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# JOANNE DE GUARDIOLA

REVIVING A TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY  
SHINGLE STYLE HOUSE IN SOUTHAMPTON

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**W**hat freedom—you get to do exactly what you want!” Joanne de Guardiola must have heard this remark half a dozen times when she was about to begin work on her country house in Southampton, New York. Her response? “That’s a fantasy. When you design for yourself, your family becomes your client. You strive as hard to meet their needs, and the needs of the architecture, as you would for anyone else.” Certainly it seems clear that, in rehabilitating her 1895 Shingle Style house, de Guardiola, a member of the design firm of Parish-Hadley Associates, was careful to heed the requirements of both the structure and the people who would live there.

First, the people: De Guardiola spends weekends and summers in Southampton with her husband, Roberto, an investment banker; their two-and-a-half-year-old twins, Mercedes

“I wanted to downplay the formality without wrecking the beauty of the place,” says Joanne de Guardiola (above) of her 1895 Southampton house. **RIGHT:** A columned fireplace in the living room is offset by a stained-fir floor. Edelman suede covers the Italian shield-back chairs from Sotheby’s.







and Roberto; and her two stepdaughters, Jeanne and Susan. The house was going to have to adapt itself to three different age groups, be childproof and stand up to a good deal of indoor tricycle riding. "This is our country home," de Guardiola stresses. "We come here to relax and be comfortable. Everything had to be practical and down-to-earth."

Down-to-earth and yet not, admittedly, without palpable grandeur. Built for Andrew Carnegie's daughter, Margaret Carnegie Miller, the house originally reflected the sensibility of its era: In addition to the spacious public rooms, there were many smaller sitting rooms. Staff and guest quarters abounded. There were eleven hand-carved fireplaces. Now consisting of twenty-three rooms spread over 15,000 square feet, the house was once larger still (several porches were removed in an earlier renovation) and is more than de Guardiola would have built for herself. "But its proportions and scale are perfect," she says. "While the house is undeniably large, it never overwhelms you. It's a big intimate house."

Although its previous owners had respectfully cared for the house, it was time for what de Guardiola calls a "hundred-year renovation." Her goal was to retain the house's character and detailing and even some of the blemishes while modernizing and adapting it in more general ways to contemporary use. Parish-Hadley architect Blaine Capobianco worked closely with her to create drawings and mock-ups.

The chief structural problem was the handsome coved ceiling in the living room, which was sagging from a 1910 addition of two floors above; de Guardiola's contractor, Bob Plumb, inserted new supporting beams, shored up the upper floors and restored the ceiling as it had been. Plumbing, wiring and insulation were updated throughout, and baths were remodeled. Windows and French doors were replaced with copies of the originals. Central air-conditioning was installed, the heating system overhauled, the roof reshingled and the driveway reoriented so that visitors now approach the house head-on.

De Guardiola was determined to sim-

"The process was collaborative," says de Guardiola of designing for her husband, Roberto, and their children. ABOVE: One of four sitting areas breaks up the 40-foot living room. Brunschwig & Fils sofa and drapery fabrics; Clarence House fringe. Jim Thompson table silk with Cowtan & Tout fringe.

RIGHT: A circa 1825 Dufour screen from Sotheby's anchors a living room corner. The Chinese vase lamp is from Marvin Alexander. The Napoleon III Chinese lacquered box is from Yale R. Burge. Chinese box in foreground, George Subkoff Antiques. Colefax and Fowler chintz; Clarence House tassel trim.





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ply traffic patterns and eliminate the kind of duplication of space that characterized even late-nineteenth-century houses, when men and women still had separate sitting rooms. She closed up a passageway between the entrance hall and the library, rendering the latter more intimate and guiding visitors somewhat more directly into the living room. “Somewhat” continues to apply, however, because an anteroom stands between the entrance hall and the living room. She redesignated the space as a cozier, gardenlike alternative to the dining room, which can seat seventy guests. Other structural adjustments included creating a large kitchen out of three rooms and combining service quarters into a nursery on the third floor.

Considering the amount of work that was done, the spirit of the house remains remarkably intact—intact and, in a way, perfected. De Guardiola imported a team of painters from New York City, and they painstakingly removed a hundred years’ worth of paint and wallpaper, revealing beautifully detailed handmade moldings. In the living room, she specified a subtle yellow-and-

ABOVE: De Guardiola used Chinese silver tea paper for the dining room walls. “It allows us to constantly change the mood,” she says. The Moroccan covered bowls once belonged to Sister Parish. The Regency dining table and chairs are from George Subkoff Antiques.

RIGHT: “It’s my favorite room,” de Guardiola says of the garden room, previously a parlor, where the family often has breakfast. Artist Susan Huggins created the mural. As elsewhere, the floor was stained dark to balance the heavy moldings and the fireplace. Bamboo chairs and table base from McGuire.







LEFT: "I used a lot of patterns in the library, but some are subtle, others more vibrant," says de Guardiola. The 1969 aquatint is by Miró. Below it is a 12th-century sandstone head of Siva from India. The Chinese bronze temple vase lamps are from Florian Papp. Brunswick & Fils drapery fabric.

ABOVE: A set of circa 1736 botanical prints highlights the master bedroom. "My husband requested blue and white," says de Guardiola, "so I came up with a country palette." Headboard fabric and wallcovering are from Cowtan & Tout. The bench fabric, foreground, is from Jim Thompson.

cream palette, finishes that were lightly sponged and glazed, and a restrained *faux-marbre* baseboard that mediates between the cream-hued wainscoting and the original fir floors. These she stained dark, as she did throughout the first floor. "I thought the darkness would give weight and help balance the height of the ceilings, which are fifteen feet in the living room alone," the designer says. "Dark floors are a little more formal, which suits the spirit of the common rooms."

An interplay between the formal and the informal characterizes de Guardiola's approach to the furnishings. This is

especially true of the living room, where she combined casual fabrics—cotton, linen, jute and a chintz that had been deglazed and washed—with English, French and Russian pieces from various periods; the mixture cohabits easily in the forty-foot-long space. A pair of painted and gilded shield-back chairs that once belonged to Sister Parish "add a classical note," de Guardiola says. "Sister always liked a bit of gilding."

In the garden room next door, the designer took a more lighthearted and playful approach than she might have for a client. She commissioned a mural

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