

New England HOME



Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Winter Wonders

Living at the intersection of style and comfort



Design Destination



Treasure Hunt

The eighteen shops and showrooms that make up the Greenwich Design District offer an abundance of all things wonderful for the home.

The traffic cop raises a gloved hand to guide me through the phalanx of cars that appears, to the occasional visitor, a permanent condition in Greenwich's bustling business district. Applying a human touch to traffic control may simply be good public safety, but it also strikes me as representative of the personal attention bestowed on even the most casual transactions that take place in this affluent marketplace.

This kind of white-glove attention is a hallmark, too, of the design trade that has taken root here, along a stretch of U.S. Route 1 known as East and West Putnam Avenues (with apologies to Rudyard Kipling, here is where the twain do indeed meet). While

Greenwich's namesake avenue focuses on clothing—Mitchells, Saks Fifth Avenue, Brooks Brothers, and Tory Burch all have stores here—Putnam Avenue has evolved as a home design destination, offering custom furniture and designer lighting, window treatments and wallcoverings, fine art and bathroom fixtures. Its mix of widely recognized brands and local boutiques promises one-stop shopping for designers. Never mind that its refined, small-town architecture, alluring window displays, and wealth of dining options offer multiple excuses to wander its wide sidewalks.

None of this was lost on Darien-based marketing strategist Beth Dempsey, who recognized the neighborhood's potential and, late last year, literally

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: The wide sidewalks that line Greenwich's hometown-chic mix of stores and restaurants invite widow shopping at any time of year. At Oomph, finely crafted tables and casework pop with the shop's signature colors. Small objets d'art—both contemporary and vintage—come together naturally at Putnam & Mason.

| TEXT BY DEBRA JUDGE SILBER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA MOSS |

Design Destination

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Be sure to check out the Design District's opening party photos in Design Life, page 68.



put the Greenwich Design District on the map by convincing eighteen shops to add their names to an illustrated plan highlighting the district. With tangible proof of the area's design vitality, Dempsey then pulled a dozen of those shops together for a "Taste and Tour" last October in which visitors were treated not only to cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, but also book signings, giveaways, and freshly made nosegays from McArdle's. The district



LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Oomph's wealth of small delights—from glass match holders to candles to purses—makes it a worthwhile stop when browsing for the perfect gift. **RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Sales associate Sue Pinzon helps designers and retail customers alike track down just the right piece from the diverse collection on display at Circa Lighting.

promises more as 2018 unfolds, with Dempsey hoping to solidify the organization, add local design service companies, and launch spring and fall events.

In advance of the coming buzz, photographer Laura Moss and I set out to explore some of the stores that make the district unique.

We soon learned what designers who frequent the area already know—that the best place to start a tour of Greenwich's Design District is at Oomph (21 West Putnam Ave.), where an adjacent parking lot was just one of the benefits that New Canaan designers Amy Rice and Louise Brooks found when they established a brick-and-mortar home for their successful online furnishings business. Customers are drawn by Oomph's signature high-gloss lacquered furniture—

much of it locally crafted. An ever-changing inventory of pillows, tabletop, linens, and other grab-and-go accessories make the shop a sure thing for designers in need of a quick dose of—what else?—oomph to finish off a room. Online sales still dominate, Rice tells me, but the store provides an opportunity to gauge the appeal of new products and for customers to experience Oomph craftsmanship firsthand. "We never pictured ourselves as a store," she says, "but people like to come in to touch and feel the pieces." Meg Leo, who is minding the shop when we visit, notes the effect this has on skeptical spouses—usually husbands—who don't see the appeal of the brightly colored furniture. After they've slid their hand across the mirrorlike finish, she says, "They understand what their wives are talking about."

Just steps from Oomph's door, we slip into Circa Lighting, the well-known supplier whose online

Design Destination



NEAR RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Luxury fixtures and finishes rule at Waterworks, where sales associate Dominique Mason shows off one of the showroom's recently installed vignettes. **FAR RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:** At Putnam & Mason, designer Kim Alessi partners her aesthetic and sourcing talents with those of co-owner Robert Passal to offer elegant furniture, original art, and vintage finds.



inventory far surpasses the capacity of any store. But that's okay, explains sales associate Sue Pinzon. "It's a very well-edited collection, so it's not overwhelming." Still, it's a visual feast: sparkling glass chandeliers, voluptuous ceramic table lamps, and industrial-chic pendants by designers Christopher Spitzmiller, Thomas O'Brien, Alexa Hampton, and E.F. Chapman, among others. Local designers constitute the majority of Circa's clientele, as they do for most shops on the avenue.

Completing the trio of showrooms is Waterworks. The luxury kitchen and bath source just expanded to a full 6,000 square feet of tile, bath fixtures, vanities, mirrors, hardware, and most recently, kitchens. "Everyone was asking, when are you bringing kitchens

to Greenwich?" says general manager Suzanne Blum as she shows off the expanded showroom that includes three kitchen vignettes, a collection of sprawling work tables laden with kitchen accessories, and drawers housing a hefty selection of hardware in leather, wood, and more than a dozen metal finishes.

Waterworks and Circa are among the national brands that count downtown Greenwich among their many locations. Others include furniture and accessory source Lillian August (26 East Putnam Ave.) and Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams (45 East Putnam Ave.). Notable specialty retailers making a home here include The Shade Store (48 West Putnam Ave.), Hästens (23 East Putnam Ave.), Togas (51-53 East Putnam Ave.), and Farrow and Ball (32 East Putnam Ave.). In a clever pairing, Nanz displays its luxury hardware beneath lighting by Remains in a shared space at 44 West Putnam Ave.

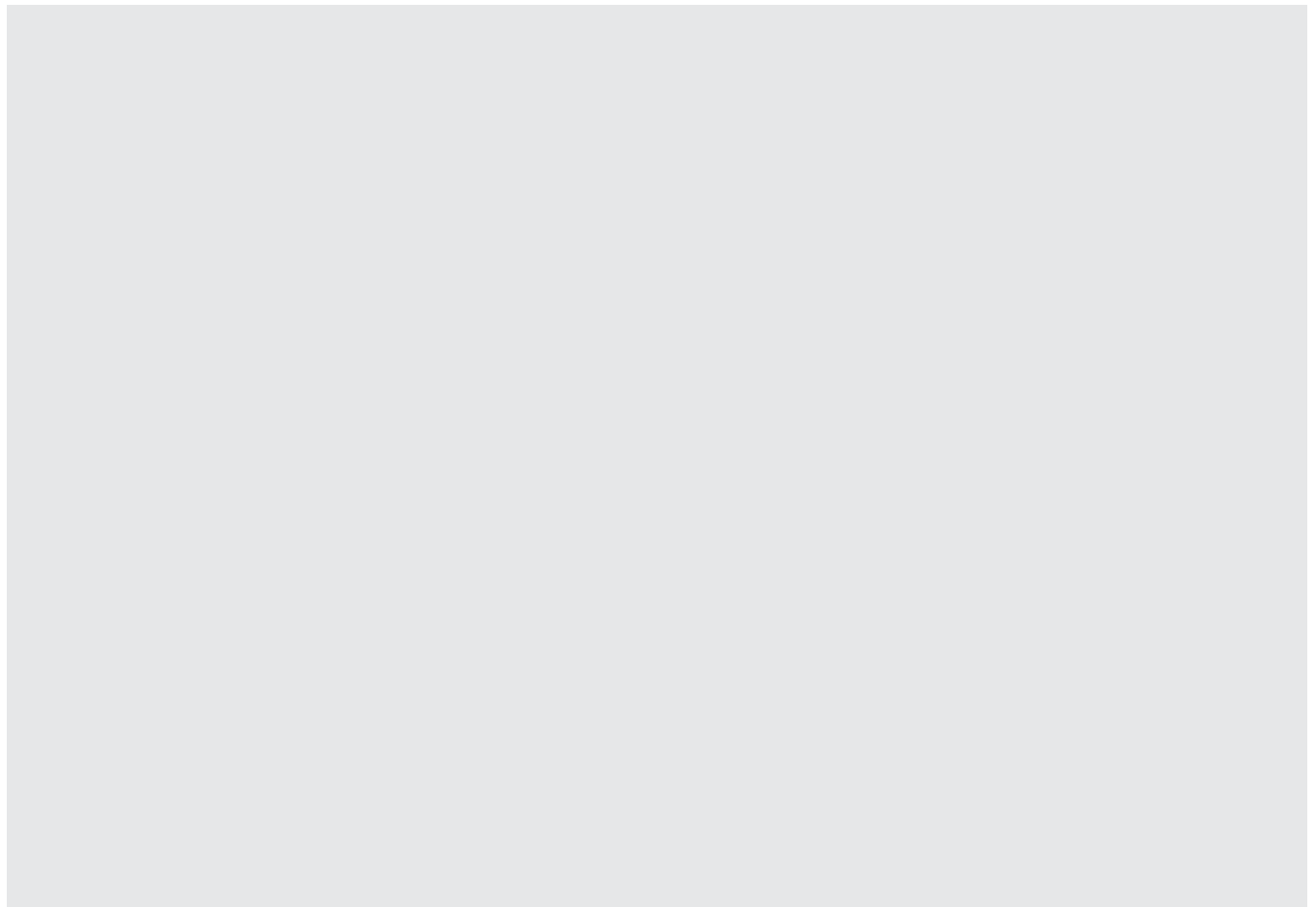
Design Destination

THIS PAGE: Lighting, including designs from Bocci and Lindsey Adelman, is a focus at Room. **FACING PAGE:** Alex Trimper, son of art dealer Isabella Garrucho, manages the gallery that bears his mother's name. His own furniture designs, also on display, blend midcentury and Art Deco elements.



A new Greenwich original, Putnam & Mason is located (as its name implies) a few doors down from the intersection of those two streets. The showroom, a partnership between New York designers Kim Alessi and Robert Passal, stands out for its sophisticated urban aesthetic. One of the two is always in the store; today it is Alessi, and she's with a client—giving us a moment to explore P&M's mix of vintage objects, contemporary furniture, and fresh artwork arranged casually to evoke a cosmopolitan pied-à-

terre. "The concept is to create a living environment in the space," Alessi explains. "It's not just a shop, it's a lifestyle." Don't get too comfortable, though—pieces sell regularly, necessitating frequent restaging. What doesn't change (at least not yet) is the showroom's deep-blue walls and its powder room, memorable for its mirrored molding, vintage French mirror, and elegant Schumacher wallpaper. Also in the rear of the store is a "sample bar," designed by kitchen design partner Chuck Wheelock, where clients can





spread out wallcoverings, fabric, and floor samples from Brett Designs, Phillip Jeffries, Cowtan and Tout, and others.

Lunch at this point seems like a good idea, so we swing by Coffee Café Roasters at 118 Greenwich Ave., a brick-walled bistro that serves an array of coffee beverages, pastries, salads, and panini. Feeling adventurous, we share a beet toast—an open sandwich topped with beets, crumbled goat cheese, lemon pepper, olive oil, and California walnuts.

We arrive restored at Isabella Garrucho Fine Art, where Alex Trimper, Garrucho's son and the gallery's managing director, has just hung *The Puzzle*, a visually perplexing portrait of a zebra by British photographer David Yarrow. It's not unusual for the gallery to arrange an in-home trial to ensure that a client's choice is the right one; the perfect pairing of art and owner, whether for investment or pleasure, is Trimper's goal. Yarrow's arresting wildlife photographs dominate the narrow gallery, but come next

Design Destination

year, they'll have more room to roam as the gallery doubles in size to 3,800 square feet of floor space and 6,200 square feet of wall. The expansion will allow more display space for the thirty artists the gallery represents. In addition to artwork, the gallery offers furniture designed by Trimper and Joe Calagna of Anthony Lawrence-Belfair, the manufacturer. The sleek and sinuous sixteen-piece collection is inspired, Trimper explains, by "everything amazing about Art Deco and midcentury-modern style."

For style of a different kind, we drop in at Room at 36 East Putnam Ave., where Amy Crain offers a comfort-driven, casual collection of furniture and lighting she

aply describes as "organic modern." A former editor at *House & Garden*, Crain and husband Shawn Miller launched the Room concept as a catalog in 1998. Two years later, they opened a showroom in Tribeca and in 2008, a second one in Westport. In 2012, she relocated the store to Putnam Ave. It's a narrow space, but its high ceiling is filled with contemporary lighting from Lindsey Adelman, Bocci, CTO, and others, and its floor with sofas, chairs, tables, and case goods, most of them designed by Crain, and all of them fully customizable. "There's nothing cookie cutter about it," she says, a description that's easily applied as well to the street of shops of which hers is now a part. **nm**

The Greenwich Design District

Carmina Roth Interiors

219 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 987-5961

| carminarothinteriors.com

Christopher Peacock

2 Dearfield Dr., (203) 862-9333

| peacockhome.com

Circa Lighting

21 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 622-1417 | circalighting.com

Farrow & Ball

32 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 422-0990 | farrow-ball.com

Hästens

23 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 629-8022 | hastens.com

**The Home Boutique
of Greenwich**

14 Lewis St., (203) 869-2550

Intérieurs

238 East Putnam Ave.,
(212) 343-0800, ext. 203

Isabella Garrucho Fine Art

40 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 622-0500 | igifineart.com

Lillian August

26 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 489-3740 | lillianaugust.com

Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams

45 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 661-4480 | mgbwhome.com

Nanz

44 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 987-4403 | nanz.com

Oomph

21 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 518-8068 | oomphhome.com

Putnam & Mason

34 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 900-1414

| putnammason.com

Remains Lighting

44 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 629-1000 | remains.com

Room

36 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 557-9066 | roomonline.com

The Shade Store

48 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 987-3080

| theshadestore.com

Togas

51-53 East Putnam Ave.,
(203) 900-1555 | togas.com/us

Waterworks

23 West Putnam Ave.,
(203) 869-7766 | waterworks.com