

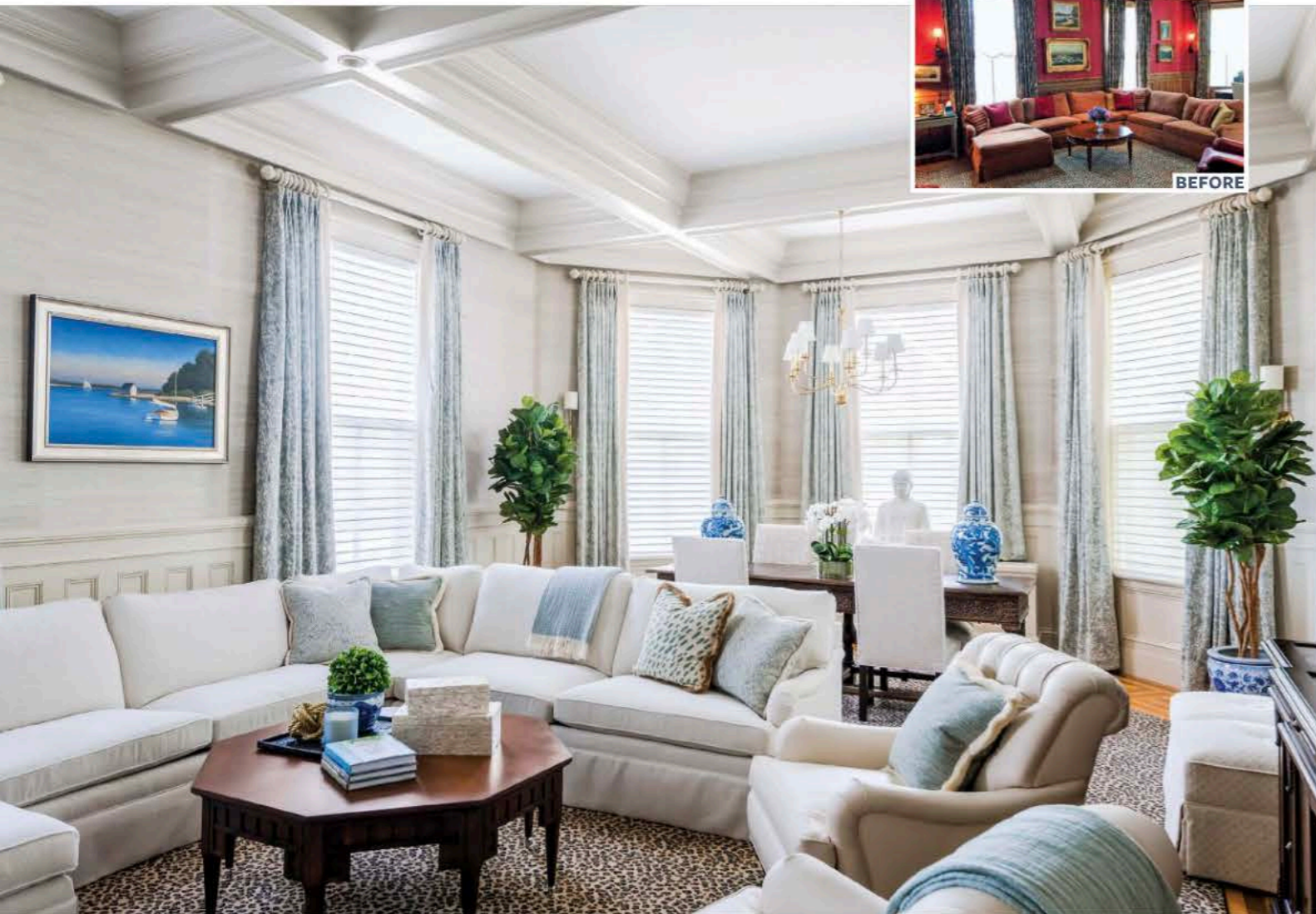
# A New Light

A Newport manse is transformed from dark and dated to bright and modern.

By **Dana Laverty** Photography by **Cate Brown**



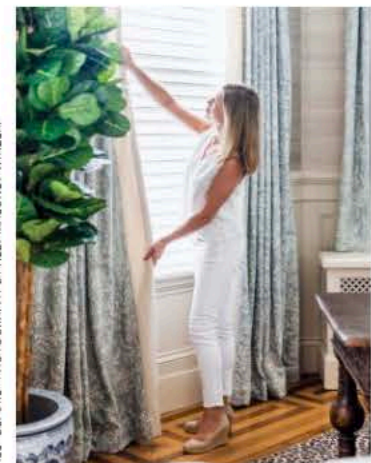




OPENER PAGE: Soft blue tones and animal prints add pops of color to the living room.  
 OPPOSITE PAGE, FROM TOP: Textured wallpaper, plants and family heirlooms all work together in the living space; designer Ally Maloney Winzer adjusts a Belgian damask drape.  
 THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: The study is done in rich cream tones and luxurious fabrics; a painting by local artist Jeanette Vertentes adds an intriguing focal point to the living area.

**T**he Beeches, a stately Newport estate tucked in between the mansions of Bellevue Avenue, was in need of a refresh.

A Providence family uses the home as a gathering place during the summer months, with the parents, children, grandchildren and various pets all sharing the space. But the dark-grained woodwork, jewel-toned walls and matching furniture and decor conveyed anything but the carefree days of summer in the City by the Sea.



ALL "BEFORE" PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLY MALONEY WINZER.

"It's a big, beautiful home, but it was just so dark," says Ally Maloney Winzer, the Newport-based designer tasked with making over the home's first-floor living room, study and entryway areas. "There was no light getting in there."

Her goal was two-fold: brighten up and modernize the space to make it truly feel like a summer home.

### A Gilded Age Gem

The Beeches was built in 1870 by prominent — and prolific — Newport architect George C. Mason Sr. during the height of the Gilded Age, when moneyed industrialists built summer cottages along the city's shoreline. He designed more than 150 buildings, including Chepstow and Eisenhower House, edited the *Newport Mercury* and helped found the Newport Historical Society.

The home was built for New York sugar merchant Moses Lazarus and his family. Lazarus' daughter Emma was a feminist and writer; a section of her sonnet "The New Colossus" adorns the base of the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ..."

The elder Lazarus encouraged her writing, as did the noted transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. A fierce supporter of her Jewish heritage, she attended Newport's Touro Synagogue while in the city and at the age of nineteen penned an ode to it entitled "In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport, 1871."

The three-story Second Empire French-style home is nestled

between Belcourt and Rough Point. With 9,000 square feet of living space, it's a perfect spot for a multigenerational family compound, with six bedrooms, five full baths and two half-baths, a mansard roof and expansive wrap-around porch. It's been a single-family home throughout its 153-year existence.



### Letting the Light In

Maloney Winzer first met the owner in late 2019, when she walked into her retail space of Maloney Interiors on Thames Street. (Maloney Winzer has since closed the retail section of her firm.)

The owner wanted a refresh of the first-floor common areas, which held beautiful millwork detailing but was dreary and dark.

"It was their summer home, but it did not feel like a summer home at all when you walked inside," Maloney Winzer says.

She envisioned a more neutral palette: lots of cream and off-white tones, with pops of color, to lighten up the stifling atmosphere. She homed in on the exquisite original millwork — wood paneling, trim around the doors, windows, fireplace mantels, the coffered living room ceiling and stairway spindles — and painted them all in neutral, bright shades.

"It's an architecturally significant property," she says of keeping the historical details intact. "It was important for me to respect and preserve the identity of the home."

It was also necessary to strike a balance between respecting the structure's historic nature and turning it into a comfortable and casual gathering space for the extended family.







OPPOSITE PAGE: Thibaut wallpaper in beige Largo Weave and Benjamin Moore's Tapestry Beige set a soothing tone in the study. THIS PAGE: The entryway/foyer area gleams with Phillip Jeffries grasscloth wallpaper, Benjamin Moore paint in Oxford White and Visual Comfort jade-hued lamps.



“As an architecturally significant property in Newport, there was still a need for some formality,” she says. “But I wanted it to have a casually comfortable feel — like you could gather on the big sectional sofa and put your feet up.”

In the living room, she kept the rust-hued sofa, but upholstered it in a cream-colored, treatable Crypton fabric. She kept the family’s leopard-print rug, antique vases and Buddha statue and brought in shades of blue with luxurious Scalamandré draperies woven in Belgium, throw pillows and textiles. A Daniel Pollera nautical scene and a large floral painting by local artist Jeanette Vertentes draw all of the room’s elements together, and a finishing coat of Benjamin Moore’s Berber White illuminates the space.

A neutral palette also reigns in the study, where Maloney Winzer chose Thibaut wallpaper in a beige Largo Weave, which coordinates smartly with the mantel and wainscoting done in Benjamin Moore’s Tapestry Beige.

The foyer is almost unrecognizable: What was once heavy and dramatic is now bright and elegant, with jade and mossy hues winking out from the Phillip Jeffries grasscloth wallpaper. Oxford White paint from Benjamin Moore on the walls and wainscoting, Stark carpeting on the floor and refinished stairs completed the look.

In all, the project took about a full year from start to finish, with the majority of the work taking place from March through May 2020. Thankfully, the project was able to stay on track, even during the pandemic, since Maloney Winzer selected and ordered most of the products before any supply-chain issues took hold.

The space is elegant, warm and welcoming without being stuffy — a true summer escape for the family that calls it home.

“We used some really nice pieces and brands, but that doesn’t mean the home has to be super formal,” Maloney Winzer says. “We were still able to embrace luxury but kept it comfortable, casual and family-friendly.” **R**

