

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

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## Always in Style

FASHION INSIDERS OPEN THEIR DOORS

### AD VISITS

DEE + TOMMY HILFIGER

NATALIE MASSENET

FRANCISCO COSTA

TORY BURCH

ISAAC MIZRAHI

CARLOS SOUZA

ADAM LIPPES

STEVEN KLEIN



### PLUS

MARELLA AGNELLI'S  
ROMANTIC  
ITALIAN VILLA





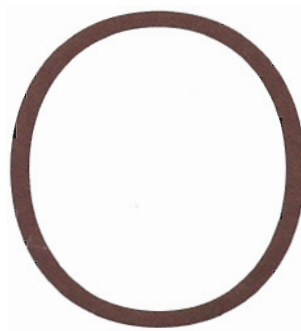
Calvin Klein Collection's Francisco Costa takes a stroll outside the Long Island getaway he shares with his partner, John DeStefano; Mark Cunningham oversaw the interiors. **Right:** In the living room, a trio of armchairs (one with a Calvin Klein Home throw) purchased at Christie's flanks a round Jacques Adnet cocktail table; a William Eggleston photograph is displayed above the fireplace, the sofa is upholstered in a Jim Thompson fabric, and the carpet is by Merida. For details see Sources.

# Calming Influence

Evoking the purity of form that defines his fashions for Calvin Klein, Francisco Costa worked with decorator Mark Cunningham to create serene, sophisticated interiors for his 1930s Georgian mansion on Long Island

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nce upon a time—the summer of 1960 to be exact—director Elia Kazan needed an East Coast location that could represent Kansas in *Splendor in the Grass*, his Warren Beatty–Natalie Wood drama. He found a surprisingly suitable spot in the Long Island hamlet of Brookhaven, on a farm complete with a Georgian Colonial–style house.

“Personally, I don’t see Kansas,” says Francisco Costa, the Brazilian-born creative director of women’s wear for the Calvin Klein Collection; Costa owns the cinematic acreage today with his partner, John DeStefano, a horse trainer. “I associate the red bricks of this house with Virginia in the 18th century.” The bricks actually date from 1836, when they were used for a dwelling that was constructed on the site for a president of the Long Island Railroad. A century later, another owner tore that home down and repurposed the building material into a two-story, six-bedroom residence embellished with a Doric-columned portico and fanlighted doors.

Shortly before the New York City–based couple acquired the property four years ago, they had been planning a major remodel of their previous weekend place, a Dutch Colonial in the neighboring village of Bellport, just south of Brookhaven. “Instead of going crazy rebuilding, why don’t we just look for something else?” DeStefano recalls asking, adding that there was never any doubt they would stay in the area. “Although Manhattan is where we live during the week, Bellport is our heart.”

For those in the know, Bellport is the unHampton, so much so that *Women’s Wear Daily* once compared it to Mayberry. It’s a resolutely low-key community, albeit one with high-profile



**From top:** The house was built in the 1930s, using brick from a 19th-century residence that previously occupied the site. A chandelier from Christie’s 2013 Colefax and Fowler sale serves as the conservatory’s centerpiece; a Palecek club chair joins an R. E. Steele Antiques cocktail table, and an Hermès blanket accents the sofa. **Opposite, clockwise from top:** Anthony Miller mixed-media works fill a living room wall. A circa-1870 cabinet from Ann-Morris stands in the dining room; the 1920s chandelier is from Thomas Jolly Antiques, the table is by Jed Johnson Home, the George III chairs were found at Stair Galleries, and the bowls are by Calvin Klein Home. In the main hall, an Elliott Puckette painting hangs above an antique Swedish bench from Dienst + Dotter Antikviteter.





**Clockwise from above:** Art by, from left, Bruce Nauman, William Wegman, and Kim Gordon adds a modern touch to the dining room. In the library, which is painted in a Benjamin Moore black, a Vik Muniz photograph is mounted on the bookshelves, and an Ellsworth Kelly print rests on the mantel; the sconces are from Circa Lighting, the vintage armchair (at rear) and table are from Corey Daniels Gallery, and the circa-1900 German horn-and-antler chair is from Dienst + Dotter Antikviteter. The kitchen features a honed-stone backsplash and counters, a Thermador cooktop, and a Brazilian-slate floor; a Malcolm Morley work is propped between the windows, with a Hugo Guinness print from John Derian Co. nearby.





residents from the worlds of fashion, decorating, and the media, including some of the couple's nearest and dearest, from art dealer Angela Westwater and her design-connoisseur husband, David Meitus, to the artist pair Hugo Guinness and Elliott Puckette, individuals whose works are on full display in Costa and DeStefano's Brookhaven home.

Though both men fell hard for the house upon visiting it for the first time, the fashion designer was concerned that the formal architecture might affect their lives: "Actually I was terrified. The house is so grand, and that's not our style." The four-and-a-half-acre property's ultimate appeal was its lot. Exceptionally private, it is shielded by towering maple and oak trees and compartmentalized by clipped privet hedges. In fact, so hidden is the swimming pool that guests may not know it exists until they gaze down from a second-floor window.

Living on-site for a year with what Costa calls "very little furniture" helped the couple pinpoint for Manhattan designer Mark Cunningham what the place needed—light, air, and a spare but texturally rich modernity. Color is at a minimum: There is black, there is white, there are gray and brown, but not much more. "At Calvin Klein my design process is to gather all the inspiration and research I do before every collection, and then gradually reduce all that to an essence," Costa explains. "It's the same for decorating—but I'm a reductionist, not a minimalist." The home's downstairs windows are bare, for instance, while the bedrooms, located on the second floor and the attic level, have discreet Roman shades.

Like the bricks, some of the furniture has been repurposed, taken from Costa's onetime apartment in London, where he was based in the late 1990s, creating eveningwear for Gucci. In the white-walled living room an Arts and Crafts sofa is cushioned in dark boiled wool while another sofa is covered in creamy linen. Graffiti-like canvases by Anthony Miler fill one wall, their bold scrawls a pronounced contrast to the forthright period-style woodwork.

In the eternal debate over whether a round or a rectangular dining table is best, round wins here, in the form of a brass-banded pedestal table devised by decorators Jay Johnson and Tom Cashin, Costa-DeStefano pals who live across the street; the piece is surrounded by lean Georgian chairs that look penitential but whose curved seats provide unexpected comfort. Nearby is the coal-dark library, which is far less organized than it started out. "I had someone catalogue all the books, and everything was in order, but it drove me crazy," Costa says. "It ruined that organic search in the middle of the night, when finding a book is a surprise, like going on a trip." In the master bedroom, silhouettes of Costa and DeStefano by Puckette meet an antique English bureau topped with German and Spanish crucifixes. Are the crosses emblems of the designer's spiritual side or displayed for aesthetic reasons? "Both," Costa says simply.

Someday the pair would like to build a house to their own specifications, but until then Costa says they will continue to "explore and experience this one." He isn't sure what improvements might come next. "It's still a work in progress," the designer continues. "We're not making a statement—we're making a home." □



A Benjamin Moore white brightens a guest room, which is furnished with a 1920s mahogany bed featuring Calvin Klein Home bedding and a vintage throw from Paula Rubenstein; the '50s Allan Gould chair is from Wyeth, and the side table is by Calvin Klein Home. **Opposite, from top:** Elliott Puckette silhouettes of DeStefano and Costa hang in the master bedroom; the four-poster and bed linens are by Calvin Klein Home, the '50s stools are from Wyeth, and the carpet is vintage Swedish. A Bruce Nauman work surveys the room's vintage René Gabriel chairs (both cushioned in a Loro Piana linen) from Magen H Gallery; the wall covering is by Stark.