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THE GREAT ESCAPE

GLDESIGN lands in Southport

With the tagline “Live Beautifully” in surf print spanning one wall, GLDESIGN’s new studio is like a calming oasis, where owner Gaelle Dudley’s love of the coast and passion for the surf lifestyle can be seen, felt and experienced everywhere you turn. “I focus primarily on coastal interior design, and I want my clients to feel like they’re on vacation in their own homes,” she says. “To me, the

coast is about not feeling tied to the grind, so there’s a sense of freedom in everything we design. I live and breathe this lifestyle, and I’m excited to make people feel what I feel every day.”

Inspired in part by her childhood spent on the coast of France, Dudley infuses her designs with a beachy, laidback vibe that embodies what she calls the “imperfectly perfect” lifestyle. “It means it’s OK to have white couches and sand on the floor and not stress about things getting dirty.” Often working with white and neutral palettes, she injects color as accents, frequently opting for bold shades of hot pinks, indigos and yellows for pops of vibrancy.

With a menu of services that includes interior design, renovations and new builds, GLDESIGN also offers exterior styling, working with coastal



left: Dudley transformed a former shoe store into her new studio. Workspace for brainstorming with clients is paired with cubbies that host fabrics, textiles and samples.

plants, sea and beach grasses and container design to enhance curb appeal. “We do all of that ourselves,” Dudley says. “It’s not just when you walk into the house that you’re wowed; it starts on the outside.”

With plans to host special events, exhibit work by local photographers and painters and eventually incorporate a curated retail component, “this space has a lot of bright, happy vibes,” Dudley says. “I want it to be a sanctuary where clients can feel the lifestyle I love to create in people’s homes. It’s the life I love to live.” 293 Pequot Avenue, Southport; 203-554-0585; livegl.design.com –LF



Inside Job

A design studio brings urban chic style to town

This summer Laura Michaels moved her interior design studio from Armonk to the spot in Glenville that Finch’s Pharmacy called home for forty years. The totally renovated 1,800-square-foot space showcases her hip, glam, yet very approachable design aesthetic. When so many designers think small, Michaels goes big, maximizing design to scale, a concept she says the restaurant and hotel industries execute well.

Her goal is to make the design process exciting and pleasurable. “People don’t realize that interior

design can be fun. They think it has to be so serious. I’m out to change that,” she says. You know you’re in for a treat as soon as you step inside the studio and retail space where soothing grays and whites serve as the backdrop. Here, customers can pop in, look around, peruse the furniture, or grab a hostess gift—easily done since items start at \$20—or an accessory for their home.

Walk through the store and up a step into the studio, where the design magic happens. Michaels works in

both residential and commercial spaces and does it all—from creating custom-made furniture manufactured in the U.S. to designing tile tableaus you’ll never see in your neighbor’s home. (Ask to see her metal-stud tiles.) “I connect easily with my clients. They inspire me, and I draw from that to create designs that fit their personalities,” she says. 3 Riversville Road, Greenwich; 203-531-7047; lauramichaelsdesign.com —VF

PHOTOGRAPHY: CONTRIBUTED



TOP TIP TO REFRESH

“People tend to use safe colors, usually in lighter shades,” Michaels says. She suggests choosing one room—or maybe just a wall—and painting it a dense, dark color in a glossy paint that will reflect light. Want to kick it up a tad? “Lacquer a wall or the ceiling.”