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DESIGNERS DOING GOOD: CLODAGH'S MENLA MOUNTAIN RETREAT

Georgina McWhirter | November 14, 2013

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Mahasukha healing spa at Menla Mountain Retreat, Phoenicia, NY.

New York-based designer [Clodagh](#) has made a name for herself by masterminding interiors that emanate an earthy, spiritual calm. And she has long been a proponent of the view that good design can (and should) enhance wellbeing, so it makes sense she would lend her talents to the new Mahasukha healing spa at [Menla Mountain Retreat](#), a wellness center grounded in the Buddhist tradition located in Phoenicia, high in the Catskill mountains in upstate New York.



The impetus for Mahasukha spa was none other than the Dalai Lama, who confided in owner Robert Thurman (also Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia University and father to actress Uma Thurman) that his dream for Tibet, at one time known as the "Land of Medicine" by its neighbors, is to forge an economy based on healing, similar to the way in which Switzerland is associated with health spas.

Spurred by this, Thurman and his wife Nena von Schlebrügge sought someone who would understand—and translate visually—their vision for Menla. Enter Clodagh, who jumped on board by donating her skills pro bono, calling on vendor friends such as [Kohler](#) and [Ann Sacks](#) to gift materials and product to the project.

The result is one of understated tranquility: a mix of handcrafted silk tapestries, Eastern antiques, oversized lanterns and solid-wood furnishings that functions in perfect harmony with its purpose. Not to mention the altruism behind the project is surely the best kind of karma.

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