

# HCG & G

Hamptons Cottages and Gardens

WWW.HCANDG.COM | JULY 2009

**ARTFUL LIVING**

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# PICTURE PERFECT

WHEN HIS CITY CLIENTS ACQUIRED A TASTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, DESIGNER BRAD FORD FOLLOWED THEM EAST, REVAMPING A BRIDGEHAMPTON HOME TO MAKE ROOM FOR A BUDDING COLLECTION

BY ALEJANDRO SARALEGUI | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC STRIFFLER

**Bloom Time** | "Nothing says summer in the Hamptons like fresh flowers," says the designer (THIS PAGE). **Center of Attention** | The Chambray and Guillaume armchair and vintage handcrafted wood seat (OPPOSITE) are from R.E. Steele in East Hampton; the painting over the mantel is by Eric Freeman. See Resources.





## FULL-THROTTLE ACTIVITY

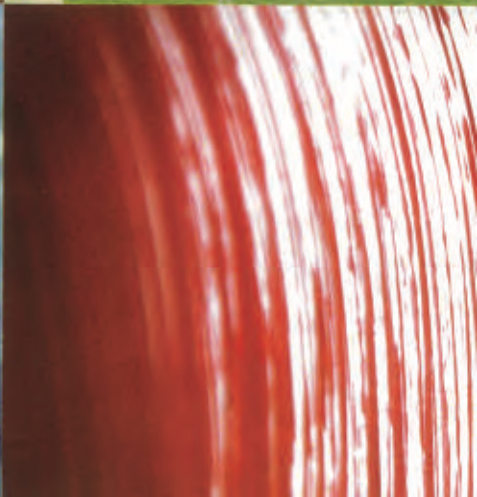
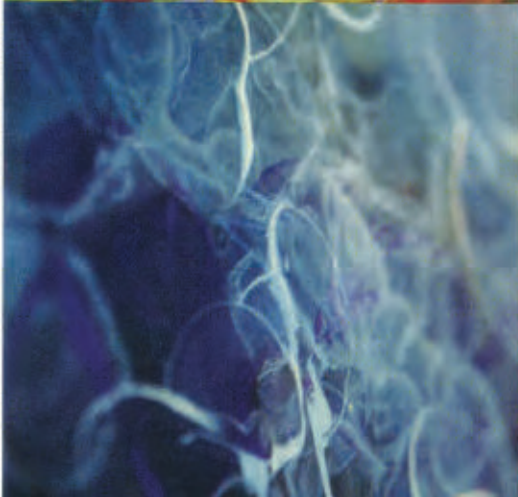
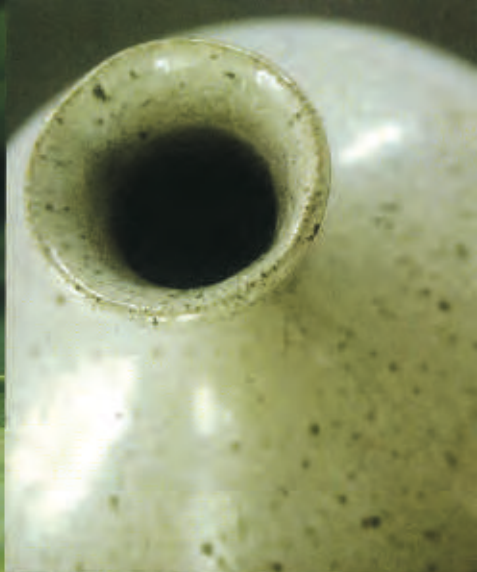
reigns in the Bridgehampton house of Rob and Ramy Sharp and their three children—trampoline jumping and all. But if the walls are buzzing with excitement, it's not always from the roughhousing but the vibrant canvases strewn throughout, reflecting ink and oil paint, crystals and wax, hither and fro. Amidst the frequently rotating collection, New York-based interior designer Brad Ford has installed a practical-but-elegant design scheme filled with serene neutrals and furniture dressed in sturdy, kid-safe fabrics and slipcovers—a setting that lets artworks shine and kids be themselves.

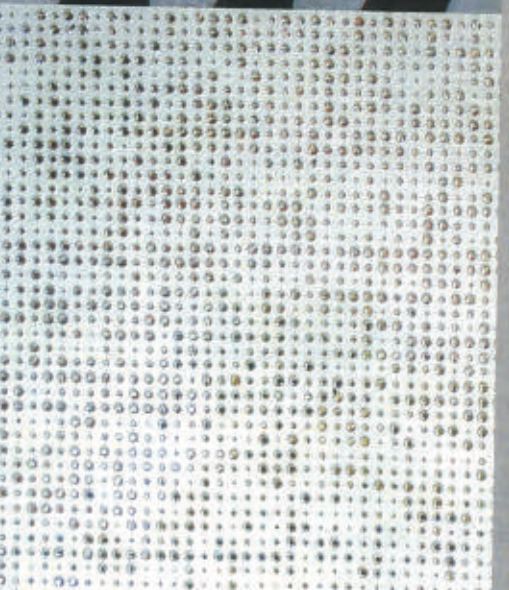
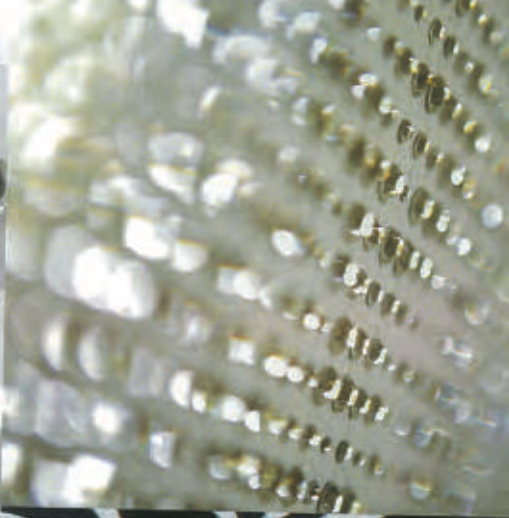
"Our kids are very respectful of the art," says Ramy Sharp. "In the city, they're exposed to museums and galleries and love to draw and paint. The house is a happy and positive environment for them to have fun and be creative." And no wonder—over the past few years the Sharps have grown their collection of fine art and photography, especially abstract works, with help from art consultant **Leslie Gerber-Seid**. "Leslie has done a great job with them," notes Ford. "The artworks really capture their personalities."

Ford decorated the house for the first time nearly 10 years ago, when the Sharps asked for a "traditional-with-a-twist" country home. A few years ago, as he saw the couple through the renovation of their city apartment, he noted their taste had evolved, with a more modern aesthetic influencing their art purchases. "It was only a matter of time before they realized that their Hamptons home needed an update," Ford says.

It wasn't the evolution of their taste that prompted Ford to return, recalls Sharp. "Actually, we started this renovation project because my husband loves to cook—and we wanted to expand the kitchen," she says. "We have a lot of impromptu dinner parties and he often does all the cooking." Ford helped them expand the size of the original kitchen by about a third, kitting it out with side-by-side Sub-Zero refrigerators, a Viking six-burner stove with an adjacent deep

**Breathing Room** | A large canvas by Glasgow-based artist Victoria Morton (opposite) hangs in the living room. The home's neutral furniture and textiles allow art to take center stage. **Visual Feast** | A swish of red pigment from artist James Nares and brilliant blue bubbles in a David Mann painting (DETAILS THIS PAGE) bring vivid color and varied texture to the Sharp home. See Resources.







**A Closer Look** | The home's compelling details (OPPOSITE) include Swarovski crystal-studded artwork by John Noestheden and a Ford-designed ceiling fixture with pendants of Edison bulbs. **Bring It Together** | In the family room (THIS PAGE) is a sofa from Dune with a custom slipcover designed by Ford, a womb chair and art by Sara Sosnowy. See *Resources*.







**Shine On** | Bold artwork by Euan MacDonald commands the study (opposite). The desk is from Aero, the mirrored-glass table lamp from Room and the distressed leather lounge from Mecox Gardens. **Lady of the House** | A black-and-white photograph by Albert Watson (above) presides over the master bedroom. The antique lamp is from BDDW. **Hang Time** | The kitchen's white tile and cabinetry (below) looks all the more pristine when contrasted with velvety brushed Israeli limestone floors, angular B&B Italia barstools and industrial-style light fixtures from Urban Archaeology. In the foreground is a work by British artist Liam Gillick. See Resources.

fryer, two ovens, a microwave and a pair of sinks plus a pot-filler by the range. Even here, though, Ford's careful choice of materials tempers the appliances' industrial qualities. Israeli limestone floors play off pale wood cabinets and dark honed-stone countertops. At the far end of the kitchen, a new breakfast room seats 10 at a simple table illuminated by a clever light fixture designed by Ford. "I designed that chandelier using old milk-glass shades," he says. "To my mind it really captures the traditional-meets-modern spirit of the house."

Turning his hand to other areas of the house, Ford followed a similar path, creating luxurious, practical spaces that don't compete with the artworks. The extra-large living room has multiple seating areas ideal for large gatherings. One cozy grouping near the fireplace features a concrete mantel of Ford's design that is crowned with a piece by Hamptons-based artist Eric Freeman. "I love that painting," says Sharp. "He's a local artist and we commissioned it for that spot. It was a great experience." The large-scale furniture here and a neutral kick-up-your-feet ottoman leave ample room to gaze at Freeman's work.

Singling out the dining room as an example, Ford

points to ways he weaved in many elements from the initial decorating job. He slipcovered the chairs in a more modern fabric and repainted the walls; the chandelier and the dining table stayed the same. "The triptych by John Noestheden, made of Swarovski crystals, ties the room to the rest of the house," he says.

Upstairs, modern and traditional elements continue to mingle in the master suite. "Ramy has become a great friend—she's funny, sexy and fabulous, but still incredibly down-to-earth, and I wanted this bedroom to really capture her personality," Ford says. A fur carpet and a zebra-print throw pillow offset the rustic reclaimed-wood side tables used as night stands, creating a glam-meets-country look. A large photograph by Albert Watson, depicting a sultry model draped in dotted tulle, leans near the bedside.

The design works as a canvas for the Sharps on many levels. "Art and nature bring a broader world of perspectives to our home. The children love being at the house, playing and exploring with friends and family in the backyard, and having fun and being creative inside," Sharp says. "We're very fortunate the environment and the art is such a positive influence on their lives." ●

