

By CATHLEEN MCCARTHY
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Renowned designer **Laura Bohn**
creates a country oasis in the
Delaware Valley by
bringing the outdoors in.

Back to Earth



"The colors
you see
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-Laura Bohn



Pale neutral and earth tones make the best backdrop for any interior.

LAURA BOHN IS FAMOUS FOR DRAMATIC, MODERN SPACES, LIKE THE loft she shares with her husband in the Village. But when it came to her country home in the Delaware Valley, she wanted the interior to reflect the pastoral landscapes outside every window.

She used a palette of sage, gray, and brown to blend antiques with modern furnishings and painted the rooms pale gray and aqua to reflect the abundant natural light. “The colors you see outside are the colors you see inside,” she says. That includes her favorite color, chartreuse. “If I look outside, I see chartreuse everywhere. I have a chartreuse sofa that I use as a bench at the table on our patio. I even buy chartreuse grasses.”

Bohn refers not just to the potted plants soaking up the sunlight pouring through the French doors in her bedroom, but also to the entire property, which she landscaped herself. Bohn and her husband Richard Fiore, a builder and developer, approached their weekend getaway as they do

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every project they share: They gutted the place and started from scratch. “We did everything ourselves,” she says. “We cleared the hedgerows and everything else off the property. We sculpted the land.”

Designing a landscape is no different from designing a room, she insists. “It’s the same process. You start with the big things, then you add the texture and the color.” You won’t find vivid red in a Bohn interior, and you won’t find it in her garden either. “Purple hydrangea is as far as I go. Everything else is mostly texture.”



Laura Bohn Recommends

ANTIQUES

Barn sales, garage sales, flea markets. “I love bargain hunting.”

Brown Brothers Auctions, 2455 Rte. 413, Buckingham, PA, brownbrosauction.com. “This is the best of the country auctions in Bucks County, especially for box lots.”

Rago Arts and Auction Center, Lambertville, ragoarts.com. “Very good source for art and antiques, much more sophisticated than Brown.”

Center44, 222 E. 44th St., New York City, center44.com

FLOORING, TILES, PAINT Home Depot. “I use a lot of

bamboo flooring and I’m a big fan of Porcelanosa tiles. You can buy them both there.”

LIGHTING

The Lighting Center, 240 E. 59th St., New York City, lightingcenter-ny.com. “I use them for almost all my lighting. I contact them four or five times a day.”

FURNISHINGS

First Dibs, 200 Lexington Ave., New York City, 1stdibs.com. “I buy a lot of modern stuff here, usually online.”

Ikea. “They have fabulous kitchens and closets at amazing prices.” She also loves their accessories, frames and

stainless-steel fixtures; she uses the Ribba Picture Ledge for all kinds of applications.

Marshalls. “I always find surprising, beautiful things there — everything from planters to boxes to accessories and lamps.” Latest finds: a huge, raw iron Ralph Lauren lamp for \$100 and antique-style faux-stone mushrooms with moss for \$10 each, three of which now perch on her stone wall.

GARDEN

Mecox Gardens, 962 Lexington Ave., New York City; 257 County Rd., Southampton, N.Y. mecoxgardens.com



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When designing a landscape or room, start with the big things, then add texture and color.



To Bohn, pale neutral and earth tones make the best backdrop for any interior, country or urban. "Gray is my favorite color," she says. "A lot of times, people walk into a space I've just painted and say 'Oh, this is a horrible color!' But it's a perfect background. You don't walk into a space I've designed and say it's a blue room or it's a green room. You don't know what color it is."

Bohn prefers pale green-gray. "Blue-grays are depressing but green-gray has a lot of light in it," she says. "When the sunlight hits, it'll go white. At different times of the day, it'll look completely green, or not green at all. Then at night, it might just disappear."

A neutral backdrop is calming and doesn't distract from the objects in the room. "But I also like the fact that it doesn't

interfere with anything you'll ever do with the space. It allows you to change your mind. If I want to change the room with pillows or an accessory or throws, I don't have to worry about the walls. I change colors in our house all the time. I also like to mix different materials and textures together, and neutral colors don't distract from that."

It's not unusual for Bohn to use several different materials on the surface of one room. Her bathroom alone has five different materials, including a porcelain slate floor, walls of textured concrete, and a surround of terrazzo-like recycled stone, glass, and broken mirrors.

Bohn is always on the hunt for recycled materials with interesting textures and was an early adopter of concrete. Now that it's become trendy and over-priced, she's moving on to poured epoxies. She also prefers quartz products to granite in her kitchens, both for durability and appearance. Even with stone, pale earth tones rule. "If you go with a strong-colored granite, you'll get tired of it," she warns. "People forget that you're going to display things on these surfaces. Browns or grays are much easier to live with." *

