

## Room of the Day: New Style in a Creative Couple's Suburban Living Room

Classic woodwork and built-in shelving add function and interest and take a Long Island family's living space to the next level

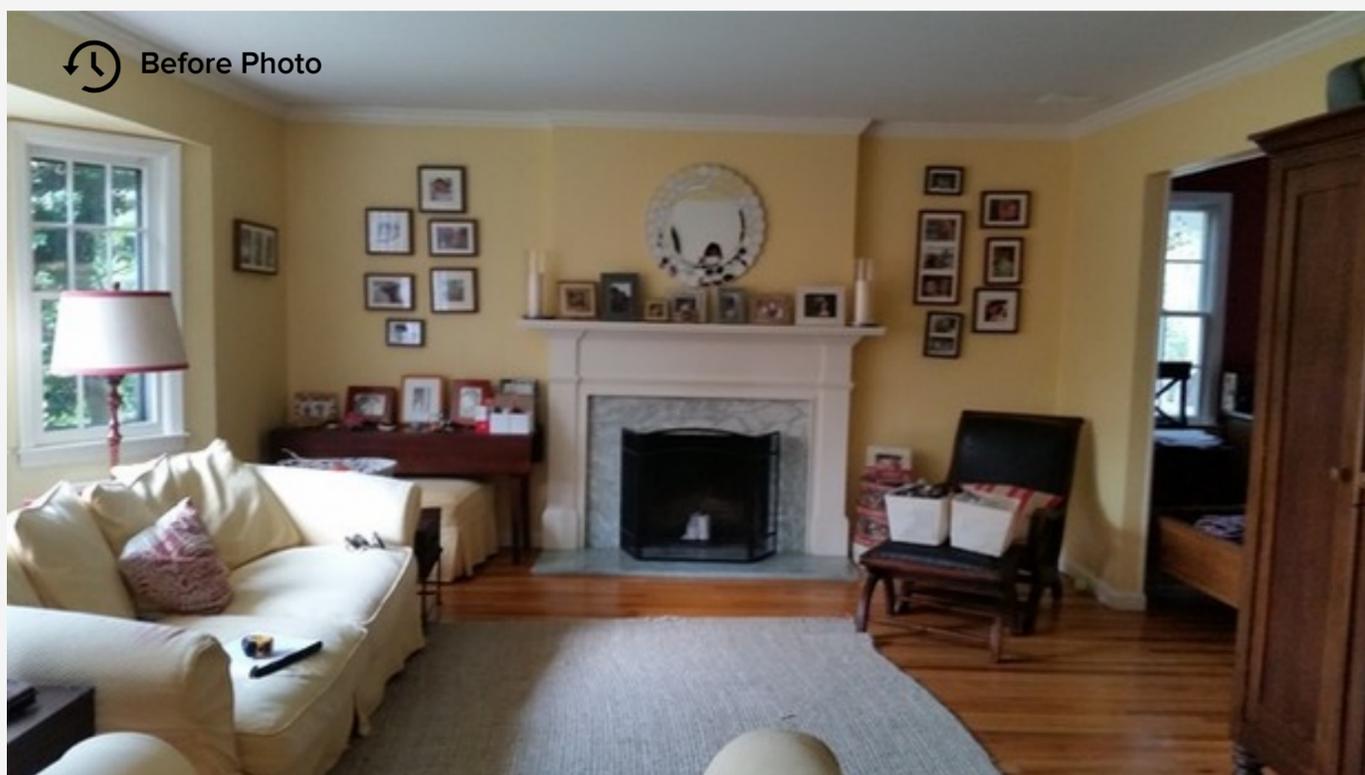


**Jeannie Matteucci** September 28, 2016

Houzz Contributor. Home design writer and lifestyle reporter with a love for stylish spaces, smart lighting and a good decaf dry cappuccino.

When designers Adam and Kara Mendelsohn had two young children about eight years ago, they decided to make the move from New York City to the suburbs. They bought a 1950s updated split-level home in the town of Centerport, on the North Shore of Long Island, and furnished it with existing pieces and hand-me-downs.

Flash forward eight years. Now that their kids are older, the Mendelsohns recently found themselves ready to create a family-friendly house that better fit their personalities. They asked friend and interior designer Jeanne Campana to help them breathe new life into their living room with added architectural details, flexible furniture and easy-to-clean fabrics, creating a space with smart function and sophisticated style.



*"After" photos by Ric Marder Imagery*

### Living Room at a Glance

**Who lives here:** Designers Adam and Kara Mendelsohn — he's head of eyewear design for Warby Parker; she's the founder of and designer for women's fashion

brand cooper & ella — and their son, Cooper, 9, and daughter, Ella, 11

**Location:** Centerport, New York

**Size:** 328 square feet (30.4 square meters)

**Designer:** Jeanne Campana

**BEFORE:** The couple enjoyed displaying family photos on the walls and tabletops in their previous living room, but felt the mustard yellow walls and mix of hand-me-downs came off as disjointed. The room also suffered from a lack of architectural interest, which made it feel flat. “The house before was literally like a box,” Kara recalls. “There were no architectural details at all. We fell in love with the location of the home and the great school district, but it’s a challenging type of house.”



**AFTER:** To highlight the fireplace, which serves as the focal point, Campana added built-in shelves, which give the family the chance to stylishly display framed family photos, favorite books and special travel mementos. Classic woodwork, including molding around the doorways and decorative molding on the ceiling, introduced architectural interest and character. “It gives depth to the room, and that’s what we were trying to do — to not make the room feel so flat,” Campana says.

After reviewing inspiration images of living rooms Kara gathered from Houzz and other sources, Campana could see the couple wanted a neutral space with natural textures and a soft color palette with accents of gold and a touch of blue. They went with earthy, organic gray walls with white trim highlighting the new architectural details. Campana says the gray walls provide a neutral backdrop that goes with anything, and allow the family to change the room seasonally (like adding red pillows during the holidays).

They considered several layout options before deciding to place two matching roll-arm sofas with washable high-performance fabric directly across from each other, with a glass-top coffee table in between. This layout maximizes seating and allows every family member a spot.

*Wall paint: Edgecomb Gray HC-173, Benjamin Moore; trim paint: white, custom blend; slipcovered sofas and end tables: Pottery Barn*



The Mendolsohns shopped at chain stores and online to find bargain deals on furniture pieces that provide smart storage and display space. “I wanted it to be beautiful but also comfortable,” Kara says. “I wasn’t spending \$4,000 on a vase.” An easy-to-clean neutral sisal rug adds warmth to the existing wood floor and helps ground the seating area.

Tables at the ends of both sofas offer storage for books and collectibles. A tall bookcase with an antique gold finish and a Hollywood Regency design sits by the doorway, which leads to the entry hall. Kara’s desk is on the other side.

*Gold bookcase: PBteen; area rug: Ballard Designs; gold picture frames: West Elm*

Campana had the family’s existing glass-top wood coffee table converted into a shadow box that displays and stores some of Adam’s eyewear designs, seashells the family has found during their travels, Kara’s growing collection of macaroon boxes and other special items that help personalize the space. “It makes a good conversation-starter when people come over,” Kara says.



This photo shows one of the new built-in bookcases flanking the fireplace, with molding on top for a finished look. The two closed cabinets with gold ring knobs conceal TV equipment, a game console and family photo albums.

*Shelves and cabinetry:  
custom, Artistic  
Contracting; cabinet  
hardware: Liz's Antique  
Hardware*



A large bay window with a repainted frame to match the new trim overlooks the front yard and gives the living room lots of natural light. Two ottomans covered in ikat fabric are tucked under the new console table below the window; they provide additional seating when guests are over.

Solid light blue cotton-linen throw pillows mixed with custom throw pillows add comfort to the sofas.

*Console table and ottomans: Ballard Designs; pillows: custom by Calico Corners with fabric from Kravet*



A striking gold-finish iron orb chandelier with six lights offers illumination from above, while a table lamp provides task lighting for Kara's desk area. "They were running out of budget for recessed lights, so I suggested one good light from above as an option," Campana says.

Chandelier: Ballard Designs; desk lamp: West Elm (discontinued)



A gold-framed pinboard hangs above Kara's desk, made of tempered glass and metal. A padded desk chair upholstered with a fun zebra print in neutral colors provides comfortable seating and a touch of pattern. "Before, I was sitting at the kitchen table when I was working from home, and that wasn't so great," Kara says.

*Desk: Pottery Barn; desk chair: Ballard Designs; pinboard: PBteen*

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