

HCG & G

Hamptons Cottages and Gardens

COTTAGES-GARDENS.COM | AUGUST 1, 2013



**CHIC
RETREATS!**



Hamptons Classic

(THIS PAGE) Decorator Hernán Arriaga stands in the entryway of his friend and client Rita Schrager's guesthouse with his Maltese, Lilo. Schrager bought the red leather horse saddle at a yard sale for \$30. The armchair and leather captain's chair in the living room (OPPOSITE) are from Ralph Lauren Home; the sofa and love seat are from Andrianna Shamaris. *See Resources.*



MI CASA ES SU CASA

For his client and friend Rita Schragar's guesthouse, Miami-based designer Hernán Arriaga adds country flair and a Latin twist

BY KELLI DELANEY KOT | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG YOUNG

Country Charm

A vintage armchair from Georgica Creek Antiques is covered in a striped fabric from Ralph Lauren Home (THIS PAGE). In the dining area (OPPOSITE TOP), a rustic table and chairs, also from Georgica Creek Antiques, sits below an antler chandelier from English Country Antiques. In the master bedroom (OPPOSITE BOTTOM), the side tables and lamps are from Homenature; the floral pillows and bed linens are from Ralph Lauren Home. See Resources.



Former New York City Ballet dancer Rita Schragers personal style is sexy, chic, and effortless—so it comes as no surprise that the interior design of her home in Southampton reflects those very same qualities. Perched on rolling green hills, Schragers “Casa Cuba” comprises a stately main house where she and her daughters, Sophia and Ava, spend laid-back summers, as well as a gorgeous three-bedroom guesthouse and a smaller gatehouse, which Schragers refers to as “The African Room,” as it’s filled with pieces she brought home from a Kenyan safari. Designing just one house is a daunting task for most people, but for Schragers and her friend decorator Hernán Arriaga, tackling all three structures at once was just plain fun. *HC&G* got the back story on how the guesthouse came together in no time flat.

HC&G: How would you describe the design aesthetic for Casa Cuba’s guesthouse?

Hernán Arriaga: It’s sort of primitive American, inspired by the world of Ralph Lauren, with whitewashed floors, vintage photography, beautiful old flags, and antiques with a nautical or equestrian influence.

Rita Schragers: I always wanted a “Ralph Lauren” house, focusing on rustic furniture and great American design roots. But we needed to take into consideration that we’re both in the country and at the beach, so we created an interior mix that brought all those elements together.

Rita, how did you incorporate your Cuban heritage into the design of the guesthouse?

R.S.: I’m from a traditional Cuban family, and while I was growing up my home was filled with collections of religious icons, sculptures, and crosses, some of which I display in different nooks of the guesthouse. I also learned so much from my ex-husband’s [hotelier Ian Schragers] collaborations with creative legends like Julian Schnabel, Philippe Starck, and Andrée Putman.





Twin Peaks

The pair of antique beds (ABOVE LEFT) in a guest room are from the Azul Mar showroom in the Dominican Republic; the diamond-pattern rug is from Merida Meridian. The pillows and linens are all from Ralph Lauren Home. In a second guest room (TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT), a portrait of a woman by Cuban-American artist Alberto de la Portilla rests on a vintage dresser from Bloom. *See Resources.*

Hernán, how does your Argentinean upbringing inspire your design?

H.A.: My design impulses come from the *gaucho* in me! I love organic materials and textures: cowhides, furs, leathers, driftwood, and branches, all elements typically found in great Argentinean interiors.

Rita is not only your favorite client, but also your best friend. How does your taste differ?

H.A.: I am a big admirer of Rita's taste, and honestly, she is not even aware of her taste level—it just comes from her gut. She knows what she wants right away, and I help her decide where it will go! My knowledge is based more on experience, research, and learning about the history of pieces and styles.



R.S.: I met Hernán 12 years ago. I fell in love with his home in East Hampton at the time, as well as his gorgeous Fifth Avenue apartment in the city. I couldn't wait to "play house" together on this design project.

Where did you acquire most of the pieces in the guesthouse?

R.S.: We hit auction houses, estate sales, and antiques stores from Quogue to Montauk. It was important to me to furnish the place as much as we could via local resources.

H.A.: I lived in the Hamptons for seven years and had a store in Amagansett at one point, so I know the best and sometimes even secret places for great furnishings on the East End.

What's your favorite piece?

R.S.: A vintage red leather horse saddle I found at an East Hampton yard sale for \$30. Another favorite is a gift from Hernán: four carved wooden saints that are more than 500 years old.

Do you entertain often in the guesthouse?

R.S.: Definitely. It breaks things up to have a second location on the property for hosting dinner parties. I like to have more intimate dinners on the porch of the guesthouse, and sometimes on snowy winter weekends, I move to the guesthouse for a "staycation," making cozy fires each night.

Who have been your favorite houseguests?

R.S.: [laughing] Well, two of my favorites were Dulce and Lupita, two baby goats Hernán and I rescued from an animal shelter on Long Island. We originally set out to rescue a pot-bellied pig, but I fell in love with two baby goats instead! The whole drive home, we cried along with the goats, who were crying over being separated from their mom. My daughter Sophia got the names Dulce and Lupita from a *telenovela*! 🌹



Fast Friends
Arriaga and Rita Schragger play with Lilo on the sisal-lined stairway (LEFT). The guesthouse (BELOW) is one of several outbuildings on Schragger's property, Casa Cuba. See Resources.

