Floor Coverings: STARK

17 Butler Street, Norwalk
203-899-1771
stark-home.com

We're sure you've popped in to check out their fabrics, furniture and wall coverings too, but Stark is truly tops when it comes to carpets and rugs. Customers can order something from the store's enormous selec-

tion, or buy rugs off the floor if they just can't wait. Interior designers get access to exclusive Stark products and services, so if you're headed there, you may want to go with yours in tow.

WINNER Best Shopping Town for Home Décor: WESTPORT

With a ton of Best Of winners in one town, it's easy to make a day of it in Westport—and you could easily design your whole house (or style an amazing dinner party) without leaving town. Since we know our readers' stamina is great, we think it would be feasible to say, grab a green juice at The Organic Market; check out the chairs at Design Within Reach; see what's new at Dovecote, Fig, and Circa Antiques; stop into Farrow & Ball for paint samples on your way to Terrain for tableware and an organic lunch; pick up a centerpiece at KD&J Botanica right across the road from Bel Mondo, and grab dinner from Aux Delices—and then brag to your dinner guests about your productive day!

WINNER Best Closet Organizer: THE ROYAL CLOSET

6-B Muller Park, Norwalk
203-847-6565
royalcloset.com

When it comes to custom closets, this shop really gives clients the royal treatment. The store's designers start with an in-home consultation, and then homeowners can choose from a full line of materials and finishes to create the space they want. And they aren't just closets; they can also build your dream home office, media center, pantry, mudroom or garage system.

WINNER Best Florist: KD&J BOTANICA

215 Post Road West, Westport
203-226-0202
kdjbotanica.com

Original, innovative arrangements are always in bloom at KD&J Botanica. Katherine Jacob creates arrangements that truly take your breath away, transforming your idea for something "umm...smallish, I like pinks and purples, and oh, I like tulips," into a design that's exactly what you asked for—but looks even better than you'd ever dreamed. From colorful bouquets to romantic headpieces, there's nothing Katherine can't do with a few stems and blooms. This isn't floral arrangement, it's artistry.

EDITORS' PICK Best Florist: WINSTON FLOWERS

382 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich,
203-622-4222
winstonflowers.com

Winston has made its mark since coming to Greenwich last year. The shop's customer service, attention to detail—and gorgeous arrangements—put it a cut above.

"Waterworks is my first stop when designing bathrooms. Their selections are fabulous and they offer designers the ability to custom design just about anything."

—Linda Ruderman, Linda Ruderman Interiors, Greenwich

NATURAL TALENT

Katherine Jacob

KD&J Botanica

Makeup: Sarah Brianna

