YOUR GUIDE TO LOCAL DESIGN

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Design with Soul

FIND YOUR STYLE WITH EXPERT ADVICE FROM HGTV'S
GENEVIEVE GORDER

Twin Cities Native and interior designer Genevieve Gorder at Room & Board in Soho, NYC

POP · ART
MOVIES OF THE 40s
MOVIES OF THE 30s
American Musicians

➕ THREE HOMES WITH CLASSIC EAST COAST SUMMER STYLE

AWARD-WINNING HOMES BY LOCAL ARCHITECTS

ROCK YOUR CASBAH WITH EXOTIC MOROCCAN STYLE

CLASSIC SUMMER STYLE

The next best thing
to a trip back East is a visit
to three Twin Cities homes
inspired by classic East
Coast summer style.

BY MELINDA NELSON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE HENKE

Maybe it's because
the Lake Minnetonka area was
home to settlers from New York
and New England, but our beloved
lake towns of Wayzata, Deephaven,
and Excelsior have always had a
vintage, summer colony vibe that
recalls Nantucket, Cape Cod, and
other favorite resort destinations
along the eastern seaboard. »

A cheeky red and cream zebra rug
complements the antique décor
of this Lake Minnetonka home.

Perched on a point overlooking a quiet Lake Minnetonka bay is a tall, yellow

home with black shutters. Back in the 1920s, a widow built the house for herself, her son, her daughter-in-law, and her grandchildren. Like the first chapter of a vintage children's book, the grandmother lived on one side of the house, while her family lived on the other, with both sides sharing a magnificent center stairway.

Nearly 100 years later, the original familial spirit is alive and well in this grand but action-packed house, home to a young family with three children, three dogs, two cats, and countless cousins who race up and down the staircase with backpacks, snowboards, skis, hockey equipment, and other gear, living fully in every colorful, antiques-filled room on both sides of the house.

When interior designer Lola Watson, Allied Member ASID, first met the clients, they discovered that they had all spent quality time on the East Coast. Watson and the wife had both lived in New York, and the husband grew up in Connecticut. Sharing an East Coast design vocabulary, a love of fashion, and a passion for talking rapidly, Watson and the wife sketched out a plan for a child-friendly home that would serve as a gathering place for family and far-flung friends and relatives.

Taking inspiration from the children, and later an oil painting of Connecticut, Watson created a color palette of rich primary colors with brown as an anchor. The wife, an avid collector, had amassed a treasure trove of antiques, including primitive wooden trunks, paintings, engraved maps,

delicate Sèvres porcelain, English chintzware, and a menagerie of classic Steiff stuffed animals, including a giraffe and a Karl Lagerfeld bear with a sparkling Swarovski crystal "KL" belt. Working together, Watson and her client selected comfortable furniture and rich fabrics, and commissioned a cheeky red and cream zebra rug to complement the antiques.

Situated on opposite sides of the stairway on the second floor, the warm yellow family room and the cool Palladian blue living room with glorious views of Lake Minnetonka are the heart and soul of the house. Chock full of books, family photos, gleaming antique silver, and fresh flowers, the twin rooms reflect the clients' love of family, friends, and life on the water.

SENSE & SENSIBILITY

Interior designer Lola Watson marries New York fashion sense with New England sensibility to create a grand but action-packed family home.

OPPOSITE: The magnificent stairway features vintage, nautical-inspired engravings and paintings.
ABOVE: The bright, sunny kitchen offers sweeping views of Lake Minnetonka.

{ the inspiration }

This oil painting of the Connecticut coastline hangs over the fireplace in the clients' warm, welcoming family room.

So Very Lola!

Last autumn, guests at the 29th Annual Dawn of a Dream gala for Children's Cancer Research Fund at The Depot in Minneapolis were treated to a performance by soprano Lola Watson. For Watson, singing and designing are both ways to express her natural and abundant joie de vivre. Among her many talents, Watson is known for designing homes that perfectly reflect her clients' distinctive personalities.

Watson's luxurious, layered interiors recall the work of the late Sister Parish. Parish, a socialite and interior designer, combined English country house style with traditional American style to create an iconic look all her own.

SISTER PARISH DESIGN: ON DECORATING BY SUSAN BARTLETT CRATER, LIBBY CAMERON, AND MITA CORSINI BLAND, ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, OCTOBER 2009.