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Lisa Davenport, principal of Lisa Davenport Designs, believes that getting to know her clients well before she starts a project is an important first step. That's why she begins every client relationship with an eight-page questionnaire that asks about their passions, hobbies and interests and what is important to them. "We work hard to set the stage to tell our clients' life stories because we believe that—aside from functionality—living spaces should reflect a homeowner's personality and what's important to them," explains Lisa.

For a client who is a chemist but also enjoys the kitchen, Lisa curated lab beakers from the 1960s and reimagined them as flower vases, and repurposed an antique bread-baking tin that she collected while antiquing in Texas. It brought back memories of her own beloved grandfather who owned a bakery. Those are just a few of the special touches she used on the coffee table of a renovated sunroom in a 1980s home in Glastonbury, CT. The total renovation included new ceilings, windows, flooring and furnishings all in lighter tones with a transitional elegance. The room can get very cold in the winter, so Lisa added a nine-foot sliding glass window that stacks left and right between the sunroom and the kitchen so it can be closed off in inclement weather during the bitter cold New England winters.

After his retirement from the corporate world, this client decided to go back to his roots, literally. His father was a master gardener

with an amazing green thumb, and he'd taught his son quite a bit about gardening and farming, but the client never had time to embrace his history until he retired. Lisa was asked to create a garden as a tribute to his father. She and her client developed a work of art within sight of a new carriage house also designed by Lisa. "I painstakingly laid out the garden grid and used faux timber (cement) to build raised beds that you can see from the carriage house," she says. The raised beds also give the client easy access to his plants. "He's a long-time client, and I was as surprised as anyone by his interest in gardening," she notes. Now he can enjoy the carriage house that she topped with an antique cupola, another nod to his father's barn on the farm where he grew up. "I love that we can return elements of history and even reinvent them for our clients," says Lisa.

In the South End of Boston, a historic brownstone underwent a kitchen renovation that had some surprising twists and turns. "Like many very old homes, this one wasn't designed with functionality in mind. The kitchen was on the ground floor and actually below street level, so when the client requested taller ceilings, we had to jackhammer out the slab, dig down 18+ inches, and remove all the rubble and material take 18 inches of dirt out in wheelbarrows up ramps to the street," she recalls, laughing. As she was going through the house one day, she noticed there was an unusable closet one flight up from the kitchen in a narrow hallway. "It's one of those weird design flaws where they had extra space and really didn't know what to do with it," she says. But she knew ex-



actly what to do with the space. Inspired by the family's heirloom sideboard, she imagined filling that space with a built-in display piece for her client's mother's crystal along with a built-in bar service. She moved the family china cabinet into the space and worked with a cabinetmaker to design a drop-down serving bar, thus saving space and allowing for the careful fit of the treasured crystal alongside the newer pieces. The china cabinet/bar unit now sits right next to the dining room and is enjoyed during family gatherings.

Transforming a nice backyard into a full-on at-home resort was the focus of the next project. Inspiration was taken from the clients' memories of their travel experiences as a young couple, when they enjoyed outdoor dining spaces and pizza ovens throughout Europe. Now that they have young children, the pizza oven takes center stage at family gatherings, and their kids lay out all the ingredients, make their pizzas and then float off in the pool or sit around the outdoor living area, watching a movie. "It's a staycation destination for this family and their friends," says Lisa, "because traveling with very young children is not always easy." The backyard is now a three-season destination with a pool, full-service outdoor kitchen, pizza oven, fireplace and lanai. It also features a swim-up bar and a fire-and-water waterfall that can be accessed via remote control. Explains Lisa, "We collaborated with architect Jack Kemper of Kemper Associates Architects in planning the layout and choosing the natural materials and finishes."

