

# New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

## Bright Beginnings

*Ring in the New*





For the dining table, Silver Maple Construction built a trestle-style base that allows lots of leg room when guests are many. The wall art is a commissioned piece by Miami textile artist Ana Maria Mariani. **FACING PAGE:** The living room's striking rust-colored floor-to-ceiling fireplace surround is acid-washed steel, fabricated off-site in Silver Maple's workshop. The ceiling is whitewashed oak accented with timbers salvaged from an old barn.



# Full House

This family retreat includes built-in flexibility that welcomes many or just two.

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Architect and historian Thomas C. Hubka hails the nineteenth-century New England farmhouse as an archetype of practical and aesthetic design. In his 1984 book *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn* (reprinted in 2022), he chronicled the typical farmstead, usually three or four buildings, including a barn, of various sizes connected under a series of gabled roofs of

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** A collection of succulents is arranged as a centerpiece on the dining room table. The built-in bar off the living room is a "little jewel," says interior designer Kate Kelley. Twelve-foot high-performance Marvin sliding-glass doors seal the living room against the cold while providing a view of the snowy terrace and meadow beyond.





*“IT’S NO FRILLS  
in a modern way.”*

—Architect Joan Heaton

Looking up at the house from the base of the meadow, landscape architect Keith Wagner says the concrete wall “creates a plinth that gives the house a comfortable stance on this sloped site.” The gable ends on the left wing and on the barn face forward, while the middle structure has a broader roofline, a scheme that helps break up the massing of the 5,890-square-foot house.

different heights and sizes. Sections could be closed off as needed to save heat or provide privacy, and you could access the barn without stepping outside.

The Vermont retreat that architect Joan Heaton designed for her clients is a variation on Hubka’s classic farmhouse theme, hitting an architectural sweet spot that pays homage to the past while embracing pared-down modernism. The clients, a couple with four adult children, wanted a vaca-

tion home that would work when the family is together—and there could be as many as ten guests sharing the space—and when the couple is alone. Heaton’s answer is three distinct two-story buildings tied together by flat-roof one-story structures to create a handsome, unified complex. The result is a 5,890-square-foot house that reads as a welcoming rural homestead.

The house is set at the edge of a gently sloping

meadow, part of a more than 100-acre property, most of which is forested conservation land. Keith Wagner, principal of Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture, recalls the Goldilocks moment when he, Heaton, and the owners selected the site for the house. “It wasn’t the highest or the lowest spot. It was just the right fit,” he says of the unanimous decision. “We all knew. Everyone felt it.”

Inside and out, Heaton strove for sophisticated





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—Interior designer Kate Kelley



simplicity. “It’s no frills in a modern way,” she says. Windows lack trim, walls have no molding. It’s a minimal style that requires “attention to detail to the nth degree,” says Sean Flynn, an owner of Silver Maple Construction, which built the house in a soup-to-nuts operation. “It’s a solid example of what we do,” he says. “Everything comes from us. We don’t have various crews. It’s one team the whole way through.”

In creating the interior spaces, designer Kate Kelley says, “I complemented the architecture with lots of textures and soft colors. I wanted it to be calm and uncluttered but not too serious.”

Together and apart, “Everyone loves the house,” says the client. “When the family is all there, they have their privacy. When it is just my husband and I, we can close off areas, so the house doesn’t feel huge.”

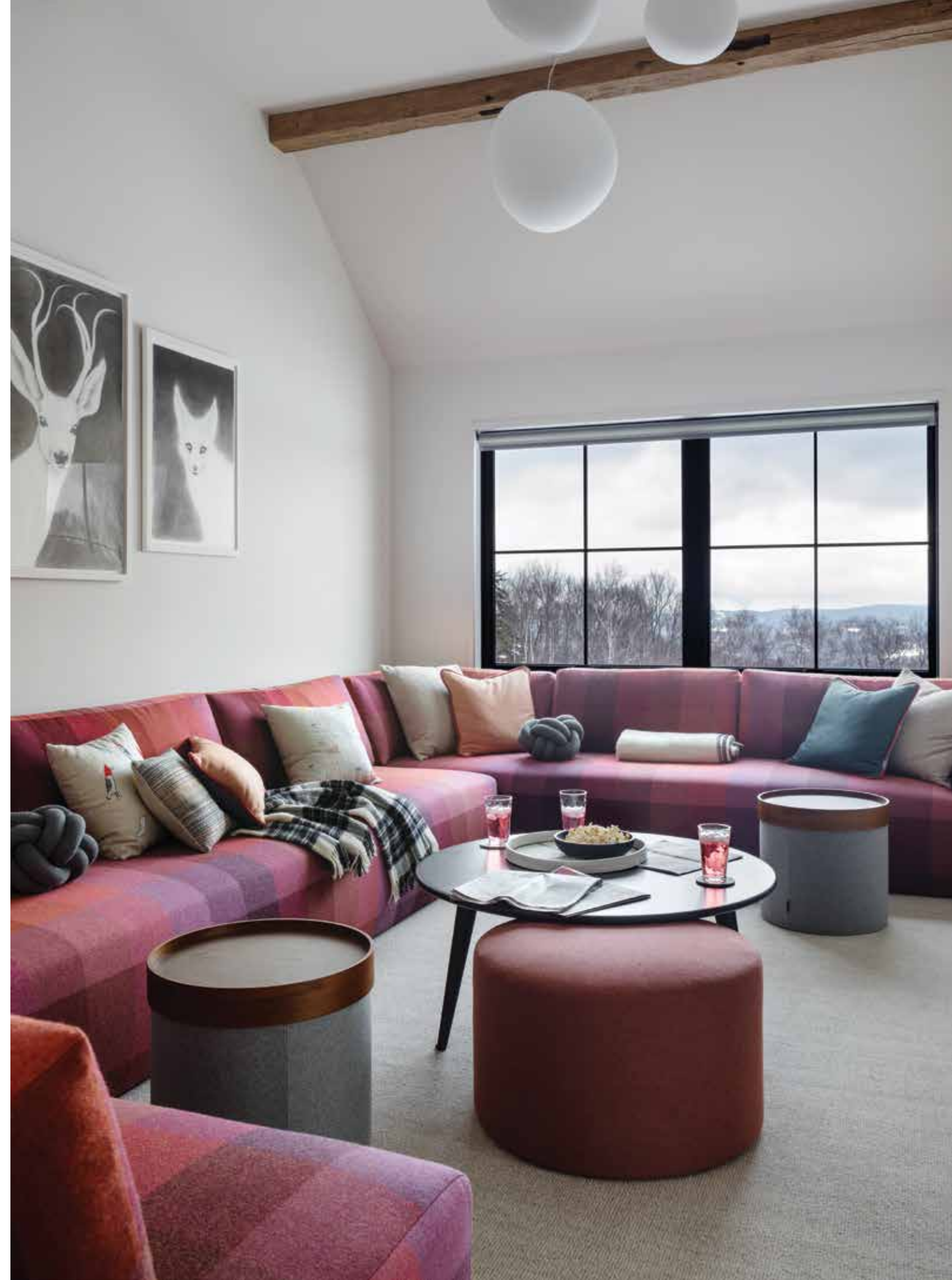
The living room, dining area, and kitchen are in the center of the house. The primary bedroom suite is above, accessed by its own staircase. The home’s west wing has a first-floor study, laundry, and guest

**ABOVE:** The Zen-like kitchen has no upper cabinets to break sight lines. An adjacent pantry provides plenty of storage, and Knoll stools around the island add contrast. The range hood is Tadelakt Moroccan lime plaster crafted by Jonathan Ives of Shoreham, Vermont. Ceiling pendants and Hakwood engineered white-oak flooring add to the Japanese sensibility. **TOP LEFT:** Floating shelves of richly stained walnut accent a corner next to the textured handmade white subway tile from Waterworks.





**ABOVE:** The primary bedroom's gas fireplace is set in the same Tadelakt plaster that is used in the kitchen. **RIGHT:** Japanese influences continue in the primary bath starting with the sleek black soaking tub. **FACING PAGE:** The sofa in the conversation pit looks built in but was made to order by Partners in Design of Newton, Massachusetts. It is upholstered with a soft-toned Paul Smith fabric from Maharam.



suite and two second-floor bedrooms and baths, also accessed by its own stair.

Above the garage, reached by a third set of stairs, are two more bedrooms connected by a sitting room, aka the “convo pit,” a must-have for one of the client’s two daughters. A retro concept reminiscent of John Lennon’s living room in *Help!* or Don Draper’s Manhattan apartment in *Mad Men*, the sunken room has a comfy made-to-fit sectional that dominates the room and draws guests like a magnet. “It’s a very popular space,” says the owner, an observation that applies to this niche and the entire house.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**ARCHITECTURE:** Joan Heaton Architects

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Kate Kelley Designs

**BUILDER:** Silver Maple Construction

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN:** Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture