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A River Runs Through It

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Designer Jane Capellini creates her own dreamy dockside retreat

BY JAMIE MARSHALL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIE COLE

JANE CAPELLINI'S BUCKET LIST doesn't include jumping out of a plane, climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro or trekking to the South Pole. Her list is all about houses—the ones she dreams about living in some day. She has crossed off a stone farmhouse in New Jersey, a Tudor in Greenwich, a townhouse in Manhattan, a villa in Tuscany, a loft in Dumbo and, now, a river cottage in Connecticut. "I always wanted a view of the water," she says.

Capellini got that—and more—when she bought a weekend retreat in Essex on the Connecticut River. It's a town she knows well, having summered near there as a child. When her Realtor first brought her to see the property on secluded North Cove, the designer was skeptical. "From the front it didn't look like much," she says. "But when I stepped inside—wow."

Inspired By Water When she saw this view of the Connecticut River, designer Jane Capellini knew she had found her coastal getaway.



It was the wow factor that won her over. Surrounded by gardens and fruit trees, the three-bedroom clapboard cottage is set on a quarter-acre of land that slopes down to a long, weathered dock. "The light is extraordinary; it changes all day long," says Capellini. "There are ducks and swans. It's protected and the water is very still. I stayed here during Hurricane Sandy, and that was the only time I've ever seen turbulence."

Originally designed nearly 30 years ago by one of the founding partners of Centerbrook Architects, the house was in good shape structurally. Capellini added some latticework to one exterior wall and bumped out the front to make room for a home office. Inside, however, was a different story. "Everything was very dark," she says. "Dark wood floors, heavy furnishings, dark trim." To lighten things up, and make the most of the open floor plan, she chose a neutral color palette, removed window dividers, grayed out the red-oak floors, gutted a bathroom, and created a wall near the foyer using 28 individual mirrors. "It reflects the water and creates an illusion of space," she says. The end result is bright and airy, a far cry from the dreary rental cottages Capellini remembers from the past.

When it came time for furnishings, the designer opted for a casual, breezy vibe. "It's a weekend home," she says. "I have two daughters and I wanted it to be very comfortable, and a bit bohemian." The living room chairs and sofa are slipcovered, and the chairs are topped with throw pillows made

Bright And Breezy (OPPOSITE PAGE AND ABOVE) Living room chairs from Crate & Barrel are slipcovered in off-white linen; the sisal area rug is from Turabian & Sariyan. Hand-forged sconces on the wall of mirrors are by Avrett; the Belgian sideboard is from Legacy Antiques; and the French wicker and rattan chairs are by Drucker. The designer added some latticework to the traditional clapboard exterior (RIGHT). "The detail is in the river," she says. See *Resources*.





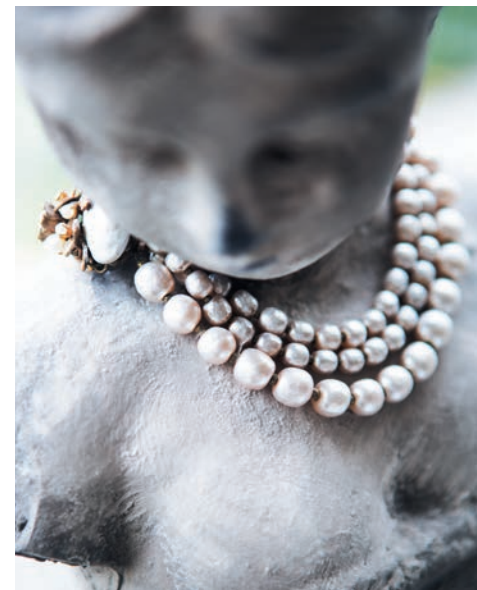
Color Story (CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT) In the downstairs bedroom, an orange leather Brunswick & Fils ottoman anchors a Crate & Barrel chair. The cashmere throw is from Pratesi. A nickel-plated Bernhardt bed is dressed with pink and orange: The geometric pillow is by Trina Turk; the Euro sham has a Lee Jofa fabric. In the entry, framed vintage burgees are from the George Glazer Gallery. The quahog-shaped knocker is a Michael Healy design. See *Resources*.



of embroidered Italian linen; the dining room chairs are French wicker. A framed trio of vintage yachting burgees graces the entry, and a pair of Victorian-era oars hangs in a downstairs bedroom. The designer scoured the region for local art that would showcase the river valley's rich legacy. "There is so much history to the river," she says. Among her favorite pieces is a wall hanging crafted from woolen spools taken from an old knitting mill.

Capellini played up the waterfront setting by incorporating nautical touches throughout: beadboard wainscoting, polished nickel door hardware, wrought-iron accessories. "Even the sisal and linen area rugs have a "beachy, sandy vibe," she says. "I've designed a lot of homes on the water. I've learned to use soft, beige neutral colors." The only exception? A downstairs bedroom where the pink and orange palette is more Mexican beach resort than coastal New England. "In my interiors, I always do one room that is sort of quirky," says Capellini. "Something that stands on its own. I wanted this room to be whimsical and fun."

Back outside, the view takes center stage. The polished mahogany deck evokes a classic yacht; a wisteria-draped pergola shades a cozy seating area. A vegetable garden steps down along one side of house. "It's just the perfect little house," says Capellini. "There's not a lot to worry about. When I leave, I can walk out and turn the key." 🌟



Dreamscape The master bedroom (TOP) is done in soft hues. Ivory cotton drapery panels are through ABC Carpet & Home. The wood frame bed is through Louis J. Solomon; the linen duvet cover and boudoir pillows are from And Company. **Delightful Details** (ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT) A vintage pearl necklace adorns a bust. The powder room features polished nickel hardware; the French limestone vanity top is through ABC Stone. A porthole in the shower is from Nautical Tropical. See *Resources*.