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Depth *of* Fields

AMPLE MEADOWS AND A REVAMPED STUDIO OFFER
A PAIR OF WRITER-FILMMAKERS BREATHING SPACE AND,
FOR THEIR SMALL KIDS, ROOM TO GROW.

BY SOPHIE DONELSON | PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL GRIMM



It's A Breeze | Billowing curtains frame a north-facing view of Sagaponack fields. On the south side of the studio, an identical aperture affords a glance of the farmhouse and meadows beyond. See *Resources*.

DURING A MIDSUMMER READING OF HER FIRST NOVEL, *The Embers*, Hyatt Bass admitted to the audience that she hadn't—until recently—been aware of how closely real life events were related in the fictional work. There was the example of the novel's protagonist, modeled after an actor she worked with on the set of a film she produced, and then the narrative construct of a wedding, written around the time she exchanged vows with Josh Klausner, a screenwriter and director. But the apple orchard that she planted at her summerhouse was a case of reality mirroring fiction.



See-Through | Architect Markus Dochantschi, a friend of the homeowners, opened up the studio to the landscape with sliding doors. Bonetti/Kozerski Studio tackled the interiors. See Resources.



JOE WOKE MUCH EARLIER than he ever did in the city, not to the harsh crowing of a rooster, but to the gentle, rolling warble of flying geese. The first rays of the sun poured over the crest of a distant hill and fell in long, golden shafts across the landscape, sparkling on patches of dewy pasture.

Downstairs, the lobby was empty, and the lights at the front desk were off. Treading lightly across the stone floor, he slipped outside and was greeted by a considerably livelier world. Insects buzzed around the inn's garden, occasionally veering off-course and dive-bombing a fence post or the side of the building, hitting with a hard thwack. The sunflowers and morning glories were beginning to raise their heads. In the distance, cows grazed, and here and there, flocks of geese and ducks continued their noisy migration overhead.

He passed along the edge of the garden, then struck out across the meadow on a path that led to the woods. The grass on either side of him lay in soft, knee-high waves. Moisture seeped quickly through the thin leather of his black loafers and drenched his black cotton socks. He ignored the discomfort and upon reaching the forest, came to a cedar-chip trail.

Stepping into the shade of the towering pines, he felt the warmth of the sun abandon the back of his balding head. Somewhere a woodpecker began to peck at a tree, and its staccato rap echoed through the forest. There was something faintly ominous about the sound, like a warning being issued in code. Other than the woodpecker and the occasional snap of a twig under his foot, things were utterly still. He continued on for a while until, finding a large caramel-colored mushroom in his path, he stooped down to take a closer look.

FROM THE EMBERS (HENRY HOLT, 2009)
BY HYATT BASS

Take Cover | Landscape designer Edwina Von Gal added ivy to the garage. **Straight Away** | A breezeway (BELOW LEFT) connects the house to the studio. **Rough and Tumble** | A chair from Espasso in NYC (BELOW RIGHT) joins vintage industrial objects from Obsolete in Venice, Calif. See Resources.



Buster's Grove commemorates the family's now-deceased dog. (Planting trees to mark a death has become a tradition in the Bass family.) The author received the sad news just after the happy first meeting with her editor at Henry Holt. "I left the lunch high and excited—and then I got this call," she remembers. And though she didn't immediately think of the passages that ruminate on apple trees in *The Embers*, the orchard seemed an apt tribute.

That the grove has a back-story is typical of Bass and Klausner's Sagaponack house. The kitchen-side pergola is a stage for magic shows by the couple's two knee-high boys, the garden a place for a first taste of chives and the pond a site for turtle spotting. Here, where a story is attached to seemingly every room and garden bed, it's easy to comprehend why a childhood home is so endearing (and so devastating to part with).

The property—an Annabelle Selldorf-designed farmhouse and studio, gardens and a meadow loping to a pond—came with its own compelling history. It had belonged to David Salle and was where the artist created works that put him at the forefront of contemporary art in the '80s.

Like its current tenants, Salle made films, too. Klausner recently wrote the fourth Shrek movie and the forthcoming *Date Night* starring Tina Fey and Steve Carrell; Hyatt wrote, directed and produced *Seventy Five Degrees in July* before switching her medium to novels. Much of *The Embers*, a tender story of a family unraveled, was written here.

For reading, Bass gravitates to the studio where a behemoth of a sofa offers what she calls the "perfect spot," which looks west through the big sliding glass doors, past the farmhouse's pergola and through the meadow.

The family has a soft spot for the sofa not just because it can accommodate the whole family—plus two mini schnauzers—but because it led them to architects Enrico Bonetti and Dominic Kozerski, who designed the sofa and whom the couple signed on to revamp the studio's interiors.

"A lot of people find us through the sofa," says Bonetti, whose firm has





Back to Nature | The redo includes a catwalk that leads to a small gym. The teak-base sofa is by Bonetti/Koserski. **Play Room** | An arts-and-crafts ante room (BELOW) connects the studio to the breezeway. The furniture is from Urban Country Antiques in Venice, Calif. See Resources.





completed dozens of fashion retail projects, such as Donna Karan stores.

An architect friend had added two massive apertures and sliding garage-size doors to the structure, and after that, Dominic recalls, "they were looking for ways to make the interior unite with the outside view." The firm's plan called for a great room, a floor-to-ceiling expanse of built-in bookshelves, a guest suite and wee top-floor gym. They also pitched the idea of walls clad in walnut planks. "I initially thought it would look like a '70s playroom den," admits Klausner. He relented and now loves the results, which complement his affinity for beat-up, industrial furnishings, like metal scissor-lift tables and peeling green stools. For the floor, the group originally considered mixing sand from local beaches into the grout, but Sagaponack sand proved too dark. Now, smooth white stones and pale grout mimic the ocean floor and serve to mitigate the warm, rich walnut.

"I like that it doesn't feel designed," says Klausner. "It feels authentic and old," says Kozerski. "Like a lot of our work, we approached it from all the senses—visual texture and tactile texture, like the earthy floor of pebbles. That is a lot of our philosophy." The space reads like an extension of the landscape and is, in some ways, even more barn-like than its previous iteration. "In the winter in the city, we used to climb the walls," says Bass. "But being inside here is like being outside. The kids feel it, too."

The outdoors is just as captivating. Klausner and Bass teamed up with an organic gardener to plant lettuces, snap peas, strawberries and garlic, which their friends fight over. Salle left a bounty, too. "David had amazing asparagus and gourds that hang down the trellis in late August," Bass says. "And the lilies!" she says. "I never would have thought about planting them, but I love them—and cosmos and the Chinese lantern flowers that we display all through fall and winter, and those irises and the peonies..." It seems novel to Bass, but her husband takes it in stride. "When we first saw this place, we had a magical feeling. I knew we were going to be here for a long time." ✨





Look Around | Working off the designs of Edwina Von Gal and the previous owner, Sag Harbor-based landscape designer Abby Clough created numerous garden features, such as a series of raised beds (ABOVE), which include both cutting gardens and berry and vegetable patches. Highlights from the landscape include (FROM OPPOSITE TOP) cosmos; wild strawberries; mowed paths that circle the property's meadows; lettuces; a canoe for exploring a nearby pond; and poppies, which were among the beautiful leftovers from David Salle's tenure here. See *Resources*.

