

THE NEW FORMAL

An expert team delivers a **FOREVER HOME FROM SCRATCH**, marrying a **CHARMING TRADITIONAL BUILD** with **MODERN MAXIMALIST FUN**

INTERVIEW WITH **DOUG VANDERHORN**, VANDERHORN ARCHITECTS and **STEPHANIE WOODMANSEE**, HENRY & CO.
PHOTOGRAPHER READ MCKENDREE/JBSA // STYLIST FRANCES BAILEY



above: Elegant detailing with historic roots makes this Colonial Revival home an instant classic. **opposite page:** A view through one of many arched doorways into the stair hall, with a rug resized by Eliko, Vaughan light fixtures and a custom settee by Luther Quintana Upholstery using John Robshaw fabric.





This is a new build, but it looks like local historical home. How do you achieve that?

Doug VanderHorn: For years, we did traditional additions and alterations, and that leads you to understand the additive nature of home design, and in understanding that, you can then reproduce homes that look as though they've grown over time. It adds charm, a playfulness to the exteriors. In this instance, the rear of the house extends quite a bit and appears to be a couple of extensions. The property is fairly narrow, so to have a good size house, we made it L-shaped, and it appears to be additive.

Stephanie Woodmansee: Doug is such a mastermind, and his team is so skilled at creating new construction that feels old. Everything has a historical nod or reference. With that foundation—and working with someone who has that passion for it—it becomes easy to build upon one another's ideas. From the start, he was so receptive to all the ideas.

Do you have any favorite exterior features?

DVH: There are a broad variety of spaces on this home, and I think one of the architectural devices that I use to get a lot of glass in a space is to make it appear as though it's an old porch that's been enclosed. So even though this is a new house, there is an enclosed porch, which is just a portion of the family room where we wanted a lot of glass. I also think that the detailing on the exterior is quite elegant and traditional, with the dormers, the front portico, and that portion of the dining room on the front of the house that has that railing around it.

What did the clients want, and how did you work together to deliver that?

DVH: They didn't want it to look like a new house; they wanted it to look like it fit in the neighborhood. They have a place in Rhode Island,

and they were driving by a house that they thought was really special. Coincidentally, they were looking for property in Rye and saw a house there that they also thought was great. It turned out that we had done both houses, so they called us and said, "We know who our architect is going to be." They liked that our work is traditionally based, but fresher.

SW: In talking to the wife, she was so passionate about making it feel like a house they'd been in forever, with all the layers that we kept referencing. She and I spent at least four hours together in our first meeting, going over both of our tear sheets of spaces we loved. Some clients don't give you much, but with her, she had this romantic vision, and she loves entertaining. We became good friends, and in getting to know her, it's like she came from another era. Especially after COVID, everyone was craving that finished house that felt warm and cozy and inviting. It was really fun to dive into it.

above, left: Custom cabinetry painted in Rosepine by Benjamin Moore grounds the English-inspired kitchen. Hollywood at Home counter stools tuck neatly under the island, with its shapely brass legs. **above, right:** Woodmansee used Peter Fasano fabric at Home counter stools tuck neatly under the island, with its shapely brass legs. **above, right:** Woodmansee used Peter Fasano fabric on both the bar stools and the Roman shades over the breakfast nook. Ticking striped cushions are trimmed in green tassels.



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above: Usually reserved for dining rooms, Gracie wallpaper wraps the living room walls. Woodmansee found the mirror at Stamford’s Antique & Artisan Gallery.
opposite page: The wife was inspired by John Derian’s layered style. His prints sit over the sofa in this seating area, layered with its own mix of pattern and color.



above: Clé tiles create a Deco backsplash at the bar. Cabinetry and trim are painted in Bewitched by Benjamin Moore. Schuyler Samperton fabric on the Roman shade and mini table lamp add complementary blue and green tones to the mix. **right:** Floe Painting added Benjamin Moore's Prussian Blue lacquer to the dining room. The Chaddock table is surrounded by custom dining chairs, which Woodmansee created with Luther Quintana Upholstery. Visual Comfort chandeliers lend light to family dinners and friendly gatherings.





left: Gucci's The Heron wallpaper makes this powder room pop. A Precision Stone-topped Waterworks washstand adds dramatic veining, while the vintage German mirror lends more feminine flair. **opposite page, left:** The light-filled library is punctuated with pink grasscloth, perfect for both work (at the vintage desk) and relaxing or reading (on the Lee Industries sofa in Raoul Textiles fabric). **opposite page, right:** VanderHorn's team designed the built-in bookcases, and Woodmansee added the pointed detailing at the top.

DVH: Stephanie and I worked closely on those elements that are truly integrated, like tiles and lighting. She did weigh in on our millwork design, which is something we're known for. And it's not just in the library and the family room, but we create the kitchen cabinets and the mantel pieces. She really liked everything we proposed. She has a great eye and I was not prepared for the level of color. This house is really just the antithesis of that beige catalogue look. It's really fun.

Yes, there are so many bold color choices in this house. How did you land on your palette?

SW: The wife had a couple of specific small pieces and artworks that we used to start the conversation. She loves the John Derian prints and that

vibe, so we took that into the family room and the kitchen, which has more of a boho feel. She also had some pieces and objects that were very formal, so we knew we could take her living and dining room and go a bit over the top. With the colors, I tried to connect them with the jewel tones throughout. She always wanted Gracie wallpaper, which you typically see in the dining room. But the living room looks out to the backyard, and the dining room doesn't. And I thought, if you have these living room doors open, it just feels like an extension of the outside; let's switch it up a bit. We had fun in the formal spaces. The dining room chairs were antique finds that we had Luther Quintana Upholstery recreate, which look great against that Prussian Blue lacquer.





above, left: Paper for the mudroom bath was taken from the pages of the owner's *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities* book. **above, right:** VanderHorn's team spends a lot of time getting the staircases right, as seen on this construction at the rear of the house. **opposite page:** The Pineapples pattern from Adelphi Paper Hangings is circa 1830-1845. Trim is painted in Benjamin Moore Mediterranean Teal; the bamboo hall stand was found at Antique & Artisan Gallery.

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Tell us about the kitchen.

DVH: We designed the kitchen cabinetry and the layout, and then Stephanie said, we don't we take this (coffee) area and make it a furniture piece, with an antique she found and reworked.

SW: It was one of the first things I purchased for the house. We wanted something to ground the space that wasn't more cabinetry. The wife knew she wanted the kitchen to be green. At first, she was picking some lighter shades. But because it opens into that family room, it kept getting moodier, and we were inspired by British kitchens. I went back to Doug and said we need to get a little less fussy about it. Initially, we had tile all over the walls, and then we felt like one wall was enough, especially in a room that was so big. She had loved this cerused oak island, but I wanted to play up some brass and get a curvy, organic detail in there with the legs.

The bottom of the antique piece has similar detailing on the feet, which is where I started the design for the island legs.

The bathrooms are such fun spaces. Do you treat them as individual moments or think of them in terms of a larger cohesive design plan?

SW: I think the powder rooms can be completely independent, like little jewel boxes. In the paneled entry, the powder room is hidden under the stairs with a jib door. She loves pink, and she loves Gucci. So, we thought, why not put them together? And you see those pinks in the living room and the reds in the dining room. She wanted paper everywhere, and sometimes even I will say we need to dial it down. But as long as the scales are balanced, it works, and we had both murals and smaller

repeat patterns. Off the mudroom, we took pages from her *Cabinet of Natural Curiosities* coffee table book and used them as wallpaper. We were worried about preserving it, but we still have the book if any of them need to be replaced (laughs). I really did love pouring into the bathrooms. I think it's so nice to get out of the Carrara mosaic box.

What was the biggest challenge?

DVH: The site being narrow was a challenge, and this is a big family who wanted a large home. But in terms of how it all came together with the client, Stephanie and the builder, we all enjoyed the process, even a little more than we normally do. It was such a friendly family and good working environment.

SW: The biggest challenge for me was the primary bedroom. We moved

that room around into 50 different configurations trying to make it work. We wanted to capture the light and have a fireplace but also had to consider that the husband gets up early and we had to figure out a way for him to leave through his closet without coming back to the bedroom. Doug finally suggested that we flip the room around and focus on the fireplace (versus the view) and make it a calming space. We took all of her favorite colors and toned them down. It worked out in the end.

What are your favorite colors right now?

SW: I am always a green girl, and I think it goes with everything. I have the girliest four-year-old girl, so I've also really embraced pink. I'm working on a Hamptons project where we're doing a salmon pink in the living room.

left: The starburst pattern of Ann Sacks tiles adds interest to the all-white primary bath. **right:** Woodmansee chose a calmer palette for the primary bedroom. Walls are covered in Pierre Frey paper with art by Kate Roebuck, sourced through Uprise Art. The bed is made in Biscuit Home bedding and backed by a Ballard Designs headboard.



left: Studio Ditte wallpaper plays off the striped tile treatment in this kids' bathroom. **right:** VanderHorn and Woodmansee created fun spaces for the family's children, including this boy's room, which includes a custom loft, tented bed and Rebel Walls forest mural.

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this photo: The three-car garage with home office above is clad in board and batten siding, giving it a barn-like feel. **right:** By appearing to be a series of additions, this large new home maintains a charming scale. An enclosed porch concept provides a full glass wall for the light-filled family room.



What are some of your favorite custom touches?

DVH: We spend a lot of time on our staircases. The balusters are custom turned. The entry hall is fully paneled, floor to ceiling, which we've been doing a fair amount of. The banquette in the breakfast room is a combined design between us and Stephanie. The study has those built-ins with a point at the top, which was all Stephanie. It really did make them more interesting and custom looking. We designed the pantry cabinets, and then she asked us to incorporate the mesh fronts.

How much does the architecture factor into the landscape design?

DVH: We often do our site design, and that includes the landscape design, which we did here, with the exception of the plant materials. I like when the form of a house helps to create outdoor rooms, for spaces to fit in. With an L-shaped house, the primary rooms that you live in focus on that outdoor room in the corner. We added an outdoor kitchen area and a firepit built into the terrace and also adjoined the porch that enters the family room, living room and study.

Resources:

Architect: Doug VanderHorn, David Milliken, VanderHorn Architects, Greenwich, 203-622-7000; vanderhornarchitects.com

Interior Design: Stephanie Woodmansee, Henry & Co. Design, New Canaan, 203-594-1270; henryandcodesign.com

Builder: Significant Homes LLC, New Canaan, 203-966-5700; significanthomesllc.com



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