

The newly defined step-down dining room features seating, table linens, and window treatments fabricated in Gilberte Interiors' workrooms. The chandelier, from Vermont's Hubbardton Forge, adds soft light and shape.





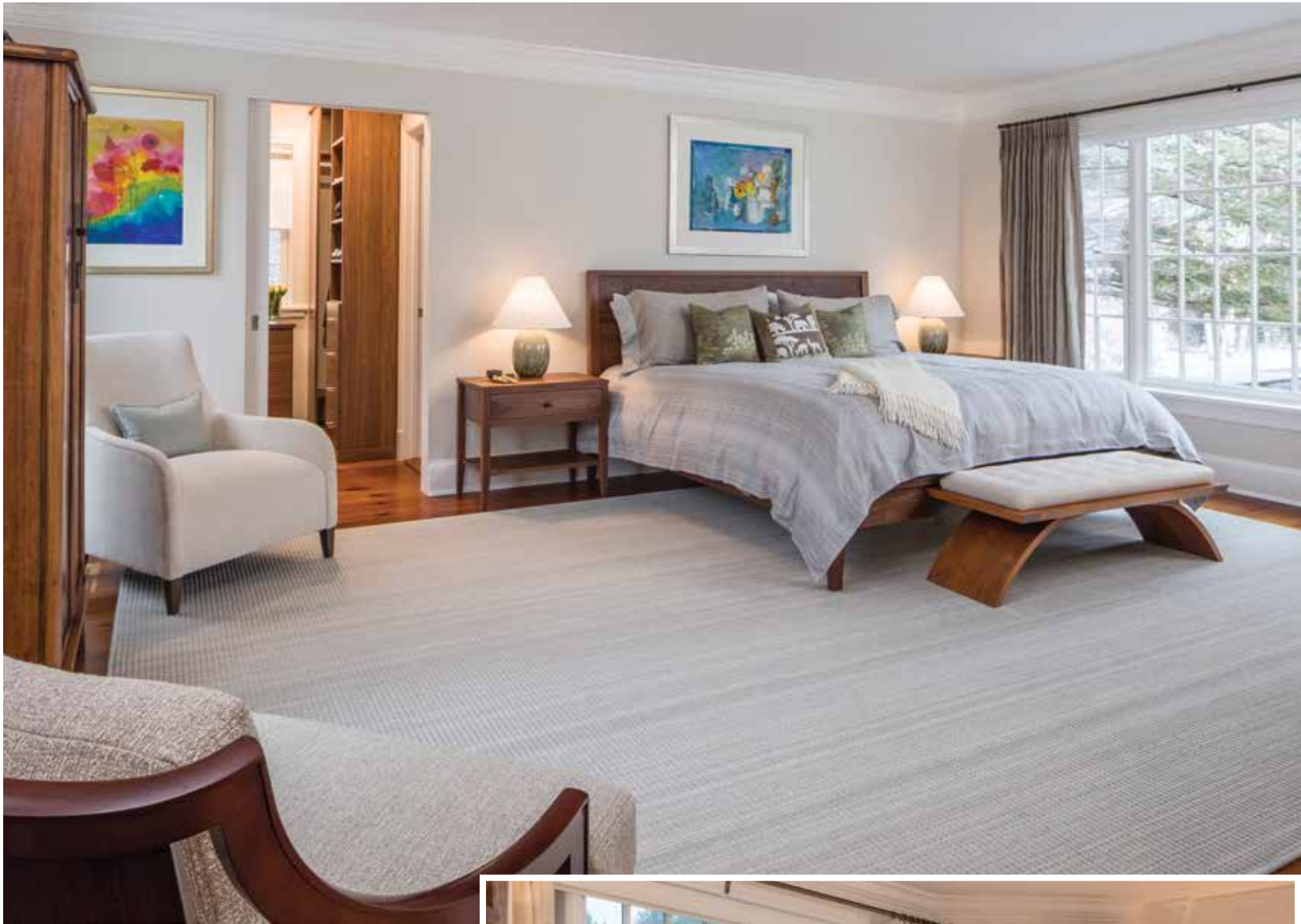
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PHOTOS BY CHARLES PARKER, IMAGES PLUS

A MODERN VERMONT CLASSIC

TURNING A HOUSE INTO A HOME

We feel lucky every day to live in this fantastic part of the world, and we always enjoy the opportunity to welcome new neighbors to the area. This particular family had long wanted to have a home in Vermont. As avid outdoor enthusiasts, they fell in love the possibility of having skiing, hiking, and biking all available right outside their front door. We already knew them well from having worked together on their city home, so they brought us in for a first consult before they closed on this new house.

Building on our understanding of the family and their lifestyle, we were able to quickly refine their goals, outline the requirements needed, and set to work on a master plan. They loved the location and wanted a New England country feel with rooms flowing together with spaces for children, for relaxing, and for entertaining all woven together with a cohesive look throughout the home, with furnishings that are attractive yet durable enough to survive family life. The baths were sorely in need of an update, and they presented the opportunity for us to reimagine them with clean lines, minimalist decor, and ample storage.



A house is fundamentally a collection of spaces, sometimes separated, sometimes blended, and by adjusting how a person moves from one to the next, we can significantly alter the utility and feel of a space for the better. Often, by simply changing the access from one space to the next, you can make a huge impact.





Small Changes Make a Big Impact

Coming in on a project that early is incredibly helpful for everyone. We focus on existing conditions and areas that can be improved. We hone in on how small improvements can make the greatest impact while defining where it makes sense to work around what is already there. As a professional, I see spaces differently—I think in terms of both the flow of what is there now and how a few small changes in the footprint could have a big impact in the quality of access from one space to the next. A house is fundamentally a collection of spaces, sometimes separated, sometimes blended, and by adjusting how a person moves from one to the next, we can significantly alter the utility and feel of a space for the better. Often, by simply changing the access from one space to the next, you can make a huge impact.

In this house, the master bedroom and its closets were one space. Actually, it had a wall of closets with doors. We proposed taking off the closet doors and putting a single pocket door in place. That would mean going from broken spaces with intrusive doors to a large walk-in closet with three interior walls of usable space. It would all be easier to access, but with the pocket door, the closet could also be closed off from the bedroom.

We shared layouts, material suggestions, lighting plans, and a broad range of fine details. Based on our preliminary plans to update three of the bathrooms, we knew which subcontractors to bring on to deliver the finished results they desired. To facilitate the project

Opposite: The master bedroom includes custom walnut furniture along with bedding and upholstery fabricated in the Gilberte Interiors workrooms.

Inset: Creating a spot for the family to gather at a hand-crafted cherry table is a fantastic use for this window nook.

Above: Selecting a palette of new color tones and natural textures created a fresh living room.

Inset: A “before” view of the living room shows dark red walls and heavy dark window blinds.



Removing all existing fixtures and tile was the first step in creating a bathroom with a larger glass-enclosed shower, improved lighting, and a serene feel.

and make it as easy as possible for the family, who lived a few hours' drive away, we assembled a talented team, from the contractor through key specialists and painters, to implement our designs and get the project rolling. We outlined the renovations with detailed construction plans, lighting and plumbing placements, and tile and fixture specifications.

Tending to Every Detail

Our ability to design, specify, and provide all materials for our projects made this easier for both our clients and the contractor. Details such as changing all the door and cabinet hardware were included in the scope and we provided materials individually marked for each door to make our contractor's installation that much more efficient.

Once we started the renovation, by working closely with the contractor, we discovered the ceilings were unnecessarily low. We could raise them by a foot to provide more space and a more open feel. We took pictures and explained these decisions to the family remotely while also overseeing all the finishes, including painters and tile installers. Our job was to bring along our clients' eyes when appropriate and facilitate everything from selection of materials through the completion of the finer details. The tradespeople knew we were ready to answer every question they might have, all the way to exactly where the drain of the shower was going to go and where towel bars would be hung.

Open Communication, Less Stress

In a renovation project, there are literally thousands of small choices being made by someone. Most of those are ones we will oversee and make, but for the bigger questions, it is very valuable to have input from our clients. Our goal is always to take the stress out of a process that can overwhelm people. As a professional, I can visualize many things that most cannot. As the project begins to take shape, most homeowners slowly gain more context to make the next decisions, whereas at the beginning, everything can feel pretty abstract. Our role is to bring homeowners along at a comfortable but efficient pace.

For this particular client, we connected weekly on email and spoke on the phone to discuss more complex decisions. I would send pictures and if we had questions, we would plan a follow-up phone call. On other projects, I normally send emails with photos of the project in progress to keep them in the loop. If a client is on-site, we plan to have weekly meetings.

Once we had finished updating all the finishes and the contractors had swept up the last of the sawdust, we arrived with our finishing team to turn this house into their home. Furnishings, lighting, accessories, and bedding had been carefully selected, meticulously constructed, and staged in our New Hampshire warehouse. We finished by fabricating the window treatments and putting them in place so that when the moving truck finally pulled away from the curb, we could all look around and see that this new house already felt like home. **TW**

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