

CANVASSING THE HOUSE



A SAGAPONACK
INTERIOR AS DYNAMIC AS
THE MODERN AND
CONTEMPORARY ART
FOUND WITHIN COULD
ONLY BE FROM THE
MINDS OF DIAMOND AND
BARATTA DESIGN

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PHOTOGRAPHS
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Surf n' Turf | Known for inventive style and unabashed statements of color and composition, Bill Diamond and Tony Baratta of Diamond Baratta Design were an obvious choice for a family seeking anything but traditional interior design. Literally setting the scene in the dining room (THIS PAGE), a Top Notch Graphics photomural created from a Getty Images beach shot covers the walls while an ochre rug from Country Braid House is reminiscent of combed sand. Standing in for the sun, a Mathieu Luster chandelier sheds light on the custom-designed white and leather cabinets (OPPOSITE) and dining table, both from Flammang Woodworking. See *Resources*.





"LESS IS MORE" is not a catch phrase around Diamond Baratta Design, the venerable Manhattan-based firm known to saturate interiors with glorious colors and punctuate rooms with large-scale furniture. But in the case of this client's new summer home, an unremarkable Sagaponack spec house, the dearth of style turned out to be a boon to the decorating process.

"It's one of those quasi-McKim Mead & White-style houses," says Bill Diamond. "But I'd rather be faced with a good spec house than with a bad architect's house," Tony Baratta chimes in. The clients abhor traditional decorating and wanted something "young, fresh, clean and zippy" for themselves and their three teenagers. And there was an art collection of modern and contemporary canvases more apt to hang in an unfussy white-cube to consider.

"I didn't know how the couple's collection would fit in," admits Diamond. "And I don't know if they did either." Their job was to contemporize, making sure works by Chris Makos, Alex Katz, Enoc Perez (amongst others) could feel right at home.

Shingle-style affectations were the first to exit. What was left was a perfectly summery shell that was a blank canvas. This is exactly what Diamond, a painter by trade, needed to get going.

Not unlike artists prepping a canvas with a coat of gesso, the team stripped the ebonized floors in favor of a cerused oak finish the color of sand. "I don't understand having dark floors at the beach," says Diamond. "Dark floors and white furniture—it's a formula and it's not for me."

The pale ground is a wonderful frame for a series of notice-me rugs, custom



Art Appreciation | Diamond and Baratta not only had to contemporize the shingle-style spec house (OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT) but also create a space that would feature and flow with the client's extensive art collection, including a Frank Stella piece set in the living room (OPPOSITE TOP LEFT). **Shaping Up** | Tai Ping's Gio Ponti-style living room rug (OPPOSITE BOTTOM) establishes a geometric interplay that extends from a circular coffee table by Ron Seff to vibrant pillows by Erin Wilson Quilts. **Cutting A Rug** | Known for utilizing rugs as canvases, the design team employed a graphic rug from AM collections (THIS PAGE) to chase away any notion of a traditional library. An inviting JM Upholstery sofa with Jalan Jalan pillows ties into the brown wall covering from Clarence House in a bold divergence from the home's unwavering blue color scheme. See Resources.



designed for this project. The dining room received a hand-braided ochre rug reminiscent of a neatly groomed Japanese sand garden while the living room is home to Gio Ponti-style geometrics. “For us,” comments Diamond, “the rugs are a canvas. They’re part of our signature.”

Another hallmark of working with Diamond Baratta is custom everything. “Why buy it when you can make it” truly is a mantra for the pair, who have an arsenal of woodworkers, finishers and upholsterers to satisfy their well thought out and layered designs. The periwinkle powder-coated finish of the living room chairs matches exactly the periwinkle inside of the sculptural white-lacquer console in the entryway. The Diamond Baratta lima bean-shaped sofa in the living room is upholstered in custom fabric woven in Pennsylvania to the firm’s specs. Artisans in France crafted the crystal-laden chandelier in the dining room; the lacquer consoles and side tables throughout the house are fabricated by a workshop in Connecticut. Not unlike the rugs, the furnishings are steeped in the vernacular of modern art, with streamlined shapes and a graphic presence.

The home’s palette is unwavering blue—a natural fit for a house a block from the beach. But it’s also the homeowners’ favorite color and is used extensively in Diamond Baratta’s decoration of their Manhattan townhouse. In lieu of paint, several walls got a sheath of blue linen, but no shock of color or fabric could redeem the dining room.

“That room perturbed us. Its chair rail was hung too high on the wall, and it had no real view,” says Diamond. An uncanny idea popped into Diamond’s head. “When Bill said they wanted to install a photomural, I thought he was a little nuts,” admits the owner. The three picked a beach scene and blew it up to life-size wallpaper panels. “The family was totally open to it. They’re fearless!” says Baratta. Maybe because, as collectors, they’ve had plenty experience diving right in. ✨



A Shore Thing | Cerused oak floors the color of sand relate to the beach just beyond the windows of the breakfast room (OPPOSITE TOP LEFT). Emeco chairs surrounding a dining table by Knoll enjoy the outdoor view, while a Paul Ferrante lantern hangs above.

Artistic License | In the foyer (OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT), a large painting by Enoc Perez seamlessly integrates into Diamond and Baratta’s thoughtful décor that was designed to give their clients the space and freedom to showcase their art collection.

In Living Color | A two-toned coffee table from Dennis Miller centers the family room (OPPOSITE BOTTOM) while a bold AM Collections rug and throw pillows from Sara Bruce continue the color story.

Sleep Aids | In the master bedroom, characterized by a whimsical rug from Stark Carpet (LEFT), sunlight is kept at bay with window drapes from Hegner Studio. Flammang Woodworking night tables paired with sconces from Ann-Morris Antiques flank a streamlined JM Upholstery bed.

Cushioned Souls | Curl up on the cushiony Bielecky Brothers chair and ottoman set (ABOVE) or on the matching plush sofa from JM Upholstery. See Resources.