

LIVING / VINTAGE BEACH-HOUSE FINDS AT SOJOURN

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Vintage Beach-House Finds at Sojourn

BY BARRI LEINER GRANT



Sojourn is housed in what once was a rundown grocery store and is now a modernist focal point for the town of Sawyer

Harbor Country has a new neighbor that everybody's talking about: Stacia Garriott Kass and her Midcentury Modern-slash-vintage home furnishings store, *Sojourn*. What makes the space extra special is she not only works there, but frequently lives there, too. The reclaimed hemlock and yellow-painted-brick facade with 21-foot glass Nana Wall is a traffic-stopping structure at the corner of Sawyer Road and Red Arrow Highway. It's the one with the striking steel stairways leading up to an impeccably decorated three-bedroom family apartment. Just follow the twinkling strands of porch lights and look for the crowd of friends gathered around the enviable fire pit on a huge side deck (outfitted with sleek recycled-plastic Loll Adirondack chairs), and you're there.

"I'd always wanted a shop," says Garriott Kass, explaining why it took 20 years to achieve that dream: "In my 20s I worked as a teacher and in corporate America for my savings account; in my 30s I became a stay-at-home mom to our three children, now ages three, six and nine. As I rounded my 40s, I wanted to explore getting back into the working world, and the idea of a store was always in mind."

After 10 years as summertime renters, Garriott Kass and her husband, Jordan (who works for logistics giant C.H. Robinson Worldwide, Inc.), set out to find a family retreat and shop to call their own. They landed in Sawyer, 87 miles from Chicago. "I did my own brand of market research," says Garriott Kass. She thought the town could use a shop with "not too precious, but cool" beach-house finds that were sophisticated enough to fit in city homes, too.

What they found was a rundown building that had been the town grocery 50 years back (with the shopkeeper's family dwelling upstairs). Years later, the building became an antiques store. Sadly, this former neighborhood landmark had fallen on hard times, and the abandoned building was in dire need of a face-lift. The couple decided to rescue the property, which they soon learned needed schematics to regain its work/live zoning.

Garriott Kass's dear friend and Bucktown neighbor Julie Fisher is half of one of the most sought-after Chicago architectural and interior design firms, FC Studio Inc. Fisher drew up plans and renderings for the town board that were "Modernist perfection," says Garriott Kass. The duo worked in tandem to collaborate on an aesthetic that Kass says is like the merchandise itself: "a good mix of rustic, industrial, folk, and primitive materials—with a hefty dose of comfortable chic."

While Garriott Kass isn't a trained interior designer, a stint with decorator Alessandra Branca and a few years studying at Harrington College of Design are reflected in her aesthetic eye.

A trip to last year's inaugural Design Harvest, a creative festival of artists and artisans in West Town, turned up some of her first commissions for Sojourn, from Strand Design lighting and furniture star Bladon Connor. It's a pure vision—her first "from scratch moment" as she calls it—where everything is meticulously edited and the old grocery store concept is back in action, with a new (highdesign) front door to sidle up to. Sojourn is open weekends only. 12908 Red Arrow Hwy., Sawyer, Michigan, 312-543-4240



TOP: The apartment's living room reading nook is highlighted by a mesh Bertoia chair, and a still life of vintage finds
BOTTOM: Stacia Garriott Kass

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