

Hudson Valley

THE DESIGN ISSUE



The best places to go trail running & horseback riding

March 2022
hvmag.com \$5.99

03

73361-65962-0

HOME & DESIGN

Inspiration from the Valley's best decorators, architects, builders, realtors, and makers.



ALL PHOTOS BY JEFF HOLT; STYLING BY MIEKE TEN HAVE

Home Sweet Home

Interior designer Ariella Duker helped clients curate gorgeous spaces while she lived in a series of unremarkable Manhattan rentals. See what she came up with when it was finally her turn.

BY JONNA GALLO WEPPLER



Ariella Duker's journey to homeownership began innocently eight years ago. She was heading back to Manhattan after yet another happy weekend in the Hudson Valley, exploring different towns and sourcing antiques for her eponymous New York City interior design firm.

As luck would have it, she had planned to stop at Wethersfield Garden

for a private tour from an acquaintance who worked there. "I was in complete awe of the property and the views," says Duker. "Naively I asked, what town are we in?" When she learned the answer, Amenia, she began researching area properties. The rest is history.

In 2013, she closed on a rocky, wildly overgrown 10 ½-acre parcel of land and was determined to build a house, literally from the foundation up. "They

say ignorance is bliss and I was blissfully unaware of the challenges ahead," recalls Duker. Blasting through solid rock and facing off with black bears (!) over garbage were among many tests of will during her crash course in country living.

In terms of overall design for her dream home, the former fashion stylist and Sotheby's-trained art historian says she drew inspiration from the symmetry and formality of European country



Scale-wise, the living room is relatively intimate. "I like forcing people to interact with a space and with one another," says Duker. The French doors open to a lounge area on the porch, doubling the room in size during the warmer months and allowing friends to flow freely in and out. Choosing chairs that swivel makes it easy to turn to see what's happening in the kitchen, chat with anyone on the sofa, or watch TV. The ombre drapes are a nod to the horizon and draw the eye to the spectacular view.



Duker's welcoming foyer is flooded with natural sunlight thanks to the glass front door. The neutral walls and pale wood furnishings and floors allow the beautiful, classic molding along the ceiling, doorways, and baseboard really shine. A big fan of fresh flowers, Duker likes to have vases of blooms in every room.

This vintage Swedish extension dining table has three leaves and measures about 9 feet in full. Formal dinners are rare, the table is often used for serving, leaving the island available for food prep and casual meals. The chairs—vintage Italian Savonarola—were in rough shape when Duker found them in a local antiques shop, so she swapped in durable indoor/outdoor fabric and polished the brass. She's always on the hunt for a few more.



It Takes a Village

Duker worked mostly with fellow Hudson Valley creatives. Meet her dream team:

R.A. Nilsen Construction

Millbrook; robertnilsen.com

Sloan Architects

Millbrook; sloanarchitects.com

Louis Fusco Landscape Architects

Pound Ridge; louisfusco.com

Northwest Lawn and Landscaping

Millerton; northwestlawnlandscaping.com

Domenick Lopane Landscaping

Millerton; 845.518.0632



Meet Figgy, a Brussels Griffon who belongs to one of Duker's closest friends. "Figgy is a regular guest," says Duker. "Dogs run the show around here." Guest pups and Duker's frequent fosters all gravitate to this comfy velvet chaise, which has only gotten better with age. "I'm tempted to reupholster it, but it was one of the first pieces of furniture I picked for my Manhattan apartment when I started my career. It's nostalgic and it has followed me around even when it had no suitable place or space."

from forays to the famous Brimfield Flea Market in Massachusetts. A consistent backdrop of warm whites and greiges set them off to best advantage. Coincidentally, her natural style was an ideal answer to persistent pandemic-related supply chain and delivery issues.

Unsurprisingly, Duker has deemed the house a personal design lab of sorts. Living in New York City, she moved from rental to rental, occasionally getting to paint or wallpaper a room, but not much more. "At the end of the day, I could only be so creative in a

space I did not own," she says.

Beyond the artistic freedom, Duker treasures the vibe. "Truly the house has such good energy," she says. "I feel as though it was built on friendship because everyone cheered me on and helped keep my spirits up when things didn't always go as planned." It's also the picture-perfect place to finally repay the hospitality of friends who hosted her at their homes over the years.

Finally, after years of helping others design their dream homes, she has a fabulous one of her own.



Duker situated the primary suite—a bedroom, full bath, and closet—behind double doors off the main hallway. The dreamy mix of modern and vintage furnishings reflects Duker’s personal style. From the outset she assumed that the king-sized four-poster bed would be the focal point, but in the end, the sunburst chandelier stole the show. “It’s like waking up to the sun rising and it floats in front of the windows like it’s resting on the clouds,” she says.



The house accentuates a sleeker, more modern take on the symmetry, scale, and formality of European country homes—no ornate details or fussy moldings. A glass front door was a must for Duker, to let in light throughout the days and the seasons. As the exterior copper lighting ages, its patina offers interesting contrast to the clean, pared down architecture. As for the stucco exterior, Duker learned it wasn’t a common choice in the area. “We had to search high and low for a mason with the necessary expertise,” she recalls.