

artist in residence

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BOLD STROKES OF COLOR AND PATTERN TURN THE NEW ENGLAND CAPE OF KRISTIN NICHOLAS AND MARK DUPREY ON ITS 18TH-CENTURY EAR.





When people walk into the house, their first reaction is always 'Oh!'"

says Kristin Nicholas. "Once they settle in, though, they find themselves saying, 'I don't know where to look next!'" The reaction doesn't surprise Kristin, though. When she and husband Mark Duprey purchased their classic Cape in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts in 1998, she couldn't wait to boldly splash her favorite mix of chartreuse, pumpkin, sunflower, cobalt, and moss green on its antique walls.

The 3,000-square-foot house, built in 1751, is just four miles from where Mark grew up on the family farm that is now under the direction of the fourth generation of Dupreys. And because Mark and Kristin had been planning to relocate to the area, Mark wanted to purchase the house over the phone when he heard it was for sale. "I said, 'I have to at least look at it before you buy it!'" says Kristin, an author and decorative artist who holds a degree in textiles and worked as the creative director for a yarn company. "But when we drove up, we didn't even get out of the car! I knew that I could easily turn the house into a cheerful home."

A year of structural changes before they moved in resulted in a larger kitchen, updated bathrooms, and a rearrangement of many of the living spaces. Kristin had two goals in mind: Give the house an edgy farmhouse feel, yet maintain the home's architectural integrity, and use as many local materials as she could find. Kristin handpicked the Ashfield stone used for countertops at a local quarry, for example, and a friend crafted the kitchen island top from local maple. Three rooms were combined to create the new kitchen, and special profiles had to be made to ensure that new moldings would join seamlessly with the existing woodwork.

Once the work was done and they moved in, Mark focused on returning the overrun pastures to the verdant, rolling expanses they once were—making room for gardens and grazing land for their menagerie of sheep and exotic chickens. Indoors, Kristin began creating a festival of colors. The dining room is a perfect example of her bravado. Her painterly talents transformed the walls in this room, and then she updated inherited furniture by painting it a translucent black. "Nobody in my family wanted the furniture because it didn't match their style," she says. "I remember sitting at that table during many Sunday dinners, so the furniture holds beautiful memories for me. I knew I could paint it and turn it into something special."

Kristin derives inspiration for such transformations from art books and interior design magazines. "If I feel unsure about an idea, I'll look through my books to see how different artists used color, or flip through magazines to see how other designers have created a look," she explains. Texture, which Kristin achieved by dragging, color-washing, stippling, and sponging walls in layers of color, also reigns throughout the house. These different treatments add depth to her signature color palette and often mimic the feel of antique textiles, which are top on her list of favorite collectibles. "The house is so plain and serene on the outside," says Kristin. "Then people walk in and see this bright, welcoming home. It's exactly what I wanted."

Kristin created the vibrant chartreuse wall in the living room by dragging bright green paint over a base coat of yellow. The matching lamps on the chest are antique blown glass; a treasured gift from Mark, they were once oil lamps and have been electrified. Kristin bought the copper pot at a flea market in Amsterdam and managed to wrestle it back home on the plane.



1. Wanting to create a farmhouse feel with an eclectic, artsy spin, Kristin mixed old and new in the living room. The chest, which Kristin found at an antiques shop and uses as a coffee table, is carved wood inlaid with shells. The green hanging lamps from India—gifts from a friend—are new, while the table lamp in the window was assembled from varied pieces of lamps that she found at flea markets. She hand-painted the lampshade using one of her favorite color combinations: yellow, orange, and green.

2. Kristin chose local Goshen stone for the layered patio that is just outside her studio door. She had a galvanized steel top fabricated to cover an antique English laundry-washing tub, creating a one-of-a-kind patio table.

3. On the screened porch, antique embroidered textiles and Indian saris combine silk with kilim rugs and wicker furniture for a Casbah-like atmosphere.

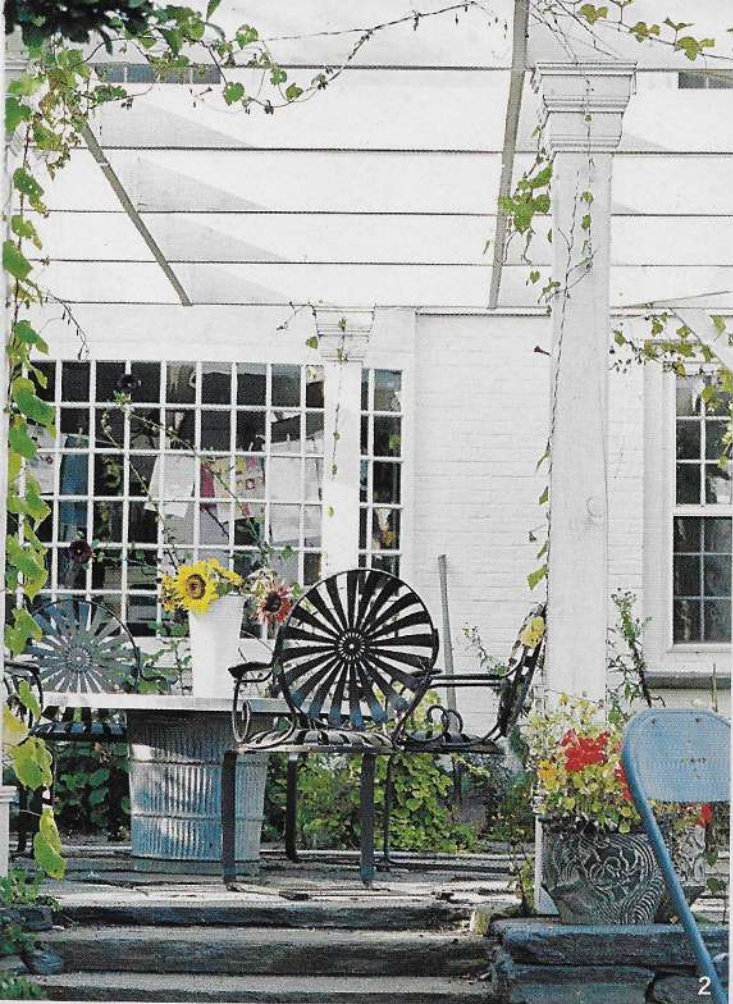
4. The antique kilim rug in the dining room—in fuchsia, purple, brown, and orange—further the Gauguin-esque appeal of the room. Kristin covered the chair cushions in metallic sari fabric. The clock was her wedding-day gift to Mark, and the non-electrified candelabrum is one of her favorite finds.

5. This nook off the kitchen is home to many of Kristin's creations, including the pottery on the walls and the portrait of Julia above the daybed. Pillows covered with Indian fabrics intermingle with her own knit pillows on the block-printed bedspread. The bookcase is a replica of a design that she saw in a friend's house in Maine.

6. In the guest room, Kristin agonized over the wall color. Leaving the beams their original dark brown was a priority, so she wanted to choose a color that would complement the wood while emanating cheerfulness. The peachy pink is echoed by a throw rug, which she brought home from a business trip to Greece.

7. In Kristin's studio, bits of inspiration hang on a clothesline over her sewing table. The private space, which was once the kitchen, provides her with a sunny place to work.





The walls in the library were hand-painted by Kristin in a tile-work pattern. The shelves hold books on textiles, knitting, and art, which she uses for research and inspiration. (Kristin's new book, *Kids Embroidery: Projects for Kids of All Ages*, published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang, is scheduled to hit newsstands in September.) Pillows and throws from India and the old Moroccan table heighten the exotic flavor Kristin wanted in the room.

