



IT'S HUMAN NATURE

SHEILA BRIDGES DRAWS FROM VERMONT'S
HISTORY AND WILDERNESS TO BRING LIFE AND
CHARACTER TO A SPRAWLING NEW HOME.

BY CAMILLE OKHIO PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK FRANCIS STYLED BY ELVIS MAYNARD



In the great room of a Vermont house with architecture by TruexCullins and interiors by Sheila Bridges, vintage chairs in a Schumacher ikat surround a games table from John Rosselli & Associates. Wallpaper by Morris & Co.; Roman shade of a Castel Maison fabric.

OPPOSITE: A vintage pine hutch stands next to a dining table by Atelier D emiurge. For details, see Resources.



In the barn, two Nickey Kehoe sofas in a Rogers & Goffigon fabric flank an ottoman in a Schumacher ikat. Madeline Stuart armchairs; chandelier by Ralph Lauren for Circa Lighting; curtains by the Shade Store.

OPPOSITE, LEFT: A vintage Kaare Klint settee in a Scalamandré velvet sits in the entry. Demilune table, John Rosselli; light fixtures by the Urban Electric Company; vintage rug; walls painted in White Dove by Benjamin Moore.

OPPOSITE, RIGHT: The kitchen cabinets and island are painted in Farrow & Ball's Calke Green. Oak barstools by Sawkille Co.; fittings by Waterworks; pendants by the Urban Electric Company; range and hood by BlueStar.

Vermont has attracted the strong, silent type for centuries. The New England ski capital is known for maples, mountains, and minding your own business, and its historic houses follow suit—sturdy barns and Greek Revivals dot the hilly landscape, interwoven with trails, lakes, and valleys that add to the state's charm. With all the natural splendor and architectural heritage Vermont has to offer, building a new house there is an intimidating proposition. One New York City couple was undaunted by the challenge after hiring Sheila Bridges to decorate the interior.

It was the New York City-based ELLE DECOR Titan designer's skill with layering and texture that made her the best choice to bring warmth and character to an 8,000-square-foot house built by the Burlington, Vermont-based architecture firm TruexCullins in 2023. "I fell in love with Sheila's work after seeing it in ELLE DECOR," the wife says. "Her use of pattern and color is very appealing."

After the husband had floated—and subsequently kiboshed—buying a ranch in Montana, the couple scouted

rugged central Vermont in one whirlwind weekend, visiting 10 properties in two days. They chose an unspoiled 240-acre plot with unobstructed views in every direction, a stunning, romantic piece of earth. But, as one might expect, it was not without some issues. "There was no road into the house site. We had to park at the edge of the road and hike up," the wife says. "But the minute you clear the bend, the whole world opens up before you. My husband was completely enraptured."

The Greek Revival house follows the form of traditional 19th-century New England connected farms. A central, rectangular structure houses the husband's library, an office, and a parlor for the wife, with four bedrooms above. Initially intended as an occasional landing for ski trips, the house has now become a regular retreat, with friends and adult children populating the bedrooms. There is a double-height, barnlike space (the only room with undecorated walls) used for larger gatherings, and to the right is the great room and kitchen, where the family spends most of their time, with the primary suite above it. ▷

Bridges's design concept began with an unexpected source of inspiration. "It started with the Vermont license plate," she says. Its distinct leafy-green hue, reflected in the Morris & Co. Blackthorn Autumn wallpaper, covers the kitchen cabinets and extends into the great room. "I'm always inspired by nature," says Bridges, who keeps horses and homes in the Hudson Valley and in Iceland. "I visited Vermont a lot throughout my childhood. When you think of the state, you think of the foliage, so it follows that this home is very rich and reflective of nature."

A flora and fauna theme permeates every room of the house, with barn swallows flying on the walls of one downstairs powder room and vines and butterflies adorning another. Even the custom Roman shades in the great room were designed with animal motifs at their center. Upstairs are two more cheeky prints, with prancing deer on the walls of one bedroom while skiers zoom down slopes in another. "I start every job fresh," Bridges says. "In 30 years, I have tried not to use the same pattern or textile twice." Bridges goes beyond bespoke.

The depictions of winter sports and forest fauna disappear in the wife's parlor, where the focus shifts to trees and foliage with two botanical prints mounted on an earthy chinoiserie grass-cloth toile by Scalamandré. In the pattern-light, green primary suite with the best views in the house, peace is the premise. "Though this was a new build, I still wanted it to feel like it had a sense of history that isn't just about humans," Bridges says. "History is also rooted in nature. After all, this was all forest at one point." ■

BELOW LEFT: The patio of the barn overlooks the 240-acre property, with landscape design by Wagner Hodgson.

BELOW RIGHT: Wallpaper by Timorous Beasties creates drama in the barn powder room. Concrete sink by Kast; fittings by Waterworks; antique mirror.

OPPOSITE: The parlor walls are covered in an embroidered Scalamandré toile. Custom skirted sofa in a Lee Jofa fabric; latesta Studio steel and glass cocktail table; rug by Stark Carpet.





“IN 30 YEARS, I HAVE TRIED NOT TO USE THE SAME PATTERN OR TEXTILE TWICE.”

—SHEILA BRIDGES

ABOVE: A Lee Jofa forest pattern depicting deer covers the walls of a guest bedroom. Antique side tables; sconces by Circa Lighting.

OPPOSITE: In another guest room, the bed is in a Schumacher fabric. Antique nightstand; lamp by Circa Lighting; Serena & Lily bedding; wallpaper by Pintura Studio; rug by Stark Carpet.

LEFT: In the primary bathroom, a Catchpole & Rye copper tub has a prime mountain view. Fittings by Waterworks; pendant by Remains Lighting Company; curtains by Emma J Shipley; marble floor tiles, TileBar.

