

Vintage sconces from Avant Garden grace this showstopping foyer. **opposite top:** French doors line the "gallery" that runs along the back of the first floor, and two indigo vintage chairs were among the first purchases for the home. "We loved that saturated hit of color in a more neutral space," says Lindsay. "The shape of these chairs is stunning against the linear paneling behind them." **bottom:** Plenty of light filters in at the top of the stairs on the second floor, and Phillip Jeffries' Enchanted Woods wallcovering dresses up the hallway to the powder room off the foyer.



interiors PIMLICO INTERIORS architecture JAMES SCETTINO ARCHITECTS  
kitchen design DEANE, INC. builder V&A CONSTRUCTION

# CHANGE OF PLAN

Traditional touches and modern elements meet in a brand-new house on a family's existing property

interview LAUREN FETTERMAN photographs AMY VISCHIO





**How did you all meet the couple?**

Melissa Lindsay, Pimlico: The wife has been a longtime client of Pimlico. I saw her and her husband on the New Canaan Kitchen & Home Tour in 2013, and they said, "We'd love to chat with you about an upcoming project." That initial conversation stuck out to me because you don't typically see a husband and wife doing a house tour together! But I thought that was really cool, and the husband was excited about their upcoming project and really interested in seeing design in person. It was a fun introduction.

Jim Schettino: The wife got our names from referrals in town, and she was a very active participant and a really good client. She had a good sense of design and gave great feedback.

**How did you all work together as a team?**

James Schettino: Melissa was great to work with, and we worked

Bold artwork by Vik Muniz injects color into the more formal living room. "My clients were excited to start a new art collection for this home," says Lindsay. "They love finding art with a story and pieces that are really bright and saturated." **opposite:** Italian vintage chairs from Mixit cut a dramatic silhouette in front of the modern double-sided fireplace, which grants a glimpse into the study next door. The clean-lined built-in bar is backed with antiqued mirror.







Hanging above the sofa in the study, custom artwork by Kerri Rosenthal holds special meaning for the clients. "The wife commissioned the piece as a gift for the husband, who loves *Catch-22*," says Lindsay. "That strong punch of blue helped launch the design for this room." Seated next to a floor lamp from Pimlico, a Le Corbusier chaise from Design Within Reach is an elegant focal point as you enter.



opposite: Warm saddle brown mixes with cooler grays, taupe and royal blue for a masculine look.

closely with her on the fireplace mantels, moldings, interior trim, cabinets and millwork.  
 ML: It was such a nice partnership with Jim and James. V&A Construction was the builder, and the wife had also hired Gianna Santoro from Deane, so we had a great team. The wife had all of the creative professionals, including the landscape designer, in place at the very beginning, and I think the best creative decisions are made that way. She saw the value in having all of these professionals on board from the very start.

**Why did the clients decide to build a new house rather than renovate?**  
 James S.: Their original house wasn't facing the street—it was facing sideways—and it didn't take advantage of their backyard. Those were some of the big reasons why they decided to build new. They wanted to rotate the house to face the street and move it forward.  
 Jim S.: Their original home was from the '50s, and those houses don't have high ceilings, basements or first floors with the larger spans that people are looking for today. The clients wanted more open rooms, longer spans, higher ceilings and a deeper basement.  
 James S.: They also decided to live in their existing house during construction, so that also guided where we placed the new house.  
 ML: It was actually great that the clients could live in their existing house while building a new house on the same piece of land. We could have our weekly team meetings at their house and then walk right to the site.

**What were the clients looking for in their new home?**  
 James S.: They wanted the exterior to be more traditional and contextual with the neighborhood, and they wanted the interior to be a little more modern and transitional. The exterior is a Colonial







above: Artwork by Juan Genoves is a vivid touch in the dining room, and a custom walnut slab enclosed in glass provides temperature-controlled wine storage.  
 below: The butler's pantry connecting the dining room and kitchen is painted Raccoon Fur by Benjamin Moore. opposite: A custom-designed dining table by Pimlico sits underneath a Ralph Pucci light fixture, and a subtle taupe metallic wallpaper covers the ceiling.



Revival style with a mix of clapboard and stone, which is a green mountain granite blend. The stone is pillowed, which created depth, and that was very important to this house. The home also has a slate roof, stone chimneys and a lot of roofline, and the clients loved the front porch, which they wanted from the very beginning.

ML: The wife was really involved in the design process, and what we ultimately wanted to create was a strong, dynamic architectural space that is elegant and contemporary but feels clean and light. There is a lot of white, and we brought in bright color with artwork and interjected color with some of the furnishings. We were mindful about all of these little details that create this whole feeling, but when you're in it, you can't necessarily pinpoint it. The interior feels modern and elegant, yet it still connects to the traditional bones of the exterior.

Jim S.: The wife always wanted a classic center hall, where you walk in the front door and look straight through to the back of the house. Once we established that, things fell into place.

The entry is a great example of blending traditional and modern elements.

ML: We did very elegant paneling in the foyer, which is a traditional approach, but we put a modern spin on it by using square panels. We wanted each piece in this space to have a "wow" factor but not to take over the stage. I love how the hanging light fixture is so curvilinear and voluptuous in nature, compared to the stark, more rectilinear paneling and the sharp, tapered metal vintage sconces. It creates a strong feeling when you walk in.

That light-filled "gallery" running along the back of the house is a really





Designed with Gianna Santoro from Deane, Inc., the kitchen features vintage light fixtures from Avant Garden. Sliding slab doors under the hood conceal spices and oils for cooking, and the blue island houses several refrigerated drawers for easy access to drinks.  
 opposite: A custom-designed solid white oak breakfast table by Pimlico is a favored spot for viewing the gardens outside.



**interesting feature.**

**Jim S.:** We put all glass on the back elevation, and those are all French doors.

**ML:** Looking down that hallway throughout the day is so pretty. You can see the play on light when the sun comes around the house and reflects onto the floor, and the repetition of the cased openings makes a strong architectural statement and ties all the rooms together. It's so beautiful.

**How did the living room come together?**

**ML:** We wanted this to be a more formal space and to play off of all of the linear shapes with very curvilinear pieces of furniture. I positioned a curved sofa to overlap with the cased opening of the gallery, and then anchored the fireplace with these gorgeous vintage chairs that have a really strong profile. The bar next to the fireplace has an Art Deco feel with antiqued mirror, which has a warm, golden hue, and very cool cabinetry with a woodgrain finish. The bar needed to feel more furniture-like and not like a built-in bar, because the room is small, and everything needed to work together. It was important to get the right furniture layout for this space, and every piece contributes to the drama of the room.

**The study next door has a very different feel. Whose space is this?**

**ML:** This is the husband's office, and he actually chose almost everything in here. We wanted a dark, masculine space that anchors this side of the house, and it feels very different going into it from the living room. What I love about this color palette is the mixing of chestnut brown with taupe, grays and blues. I've never done a palette where I mixed a warm brown with taupe, and I think it looks really great. The husband gave me the saddle brown color in the sofa, and the blue was something he wanted to bring in. He chose the rug, which is navy with a taupe-gray. He had a lot of say in this room.

**The dining room has a very clean look. Was this intentional?**

**ML:** We kept it really simple—the walls are neutral, and there's no area rug. We really let the architectural details shine along with the furnishings, artwork and lighting; we were very purposeful not to distract from all of that. We also did a custom brown Rubio Monocoat finish on the floors. It creates a dark, saturated floor in a matte finish that feels, in some ways, very European. It works well with the architectural details and overall look of the rooms.





Tell me about the kitchen—how did you mix form and function?

ML: The kitchen is really large in scale with two islands and perimeter cabinets, and we brought in modern elements with floating stainless-steel shelves and an oversize stainless-steel hood. We also mixed in wood with the waterfall countertop and a darker finish on the cabinets on the second island, which ties it in more as a furniture piece and a nice segue to the adjacent family room. All of the cabinetry is painted a really soft gray, and we incorporated integrated hardware. The clients love to bake, so the lower cabinets on the right house all of their baking ware. We had a lot of fun working with Gianna to design a super-functional kitchen specific to this family's needs.

I see that the dining area and family room have exposed beams in the ceiling. What was the thought behind this?

ML: I wanted to incorporate an architectural detail that sets this area apart from the kitchen since it's such a grand space. The white oak beams give interest and contrast beautifully with the all-white walls and black-painted doors and windows. In the family room, the white oak beams also serve a functional purpose—they have automatic drop-down shades for the windows to block out the light when needed.

Heading upstairs, the master bedroom appears to have a small "entry" before you come into the space.

ML: This is continuing the same gallery effect that's on the main floor onto the second floor. This cased opening serves as sort of an entry hallway into the space, which makes the bedroom feel more intimate. Since this wasn't a huge space, I wanted to give it a dramatic feel with a fully upholstered, rectangle-paneled, floor-to-ceiling



"The rooms are very **OPEN** yet still **SEPARATE.**"  
—JAMES SCHETTINO



In the family room, a contemporary leather sectional is topped with a mix of cozy pillows, and a taupe-and-cream high-pile wool rug defines the space. Black-painted windows and doors provide contrast to the white walls. **opposite:** Built-ins on either side of the fireplace reinforce the simple and clean aesthetic.



For a serene feel, the master bedroom is awash in champagne and silvery tones, and a wool-and-silk rug introduces various shades of gray to the palette. A vintage chaise is a welcoming sight when entering the room.







Curvilinear bedside lamps are a striking counterpoint to the fully upholstered, rectangle-paneled, floor-to-ceiling headboard. **opposite:** Behind the tub, a wall of white Glassos tile provides shimmer in the master bathroom. "It feels like water," says Lindsay. "It's ethereal without feeling too strong or overpowering the room." Modern hardware and wall sconces are paired with custom-designed his-and-hers vanities.

headboard and make that entire wall a strong focal point. We did a very clean, modern fireplace design without a mantle so it didn't feel fussy. The stone we chose is beautiful—the stone makes it.

**Did you encounter any challenges during this design and build?**

**James S.:** I think siting the house, making that decision to move the new house forward, was a little tricky.

**ML:** When you're building a home from scratch, the sky is the limit, but you also have so many choices. Hammering down on choices, picking the best ones for the space, was really important. Lighting was the most important factor for the client, so making final decisions on lighting was probably the biggest challenge. When we made a final decision on the sconces in the entry, that was a great impetus to decide on the hanging light fixture, and then the space could move along. It can be hard, but sometimes you just have to commit.

**What are you proudest of with this project?**

**Jim S.:** I like the jump from the classical, more traditional exterior into the more modern interior, but it's a smooth transition.

**James S.:** The floor plan was interesting in that it's a nice combination of having a formal side of the house with an open flow to the informal kitchen and family room area. The rooms are very open yet still separate.

**ML:** When you and the client invest so much time, and you're involved in every detail and every decision, it's so rewarding to see it all come together. Every single paint color, building detail, fireplace, light fixture—creative energy, thought and collaboration went into all of those decisions. You're no longer looking at tear sheets or sketches—you're seeing the beautiful finished product, and it's amazing.

**RESOURCES**

*Interior designer: Pimlico Interiors, New Canaan; 203-972-8166;*

*pimlicointeriors.com*

*Architect: James Schettino Architects, New Canaan; 203-966-5552;*

*schettinoarchitects.com*

*Kitchen designer: Gianna Santoro, Deane, Inc., New Canaan;*

*203-972-8836; deaneinc.com*

*Builder: V&A Construction; 203-667-1707; vnaconstruction.com*

