

DESIGNERS

TODAY

style. substance. soul.



Walter Lewis

APRIL 2020



(Above) With Carleton Varney during a fun Dorothy Draper Decorating Weekend at the Greenbrier Resort. See more of my photos at designerstoday.com.

Several other April cover submissions done by Nicole Larsen (right), Adam Ploch (middle) and Corey Williams.



HELLO DEAR READER

This is a difficult salutation to write. I have grown weary of the words uncharted, unprecedented, uncertain and navigate, and I have promised not to use any expletives. So, what's left? Perhaps this opener borrowed from one of my favorite Dickens novels: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

That unforgettable quote positions life as one big serving of opposites. So apparent right now where a crisis like COVID-19 brings out the best and worst in people. Beauty surfaces when you know what hits the fan. Generosity of spirit is abundant, there are free classes and concerts, yet people hoard toilet paper and there are scant supplies. Facebook groups overflow with compassion, Zoom meetings gather friends, and yet I fear there is a vast population of seniors disconnected and all alone. Our bodies are forced to stay home, but our minds race and wander with "what-ifs." Opposites.

On the one hand, my heart is heavy thinking about all levels of loss and isolation, and I miss my kids and parents very much. On the other, I am a homebody of sorts, grateful for our house in High Point, a home office with a podcast studio and a part-time cat, and for my partner Frank working one flight up. I predict he will smirk when he reads this because we have this thing about "partner" versus "boyfriend".

As soon as this issue closes, I will be able to relax. I will celebrate with a filthy martini. Frank will fire up the turntable and we'll dance in our yet-to-be-furnished dining room. I'll unearth the tambourine. He'll play the bongos. We'll sleep in on Saturday, and I will not open my laptop at all. I may take Sunday off, too. I will relish in stay-at-home.

On Monday, I will be back at it. The same old. But the same old is different now. Corona may not infect everyone, but it touches us all. We are vulnerable. Nothing is assured, yet there are opportunities everywhere. When we emerge from this collective crisis, we will hopefully be changed for the better, the kinder, the stronger and more resourceful. I'm feeling it.

With that said, I hope you ❤️ this issue. I hope that when it arrives the pace of the virus has slowed and we can begin to plan again. I hope the cover brings you joy and some of the articles inside bring you hope. We are here. Be in touch. Peace and love.

Jane
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Designer Philip Thomas is exhausted after a bowling alley renovation. Photo: Aydin Arjomand

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Christi Barbour photographed by Maria West.

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COMMUNITY BOWL

WRITTEN BY ALEX MILSTEIN
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DESIGNER PHILLIP THOMAS TRANSFORMS AN OLD BOWLING ALLEY
INTO A RETRO WONDERLAND



Often referred to as a hidden gem of Long Island, New York, Bellport is a small coastal village that sits on the Great South Bay. Rated one of the happiest seaside villages in the U.S., designer Phillip Thomas of Phillip Thomas Inc., grew up spending his summers there.

Recently the designer made the little village even happier by reimagining and restoring an old 1920s-era bowling alley that sits in the basement of the Bellport Community Center. Before Thomas got to it, the bowling alley was a bleak space with poor lighting and uninspired colors.

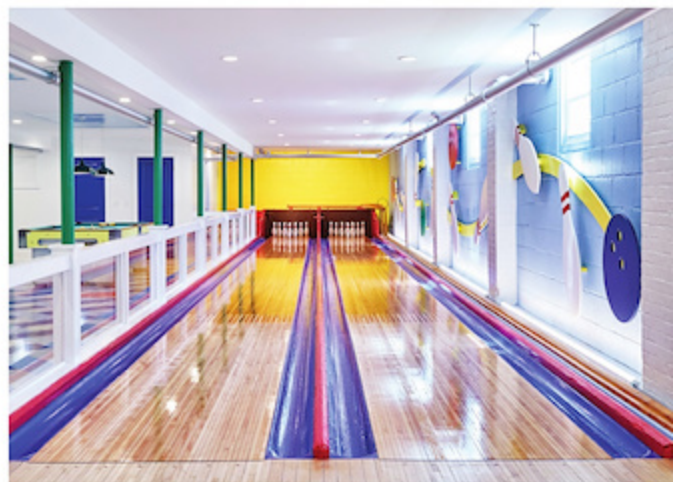
"I really pushed for this project to happen," says Thomas, who is very involved in the local community, sitting on the board of the Bellport Village Program Fund. "Bellport is very much about the bay, but that's just one aspect. Being able to work on the community center is what I call an evergreen project, because people will be able to appreciate it year-round."

As with many city projects, Thomas says the biggest challenge was the budget, and stretched every dollar and quarter to its fullest extent. Paint was his most reliable friend. "I love color and think it has a dramatic impact on people," he explains.

Starting with the stunning Great South Bay-themed floors, Thomas carried a simple palette throughout, choosing to go with bold primary colors that evoke a fun retro vibe. Two of the existing bathrooms had yellow tile from the 1950s that Thomas kept in place. "The pool tables are also vintage from that era, so I thought why not kind of emphasize that?" he says.

Having given the bowling alley a fresh new look, Thomas says

his favorite part of working on this design was seeing the excitement of the locals when it opened to the public. "I still get messages through social media and emails from people about how they have so much fun using the space. That's the best thing I could ever want; to create a space that brings people joy."



(Clockwise from top left) The Bellport Community Center was built in 1926 and the bowling alley was installed three years later.

The space is also used for kid's summer camp and senior art classes.

Thomas stripped, varnished and restored the original hardwood lanes.

Bowling alley colors were chosen to represent the Great South Bay, with blue being the surf and red referencing the buoys sprinkled around the coastline.