

A modern living room with a beige sectional sofa, a wooden coffee table, a large plant, and a colorful abstract painting. The room features a high ceiling with a large, spherical chandelier and large windows with white frames. The coffee table is a light wood top with a black metal frame, holding a glass bowl of greenery, a vase of red flowers, and a glass of amber liquid. The sofa is adorned with several pillows, including a patterned one and a purple one. A large green plant stands to the left of the sofa, and a colorful abstract painting is on the wall behind it.

# Zen And The Art of Family Living

BY ROBIN H. PHILLIPS // PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANE BEILES



**QUIET CALM** The family room has comfort, beauty, and compelling shapes and textures. Fuhrman's gift to the family welcomes you into the home: a small painting of a Jerusalem cypress tree.



A

T THE END OF A LONG, winding and wooded cul-de-sac in Greenfield Hill, there's an attractive grey-shingled colonial, not unlike many others in Fairfield. "We had been to open houses on the street, and knew we loved it. When we heard there was a home for sale there in 2006, we jumped on it," says Lauren Field who bought the house with husband Steve. Wellington Drive is a mecca for families. There are always kids playing and neighbors get together in all seasons. The house, built in 1985, was nicely sized at 3,300 square feet and updated, but as the years went by the need for a mudroom for the Fields' two kids' growing gear sparked an interest in making some changes. "What started as a small change suddenly blossomed into something bigger," says Lauren. "My tastes were also changing and I wanted some thing more sleek and modern."

So with a new mudroom came a complete renovation of the first floor, 2,200 square feet of the total. With the help of architect Steven Odams and builder John Arone of IC Contracting, they gutted the whole first floor, and started from scratch. They reconfigured the mudroom, laundry room, powder room, and shape of the kitchen. The transformation of the actual space inspired Lauren to find a whole new design scheme. Lauren and Steve had some general ideas and knew what they liked, but needed a professional to help them translate their feelings into a décor that had a unifying theme. Meeting through mutual friends, they hit it off immediately with New Canaan-based designer Emily Fuhrman of Sage and Ginger. "Emily understood us right away, and what's better, she had a vision

for each room, and helped us change big details as well as small, and work with some pieces we wanted to keep.”

When you enter the Field home, an overall feeling of calm envelops you. “Lauren loves Buddha, and clean lines, with not just cool and earth tones but also with pops of brighter colors, like lilac, red, and turquoise, that add surprise to the décor but do not dominate it,” explains Emily. Fuhrman translated these tastes into a décor that is very personal for the Field family, but inviting and appealing to all. Indeed, a white ceramic Buddha greets you as you enter, sitting atop a metal and zinc table. The grey and white tones you first encounter are echoed throughout the house.

Usually the family enters the home through the mudroom that began the transformation, and as you pass through that entrance there are stairs to the left leading up to a majestic family room, with windows on three sides. Flooded with light and exposed white beams, it was a blank canvas and Fuhrman filled it with contemporary designs, functional and comfortable pieces, with cool tones and pops of purple and red in accent pillows. “I love to add textures and materials that complement each other,” says Fuhrman. Holly Hunt window treatments sparkle with silver thread, adding dimension and texture but not overwhelming the large windows. The expanse of the room is covered with a geometric patterned grey and white Stark carpet and in the center is a square-lined Vanguard beige linen sectional. An eye-catching oil painting with purple, lime green, and red splashed on the canvas is a great focal point, and underneath is a whimsical purple velvet-covered settee from Mr. Brown. “The Fields were willing to take some risks which always makes decorating more interesting,” explains Emily.

**FAMILY HANGOUT** The Field family, including Portuguese Water dog Rio, love to relax in their oversized family room. Fuhrman placed funky mirrors throughout the home, including the wire starburst Made Goods one in the living room. Vases in a mosaic stone grace the dining room table adding height and warmth.





“Emily taught me that art is as important as furniture,” says Lauren. The two women visited the Carriage Barn Arts Center, an artists collective in New Canaan, and chose several pieces of art together that dot each room, adding the kind of drama and depth that you might find in a SoHo loft. “I love to use art from local artists in my projects,” says Emily.

When it came to the kitchen, Lauren knew she wanted something completely different than her current “country kitchen.” Cabinet-maker Rinaldo DiIorio of DiIorio’s Custom Woodworking in Norwalk designed the Fields’ cabinetry, mixing painted white cabinets with an island in cherry. The contrast of light and dark is continued throughout the kitchen with oak floors and a white marble counter, floors are oak with a dark walnut stain. Emily wanted to balance the dark/light concept in the kitchen so she added chocolate faux leather Zuo Modern bar stools at the counter and faux white leather Zuo Modern chairs with a round Looc Studio walnut table. “The leather texture is not just sleek and comfortable, but the faux part allows for easy cleaning,” explains Emily.

The dining room introduces blue tones mixed in with a palette of browns and beiges. A faux-tortoise mirror from Mr. Brown is a fo-



**PLAY OF DARK AND LIGHT** The sleek, modern kitchen alternates dark with light, drawing the eye upwards. Fuhrman also played with spatial details, contrasting round with square in cylindrical light fixtures and a large white round chandelier from Currey and Hudson Valley, respectively. A giclee "painting" adds interest to a far wall, without breaking the budget.





**SHADES OF BLUE** For the living room, Fuhrman worked with a few pieces the Fields loved, taking the blue theme one step further and introducing shades of purple and some interesting accessories. The powder room is a tiny jewel with mini mosaic blue tiles on the floor and a Robert Abbey tear drop glass chandelier. Fuhrman recommended painting the ceiling slate blue to add warmth.



cal point on one wall, and on the opposite is another contemporary painting from the Carriage Barn Arts Center with splashes of yellow and red. Emily added sheer Donghia window treatments in turquoise and a subtly striped carpet from Stark. The dining table, made by Orient Express Furniture, has the clean, simple lines of most of the main pieces in the home. The dining room looks onto the formal living room, so Emily made sure the transition of colors and even shapes was seamless. Emily added interest and height with Donghia vases on the mantle in varying shades of purple that contribute a “wow” factor.

Emily redid the first-floor powder room, which is a shining example of how a small space can sparkle with the right accents. Emily added grey blue Phillips Jeffries grass cloth wallpaper, a gold painted mirror that instead of clashing with the aluminum fixtures, enhances them. “I am not afraid to mix colors, metals, and textures,” says Emily. “Gold, silver, shiny, matte—it all can work together in the right space.” ■

