

# HCG & G

Hamptons Cottages and Gardens

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## THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE



**Old Meets New**

Dr. Elliot and Lauren Thayer Weiss's home includes architect Russell Riccardi's addition, at left, seamlessly integrated with the original 1974 structure on the right. See Resources.

# FAMILY AFFAIR



A Sagaponack home gets  
reimagined and revamped for  
fourth-generation locals

BY LAUREN THAYER WEISS | PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRIA GIOVAN



The original skylights, wood beams, and stone fireplace and floating bench were near and dear to us



**Updated And Upgraded**

(NEAR LEFT) A sleek console by Dunn stands below a vintage mirror in the oak-paneled entryway. (ABOVE) A vintage Adrian Pearsall wing chair sits next to the fireplace in the den. The stone fireplace surround and bench are original to the house. (OPPOSITE) The kitchen's Robert Lewis Studio pendants are custom designs by Allison Babcock. The custom cabinetry is by East End Country Kitchens and the island's quartz is from Caesarstone. See *Resources*.



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ight years ago, after pursuing careers in Baltimore and New York City, my husband, Dr. Elliot Weiss, and I decided to become full-time residents of the Hamptons. For me, it was a return to my roots and something of a family tradition. My mother's family, the Gibsons, began summering in Sagaponack in the 1880s, and my father's family made the move from New York City to

Bridgehampton after World War II. For Elliot, it was a chance to build a new medical practice and to experience the joy of year-round Hamptons living. For both of us, it was the beginning of a journey that so many people dream of: to be able to live, work, and raise a family on the East End. We moved into my childhood home in Sagaponack, which my parents built in 1974.

Inspired by architect Norman Jaffe, the saltbox-style modern was designed by his apprentice, Mark C. Matthews, on a site with

**Visionary Thinking**

(THIS PAGE) A photograph by Mary Ellen Bartley hangs in the kitchen's dining nook, above a natural-oak Nomad table by Jacob May and a floating banquette. (OPPOSITE) Furnishings in the living room include an Apelle rocking chair, CB2 cocktail tables, and a throw designed by Summer Louchheim. The oil on canvas is by Quentin Curry. See Resources.





sweeping ocean views and farm fields on three sides. Angled on the lot to capture passive solar energy, the house featured warm cherrywood accents, walls clad in cedar, flagstone flooring, and huge skylights. Wood ceiling beams on the first floor were sourced from the original Marconi wireless telegraph station in Rocky Point, which dates from 1902. It was an idyllic childhood for my sister, Erin, and me, spent mostly outdoors among a close community of friends and relatives. We would ride our bikes through the Foster farm to Sagaponack's little red schoolhouse, picking up friends along the

way and stopping for candy at the Sagg store on the way home.

Retaining the spirit of the original house, and all the memories that came with it, was important to Elliot and me. We loved how the original design evoked a specific time and place, and many aspects of the structure were near and dear to us—the skylights, the wood beams, and the stone fireplace and floating bench, to name a few. The challenge was to keep the soul of the house more or less intact, while modernizing and reconfiguring it for the needs of our growing family. To pull off this grand plan, the stakes were high.







#### Barn Raising

Matthew Satz's 2018 oil on canvas *Smoke* punctuates the home's graphic "dining barn," which includes a table and chandelier designed by Allison Babcock. See *Resources*.

Our initial meetings with three very talented local architects all resulted in their recommendations to tear down the house. Feeling somewhat discouraged, we were happy to come across a stylish, modern, yet casual barn-style Hamptons home designed by architect Russell Riccardi. After our first meeting with him, we knew that he understood why we didn't want to tear down the house. He, too, loved its bones and saw its potential. Together, we collaborated to optimize the space, add contemporary amenities, and create a new home that looks and feels as if it were always there.

As with many older houses, the first floor had several small rooms that were walled off and separated from one another. Knowing that the kitchen is always the gathering point, we created a large open room with bar seating, a cascading countertop, and a floating dining nook for casual dinners. The adjacent enlarged den now provides ample seating and optimizes the views of the farm fields through floor-to-ceiling windows. The original stone fireplace and floating bench, meanwhile, remain untouched. Additionally, Russell opened up the den's walls to provide access and bring light into the previously underused sunken living room. The original 20-foot-tall skylights have been preserved, while a modern concrete fireplace and TV were installed for family movie nights. This being an all-season

**Extra Points**

Dansk chairs from Gloster and an Octo pendant from the Finnish Design Shop provide curvy accents to an angular guest bedroom. See *Resources*.



## FOR POSTERITY'S SAKE

(VINTAGE PHOTOGRAPHS BELOW) The author, Lauren Thayer Weiss—pictured as a young girl and at eight months old with her mother, Lisa Thayer, and two-year-old sister, Erin Thayer Dickson—grew up in a 1974 shingle-style saltbox designed by an apprentice of architect Norman Jaffe and built when the area abutting Gibson Beach in Sagaponack was still mostly farm fields. Thayer Weiss's renovated home retains the den's original stone fireplace and floating bench. (NEAR LEFT) Family portraits in the dining barn depict Thayer Weiss's great-great-great-grandfather, Peter Boyd (1775–1846); her father, Roger Thayer, painted in 1957 by his grandmother, and her great-great-great-grandmother, Grace Sussdorf, who married N. Townsend Thayer, Jr. (BOTTOM LEFT) Thayer Weiss's daughters, Lillian Grace Weiss and Georgia Gibson Weiss, practice their art skills in the play area and bunk room with Rojo, an Abyssinian. See Resources.



**Made For Relaxing**

(THIS PAGE) The resin tub in the master bathroom is from Signature Hardware. The wall and floor tile is from Stone Source. (OPPOSITE BOTTOM) In the master bedroom, a mirror hangs on a stair wall clad in original 1970s cedar paneling. (OPPOSITE TOP) The deck features seating pieces and accessories from Gloster, Kettal, and other outdoor furnishings vendors, all sourced from Thayer's Hardware & Patio. See Resources.





house, we also added a two-car garage, which created space on the upper floor for a children's play area and bunk room.

Another pressing goal was to blend indoor and outdoor living areas. Russell achieved this by creating a "dining barn," now our favorite room in the house, complete with a gas fireplace, pocket doors, and a 16-foot-long dining table that accommodates large informal parties and family gatherings on holidays. On warm nights, sliding doors can be opened to connect the dining barn to the outdoor lounge space, allowing the sounds of the ocean to flow through the house.

We spent a good deal of time designing the floating deck, making it the perfect height to sit on, and replicated the original deck's planting boxes to create a strategic green focal point from the den, kitchen, and dining barn. The outdoor furniture, naturally, is from Thayer's Hardware & Patio, our family business, and we've hung festive lanterns from the trees above. Landscape designer Geoffrey Nimmer devised a plan for low-maintenance, deer-resistant plantings, including beach-plum bushes that now provide abundant fruit for my mother's beach-plum jelly. The apple orchard, meanwhile, has been re-created from my childhood memories: The original trees, a gift from the Halsey family, were lost over the years to storms. Rebuilding our home was a labor of love, but our family's history continues to live on, and will do so for many generations to come. 🌟