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# cottage industry.

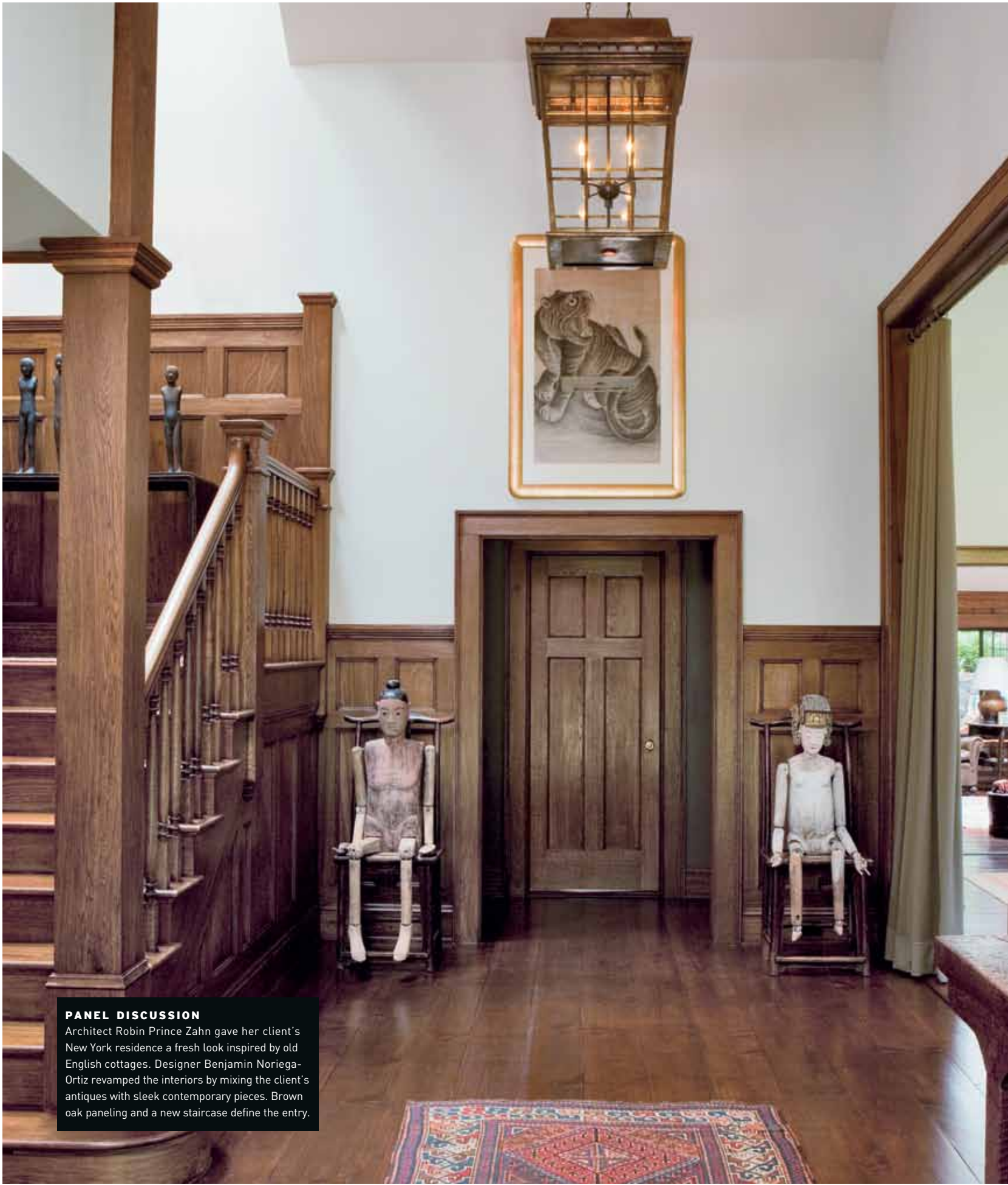
WRITTEN BY **CAREN KURLANDER** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ANTOINE BOOTZ**

ON A WOODED LOT IN UPSTATE NEW YORK, A STately HOUSE WITH ELEGANT PROPORTIONS, MEANDERING ROOFLINES AND A TEXTURED STONE FACADE SETTLES INTO THE PROPERTY AS IF IT HAS BEEN THERE FOR CENTURIES—AND THAT WAS THE PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING. “The whole concept was to make the house look like an English country cottage that had been there for 200 years,” says architect Robin Prince Zahn, who shared that vision with interior designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz and general contractor Charles Cancro. Though part of the structure had been standing on the site since the 1800s, the talented team was able to transform and expand the residence—through an extensive renovation, inventive floor plan and the careful selection of furnishings and finishes—into a new house with a sense of permanence.

Before its makeover, the residence stood as a neat, 3,000-square-foot clapboard structure, which the owner used as a weekend retreat. With its simple layout, cathedral-vaulted living room ceiling and aged pine floors, the house functioned perfectly for short-term visits.

<b>INTERIOR DESIGN</b> Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz, BNO Design		
<b>ARCHITECTURE</b> Robin Prince Zahn, Robin Prince Zahn Architecture		
<b>HOME BUILDER</b> Charles Cancro, Cancro Construction Corp.		
<b>BEDROOMS</b> 4	<b>BATHROOMS</b> 5	<b>SQUARE FEET</b> 7,800





**PANEL DISCUSSION**

Architect Robin Prince Zahn gave her client's New York residence a fresh look inspired by old English cottages. Designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz revamped the interiors by mixing the client's antiques with sleek contemporary pieces. Brown oak paneling and a new staircase define the entry.



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Once the owner decided to move in full time, however, he wanted to add a bit more substance to the house and double its size without disturbing the easy floor plan to which he had grown accustomed. “He liked his house,” says Zahn, who created a design that kept the same central footprint and quirky rooflines as the existing structure, but with new bedroom additions on either side, a large kitchen in the back and an entirely new aesthetic. “It was complicated, but a fun exercise.”

Combining the old and new was a challenge, as was shoring up the original building. “It was timeworn and out of level,” says Cancro, “and the existing roof had so many sags in it we had to take it down completely.” He and his team rebuilt a sturdier version of the same volumes and knitted them together with the new additions. The entire structure was

**CHINESE TRANSLATION**

Noriega-Ortiz separated the living room from the entry with draperies made from Gretchen Bellinger felt. He paired the client's tea table with modern Cassina chairs, which offset the Chinese antiques.





#### MEAL PLAN

A new fireplace lends character to the dining room, which retains the unusual ceiling lines of the existing structure. Noriega-Ortiz combined a leather-topped library table the client found in England with Windsor-style chairs covered in Dualoy Leather cowhide.

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sheathed in rectilinear granite stones—inspired by the stonework of local churches—and crowned with heavy slate shingles.

Inside, in keeping with the English cottage sensibility, all of the window openings were replaced with turn-of-the-century steel frames, and ceiling beams were created from old barn timbers found in Vermont. “We wanted everything to be as authentic as possible,” says the architect, who referenced old books and Shingle-style homes from the 1880s to draw each detail of the house’s extensive wood paneling and trim.



#### HORSE PLAY

A large wood-framed opening connects the living room with the library, where a Noriega-Ortiz-designed sofa and swivel chairs are upholstered with a soft J. Robert Scott chenille. The client’s saddle sculpture rests atop an antique Chinese low table.





**TREES COMPANY**

Mature trees and three ponds punctuate the verdant site. Garden of Ideas installed natural-looking landscaping around the caretaker's structure and the main house in a manner that complements the existing wooded property.



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Tom Kuklinski, of Kuklinski Woodworking, brought over a 300-year-old tree from Woburn Abbey in England to be milled for the paneling and then finished every surface by hand.

The honest materiality of the architecture created a perfect backdrop for the client's collection of antique furnishings and figurative paintings. "Our design was about making what he already had look cohesive," says Noriega-Ortiz. "The last thing we wanted was for our furnishings to compete with his beautiful antiques." The designer—in a stark departure from the ultramodern interiors he famously designed for the Mondrian hotel chain—brought in classic upholstered pieces, antique rugs and large-scale light fixtures to balance the dark wood of the owner's

**KNOCK ON WOOD**

In a light-filled den just off the living room, Zahn brought wood paneling all the way up the walls for a rich feel. Noriega-Ortiz designed the clean-lined sofa, which was fabricated by K Flam Associates and upholstered with corduroy from Clarence House.





#### BEST GUEST

The designer chose a subdued palette in the guest room, keeping the windows drapery-free at the client's request. Two side chairs from British Khaki offer seating, and the bed linens are from Frette.

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traditional English and sculptural Chinese antiques. "We didn't want to have just one particular style in any one room," he explains. "If we had English furniture, we'd mix it with Chinese and modern."

In the living room, he placed a custom camelback sofa beneath the large window and grouped it with the client's antique Chinese low table and chairs. A massive French light fixture fills out the soaring ceiling, and leather-covered Cassina chairs provide a second sitting area. In the adjoining library, Noriega-Ortiz displayed the owner's equestrian artwork along with a low-slung chenille-covered sofa and chairs that he designed. "We didn't use any patterns, or chintz or stripes," he says of the fresh look achieved through the fabric choices. "We didn't want it to look too old, so keeping it light and monochromatic was very important."



#### HAUTE BATH

Zahn designed the opening for the master bathroom specifically to fit an antique Chinese door with intriguing detailing from the client's collection. Tiles from Country Floors cover the walls; the stand-alone tub is from Duravit.



#### HOME WORK

The vaulted ceiling of the owner's office creates an intimate atmosphere, especially when paired with Chinese antiques from his collection. The windows boast turn-of-the-century steel frames salvaged by Seekircher Steel Window Repair.



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The designer hung textured handmade wallpaper in the dining room, which is simply furnished with a leather-topped library table the homeowner found in England. The client also found the pendant—a reproduction of a Chinese lantern—that hangs above the British Khaki bed in the master bedroom. “He didn’t want me to do any draperies,” says Noriega-Ortiz, “so I convinced him to do the natural-linen upholstered wall panels. It calmed the room and brought the ceiling down to a comfortable level.”

In keeping with the theme of the architecture, Noriega-Ortiz aimed for a feeling of timelessness in the interiors. “The more time passes, the more the house starts to match the antiques,” he says. “That is the beauty of it. You walk in and think that these antiques have been with the house for generations.” **L**

#### TAKE CARE

The nearby caretaker's house—designed by Zahn—incorporates a three-car garage with one-bedroom living accommodations on the second floor. Reclaimed barn siding lends the structure a timeworn feel, and a low border of stacked granite reflects the material of the main house.