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Project completed while an associate of
Shostak & Company

the NATURAL

In Hoboken, designer Bruce Shostak updates an 1880s brownstone for a modern family



INTERIOR DESIGN BRUCE SHOSTAK
TEXT SALLIE BRADY
PHOTOGRAPHY CHRISTIAN HARDER



ROOM to ROOM

Opposite: Cowtan & Tout linen velvet covers the family room sofa. Wool sateen Roman shades, Holland & Sherry Triangular tub chair, 20th Century Gallery. This page: The dining room's c. 1950s brass chandelier is from Eric Appel.

quiet RESTFUL color

Neutral ivories, grays, blues, and buff create a serene mood in the living room. Jim Thompson silk curtains; Samuel & Sons trim; Rogers & Goffigon linen damask on custom sofa. Hand-knotted rug from Beauvais Carpets. Karl Springer lacquered linen cocktail table, Eric Appal, Brass drum stool, John Salibello Antiques.



NATURAL materials

Clockwise, from bottom left: Draggled wallpaper is Farrow & Ball; convex mirror, Julian Chichester. Winterberry, by Allyson Levy, hangs above the dining room's 1950s marble-and-brass console from Mando Cane. Italian chandelier, Flessas Design. A bone and mother-of-pearl tray, in the living room.

HIRING A DESIGNER AFTER LIVING IN A SPACE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS HAS advantages as well as challenges: On the plus side is the fact that the client knows all too well the home's fundamental problems and frustrations and is ready to tackle them head on. Less easy to accomplish is paring down acquisitions and heirlooms—a process that's necessary before major change can be undertaken.

When Bruce Shostak began work on this Hoboken brownstone, he had clients who loved their 19th-century home, but were craving rooms that were more social, serene, and organized. They also knew they needed some urging to step away from a more traditional decor. "I respect the architecture of a home," says Shostak, who found inspiration in the brownstone's 1880s bones. The way to bring the space into the present was by mixing in some clean-lined, modern finds. Shostak and his associate, Joan Leger enlarged some of the brownstone's warren-like rooms, removed superfluous doors, and fitted out tricky interior spaces with built-ins and custom cabinetry. Every square inch of the house needed to function at its full capacity.

To unify four floors of distinctive rooms, Shostak looked to nature, selecting a palette and decorative motifs that could have been plucked from the woodland. Hardwoods were favored for new and antique furniture. In decorative elements, Shostak gravitated toward pieces made of natural materials: mother-of-pearl and bone. Other decorative elements echoed branches, twigs, and bamboo in form.

With two young children, the brownstone couldn't be too precious.

CONTINUED

"This is the most POPULAR PLACE in the house. The kids can always be found TUCKED IN HERE READING," says interior designer Bruce Shostak.



open DOOR policy

Opposite: Shostak's team transformed an interior space into a mini-library with a reading nook. Banquette covered with cadet-blue mohair from Pollock. Ikat pillows from Bermingham & Co.; Christopher Hyland cotton print on small pillows. Custom swing-arm sconces, Ann-Morris Antiques. This page: The master bedroom's grasscloth wallpaper is from Silk Dynasty. Custom bedding, E. Braun & Co.





updated DRESS code

A marble-topped island offers additional storage, as well as a packing, folding, and organizing area. The same grasscloth wallcovering, fitted Stark carpet, silk Roman shades, and custom drum lamps are used throughout the master suite.



gather YOUR thoughts

Clockwise from left: In the wife's study, works on paper hang above a 1970s leather-clad trestle desk from Lobel Modern; custom desk chair from JM Upholstery covered in green Edelman Leather. The study's chaise lounge is upholstered in Claremont fabric. An oval giltwood twig mirror from Berns Fry; bleached mahogany Paul Frankl chest from Duane Antiques; and T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings slipper chair.

Rugs and upholstery fabrics needed to be forgiving, and the client stressed that the first floor of the brownstone must better accommodate entertaining.

"We gave the family plenty of flexible seating," says Shostak. "And there is always somewhere to put a drink down." But small luxuries—custom upholstery and bed linens—elevated the brownstone's level of sophistication: Every lampshade, for example, was handmade by Blanche P. Field.

In the end, the designer says, it was the clients' motivation to make the brownstone their own—and the fresh interest in modern design that the project awakened—that made the transformation a success. "Their confidence grew, they stepped up to the plate, and went all of the way." — See Resources.