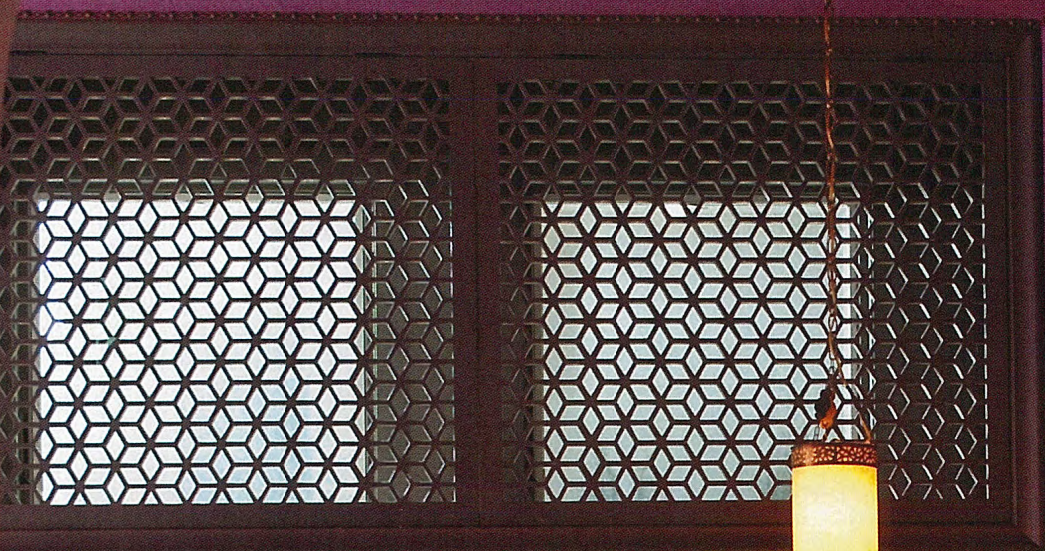


# MARRAKECH LONG ISLAND



By GREGORY CERIO  
Photography by John Bessler

In a seaside community, architect Michael Pierce and interior designer DD Allen devised and furnished a house where modernism and exoticism get along superbly



Facing page: The lively berry-colored living room features banquettes, pillows, and distressed-wood window grilles designed by DD Allen and Michael Pierce. The cylindrical lights were purchased in Morocco and wired for electricity. The decor also includes a set of six walnut side tables with hexagonal travertine marble tops designed by Harvey Propper in the 1950s.

Left: The unassuming streetside facade of the house has a smooth plaster finish. Pierce and Allen designed the custom-made metal gates with their asymmetrical bubble motif.

Above: A shell-and-mica-framed mirror by the contemporary French designer Thomas Boog is a feature of the powder room on the first floor.

Below: Pierce and Allen purchased the studded door that leads to the swimming pool area while in Tangier. The blue hue is the signature color of the late Yves Saint Laurent's villa in Marrakech, where Pierce, Allen, and their client bought a can of the paint.



**HAD** he lived in a certain village on Long Island, the non-narrator character in Robert Frost's famed poem "Mending Wall" might have said: "Good fenestration makes good neighbors."

The hamlet—occupying one tip of an Atlantic coast barrier island just beyond the New York City line—is a tightly-knit community in multiple senses. One: the place has been a summer or year-round home to serial generations of families. Two: a majority of the houses there sit cheek-by-jowl, the structures taking up the full measure of the building lots on which they stand. "In many



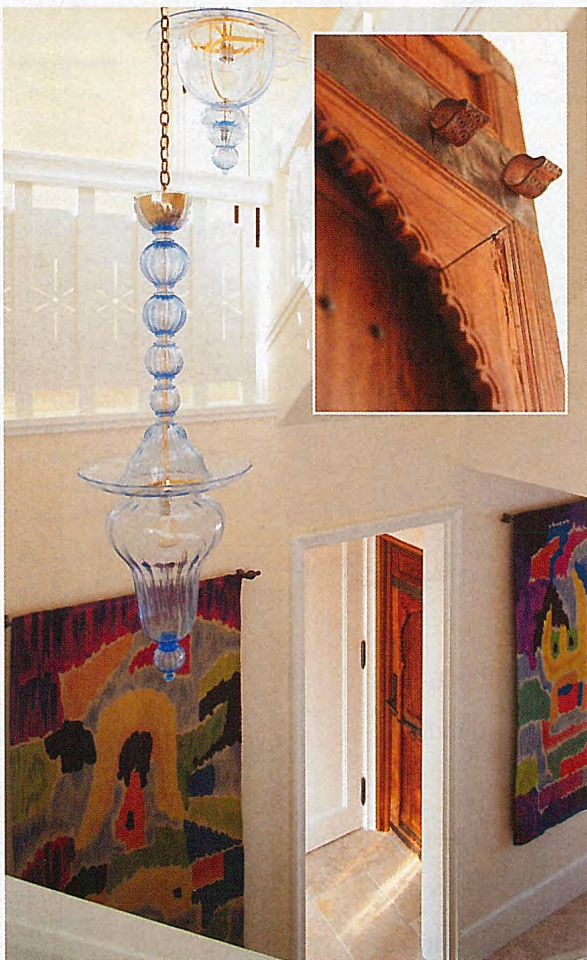
cases,” says architect Michael Pierce, co-principal of the Manhattan-based architecture and interior design firm Pierce Allen, “neighbors walking by or living across the street can stare straight into your living room.”

That helps explain the design decisions Pierce made when he and his business partner, DD Allen, were

commissioned to create a new residence—inside and out. The street-side facade is strict enough (more or less) to satisfy even Adolph Loos, the turn-of-the-twentieth-century

**Though most areas of the house are bright and airy, the client got her piece of the Near East in the living room—a darker, warmer, and more intimate space than elsewhere in the house**

Austro-Hungarian architect best known for his manifesto “Ornament and Crime.” The front wall is bereft of all but two staggered windows, which open onto a stairway. The two non-Loosian details are a high-relief scallop-shell element surrounding a small



second-floor porthole window, which brings light into the guest bathroom and is too high to be seen through by prying eyes (it is an aspect of the “maritime motif” Pierce says he sought to attain), and a front door painted electric pink. The latter, Allen freely acknowledges, was a whim on the part of the female client—“it’s a girly thing.”

But the client specified more than privacy and a lipstick-livid entry. She had requested a Moroccan-themed house, so before the project began the trio set off to that North African country to find inspiration and furnishings. Once there, it quickly became apparent that their notions of the land might have been a bit romanticized, and that a total Moroccan architecture-and-decor scheme might be a bit over the top for modern living in New York. “We settled on something that would have a more Mediterranean vibe,” Pierce says.

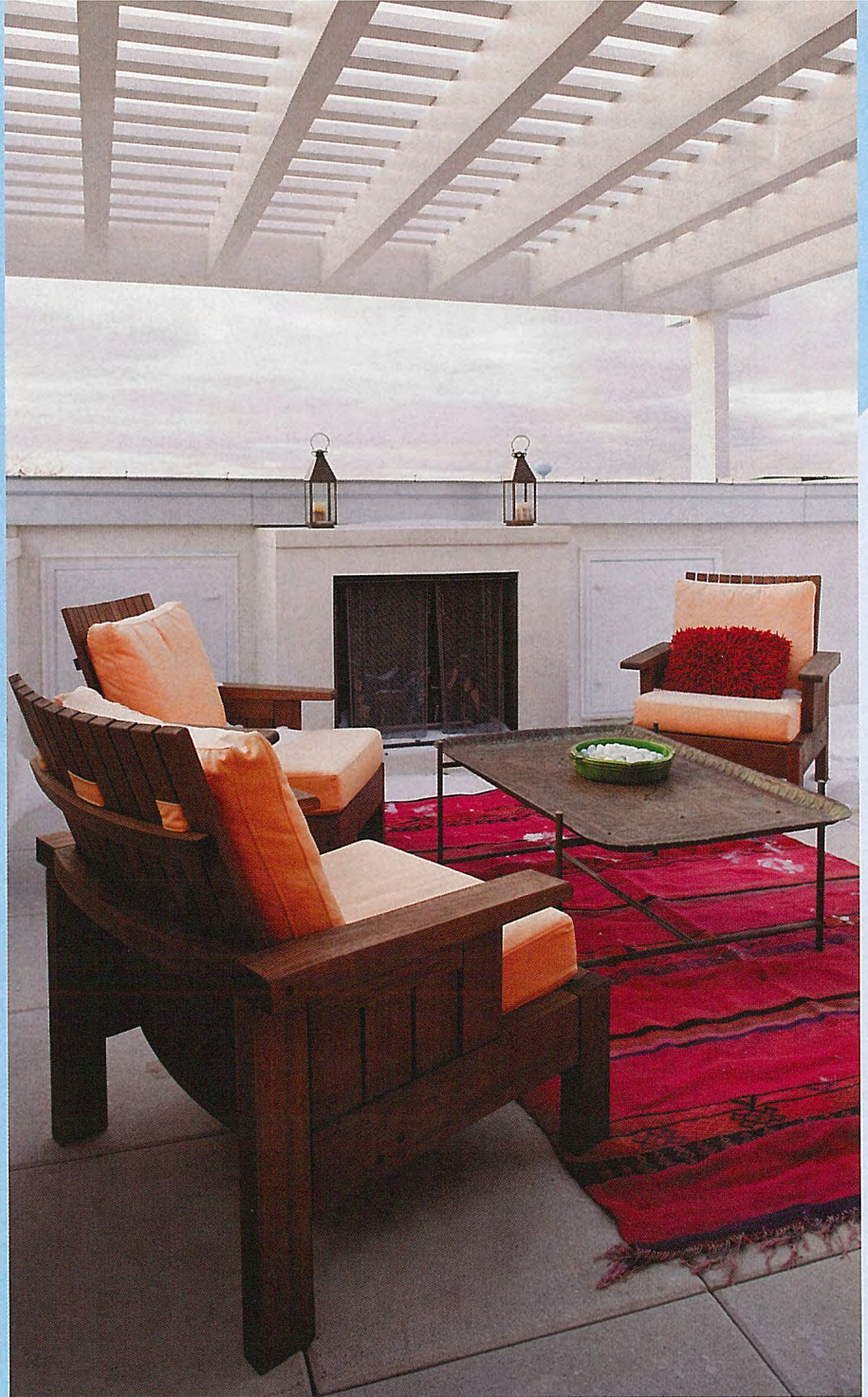
But they did bring home scads of finds, including lamps, bits of carved grillwork, an antique unfinished-wood door with scalloped spandrels—later used as the entry to a powder room—and many, many rugs. These were so inexpensive—\$60 to \$80 each, says Pierce—that one of them was laid on the pergola-covered roof deck. A rich blue that covers the walls at the famed Majorelle Garden in Marrakech—restored by the late Yves Saint Laurent and his partner Pierre Bergé—was



Facing page, bottom: A pair of 1960 tapestries by French artist Marc du Plantier woven in the Aubusson workshops hangs in the entry hall. The suspension lamps are by the Venetian glass firm Venini. Past the tapestries, and in the inset photo, is a glimpse of an antique unfinished wood door with scalloped spandrels brought back from Morocco and installed at the entrance to the powder room.

Facing page, top: Another view of the living room, looking toward the passage to the dining room. A cylindrical lamp stands atop a built-in plaster side table.

This page: The master bedroom includes a tufted chaise longue by designer Patrick Naggar—which stands on a Berber rug—and a Morocco-inspired fireplace. The floor lamp was also found in Morocco.



appropriated and used to paint the door that leads to the swimming pool area on the property.

The completed decor is a striking hybrid of the modern and the exotic. Most of the public spaces are bright and airy. The sitting room is pure mid-century in style, featuring such elements as a curving Dunbar sofa, a Warren Platner-designed ottoman, and a Belgian floor lamp with a stand made of beaded glass. A set of Jean-Michel Frank-designed X-base chairs in cerused oak surround a table of the same material designed by Pierce Allen. These pieces stand on an elegant green 1940s French rug with



North African motifs, found in New York. “When we saw it, we had to have it,” Allen says.

The client did get her piece of the Near East in the living room. Despite the fuchsia-painted walls, the space is darker than other areas of the house. The windows are covered in wooden grilles, there are Moroccan oil lamps refitted for electricity, deep sofas strewn with a dozen pillows made with hand-dyed fabrics, and clusters of side tables with hexagonal stone tops and arched bases reminiscent of Moorish design. “It’s a cocoon at the very center of the floor plan,” Pierce says. “It has warmth.” And it is a place that brings to mind the customary greeting in the Arabic world: *salaam*—“Peace.” **M**

Facing page, far left, top and bottom: The main guest room is known as the “Rope Room” for the number of furnishings that include rope as a design material. Among these are a 1950s French oak and rope-topped table and a pair of 1940s French rope-wrapped sconces, as well as a rope-clad table lamp made in the 1950s. The walls are hung with prints of Richard Avedon’s famed psychedelic 1967 portraits of the Beatles. The bedstead was designed by Pierce Allen using a Moroccan rug.

Facing page, near left: The rooftop terrace is furnished with chairs by the Brazilian designer Carlos Motta and a bronze tray—which the designers think is likely Syrian in origin—set atop a bronze frame of their design. The rug is from Morocco and the gas fireplace was custom-made.

This page, above: The dining chairs are contemporary reproductions of a Jean-Michel Frank design and surround a table designed by Pierce Allen. All are in cerused oak. The adjacent walnut bar stools are by the firm Emerson, and the painting is by Paul Resika.

Below: The sitting room is furnished with an Edward Wormley-designed sofa for Dunbar (upholstered with Missoni fabric), a Warren Platner ottoman, a 1960s Jens Risom swiveling chair, a lacquered “Dong Shan” table by Robert Kuo, and a cowhide rug. The painting is a 1969 work by Ann Pruitt.

