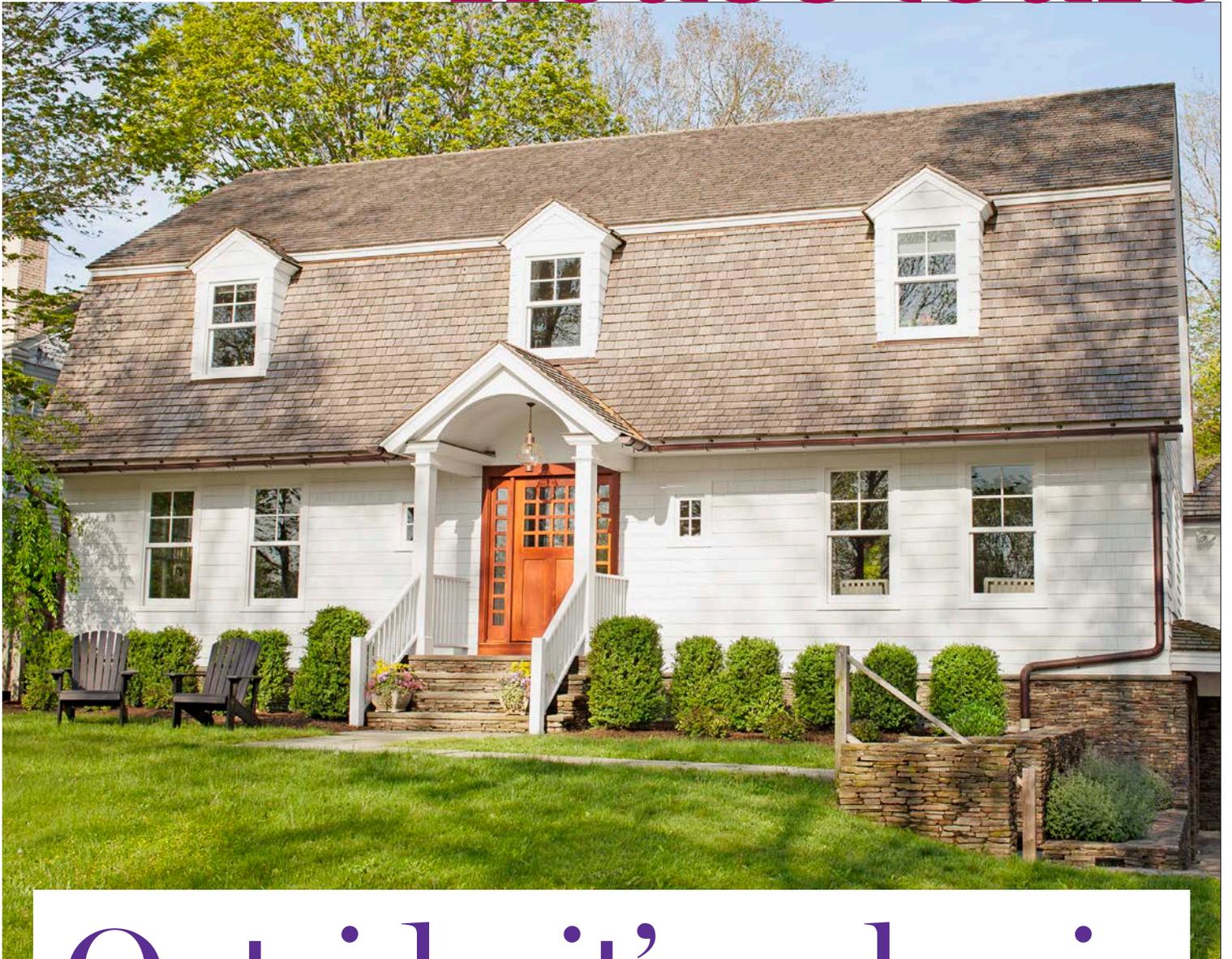


house tours



Outside, it's a classic
white charmer.
But inside, well...
just turn the page! →

...it's jam-packed with personality!

Drive down the Darien, CT, street where Karen Bow lives with her husband,

Tom, and their 16-year-old daughter, Melanie, and you probably wouldn't think twice about the lovely Dutch barn colonial. But once you step inside...whoa! Fuchsia! Orange! Flowers! Everywhere! "When people first come into our house, it's like 'bam!' I just love that feeling of surprise," says Karen.

The Bow's home wasn't always so bold. In fact, the family lived there for 12 years before taking the color plunge. "Things were literally falling apart. I told my husband we either had to move or renovate," says Karen, an interior designer who worked for Jonathan Adler during the reno. "I wanted my home to make me smile," Karen says. She decided to buy only things she really loved, and used bright fabrics as a starting point. Luckily the whole family was on board with her gutsy vision.

Karen's daring decorating style is catching. Even friends with mostly monochromatic homes get inspired to perk up their own place after visiting. "Color makes everybody happy," says Karen. "I think people get infected by it."



Snazzy family room

Karen upholstered the sofas with a fuchsia wool-blend fabric, then ran with a hot pink theme throughout the house. "I'm not even close to being over this color," she says. In the family room, Karen balanced the bright shade with brown—in the rug; the pillows; and the curtains, which, if you look closely, are actually made of a large-scale bird-and-floral print. The other big pieces—the coffee table and vintage credenza—are pretty low-key, as are the walls, which she painted the same shade of white as the exterior of the house.



Dramatic dining room

The ceiling molding pattern was inspired by Karen's past work in theater and set design. "Only later did I realize why it was so familiar," she says. "The design is in almost every theater I've ever been in!" She chose the wood and leather low-back chairs to add some masculinity to the room.



Jazzy bar

Karen keeps the super-glossy lacquer bar stocked with glasses and drink fixings so she's always ready for pop-in guests.





Playful powder room

The shimmery floor-to-ceiling mosaic glass tiles tend to mesmerize kids, especially little girls. "It's not unusual for them to disappear in there for a while. Kids just seem to really get the joy in this room," says Karen.



Zippy mud room

Karen put her own stamp on the wallpaper in this mud/laundry/back door area, creating the pattern with her friend Given Campbell, a wallpaper designer. They hand-stamped the flowers, but Karen didn't like how they turned out, so she changed course and cut out more than 200 daisies, which she appliquéd to the paper instead. She had the baskets sprayed orange at an auto paint shop.



Poppy kitchen

Neutrals dominate in the kitchen with white Caesarstone countertops, earthy cabinets, and a stainless steel tile backsplash. But you didn't think she'd forget her fuchsia, did you? Glass pendants and a Tootsie Pop print by Todd Lim help tie the kitchen to the open family room.

Spunky bedroom

Daughter Melanie helped design her own bedroom. The headboard is medium-density fiberboard (MDF) wainscoting painted orange, and the giraffe sconces were mounted directly on it for easy reading in bed. The silhouette of Lola, the family's Pekingese, is by artist Carter Kustera, who also did a silhouette of Melanie (opposite page).



Sparkly guest room

An extra bedroom has orange and gold Mylar wallpaper, which Karen's guests get a real kick out of. A silhouette of Melanie by Carter Kustera hangs in the hallway. Kustera always includes a handwritten line about his subject; Melanie's says, "laughs at her own jokes."



Funky music corner

Melanie (who has played the guitar since she was 6) picked out the chartreuse egg chair when she was 12, and she still loves it. "I'm definitely taking it with me when I get my own place one day," she says. The dotted rug, a customized Jonathan Adler design, has hues that jibe with Melanie's color scheme. While it did take longer than buying the in-stock version, customizing the colors personalizes the room even more.





Surprise! A pretty subdued eating area

A vintage settee and traditional chairs sit around the table, a walnut and glass midcentury number. Karen covered one wall with the same print that's on the family-room curtains. "I like that the colors are quieter in this nook," she says. "It's the perfect spot to drink coffee and read the paper."

Karen's husband, Tom, and their daughter, Melanie, at the breakfast table

now, get the look!



floral curtains
Aviary in Earth by Thomas Paul, \$37 per yard, calicocorners.com

pink pendant
Pahu 8-cable pendant in amethyst, \$405, ylighting.com



spotted rug
Polka-dot 5' x 8' rug, \$360, safaviehome.com



magenta seating
Handy Living Nate slipper chair in magenta, \$200, wayfair.com



bold silhouettes
Carter Kustera Pop 9" x 7" portraits, from \$110, carterkustera.com



fun lighting
Jonathan Adler Giraffe sconce, \$185, lampsplus.com

pillow that pops
Rizzy Home throw pillow, \$38, bedding.com



graphic bench
X bench, 20¼"W x 20½"D x 21"H, upholstered in Camargo Lattice, \$275, ballard designs.com



SILHOUETTES FROM LEFT: GREG MARINO/STUDIO D; ALISON GOOTEE/STUDIO D; OTHER STILLS: COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS