

Liz Lange restores East Hampton landmark **GREY GARDENS** with bold confidence, singular style, and a little swagger.



AMERICAN GLAMOUR

INTERIOR DESIGN BY JONATHAN ADLER AND MARK D. SIKES • ARCHITECTURE BY BORIES & SHEARRON
ARCHITECTURE AND FERGUSON & SHAMAMIAN ARCHITECTS • LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY DEBORAH NEVINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PASCAL CHEVALLIER • STYLING BY HILARY ROBERTSON • PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK
AND BRAD COMISAR • FLORALS BY THE BRIDGEHAMPTON FLORIST • WRITTEN BY STEELE THOMAS MARCOUX



PREVIOUS SPREAD FROM LEFT: A papier-mâché bust of former owner Big Edie (Mark Gagnon) presides over the second-story landing alongside commissioned paintings by Luke Edward Hall. A mix of dahlias and delphiniums blooms in the restored walled garden. THIS PAGE: The living room sofa's Arbre de Matisse Reverse upholstery (Quadrille) is a nod to Billy Baldwin. Vintage chairs, Mastercraft. OPPOSITE TOP: In the foyer, Lange restored the original banister and railing. Vintage console, Fornasetti. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Garden gates, planters, and shutters are painted aquatic blue (Fiji, Benjamin Moore).



Liz Lange does not believe in ghosts.

In fact, she's dismissive when asked whether Grey Gardens, the 1901 East Hampton, New York, estate she and her husband recently restored, is haunted. "I didn't expect to see ghosts because I simply don't believe in them," the creative director and chief executive officer of women's luxury fashion and lifestyle brand Figue says of what it felt like to move in.

Which isn't to say the past is not present at Grey Gardens. Shortly after purchasing the home in late 2017, the fashion entrepreneur embarked on an extensive restoration of the storied estate, working with architecture firms Ferguson & Shamamian and Bories & Shearron to modernize the operation of the house while preserving much of its original design. This involved digging a full basement to conceal contemporary mechanical and other functional spaces, shoring up the home's foundation and structure, protecting original elements like the Dutch front door and foyer banisters during construction for restoration and, when needed, reconstruction, and adding back period-appropriate details like diamond-paned windows and doors with restoration glass—all while leaving the house's footprint and exterior design nearly unchanged.

"Liz and her husband knew that the architectural background they wanted to live in was the one that was built in 1901," says architect Mark Ferguson, whose firm oversaw the restoration. Plans for the original

In the breakfast room and kitchen (opposite bottom), Sikes composed a symphony of soothing blues. The rattan chairs (Soane Britain) are painted Lulworth Blue, while the custom china hutch is Cook's Blue, both by Farrow & Ball. Floor color, Harbor Fog by Benjamin Moore. The floral wallcovering (Arjumand's World) visually connects the space to a kitchen garden (opposite top) just outside. Chandelier, Paul Ferrante. Kitchen flush mounts, Visual Comfort & Co. Island pendant, Charles Edwards

“To me taste should be kind of controversial. This house definitely makes a statement.”

—HOMEOWNER LIZ LANGE



house—an L-shaped, shingle-clad structure with dramatic gabled rooflines and brick chimneys, faint echoes of the English Arts and Crafts vernacular that seeded the American Shingle Style—were designed by architect Joseph Greenleaf Thorpe and commissioned by Fleming Stanhope Phillips. But Phillips died before his vision was realized. Instead his wife, Margaret Bagg Phillips, who famously inherited his estate after fending off challenges to the will from Phillips's brother, built the house later that year.

To summon the spirit of the original house, Lange changed its flow as little as possible. While some minor floor plan reconfigurations were necessary for the house to live at today's standards—opening the kitchen to a breakfast room, adding a back stairwell—other alterations, like punching out attic dormer windows on the street side, were avoided to retain the integrity of the original building. Says Lange: “One of the reasons it still feels like an old house is that we forced ourselves not to



*“There’s almost a quietness and you feel like you don’t even know where you are. It has this **strangely magical, peaceful, beautiful** atmosphere.”* —LIZ LANGE



Inspired by film producer Robert Evans’s home, the round pool brings a touch of Hollywood panache to Grey Gardens. Sikes designed custom chaise longues with Munder-Skiles. OPPOSITE TOP: Anna Gilman Hill added the thatched garden hut early in the 20th century. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: For the pool and tennis cabana, Sikes commissioned decorative painter Bob Christian to “tent” the interior with stripes. Furniture, Century. Planters, Accents of France



On the front porch, Lange wears a Figue caftan. Wicker furniture, Bielecky Brothers. Floor color, Parma Gray by Farrow & Ball. BELOW: For the study, Lange and Sikes clad the walls in a yellow textile (Peter Fasano), an ode to the room's shade as featured in the 1975 documentary.



make it *perfect* perfect. The floors still creak a little bit, and they are not entirely level.”

The thoughtful revival of its gardens is but another invocation of the property’s past. Lange worked with landscape architect Deborah Nevins on a thorough overhaul of the grounds, planting new gardens in some places and restoring historic elements in others, and facilitating as much outdoor living as possible. Most notably Nevins restored the walled garden, pergola, and thatched garden hut, which had been added by prominent horticulturalist and author Anna Gilman Hill, the second owner of Grey Gardens (from 1913 to 1924) and the first to describe it as such. When reflecting on the garden spaces, Lange describes a distinctive magic. “There’s almost a quietness and you feel like you don’t even know where you are. It has this strangely magical, peaceful, *beautiful* atmosphere.”

Perhaps ironically Lange’s family history in East Hampton—childhood summers and weekends spent in a rigorously modern house by architect Charles Gwathmey—fueled her passion for Grey Gardens in the

PORTRAIT, HAIR STYLING BY VALERY JOSEPH, MAKEUP STYLING BY SHIKO YUIN.



In the dining room, Lange and Sikes enlisted artist Vladimir Kanevsky to create porcelain renderings of the flowers in the garden. Adler covered the walls in a deep teal silk (Cowtan & Tout) and paired chartreuse side chairs (Jonathan Adler) with vintage host seating.



Sikes transformed the once raccoon-infested attic into a verdant wonderland for guests by covering the bedroom walls with a Bennison reverse toile and the game room walls (left) with leafy stripes by Soane Britain. **BOTTOM LEFT:** In a guest bedroom, decorative painter Bob Christian repeated the walls' floral motif (Bennison) on the four-poster bed (Century) and the crown molding. Green mirror, Oomph



“The idea was to be *respectful of the history* and the house but make it *reflective of who lives there today.*”

—DESIGNER MARK D. SIKES

first place. “I loved it,” she says of her parents’ home, “but it was not lost on me that the other houses on the street were these older houses...often Shingle Style cottages built at the turn of the 20th century with mature properties and older trees. I grew to think that I wanted a house like *that* when I had my own.”

It was her love of the house, not its provenance, Lange insists, that prompted her to buy when it came up for sale. She and her husband had rented the house for a summer several years prior and had become smitten with its details, proportions, layout, and gardens. “The landscape struck me as familiar,” she says. “The flow of the rooms just made sense, and it has a really cozy feel, and it’s a very bright house. I worried about it feeling dark,

maybe in that haunted way although I don’t believe it’s haunted, but it doesn’t. It’s a very sunshine-y, happy house.”

Lange, who hails from a family who experienced very public financial booms and busts (as she chronicles in *The Just Enough Family*, her podcast with friend and journalist Ariel Levy) and who became a household name at a relatively early stage in her career with the success of her eponymous maternity brand, is the sixth in a string of prominent, artistic, even visionary women to inhabit the house, each casting a reflection of herself within its design. She bought it from author Sally Quinn, who, along with husband and *Washington Post* executive editor Ben Bradlee, brought the house back from *Continued on page 130*