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\$ 9.95 A SANDOW PUBLICATION | LUXE SOURCE®



MAR/APR 2017 | DISPLAY UNTIL 05/08/17

EUROPEAN ENDEAVOR

THE LOOK OF A BELGIUM FARMHOUSE INSPIRES
A FAMILY-FRIENDLY CONNECTICUT HOME.

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ARCHITECTURE / LOUISE BROOKS AND VINCENT FALOTICO, BROOKS AND FALOTICO
INTERIOR DESIGN / LYNN MORGAN, LYNN MORGAN DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / IAN HOBBS, HOBBS, INCORPORATED
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / TIM PATERSON, HIGHLAND DESIGN GARDENS

At one end of the home's great room, custom sofas by designer Lynn Morgan gather around a limestone fireplace fabricated by Connecticut Stone. Pillows covered in orange Holland & Sherry fabric complement the foliage outdoors, while the rug from JD Staron unifies the room. Custom millwork by architects Louise Brooks and Vincent Falotico shines beneath white-oak ceiling beams.



A Belgian farmhouse is not a common sight in New England, but that's exactly what a couple were going for when they hired architects Louise Brooks and Vincent Falotico to design their new residence. The wife is from an artistic family in Northern California, says Falotico, so "she brings a different sensibility" than what is often found in New Canaan. So what does that taste translate to architecturally? A fieldstone-and-stucco exterior with steep roof pitches, a slate roof and a steel-and-glass stair tower that extends from the main structure.

The architects had a challenge to begin with: situating the residence to best fit the modest piece of land. "We packed a lot of house onto a tight site," Falotico says, noting the building twists from the front door to take advantage of the southern-facing sun and views of the woods and a stream along the lot. As a result, the 11-foot-high living spaces—with wide arched door openings and metal-frame windows—offer generous views of nature as well as the pool and terrace. "The benefit of steel windows is a smaller frame and more glass," Falotico says. Consequently, plenty of light filters into the home while considerable views beckon looking out.

With the views being such a focal point of the home—the first, second and third floors all have terraces that look onto the pool and garden—the outdoor design needed to be carefully considered. While wild plantings grow by the stream and fluctuate with the seasons, residential designer Tim Paterson arranged orderly boxwoods, hydrangeas and cherry trees close to the home. "Symmetry and formality bring a sense of entrance to the house, which is very important," he says.



The custom cabinetry and millwork for the kitchen and bar, designed by Brooks and Falotico and manufactured by D&D Woodworks, is situated within a central hall of plaster arches. The bar's countertop is an earthy-toned Belgian Bluestone.

In portraying a European feel, designer Lynn Morgan kept the palette quiet, except for occasional pops of orange. "It's one color scheme—all creams—but different textures," she says. "It's all about the materials that went into it." In the living area, for example, two custom rectilinear sofas are upholstered in a durable sand-colored fabric, complementing the space's wool-blend rug, pale oak flooring, limestone fireplace surround, standing lamps with cream shades and textured artworks in shades of white and beige. The room's dark wicker chairs sporting cream cushions mimic the nearby dining area's cream leather armchairs with dark-stained legs; the fireplaces

in both areas also mirror each other, bringing symmetry and organization to the monochromatic open plan. Throughout the house, the clients' desired old-world feel is carried via Venetian plaster walls. "It gives the place a lot of depth, because there are layers of plaster built up by hand," says builder Ian Hobbs. "The residents liked to see the handwork; it's one-of-a-kind."

An unusual feature of the plaster is its use as a "termination point" at arched doors and other openings, meaning there is no interruption because of casing, Hobbs says. "It's a more traditional European look," he explains, pointing out it creates clean lines. The home's only trim,

The dining area on the opposite end of the great room mimics the living area's Belgian feel with characteristic tones of light and dark, as custom chairs covered in Holly Hunt leather encircle a walnut-stained X-base table by Tucker Robbins. A neo-Gothic chandelier from O'Lampia is suitably clean-lined, while the painting by Bruce Horan above the fireplace brings in just enough color.



Right: In the breakfast room, the custom table by Morgan features a fishtail base and walnut top. Both the banquette and the more traditional custom studded chairs are covered in platinum-hued Perennials fabrics. The Antique Blonde Barr stone flooring by Paris Ceramics has been used for centuries in European country homes.

Opposite: Referencing the lanterns outdoors, a grand hand-forged iron chandelier by Gregorius Pineo presides over the kitchen, where Belgian Bluestone reappears, topping the counters. Tucked in a niche in the maple butcher-block island are orange woven baskets from Pottery Barn. The Hickory chairs are covered in Holly Hunt leather.



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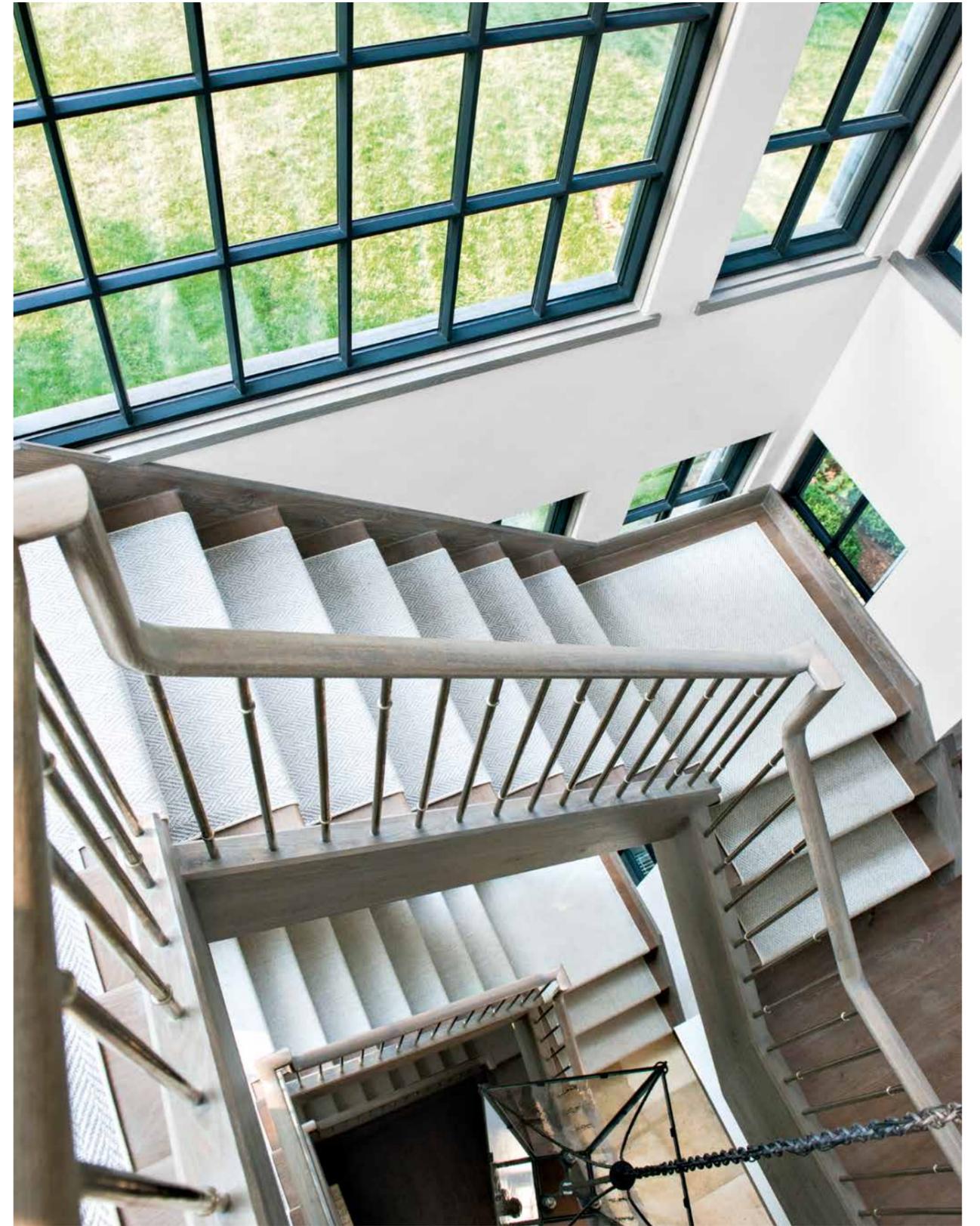
—LYNN MORGAN



Above: A kitchen window conveniently opens to a stone-slab bar on the terrace, furnished with the clients' existing stools. Edelman Metalworks fabricated the bar-ledge brackets.

Left: The dining area on the pool's patio is shaded by a SunShelter Elite Plus remote-controlled retractable awning sporting Sunbrella fabric. The wicker chairs and dining table are from RH, and the orange serving trays are from West Elm.

The second-floor landing is a transitional space from the architectural stair to the serene master bedroom. A custom table supports a pair of robin's-egg blue lamps by Hwang Bishop, which pick up the color in another Bruce Horan painting.



An open steel-and-glass stair tower connects the four stories of the house. The thermally broken windows, which stream in generous amounts of light, are from Case Window & Door.



A Waterworks Colette freestanding bathtub adds a vintage feel to the master bathroom, where the vanity, sporting a honed Dolomite slab countertop, was custom-designed by Brooks and Falotico. The sconces are by The Urban Electric Co.



A rug by CB2 and an Eiffel side chair from Design Within Reach, which sits at a desk by AllModern, add a splash of fun to the third-floor bedroom. The antiqued pine platform bed is from RH's Printmaker's collection.



The second-floor master bedroom is one of the quietest rooms in the house, but the beamed cathedral ceiling, which follows the steep roof pitches, brings dramatic flair, as does the globe chandelier from O'Lampia. The chairs, side table and ottoman are custom pieces by Morgan, and the table lamp is by Circa Lighting. Window treatments are by Robert Allen, while the white-oak beams are from Southend Reclaimed Vintage Wood & Brick in North Carolina.

Falotico adds, is in the baseboards and the antiqued reclaimed ceiling beams. The latter are extra long and extra weathered, adding drama and bringing out the beauty of the wood. "Every ceiling has some interest to it," the architect says. "Most of the second-floor bedrooms have cathedral ceilings." Such is the case in the master bedroom, where Morgan dressed the windows with pale blue and crisp white linen. In fact, the only windows in the house with coverings are in the upstairs bedrooms.

The home is so elegant that one could be tricked into thinking there is nowhere for children and pets, but that isn't the case: The team took care to design a house meant for entertaining and accommodating plenty of family, including the clients' three children and three dogs. "The kids can sit anywhere," Morgan says. "The living room rug, for instance, looks like camouflage—you could drop chocolate on it and not worry." This kind of casual living is particularly encouraged on the ground floor, where the living room and adjacent kitchen open onto the pool terrace. Decked in Belgian Bluestone countertops, the kitchen also has a giant window that unfolds to access the terrace, where three stools are perched at a modest bar. "The kids can eat there in their wet bathing suits, or the wife can serve ice cream," Morgan says.

Not surprisingly, this house is a magnet in the neighborhood, and the family loves to entertain. The children can often be found sitting at the breakfast nook in the kitchen, doing homework at the built-in banquette while dinner is being made, or under the retractable awning over the hot tub and outdoor dining area, where a fireplace warms in cool weather. "What's not to love?" Morgan asks. "They're living the life here. It's really fun." ■