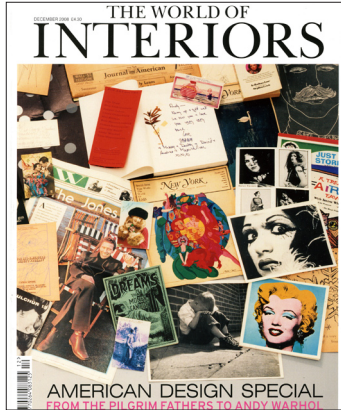


As seen in



World of Interiors

December 2008

A feature on Steven Gambrel's Sag Harbor, NY home.

Interior Designer: Steven Gambrel



however, he concentrated more on textured surfaces and the reflective quality of glass. The house seamlessly incorporates layers of Gambrel's collections, found all over the world on his travels, and which he links into a maritime theme, using objects with nautical references, as well as pewter and glass.

You enter the main house almost directly from the street. Here, Gambrel put one of his favourite pieces of furniture: a Danish Baroque chest of drawers found in Belgium, topped with a collection of tobacco boxes in various types of stone. The eye is led directly through an enfilade of rooms to a glimpse of water past a broad green lawn. To the left of the entry, one of the oldest rooms in the house has been given a bracing dose of purple, and with a sure hand, the designer has combined old and new furniture with meticulous attention to shape and colour. A modern sofa upholstered in purple linen, sitting below an abstract sailing picture, works perfectly with the period furniture in this panelled room. Beyond the spacious pastel-coloured dining room, hung with impressively large brass chandeliers from the Netherlands in each corner, Gambrel added a large kitchen with a view of the cove, using new and recycled materials: the marble floor was rescued from a renovation of Moma, New York.

The spacious living room leading from the kitchen was once the garage. 'Stephen and his father shellacked the room in three days,' explains Connor, 'and the 18th-century beams in the ceiling are old floor joists discovered in Connecticut.' Hanging above the reclaimed fireplace is a zodiac table, once used every day by a fortune-teller in Long Beach, California. They installed large period-style '12 over 12' windows along the side that faces the sea, using standard Brosco windows, taking out the aluminium sides and replacing the hanging mechanism with a more traditional chain.

Upstairs, Gambrel added an extra wing of bedrooms for visiting friends, which blends well with the rest of the house. The master bedroom has a commanding view of the water, and a large painting by contemporary New York artist Matthew Benedict acts as a headboard. Out in the garden, the designer built a Westchester-granite barn, based on the proportions of a silversmith store in nearby Southampton. They use this space for summer lunches, and for storing boating equipment in large bins along the side.

'We had to add elements rather than restore the house,' Gambrel says. But they kept to its historical past. As Sag Harbor was once one of the three main ports on America's East Coast, the sea was a big inspiration. Upstairs, in a pink guest-room, Gambrel hung framed wallpaper fragments of ships' masts and coils of rope on the wall, which they had discovered in Paris. 'We were in the Clignancourt flea market,' explains Connor, 'and we found a hand-blocked wallpaper screen in bad shape. Right under the horrified dealer's nose we took out scissors and cut out the pieces we liked, saving us the bother of shipping the whole thing' ■

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Left, from top: a fishy still life hangs above a late 18th-century fireplace in an upstairs guest-room (opposite); the guest-house has the best views of the cove; in this redesigned bathroom, Gambrel used custom-glazed tiles from Urban Archeology and Waterworks fittings. Opposite: a Jaipur rug, an egg collection and a linen-covered Flemish chair grace this guest-room

1. Easton Vintage Lavatory Faucet