



**COMFORT ZONE** The living room, decorated by Robin Curnan of Olley Court, features two custom gray couches inspired by a pair Jenn Sitinas saw at a hotel. Winston, a long-haired chihuahua, rules the roost.



# CHATEAU BOW-WOW

BRIDGING THE OLD AND THE NEW

BY JENNIFER MOORE STAHLKRANTZ // PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEIL LANDINO



**OLD MEETS NEW** Architect Peter Coffin designed the expansion, including the new three-car garage, right, to blend seamlessly with the original 19th-century Colonial. The new guest suite sits atop the garage. All the Sitinas family members gather in the kitchen.

## “We have a very dog-centered house,”

says Jenn Sitinas, as she settles in to the one room of her 19th-century Colonial where dogs are not usually allowed. For this special occasion, Eli, Olive, and Winston have been given a rare opportunity to enter the chic salon, and they stay close to their mama, perhaps unsure of their good fortune. Eli and Olive are the second pair of retrievers that Sitinas and her husband, Stavros, have raised over the course of their 22-year marriage. And, Winston—or Winnie, as he’s called—was an unexpected surprise. The New Jersey natives, who are parents to two college-age daughters, weren’t “little dog people,” but when their eldest, Samantha, begged for a chihuahua for Christmas, they relented, and haven’t looked back. Winnie now rules the roost.

“Dogs are our everything, since the girls aren’t around much anymore,” Sitinas says in reference to Samantha and her sister Sophie’s recent enrollment in colleges far from home. “In fact, they have always been a big part of our relationship. Within a month of my first date with Stavros, we adopted our first lab, Aspen, together. We took her everywhere,” she recalls.

“In 1997, we came to Ridgefield to look at this house with a realtor, and Aspen ran out in the overgrown field and returned again and again with one tennis ball after another. After the fifth one, we decided it was a sign that this was a good place to make our home.”

Once they bought the historic house, Sitinas furnished it with an English country décor—striped walls, weathered pine, and plenty of window treatments. Yet, over time, her taste became more transitional. She struck up a friendship with Robin Curman, owner of Olley Court, a Ridgefield-based home décor and lifestyle boutique that offers on-location design services. “Jenn and I have the same taste,” explains Curman, who notes that she and Sitinas have an ongoing conversation rather than a formal plan. Sitinas describes what she wants or a design challenge, and Curman finds a source or a solution.





**FREE FLOW** Jenn worked with Northeast Cabinet Design to create a traditional kitchen with a modern edge. Winnie poses in the study, while Sophie, Samantha, and Olive make themselves at home in the guest suite's great room.



Over the past five years, Curnan helped with smaller projects, like an updated master bedroom and TV room, but the recent renovation was a more comprehensive project.

Peter Coffin, a principal architect with Doyle Coffin Architecture, designed the expansion. Coffin's plan included creating a shared, open space for cooking and dining, removing the old garage, and adding a breezeway, secluded patio, and new three-car garage with a guest suite up above.

While a vintage front door still stands ready to welcome guests, it hasn't been used in years. In fact, there's no longer a path to the old entrance. Instead, guests and family members drive around back to a parking court and are greeted heartily by a trio of furry friends in the new foyer-cum-mudroom. To the left, is the living room that Sitinas redecorated a few times over the past twenty years before finally capturing the right vibe. With a goal of creating a comfortably elegant space for entertaining, she and Curnan transformed the space. French doors, outfitted with mirrored glass panels, lead to the original front hall, a staircase to the second-floor bedrooms, and a cozy study paneled in antique, painted pine with doors to the new eat-in kitchen.

"I knew exactly what I wanted," says Sitinas of the white kitchen by Northeast Cabinet Design. "I didn't want fancy; I wanted traditional with a modern edge." While the center island is the most popular spot for snacking, Curnan found a fabulous Julian Chichester oval table and designed six eye-catching upholstered chairs for dining with guests. A rectangular breakfast table is tucked around the corner beside Winnie's window seat for more casual family meals.

"This is our work in progress," says Sitinas as she slides open barn doors to give a glimpse inside the TV room featuring a sumptuous Verellen sectional where the whole family joins Stavros when he watches his beloved Rangers games. She and Curnan are actively working on final touches for this popular hang out. Coffin designed the breezeway





**SUITE DREAMS** The guest suite includes a bedroom with flexible sleeping accommodations, bath, and great room. Eli and Olive prepare to swim.

to connect the main house to the new garage. While it often serves as a carport, its bluestone floor and paneled ceiling allow it to double as sheltered entertainment space. Another favorite family destination, the adjacent private patio draws crowds thanks to the new fire pit and furnishings, care of Olley Court. The garage houses three bays and a handy car-detailing system—Stavros’s one renovation wish list request.

Upstairs is the new guest suite. “We never had a proper guest room for my parents who visit frequently,” says Sitinas. “This is so nice because they can get away while being nearby.” A happy surprise is that the suite has also become a fun space for Sam and Sophie to entertain their friends. In addition to a bedroom with flexible sleeping options, the suite includes a living room and kitchen.

Craig Studer designed the verdant landscaping, including a wildflower field and a garden path that leads beyond the garage to the pool house and swimming pool. While the pool house serves as an exercise gym for the humans, “we put in the pool when we moved here because Aspen needed a place to swim,” Sitinas says in reference to their beloved, late retriever.

“Yes, we really are all about dogs,” she adds with a laugh. ■

