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## THE INN AT CASTLE HILL

The Crane family's eighteenth-century country house welcomes guests in an intimate setting.

IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL J. LEE

◆ The Inn at Castle Hill had already been a popular North Shore escape for thirteen years when its owner, the Trustees of Reservations, decided to redecorate. "It was time to refresh the comfortable, casually elegant, showhouse-style decor and to unify the rooms and living spaces with each other and the surrounding landscape of the exquisite Crane Estate," says the

nonprofit group's president and CEO, Barbara Erickson.

"The goal," says designer Wendy Hodgson, of Carpenter & MacNeille, "was to make the spaces feel as if guests were staying at a great country house, rather than a more prescribed notion of a hotel."

She achieved that homey look by supplying the rooms and public spaces with a collection of throw blankets, nature books and binoculars, current magazines, the morning paper, and a rotating exhibit of local artwork.

Like Susan Stacy, Hodgson talks about the necessity of choosing materials with staying power. "To stand up to the traffic needs of a public place, we chose commercial-grade materials in residential styles," she says. "We used sisal carpet, and chose fabrics that can take heavy use, such as

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Designer Wendy Hodgson refreshed a living room already rich with architectural elements at The Inn at Castle Hill. Grass-green walls and bright white trim, crisp bright shades, and fluffy white towels infuse a bathroom with style. A guest room defined by traditional toile got an updated look with French-blue velvet club chairs, bold pillows, and new striped shades.

velvet, chenille, and Sunbrella fabrics."

Hodgson points to the living room's grasscloth wall covering as a material that looks far more delicate than it is. "It is a workhorse," she says, "hiding nail holes and less than perfect walls."

Of course, a less than perfect wall would hardly disturb a visitor lucky enough to find himself ensconced in a cozy chair by a blazing fire.