

Victor / Victorian

Deborah Martin finishes renovation with grandeur

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RANDY SCOTT SLAVIN



Poised on a bluff with magnificently unobstructed views of the Long Island Sound, this waterfront Victorian was built in 1904 as a summer residence. After acquiring it nearly a century later as a diamond in the rough, these Stony Brook homeowners embarked on a series of painstaking renovations that would bring their three-story home to its grand potential.

Knowing the search for just the right appointments would be lengthy and time consuming, restoration of the living room was saved for last. The couple identified a new fireplace mantle and surround as the room's first

priority. The quest for just the right one would begin at Chesney's in Manhattan's D & D Building, continue in London where the couple traveled in 2006 and concluded in Florida where they commissioned a pure white Italian Carrera marble original.

The hand-carved female figures on the vertical faces of the fireplace, two on each side, represent the four seasons found in nature. Stone and bronze sculpture is known to have featured prominently in Victorian décor. Simultaneously elegant and organic, the new fireplace set the tone for the rest of the

living room's design elements.

Having collaborated on at least part of the search for the fireplace, Deborah Martin of Deborah Martin Designs, was eager to begin the room's transformation while staying true to its Victorian past. Inspiration would come in the form of a Maitland-Smith mahogany cabinet she





chose to house the room's flat-screen television. Authentic to the Victorian-era design style that swept Europe during the 1800's, the Chinoiserie cabinet features hand-painted Oriental motifs in the signature red color. A pair of ceramic Foo dogs placed on a Maitland-Smith console from the same collection is a nod to an original oil of the same subject by German-born Gunter Korus, an artist known for his museum quality, "Old World" paintings. Other pieces of original art in the room include a Dutch botanical and a seascape of Catania purchased on trips to Amsterdam and Sicily.

A pair of custom sofas from the Theodore Alexander Althorp Collection named for the estate of the late Princess Diana's brother flank a large metal and glass cocktail table were chosen for the ample and comfortable seating they afford. The sofas and a stunning 19th century French armoire were purchased from Manhattan's widely acclaimed ABC. Deborah credits

the couple's husband for conceiving the room's configuration – after protracted debates over furniture placement – which allows one to look through the room to the 1925 Steinway Baby Grand piano. Deborah chose a Duralee stripe in soft earth tones for the large pair of pillows on each of the amber velvet sofas and three additional coordinating Duralee fabrics for the window seat cushion and its decorative pillows.

The need for additional lighting in the room was met by a pair of long dramatic wall sconces and a cut-crystal embellished floor lamp from Fine Art Lighting. Keen on preserving the room's panoramic views, Deborah chose a combination of waterfall Roman shades and stationary pinch-pleat panels using an embroidered Kravet fabric to dress the six windows.

Protective window film provides light control without diminishing the spectacular waterfront views that first drew this family of four to a stately Victorian of unquestionable grandeur. ■

