

The first time they explored charming Westport, Connecticut, Tom and Nancy Broadbent felt an instant connection to a historic 1810 Colonial home they happened to pass by.

Of course, it wasn't for sale. Instead, Tom, who works in real estate and marketing management, purchased a sensible two-family rental where he and Nancy, a banker, started their married life together. Four years, several fixer-upper projects, and one child later, the opportunity to buy the Colonial presented itself. The Broadbents wasted no time. Though the exterior had weathered nearly 200 years with little change, the interior had fallen victim to cut-rate updates that were now dreadfully out of style. To restore the home, Tom and Nancy made big changes: blowing out the back of the house to expand the kitchen and solve floor plan problems, lifting the roof 2 feet to carve out a rec room and home office on the third floor, and reordering the second floor to add a bathroom. "With the renovation, we wanted to respect the architecture and history of the house, such as the siding and surfaces," says Nancy. "But when it came to decorating, it needed to be personal." Over the years, these self-professed pack rats had amassed an eclectic mix of furnishings, art, and curiosities, often favoring classic modern furniture and always eschewing flash-in-the-pan

trends. Tom and Nancy started by putting these treasured collections in storage. Having open rooms allowed them to visualize what they would need and where it might work. Only then would they trek to the storage facility to retrieve what they wanted. Each piece has a story to tell. "We scour junk shops and stalls in small villages, and we never miss a flea market when in a foreign country," Tom says. "We aren't afraid to take a chance on a piece of furniture that might need to be changed in order to work." Once, they found a large wall of early 1800s cabinets and modified it to make three different closets for the kitchen. On another excursion, they walked into an antiques shop looking for chairs and walked out with a picture of the Hindenburg flying to Lakehurst, New Jersey. "You can find treasures anywhere," says Tom. "We just love to explore." While the mix is often disparate (and that's the beauty of it), everything here is family friendly. "When the kids were younger, we used a lot of slipcovers and rustic antiques so we didn't have to worry about the wear and tear," says Tom. "Now that the kids are a little older, we can be more elaborate."



LEFT Tom and Nancy Broadbent play with Emma, 7, and Alex, 11, on the sofa. RIGHT Tom credits Nancy as the "master researcher," carefully weighing every design decision on the 5,500-square-foot home. OPPOSITE Nancy snatched up the limited-edition, 1929 Poltrona Frau settees the minute she saw them. At home, they contrast a faux zebra skin ottoman and a striped rug from Ikea in the parlor where Tom writes songs and plays guitar "mostly for the kids," he says.