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A large, multi-story Shingle Style cottage with a prominent white porch and a large tree in the foreground. The house features a mix of white siding and dark wood shingles. A large, mature tree stands in the foreground, casting shadows on the lawn. The porch is supported by white columns and has a white railing. There are several windows with white frames and shutters. In the background, there are more trees and a glimpse of a body of water.

ASIAN STYLE
on
THE
SOUND

Japanese grace and
American comfort merge
in a Shingle Style cottage
in Southport, Connecticut



MULTIcultural

A 100-year-old cottage on Long Island Sound is an unexpected setting for gardens and interiors inspired by Japanese design: Interior architect Giancarlo Alhadeff—who works from Milan, London, and New York—and Paris-based interior designer Michael Lewis collaborated to bring the homeowner's multicultural vision to life.



ARTISANAL elements

Clockwise, from above: Lewis commissioned custom textiles for almost every room. Roman Thomas sofas. Silk rug from Fort Street Studio. This image: An inlaid floor flows through three rooms. Left: Cibachromes by Ruud van Empel hang over the sitting room's hand-embroidered, cashmere-upholstered banquette.



HARMONY of design This image: With a homeowner who loves to cook with produce harvested from the property's extensive vegetable gardens, the kitchen really had to function, says Giancarlo Alhadeff. Billiards-room-style pendant lights illuminate the island's thick slab of Belgian stone. The same stone paves the floor. Bottom: Stepping stones lead to a teak garden gate.



ARCHITECT GIANCARLO ALHADEFF SPENT HIS CHILDHOOD AND PART OF HIS ADULT WORKING life in Japan. So when a dear friend and former client shared his vision of importing Japanese design elements to a recently purchased Southport, Connecticut, weekend home, Alhadeff signed on as the project's lead consultant. Frequently in China on business, the client would make side-trips to Japan, where he and Alhadeff, now based in Milan, would meet for treasure hunts that yielded the home's kimono, doll, and basket collections. The challenge, says Alhadeff, was in achieving cultural harmony in the century-old, Shingle Style house, which was being doubled in size to 12,000 square feet.

Outdoors, Japanese gardens, meditative areas, and teak moon gates—constructed with the help of landscape designers John Imbiano and Susan Dekleva—integrate with the home's traditional exterior, by architects Michael Smith and Richard Henry Behr. Indoors, custom cherry cabinetry by Connecticut woodworker James Blauvelt is interspersed with shoji screens and fabric-lined niches. Alhadeff created an elliptical dining room, complete with a backlit wood-veneer ceiling oval. Responding to his client's vision, he sketched out an elaborate inlaid-floor design and had it pieced in Padua.

Knowing that a home so full of wood needed softening, Alhadeff brought interior designer Michael Lewis into the project. Lewis introduced an intriguing blend of cashmere, silk, Jack Lenor Larsen velvets, handmade paper, and pineapple fiber. Artisanal materials appealed to the client's wife, who was drawn to their personal touch, explains Lewis. "They are the extra layer that carries on the existing design sensibility." — See Resources.

CONTINUED





layers of ATMOSPHERE

Opposite: A bronze-base cherry table seats 18 in the elliptical dining room; BDDW chairs are covered with laser-cut ponyskin. Bronze chandelier, Fran Taubman. Cabinetry throughout, James Blauvelt. This page, clockwise from above: Lacquerware, brought home from Japan. Japanese dolls and baskets are displayed in the master bedroom. On the powder-room walls and ceiling, maple and birch inlay become cherry blossoms and birds. The master bath's French copper soaking tub is lined with tin.

