

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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## FRESH SUMMER STYLE

At the Beach and Beyond



# American Beauty

On the isle of Nantucket, former Chanel president  
Arie L. Kopelman and his wife, Coco, renovate the house of their dreams  
and fill it with a treasure trove of top-flight antiques

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Coco and Arie Kopelman's retreat in Nantucket, Massachusetts, was renovated with Botticelli & Pohl Architects and Nantucket House Antiques and Interior Design Studios. In the living room, antique wicker seating flanks an 18th-century Swedish grain-painted side table; the cocktail table was custom made, and the ladder-back chair is 19th century. The walls are painted in Benjamin Moore colors. For details see Sources.



**Left:** The living room's George II oak cupboard from Robert Young Antiques is topped with a freestanding 19th-century whalebone swift for winding yarn; the club chairs are slipcovered in a Cowtan & Tout print.

Mention the phrase “decorating with antiques,” and a significant number of people are likely to think of stiff, old-fashioned rooms with brown furniture. Arie L. Kopelman, former president of Chanel Inc., and his wife, Coco—two halves of an avid collecting team—would beg to differ. “Rooms can have a clean, fresh, modern sensibility but still have traditional elements that let your mind wander through history,” says Arie, who also happens, not so coincidentally, to serve as the chairman of the Winter Antiques Show, an august annual New York City event that benefits the educational programs of East Side House Settlement. “Where you live,” he continues, “doesn’t have to look like Grandma’s house.”

Take, for instance, the Manhattan couple’s second home, on the Massachusetts isle of Nantucket. Behind the weathered shingle façade of the circa-1800 residence lie a dozen sunny, cheerful spaces that illustrate the Kopelmans’ philosophy—and their shared passion for American, English, and European country furniture. Period-style bells and whistles abound, including a ceiling crisscrossed with worn wood beams and a floor painted with a large-scale diamond pattern, but the overall effect is anything but mimsy. A rare red New England Chippendale corner chair plays the role of sculpture beneath the curving staircase, while startlingly modern-looking 19th-century Swedish armchairs flank a superb George II oak cupboard in the living room. Perhaps the success of these spaces springs from how the pair lives among the spoils of decades of antiques hunting: with a spirit of down-to-earth generosity. Their children (daughter Jill Kargman is a novelist, and son Will Kopelman, who marries actress Drew Barrymore this summer, is an art consultant to Hollywood stars and Silicon Valley movers and shakers) and grandchildren come and go throughout the season, so the Kopelmans expect the dwelling to see a certain amount of wear and tear. As Coco says, “We’re not collectors, we’re furnishers.”

When they purchased the charming, small-roomed home, in 1993, it had already gone through several alterations. Back in 1903 the building had been moved from an in-town lot to a suburban hill, and as time went by, additions





**Clockwise from top left:** The main façade of the circa-1800 Federal house, which was moved to its present location in 1903. Entirely rebuilt, the dwelling's four-story rear addition features a veranda and a balcony. Artist Kevin Paulsen stenciled the walls of the sun-suffused family room, where a 19th-century weather vane from Cheryl A. Scott Antiques is positioned behind a wicker sofa; the ottoman is dressed in a linen by Jasper, and the carpet is by the Weaving Room.



and cosmetic changes were made, not all terribly well executed. That hodgepodge sprawl was acceptable—up to a point. “Then the years passed,” Coco says, “and we realized there were things about the house we didn’t like.”

A decade ago the couple found themselves at a domestic crossroads: Should they renovate the retreat they loved, or find another on the island? Not only did dry rot and leaks need to be addressed, but the homeowners concluded that a basement, along with a master suite, a family room, and other amenities, would make the place more comfortable for their expanding clan. Digging a basement and constructing a new foundation would require moving the entire residence off its site while the work was being done. It was a daunting prospect, but sentiment won out. Calling on architect Lisa Botticelli of the Nantucket firm Botticelli & Pohl, the Kopelmans embarked on what turned out to be a two-year project that, surprisingly enough, ended up with the exterior appearance of the landmarked dwelling largely unaffected, though not without causing the couple some anguish along the way. The renovation was like “watching open-heart surgery,” Coco says. “This possession you have known and loved gets redone in front of you.”

Today the original Federal structure retains its cozy floor plan and architectural details, but the rebuilt rear addition has been reconfigured in family-friendly fashion. Aside from the now-five-level house’s new





**Clockwise from far left:** A contemporary oak dining table is paired with Windsor chairs from Nantucket House in the family room. The hall's sampler and drop-leaf table are both 19th-century English; the circa-1810 chair is from M. Finkel & Daughter. An 18th-century Swedish chest from Nantucket House shares a landing with a mirror from Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Antiques. The painted-pine office is furnished with an overmantel mirror from Robert Young Antiques, a circa-1810 Windsor armchair from Samuel Herrup Antiques, and a desk chair and mahogany writing table, both 19th-century English.

**Opposite, from top:** The kitchen's Thirty Acre Wood cabinetry is painted in a Benjamin Moore cream; the ceiling fixtures are by Ann-Morris Antiques, the refrigerator is by Sub-Zero, the range is by Thermador, and the barstools are by TK Collections. A curved staircase leads from the living room to the lower-level family room; the weather vane is 19th century, and the stoneware jugs are American.





basement—a 1,800-square-foot subterranean space that contains a wine cellar, gym, playroom, and storage—the most striking alteration was the creation of a 25-by-30-foot family area from a warren of rooms on the addition's ground floor. "It's so we can all see each other when we are downstairs," Coco notes. The inviting atmosphere of the space reflects the Kopelmans' fruitful collaboration with Nantucket House Antiques and Interior Design Studios, whose owner, Sandi Holland, helped decorate the house and keep the project on the straight and narrow. Lined with classic six-over-six windows, the room holds an assemblage of antique wicker, modern upholstery, and sinewy Windsor chairs and the venerable like that represents a lifetime of acquiring, upgrading, and mutual veto power. "I won't buy anything she doesn't agree is special," Arie says, adding that attempts to cajole his wife only go so far. As Coco explains, he knows it's time to curb his enthusiasm for a particular object when she says, dryly, "I've heard too many paragraphs."

Both found themselves in perfect accord, however, when Coco announced that she wanted to hire Kingston, New York, artist Kevin Paulsen to hand-stencil the walls of the family area. Inspired by 19th-century folk art, Paulsen came up with an airy pattern of stylized vines and trumpet-shaped blossoms that he painted on white canvas in tones of gray and blue, the artfully distressed surface giving it the appearance of antique wallpaper uncovered and then happily kept. It suggests a past embraced with a laid-back attitude tailor-made for one family's easygoing way of life. The Kopelmans can rest assured: They may be grandparents, but this house is anything but granny. □







**Clockwise from top left:** In a bath, the light fixture, washstand and fittings, and marble tiles are all by Waterworks. The master bedroom's headboard, chair, and ottoman are clad in a Travers print; the carpeting is by Stark. A 19th-century English chair graces the master bath; the tub and sink fittings are Waterworks designs. A Charles Manghis weather vane stands guard over a custom-made trundle bed in a children's room.



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Son Will Kopelman's bedroom was designed, at his request, to look as modern as possible, with the walls and floor painted in Benjamin Moore's Decorator's White. Silhouettes are propped on the mantel, and the chair and quilt are 19th-century American.

