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COUNTRY MEASURE

On Long Island's North Fork, a quietly composed Georgian Revival house draws on early-20th-century precedent to create a country retreat rooted in its landscape.

By Rob Duca | Photography by Thomas Loof

THE DRIVEWAY INTO THIS HOME on the North Fork of Long Island, New York, is nearly a quarter-mile long, taking one past farmland on either side and into woodlands before arriving at a courtyard, where the Georgian Revival-style house, with its weathered whitewashed brick exterior, finally comes into view. Although it would fit into the English countryside, architect Mark Ferguson prefers to think of it as a home that pays homage to its actual location on a wooded property along Peconic Bay.

Above Approached by a nearly quarter-mile drive through farmland and woods, the house reveals itself gradually at the end of a gravel courtyard. Its simplified Georgian composition draws on early-20th-century interpretations of English country architecture.
Opposite Weathered whitewashed brick, restrained trim, and an understated entry give the Georgian Revival house its character.

“This is a Georgian house seen through a 1920s lens,”

says Ferguson, of Ferguson and Shamamian Architects of New York. “It’s very reminiscent of Georgian and Colonial architecture of the 1920s in this country. We wanted to associate it with how the English countryside was interpreted when it was settled by New Yorkers, so it has an austere, simplified interpretation of Georgian architecture.”

As Ferguson points out, the cornices are lean, the front door is understated, and the chimneys are unassuming, striking a balance between luxury and austerity that feels right for this rural setting. “You’ll find details in all these locations, but it’s quiet, not ornate, not extravagant,” he says.

Exterior materials were chosen to age gracefully while appearing weathered, beginning with the whitewashed

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In the living room, tall French doors bring abundant natural light into an otherwise intimate setting. Restrained architectural detailing provides a backdrop for traditional furnishings, artwork, and textiles. ***Opposite*** The entry hall establishes the house’s quiet character with wide-plank oak floors, simple millwork, and a traditional stair.

Below Designed to feel more like a farmhouse room than a conventional modern kitchen, the light-filled space was designed with open shelving and a furniture-like island. ***Opposite*** A mix of antiques, patterned textiles, and collected furnishings gives the dining room the relaxed character of a country house.

brick and including red cedar shingles on the roof of the house and nearby barn, which serves as a garage.

At 5,000 square feet, with four bedrooms and four baths, the house is relatively modest yet feels expansive due to its layout and ample windows and doors. The interior was designed with a casual flair and a focus on light and the landscape. Tall windows and doors allow light to wash across the ceiling and reflect into the rooms. Doorways align to create flow from one room to the next, and many spaces are either corner rooms or open into rooms with sizable windows and doors. "There's light coming into the room from two or three directions. It's much more luminous when light comes from different directions," Ferguson says.

The view through an archway to the living room's French doors and past the rear terrace to the water is evident from the moment one enters the front hall. On each side of the back of the house is a glass-enclosed room—one an office, the other a dining room—that provides more unobstructed views. "The owners wanted to be able to proceed through the house and feel engaged and invited to return to the landscape and the part of the house that looks out to the water," Ferguson says.

Although wide-plank oak flooring is used throughout most of the interior, brick was used in the office and mudroom, helping to connect indoors and out. The office and all the second-floor bathrooms feature beadboard walls and ceilings.

Perhaps nowhere in the house is the desire for simplicity more striking than in the kitchen, where the mod-

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Left From the rear, the house opens generously to the landscape, with the swimming pool positioned between the residence and detached barn. ***Right*** (from top) The chimneys and cornices were conceived to be quiet rather than imposing. • The detached barn continues the property's deliberately understated vocabulary. • Red cedar shingles and simple openings give the barn an agricultural character appropriate to the rural setting.

Right Glass-front cabinetry in the adjoining pantry provides generous storage for glasses, dishware, and serving pieces, allowing the kitchen itself to remain deliberately uncluttered. ***Below*** Simple moldings bring an informal character to the second-floor bathrooms. ***Opposite*** Softly patterned walls, traditional furnishings, and a four-poster bed give the bedroom the layered, collected feeling of an established country house.

ern expectation of extensive cabinetry and storage is eschewed in favor of what Ferguson calls an "old-school kitchen." Instead, glasses, dishware, and other items are stored in an adjoining pantry.

"The owners wanted a kitchen that felt like it was in a farmhouse," he says. "They really wanted to suppress the tendency to fill everything in."

Instead of built-in cabinetry, open shelves are set against Moroccan wall tiles, while the island is a simple table for meal preparation. "It feels like more of a sitting room than a place with all the gadgets and accessories you would have in a traditional kitchen," Ferguson says.

The final touch, in keeping with the tradition of a country estate, is the detached barn, which overlooks the pool and serves as a two-car garage with boat storage.

"What I found satisfying about this project is that it was very respectful about the traditional ways of placing a building in an open landscape, choosing materials and organizing the way you move around the property," Ferguson says. "It reflects some of the best ways we have to put a house into the countryside."

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