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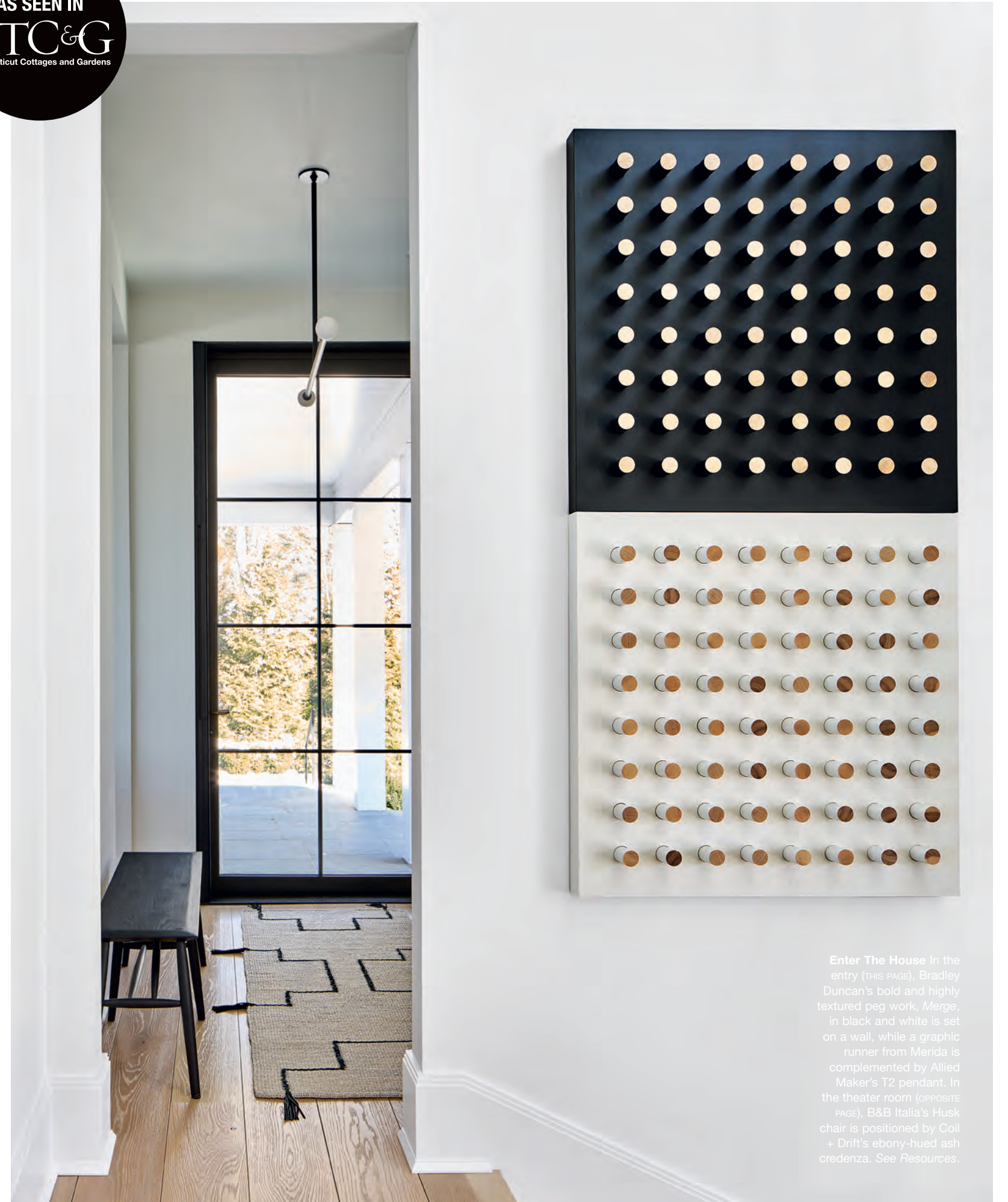


New Kitchen
VIBES

VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

TAKING A SIGHT-UNSEEN PURCHASE TO A FAMILY HOME WITH THE HELP OF A MOTHER-DAUGHTER DESIGN TEAM

BY DAVID MASELLO | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCO RICCA



Enter The House in the entry (THIS PAGE), Bradley Duncan's bold and highly textured peg work, *Merge*, in black and white is set on a wall, while a graphic runner from Merida is complemented by Allied Maker's T2 pendant. In the theater room (OPPOSITE PAGE), B&B Italia's Husk chair is positioned by Coil + Drift's ebony-hued ash credenza. See Resources.



Setting The Scene (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM) In the living room, Blackcreek Mercantile & Trading Co.'s coffee table is flanked by a B&B Italia sofa. A BDDW leather sling chair is topped with a shearling pillow. **Just The Ticket** A De La Espada dining table (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP) from the Future Perfect is set with Carl Hansen & Son chairs from Suite NY. The tiered chandelier is from Matter Made. See [Resources](#).



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ovie makers need the right locale, good scenery and talented actors. One of the homeowners of this modern-style farmhouse in Fairfield County is a noted screenwriter, and he and his wife found in their new residence all the elements they needed, not only to make for a good movie, but, more importantly, a good domestic life as a family. This house's hilltop locale comes with 60-mile views toward the Hudson River and distant Manhattan. As for the cast who occupies the house, it's a close-knit, blended family that entertains frequently and hosts screenings of movies in their spacious home theater.

At a point during the pandemic, when the husband was filming in Canada and the wife was with the children in Manhattan, the couple "auditioned" several houses via Facetime to which they could relocate. They purchased this five-bedroom home without actually seeing it in person—nor had they officially auditioned the mother-daughter, Brooklyn-based interior design team of Diana Rice and Chelsea Reale that they later commissioned. Of their own familial collaboration, daughter Reale says, "We work together not just as mother and daughter,



Leading Roles (CLOCKWISE ACROSS SPREAD FROM THIS PAGE) The kitchen island—designed and built by project architects Brooks & Falotico—is set with stools from Thomas Hayes Studio. The design team worked with Studio Ater to configure a downstairs home gym. A custom Calacatta stone sink from ABC Stone is lit by Apparatus Studio sconces. See Resources.



but also as best friends. You could put each of us in separate rooms and tell us to design the same room and we'd come up with the same result."

As for how the homeowners found the designers' company, Sissy+Marley Interior Design, it was a matter of scrolling through Instagram posts about their work, a process not unlike casting the right actors for a film based on headshots. As the wife says, "My husband and I were drawn to Chelsea and Diana for their aesthetic, which is chic, modern, and clean, but still warm and homey. But their selling point was that we would get to walk into a completed house." As Rice concurs, "That *is* how we work—when we are done with a project, that means it's a completed project."

Like many homeowners who entrust interior designers to redesign how they will occupy their daily lives at home, this husband and wife had Rice and Reale purchase everything anew—from towels, sheets and placemats to custom-made furnishings, rugs and canopy beds. Reale likens the relationship designers forge with clients to that of a marriage. "For twelve months, or so, you become part of your client's family. You're in their home, you have keys to their house, you're in their life for a lengthy amount of time. We get close to our clients, because they trust us, and we trust them."

Rice and Reale's aesthetic is such that it allows for their clients to have creative freedom in the rooms of a home. As they did here, the designers deliberately limit the colors they use on walls, the patterns that appear on furnishings and walls, and even the compositions of artwork they might be commissioned to buy. "This is a perfect example of how we want the natural beauty of the house and

That's A Wrap (THIS PAGE) Light and airy is the prevailing mood in the primary bedroom, which is furnished with a B&B Italia canopy bed and nightstand. The bed is dressed with a cashmere throw and pillow from RH. The rug is from Armadillo. See *Resources*.



Behind The Scenes (THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) A pocket door provides privacy in the primary bathroom. In the playroom Serena & Lily rug is topped by a table and animal chairs from Oeuf; the Herman Miller light is through Design Within Reach. A Tamar Mogendorff fabric deer head and Marley + Malek Kids' wallpaper add a touch of whimsy to the nursery. See *Resources*.

the spectacular views visible from the windows to emerge," says Reale. Adds Rice, "We never want any room in any home to be too loud or distracting. We love for homes to speak for themselves."

One of the variables that defines the work of the design duo is their ability to commission furniture and accessories from a network of artisans they've cultivated over the years—such as shearling upholstery from Moses Nadel, wood artwork by Bradley Duncan, furniture from the Brooklyn workshop of Matter Made and lighting fixtures from Allied Maker and Apparatus Studio. "We loved putting the work of these kinds of talented designers into this home," says Reale.

The homeowner cites favorite details that include the long, low sofa in the living room that features a bench on the back side and from which one can sit to take in unimpeded views over the landscape, making for a kind of film that plays continuously. As the wife says, "All of the rooms are conspicuously beautiful, with a sense of artistry and balance. Even sitting down to dinner every night in our great room, at our lovely table, gives us a great feeling of completeness." 🌟