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Drew and Melanie Schaffran relax in their expansive back yard. "We're happy to be here," says Melanie.



## WELCOME HOME

How a two-story addition, an eye for detail, and a fresh coat of paint coaxed the best out of Drew and Melanie Schaffran's Katonah house and made it the home they'd always wanted.

BY SUSAN HODARA, PHOTOS BY DION OGUST

When Melanie and Drew Schaffran, house hunting in Katonah in 2003 after 18 years in nearby Chappaqua, pulled into the driveway of the second house they were shown, their reaction was less than enthusiastic.

"We almost told the realtor to turn around," recalls Melanie, the mother of Brett, now 17, and Lindsay, 20, and at the time about to start college. "The house was salmon pink and ugly brown—more Miami than Katonah. And it had a gate! It was very different from what we thought we wanted."

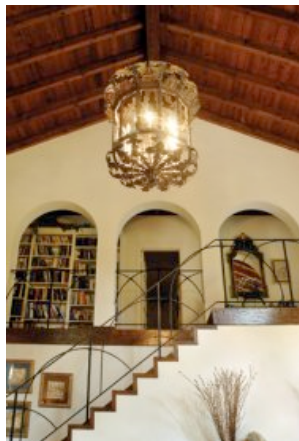
What Melanie, an avid gardener with a passion for entertaining, and Drew, a partner in a Manhattan law firm, thought they wanted was a colonial or a farmhouse, large enough for their family and an expanding assortment of pets (which now includes Gracie, a four-month-old retriever; Kiwi, a two-year-old ferret; Prince, a five-year-old African gray parrot; and three fish). This house was a Mediterranean, built in 1967.

It didn't take them long, however, to recognize the property's assets. A 4,500-square-foot three-bedroom bordering a nature preserve in the exclusive Mount Holly section of town, the house boasted an expansive living room, pine-beamed cathedral ceilings, stucco walls, and abundant fireplaces; an adjacent 600-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bath cottage and 300-square-foot studio; and gardens, then neglected but fertile with possibilities.

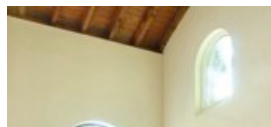
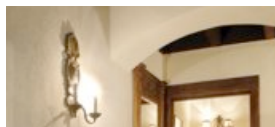
"Afterwards, the colonials and farmhouses we saw seemed less interesting," says Melanie. "They didn't hold the potential of this house."

Three years later, that potential has been more than realized. This summer the Schaffrans, who spent the last 20 seasons on Martha's Vineyard, stayed home. "Our house has replaced the Vineyard," Melanie says.

Besides repainting the exterior in a more palatable color scheme (tan and olive green), transforming the house involved accomplishing several goals. Foremost was to make the space "comfortable and welcoming," says Melanie.



The arches in a second-floor corridor are echoed in a cast iron banister; a chandelier hangs from the 30-foot-high cathedral ceiling in the living room.



The renovation addressed limitations upstairs, including a too-small master bath and inadequate closet space in the master



A loveseat in a downstairs hallway.



Some of the Schaffrans' antique furnishings were passed down to them from family members. In the spacious and light-filled living room, the large coffee table was once a Chinese opium bed.

bedroom.

In addition, the Schaffrans wanted to maximize contact with their natural surroundings. "This area is bucolic and beautiful," Melanie says. "Some of the prettiest views are to the north, but there was little exposure in that direction."

The solution lay in a two-story, 1,000-square-foot addition on the north side of the house that includes a

window-lined sitting and dining area adjacent to the kitchen, a luxurious master bath overlooking the branches of a hearty holly tree, and what Melanie calls a "bonus room" in the basement that will eventually house a wine cellar. The majority of the construction took about nine months, guided by Lawrence Borges of Lawrence Borges Architects in Manhattan (212-353-1320; [borgesnyc@yahoo.com](mailto:borgesnyc@yahoo.com)).

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