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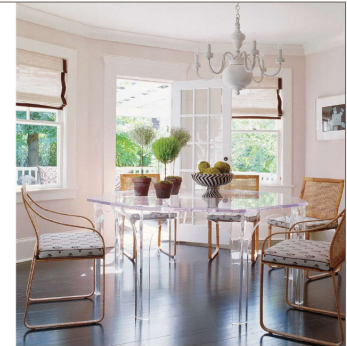
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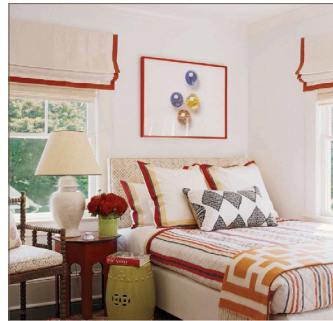
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This snap decision—and the fact that he looked at only one house—might sound too hasty to be overlong, but Whelan has already given credence to his decision. “I got boring, spending money to live in an expensive city for a very small,” he says. “Not to mention expensive.” Of course, going over the house he purchased was eight years more expensive than any quick summer rental he’d ever seen. “There is a pretty bad shape,” he recalls. “It needed a whole new roof and the bathroom had to be gutted and replaced.”

Sometimes when people buy a country house, they go a little farther. Even if they live in a pretty modernized town, they buy an apartment that doesn’t have a single comfortable place to sit. They fall in love with the idea of a farm or the sea, and the need, they know there are no tractor parts or whaling boats nearby. But Whelan always stayed on message. He was going to be about as close to a rustic palace as he could get. He had a vision of a rustic palace for today’s Kukulá Khana, Whelan is only too familiar with the colonial rightness involved in building a dream house. And he wasn’t about to let them defeat him.

“This place has a certain sense of intimacy, which is one of the things I like about it,” he says. “It is very manageable, and I tried to keep that way.” He put up ceiling moldings to echo the baseboards and stained all the floors a deep, dark brown. He painted the living and dining rooms pale pink, one bedroom green, one blue, and a few others a muted, moody lavender gray. In the kitchen, he painted the floor as a big chessboard, and the baseboard cabinets and travertine counters, and painted on walls his own ideal white. A wooden table on a courtyard table. And, in keeping with the Mission Possible goal, the charming mix of furnishings is very similar to that in Manhattan apartment. Twentieth-century artworks and furniture (a suite of Henry Probber chairs, a Lucite table



by Peter Duff Whelan designed) are juxtaposed with a Victorian mirrored console, Bridgwater table, and a suite of Giuseppe Penone botanical prints. And a surprising number of summer pieces, such as the chair lounge around the pool, came from good old Mission Possible. “The most important part of decorating was merely enjoying the storage unit, which was full of a variety of objects, and furniture—a pile of chests in the living room, the table in the bedroom—ready and waiting to be not cheating—is thinking ahead.”

Shopping at antique stores, to get a jump start on the garden, he brought in landscape designer Vivian Gardens, who planted a hedge of ivy and rose and beds of flowers and vegetables. And for Whelan to visit the weekend gardeners’ crew. And it’s in the garden, whether alone with a book or sharing a bottle of rosé with friends, that Whelan enjoys the place best. “I don’t really go to the mansion to look at it, to sit outside and not think about anything,” he says. “Just appreciate the ocean light and the air.”

All of it easy to get to, deal with, and care for—if that isn’t a dream house, what is?



In the master bedroom, the bed is by Megan Lawrence. Behind the headboard are custom-made, and the pillow is by John Proctor. The table is a custom-made piece by Megan Lawrence. The chair is by John Proctor. The table is a custom-made piece by Megan Lawrence. The chair is by John Proctor.

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