



*The foyer proves that you only need a few pieces to “make” a space— if they’re the right ones. The settee, from Amy Perlin Antiques, is the homeowner’s favorite thing in the house. “It’s such an exquisite piece,” she says. In the first-floor powder room, blue walls highlight orange linen towels. **opposite:** The living room is a little bit traditional, a little bit modern, with comfortable linens and a clean-lined coffee table.*

Take the best and leave the rest: that seems to be this family’s motto when it comes to choosing the things they want to surround themselves with at home. Before settling in Westport, they were based in such far-flung places as Hong Kong and London. When they came to the States, they brought an assemblage of only the most meaningful pieces from their time abroad. Collected over a lifetime, these prized pieces became the departure point for Designer Sam Allen when he transformed their Compo Beach house.

The family wanted to move in as soon as possible, but Allen and his client were like-minded in the idea that they would not sacrifice style or uniqueness in the interest of time. Design “is a

by ANN KAISER photographs HULYA KOLABAS

ALL TOGETHER

A meaningful collection acquired abroad is right at home in Compo Beach.



process, and this home is a great example of that,” says Sam. “A home should look like items were accumulated over time. It’s about finding these statement pieces, and not just filling rooms up with furniture.” To avoid a “decorated” look, Sam started with a mix of neutral furnishings in a mix of textures and finishes, and searched high and low for antiques to complement the couple’s existing collection. “It’s a lot about custom and truly one-of-a-kind, antique pieces,” says the designer.

In the living room, Sam had a pair of nineteenth-century ebonized armchairs from Lucca Antiques in New York City upholstered in flat linen to contrast the nubbier, more organic fabric of the custom single-seat sofa. A more angular Astele custom coffee table, with a sleek iron base and square stained-oak top, pulls things into sharp contrast. “There needed to be some modern, clean-lined pieces, but there also needed to be some more upholstered, comfortable pieces in the room,”

says Allen. The étagères put display some of the homeowners’ favorite things on display, including a nineteenth-century terra-cotta horse, a vintage iron tea set, and an antique standing Buddha from Hong Kong. In between is another special piece from a little closer to home: an oversized print of cowboys galloping through a snowstorm that the homeowners found on a trip to Beaver Creek, Colorado.

To create a flow between rooms, Sam echoed pieces and finishes. In the dining and living rooms, which face each other, the same gray wool/sisal rug is used, and the dining table and coffee tables, both by Astele, feature the same Belgian oil finish. Lighting made from architectural fragments is found throughout the house, including the dining room chandelier and many of the table lamps. In the pale blue powder room on the first floor, a pair of iron sconces made from architectural fragments is tipped in hand-painted gold leaf.

Though the foundation of each room is neutral, the home gets some

In the living room, the accessories steal the show. French pottery sits underneath an oversized photo of cowboys riding through the snow; behind the sofa, antique African braided leather belts and lamps made from weathered pottery lend history and texture to the room.





Sam found this French green-painted cabinet at Circa Antiques and had a soapstone top fabricated to fit it. A large tortoise shell hangs above.







In the dining room, Sam used a mix of Astele's Genevieve chairs and vintage Os de Mouton (for the head chairs) slipcovered in Libeco linen. A Rose Tarlow solid mahogany bowl filled with ferns gives the room some "oxygen." The large artwork is by Hong Kong artist Zhu Wei.

color from art and accessories. "I love mixing up different patterns and textiles in the throw pillows," says Sam, who used vintage textiles and silk suzanis—some turned into throw pillows, some hung on walls—throughout the home to add a subtle layer color. "It's all about the layering and it's all about the mix. That's what gives something a truly rich, sophisticated look."

And layer he did. Each purchase led to the next. Sam's advice: "If you love something, buy it, and you'll make it work." By following this principle, he and his client created a home full of beautiful objects with great sentimental value. "There are really so many favorite parts about the house now that it's hard to pick just one," says the homeowner.

In the foyer, the eighteenth century Os de Mouton settee, reupholstered in Holly Hunt Great Plains linen, sets the tone for the home. From there, Sam found the gray Moroccan bone inlay table, atop which a scalloped marble bowl and eighteenth century wood ebonized mirror from the Netherlands sit. The designer was looking for a

place to put the marble praying monks from the homeowners' collection—they're too heavy to sit on any table—and found the perfect spot under the Moroccan console, where they peek out at visitors sitting on the bench.

The console with iron legs and lion's paw feet provided the starting point for the dining room. "I didn't know what we were going to do for the chairs or the table yet, but I knew this would be the statement piece," says Sam. The table, crisp custom slipcovered chairs, and silver-leaf ceiling came later. And, of course, the dramatic artwork by Hong Kong artist Zhu Wei makes a big impact with its scale and color.

"Each piece kind of led me to the next decision, and the building of the room," says Sam. In the living room, two narrow jade side tables led Sam to the green-painted 19th-century French cabinet. When he found it at Circa Antiques, it had no top, but it was just the right shade of green, so he searched for a piece of soapstone and had one made. Above it hangs a massive tortoise shell that's more than a century old.



A Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams sofa is a great canvas for fun throw pillows. **opposite:** The family can conceal coasters and TV remotes in the Mother-of-Pearl inlay box; the Chinese wood-carved brushes are over 100 years old.

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—THE HOMEOWNER

Sam used a pink patchwork rug from Istanbul (via Lillian August) in one of the daughters' rooms. John Robshaw's Kochi fabric in Kashmir was used for the headboard and roman shades.
 below: The son's room has a handsome, slightly Western look. The vintage railway poster is from his childhood bedroom.





In the family room, Allen worked with the existing floor-to-ceiling walnut paneling, embracing a palette of browns and oranges to create a masculine study of sorts. He grounded the space with an antelope-patterned carpet and used a single-cushion Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams sofa to accommodate the high-traffic area. Another custom Astele coffee table with shelving provides space for storing books or baskets; and a pair of reupholstered taupe-gray vintage French club chairs are a more traditional juxtaposition to the modern sofa.

This room also holds many of the family's treasures, including worn leather soldier's armor on a stand in one corner (below a vintage Turkish headdress and eye covers framed in Lucite boxes) and a striking jade bull with gem-like eyes. In the center of the room, a wooden Buddha made from compressed ashes overlooks the sofas and chairs. To keep things in scale with the high ceilings, Sam used tall walnut vintage lamps on the console and a gold-leaf vintage floor lamp in one corner.

The children's bedrooms were a bit of a departure from the more organic feel of the rest of the home. With "no limits," Sam made up the beds in colorful bedding combinations. He mixed "the most delicious linens" from John Robshaw and Matouk on each bed, but bought full sets of each pattern so that the beds can be made up in different combinations. The guest suite, however, is a return to the neutrals of the living spaces. An elegant cocoon of cream and beige, the client wanted it to feel like a cozy room in a boutique Parisian hotel. A vintage French crystal-beaded chandelier over the bed is a fitting light source, and a headboard is upholstered in a beautiful camel-colored Holly Hunt silk linen.


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In the guest suite, an antique gold-leaf mirror reflects bedding from Fig opposite: In one of the daughters' rooms, Sam decked out the bed in white-and-navy double-banded Matouk linens, and punctuated the space with hits of turquoise.





In the course of designing this project, Sam said he never had to settle on any piece, and that's resulted in a project that's been memorable and meaningful for both designer and client. "Everywhere I look reminds me of some excursion Sam took me on to find all the pieces for my home," says the homeowner. "Sam's passion and enthusiasm is infectious and made every field trip we went on a ton of fun. I looked forward to every meeting." For a family as well-traveled as this one, another move in the future seems inevitable—and when it happens, they'll be taking a lot more with them. 

RESOURCES

Sam Allen Interiors, 203-984-5590, samalleninteriors.com

Circa Antiques, 203-222-8642, circaantiques.com

Astete, 203-557-3332, astete.com

Dovecote, 203-222-7500, dovecote-westport.com

Bungalow, 203-227-4406, bungalowdecor.com

Balsamo Antiques, 212-759-0063, balsamoantiques.com

Lucca Antiques, 212-343-9005, luccaantiques.com

All bedding through Fig Linens, 203-227-8669, figlinens.com