



# A Colorful CHARACTER

On a small street off Sunset Boulevard, there's a little cottage that could be on the East Coast or even in the English countryside. It's as pretty as can be, and designer **SCHUYLER SAMPERTON** unabashedly plays up its granny-chic charm.

INTERVIEW

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In the living room, elegant Kensington cane chairs from Rooms & Gardens join an heirloom table and a vintage lamp that designer Schuyler Samperton refreshed with a paisley shade. **OPPOSITE:** A portrait of the wife's mother hangs above an antique table and a son's artful skateboard.





The living room was originally a sea of neutrals with the exception of the Oriental rug. A zesty mix of colors and patterns in paint and fabrics brought it to life and put an upbeat spin on traditional pieces. Walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Skylight, and curtains are made of Rogers & Goffigon's Summerplace. Samperton reupholstered Rooms & Gardens' sofas in Jasper's Charleston and accented them with pillows in vintage textiles.



**BARBARA KING:** I know we're in Los Angeles, and yet I can picture the house being somewhere on the Eastern seaboard—one of those lovely old cottages that are loaded with charm.

**SCHUYLER SAMPERTON:** It's very much a cottage-like house, Shingle Style, built in 1939, and modest in scale. My clients, Leslie Benziger and her husband, Chris Meledandri—he's the founder and CEO of the animated-film company Illumination Entertainment—are from the East Coast, as am I. So there's definitely a nod to an East Coast aesthetic here. Leslie had a lot of pieces from her parents, some beautiful antiques. She loves that sense of history and tradition, the continuum with family, and being surrounded by things that have real meaning. I share that sensibility with her, along with an affinity for that old-school Newport cottage feel.

**Do any of you have a connection to Newport?**

They have a second home on the coast nearby, in Little Compton, Rhode Island, and I used to go with one of my best friends to her family's summer place in Newport when I was growing up. We got to visit a lot of the wonderful cottages there, and I was particularly fascinated by the old wallpapers, all those ivy and floral and trellis prints.

**What was it about them that so captivated you?**

They enlivened the rooms. Mostly, I think it was—oh, I hate this over-used word!—their whimsy. They had a fanciful quality that spoke to me. I just sort of assumed that the people living in those spaces had fun, interesting lives, almost like storybook characters. I've been obsessed with wallpaper ever since, and I used a lot in this house. It's in the dining room, in the master bedroom, in the powder room, and—most dramatically—in the guest room, which I absolutely love. We call it the *Royal Tenenbaums* room.

**Was the movie your inspiration?**

No, and I can't take credit for the reference either. One of their sons came up with it, because it has the wacky essence of some of the rooms in the film. If there was an inspira-



tion, it was more like what some deliciously daft English person would do in one of those eccentric country houses. I wanted to make it really cozy in a quirky sort of way by mixing a bunch of disparate patterns. We just went for it, no holding back. **The ladylike dining room strikes me as a full-on throwback.**

It's a little bit granny—but granny-chic! The room is small, so we wanted to make it a pretty jewel box of pattern and color, with the wallpaper as the focal point.

**But in the living room, you appear to have distilled the best aspects of traditional and blended them with the youthful, relaxed West Coast flair you're known for.**

Thank you for saying that. It was already furnished with the rug, the sofas, the chest, the bar and side tables, and the lamps. The intention was to create a colorful backdrop for all her wonderful pieces. Basically, the room—the entire house—was a sea of neutrals. It needed the kind of punch and warmth that make you really want to be in a space. We

**ABOVE:** Designer Schuyler Samperton in the living room with her dog, Tricky.

**OPPOSITE:** The kitchen has a cozy atmosphere in keeping with the 1939 house. A 19th-century English farm table is paired with Crate & Barrel chairs. To warm up the space, Samperton added a flea-market rug and Roman shades in Benjamin's Dragon Flower. Walls and cabinetry are painted in Benjamin Moore's Ivory White. Viking stove and Vent-A-Hood hood. Cortina lantern, Paul Ferrante. See page 130 to get the look.

painted the walls pale blue, hung chartreuse curtains, re-covered the sofas, added pillows in a variety of vintage textiles, and modernized the lamps with colored shades. The combination of colors is somewhat offbeat, but it was such fun to put a more daring spin on traditional. **The family room absolutely vibrates with color.**

That's what brought it roaring to life. We chose colors in bold tones that tied it together with the dining room. And I covered their ottoman with a sturdy striped *frazada*—a Bolivian blanket—because that's where the two teenage boys like to sit and play video games and the two dogs like to nap. The family room is very much the heart of the house, and it gets a lot of use. Behind the seating area, there's a dining area that opens to the garden and is just outside the kitchen, a room Leslie uses as a home office.

**You don't see many intimate kitchens like this anymore.**

Almost never. Most of them are like a professional chef's kitchen with giant marble slabs on the countertops and enormous islands that you can do surgery on. To me, this one is kind of sweet in the best way—that granny-chic element again!

**Did they ever entertain the idea of remodeling it, other than putting in the Viking stove?**

No, since it functions quite well as it is, and it's in keeping with the style of the house. We did add color with the Roman shades and the tribal rug. It's an incredibly snug, inviting space where you want to sit and have a cup of tea at the little chipped-paint farm table that has such a homey, rustic charm.

**This whole house has a homey, family-friendly atmosphere.**

That was one of our main objectives, to make it lively and embracing and to have it work with the way they really live. There's nothing that says *don't touch*. The house honors the past, but it's not a fussy old time capsule. It's a fresh West Coast interpretation of East Coast tradition. Every room tells a story—of their passions, their memories, and the rich heritage of family life.





**ABOVE:** In the dining room, curtains in a Colefax and Fowler stripe complement Brunschwig & Fils' Latrobe Alabaster wallpaper. Ballroom Folding chairs, Ballard Designs. **BELOW:** Another dining area features a table, console, and mirror by Formas. Pottery Barn chairs. **RIGHT:** The family room's sofas and a wing chair, all from Rooms & Gardens, are upholstered in Jasper's Melaya and Kathryn M. Ireland's Woven, respectively. Ballard Designs ottoman in a Bolivian textile from L'Aviva Home. Bookcase, HD Buttercup.









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1. A fresh bouquet is a perfect accent. Flowers by Louesa Roebuck. 2. Pheasant wallpaper by Twigs in the powder room recalls Italian marbled paper. Mirror, Reborn Antiques. Kohler sink. 3. The wife, an amateur painter, turned a shed into her art studio. The floor is painted in Farrow & Ball's Light Blue. 4. Samperton gave the master bedroom a backdrop of Farrow & Ball's Tented Stripe wallpaper. The headboard and shades are in Claremont's Ellamay. Denis Colomb blankets. 5. Crate & Barrel wicker chairs, Pat McGann pillows, Nathan Turner lanterns, and a flea-market rug make the backyard an irresistible outdoor retreat. **OPPOSITE:** The guest bedroom is "a fun, eccentric overload of disparate patterns," Samperton says. The big statement is the wallpaper, Humming Birds by Cole & Son. Rooms & Gardens Faux Bamboo beds are dressed with white Corsica Linen duvet covers from Pine Cone Hill. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



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