

# Making Her Mark

Local interior designer updates her Upper Saddle River home

BY ELISABETH SALEMME  
Photos by Stephen Michael Garey

Though interior designer Wendy Eigen says she doesn't get attached to the homes she's decorated and lived in, the work she's done on the Upper Saddle River home where she currently resides could make her change her mind. After Wendy and husband, Randy – who have moved nine times in the past 25 years – entered their estate in 2004, she gutted and stripped it, putting her personal mark on each room. "I was inspired when I first saw the house – especially with all the light," says Eigen, who for the past 18 years has been an interior decorator for clients in towns including Alpine, Franklin Lakes and Upper Saddle River.

"Every time I move into a new home, I tell my friends how much I love the house," Eigen says. "Then, they say, 'Yeah, for how long?'" But, it's not just the Eigens' friends who have had to acclimate to the perpetual relocating. During numerous summers when their three adult children were growing up, Wendy and Randy would move to a new house that Wendy would renovate and redecorate while the children attended camp. "I would always tell them, 'I have a surprise for you,'" Eigen says. "When they came home, they would have a new house and their room would be totally decorated."

Now that the Eigens have settled into their Upper Saddle River home, each room has developed a special meaning for Wendy. But, it's the conservatory, a first-floor, light-filled room – an addition to the house – that is the home's jewel. "I find that the smaller rooms are my favorite," she says. "I love the colors, the windows, everything in the conservatory. And, because I built it from scratch, I didn't have any limitations."

## CONSERVATORY

A space built from scratch, thanks to an addition on the home, the conservatory, located off the kitchen and toward the back of the house, is plastered with windows on three walls, letting in a tremendous amount of light. The design of the room was worked around the complex, colorful floor, imported from California. Two custom-made, blue rocking chairs sit on either side of the limestone fireplace, which stands below a 1950s painting by Ann Chernow. A French antique mirrored table is set below a bisque chandelier between tan leather sofas. Framing the conservatory are hand-carved and hand-painted wood beams, which stretch across the ceiling. The room was built by Ed Stacey of Ridgewood Renovators. The walls, by Gelu Pislari, are done in a Venetian lime plaster. Tables throughout the room display antique pots the homeowner collected over the years. The antique coffee table and light fixture are from David Duncan Antiques in Manhattan. >





### GREAT ROOM

The magnificent great room, located in the back of the house, fills with sunlight thanks to its nearly floor-to-ceiling glass windows and doors that surround a floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace. The intricate ceiling, which is custom-built and hand-painted, draws in the blues and golds from the room's custom, pale blue sofas and antique armchairs. A large painting – dated 1907 and featuring a foggy day in Venice – hangs

across from the fireplace and underneath the staircase to balance the room and bring life to the bare wall. Atop the Woodland table at the center of the seating area is an antique Eglomise French box, as well as extremely rare Royal Doulton pieces that the owner found in England. Each lamp in the room is custom-made from California and the large, square carpet is from Starr Carpet in Englewood. ➤







## FAMILY ROOM

The Eigens redid their cozy family room twice since moving in. Wendy overhauled the room for the second time recently, after a colossal bookcase she'd had her eye on for years finally became available. With just 2 inches on each side between the bookcase and the walls, the structure appears as though it was designed for the room. Antique English biscuit barrels, Irish crystal pieces and leather-bound books fill the case, giving the room a warm, personal feel. The fabric-covered armchairs located on either side of the large window are antiques from the 1940s and the sofa is a muted, reupholstered piece Wendy already owned. In addition to the room's fret moldings, a whitewash paint finish covers the wallpaper, making the walls appear as though they are embedded with old artwork. Other antiques in the room include the tiny silk-top wood benches from the 1800s, a miniature old-English chest that rests between the chairs, and a clover table near the entrance. Window treatments throughout the home, by Alan Schatzberg and Associates in Little Ferry, are constructed in silk with silk tassels. The large area rug covering the hardwood floor is by Starr Carpet in Englewood. ➤







### KITCHEN

This home's kitchen is as elegant as every other room on the first floor — almost every appliance, aside from the carved bronze sink, has been disguised to appear like an armoire or cabinet. The top tier of the newly installed maple cabinets features glass panes to showcase dinnerware and glassware. When the Eigers moved in, they ripped out all of the new appliances and replaced them. The refrigerator, painted in a whitewash, resembles an armoire, with antique mirrors attached to the door. The bottom drawer of the "armoire" is actually a pull-out freezer. The center island, which was conceived and designed by Wendy, is covered with intricate latticework that mimics the back patio, and the island is done in a whitewash to match the refrigerator. Unlike the room's countertops, which are marble, the top of the island is made of Israeli limestone. A large, hand-painted hood, which also carries the kitchen's lattice theme, hangs above a camouflaged oven and stove.



### DINING ROOM

Though most of the home's first floor is formal, the owners wanted the dining room to have a cozier feel. The turquoise room's focal point, a hand-painted table from California, is the only piece Wendy has brought with her to each of her last three houses. Using the table as the inspiration for the rest of the room, the walls are painted with the same quality as the table. Above the seating area, where 10 people can comfortably fit, hangs an antique lighting fixture purchased in Paris. The unusually large 99-inch mirror was once attached to a dresser from the 1920s, but the owner was able to purchase the etched reflective piece separately. The French cabinets that were once housed in a Paris hotel are filled with a collection of Murano glass. Wendy asked the hotel owner if she could buy the pieces many years ago, and when it closed down recently, the hotel owner finally handed them over to her. ➤







### RUSTIC BEDROOM

This room stands out from the rest of the house with its craftsman style, thanks to the owner's son's desire for a simple, no-frills place to stay when he visits his family from his home in Boston. The mahogany bed, nightstand and pine desk are Tommy Bahama. The wood ottoman, which sits below an old windowpane filled with mirrored pieces, is covered in pieced fabric to create a quilt-like effect. Perhaps the room's most distinct feature is its oak ceiling, whose panels were installed on a diagonal and stained to match the hardwood floor. Adding to the bedroom's understated beauty are the walls, which were done with a faux painting technique.

### RUSTIC BEDROOM'S BATHROOM

The bath, with its Venetian plaster walls, features ornate details that the bedroom lacks. The single-sink white porcelain vanity with bronze fixtures has been embellished with earth-tone glass mosaic tiles, a look that was mimicked in the shower stall. The marble archway over the tub is a unique way of hiding the shower rod.



### GIRL'S BEDROOM WITH FOUR POSTER BED

This understated, girlish room, that is the home-away-from-home for one of Wendy's adult daughters, features neutral colors and some of the only non-antique furniture in the home. The Rose Cummings wallpaper looks like tufted fabric, the bedding is custom-made with Rose Cummings fabric to match the wall covering, and the canopy is by Julia Gray. An antique lamp sits atop the nightstand, which is actually a mosaic table from Wendy's broken china, with a vintage mirror hanging above. Two hand-painted birds sit in gold-leaf frames that surround the room's one window. In the corner near the wardrobe — a reproduction done in a whitewash finish — is a table that displays small dolls, which are actually miniature pocketbooks handmade by Floralina. Each doll is named after Wendy's daughters, Gabrielle and Nicole; her daughter-in-law, Sarah; her niece, Tracey; and her grandniece, Amanda. >





#### MASTER BEDROOM

The ceiling of this French-blue master bedroom is embedded with lighting that travels around the perimeter of the room. Panels surrounded by molding above the disguised lighting were hand-painted on canvas stretches to appear like wallpaper, with pinks and golds to pick up the florals in the Starr rug. A pair of 1940s antique mirrored end tables sit on either side of the four-poster, blue-green reproduction bed. The bedding was purchased on a trip Wendy made to Florence, Italy, and the shams are cut velvet. A needlepoint pillow, handmade as a gift by one of Wendy's friends, provides an accent to the simple, elegant bed. The central lighting fixture, an Art Deco piece from the 1940s that was purchased in Canada, hangs above an antique bench, whose color closely resembles the reproduction bed. The silk, cream-colored window treatments are adorned with pearl beading and hanging crystals, and a Kingston valance hangs under a plaid overlay.

#### MASTER BATH

The colossal master bath finishes off the master suite with a spa-like feel. The white-wash-finished double-sink vanity with marble top has cane doors and crystal knobs – all meant to look like antiques. Early 1900s French sconces with hand-painted flowers illuminate each sink. The walls, covered in a blue, pink and green toile wallpaper, and the round Aubusson rug – which lays atop a cream and green marble floor – bring bright colors to the otherwise monochromatic room. The footed air-jet tub across from the vanity is adorned in Rohl chrome hardware, and the owner's collection of couture candles and old-fashioned soaps purchased on her trips around the world sit in a chrome basket. Crystal beading covers the lace, Austrian shades, draperies and shags. Next to the small, Victorian-era cream dressing table is a chair designed by the owner, which is covered in a shimmering ivory fabric and finished off with a large rosette in the back.

#### MASTER SITTING ROOM

At about half the size of the master bedroom, the sitting room provides a cozy, yet sophisticated extension to the master suite. The antique French Louis XVI-style loveseat and hooded chair from the Whitney Estate in Long Island are upholstered in vintage Ralph Lauren fabric. The white swivel and rocker armchair, from Mason Art, is upholstered in a striped mohair fabric with an antique pillow resting on it. In front of the loveseat rests etched Lalique crystal on top of a gold-leaf, Art Deco coffee table from 1930s France. >

