

# PORTSMOUTH

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Photography:  
Kevin Edge  
Photography

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# LIVED IN & LOVED

*Unique Design Concepts Driven by Art and Psychology*

ARTICLE BY ANN KATHRYN KELLY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN EDGE





Art and psychology meet in the middle to inform Sheri Gibson's interior design philosophy. Sheri, owner of Rein & Co. Design, combines her love of houses dating back to childhood with her college studies in art and psychology. The result balances the aesthetics of art with her clients' psychological wants and needs.

"I help clients create spaces that are uniquely theirs," Sheri explains. "It's a partnership, with ongoing feedback that ensures the outcome is thoughtful, creative, and personalized to each client's tastes and how they live."

Sheri and her husband, Bob, returned to New England in 2022 when they purchased a 1796 farmhouse in Durham. Living in Chicago for 20 years, they wanted to relocate near the North Shore of Massachusetts, where they grew up.

The couple's five-year plan to return was accelerated when a friend sent Sheri the listing for the farmhouse in late summer 2021. Weeks later, Sheri stood on the front lawn with her sister as a realtor pointed out the property's unique attributes and history. The farmhouse was once owned by Mary

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*Beloved Baxter*

Ann Esposito of NH PBS fame, who filmed the pilot for her “Caio Italia” cooking show in the rustic, beamed-ceiling kitchen.

“I could see my future unfolding here,” Sheri recalls. “It already felt like home. I called Bob, who was away on business. Though he hadn’t seen the house, he encouraged me to make an offer on the spot.”

Sheri shares that her sister jokingly asked the realtor if he told everyone the house was haunted at the exact moment another couple walked past who were also looking at the property. The house needed to be hers—with or without the joke. Her offer was accepted.

Sheri’s choice to neutralize, using a soft white palette over walls that had been painted in deep yellows and reds, initially shocked her. “It was December and grey outside, so that didn’t help. But in this empty house, the rooms suddenly felt stark, all in white. But I realized this is how my clients feel, and my response is always to trust the plan.”

Sheri knew her art pieces, wood furnishings, and baskets would bring warmth and character back into the space. Now, one need only walk into a cozy room dominated by a gorgeous antique fireplace—a space she lovingly calls “The Snug”—to feel ready to curl up with coffee or wine and enjoy a nice chat.





Scale, proportion, and balance are critical elements to design projects. Sheri's expertise comes in here, as she points out where more texture or color is needed, for example. The weight of these elements, working together, gives harmony to a space. Sheri also emphasizes the importance of negative space. Not every spot needs to be filled, and negative space—when used correctly—adds depth.

When form follows function, it creates a space that feels lived in, loved, and uniquely custom. A vintage basket holding umbrellas or a walking stick placed beneath a modern, silver-framed, or beveled mirror brings together old and new, form and function.

When asked what sets her design philosophy apart, Sheri says, "I don't want anyone to see me in their space. The design should showcase how the homeowners live and what's important to them."

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“Design is like a flowchart, yes and no answers help us navigate to final decisions. I’m there to guide

this process and provide the best options to elevate the space.”

Sheri’s job as an advisor is to help steer her clients in directions that take elements of the style they love while working with elements they may not have considered, but that will better serve the space. “Design is like a flowchart,” she explains. “Yes and no answers help us navigate to final decisions. I’m there to guide this process and provide the best options to elevate the space.”

She adds, “After a project plan has been agreed to, it’s best not to second-guess. We are inundated daily with beautiful things; sticking to the plan helps quiet the noise.”





Sheri returns to Chicago to work with her clientele with whom she has formed strong relationships. And now, with several Seacoast and North Shore-area clients on her calendar, she is looking forward to growing Rein & Co. Design locally in the coming year.

Working with a hand-selected group of vendors she trusts that offer top-quality merchandise, Sheri counsels clients on a range of design scenarios that will deliver good, better, or best results based on the agreed-upon budget. “When it comes to quality, affordability, and quick results, you can have two, but rarely all three; it’s about prioritizing.”

Listening—and the trust it builds—is the North Star Sheri follows in her design approach. A complete understanding, followed by agreement on goals and budget, culminates in a result her clients love living with.