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NOV/DEC 2019 | DISPLAY UNTIL 01/06/20

Jean Miro
de Kooning
LEE FRIEDLANDER LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

A FINE BALANCE

HELMED BY A MASTERFUL DESIGN TEAM,
A SPRAWLING GREENWICH ESTATE STRADDLES
THE LINE BETWEEN CLASSIC AND MODERN.

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ARCHITECTURE / CHARLES HILTON,
CHARLES HILTON ARCHITECTS
INTERIOR DESIGN / RAYMOND FOREHAND AND CHRISTINA LAKE,
FOREHAND + LAKE DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / IAN HOBBS, HOBBS INC.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / MARYANNE CONNELLY,
HOLLANDER DESIGN



Georgian-style country estates have long been a mainstay in Greenwich, Connecticut, a town where timelessness tends to trump trends. “People here want homes that will live well and fit into the neighborhood for generations,” says architect Charles Hilton. So when a family of five commissioned Hilton to design one such home for them, he expected the project to remain rooted in tradition. But as the bounds of the project expanded—over the five-year construction period, the family acquired more surrounding land, eventually totaling 13 acres—so, too, did the design. “The owners’ opinion evolved in relation to the built-in architectural interiors,” explains Hilton. “They leaned increasingly modern as time went on.”

While sleeker details abound in other areas, the home’s front elevation evokes the stately elegance of a country manor in a Jane Austen novel. The classic designs of the

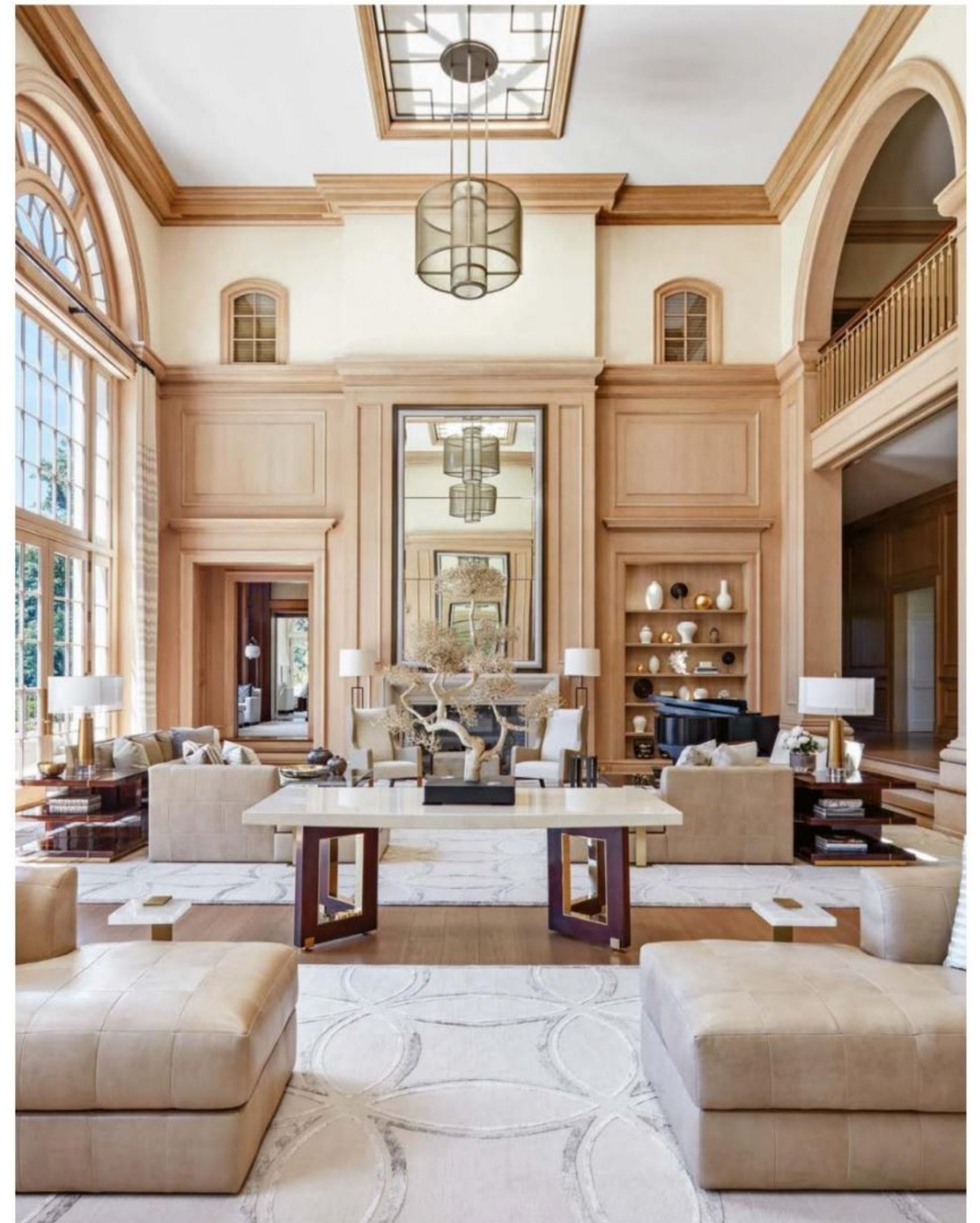
early 20th-century architect David Adler were an inspiration, specifically Castle Hill—the grand estate Adler conceived for the Crane family in Ipswich, Massachusetts—which is in turn influenced by Belton House in Lincolnshire, England.

Though the grand façade remains a testament to tradition, Hilton incorporated modern touches to both the outdoor and indoor living areas, reflecting the tastes of his clients as well as their personalities. On the pillars surrounding the pool pergola, for example, he created intricate, lacy cutouts of the Chinese symbol for happiness as a nod to the owners’ Asian heritage.

“The husband stays in the finest hotels around the world, and he liked the open, airy feel of those beautiful lobby spaces,” Hilton says, explaining the driving force behind the expansive central living room, which features three large skylights and a wall of round-top windows with semicircular muntin patterns in the shape of lotus leaves, yet another

The home’s exterior facade and outbuildings were inspired by a wide variety of Georgian brick architecture, especially the American Colonial architecture of the mid-Atlantic region.

Rift-sawn white-oak wood paneling creates an inviting atmosphere in the living room, which features calfskin-covered chaise longues and hand-knotted wool-and-silk area rugs by Mark Inc. Fine Carpets. The overhead lighting from Hammerton Studio is rice-paper glass with a bronze frame.



Opposite: The kitchen is paved in porcelain floor tiles by Porcelanosa and features polished Silestone quartz countertops. The custom lacquered cabinetry is by Fairfield County Millwork and the counter stools are upholstered in a Holly Hunt fabric.

Below: Wide-framed openings connect the sunny breakfast room to the kitchen, maximizing natural light and creating a sense of airiness.





Landscape architect Maryanne Connelly used small boxwood hedges, catmint and rose bushes to evoke a formal European garden feel. The lakeside pavilion showcases stonework details from Stone Legends of Dallas.

reference to the owners' heritage. "The overall scale of that room is breathtaking," notes Ian Hobbs, the builder on the project. "The ceilings are the highest we've ever built and the windows are tremendous." Arching up to meet the soaring ceiling, those windows overlook a majestic expanse of property designed by landscape architect Maryanne Connelly, who combined a British park-like setting on the east side of the house with a formal European-style garden to the west, stretching out toward the lake.

To fulfill the clients' desire for a more modern interior, Christina Lake and Raymond Forehand rounded out the design team. "We wanted to keep the integrity of what

[Hilton] had done but marry his traditional elements with a more transitional style," says Lake, referring to the foyer's clean-lined millwork, tone-on-tone strié paneling and geometric sconces as immediate examples. To give Hilton's wood paneling in the living room a fresher feel, Forehand and Lake employed white oak, and in the family room, they added warm walnut as a fireplace surround.

"We kept the hotel inspiration in mind, but in reality, this is for a family," Forehand says of their efforts to make the cavernous space feel homey. "Almost every wall is covered in some kind of treatment," he elaborates, noting the leather and wood cladding throughout, the Venetian plaster

In the soothing conservatory, a series of arched doors are ornamented with hand-embroidered linen drapery panels, framing postcard views across the gardens and lake. The tiered walnut coffee tables are from ALB and the wool silk rug is by the Scott Group Studio.





above the paneling in the living room, which extends into the upstairs hallway, and in the family room, a Fromental wallpaper made of pulped coconut shell and papier-mache overlaid onto silk. "That was one of the elements that, when installed, really took over the space," recalls Lake. "Then we brought in the beautiful ombré draperies and kept layering. By adding wallcoverings, textiles and artwork, and furnishings upholstered in fabrics like lambskin, velvet and chenille, we were able to achieve a sense of coziness."

The home's many lighting fixtures, meanwhile, add contemporary and dramatic flavor to the interiors, from a cascading crystal chandelier in the dining room to cylindrical

pendants dangling from the living room skylights. "For every light that we put into the house, whether a sconce or a ceiling fixture, we had models made out of foamcore to get the scale just right," recalls Forehand.

The sheer size of the house and the gardens demanded such precision for every aspect, and fortunately every member of the design team was not only willing but thrilled to take on that challenge. "If we didn't have such an amazing team, I can't imagine getting the results we did," says Hilton. "It was one of these projects where everyone wanted to be there and everyone wanted to do a fabulous job," echoes Connelly. "It was just very, very special." ■

Clad in a beaded Donghia wallcovering, a guest bedroom features a wood and lacquer desk that serves as a dressing table and a chair by Lorin Marsh. The rug is by Stark Carpet.

A curved upholstered sofa from ALB, along with an armchair and a shagreen-topped table by Lorin Marsh, creates a cozy conversation nook in the sitting area of the guest bedroom.

