

New England HOME

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House Proud
The Best of Summer—At Home



The landscaping features such classics as hydrangeas, rhododendrons, and pink roses, all of which wind up on Mally Skok's dinner table throughout the summer. **RIGHT:** Skok at home wearing one of her favorite Figue caftans.



A LESSON IN LAYERS

Designer Mally Skok's effervescent personality shines in her Cape Cod home.

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Produced by KARIN LIDBECK BRENT



The living room's stone fireplace was inspired by the one in the original house; that's Skok's Nichola fabric on the French footstool. **FACING PAGE:** The chairs flanking the front door came from the now-defunct Antiques on Cambridge Street; Lee Jofa sconces grace the walls.

Mally Skok does not believe in redecorating her home, which might seem counterintuitive for an internationally published, award-winning designer of interiors, furniture, and fabric. Case in point: her three children, now in their twenties and thirties, still have their own rooms in the seaside Falmouth,



LEFT: Skok loves the double-sided glass cabinets filled with vintage treasures: "When the cabinets are lit during a dinner party, everything twinkles," she says. **RIGHT:** Skok splurged on handmade red-and-blue Portuguese tiles for the backsplash. She discovered the tin schoolroom pendants in London, where she began her design career.

Massachusetts, home Skok designed with architect Sally Weston twenty-plus years ago. "If you're thoughtful the first time around, then all you really need to do is add layers to your home," muses Skok. "I personally don't think it's chic to throw everything away and do it all over again. But I'm also very sentimental."

Skok, who is originally from South Africa, moved to New England from London with her husband, David, twenty-five years ago. They purchased an early 1900s house in Falmouth that had been renovated in the 1970s. When it came time to build a place more conducive to the family's needs, the couple scoured





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ABOVE: Skok uses mismatched serving ware and plenty of Zulu baskets from her homeland. **LEFT:** The designer sets her table with an eclectic mix of accessories from all over the globe, like this tablecloth from South Africa, her own line of ceramics, bowls filled with seashells, and a mix of glassware. “You should see the suitcases I bring back when I travel,” she says with a laugh.

the area, but they couldn’t find a better location than the one they already had. They decided to build a new home on the site, retaining the original footprint of the house, pool, and pool house. Skok refused to sacrifice any of the surrounding trees, either. The result is a home that feels secluded.

With family scattered around the world, Skok wanted plenty of bedrooms for visiting relatives. Her wish list also included custom storage for golf clubs, a covered porch large enough for comfy furniture, and a closed-off kitchen to keep cooking smells contained. She accomplished the latter with double-sided glass cupboards that open to both the kitchen and family room. “Those cupboards gave me the opportunity to spend the rest of my life in junk stores,” Skok says with a wink, referring to the collection of glass and ceramic serving ware tucked away in the cabinets. “I have more \$20 bits of glass than you can imagine.”

Speaking of those “junk shops,” the house provides a place for Skok’s other collections, including vintage oyster plates and baskets from South Africa that remind her of her homeland. She says that adding to the collections has helped the home grow and evolve



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LEFT: Isabella, a miniature long-haired dachshund, poses next to beloved Stephen Huneck dog sculptures repurposed for the family room's coffee table. **BELOW:** A guest bathroom's Lee Jofa wallpaper was a favorite of the designer's two daughters when they were children. **FACING PAGE:** The covered porch features a collection of wicker and a Crate & Barrel sofa that Skok reupholsters every five or six years. "Snoozing there in the afternoon is the most luxurious thing," she says.



organically over time without the need to refresh. It also gives her an excuse to trawl vintage shops in nearby Sandwich and Dennis.

Here's another element thoughtfully placed throughout the Skok home: accent chairs. Skok's most cherished come from the now defunct Antiques on Cambridge Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and she's had some of them for as long as she's lived in Falmouth. Her favorite place to position a chair? In the bathroom. She says it's the ideal spot to place clothes, it breaks up the hard surfaces, and it provides an opportunity to add a bit of vintage to a modern bathroom.

Aside from gravitating toward pieces with a past, Skok steadfastly refuses to do away with items she loves simply because they are no longer in vogue. She points to the master bedroom's yellow toile curtains as something that might not be on trend but are beloved because,





BELOW: This guestroom was frequented by Skok's mom when she was still able to visit from South Africa; that's the designer's own fabrics on the headboard, curtains, and bench. **RIGHT:** When Skok has a house full of summer guests, she'll take a break to "rest her eyes" on the master bedroom's daybed. Her favorite yellow toile curtains frame the window.



when she stumbled upon them, she had never seen toile in that sunny shade. "Plus, the yellow with the blue ocean behind it is a great combo," says someone with a particularly keen eye for color. That sentimentality and those types of stories infuse every corner and object in Skok's home, whether it is a jar full of sea glass or a painting by a friend.

As an interior designer, she encourages that sort of thinking when she's working with her clients, focusing on highlighting their personalities rather than the style du jour through design. "Interior design should bring out the personal in people," she says.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details about this home, see Resources.

ARCHITECTURE:
Sally Weston Associates
INTERIOR DESIGN:
Mally Skok Design
BUILDER:
Ralph Cataldo, Cataldo Custom Builders
LANDSCAPE DESIGN:
Horiuchi & Solien Landscape Architects