

# Connecticut COTTAGES & GARDENS

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## Modern Movement

Sizzling Summer Designs | New Canaan's Secret Market  
All-American Antiques | Litchfield Vineyard



ANTIQUES

# Made in America by Ann Sample

COLONIAL-ERA ANTIQUES USHERED IN A UNIQUELY AMERICAN STYLE

Americans have often looked to Europe for design inspiration. Our first settlers—the English, Dutch, Germans and Scandinavians—built furniture in the styles favored in their home countries. Collectively called Colonial, the furniture of the 17th century resembles the practical European designs instead of the high styles of court furniture.

As the colonists prospered, their desire for fine goods increased. Furniture was produced in the royal styles, including Queen Anne, Thomas Chippendale and George II. English cabinetmakers set up shops in the bustling port cities of Boston, Philadelphia, Charleston and Newport, bringing with them knowledge of British furniture design. Additionally, fine English furniture was imported into the states and widely imitated, and British furniture pattern books were widely circulated.

By 1725, Americans wanted furniture styles distinct from what the English were producing. Cabinetmakers responded by adding creative flourishes to traditional British designs. The most original pieces were typically created by those who worked in isolation, far from the major ports. By the end of the 18th century, our national style, Federal, emerged in furniture design. Linked to Greece (the first democracy) and republican Rome, our new national identity naturally called for a Neoclassical style.

Interior designer James Petersen has great appreciation for fine American antiques. A graduate of Pratt, Petersen worked with Mark Hampton for nearly a decade before opening his own business, James David Petersen, in the mid-'90s. In the last year, he relocated to Connecticut and began working with the New Canaan-based architecture and design firm Wadia Associates as director of interior design and decoration. On a hunt for the best in American antiques, CTC&G accompanied Petersen on a shopping trip to scope out his favorite local spots.

## LEONARDS NEW ENGLAND

Known for its resized antique beds (standard bed sizes weren't introduced until the 20th century) as well as Early American antiques and reproductions, Leonards New England in Westport is a family-run business that



**Trading Up** | Leonards New England will restore an antique bed to adapt to modern mattresses. Here, a maple turnip-carved bed (ABOVE) with ram's ear headboard and blanket rail, circa 1830s, was resized for a queen. **Cornered** | An 1820s mahogany side table (BELOW LEFT), also at Leonards New England, is often called a cookie corner stand because of its circular ends. **American Made** | At H.A. Mottai, a Chippendale side chair (BELOW RIGHT), circa 1780, has a scrolled and leaf-carved crest rail above a pierced Gothic splat. The trapezoidal seat and frame is supported by square scratch-bowed legs with carved corbels. See Resources.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEIL LANDING JR.

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ANTIQUES



**Nice Pick** | Designer James Petersen with Holly Ann Mottai, owner of H.A. Mottai. "I always see something there that I never would have thought of but absolutely love," says Petersen about the shop, which recently moved to Greenwich from New Canaan. See Resources.

opened in the 1930s. "If you have an American house, it just makes sense to visit Leonards," Petersen says.

Inside the store, Petersen spots a richly detailed queen bed made of maple. Crafted in New England in the 1830s, its end posts look like turnips and its headboard is carved to resemble a ram's ears. The turned footboard rail was designed to store a blanket. "I would use this bed in a Connecticut Colonial," Petersen says. "It's informal and belongs in an equally informal house where there are children and dogs." He notes it would look great along with a Tiger's Eye maple chest, a Queen Anne mirror and an American hooked rug.

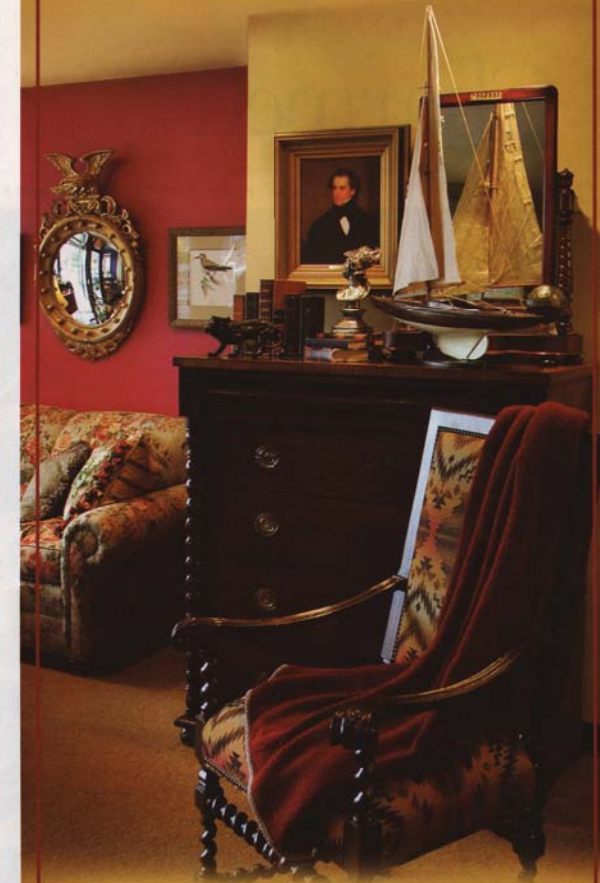
Nearby, a mahogany side table from the 1820s boasts hand-carved roped legs and brass hardware. Made in New England, it's also known as a cookie corner stand because of the corners' circular ends. "This is a classic American piece," Petersen says. "Given its petite scale, I would pair it with twin beds in a guest room." (1026 Post Road East, Westport, 203-222-7031, [www.leonardsdirect.com](http://www.leonardsdirect.com))

## H.A. MOTTAI

Holly Ann Mottai, owner of H.A. Mottai, has been selling fine antiques for seven years. She recently relocated her shop to Greenwich from New Canaan. "Holly has a great eye for smaller things," Petersen says. "The shop is filled with nice antique chairs, pretty mirrors and unusual pieces. I always see something there that I never would have thought of but absolutely love."

Petersen appreciates a pair of 1780 mahogany Chippendale side chairs, produced in Philadelphia, for their fine detail. Pedigreed and listed in Honor's *Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture*, the chairs' splats are pierced and the rails are decorated with hand-carved scrolls and leaves. "I would use these to flank a nicely proportioned piece of furniture," Petersen explains. "They would look elegant in an entrance hall on either side of a console table or in a bedroom on either side of a secretary." (30 W. Putnam Ave., Greenwich, 203-661-7965) •

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