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INTERVIEW WITH TORI LEGGE, STIRLING MILLS INTERIOR DESIGN | PHOTOGRAPHER CARMEL & ROBERT BRANTLEY

# WHITEHOT

A LIGHT PALETTE AND AN OPEN FEEL bring the outdoors in for this FLORIDA GETAWAY









**opposite:** In the family room, swivel chairs from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, reupholstered in a Great Plains fabric, are pulled up to a set of Holly Hunt's Cachalot cocktail tables. The Saddlemans hide underfoot can easily handle spills. **this page:** Roberta Schilling's Banda mirror and a bench from AllModern create a sleek vignette in the foyer; custom pillows by Weitzner dot the family room sofa.



“The clients didn’t want much color; they wanted the **OUTDOORS** to be the **COLOR.**”

—TORI LEGGE

**How do you know the clients?** I had helped them do their home here in New Canaan, and right after that, they decided to join the Floridian National Golf Club down in Florida (the husband is a huge golfer) and custom-build this home there. They’re a lovely family and so great to work with.

**Given that you live in Connecticut, how did you approach this project?**

We did a lot remotely. The architect and builder were in Florida, and I went down there about four or five times for a few things during the project, but in terms of furniture layouts and things like that, we were able to easily manage that from here. We had a receiving house there, and we flew down for the two-day installation, which involved everything from unpacking forks and spoons to making beds—the glamorous part of our job! *[laughs]*

**What were they looking for?** The clients really wanted a palette that was super-clean, modern, simple and usable, and it’s a lot of white, as they

didn’t want much color; they wanted the outdoors to be the color. The front door is glass, so you can see all the way through to the back to the water, and the entire back of the house is all glass doors and windows. When you’re inside looking out, you just see the green grass and the bright blue water, and those are the colors that reflect back into the house.

**What launched the design concept for you?** The floors are the prettiest color—they’re a light stained oak—and the white just looked so good with them. The kitchen bleeds into the family room, so this area is really one large space. The client wanted an all-white kitchen, so that dictated everything we did with the furniture. We also did all polished chrome—for the light fixtures, the bar stools, everything—which is typical for houses on the water.

**Tell me about this great room space—how did it come together?**

We knew the client wanted two islands in the kitchen, and we needed

**this spread:** The family room flows into the spacious kitchen, and whitewashed oak floors run throughout the home. Floor-to-ceiling windows and glass doors blur the line between inside and out.







**left:** The all-white kitchen is accented with chrome lighting from YLighting, and the swivel counter stools are from AllModern. **opposite, clockwise from top left:** The dining area is furnished with a Wüd Furniture table and DWR chairs; a custom console helps to delineate the kitchen from the family room; chairs from Roberta Schilling and a custom ottoman covered in a Holland & Sherry fabric are glimpsed in the master suite, along with a cozy Kashwé blanket; next to the stacked-stone fireplace in the family room, a piece of custom art was placed above a credenza from Made Goods, and a custom wine cabinet is a conversation-starter.

the seating area in the family room, so we had to back that up a bit. The console behind the sofa helps to separate the two spaces. The bar stools are swivel chairs so you can turn around and watch TV. Most of the furniture throughout the house was custom, and we primarily used indoor/outdoor fabrics. Many of those fabrics are so amazing and so comfortable—you don't even know that they're indoor/outdoor fabrics. The rug in the family room is a cowhide, so spills wipe right up. When the weather is nice, the clients can open up all of the doors, and you have this seating area inside and all of these living spaces outside. Everything is very outdoor-protected.

**Is that an area for wine storage off of the family room?** Yes! It's amazing and so cool. This was really the husband—he primarily drove the design process for that piece, and he did such a great job. It's stainless steel, glass and metal, and you can open the door and step inside. There's wine storage along the back and on the sides, and it's temperature-controlled. Wine cellars can be a bit boring and traditional, and this is just an unexpected piece right there in the family room. It also works so well with the staircase nearby, with the metal and rivets on the side with the wood. It all just ties in together beautifully. The wine storage is a jewel of an art piece.







**The outdoor living spaces look perfect for entertaining.** The clients typically host quite a bit—he'll entertain for work and have guys down there to golf, and they also have other couples visit all of the time. There's a huge seating area with a TV, a ping-pong table, and four JANUS et Cie chairs pulled up to a round table, and just outside the master suite are two lounge chairs. There are then more lounge chairs by the pool and Adirondack chairs by the fire pit. The clients hired a landscape designer, and we went over all of those plans in terms of the hot tub being integrated into the pool and where the fire pit and outdoor grill would be. The grass in the back is all Astroturf, so you're not having mowers get grass into the pool. It's definitely indoor/outdoor living for a winter in Florida.

**above:** Sleek RH sofas provide plenty of seating for outdoor entertaining and TV watching.  
**opposite:** JANUS et Cie lounge chairs are primed for poolside relaxation.



**Their master suite looks so relaxing.** The clients wanted it to be super comfortable. There are a few blue accents in there and a couple of really great chairs. There is a breakfast bar area, and you go back through to a big walk-in closet, which leads into the master bath. The master suite is on the first floor, and then upstairs there are three additional bedrooms and a large terrace with two different seating areas.


**What element made the biggest impact in this house?** Architecturally, I love all of the glass and all of the openness—I would live in a glass box if I had my choice! I like the feeling of it being so open and airy and being able to see the outdoors so much. I also love the staircase with the glass front door and the glass back doors. Furniture-wise,





**left:** Adirondack chairs from DWR surround the fire pit.  
**above:** In the master suite, a bed from RH is dressed in neutral Matouk bedding for a serene feel. Lamps from Made Goods top nightstands from Holly Hunt.





“A lot of the pillows and throws were about bringing in **TEXTURE**, so there’s a tonality to it. There are so many elements that layer in **COZINESS**.”

—TORI LEGGE

**this spread:** Four JANUS et Cie chairs and a table from RH form another seating area for outdoor entertaining.



**above:** RH loungers are just steps outside the master suite on the first floor.

I love swivel chairs; you can turn around in them and see inside and out. The white mesh lounge chairs near the pool are so easy and low-maintenance, and you're not dealing with cushions. I also love the Roberta Schilling chairs at the end of the bed in the master suite. Overall, I just like the way the house feels. I'm kind of afraid of color [laughs], so my dream house is all white and glass. A lot of the pillows and throws were about bringing in texture, so there's a tonality to it. There are so many elements that layer in coziness.

**How did installation go?** A coworker and I flew down, did everything and then came home, and the clients came down the following weekend. They were so happy and totally pleased. It's the best part of our job, when it all comes together so nicely. —INTERVIEW BY LAUREN FETTERMAN

**Resources:**

Interior designer: Stirling Mills Interior Design, New Canaan; 203-594-9596; [stirlingmills.com](http://stirlingmills.com)  
Architect: GarciaStromberg | GS4Studios, West Palm Beach, FL; 561-478-5855; [garciastromberg.com](http://garciastromberg.com)  
Builder: Bill Daly, Carrere General Contractors, Hobe Sound, FL; 772-545-2112; [carrere.com](http://carrere.com)  
Developer: Floridian National Golf Club, Palm City, FL; 772-678-4063; [floridian.cc](http://floridian.cc)