

New England HOME

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Home Run

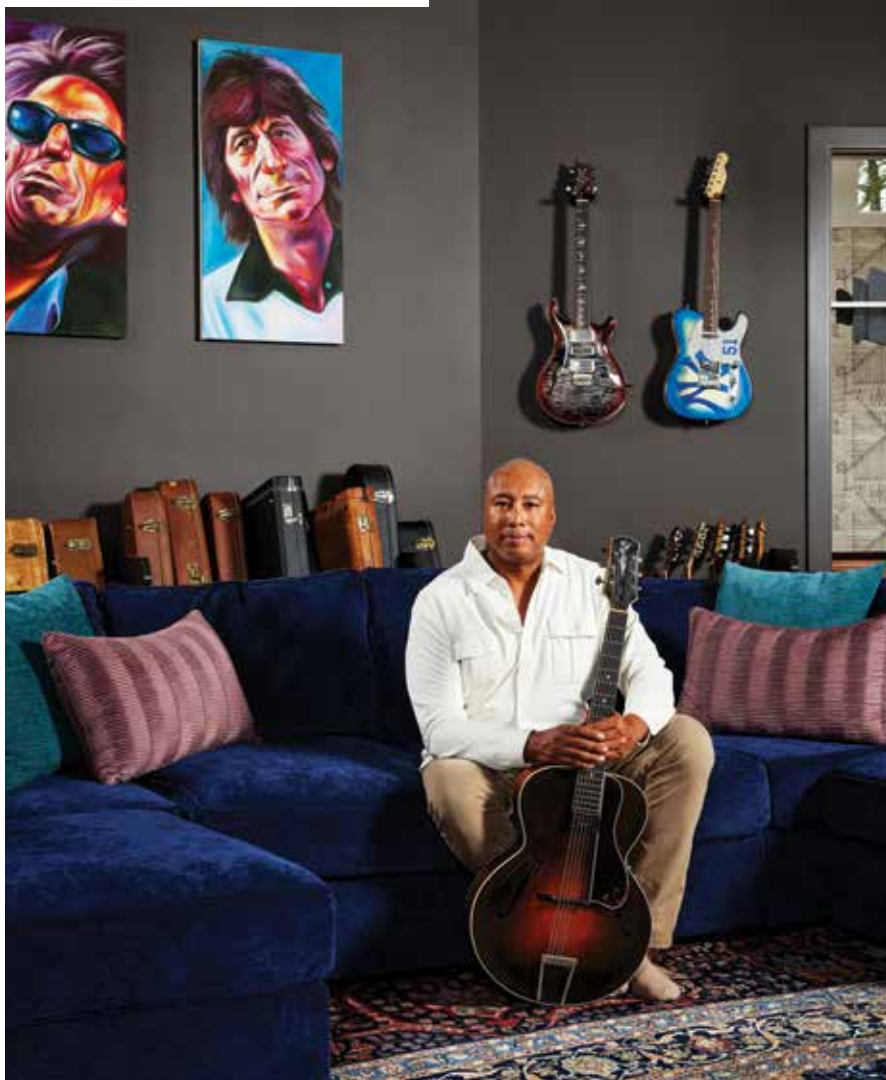
Former New York Yankees star Bernie Williams finds room to stretch out and relax in Connecticut.

Text by ERIKA AYN FINCH | Photography by TIM WILLIAMS

Styled by ANNA MOLVIK



In the formal living room, interior designer Jody Fierz and the homeowners found a place for portraits depicting Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder. Two maple coffee tables can either fit together or be pulled apart like pieces of a puzzle, while the sculptural side tables are by Uttermost.



Williams and his girlfriend reached out to Fierz about refreshing their Connecticut home base, a residence Williams had owned for ten years but never quite had the time to renovate. “It gave me the opportunity to see for myself the things the house really needed.”

That list included more light-filled rooms and an open floor plan. But as the project progressed, the design team discovered issues with the foundation under the kitchen, which necessitated a gut renovation of that space. The renovation allowed for the addition of the glass wine “room” that separates the kitchen from the rest of the living area, apropos for a man who has collaborated with New York’s Millbrook Vineyards & Winery on his own blend.

LEFT: Former New York Yankees center fielder and jazz recording artist Bernie Williams relaxes in his home studio with a sampling of his guitar—and guitar case—collections. **BELOW:** Williams wanted to repurpose some of his existing furniture, like the family room’s swivel chairs that Fierz reupholstered in mohair. The chairs sit near a Rene Cazares coffee table that’s wood on top and upholstered on the sides.

When interior designer Jody Fierz met her new client, Bernie Williams (yes, THAT Bernie Williams), on a Zoom call, she cheekily showed up in a Boston Red Sox cap. Williams, a four-time World Series champ who played for the New York Yankees from 1991 to 2006, laughs at the memory. “I thought we were going to have to call security,” he jokes. “But seriously, her work spoke for itself, no matter what team she was wearing.”



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Williams's girlfriend came up with the idea for the slick wine "room" that separates the kitchen, designed by Erich Diller of Evolve Design Group, from the living room. A pool table, lit by a Hubbardton Forge slate chandelier, acts as the centerpiece for an area outside Williams's studio. Massachusetts-based Saltwoods crafted the dining room tabletop from one solid piece of walnut; the lush foliage outside inspired Fierz to introduce a shade of green on the chairbacks that she says reminds her of a "newborn leaf."



"IT'S A PLACE WHERE YOU WANT TO HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE—IT'S NOT A MUSEUM."

—Homeowner Bernie Williams



Fierz says the couple gave her a lot of creative freedom when it came to the interiors. "His style is more eclectic, and hers is more transitional," says Fierz. "The challenge was combining two aesthetics and providing honest feedback on the extent of the updates." As with many tall professional athletes, ergonomics came into play, and most of the seating was custom designed. Fierz also kept in mind Williams's art collection, which includes paintings by his daughter, Beatriz Williams.

And then there's the guitar collection. Williams, a classically trained guitarist, has released two jazz albums and was nominated for a Latin Grammy





in 2009. Ground-floor hangout spots like a room with a pool table, another one for playing board games, and a moody recording studio/bar treat the instruments like works of art.

Williams says the home, inside and out, feels like a sanctuary. “It’s a place

where you want to have a cup of coffee—it’s not a museum,” he says. “Outside, you can take a deep breath and enjoy the greenery and the wildlife. Inside, there’s that same feeling of relaxation—you might even be tempted to take a nap.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: For details, see Resources.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The pool nestles into the private backyard and boasts views of a nearby lake. Diller also designed the primary bath, which features panoramic views of the surrounding hillsides. The Visual Comfort & Co. table lamps in the primary bedroom echo the statement-making Phillip Jeffries wallcovering and bring a touch of contemporary glam to the space.



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN:
Evolve Design Group

INTERIOR DESIGN:
Jody Fierz Interior Design

BUILDER: LS Construction

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Brook Clark
Landscape Architects