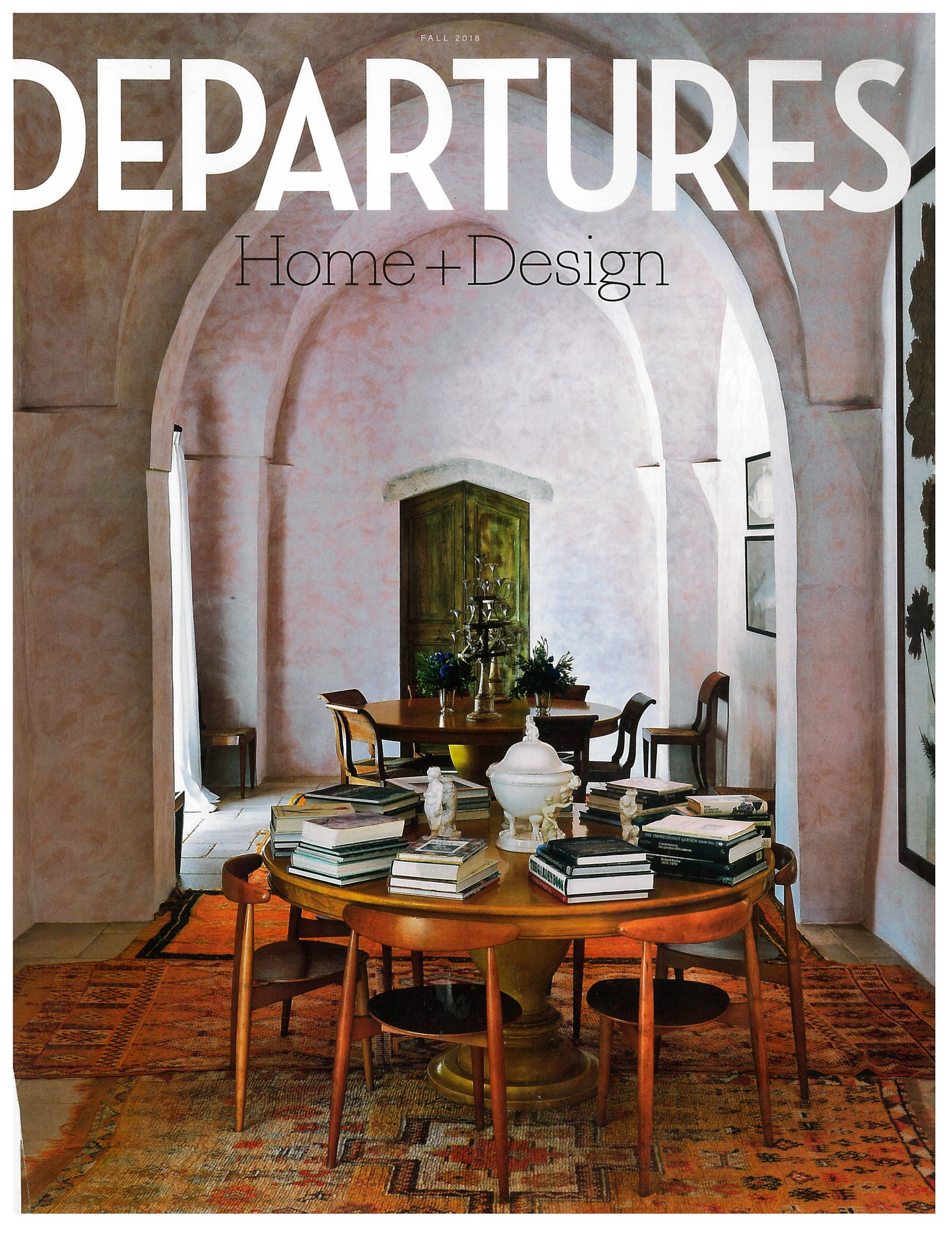


FALL 2018

DEPARTURES

Home + Design



DISPATCHES

Artist Mickalene Thomas, left, and her partner, Racquel Chevremont, lounge on Hassan Hajjaj's installation *Le Salon* in their barn studio in Salisbury, Connecticut.

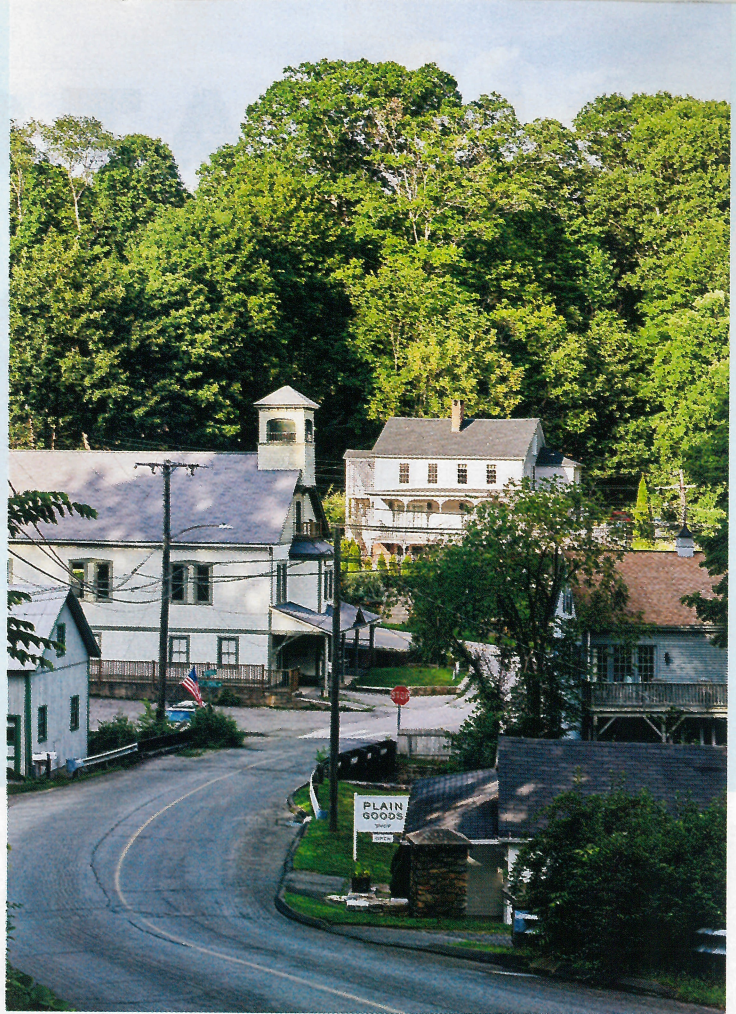


Life in the Slow Lane In a picturesque corner of northwestern Connecticut, enterprising artists and tastemakers are redefining country living. *by Maura Egan. Photographs by Paola + Murray*

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN this place last Fourth of July,” says artist Mickalene Thomas. “There were people lining up for the slip and slide. It was a bit crazy.” Thomas and her partner, Racquel Chevremont, a curator and art adviser, are showing me around their compound in Salisbury, Connecticut. The couple bought the property in 2013 as a country house for their three children and two miniature Labradoodles. Since then, they’ve turned it into a family fun house, with a pool, an enormous tree house, and a zipline that has also proved to be a big hit with guests.

While the couple likes to entertain, Thomas spends a lot of her time working in the property’s refurbished barn, which serves as her studio. “We had to take it down to the studs,” she says. “It was such an undertaking that it became the talk of the town.” Today it’s where the artist works on collages as well as curatorial projects. Her vibrant portraits of black women in different guises have earned her critical acclaim and shows around the world, including a solo exhibition at

Above: The village of New Preston, Connecticut.
Below: Charlotte and Anthony Champalimaud in the library of Troutbeck, their recently refurbished hotel in Amenia, New York.



the Brooklyn Museum. There is also a hoop that hangs from the rafters, where Chevremont practices aerial acrobatics.

You could say that the studio barn serves as a haven within a haven. Salisbury, with a population of under 4,000, is the kind of place where the postman actually knows you by name. “Our kids can walk into the village,” says Thomas. “Yesterday we went with our friends to the library in town. It’s a great community, but you’re still hidden away.”

This swath of northwestern Connecticut, with its chain of bucolic villages—Salisbury, Cornwall, Washington, Kent, and New Preston—is just 90 minutes north of Manhattan. Straight out of a Currier & Ives print, it has long been a discreet weekend retreat for artists, writers, and designers, including Diane von Furstenberg, Jasper Johns, and Malcolm Gladwell (who is one of the owners of the stylish White Hart Inn in Salisbury).

The prominent artist couple Laurie Simmons and Carroll Dunham started renting in the area 23 years ago with their two then-young daughters. “My





Clockwise from left: Chef Joel Viehland; some of the dishes at his restaurant Swyft, in Kent; ceramics at Dawn Hill Antiques in New Preston.

husband grew up in Connecticut and always talked about the area,” says Simmons, a photographer and filmmaker, who has a retrospective at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth this month. “We rented a series of wrecks where we were battling the elements—the rain coming through the roof, bats flying around at sunset,” she recalls. “We just thought it so picturesque.”

When they found the property they would eventually buy—two buildings that were once part of an old boarding school in Cornwall—she said she was lovestruck. “I have visceral reactions to spaces. It’s not just a real estate thing for me. My work is about spaces,” says Simmons, who is well known for her set-up photos of miniature domestic interiors. “This was never a vacation house for us. We do our work here.” Simmons recently finished her first feature film, *My Art*, while Dunham is known for his bold, surreally cartoonish figurative paintings. “But it is a place where we come to recharge from the city.”

With the area’s winding country roads, the meticulously restored barns, the covered bridges, and rolling hills, you can see why it’s the perfect antidote

to city life. But recently, another cross-section of creatives have discovered the region’s charms and are setting up shops, restaurants, even hotels.

“This area has that New England feel but without the corny factor,” says Michael De Perno, the co-owner of Plain Goods, a clothing and home-goods store in New Preston. “There’s a level

of refinement here, and the laws are really strict about what you can and cannot change, whether it’s a stone wall or a historic building.” De Perno opened his shop in a white clapboard cottage in 2015 with his partner, Andrew Fry, a former fashion publicist. Fry wanted to unload De Perno’s stuff that was gathering dust in storage. “I’m a collector,” says





With its winding roads, covered bridges, and rolling hills, northwestern Connecticut is the perfect antidote to city life.



Left: Plain Goods owners Michael De Perno, left, and Andrew Fry. Above: Inside Plain Goods.

De Perno, who, in the early 1990s, owned Hope & Wilder, a design shop in SoHo known for its New England aesthetic. At Plain Goods, the look is simple but chic: handblown glass tumblers, Italian cashmere sweaters, and antique handwoven baskets. De Perno and Fry will offer fabrics, larger furniture, and decorating services when they move into Pavillion Hall, a community arts center, this fall.

New Preston is a pretty village chockablock with design stores. If you're in the market for a Swedish painted Mora clock, there's Dawn Hill Antiques; for a vintage iron garden bench, there's Pergola; for wicker or bamboo anything, there's Privet House. Richard Lambertson opened Privet House with Suzanne Cassano, as a side project to his luxury leather-goods company, Lambertson Truex. At the time, Lambertson had been commuting to Detroit for a consulting project while still designing his exotic bags in New York City. His place in Connecticut was a welcome retreat. "I was feeling like a traveling salesman, and then I would come up here to be in the shop, and it was just so nice," says Lambertson. "At Christmas, everyone hangs wreaths and lights in their shops, and there is a Christmas stroll. It's a village, but a sophisticated village."

In Kent, chef Joel Viehland runs Swyft, a casual restaurant housed in a 1781 post-and-beam building. He's about to open a fine-dining spot, Ore Hill, on the same property. What looks like a simple country kitchen is actually a serious operation. Viehland, a Noma and Gramercy Tavern alum, found a patron in the socialite Anne Bass, who restored the building and supplies much of the produce from her organic Rock Cobble Farm. "We have 34 varieties of tomatoes alone," says Viehland, who specializes in wood-fired pizzas. Swyft's casual tavern vibe is deceptive, given the talent behind the restoration: Architect Yvette Adams, who (CONTINUED ON P. 142) →

had previously worked on the Aman hotels in Tokyo and Kyoto, created the interiors, while the gardens are the work of the British landscape designer Arne Maynard.

Perhaps the most impressive new establishment around is Troutbeck, about 20 minutes across the border in Amenia, New York. Last September, Anthony Champalimaud (the son of legendary hotel designer Alexandra Champalimaud) and his wife, Charlotte, reopened the 250-year-old inn. Over the years it had played host to notables ranging from Mark Twain and Teddy Roosevelt to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Langston Hughes. "We wanted to build on the legacy of this place and really create something for the community," says Anthony, who studied art before working with his mother for a stint.

To restore the property, the couple partnered with the real-estate firm D. R. Horne & Co., which had worked on projects such as the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, in New York, and Blackberry Farm, in Tennessee. The goal was not only to transform Troutbeck into a world-class inn but also to create a cultural gathering spot for the region. "We sort of saw the project like we were taking over our parents' home," says Anthony, laughing. "We brought in some of our own stuff, we borrowed some of their old stuff, and then we ran out of money."

While the bones of the main manor house—the stone exterior, the heavy wood paneling, the stained-glass windows—were left intact, they brightened up the color palette and brought in spare midcentury-style furnishings. It looks airy and modern but still feels comfortably lived-in—especially in the library, where Charlotte curated the estate's original book collection. The idea is for guests to linger, whether in the garden or at their restaurant.

"We had our first New Year's Eve party last year. In the beginning everyone stuck with their tribes, but eventually it was just one big party. It lasted until the a.m.," says Anthony. "I think we only had to comp one guest's room because of the noise."

Where to Buy

CALM, COOL, COLLECTED

PAGES 90–94 Interiors by Michael Del Piero, 428 N. Wolcott Ave., Chicago, 773-772-3000, with another new shop and studio at 372 Montauk Hwy., Wainscott, NY, 631-464-7310, michaeldepiero.com.

PAGES 92–93 On the pool deck, Marbella Aluminum in Slate **chaise longues** at restorationhardware.com; concrete **side tables** from crateandbarrel.com. In the living room, Hamptons Mod **sofa** and **ottoman** from michaeldepiero.com, using Manuel Canovas Cruz in Neige **fabric**, to the trade at cowtan.com; antique antler **chair**, using Theo Sierra in Ivory **hair-on-hide**, to the trade from dessinfournir.com; Saarinen **table**, also available at knoll.com. **PAGE 94** In the master bedroom, custom **curtains**, using Leno in Twine bouclé **fabric**, at maharam.com; custom Lake Forest Collection Mod Wing **chair** from michaeldepiero.com, using Rustic in Snow linen **fabric** from donghia.com; Paola Navone Ghost 81 **bed** at gervasoni1882.it; concrete **side table** from crateandbarrel.com; custom Foundry Collection steel **sconces** from michaeldepiero.com; custom oak **cabinetry** from Vital Habitats, 631-537-8287, vitalhabitats.com. In the dining area, antique fruitwood farm **table** from the Golden Triangle, 312-755-1266, goldentriangle.biz.

IN THE RIGHT KEY

PAGES 132–135 Interiors by Andrew Fisher and Jeffrey Weisman, 1706 Stockton St., San Francisco, 415-567-6633, fisherweisman.com.

PAGE 132 Midas Grand Tier **chandeliers** to the trade at fisherweisman.com; Agnes **armchairs** to the trade at magnihomecollection.com; taxidermy **peacock** from Creel & Gow, 212-327-4281, creelandgow.com.

PAGE 133 Outdoor furniture to the trade at sutherlandfurniture.com.

PAGES 134–135 In the master bedroom, Santiago **sconces** to the trade at tuellreynolds.com; Acanthus Minor **desk** to the trade at fisherweisman.com; MTD-0700 **desk chair** to the trade at michael.taylorcollections.com; bronze **table lamp** from the Twisted Trunk, 224-616-3258, twistedtrunkglennview.com; custom **curtains** to the trade at rogersandgoffigon.com. In the foyer, custom **pendant light** to the trade from fisherweisman.com; Tissage **dining table** with alabaster top to the trade at niermannweeks.com; custom **rug** to the trade at marknelsondesigns.com. In the family room, custom **curtains**, using Hampshire Stripe in blue/natural linen **fabric**, to the trade at kerryjoyce.com; wool **rug** to the trade at starkcarpet.com.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

PAGES 136–141 Interiors by owners with architect Suby Bowden + Associates, 333 Montezuma St., Ste. 200, Santa Fe, 505-983-8118, sb-associates.net. **PAGE 136** Nelson Saucer **pendant lamp** at dwr.com; Eames Molded Plastic Dowel-Leg **side chairs** at dwr.com; vintage Bruno Mathsson Gateleg **table**, also available at 1stdibs.com; vintage Poul Kjærholm PK22 **chair**, also available at fritzhanzen.com. **PAGES 138–139** In the living room, Womb **chair** and **ottoman**, Barcelona **couch**, and Saarinen **side tables** at knoll.com; Eames Molded Plastic Rocker **chair** at dwr.com; vintage Serge Mouille Three-Arm **floor lamp**, also available at dwr.com; Alison **sofa** from molecule-design.com, also available at camerichusa.com. **PAGES 140–141** Nelson Saucer **wall sconce** at dwr.com; vintage LC4 **chaise longue**, also available at dwr.com.