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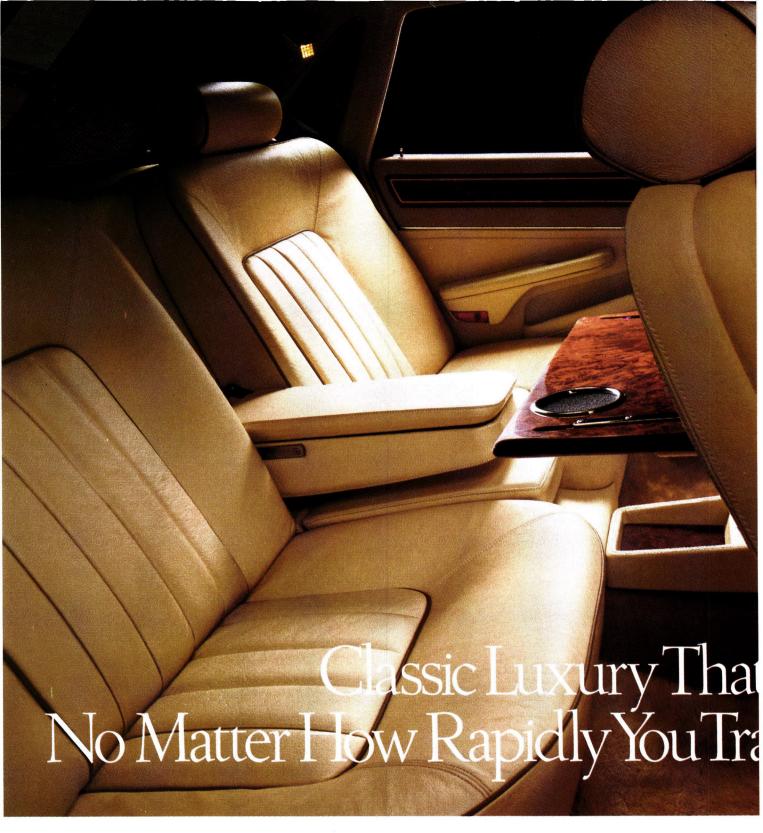
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JAGUAR



Two generations of the Sherrill family at poolside. Page 112.



Designer Mario Villa's New Orleans living room. Page 124.



**COVER** Didier Gomezdesigned sofa and tables in the salon of his Paris apartment. Photograph by Thibault Jeanson. Page 136.



Site-sensitive modernism, above,  $in\ California.$ Page 92. Left: Burl ash and carved limewood console by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. Page 100.

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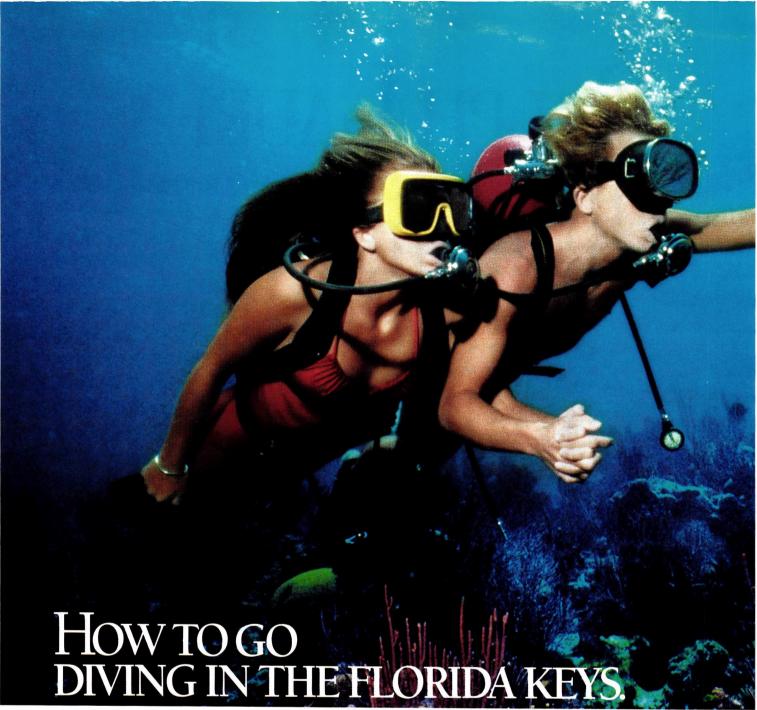
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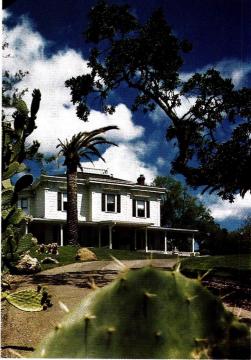




Mannequins rest on a high-back sofa at Bendel's. Page 72.









Restaurateur
Pino Luongo,
left, surveys
produce at a
Tuscan market.
Page 32.
Above: Producerplaywright
Steve Silver's
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### JUNE

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#### Contributors Notes



Paula Deitz, who coedits The Hudson Review, also reports on architecture and design for The New York Times and the Financial Times of London, among others. For this issue, she visits the picturesque Château de Bellerive near Geneva, home to one of Europe's great gardens. Says Deitz, "I love garden writing-it makes me feel I'm giving ephemeral architecture a permanent form." A collection of Deitz's articles on design will be published next year by Story Line Press.

Marcelle Clements is a journalist and novelist who divides her time between New York and Paris, In the "Decoration" column, she tours the apartment and shop of French decorator and fabric designer Christian Benais. Savs Clements, "He's a witty and industrious artist whose translation of French design for the U.S. market will be interesting to watch.'





David Dillon covers architecture and design for The Dallas Morning News. For HG, he writes about the Houston residence of collectors Janie C. Lee and David B. Warren: "It's a generous, comfortable turn-of-the-century house that is also the perfect showcase for contemporary art. And their collections have outstanding clarity and depth." Dillon is currently at work on a monograph about Texas architect O'Neil Ford.



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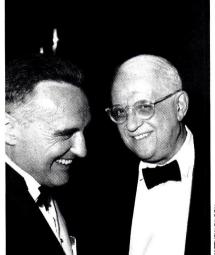
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#### **Contributors Notes**



Evelyn Hofer journeys to the Swiss mountain village of Bondo to explore and photograph Palazzo Salis, a celebrated eighteenth-century summer house. Says Hofer, "I love the fact that the personality of the palazzo remains intact. The character of the place would have been lost if the owners had modernized." Hofer is currently at work on a book of portraits depicting peasant life in Soglio, Switzerland.



George Christy (at right, with Dennis Hopper at a film festival) chronicles the social, entertainment, and literary scene of Los Angeles in "The Great Life" column in *The Hollywood Reporter*. For "HG People" he writes about playwright and producer Steve Silver and his Sonoma retreat. The two met in 1974 when Christy covered the opening of Silver's *Beach Blanket Babylon*, San Francisco's longest-running show.

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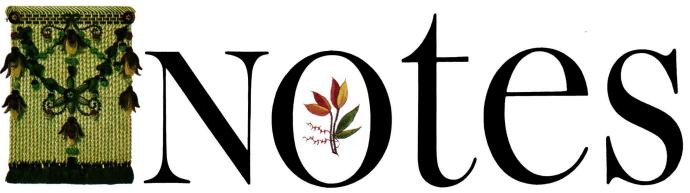
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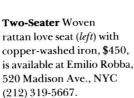
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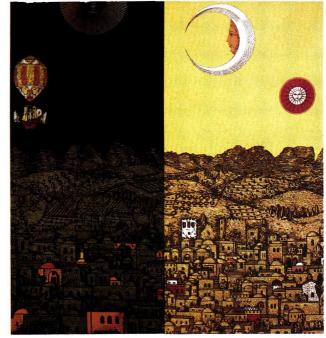
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**Penmanship** Penwork boxes by Scott Warshaw (left) echo their 18th-century counterparts. Scott Warshaw Collection, Riviera Beach (407) 844-2325.



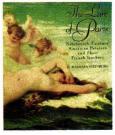


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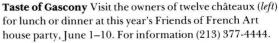


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THE SEVENTEENTH-CENtury villa Pino Luongo rented in Tuscany not long ago came with a cook, a lazy but talented local woman who, on her boss's first morning, tried to sneak him his breakfast tray without any fresh ricotta on it. The following day, when he asked her to make a pot of minestrone and a simple chicken cacciatore for lunch, she grunted before reluctant-

ly giving in. Having dazzled New York in 1989 by importing authentic Italian "mammas" to advise the chefs at his Peter Marino-designed restaurant Le Madri, Luongo pronounced the suffering he experienced at the hands of his indolent contadina in Gaiole in Chianti a "delicious irony."

He was in Italy, with his wife, Jessie, their two children, and his executive chef Mark Strausman, plotting his next savory attacks on the United States—a new book and a new Manhattan restaurant called Coco Pazzo (Crazy Chef). Celebrating the soulful and unpretentious cooking of his native Tuscany, Luongo has become one of the most popular and influen-

tial chefs in America. While Coco Pazzo was instantly filled by that boldfaced group of regulars that will be identified for all time with Mortimer's, Page Six of The New York Post fanned an amusing lit-

### Return to Tuscany

Memories of an Italian childhood spice the cuisine of restaurateur Pino Luongo

BY CHRISTOPHER PETKANAS

tle dialogue between Luongo and the owner of another of society's eating temples, Sirio Maccioni of Le Cirque. The reporter wanted to know if there was enough room in the city for evervone.

"I want to make one thing clear," says Luongo. "When we did things like room-temperature grilled vegetables and spinach with olive oil and lemon juice in 1983 at my first restaurant, Il Cantinori, in New York, no one else was doing them." They have since become clichés, a fact that encourages him. "I made Tuscan cuisine part of daily life in the U.S., and I will not be satisfied until one out of three Americans sits down to a meal of Tuscan food every day."



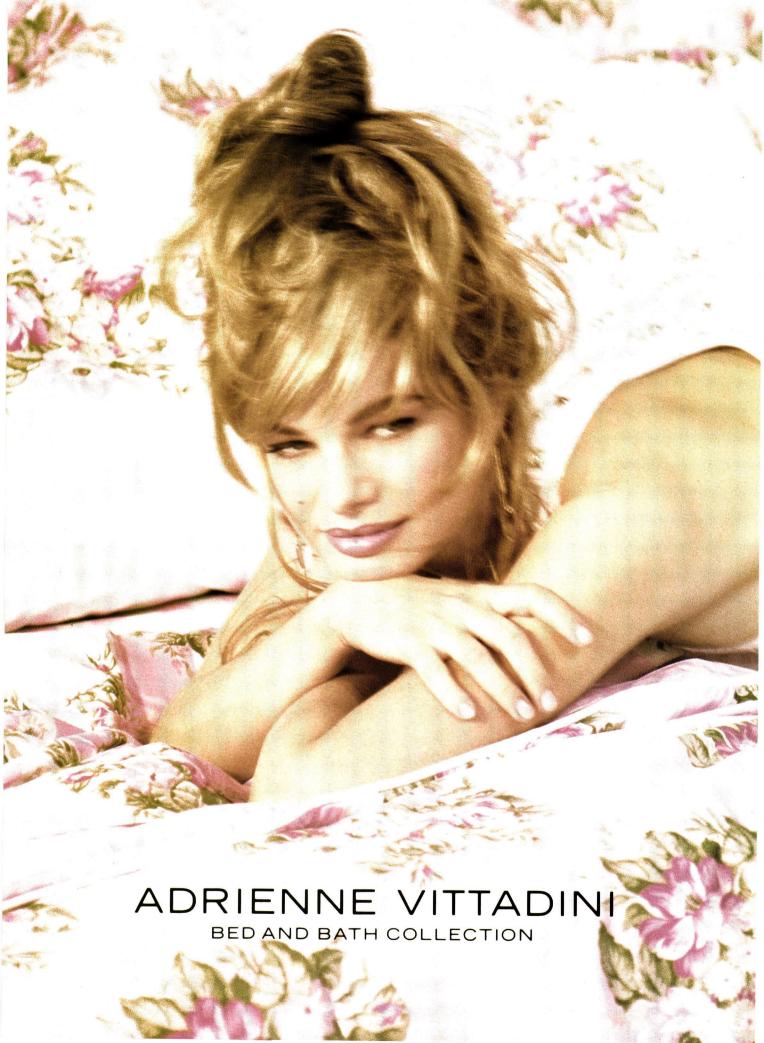


Luongo, born in Florence in 1953, recalls a childhood in which his grandmother hung fresh eels on the clothesline to dry and makeshift barbecues were created out of bedsprings that were later left

When in Tuscany, Pino Luongo, above, stocks up on local produce at the Colle di Val d'Elsa market. Above left: The restaurateur's peasant-style apple salad. Below left: Luongo, with his wife, Jessie, and daughter Jacobella.

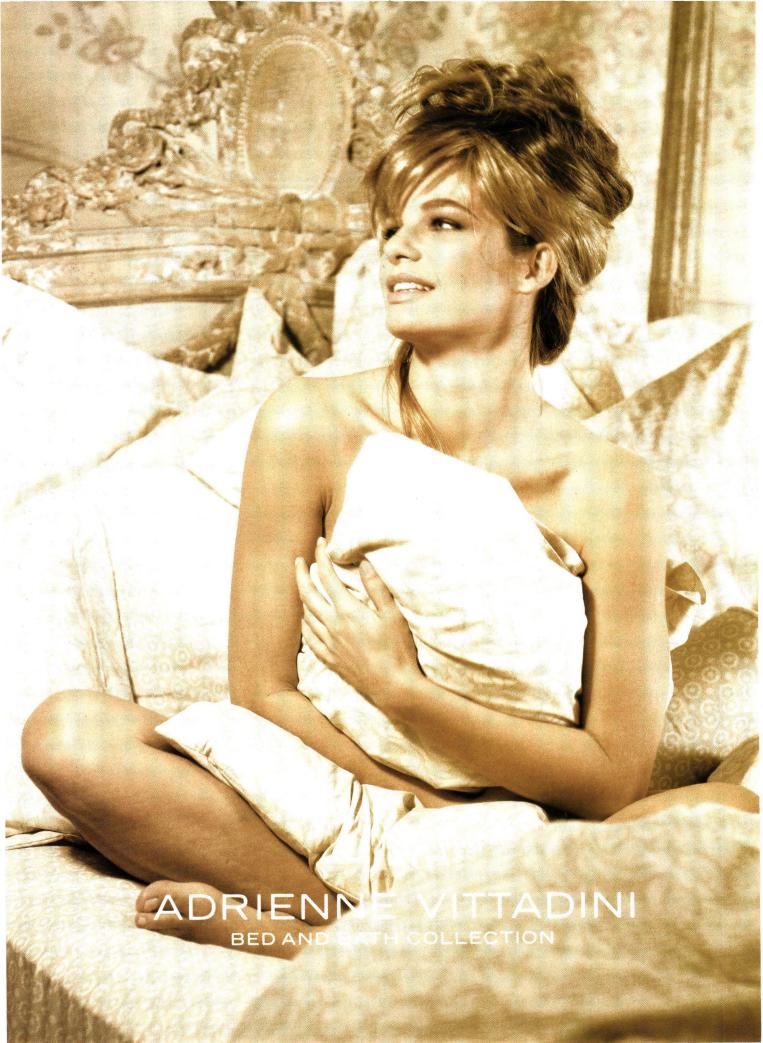
to cool and slept on under the stars. "My main activity as a restaurateur is to chase and apprehend the memories I have of certain flavors, which is one of the reasons I always come back to Tuscany," Luongo explains. "The other day, in a little nothing trattoria nearby, I found a woman making spaghetti with cubes of bread that had been toasted in hot oil and garlic and tossed with rosemary and tomato. This is me chasing my gastronomic youth."

Moving to Rome in 1971, Luongo earned a degree in theater history before traveling around Italy as a professional actor, playing a classical















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## TABLET OF COURT

#### "I come back to Tuscany to chase my gastronomic youth"







A picturesque view of Gaiole in Chianti, top. Above: Family and friends enjoy an informal Tuscan dinner; roast squab with Swiss chard; spaghetti with fresh porcini. Below: For dessert, Luongo serves Bartlett pears with ricotta.



repertoire of Pirandello, Strindberg, and Shakespeare. When called up for compulsory military service in 1980, he escaped to New York. Forlorn, aimless, and unable to speak English, he took a job as a busboy at Da Silvano in Greenwich Village, working his way up to general manager within two months. It was around this time that a career as a restaurateur began to seem inevitable: "My ability to deal with the public and the fact that I have always loved food made the opening of a place of my own the most obvious solution to all of my problems." Soon after, he met the partners who would help him launch Il Cantinori, a restaurant he is no longer associated with. Next came Sapore di Mare, his Mediterranean-style restaurant in the Hamptons; two gourmet shops, also in the Hamptons, selling prepared foods; the upscale "fast food" spot, Piccola Cucina, in Dallas; Le Madri, with its 3,000-pound woodburning lava oven; and now Coco Pazzo. The last three were opened in partnership with the Pressman family, owners of Barneys New York. Luongo oversaw the construction of all his establishments, ensuring a sympathetic rapport between the work of his designers and the eventual output of his kitchens.

In between restaurant openings, there was a highly individual book of enormous charm that dared to challenge accepted cookbook wisdom. At the insistence of the author, there are no quantities attached to the ingredients in the recipes in A Tuscan in the Kitchen, and cooking times are also treated loosely. Luongo's thinking is that there is never any right

way to prepare a dish. Another innovation is the division of ingredients into three categories—pantry, cold storage, and market. To make tomato and bread soup, for example, you need olive oil and black pepper from the first, vegetable broth and garlic from the second, and bread, tomatoes, and basil from the third.

"Pino gives you an idea to follow and you make the dish the way you like it," says Mark Strausman. "Unlike everyone else who writes cookbooks, he actually wants you to experiment with his recipes."

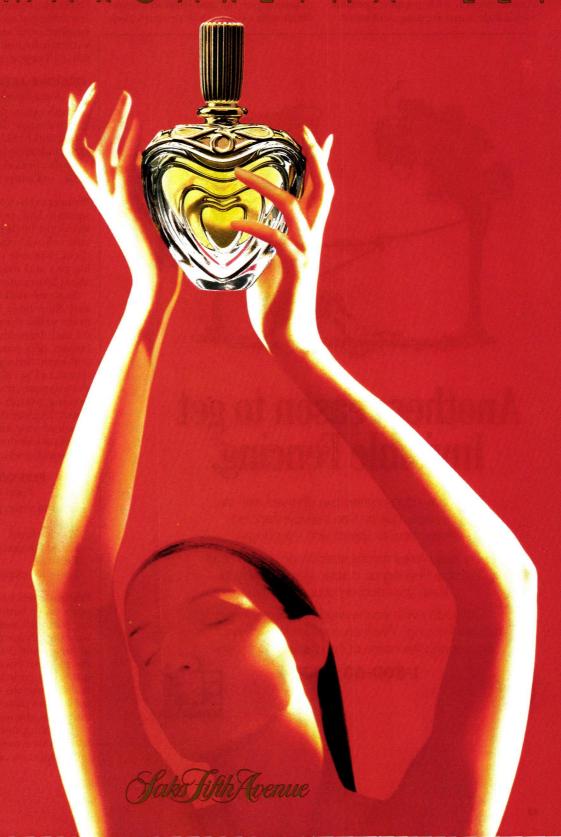
"What my first book says from beginning to end," explains Luongo, "is that you don't have to be a great chef or have a lot of experience to cook well. And it says that a plate is a plate, not a canvas."

Luongo's second work, which is still being researched and written, is a guide to good eating in Tuscany, stuffed with addresses only an insider could supply. It is the sort of book, he says, that will instruct readers to take the "second dirt road on the right, cross the bridge and count nine cypress trees before parking the car and walking fifty paces to the best alimentari in Tuscany."

#### INSALATA DI MELE ALLA CONTADINA

Peasant-Style Apple Salad
Extra-virgin olive oil
Lemon juice
Salt
Granny Smith or other acidic
apples, cored but not peeled
Tuscan or Tuscan-style salami,
thinly sliced
Parmesan cheese, cut into slivers
Celery, peeled and cut into
matchsticks
Freshly ground pepper

# BY MARGARETHA LEY



Beat together oil, lemon juice, and salt. Cut thin horizontal slices from the apples and discard the ends. Arrange the slices around the rims of individual plates. Drizzle with just enough dressing to keep the fruit from discoloring. In the center of each plate, layer first the salami slices and then the Parmesan cheese in a circle. Arrange the celery in a crosshatch pattern on top of the cheese. Season with pepper, sprinkle with a little more dressing, and serve.

#### SPAGHETTI AI PORCINI IN BIANCO

Spaghetti with Porcini
Fresh porcini (or portobello or cremini) mushrooms
Spaghetti
Extra-virgin olive oil

Extra-virgin olive oil
Garlic, thinly sliced
Flat-leaf parsley, chopped
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Separate porcini caps from stems and clean with a damp cloth or mushroom

brush. Remove and discard gills from caps. Dry mushroom pieces, cut lengthwise into thin slices, and set aside. Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil and cook spaghetti until al dente. While the pasta is cooking, cover bottom of a pan with oil and sauté garlic until lightly browned. Add porcini slices and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until they begin to wilt. (If the pan seems dry, add more oil or a few tablespoons of pasta water.) Drain spaghetti well and transfer to the pan with mushrooms. Toss with parsley, salt, and pepper and serve.

#### PICCIONE ARROSTO CON BIETOLE

Roast Squab with Swiss Chard
Fresh squab, dressed
Extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Small-leaf Swiss chard
Garlic, peeled and crushed
Dry red wine, preferably Chianti

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Split each squab in half, removing the backbone. Brush the birds inside and out with oil and rub with salt and pepper. Place them, skin side up, in a shallow roasting pan and roast until medium rare, about 20 minutes.

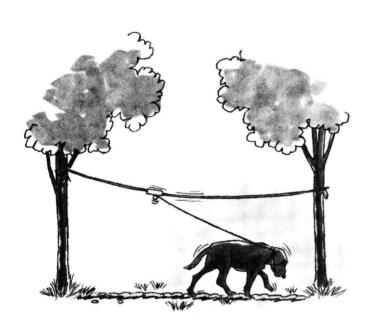
Separate stalks and leaves of chard and chop both roughly. Blanch and drain stalks; drop leaves in boiling water and drain immediately. Cover the bottom of a pan with oil, add garlic, and warm through over low heat. Add chard and sauté until wilted. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chard to a warm serving platter. Arrange squab on chard. Deglaze the roasting pan with a splash of wine and the juices from the chard pan. Reduce liquid slightly. Pour over squab and serve.

#### PERE CON RICOTTA

Pears with Ricotta

Dry red wine, preferably Chianti Sugar Whole cloves Large Bartlett pears Ricotta Fresh mint leaves

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Generously cover bottom of a shallow roasting pan with wine and dissolve in the wine slightly less than the same amount of sugar. Add cloves. Stand pears up in the pan and bake until fork-tender or until they emit white foam. Flatten a few tablespoons of ricotta on individual dessert plates and place a pear on top. Bring the wine-sugar mixture to a boil, stirring until it becomes syrupy. Spoon sauce over fruit, decorate with mint, and serve.



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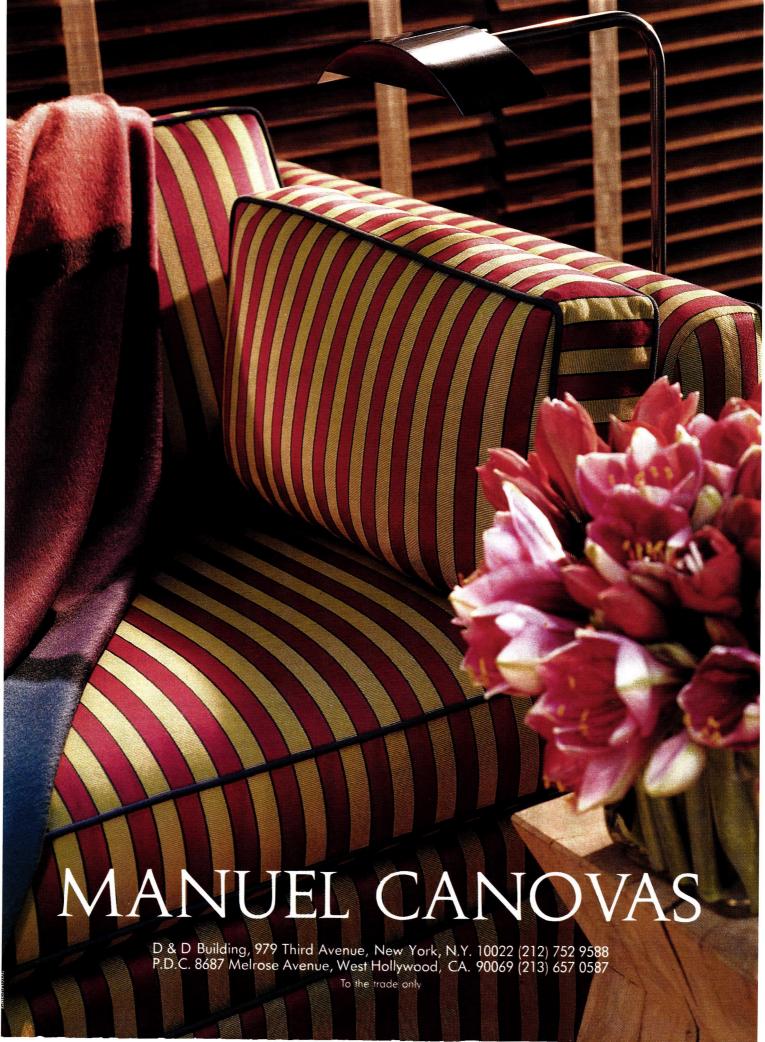
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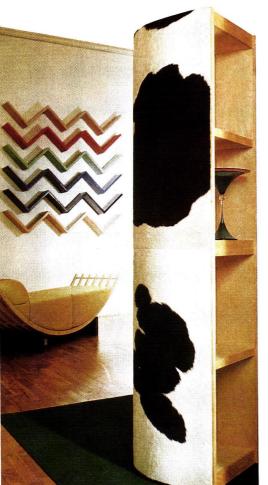
**JONAS HILLERGREN'S AMBITIONS FOR** his new furniture gallery, Artik, are not quite as grand as those of the Swedish furniture retailer IKEA, which brought us the modest motto, "It's a big country. Someone's got to furnish it." But he shares with the giant a common interest in promoting Swedish design, if on a much higher plane. Explains Hillergren, "In recent years, Sweden has experienced a

boom of interest in idiosyncratic design because, thanks to the influence of IKEA through-

out the sixties and seventies, not only did everyone already have the basics, they all had the same things."

The designers Artik represents honor the traditional Swedish crafts

A SoHo furniture gallery brings together Sweden's leading lights By Heather Smith Macisaac



of woodworking, boat building, and painting furniture, but their pieces are united more by modernity than tradition. John Kandell's resting chair in cadmium red-stained wood and natural leather is a welcome departure from the Le Corbusier chaise longue. His more than twenty-year-old design for the Pilaster book-

shelf is utterly contemporary and more popular than ever. Jonas Bohlin's clever zigzag shelf, simple in design yet complex in structure, has also become a classic. But Bohlin is perhaps better known for his controversial claim that "good furniture takes twenty seconds to design" and for his unfinished steel and concrete chair that, upon its debut in 1980, shocked a country where comfort and practicality are paramount.

Artik Circle

Hillergren's selections are more than functional and well crafted; they are, as he points out,

"funny and fun to have." Stools by Thomas Sandell, available in six colors, can be linked via oversize dovetails to create a caterpillaresque bench. A pair of cowhide-covered shelf units by Karin Tyrefors together form a freestanding elliptical column. And by combining aluminum, wood, and birch bark, Mats Theselius has figuratively unstuffed a traditional club chair. As Hillergren notes, "You don't buy this furniture because people recognize it." Oldworld charm may come through in the pieces at Artik, but it is newworld ideas that make them so appealing. (Artik, 560 Broadway, New York, NY 10012; 212-274-1320) ▲

Gallery owner Jonas Hillergren, <u>above left</u>, behind a chair by Mats Theselius. <u>Above:</u> John Kandell's chaise. <u>Left:</u> One of a pair of shelf units by Karin Tyrefors that together form an elliptical column of cowhide. In the background, Jonas Bohlin's zigzag Zink shelf, shown in six finishes, and his Concave lounge. <u>Below left:</u> Interlocking Wedding stools by Thomas Sandell. <u>Below right:</u> Table, chair, and Pilaster bookshelf by John Kandell.





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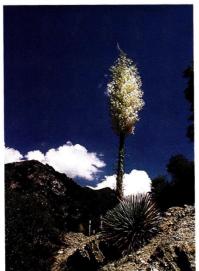
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## In the summer, guests ioin students of the San Francisco Zen Center, above, at Tassajara. Visitors swim in the pool, left, or downstream in a spot called the Narrows, below, and soak in the spring-fed tubs in the bathhouse, bottom.





Tassajara's gardens provide some of the ingredients for its epicurean vegetarian cuisine, above. Right: Yucca punctuates the rough terrain.



#### Four Star Zen

At the Tassajara spa, epicures transcend austerity

By SUSAN EDMISTON

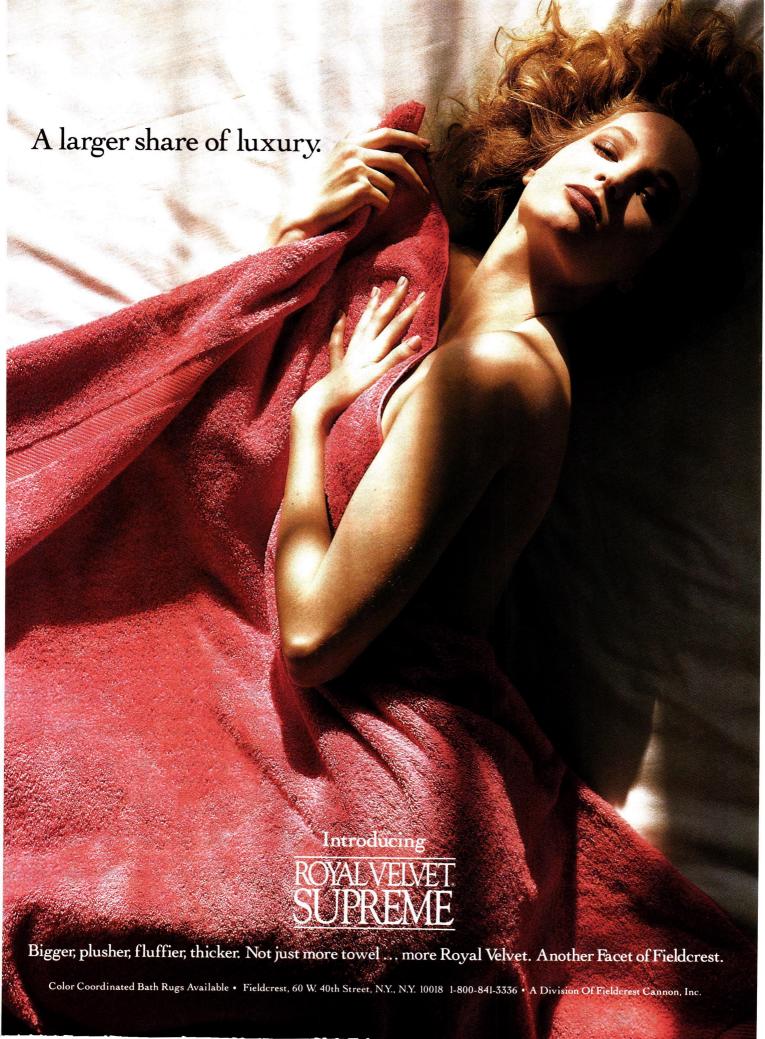
dirt road climbs into the Santa Lucia Mountains of the Los Padres National Forest—rugged peaks dotted with yucca, wild buckwheat, sagebrush, madrone, and clusters of live oaks—then plunges precipitously to the Tassajara hot springs. It was here that the Japanese monk Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, a founder of American Buddhism, established the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in 1967 as a retreat for the community he had started in San Francisco. The following summer Tassajara opened its gates to guests. The result was an oxymoron, a monastic spa, which gave birth, in turn, to an epicurean vegetarian cuisine.

Arriving from tiny Jamesburg, California, by "stagecoach," the community's four-wheel-drive vehicle, we enter Tassajara Canyon. The zendo, a large Japanesestyle meditation hall, rises above a complex of nineteenth-century stone buildings nestled on the bank of a winding creek: a two-room dining hall for guests, a kitchen, an office, a screened porch where the Zen community eats. Down the path to the right are the Stone Rooms, Tassajara's most elegant accommodations: one large suite and three smaller rooms overlooking the creek, all with patios, skylights, and slate floors. On the other side of the central complex, across a stone bridge, several dozen cabins are sprinkled among the trees, rustic redwood survivors from the 1920s and '30s. Three yurts, each with its own deck, overlook the gardens. The smallest one-room cabins house one or two people; the largest is a women's dormitory that sleeps four-accommodations for about eighty guests and an equal number of Zen monks and students.

Each room embodies the Zen aesthetic: simplicity, grace, and a concern for both beauty and usefulness. A redwood cabin has a rustic built-in desk and antique chair; a Japanese room, tatami on the floor, futons for beds, and ukiyo-e prints on the walls. Each cabin has a toilet and washbasin, but no electricity or hot water. At night kerosene lanterns provide light.

Beyond the cabins, at the foot of Flag Rock, lie the terraced Tassajara gardens. Rows of vegetables and beds of flowers flourish below a terrace planted with herbs—lovage, red flower oregano, lemon thyme, chives, rosemary, sage, and flowering marjoram.

The Tassajara day begins at 5:45 A.M., when a monk



runs through the community shaking a bell that sounds like the chirping of a thousand crickets. It is the first of a symphony of sounds—a gong, drum, and clacking wooden instrument called a han-that announce the events of the day at the zendo. At 6 A.M. a roll on the han calls the community to zazen, which guests may join. By 7 A.M. a deep rumble emerges from the zendo as the monks chant their prayers.

Most guests begin the day with a trip to the baths. Crossing the creek on a wooden bridge, sleepy people, towels draped around their necks, bow to an altar that holds a Buddha statue, a Japanese print of bathers, a single flower in a vase, and a calligraphed poem. The long stone bathhouse has two sections—one for women only, the other for men at certain hours but coed at others. Each side has a tiled communal bath as well as rooms with individual tubs fed by the springs and a natural steam room with lichen-covered rock walls. The ritual is a rinse in the shower, followed by a plunge into the 110-degree sulfurous bath; a few minutes sitting on mossy rocks in the cool shallow creek; a visit to the steam room; then a return to the showers, which are supplied with mint- and fruit-scented soaps and shampoos, loofah cloths, and pumice stones.

Breakfast is served at 9 A.M. at tables seating four to ten. The students serve guests family style, but gently discourage rushing. Each task is performed with Zen "mindfulness," a total involvement in the work at hand and a caring attention to detail.

This quality also permeates the remarkable food, which is vegetarian with only one concession: French and Italian cheeses made with rennet, an enzyme from cows' stomachs. The Tassajara cuisine evolved over the years in a dialectic with Greens, the premier vegetarian restaurant founded in San Francisco by the same Buddhist group. In Zen tradition the tenzo, or head cook, occupies a position of great responsibility and respect, performing the most

profound alchemy: food into life, life into food. Those who have assumed that responsibility at Tassajara-among them Greens head chef. Annie Somerville-have created what Somerville describes as a "labor-intensive cuisine of good colors, good textures, and clear flavors." Like Alice Waters of Berkeley's Chez Panisse, who occasionally buys organic produce from the Zen Center's Green Gulch Farm in Marin County and sometimes hires Zen students, Tassajara cooks hew to the credo that the best food comes from the simple and thoughtful preparation of excellent ingredients.

Meals at Tassajara are lavish and inventive—perhaps a baked polenta with maple syrup at breakfast, a Mediterranean soup based on tomato and lovage at lunch, and a manycourse dinner followed by sybaritic desserts-a rich moist chocolate cake with fresh raspberries or strawberries in crème anglaise.

For most of the season, guests may participate in workshops—poetry, gardening, cooking (I learned to make a wonderful pizza with Japanese eggplant, roasted pepper, niçoise olives, and basil), wilderness hiking, yoga, and Zen-or attend meditation sessions in the zendo. But many visitors simply visit the baths, swim in the Olympic-size pool, hike in the mountains, or walk downstream to an exquisite bathing place called the Narrows, where the creek forms a waterfall that splashes into a series of widening pools.

After dinner, guests may return to the baths once more or attend evening meditation. Finally, at 10:30, a runner knocks on the door of every cabin still showing light to make sure no one has fallen asleep with the lantern on. For all its austerity, Tassajara also provides its guests with luxuries: natural beauty, excellent food, and the pleasure of being in a community that is both orderly and benevolent. (The guest season runs from the end of April to the beginning of September; telephone reservations are accepted after April 17 at 415-431-3771.) **△** 



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WALKER ZANGER

n the spring of 1988, I met for the first time two extraordinary Moscow women, one a photographer and the other a conceptualist painter. Both of them lived in conditions of squalor that surpass the imagination of most Westerners. The painter was in a squat in a condemned building where the walls were literally falling down. Rats ran through the place by day and by night; there

was hot water in only one of twentyeight apartments in her building so that all the residents shared a single tub; she had no kitchen and made do with a single hot plate that never became warm enough to boil water. The photographer lived in what had once been a rather grand apartment in which she and a few randomly selected others had each been assigned a single room by the state; they shared a bathroom and kitchen. In the dark hallway, an unbearable stench hung like a curtain.

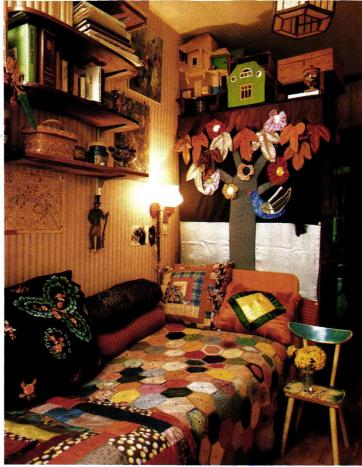
Just before Christmas 1990, I had dinner in Moscow with these two women. "I have a terrific carpenter," the

photographer told the painter. "If you can get the wood, he'll do really top-notch built-in shelves and closets for your new apartment. But I've been having one hell of a time finding decent furniture." The painter smiled. "I

have a good source for furniture," she said. "Maybe I'll come see your apartment sometime next week Perestroika

and you can come and see mine, and we'll see what we can work out." The word is coming home to for reconstruction in Russian is perestroika, and several of my friends in apartment dwellers Moscow reported having made some "real perestroika" at home. "And thank God," one of them said to me, "I've got someone better than Gorbachev for the job."

To understand the attitude toward the home in the pre-Gorbachev USSR, you have to recognize the extent of people's disdain for their government. There were al-



### **Soviet Real Life**

Private ownership inspires a decorative revolution at home

BY ANDREW SOLOMON

in the USSR

Patchwork and embroidery by three generations in an apartment outside Moscow.

most no private residences in the cities of the Soviet Union until glasnost; with the exception of a few cooperative buildings organized largely by unions, apartments were the property of the state. People lived in unbelievably foul conditions because they refused to spend their limited money, time, and energy fixing up state property. I argued the point dozens of times. "If you live here," I would say, "and will continue to live here for the rest of

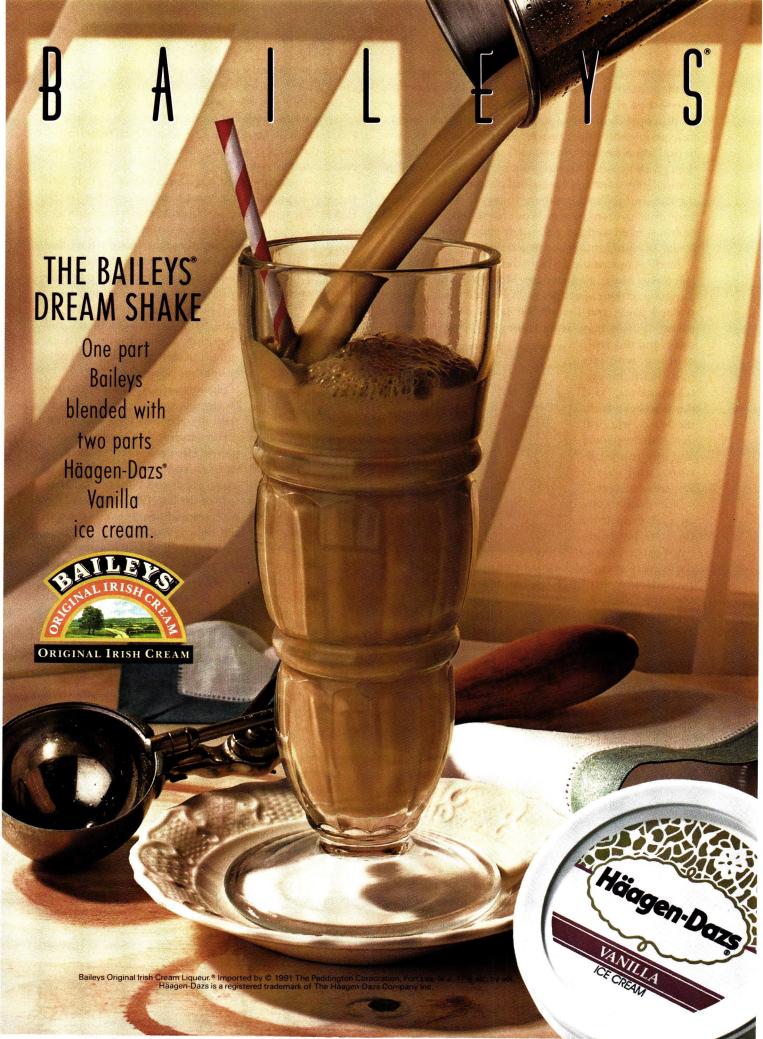
your life, then surely it's worth trying to make things more comfortable." This concept was absolutely lost on most of the people to whom I addressed it. Of course, it is important to bear in mind that getting paint, brushes, plumbing supplies, or even household cleansers is not an easy job in the Soviet Union. It could take months of effort and vast expense to paint your walls, or even to scrub properly a filthy room.

People's relationships to their apartments have been altogether transformed since the Soviet government announced in 1989 that it would sell state-owned apartments to residents who wished to buy them. "If it's our government," the smart alecks said, "then they are already our apartments. For us to buy them from ourselves is an absurd business." Nonetheless, Soviet citizens started inquiring how they might negotiate with the bureaucracy for official ownership.

How to value an apartment that has never before been sold in a country in which there is no market? Official valuers were appointed. Various papers were drawn up to serve as title deeds and evidence of transfer of title, though who would recognize these

one's guess. A rule was instituted that said it was not possible to buy someone else's apartment—where would the someone else go?—but allowed that if you bought your

deeds under what circumstances was any-



own apartment, you could then give it to someone else.

Chaos ensued. Official valuers visited those people who wished to buy their own apartments—but of course most people didn't want to buy their own apartments; most people hated their own apartments. So the trick was to find someone else who would buy his apartment and then give it to you. This was, understandably, a tricky operation. The safest bet was to find people who were leaving the country and get them to buy their apartments and "give" them to you for Western currency that could be transferred to them after their emigration. This was illegal, of course, but it was negotiable.

All these operations fell into the hands of the inescapable Soviet Mafia. I assisted two Moscow friends with the purchase of their apartments. We would meet in an appointed place, and I would be introduced around the room: "This is Ivan, from whom I will buy my apart-

ment, and this is his brother, who has come to witness our transaction, and this is Robert, from the Mafia, who will deal with the papers and any complications, and this is Robert's assistant."

The price to buy an apartment from the state has been, by Western stan-

dards, very very low. Last autumn you could pick up a th pretty good apartment for 4,000 rubles, about \$200 at the universal black-market exchange rate. The apartment could then be turned over for payment in the

West of \$5,000 to \$8,000 in hard currency, plus payments to the Mafia. Once you have your own apartment, you pay maintenance charges of 5 to 10 rubles a month (25 cents to 50 cents).

All these developments depend on a new wealthy class to whom \$200 or \$7,000 are affordable sums—a class that includes those painters, architects, designers, and writers who are lionized by the West (and paid in hard currency for their work) as well as the Mafia.

Months to get remarks to ge

There is a new economy of the home created by these groups. Mafia members have lousy taste; to cater to them, cooperatives have been set up to supply badly made gilded baroque furniture, phony antiques, and fake Western household supplies. But a country in which artists and writers have suddenly become wealthy is a country in which house decoration has a chance to take off. To cater to the intelligentsia, antiques stores have started selling furniture—not available for export—at high ruble prices. One store by the Moscow River has been holding weekly auctions, and these have become more and more popular. Furniture that members of a

vanished aristocracy had kept in dachas in the country since the revolution has been brought out of storage, dusted off, and sold. I saw a sale entirely of old clocks, some of them enameled and spectacular in the style of Fabergé. "Who knows where this stuff has come from?" one of the buyers said to me. "People had all kinds of secrets in the Stalin days."

Contemporary design has also taken off. Yuriy Sluchevskiy is probably the top furniture designer in the USSR. "For years and years," he told me, "I would design one-off prototypes. The factories would mutilate my designs when they tried to put them into production, and because I had built my prototypes with materials that I

When most city apartments were state property, no one fixed spaces like this communal kitchen. could get only from the Stroganov Institute of Design, where I was teaching, they belonged to the state. They would be exhibited and then they would disappear, I assume into official residences. I never saw them again."

Sluchevskiy's work shows strong modernist influences, sometimes skillfully reinterpreted and sometimes rendered in awkward pastiches. His designs for wall units, though spare and clean, recall mass-produced American furniture of the late 1960s and '70s. But his freestanding pieces mix the spatial delicacy of Josef Hoffmann with the endless spatial conceits of

the constructivists, creating effects of depth against what is in fact shallow or conflating the scale of the various elements into a single piece. And Sluchevskiy's feeling for materials gives his work great clarity.

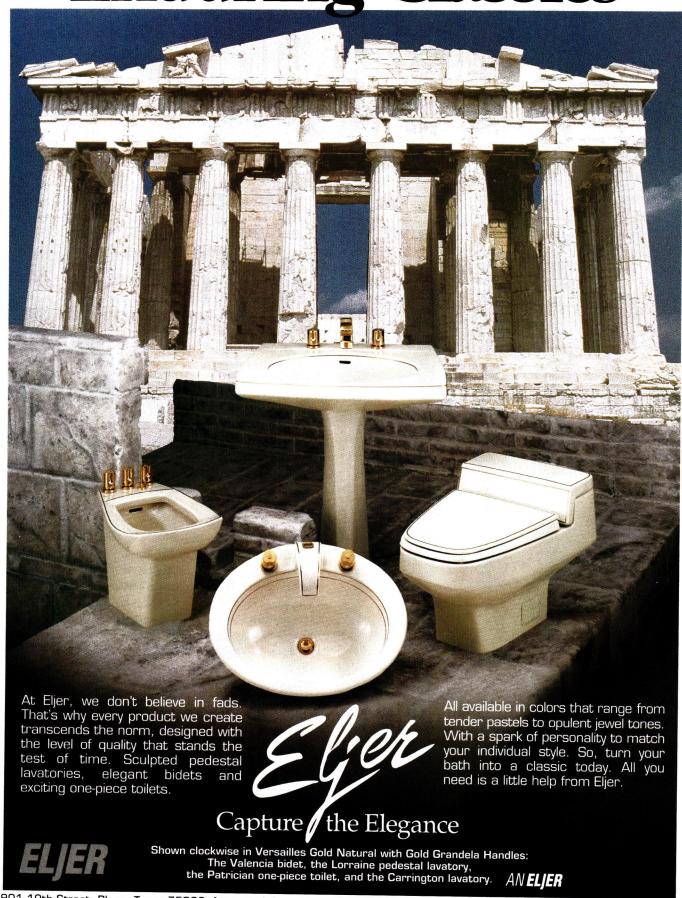
Now Sluchevskiy is trying to make arrangements with a cooperative to build his designs so he can sell them. He faces various impediments. There are few skilled workmen; materials are in very short supply; and there is no way of advertising that he is in business, no wall way to inform people of his activity except by word of mouth. Still, Moscow

society is used to functioning in terms of word of mouth.

Of course, it is still nearly impossible in the USSR to get a painter to do your walls. Construction supplies are almost unavailable, and most of the buildings are in horrendous structural condition. What could I say to a Moscow friend who asked me where I would begin on his apartment? I would get the plumbing and electrical system redone; I would pull down the crumbling plaster and have new walls built; I would get the moldings stripped and restored; I would start from scratch with the kitchen and bathrooms; and then I would decorate. "I know someone who can help me to get enough paint to paint two walls of the living room," he said. "Which two walls would you do to begin with?"

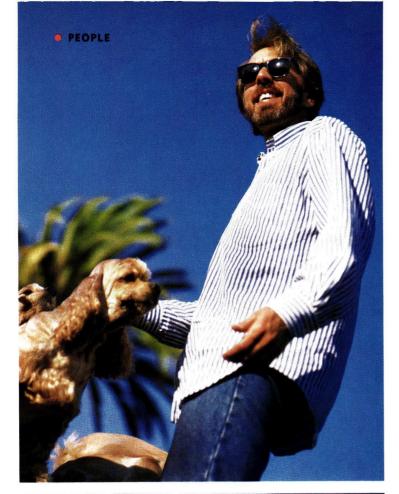


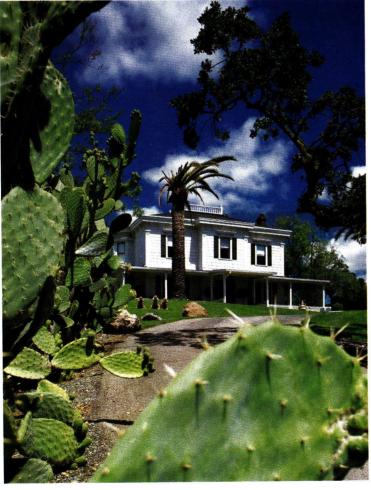
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#### Sonoma Scenario

Impresario Steve Silver writes his own script for life in the country By GEORGE CHRISTY

go to Sonoma to see. Sunsets, lawns and meadows, porch swings, and shaggy dogs," says Steve Silver, the forty-seven-year-old impresario responsible for San Francisco's longest-running hit show. His musical satire, Beach Blanket Babylon, which he wrote, directed, designed, and produced, has been playing nonstop in North Beach for seventeen years. Constantly updated

with caricatures of newsmakers (Barbara Bush portrayed as a bush with pearls), Silver's extravaganza draws crowds of locals and tourists and such international figures as Queen Elizabeth, Prince Philip, and Beverly Sills, who once said she wishes she lived in San Francisco "so I could see [the show] more."

Summer weekends, Silver retreats from the hubbub of his life in San

Francisco to a hilltop in Sonoma, where he shares an idyllic early Victorian with four cocker spaniels. "The place is historic," notes Silver. "It was built in the 1850s and is thought to have belonged to General Vallejo's daughter Lovita." Sonoma, an hour's drive from the Golden Gate Bridge, is as far as Sil-

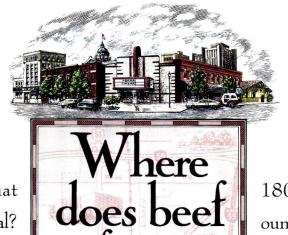
front of his majestic hilltop retreat, left. Above: In the living room, sisal, linen, and lacquer surfaces temper the summer heat. Overstuffed armchairs are in a Brunschwig stripe. **Details see Resources.** ver likes to travel. "Napa becomes a commitment with that additional half hour," he says. "Sonoma is just a commute. Besides, Sonoma's not as social as Napa with its winery tycoons. What you see here are RVs, pickup

Silver, above left, in

The house was an architectural patchwork by the time Silver took it over in 1987 and began taking things away. Gone is the broken-down porch, the flooded laundry room, the carport that "looked like it was made out of toothpicks," and the plastic swimming pool (now replaced by a white-tiled pool that stretches fifty feet). The landscaping, too, had seen better days. "We found rotting trees and barren lawns. They say the rain in Sonoma

trucks, and old boats in people's backyards."





diet

exactly is Normal?

Well, it's an average Illinois town 35 miles east of Peoria.

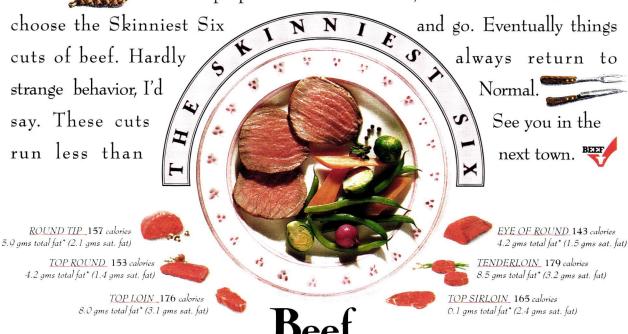
Which makes it extremely normal.

Here in Normal, people enjoy a variety of foods, including lean beef. The reasons are pretty obvious. A well-balanced diet means well-adjusted adults. Normal people also

180 calories for three ounces.\* Now you know where beef fits in the diet. On the right side of the plate next to the vegetables.

You see, ordinary folks

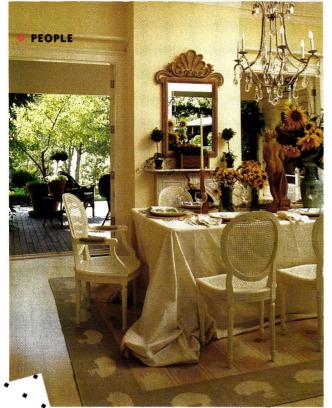
ignore food crazes. They prefer a more balanced, moderate approach. Everything from carrots and cranberries to wild rice and lean beef. Remember, outlandish diets come



\*Sources: USDA Handbook 8-13 1990 Rev., U.S. RDA National Research Council 1089, 10th Edition.
Figures are for a cooked and trimmed 3 oz. serving. 4 oz. uncooked yield 3 oz. cooked. ©1991 Beef Industry Council and Beef Board.

Real food for real people.







The serenity is punctuated by Silver's flair for offbeat drama



makes the grapes grow; it must also make the rocks grow. We dynamited for weeks to clear space for the garden." With the help of landscape architect Edward Nicolaus, Silver then blanketed his three and a

half acres with greenery and flowers. Thickets of cactus line the drive, two towering palms stand sentry opposite the front door, and the surrounding property is home to dozens of forty-foot oaks and a hundred olive trees trucked in to enhance the lushness.

Silver tackled the interior of his house with the help of San Francisco decorator Gary Hutton, who bleached the oak floors and layered the rooms with cool understated colors, crisp cottons, and spare furniture. The look is one of simplicity and ease, but there are hints of Silver's flair

for offbeat drama—for example, he dresses his dining room table with a painter's drop cloth. When it's soiled he simply puts vases of flowers on top of the spots. "Sometimes they're tall sunflowers and people complain that they can't see across the table, but I subscribe to the Frank Lloyd Wright theory that you should work for your view."

Glorious views, nonetheless, come easily from just about every perch on the property—a fact not lost on Silver's friends, who flock up his hill on the Fourth of July to take in the fireworks across the valley. And every September, during the annual Vintage Festival that follows the grape harvest, Silver stages a lunch. Last year's guests included

Bob Lurie, who owns the San Francisco Giants, Ann Getty, and Charlotte Mailliard Swig, San Francisco's chief of protocol—"All dog people, like me," says Silver, "so I served our meal in dog dishes." Tended by a caretaker, the cocker spaniels happily remain in Sonoma, where they can romp year-round. But after Halloween, Silver prefers to stay put in the city. "That's when the weather starts to turn cold," he says. "And I won't go anywhere that's colder than San Francisco." 

\*\*Editor: Joyce MacRae\*\*

Sonoma ease extends to the dining room, top left, where the table is draped with a painter's drop cloth. Top: Breakfast on a poolside terrace. Above left: The playbill for Silver's hit show. Above: Silver's study, shaded by a porch, is where he retreats to work on his plays. Left: The four cocker spaniels in residence, plus a friend.





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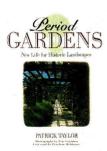
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# Backward and Upward in the Garden

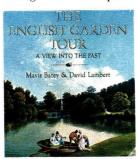
Princely parterres and grandma's peonies bloom again on the printed page By Patricia Thorpe



t is natural in a recession to feel nostalgia for a more opulent past. Most garden lovers, regardless of their financial condition, realize that no matter what turn the economy takes in the future, we will never be able to create gardens on the scale that they were made one hundred years ago. The best we can hope to do is preserve and admire the ones that are left to us. Perhaps that is why many of the most appealing new books this spring share an interest in the gardens of the past. At a time when our ability to make extravagant gardens has declined, our capacity for immortalizing old gardens in extravagant new books has increased enormously.

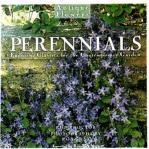
Patrick Taylor's Period Gardens (Atlantic Monthly Press, \$39.95) is a fine example of how good these books can be. Taylor made an important decision in limiting his selection of gardens to twelve, starting in the seventeenth century with Hatfield House and concluding with Mount Stewart, a twentieth-century triumph in Northern Ireland. All are open to the public today; one, Monticello, is American. With this small number, Taylor has ample space in which to make the places specific and their stories memorable. He then moves easily from a particular garden into a discussion of the more general characteristics of the era or style each represents. Taylor is a graceful and engaging writer who does not refrain from well-aimed criticism where appropriate.

Another handsome and largescale book that overlaps Taylor's territory illustrates his wisdom in taking a narrow focus. **The English Garden Tour**, by Mavis Batey and David Lambert (Trafalgar Square, \$55), began with an interesting idea: garden touring has been a part of En-



glish life since the seventeenth century, and many tourists left written accounts of what they saw. We can visit Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1712 with Joseph Addison and later with Gibbon or Repton, see Hampton Court as John Evelyn or Daniel Defoe knew it. Apparently once the authors got digging in the sources, they could not bear to deprive us of their discoveries, even though in many cases the quotations are of little historical or literary interest. The quotes are clipped into tiny snippets strung together with a dense historical outline. Over fifty gardens are covered, but long before reaching the eighteenth century the presentday tourist is likely to be lost in a dizzying swirl of dates and dukes, wondering who put the rhododendrons in and who took them out.

For a closeup look at the plants to be found in period gardens, turn to a new series. A few years ago we had Antique Flowers by Katherine Whiteside and now, from a different publisher, there are Antique Flowers: Perennials and Antique Flowers: Annuals (Harper Collins, \$29.95 each), both written by Rob Proctor and photographed by Rob Gray. There is a brief historical survey by



way of introduction, but the books are primarily plant portraits with a history of each species, nicely written, amusing and anecdotal, and loaded with horticultural trivia. At times it is hard to understand the selections: why sisyrinchium but no peonies, and was *Phygelius capensis* really such a favorite at the turn of the century? But the lovely photographs argue persuasively that plants with a past have a place in the gardens of today and tomorrow.

Laura Martin, in her new book, Grandma's Garden (Longstreet Press, \$12.95), investigates a much more limited and recent past and brings that past to vivid life. This is not a distant history of grand estates but a lively picture of home gardens just yesterday in America. Grandma's garden could have been made anytime from the 1880s to the 1930s, but it is not a time period so much as an attitude that Martin evokes-gardening in small towns or rural areas was as central to home and social life as religion. The book is organized by seasons and contains straightforward listings of old-fashioned plants with descriptions and lore and cultural information, as well as ample instruction in those garden arts our grandmas may have neglected to pass along: waxing flowers or mak-

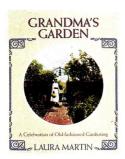


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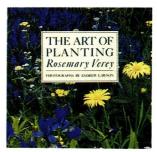
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ing peach leather, planting by the planets or fashioning beads from rose petals. The black and white illustrations, many archival photographs from the South, are a charming and funny antidote to Kodachrome overkill.



As all roads lead to Rome, so all garden history taken back far enough brings us to Italy. But lest we think all Italian gardens were made in the past, there is a new book to proclaim The Renaissance of Italian Gardens, by Lorenza de' Medici (Fawcett Columbine, \$35). According to Medici, there has been a wonderful rebirth in the past forty years, with old gardens brought to life, new gardens springing up, and all enlivened by high levels of horticultural sophistication. Now this would be news indeed, since Italian gardens from Roman days have been characterized by a magnificent architectural sense of space and a complete lack of interest in plants for their own sake. In spite of Medici's effusions to the contrary, it is clear from the book that nothing has changed. The gorgeous photographs by John Ferro Sims illustrate that there are places of overwhelming beauty in Italy but convey very little of what the gardens are like, except to show that if you have a picturesque Roman tower or fourteenth-century stone archways, even begonias can be rescued from banality. Although the text bristles with italic binomials, most turn out to be nothing more exotic than Pachysandra terminalis or Pelargonium graveolens. Binomials of greater importance to Medici are those attached to the owners of the gardens, an inordinate number of whom are marchese and marchesa, conte and contessa, barone or principe.



Rosemary Verey pulls us back to the present with The Art of Planting (Little, Brown, \$40), which might be the best book she has done. There are no easy answers to the question, how do you put plants together in a garden? In any event, Verey's text would be the last place to find a straight answer to anything; it meanders, plucking topics here and there, then dropping them and heading off in another direction. All that is beside the point. In close cooperation with her talented photographer, Andrew Lawson, Verey succeeds in making us see the flowers, see how texture and tone and scale all play a part in countless breathtaking combinations. The highly detailed photographs are not merely beautiful; they are remarkable for their exploration of the many subtleties that make a garden an always changing but enduring form of art.

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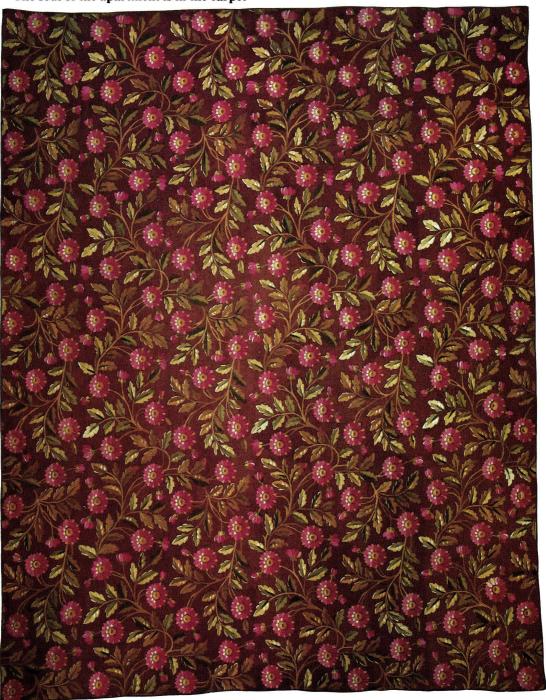


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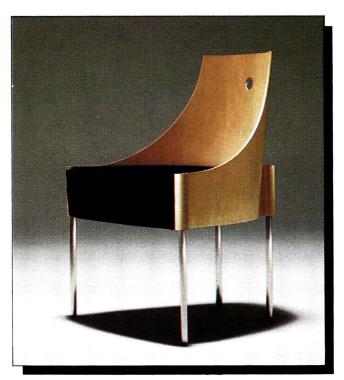
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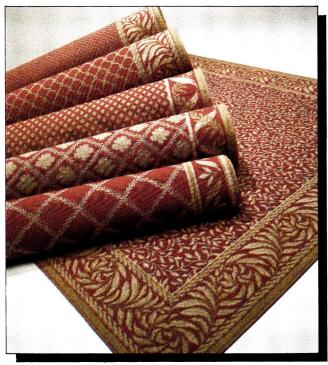


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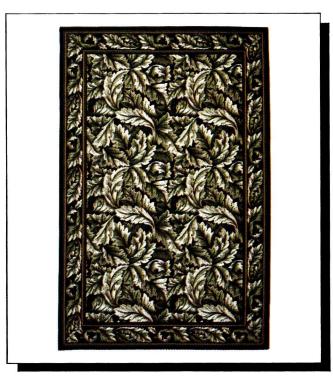
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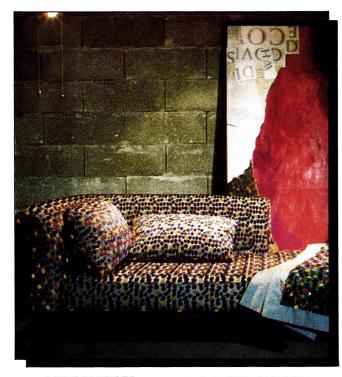
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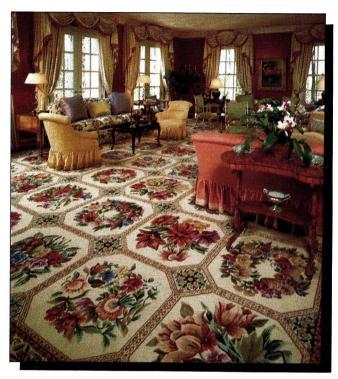
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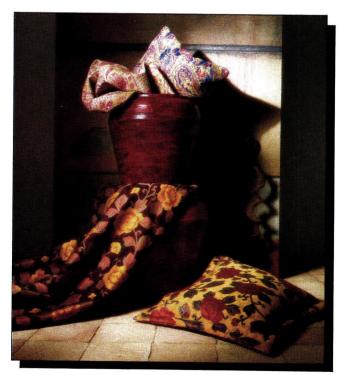




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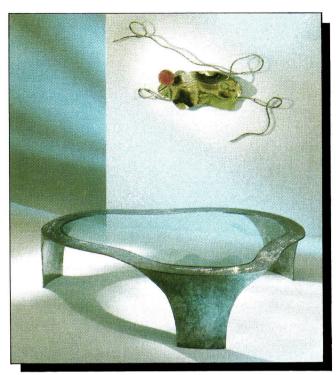


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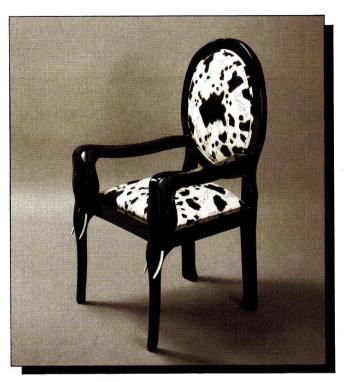
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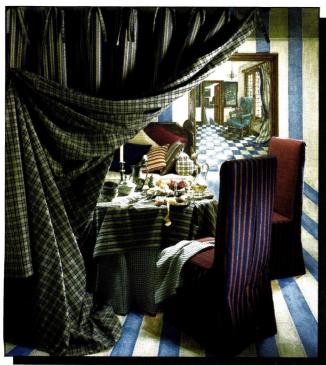


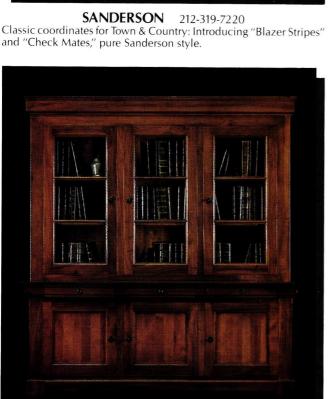
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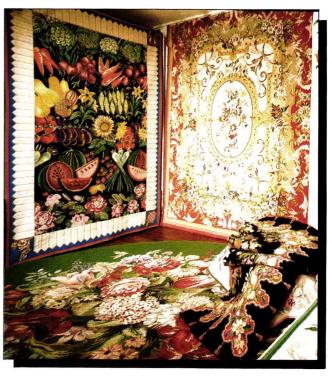




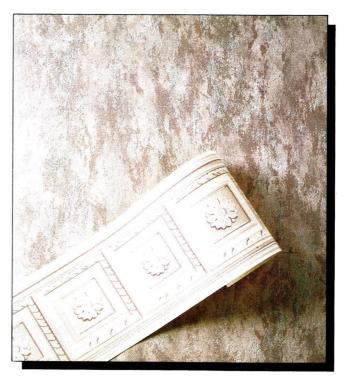


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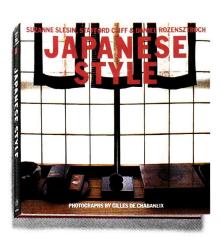
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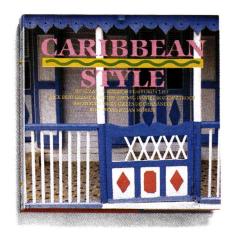


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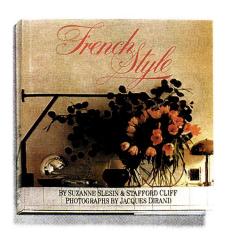


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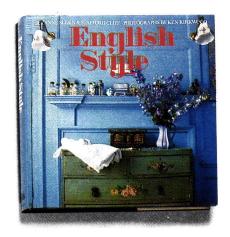
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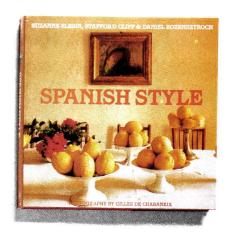
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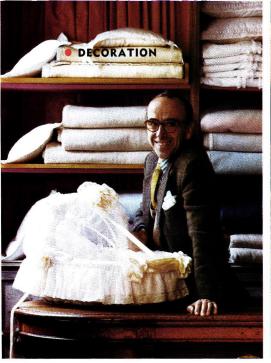
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#### Threads of Time

French designer Christian Benais weaves an ever-changing world By Marcelle Clements

Christian Benais in his boutique, top

left. Top right: On a large sofa his Freha
damask, pleated and rolled. Above: Benais's
Napoléon III salon with an unusual open-work
double bench. Benais fabrics available from
Boussac of France. Details see Resources.

hristian Benais's work marks a curious turning point in the endless zigzag of Franco-American aesthetic exchanges. "I adore the idea of ephemeral decoration," says the French decorator and fabric designer. As if to illustrate his remark, Benais's apartment on the rue Jouffroy is about to undergo one of its periodic transformations, and much of its furnishings are grouped or scattered in wild transitional disarray. The office-workroom is still stable, but the rest of the apartment seems to defy the laws of physics: large plants, small gilded objects, armchairs, fragile tables, nineteenth-century busts, and eighteenth-century chests float around the spacious rooms waiting to alight in some unaccustomed spot or to be pitilessly hauled out to make way for the new scheme. Yet it's been only a year since the last upheaval.

"I felt like a change," Benais explains with matter-of-fact gentility. "And I love things that can be changed easily, like cushions, of course, or throws on a sofa, but I also

think of curtains as temporary."

Before setting out on his own as a decorator, Benais served a long apprenticeship designing thousands of fabrics for such houses as Dior, Lanvin, and Per Spook. In 1986 he took over as designer of the Chotard collection, which has since become highly touted in France. On the long wooden table that presides over the office-workroom, samples from Benais's new line of fabrics entice the eye with their opulent textures. They are mostly damasks—his signature design-richly elaborate weaves in the hues of precious stones, ruby red, emerald green, sapphire blue. "It was only after I was finished designing that I realized they were the colors of jewels," says Benais, looking as if he's still somewhat puzzled by this notion. He often wears an ingenuous air, as if he's forever discovering an idea or an object or a color; it's easy to see why the French press so often likens him to a late nineteenth century aesthete. Benais bristles somewhat at the label, however. "I'm a modernist," he says firmly, "by virtue of the scope of my needs."

And also, of course, by virtue of his willingness to be infinitely flexible. As Boussac distributes this year's Chotard collection in the United States, his ideas continue to find their place in the country that made transience a stylistic exigency in the first place. France, on the other

**62 HG** JUNE 1991

## IN THE ENCHANTED GARDEN OF SHERLE WAGNER, YOU'LL FIND MORE THAN A MORNING GLORY.



Little wonder the fairest in every field consider Sherle Wagner the fairest in his.

Or that they transplant his international beauties into every villa, chateau, yacht and abode they abide in.

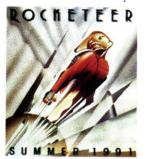
The exquisite porcelain beauty shown here is a perennial favorite. And while it will bloom unendingly before your very eyes, you'll be glad to know it requires very little tending. Sherle Wagner, 60 East 57th Street, New York, NY. 10022.

## SHERLE WAGNER NOTHING IS SO RARE AS PERFECTION.

The 1930s were golden years for Los Angeles architecture. The city's traditional Spanish style was making way for the modernism of Frank Lloyd Wright and Richard Neutra as well as a flood of fantasy architecture, with shops and restaurants shaped like dogs, boats, and even flowerpots.

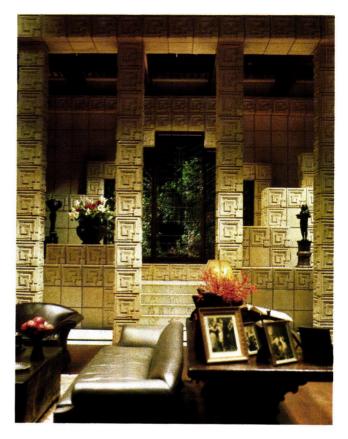
This era is vividly recalled in Walt Disney Pictures' *The Rocketeer*, which opens this month. The action adventure film, directed by Joe Johnston (*Honey*, *I Shrunk the Kids*), is based on Dave Stevens's comic book of the same name, complete with good guys, bad guys, and a mysterious rocket pack. Production designer Jim Bissell, whose credits include *E.T.*, *Someone to Watch Over Me*, and *Arachnophobia*, says that the "period fantasy aspect" gave him, director of photography Hiro Narita, and art director Chris Burian-Mohr a "tremendous amount of leeway to create evocative imagery" with buildings and interiors.

The contrasting visual messages of the architecture also help to delineate the film's characters. "This is a very sophisticated cartoon," Bissell explains. "You have the opportunists in one camp, the sincere guys in another." After a hard day at their Charles Lindbergh/Amelia Ear-



hart—style airfield, the good-guy aviators repair to the Bulldog Café. Based on an actual piece of 1930s Los Angeles fantasy architecture that appears in the comic strip, the film version of the café is a diner endowed with a richly detailed interior that is about as vernacular American—and therefore as populist—as can be imagined.

The movie's archvillain, on the other hand, inhabits a sumptuously modern bachelor pad (modeled after Frank Lloyd Wright's Ennis house) that is intended, says Bissell, to evoke "Hollywood slickness." A major shootout takes place in the art deco South Seas Club, a night spot so splashy that its glamour is off-putting. And representing the American Dream to which our hero aspires is the sleek office of a competitor for the rocket pack, Howard Hughes. Patterned after the office Donald Deskey designed for Radio City Music Hall's Samuel "Roxy" Rothafel, Hughes's headquarters is housed, appropriately enough, in an airplane hangar.



## Character Buildings

Architecture plays a
starring role in Disney's
The Rocketeer
By Pilar Viladas



The sets for Disney's action adventure
The Rocketeer, left, include the down-home Bulldog Café, above; the elegant
Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired house, top; the swank South
Seas Club, bottom center; and the sleek offices of Howard
Hughes, bottom left and bottom right.



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# Merrill Stenbeck and Ande Phipps, above, fill Valley House with their finds, from a castiron lamp, below left, to a Swedish mahogany table, c. 1840, a pillow with a crewelwork dog, and a Regency-style table with painted top, below right. Right: At Oster-Jensen, a Swedish chair, c. 1820, an American horn stool, and a mahogany sofa.



#### The Lure of Locust Valley

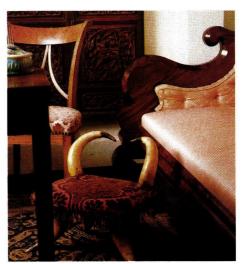
A few blocks offer antiques hunters a wealth of choices

BY BOB FELNER

LOCUST VALLEY, IN THE heart of Long Island's Gold Coast, is small enough—to have a single traffic light on its busiest street. But for its size, this North Shore village has a remarkable concentration of antiques shops, at least

ten establishments of varying quality and character in the two or three blocks along Birch Hill Road and Forest Avenue. Setting out from the Long Island Rail Road station and ambling from one shop to another makes for a wonderful day of shopping in a country setting.

Oster-Jensen Antiques Robert Jensen began as a furniture restorer for the large estates in the area. Now he and his wife, Susan, stock their fifteen-year-old shop with furniture they buy locally, sometimes from the same Long Island gentry. Their range is fairly broad, from American country and federal style to English Georgian and Regency, with a sprinkling of European pieces as well. A massive William IV armchair with a



columnar splat back and green upholstered arms and seat fills the front of the small shop—testimony to Susan Jensen's taste. "I've seen too many straight legs. I like a little carving, a little whoop-de-do in the pieces," she says. Occasional chairs—one mahogany example opens into library steps—and sets of dining chairs are plentiful. The Jensens have their own restoration facility nearby. (86 Birch Hill Rd., Locust Valley, NY 11560; 516-676-5454) Valley House Antiques My favorite spot in the village is Valley House Antiques, opened nearly seven years ago by a trio of weary decorators and frustrated shoppers. The shop is arranged like a house, with completely outfitted rooms full of decorative objects that partners Merrill Stenbeck and Ande Phipps discover on their shopping expeditions in Scandinavia, Western Europe, and the United States.

This is the place to find a stunning variety of lamps and lampshades—trimmed and untrimmed; silk and parchment; pleated, shirred, poufed, and ruched. Among the standouts are massive brass Swedish ship's lamps, both standing and desk size, that are made for the shop in Stockholm. The selection of odd and wonderful upholstered chairs, pillows, and carpets couldn't be better. I fell in love with the late nineteenth century Russian carpets Merrill brought back from Sweden—Savonneriestyle pile carpets of various sizes and shapes in black with red roses and other floral designs.

Valley House also features an interesting assortment of toleware, tabletop-size wooden items, and book-related objects (bookends, bookmarks, book-shaped boxes, and the like)—not rare, perhaps, but endowed with the



McHugh carries n

tables, linen presses, and sets of dining chairs. Locust Valley veterans—they've been in this spot for twenty-seven years—the Knights handle both American and English antiques from before 1840; they shop in Europe as well as throughout the United States. Like Robert Jensen, Raymond Knight began as a restorer. His wife specializes in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Chinese export porcelain, especially famille rose. "I love flowers," Diane Knight explains. "Most of the things I buy and sell are based on flower motifs." (121 Birch Hill Rd., Locust Valley, NY 11560; 516-671-7046)

Treasured Times The Thoms sisters rightly call their shop the "antiques supermarket." Where else can you find sterling silver, linens, Depression glass, baseball cards, jukeboxes, Coca-Cola memorabilia, sconces, glass doorknobs, and an entire collection of nineteenth-century patent models? The prices are good,

Chinese export porcelain, a mid 18th century giltwood console table, and a George III armchair at Raymond Knight, right. Far right:
Oster-Jensen's gilded bronze andiron. Below: Elizabeth McHugh of Epel & Company. Bottom: In her shop, a Second Empire daybed and a Regency wine cooler.

# Wile Code!

#### McHugh carries no Victoriana—

#### and no chairs too fragile to sit on

softness that comes with age.

I once witnessed the "Valley Housing" of a customer's living room. Merrill, Ande, and Patsy Warner (who provides an in-house decorating service) descended on the room, putting up pictures, rolling and unrolling carpets, rehanging mirrors, plumping pillows, and pushing sofas and tables and chairs about. It was not a scene for the faint of heart. (182 Birch Hill Rd., Locust Valley, NY 11560; 516-671-2847)

Raymond B. Knight, Antiques Raymond and Diane Knight's two-story 4,000-square-foot shop is jammed with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century bookcases, sideboards, side

and everything that should work does. Don't miss the Pine Room, a somewhat overwhelming assemblage of pine furniture from almost everywhere. (49 Birch Hill Rd., Locust Valley, NY 11560; 516-759-2010)

Epel & Company Elizabeth McHugh's Epel & Company specializes in eighteenth and early nineteenth century furniture, mostly English. There is no Victoriana here; McHugh does not handle anything later than William IV. She says she "likes to sell to private clients. I want people to know it's my eye, my talent, and my time."

McHugh confides that she was brought up with period Louis furniture and detests it: "It's for living in palaces and not to be sat upon." Her preference is for sturdy furniture that is delicate in feeling. She particularly favors Regency, and the shop has many fine examples, including a wonderful dresser, a bookcase-secretary, and a small wicker upholstered side chair. She is also partial to eighteenth-century French mirrors. A series of Piranesi engravings of Pompeian walls—large plates, each with two images, from late eighteenth and early nineteenth century first editions—are set off by handsome frames hand-painted in Munich. (108 Forest Ave., Locust Valley, NY 11560; 516-676-7695)

George A. Erb Books What one shopkeeper calls the "wacky man's bookstore" is a local landmark. According to his wife, who runs Country Bumpkin Antique Shop in the old general store, George Erb is a Scorpio—"born the same day as Picasso"—who would rather hunt and fish than talk about the stock on his shelves.

Nonetheless, Erb's is a great source for first editions and out-of-print books, from novels to art books to volumes on hunting and fishing. Leather bindings are uniformly high quality as well as high-priced. (28 Birch Hill Rd., Locust Valley, NY 11560; 516-671-0688)



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ROMAN STRIPE - Printed Cotton







Glimpses of glamour.
Clockwise from
top left: Flowery
hatbox chandelier;
town house façade
with 1912 Lalique
glass; François
Catroux's lingerie
salon; wroughtiron and glass dome
crowning the atrium;
the Pellé-designed
Salon de Thé.

CHINA TEAPOTS DRESS A WALL, GEMSTONE GRAPES dangle from a chandelier, and fuchsia velvet lines a gilded alcove at the new Henri Bendel store on Fifth Avenue. Architects Beyer Blinder Belle restored turn-of-the-century town house façades and devised a succession of boutiques where the design flourishes are seemingly endless. It's art deco gone to a costume ball. And it's unmistakably elegant. The limestone and marble atrium, lit by original windows of Lalique glass, was conceived with the help of Marie-Paule Pellé, Bendel "muse" and creative director of Condé Nast Traveler, who had in mind the grands magasins of prewar Paris. Decorator François Catroux quilted a plush lingerie salon in dusty rose satin and fashioned a sleek designer boutique out of black granite and faux shagreen. The tented and tasseled children's department was conjured up by the Limited's vice president of design, James Mansour, who was responsible for the overall look: luxury meets whimsy to create pure fantasy.



BY WENDY GOODMAN

Behind landmark town house façades, the new Bendel's redefines Fifth Avenue splendor



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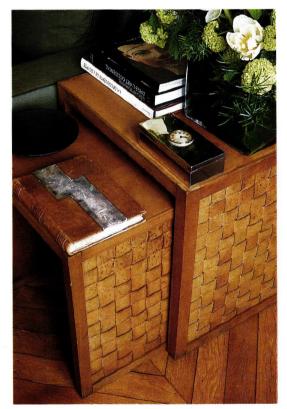


## J Editor's Page

#### IN THE VERY MATERIAL WORLD of decoration, it is not odes but chairs inspired by Grecian urns that concern us-hence the story in this month's HG on T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, the mid twentieth century furniture designer, decorator, and interpreter of antiquity. William Kent, Robert Adam, and the Jacobs are among the masters of the design pantheon who imbued classical mo-

tifs with a sense of immediacy; if Gibby's brilliance existed on a more modest scale, his pared-down classicism (no swirls or ormolu added to those Greek curves) makes him particularly relevant to the style of today. The Latin-born, New Orleans-based furniture designer Mario Villa achieves an inventive and contemporary variation on formal eighteenth-century themes with lamps, tables, and beds that are perfectly at home with his collection of religious art and giltwood furniture. Lenore Tawney draws on her own mysterious vision to create assemblages that convey a sense of history and enchantment. Betty Sherrill, the president of McMillen, inherited her mantle from the firm's legendary founder, Eleanor Brown. (With Mrs. Brown's death in January the decorating world lost one of its most persuasive exponents of classic style and taste.) For her own house in Southampton, Mrs. Sherrill placed the vibrant pleasures of family summers above the quieter rewards of the carefully edited decorating scheme. On the highly civilized shores of Lake Geneva, in Switzerland, the late

garden designer Lanning Roper reinterpreted an English walled garden for the potager at Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan's château. In his Paris apartment, musicianturned-designer Didier Gomez has given classicism a modernist and highly personal tone. And Valentino, with his couturier's eye for detail, has accented the classical proportions of his villa on Capri with a touch of fancy—showing that luxury and lightheartedness can be the rhythm and meter of style.

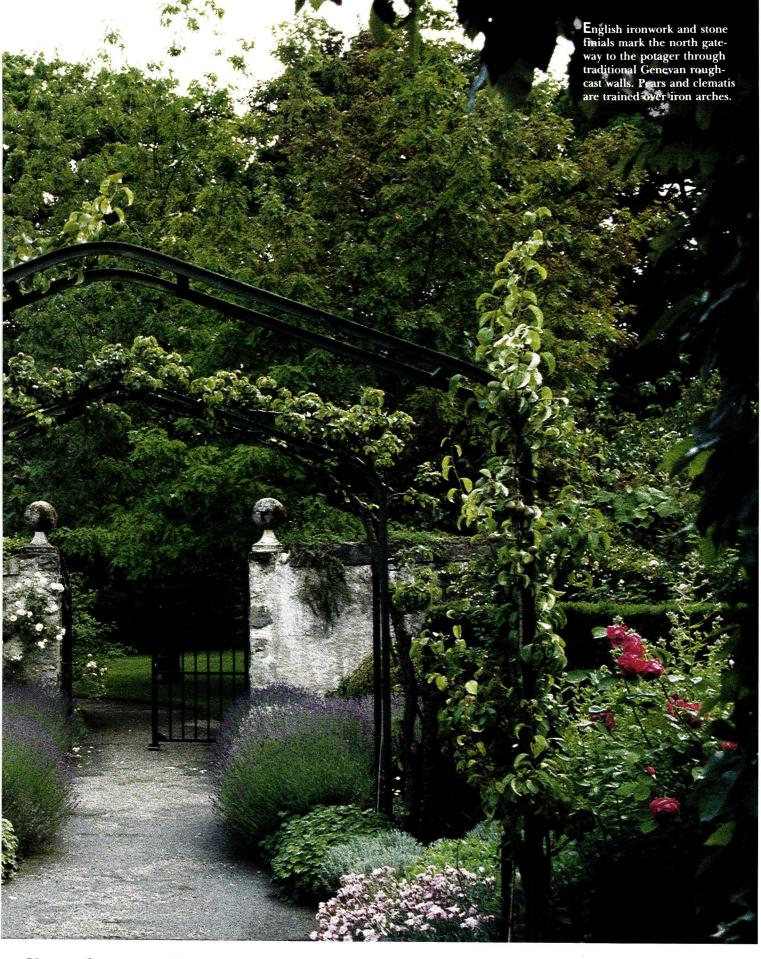


Jean Royère woven leather and wood tables, c. 1948, in Didier Gomez's Paris salon.

Many Morrograd

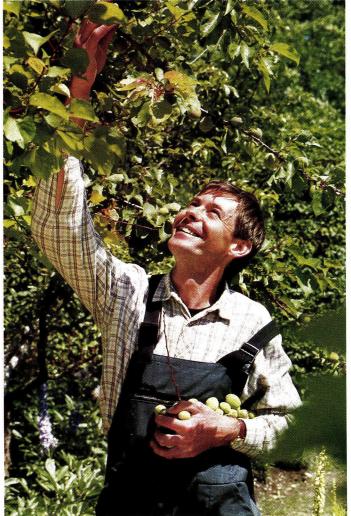


The Prince and the Potager



Near Geneva, Lanning Roper created a walled garden for Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. By Paula Deitz Photographs by Alexandre Bailhache





Gardener Philippe Cuendet, left, picks apricots. Above: Behind the herb and scent garden grapevines twine along crisscross poles. Opposite: A standard gooseberry anchors a corner planting.

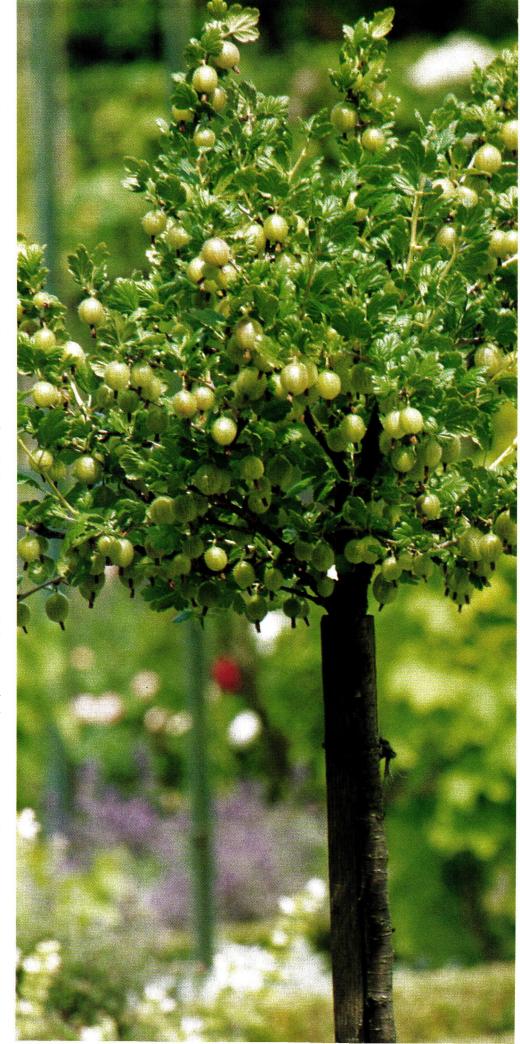
UCH AS THE DUKES OF Savoy did when they owned the Château de Bellerive in the seventeenth century, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the present chatelain, comes and goes across the waters of Lake Geneva. After lunch on the gravel terrace, he walks to a dock under the old poplar trees, boards his boat, and steers it down a canal between stone walls dripping with purple alyssum. He then heads out onto the lake, toward his office in a villa on the grounds of the Palais des Nations.

Born in Paris in 1933 as the younger son of Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, the prince became the founding publisher of *The Paris Review* in 1954, the same year he graduated from Harvard. Although he purchased the château at Collonge-Bellerive a year later, he did not go there to live until 1961. Since then, despite owning a plantation in Vir-

ginia and properties in Kenya, Senegal, and Greece, the prince has made the château his home and Geneva the center of his professional life. From 1965 to 1977 he was the United Nations high commissioner for refugees, and until recently he was the personal representative of the secretary general for humanitarian assistance relating to the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait. His Bellerive Foundation, also in Geneva, specializes in environmental issues such as reforestation and protecting the Alps.

As described in a chronicle of its 360 years as a château, the former convent at Collonge-Bellerive has the "restrained utilitarian character...of traditional Savoyard construction." That is to say, its beauty lies in plain stucco walls, iron balconies, dark green shutters, and a tile roof that curves upward slightly at the eaves. Massive square towers suggest that the château may have served as a fortress when the dukes of Savoy were at odds with the Calvinist citizens of Geneva. Only five miles from the city, the town of Collonge-Bellerive retains its rural landscape, and narrow roads like country lanes are overgrown with greenery and lined with orchards.

Already in place when the prince acquired Bellerive was a formal box and rose parterre designed for the previous owners by Russell Page. "But what I wanted," the prince recently recalled, "was an English walled garden and a flower border along the old entrance wall by the lake that I could see from my windows." He met the American landscape designer Lanning Roper (also a Harvard alumnus, class of '33) through Suzanne Magliano, a secretary to the prince who lived in Paris. Roper made his first trip to Bellerive in 1969, and from that visit ensued one of the most remarkable gardens he completed during a career that began in England after World War II and continued there and abroad until his death in 1983. His fourteen-year correspondence with the prince, later deposited in the library of the Royal Horticultural Society in









London, charts the history of a rare garden and a rare friendship.

Although Geneva has always been hospitable to English style, particularly during the Victorian period, and sports its own public Jardin Anglais on the lake, not every element of the English walled garden at Bellerive comes through in perfect translation. It is these differences that make the garden so distinctive. From the beginning, it was envisioned as a potager, providing in season all of the vegetables and cut flowers for the château. Aware of his own limitations in French, Roper enlisted the assistance of Walter Brugger, a landscape architect in Geneva. (A local architect, Marc Gignoux, helped draw up plans for walls, a potting shed/greenhouse, and other structures.) Roper's detailed reports and instructions now form a vivid diary of the garden. Like the château, the potager was elegant and utilitarian from the start, but it has never been restrained—nor could it be, with old roses tumbling over the walls and lavender spilling across stone paths.

Some 150 yards away from the château on the other side of a country road, the walled garden is protected from the bise, the fierce wind that sweeps across the lake. One long axial path runs north-south the length of the trapezoidal enclosure, another walk follows the inside perimeter, and a network of cross paths defines rectangular beds. The perennial borders and the fruit trees—apple, plum, apricot, and pear—were to be permanent frames for the beds, within which mixed plantings

Dew brings out the fragrance that was as important to Roper as contrasts of texture or color

of flowers, fruits, or vegetables might sometimes be rotated. Although the prince's head gardener, Maurice Lémery, had already begun a small garden at the same location, the only fixed elements were a walnut tree and an octagonal fountain basin, which became the central feature of a herb and scent garden at the southern end.

Most of the potager was completed between 1970 and 1973. Roper returned frequently to survey the progress and on one occasion was surprised to see rounded coping on the new seven-foot-high roughcast walls in place of the flat tops he had assumed he would find. What the Swiss call dos d'âne (donkey's back) walls are a Genevan tradition, and their presence gives the garden at Bellerive a local flavor. They have become rustic supports for espaliered fruit, climbing roses, clematis, and a tangle of other vines. The potting shed, with its pointed roof and antique fleur-de-lis weather vane from Geneva's Old Town, is another instance of Gallic vernacular in the garden.

The original plantings went in twenty years ago—some ordered from Hillier's in England, others from Swiss nurseries—and yet the potager retains the look of a Roper garden, particularly as a result of sensitive renovations by the French landscape gardener Louis Benech, who until recently was an adviser to the prince and princess. (The prince married Catherine Aleya Sursock in 1972.) The present head gardener, Philippe Cuendet, worked for some time with Maurice Lémery before the latter retired, and now, dressed in the long green coat and overalls of his profession, he leads a staff of five. Mornings are spent harvesting ripe fruit and vegetables for the chef and cutting flowers for Cuendet to arrange in great French bouquets

placed throughout the château.

Although the walled garden is what brought Lanning Roper to Bellerive, the proj-

ect expanded to include new plantings of trees and lawns sweeping down toward a small classical pavilion by the lake and a long mixed border next to the old water gate. Outside the potager, Roper designed a more conventional kitchen garden for sprawling plants and an orchard set in a small park. Even the Bellerive Foundation on the rue Munier-Romilly in Geneva has a typical Roper city garden, with laurel and magnolia on a small terrace overlooking the street.

In the freshness of early morning, with birds singing and roosters crowing, the potager seems at its peak. Dew brings out the fragrance that was as important to Roper as contrasts of texture or the use of silver foliage to subdue a brilliant palette. If exhaustive plant lists were his strength, his genius lay in the variety of vertical structures, the trellises and arches, that made his gardens cities of (Continued on page 156)

The stone bridge over the canal leading to Lake Geneva, above left, is seen through branches of an ancient quince tree. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Lanning Roper's main palette of lavenders and grays; 'Hidcote' lavender and salvia in flower among other herbs; dorycnium, box, and helianthemum—a typical Roper combination of blue green and yellow green foliage in contrasting textures; one of four clipped globes of box at the garden entrance.





## Valentino on Capri

The refined simplicity of the couturier's island villa reflects his signature style

By Wendy Goodman Photographs by Oberto Gili





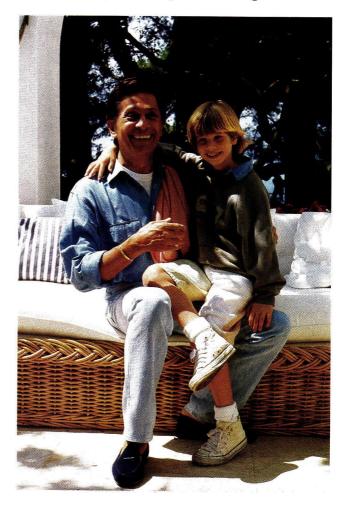


"Life at the villa is dolce far niente—sweetly doing nothing"

BEFORE VALENTINO GARAVANI STEPS INTO A room his reputation inevitably precedes him. He belongs to the small, magic circle of couturiers whose designs, like the women who wear them, are internationally recognized and admired. Valentino's professional and personal lives are no less international or demanding: while heading a fashion empire that has mushroomed since 1960 (besides the couture collections there are the ready-to-wear and menswear lines; the Miss V, Oliver, and Valentino Night collections; and jeans, skiwear, swimwear, knitwear, perfume, accessories, and forty-seven licensees worldwide), the designer also commutes between his residences in Rome, London, New York, Gstaad, and Capri, and a 152-foot yacht.

Knowing all this, and meeting Valentino for the first time, you are unprepared for his relaxed charm, soothing melodious voice, and eyes the color of pale emeralds

Valentino, right, with his godson, Sean de Souza. Sean's father, Carlos, is one of the designer's public relations associates, and his mother, Charlene, heads Valentino's new Oliver line for children. Opposite: A bucolic scene painted by the 19th-century French academic artist Paul-Jean Gervais hangs above a sofa with pillows covered in a floral tapestry. Above: Another Gervais pastoral is framed by the far archway of a salon with cushions in a green and white plaid from Valentino Più. A 19th-century Italian bronze Hermes stands beside a branch of local coral on an Indian shawl-draped table. Moroccan urns rest on the lintel of the latticed garden doors.









as serene as his smile. Meeting Valentino at his villa on Capri is yet another story. His arrival is preceded by a flotilla of luggage and an entourage of close family friends headed by Carlos de Souza, who helps mastermind Valentino's public relations. Carlos is one of those who open or bolt the door giving access to the designer. You are doubly fortunate if the door opens for a "family weekend" on Capri. Private and quiet, this is the perfect setting for Valentino at his most beatific.

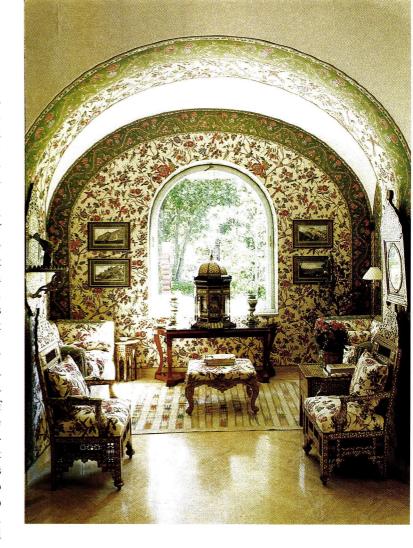
He has been visiting Capri since boyhood and always wanted to own a house there: "I love the atmosphere of this island—its smell, its greenery, its light, and the warmth of the Caprése people." Valentino adds that when he was a young designer with only two collections a year, he used to spend almost every weekend between March and October on the island. Now, because of his formidable schedule, visits are much less frequent, but his love for the island has never changed.

The turn-of-the-century house he purchased in 1967 has typical Caprése vaulted ceilings and arched doorways and windows. Cool and open yet intimate, it overlooks terraced gardens and a view of the town of Anacapri through ancient pines. Valentino describes the Villa Cercola as always full of friends. He loves to entertain, "but in a cozy way. I think one's vacation house must be very relaxed." Nevertheless, the designer's fastidious taste is apparent in every detail. An informal alfresco lunch is served by white-gloved staff, and the food is so good that eyebrows rise in unison as each course arrives. Valentino's chef, it is said, has come from England, and one wonders which royal household must mourn his loss—for he is such a treasure that any inquiry about his previous posts is gently rebuffed. Even a dash to the kitchen for thank-yous cannot pry this secret loose.

The spirit of life at the Villa Cercola is, as Valentino puts it with a big smile, dolce far niente—sweetly doing nothing. "If you want to do something you move from one sofa to the other." The decoration of the house re-

flects his personal combination of Neapolitan touches with a "mixture of everything." He winces when he recalls the interiors as he transformed them in the late sixties. "You know what I did?" he asks in mock disbelief. "Unfortunately that was a period when everybody was involved in very spare and (Continued on page 157)

Antique cotton adorns an 18th-century iron bed, opposite. Above right: Inside an alcove hung with views of Vesuvius, a 19th-century English architectural miniature in the Moorish style echoes the intricate ornament on mother-of-pearl inlaid Moroccan furniture. Floral fabric, available from Brunschwig, completes the orientalist ensemble. Right: A terrace faces 250-year-old pines and Monte Solaro above Anacapri.



"For me, decorating a room is like designing a dress.

Both can be full of fantasy"





## Geometry in the Vineyard

Architects Jim Jennings and William Stout adapt
a modernist aesthetic to the terrain of California wine country

By Pilar Viladas Photographs by Mark Darley





HE FORTUNES OF MODERN ARCHITECture seem to shift with the winds (or whims) of fashion—today it's in, tomorrow it's out. Several years ago, when bond portfolio manager Gary Schreyer and his wife, Chara, purchased a sixty-acre hillside for a weekend house and vineyard some fifty miles north of San Francisco, modernism was out of favor. That didn't faze the Schreyers. They wanted a striking piece of contemporary design, not a cozy country cottage.

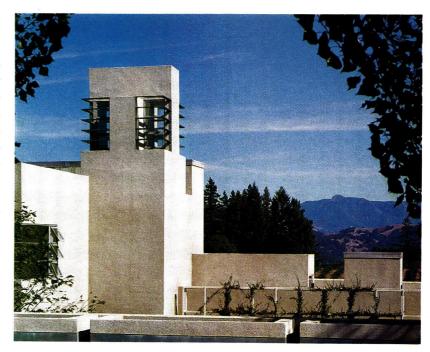
Nor did it faze San Francisco architects Jim Jennings and Bill Stout, proprietors of Jim Jennings Arkhitekture and William Stout Architect, respectively. (Stout also owns William Stout Architectural Books, one of the best stores of its kind in the country.) Both architects, who were partners when they took on the Schreyers' project, are dedicated modern-

ists who have never let the stylistic winds ruffle their

feathers. The long lean stucco house that they designed—and that was decorated by San Franciscan Gary Hutton—is, in their words, "unapologetically modern," despite its rural setting. Indeed, it is their thoughtful response to that setting that distinguishes their brand of modernism from the bulldoze-and-build variety that gave modernism a bad name. The placement of the house, which is precisely aligned with the rows of grapevines that it overlooks, was defined by two existing groves of trees-madrones to the north and olives to the south. A line drawn between the two became the main axis of the house, which was conceived as a series of walls and openings. The walls enclose the house on the west for privacy and security, and open to frame views of the vineyards to the east and of two small courtyardsone to the south, just beyond the breakfast room, and one to the north, seen through a window in the dining area.

The distribution of spaces along this axis, or spline, as the architects call it, gives the house its attenuated look, and its international-style origins are emphasized by the horizontal lines of the steel-sash windows with mitered glass corners that trace their roots back to Frank Lloyd Wright.

In keeping with the Schreyers' preference for flowing spaces rather than conventional rooms with doors, the living and dining areas were merged into a single grand space, *opposite*. The dining table was designed by San Francisco architect Jim Jennings; surrounding it are Afra and Tobia Scarpa's black leather Verónica chairs for ICF. *Above right:* The tower gives the otherwise horizontal house a strong vertical element. *Right:* The angular geometry of the architecture is echoed by a stainless-steel staircase that leads from the entry to the second floor. Details see Resources.

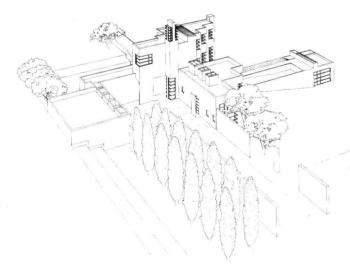


The Schreyer house is, in the words of its architects,

"unapologetically modern"







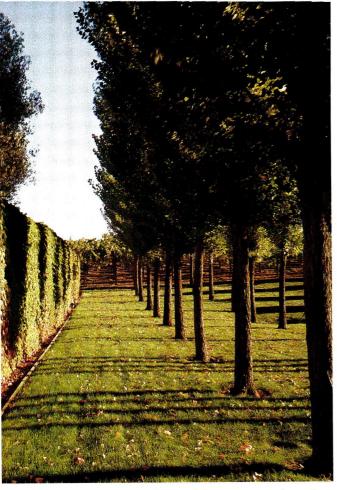
Windows on the east frame views of the vineyard; the house is precisely aligned with the rows of grapes Within the house Jennings and Stout created a strong dynamic of space and light. The Schreyers had no interest in conventional rooms; only the bedrooms and television room have doors. Instead they wanted a variety of indooroutdoor spaces. The front door opens into a dramatic living and dining room. The twelve-foothigh sunken living area overlooks the pool, which appears to blend seamlessly into the vineyard. The dining area opens onto a walled outdoor dining room, complete with fireplace.

The master bedroom looks out on the madrone grove and the sun-filled breakfast room, on the olive trees. Even the kitchen connects to the outdoors; it is the only room in the house with a sweeping view of the vineyard. And beyond the wall that lines the driveway a double row of poplar trees, part of landscape architect Ed Haag's original scheme for the site, creates another kind of outdoor room, this one streaked with late afternoon shadows.

In harmony with the architecture, Gary Hutton's work is appropriately spare—with a few surprises. He designed a striking terrazzo-like floor in the style of Wassily Kandinsky drawings that Gary Schreyer had admired in a book. (The floor is made of silica rather than the marble

An art student's homage to Mondrian adorns the living room, above. The leather-slipcovered chairs are from Niedermaier. Left: The architects' drawing shows the contrast between the walled entrance court on the west and the more open east side of the house. Opposite above: The alfresco dining room has a table designed by Gary Hutton. Opposite below: The kitchen looks out on the vineyard; the stools are from Metropolitan.





chips traditionally used for terrazzo. Its colors were developed by colorist James Goodman from mineral samples taken from the site; Goodman also formulated the colors for all the house's interior and exterior surfaces, including the silvery gray green stucco that looks beige in some lights.) Hutton carried this design and material outdoors, to the alfresco dining room, for which he designed a table on cylindrical stainless-steel bases. He and metal fabricator Chris Wilhelmsen, who executed the architects' design for the steel staircase, created a steel and glass firescreen, which they gave the Schreyers as a housewarming gift. And the Schreyers' fondness for Mondrian is reflected in the lacquered headboard wall with concealed storage that Hutton created for their bedroom.

The uncompromising leanness of the Schreyer house may not be for everyone, but its intelligent dialogue with the landscape is entirely consistent with the theories of pioneering twentieth-century architects. The house is proof that thoughtful siting, elegant proportions, and a skillful eye for materials and detail produce good architecture, no matter what the style.

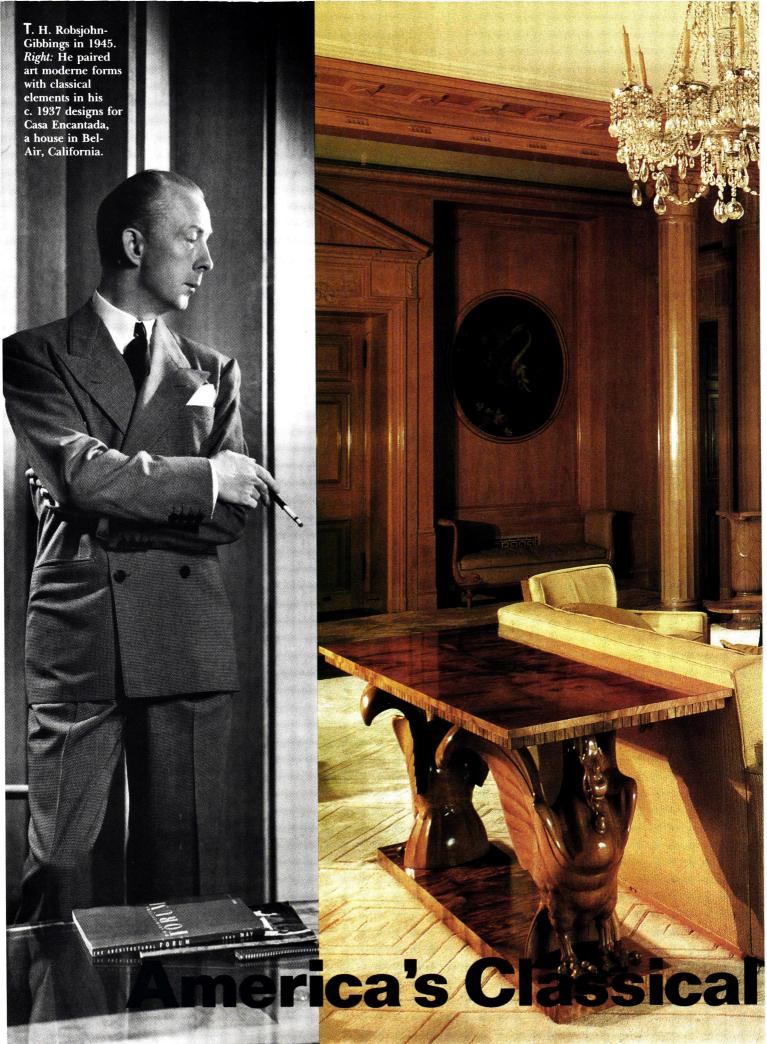
The master bedroom, right, is sparely furnished. Its major decorative feature, a headboard wall of lacquered panels designed by Gary Hutton à la Mondrian, conceals storage and bedside tables. Above: A row of poplars casts late afternoon shadows on a vine-covered wall that borders the driveway.

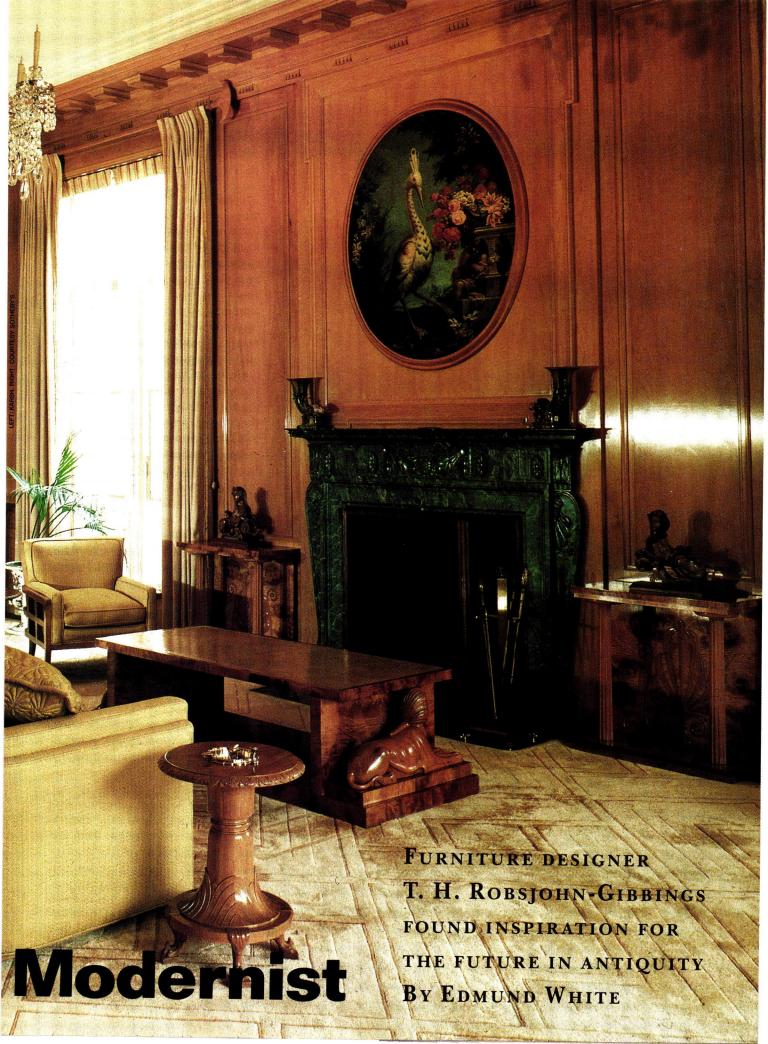


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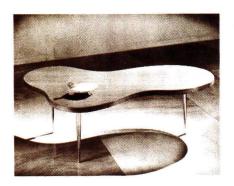
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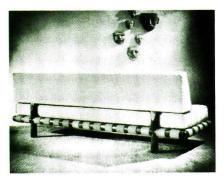


# TOP RIGHT: T. H. ROBSJOHN-GIBBINGS PAPERS, ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

#### He warred ceaselessly



against modern painting



but created furniture



that is completely



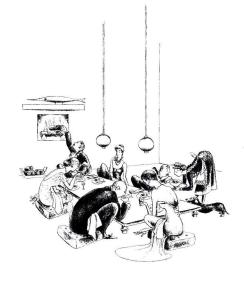
of this century

Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

He headed back to England and designed interiors for a London firm but was equally disgusted with the reigning aesthetic, an "indigestible mixture of Queen Anne, Georgian, and Spanish styles." During his offhours he visited the British Museum, where one day he was taken by the sight of a miniature bronze chair on the base of a Greek candelabra. A classic klismos, it had a curving backrest, a seat of woven-leather thongs, and gently splayed legs as nervously arched as a deer's. Inspired, he searched for other ancient furniture designs. "On Greek vases," he later wrote, "I saw furniture that was young, untouched by time."

In 1936 he returned to the United States carrying a portfolio of hundreds of his drawings of Greek furniture. He opened an office at 515 Madison Avenue, and leaving the plaster walls unpainted, he rubbed them with white wax and filled the room with his Greek models to demonstrate their timeless appeal. On the floor he reproduced a mosaic excavated near Thessaloniki depicting Dionysus in a chariot drawn by panthers. A copy of an ancient bronze brazier stood inside the mantelless fireplace, and the spare furnishings included a low table resting on winged caryatids and two klismos (he later discovered and fabricated five variations of the chair).

His ginger hair pushed back from his forehead, his long thin frame encased in exquisitely tailored doublebreasted suits, a cigarette holder dangling from his hand like a smoldering baton, this reserved arbiter elegantiae quickly attracted such socially prominent clients as Doris Duke, Thelma Chrysler Foy, and Mrs. Otto Kahn. (The rich, he once noted, are always with us, and we should learn to enjoy them.) His distillations of classical designs filled Mrs. J. O. Weber's Casa Encantada in Bel-Air, California, a major commission completed in 1938. (Fourteen years later Conrad Hilton purchased the house intact, and in 1980 and 1981, its contents were auctioned by



Sotheby's.) For Greek shipping magnate Nicholas Goulandris and his wife, Dolly, a serious collector of Greek antiquities, he decorated an Athens apartment with exact replicas of fifth-century B.C. designs. Published in *Vogue* in 1963, its look was declared "completely now."

Although Robsjohn-Gibbings frequently made faithful reproductions after the ancients, early on he also began to experiment with minimalist designs that have obvious analogies with the abstemious style of Jean-Michel Frank. And like Frank, his favorite palette, made up of white marble floors, blond woods, and gray leather, was so sober that black and white photos do it perfect justice.

But Robsjohn-Gibbings was eternally unpredictable: in 1942 he shocked everyone with a living room that combined pale blue walls, violet chairs, a dark gray sofa, and fuchsia cushions. In 1944 he created red lacquered bamboo furniture upholstered in (Continued on page 156)

Robsjohn-Gibbings's mass-produced designs for Widdicomb, c. 1950, included, left from top, an amoeboid table; strap sofa; handleless buffet; and Colosseum-shaped table. Above: An illustration by Mary Petty from Homes of the Brave, Robsjohn-Gibbings's 1954 best-seller. Opposite, clockwise from top left: For Dallas clients in 1958 he created a dining area on a circular island surrounded by water. In a Palm Springs dining room, grillwork walls set off ornament-free furniture, c. 1957. The living room of the same house displays Moroccan-style hassocks. A rug suggests another island in a c. 1950 rendering.











## Marital Arts

Two distinct collections came together when Janie C. Lee and David B. Warren set up house By David Dillon

Photographs by William Waldron



Janie C. Lee's Houston living room get a refresher course in abstract expressionism. Drawings by Robert Motherwell, Jackson Pollock, Philip Guston, and Willem de Kooning are arranged on the walls like plates in a book. A Mark Rothko drawing over the mantel faces a Franz Kline behind the sofa. The adjacent library provides a historical preface, with drawings by Degas, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso.

Several works—among them a Jasper Johns inscribed "Souvenir for Janie"—are gifts from the artists to the founder of one of the Southwest's first serious contemporary art galleries. But most are the reward of Lee's curatorial diligence and outrageously good luck. One treasure, a Matisse charcoal, arrived by Trailways bus from a collector in Kansas. "He wanted the money to buy cowboy art," Lee recalls. "I suspected it was a fake. Then I started unwrapping it and gasped. It was right, the real thing."

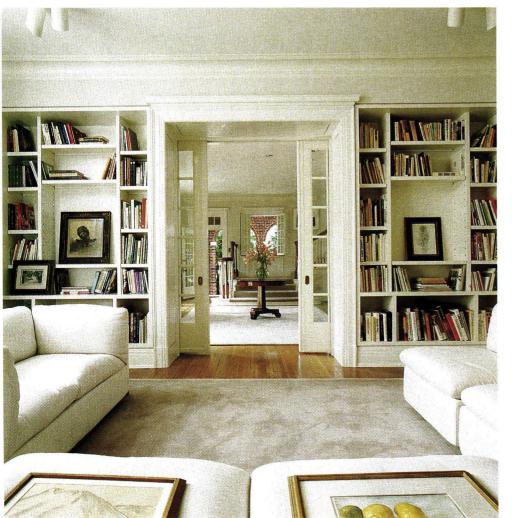
Lee began collecting drawings and works on paper in the mid 1960s. After six years in New York as a theater and lighting designer—"I was reading a lot of bad scripts and thinking I was in the wrong business"-she opened Janie C. Lee Gallery in her Dallas apartment in 1967. She showed Johns, Brice Marden, Frank Stella, and other members of the New York crowd—many for the first time in the Southwest-along with young Texas artists. When the spirit moved and the price was right, she bought drawings from the shows. "Drawings spoke to me more strongly than paintings and sculpture. And I could afford them."

In 1974 she moved her gallery south to Houston. Six years later she married David B. Warren, the direc-

Lee's modern art coexists happily with her husband's antiques. *Opposite:* A Delaware Valley maple table and a Windsor armchair with a Jim Love sculpture and a Georgia O'Keeffe drawing. *Left:* A Windsor side chair under a Robert Rauschenberg drawing.







tor of Bayou Bend, the American decorative arts branch of Houston's Museum of Fine Arts. They merged their collections, as well as their households, in an imposing Georgian-inspired house in a reviving downtown neighborhood.

"The house satisfied my love of historic architecture," Warren explains, "and the rooms had a contem-

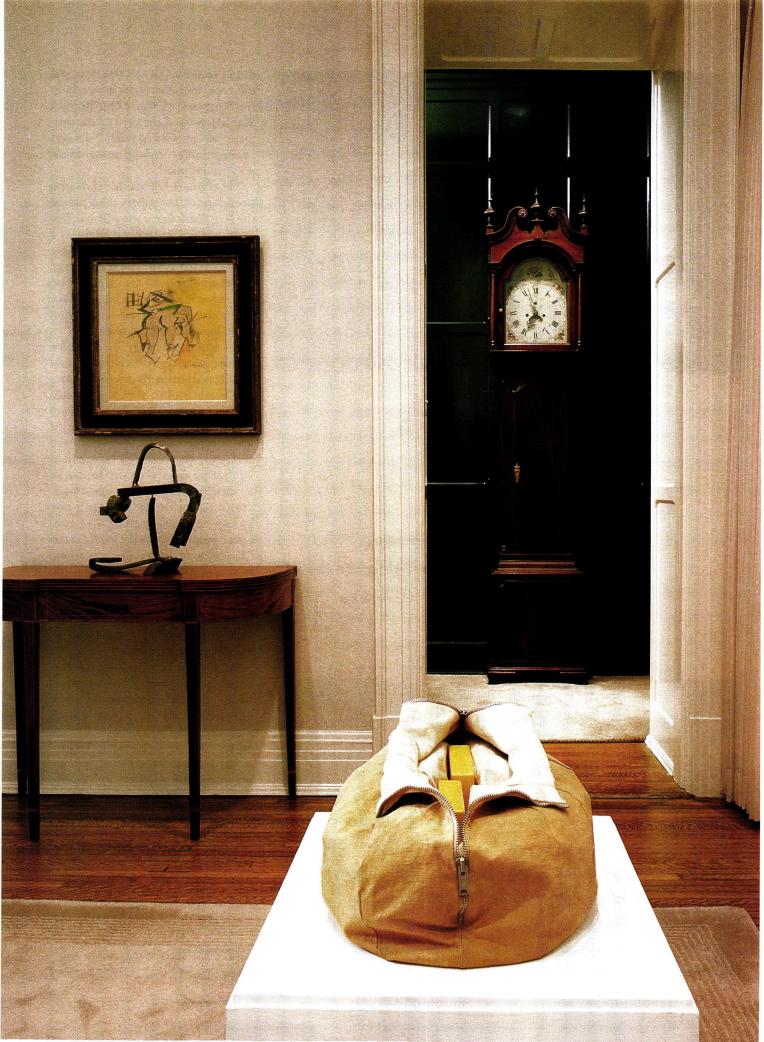
porary feel that was perfect for Janie's drawings. It was an ideal blend of our interests." Designed in 1915 by Houston architect Birdsall organized Briscoe, it was a grand house with a formal entry hall, square rooms with high ceilings, superb light, and acres of wall space.

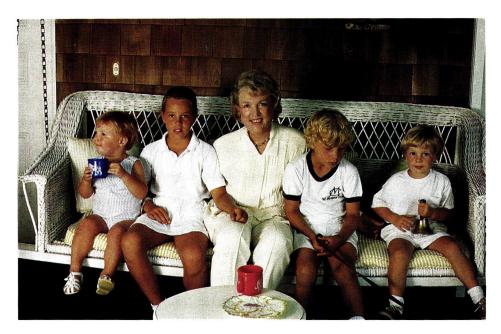
Warren says he's not nearly as a collector as his wife; she demurs

It was in such good condition that at first the new owners did little more than remove the brown wallpaper and refurbish the dining room. Since then, with the assistance of designers Janet Rogers and Joseph Perri, overseen by Debra Lehman-Smith, they have redone the first floor. They repainted the walls a soft gray that is kinder to drawings than white; installed built-in cabinetry in the library; and installed new lighting in the living room and the library, a task that required demolition and replacement of the ceilings. A discreet refinishing of the moldings and door frames allowed the old house to come through. The floor plan, including the Prohibition-era gambling rooms in the basement, was left intact.

Warren's collection of American furniture embodies history of a more conventional sort. Brought up in a Delaware (Continued on page 157)

A Claes Oldenburg soft potato plays off against a tall clock, c. 1790-1800, opposite. Above left: A Jasper Johns hangs over the bedroom mantel, a Matisse to the right. Left: In the library, drawings by Redon and Cézanne and sofas covered with Jack Lenor Larsen silk. The table in the foyer is from Boston, c. 1825.

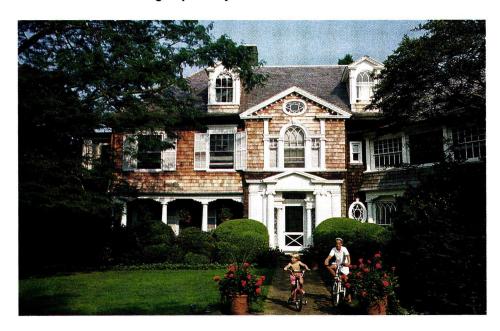




# Decorator's Holiday

At her Southampton house,
McMillen's Betty Sherrill puts aside
fabrics for family and flowers
By Sherrye Henry

Photographs by Karen Radkai



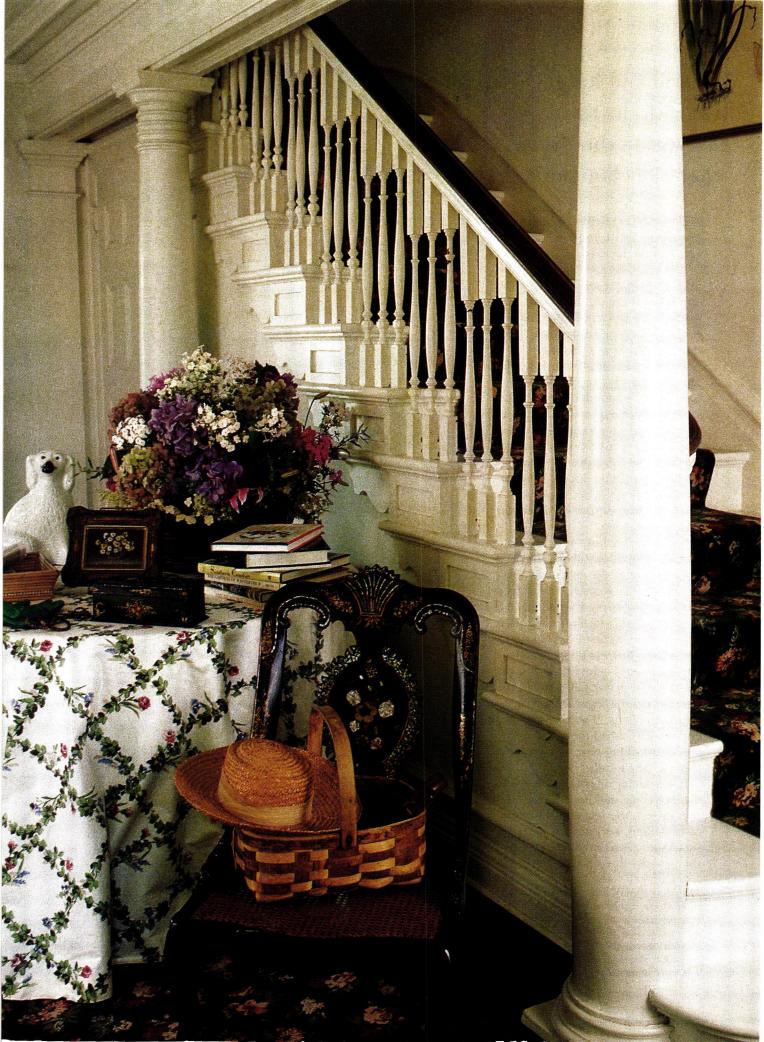
the capacious Victorian house built for Secretary of War Elihu Root in Southampton at the turn of the century. "He named it Mayfair," she says apologetically. "A little pretentious, don't you think?"

That remark tells worlds about the president of McMillen, who joined the New York decorating firm in her early twenties and helped engineer a buyout of the company five years ago. As much as Sherrill respects age and durability, she abhors affectation; what she values is less the face her house shows to the world than the living that goes on inside.

Sherrill is a nester. She'd prefer sharing pictures of her towheaded grandchildren to discussing fabrics and would rather spend weekends adding to her 20,000 daffodils than upgrading her furniture, most of which came with Mayfair when she and her husband, Virgil, bought it in 1958. She describes the house in terms of use rather than appearance. "One room deep, to catch the breeze," she says, keeping up a running commentary as she leads a tour. "Two ways to get out of every room, so you never feel trapped," passing into the blue and white dining room. "So many places to eat—the open porch, the covered porch, the pool, the kitchen," looking out the window toward Agawam Lake.

Only when outside does she talk about layout, texture, and color. "The Victorian garden is arranged like separate rooms," she says, "with walks that lead you from one to another." She moves from the Victorian garden with its masses of peonies, phlox, astilbes, and iris to the azaleas and viburnum that flourish under the towering maples. A rose garden catches the sun close to the driveway,

Betty Sherrill with her grandchildren, above left, at her Southampton country house, Mayfair, a Victorian landmark, left, built by Carrère & Hastings in 1899 for Elihu Root. Opposite: In the front hall a black lacquer Victorian chair from Sherrill's collection stands beside a table skirted in fabric from Cyrus Clark. Rug and stair runner are from Stark. Details see Resources.



#### Sherrill and her family live with the furniture that was in the house when they bought it

while shades of purple—wisteria, hydrangeas, and lavender—congregate around the kitchen entrance.

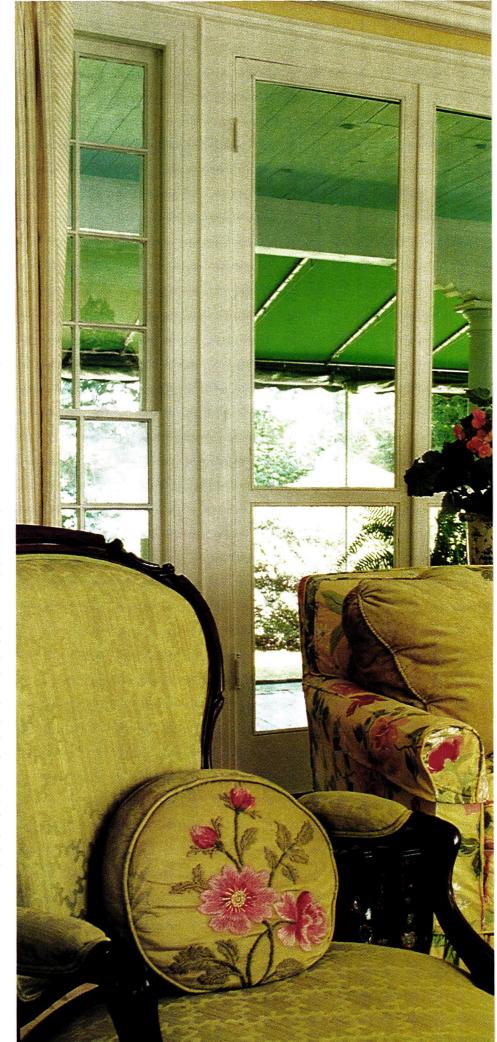
The gardens are Sherrill's first stop on Friday evenings, after the trip from the city. "I love to pull weeds," she says, confiding that she would as soon be known as a "frustrated gardener as a decorator."

Today is an important day for Sherrill. After a six-year stay her son's family is resettling nearby, and she is in Southampton to oversee the movers—and to reclaim her house. "I'm going to miss them," she says as she surveys the piles of toys and clothes, "but I'm getting a little old for all the noise. They don't have a pool, though, so they'll come over and swim with me."

It is partly because of her children that she joined McMillen in the first place. She says she "needed to pay for Nanny MacKenzie," who stayed with her for forty-five years. Although Sherrill's family didn't speak to her when she first went to work—"they thought I was taking someone else's job away"—she thinks that decision has been her salvation. In her late twenties she began to have major health problems. "I was so busy—clients actually called me in the hospital—that I didn't have time to think about it," she recalls.

It was during one of these illnesses that she cemented her future. Eleanor Brown, the legendary founder of McMillen, had not yet picked a successor to run the company, which she proudly described as the coun-

The living room's sunny color scheme, comfortable furniture, and cotton curtains from Kravet Fabrics reflect the informality Sherrill has nurtured at Mayfair. Despite her long career as a decorator, she explains, "I don't like a country house to be all fixed up."







"I love to pull weeds," says Sherrill, adding that she'd as soon be called a "frustrated gardener as a decorator"



try's "first professional full-service interior decorating firm." Sherrill remembers, "She wrote me a note when I was sick and said she didn't want to live if I wasn't across the street—I was like her daughter. Everybody was asking then who was going to be president of McMillen. So I said, 'I'll just go across the street and tell Mrs. Brown I'll be president.'"

As Sherrill reminisces about her sixteen years' carrying on Eleanor Brown's legacy, the telephone rings. After a short conversation Sherrill returns. "Mrs. Brown just died," she says quietly. "She died gently—went to sleep at the age of one hundred." Brown, who (Continued on page 155)

In the kitchen, above, an original stove and a modern pedestal table look equally at home. Left: Beds of lilies, balloon flowers, and annuals border the pool. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Outside the dining room clematis climbs the stand of an antique bird feeder. Inside, blue and white porcelain hangs over a fireplace surrounded by antique delft tiles. Stephen and William Sherrill in the garden. Betty Sherrill on the terrace.







# Collage of a Lifetime

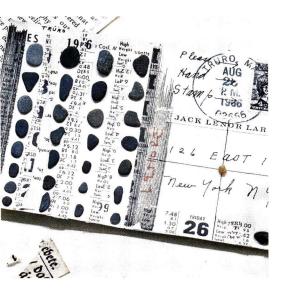
Feathers, parchment,
and threads texture the world
of artist Lenore Tawney
By Margot Guralnick

Photographs by Eric Boman

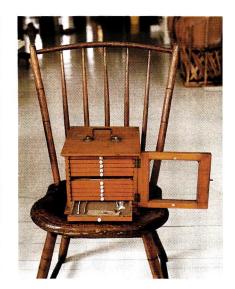












#### Tawney approaches the myriad objects in her New York loft

N CRAFTS CIRCLES LENORE TAWNEY HAS TAKEN ON the aura of a living saint. "Everything she touches is transformed into art," asserts a Swiss curator. "The tiniest fragment of nature, in Tawney's hands, is endowed with content, with symbolism, with spirituality," writes the director of the American Craft Museum in New York. "To meet her," I am told by a friend, "is a gift."

Tawney herself, at the age of eighty-four—serene, catlike in appearance, and given to leaping rather than walking across a room—doesn't disappoint. Visitors leave their shoes at the door of her vast all-white live-in studio on the fringes of Manhattan's Garment District. Wearing white leggings and a homemade saffroncolored tunic that matches her hennaed hair, she looks radiantly ageless. She speaks in an inviting whisper and approaches the myriad objects around her with wonderment, as if she had very little to do with their being there.

"Isn't this beautiful?" Tawney asks, picking up a parchment-covered box that contains the backbone of a tiny bird. Above our heads chairs dangle from the ceiling. One is shrouded behind a square womblike sack of diaphanous gold silk. Baby-size beaded moccasins are perched on a windowsill, along with a miniature duck decoy wrapped in paper with fragile ripped-paper feathers and several small parchment bundles simply identified as "potions." Tawney shakes an oval vase made by ceramic artist Toshiko Takaezu, a dear friend, and it makes a rattling noise—"a message to the unknown," she says. A bird's wing lies on top of a pile of envelopes near the door as if it arrived with the morning mail. Pages from old books, many in foreign languages, are layered across her table, on which an "homage to tea," of Chinese gold-leaf prayer paper and used teatins, is in progress. "When I'm working, whatever I want is always within reach," says Tawney. "It really is amazing." She works in volume: tucked inside the partially opened drawers of an array of old wooden cabinets, chests, and scientific instrument cases are hundreds of cryptic collages made of, among other things, pearl buttons, feathers, thick braided rope, whale's teeth, Indian spices, and bowls of water that require continual replenishing. What is not on view is the

work that made her famous.

In the 1950s and '60s Tawney was an art world renegade—the weaver who almost single-handedly provoked a revolution in fiber art by breaking away from the rectangular boundaries of the loom.

Tawney, left, works on one of her Cloud sculptures next to a three-legged stool by Wharton Esherick. Above, from left: A 1966 postcard to Jack Lenor Larsen; a still life of parchment-covered fruit on a stack of rare books; a collage-filled scientific instrument case on an antique Windsor chair. Opposite above, from left: The worktable strewn with scraps of old printed pages; a Japanese chest holding pottery by Toshiko Takaezu; one of Tawney's shrouded chairs, 1985. Opposite below: Collages nest in drawers.



with wonder, as if she had little to do with their being there



Disregarding the traditional rules of her craft, she elevated weaving from the safe utilitarian realm of place mats, ponchos, and wallhangings to compelling dynamic sculpture. In her hands, weavings undulated and spiraled and brazenly bared their unwoven warps embellished with feathers, shells, and braids. Today the fact that Tawney's towering abstract forms and large-scale tapestries textured with knots and shaggy fringe look familiar is testimony to her wide-ranging influence. ("Lenore Tawney: A Retrospective," organized by the American Craft Museum, is on view through July 21 at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C.)

But Tawney didn't start experimental weaving until she was forty-six, and for the past fifteen years, with characteristic late-bloomer aplomb, she has left weaving behind to explore new directions. Her recent work in-



cludes boxed collages à la Joseph Cornell, a series of festooned wooden hat blocks that line shelves like headhunter's booty, and enchanting doctored postcards and small-scale collages that convey messages like "Your glance scatters leaves." Since 1977, Tawney has also been suspending thousands of knotted linen threads from expanses of canvas to form what she calls "clouds." The first, completed in 1978 as a government commission for the lobby of the Santa Rosa Federal Building in California, came "like a vision" in the midst of a terrible drought. Tawney collects objects with fetishistic power, from Precolumbian textile fragments to Tibetan prayer beads, and like these talismans, her art is intended as a mystical offering to the world.

Born in Lorain, Ohio, where her father worked in a steelyard building lake boats and her mother taught her to embroider, Tawney didn't (Continued on page 155)

Gilded Chinese-style corner chairs, right, a French daybed, and a sofa and chair covered in Italian damask are grouped invitingly in one corner of the loft's main living and working space. Tawney's parchment-covered miniature decoy perches above the table. Above: A devotee of Siddha yoga, the artist keeps a copper-frame meditation pyramid in her bedroom.



Measuring linen threads and



tying thousands of knots is one of her forms of meditation



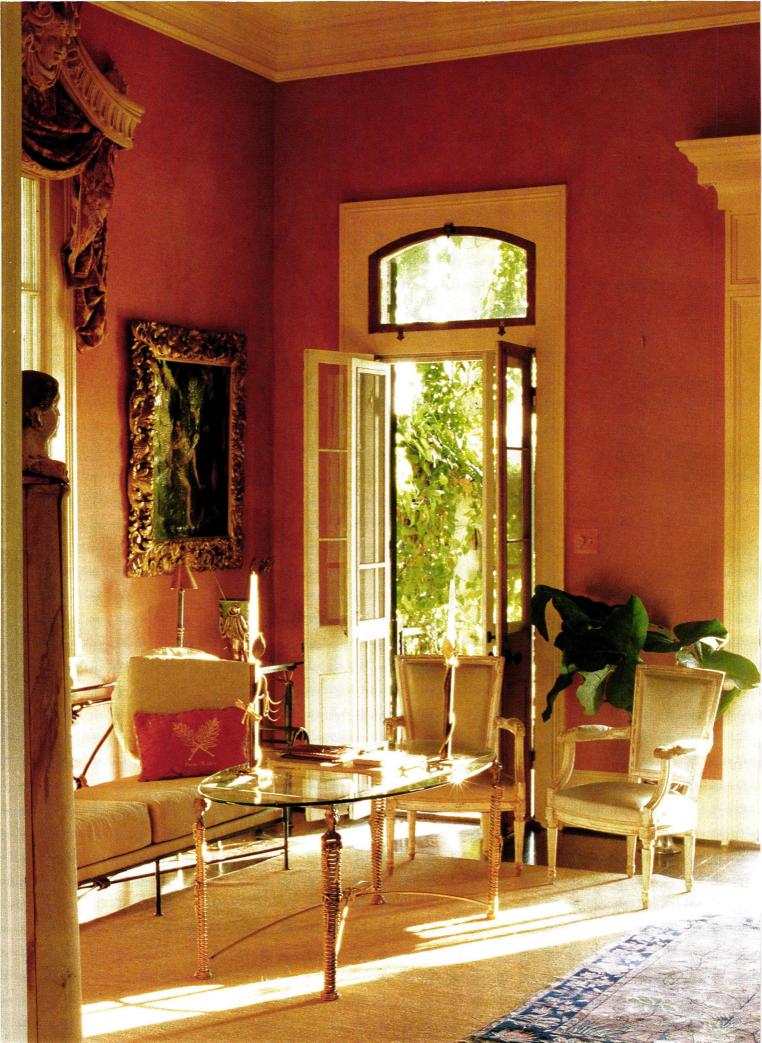




## Bayou Baroque

In a tiny Greek revival house, designer Mario Villa displays his romantic touch. By Mimi Read

Photographs by William Waldron





NAQUIET RESIDENTIAL SECTION of New Orleans there are a few noble white-pillared plantations that have been spared by the fates. These eighteenth-century houses cling to the banks of Bayou Saint John, and with their louvered shutters and wooden balustrades, they have a long-settled classical air.

The neighborhood itself, known as Faubourg Saint John, is an unpretentious offbeat place, cozy rather than haughty. Blocks of lookalike cottages sport gingerbread trim, sunsets daub the sky in fierce hot pinks, Spanish moss—less common than it used to be—drips from the tall live oaks, and at night lamplight from the houses quivers on the surface of the meandering black bayou.

It is in this context that the exuberant young furniture designer Mario

French doors invite sunlight, breeze, and watery shadow from the bayou into the Venetian red living room, opposite. Above: At the other end of the room, Villa's signature bench, tables, and lamps complement his collection of antique furniture and religious art. Right: Mario Villa with one of his sculptures on the deck of the house.

Villa has chosen to live, tucked into a small 1840s Greek revival cottage—a tiny temple, really—between two grand antebellum plantations. It's perfect for him. After all, he's a sensualist at heart, a relentlessly enthusiastic ransacker of history who craves opulence yet despises pretension. "Can you believe," he asks in his charming Latin-flavored accent, "I am lucky enough to live here?"

Villa's family was exiled from their native Nicaragua in 1979 during the Sandinista revolution. At that time, Villa was leading a pleasantly bohemian existence in England and France. When he arrived in New Orleans, it felt tropical and decadent, like home, so he stayed, studying anthropology and later architecture.

"I found myself in the melting pot, but I was not melting," Villa says. "I was forced to create my own little world. When your identity has been shaken, you look into yourself and say, what do I like?" The house on the bayou is the latest answer to Villa's own existential question. It also represents his coming of age.

At thirty-seven, Villa is an internationally acclaimed designer. His cop-



New Orleans felt tropical and decadent, like home, so he stayed per-shaded lamps and sculptural neo-Roman furniture and accessories—smart, minimalistic, raw-steel creations dressed up with gleaming brass swags, columns, lyres, and other historical motifs—are sought after by collectors and celebrities from California to Europe. His clients include Karl Lagerfeld of Chanel and Princess Caroline of Monaco.



### "I took a normal house and reinvented it"

These days, choice commissions—and design awards—are rolling in.

This was not always the case. Seven years ago Villa was the owner of an obscure New Orleans art gallery on the verge of financial collapse. And Villa himself—although he had drawn and sculpted since childhood-was completely unknown as an artist. In 1985 he turned to designing furniture to pay the bills. His first piece, a glass-topped table supported by verdigris metal figures of a man and a woman on horseback, was strangely naive, yet strangely sophisticated. When it was displayed at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, Villa was commissioned to produce five copies. Within a few

months he had created an entire line of furniture stamped with his humor, his obsessions, and his far-ranging knowledge of art history.

Success gave Villa his house on the bayou, which he bought about two years ago after considering living in the Garden District (too serious) and the French Quarter (too touristy). "I took a normal little house and reinvented it," he shrugs. "To me, it's a very romantic space where you just want to sit in a chair and love somebody. That's exactly the effect I wanted." Its porch is shielded from the street with old torn awnings and a thick Mexican creeper vine. It's a quiet place—a fixed center in a world of crazy vicissitudes.

Inside, the house feels as voluptuous and whimsical as an opera set. The front entry gives way to six high-ceilinged rooms, stacked one behind the other and connected by a lateral gallery. Although Villa didn't make many architectural changes, whatever minutes he gained by leaving the walls and ceilings in place were easily lost in the decorating.

On the surface of every wall, he had a field day with textures, finishes, and artful gouging techniques. The two front parlors were painted Venetian red, then rubbed with rags and sponged with watery terra-cotta slip. The results are streaky, primeval-looking, cracked in places. They also serve as good backgrounds for Villa's art collection—portraits of stern, staring royals and doges in ornate centuries-old frames.

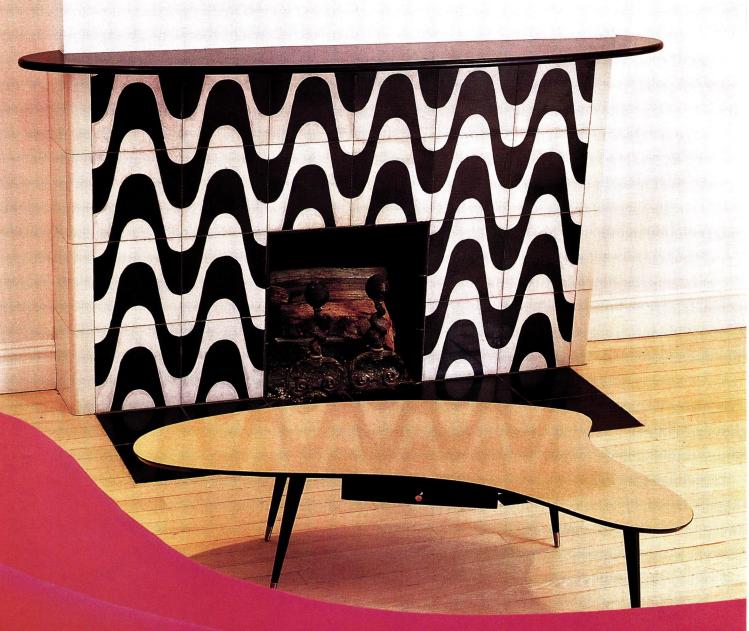
Mixed in with the inventory of Precolumbian artifacts and faded European antiques, Villa's own furniture holds its own. The contrast between, say, a serious Louis XIV armchair (Continued on page 155)

Villa wraps raw steel candlesticks, above left, with bronze dragonflies and leaves. Right: An air of tropical whimsy pervades the master bedroom, where the walls are stripped to reveal scarred plaster. The bed is Villa's "winged victory and royal palm" design. Alabaster panels adorn his metal screen. The temple cabinet conceals a computer. Purple fabrics are from Nobilis-Fontan.

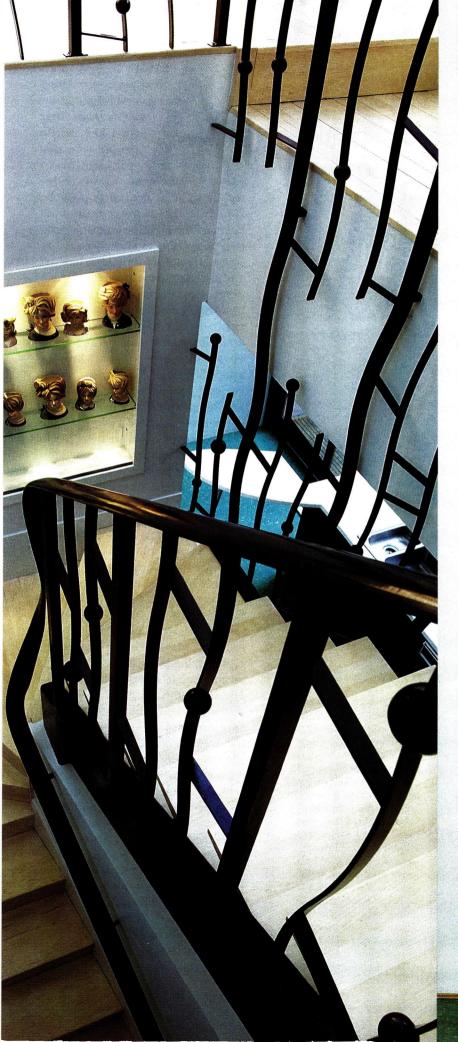








Fireplace surround of tiles in undulating Copacabana pattern enlivens the living room. Above the mantel, Richard Artschwager's Sailors, 1966. Opposite left: Steel banister fabricated by Paul Geshlider, vitrine with 1950s kitsch head planters. Opposite right: Samson Walla, the owners' two-year-old son, peers through a pane in his bedroom door. Details see Resources.



## Reframing

the

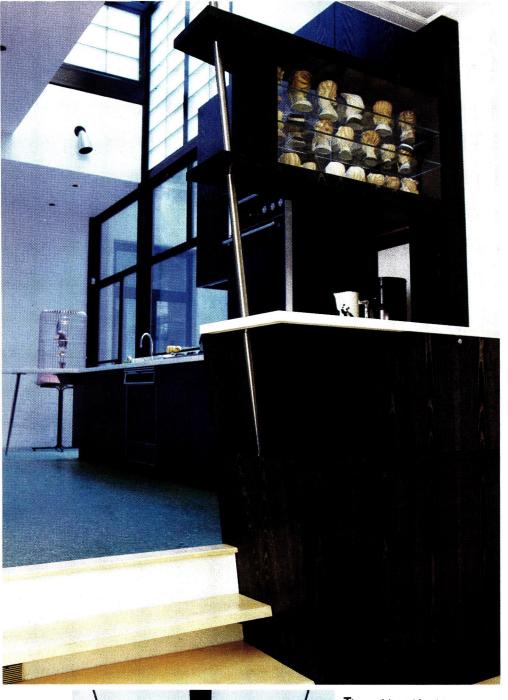
### **Fifties**



Two young L.A. architects transform a New York town house into a haven for mid-century modernism



By Martin Filler
Photographs by Todd Eberle





The architects' bar/stereo unit, above, separates the dining room and kitchen. Left: Fiberglass panels in the new enclosure housing the kitchen. Opposite below: In the dining room, Gio Ponti table and chairs from 1949 are arranged beneath a starburst chandelier from the old Los Angeles Statler Hilton. Richard Prince's Untitled Gang No. 1, 1981, above sideboard at right. Opposite above: Hickory flooring leading from dining room to living room is accented with ebonized squares. Cone chairs by Verner Panton, 1959, sofa by Vladimir Kagan.

fear art as something that will distract attention from their own work, while people who display art often want archi-

tecture to be as neutral as possible. But since the unprecedented art boom of the eighties, a new generation of architects and patrons has shown greater awareness of how art and architecture can enhance each other. One young architect who is building a strong reputation as a sympathetic creator of settings for art is Christian Hubert, whose previous work includes New York lofts for artists Francesco Clemente and David Salle. Now based in L.A., Hubert and his partner, Andie Zelnio, together have designed a jointly owned SoHo gallery for dealers Leo Castelli and Larry Gagosian and exhibition installations for the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Recently they were asked by a young New York art world couple with one small child to combine and renovate two apartments in a handsome 1838 Greek revival town house in Greenwich Village. Douglas Walla, owner of the gallery Kent Fine Art, and his wife, Jill Sussman, director of the Marian Goodman Gallery. had seen the David Salle loft and felt an immediate stylistic affinity. Like Hubert and Salle, both Walla and Sussman are enthusiasts of 1950s furniture and design, especially the more exuberant examples of midcentury modern that need generous spaces in which to achieve their full sculptural potential. Thus it did not seem inappropriate to either the architects or their clients to create a glamorous fifties-style duplex despite the exceptionally elegant classical proportions and detailing of the parlor floor of the house, which others would have taken as the unquestionable cue for a more reverent historical approach.

Nonetheless, Hubert and Zelnio were highly respectful of the land-

mark elements that had survived decades of neglect. They replaced moldings, restored the two pairs of Ionic columns separating the former front and back parlors—now the living room and dining room-and even added a frieze of bas-relief putti above that graceful colonnade. But where period components no longer existed, the architects were encouraged to take full liberties, epitomized by the flamboyant new fireplace surround in the living room, faced with vibrant op art tiles and topped with a sleek surfboard-shaped mantel of polished black granite. Neither in dialogue nor discord, 1830s and 1950s glide by each other effortlessly to create a very 1990s interior.

The sophisticated new surface finishes were worked out by architects and clients in close collaboration: kitchen cabinets of ebonized ash rubbed with white pigment; imitation bird's-eye maple paneling in the master bedroom and the guest room/study; and vividly colored glass tiles

in each of the two bathrooms. But the most impressive part

of this project lies in how the architects joined the two original flats together with irrefutable logic. It now seems as though this seamless flow of space must have been that way from the very beginning.

The most audacious decision was to enclose a terrace on one side of the back part of the house and to roof it over, forming a dramatic atrium-like space rising the full height of the duplex. Walled with beautifully detailed panels of glass and translucent fiberglass that recall Japanese shoji, that enclosure also contains the new stairway leading from the main floor up to the master bedroom suite and a huge deck on the story above. Save for the original wooden shutters in the living room, there are no window coverings at all in these interiors. Drenched with light, the rear portions of the house look thoroughly contemporary as well as more than a bit Californian, since so much American design of the fifties was influenced by ideas originating on the







A relaxed and fun-loving attitude unites the interiors



West Coast. This scheme would be just as much at home in the artsy Venice district of Los Angeles, which is just fine with Doug Walla, who grew up in California.

Because they are professionals, the owners have a relaxed approach toward art. The unpretentious way in which they have arranged offbeat works by such cultish painters as Francis Picabia and Richard Artschwager is far less obsessive than the habits of many other collectors. Perhaps as a result of their being dealers, neither Walla nor Sussman consider the placement of a piece as eternal. For example, their fine early Artschwager, an engaging four-panel painting entitled Sailors, is now on loan to an exhibition, yet the wall on which it usually hangs—over the op art living room fireplace, which appears to be aflame even when it's not-doesn't suffer as a result. In fact, the owners have left several large wall areas blank, refusing to fall prey to the horror vacui that some collectors hope will save them from being stigmatized as amateurs.

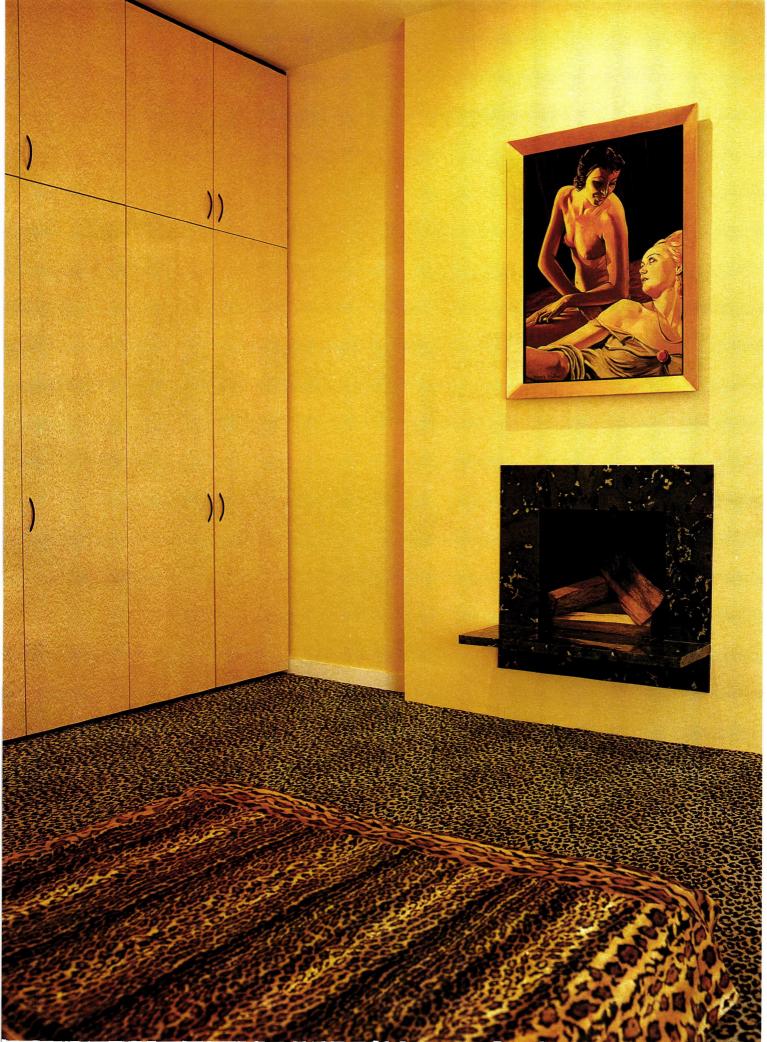
The fun-loving but ultimately thoughtful attitude to domestic living that unites the spaces marks this

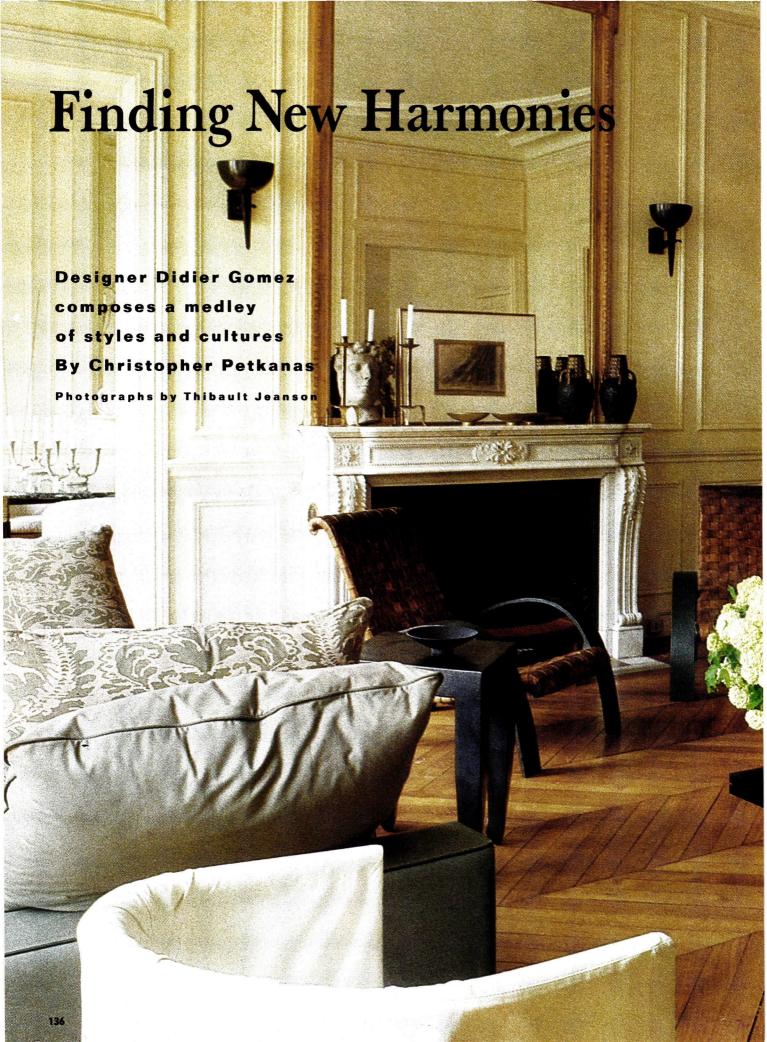
house as thoroughly of the moment. Despite an affectionate

embrace of fifties styling motifs, the equal respect for the parts that somehow survived for more than 150 years in a city notoriously unconcerned with its past is worthy of architectural preservationists. This spirited dwelling bears the burdens of time very lightly indeed and allows those who live in it the luxury of forming their perspectives as befits their artful outlook.

Editor: Heather Smith MacIsaac

In the master bedroom, opposite, Francis Picabia's 1941–42 oil, The Brunette and the Blonde, hangs over a marble fireplace set flush into the wall. Leopard-spot carpet from Einstein Moomjy and bedcover are echoed in storage wall doors of imitation bird's-eye maple. Above left: Fieldstone fireplace in child's bedroom. Far left: Elliptical steps in living room lead up to guest room/study. Left: Owners devised antic tile pattern for child's bathroom.









"I feel as suffocated in a house where everything is Louis XVI as I do in one that is all modern"

BACH OR BALUSTRADES? SCHUMANN OR sofas? Fifteen years ago Didier Gomez could have gone either way—concert pianist and opera singer or decorator and designer. Ultimately, when it came to choosing a career, the latter proved more seductive. Yet Gomez, who was born in France in 1954 to a French mother and a Spanish father, still feels the resonance of his years as a student at the Stuttgart Conservatory of Music and Theater. He cannot look at a room today without seeing and evaluating it in musical terms.

"An overdecorated house or apartment is like an opera by Bellini," Gomez explains, "a spectacle that immediately makes you say wow but

leaves you with nothing more to discover after ten minutes. I prefer the operas of Mozart, just as I prefer the rooms of Jean-Michel Frank and John Dickinson. The first time you are exposed to them they seem very easy, and you think you've got it all and understood them. But the more you listen and the more you learn and the more pleasure they bring."

Didier Gomez could also, of course, be describing the rooms of his own Paris apartment, 1,700 square feet in a nineteenth-century building behind the gilded dome of Napoleon's tomb. Virtually silent details and unannounced subtleties are part of his cool and linear signature style, which he identifies simply as "contemporary with historical or cultural references." An antimacassar laces up the back of a 1940s armchair in his library like a pair of sailor's pants, and

walls are almost subliminally layered with five coats of paint, from white to sienna, then sealed under a gossamer film of wax. When the rooms are warmed with sunlight, the effect is slightly golden, vaguely pink—though as Gomez relates enthusiastically, most of these refinements are lost on everyone but himself. "The only thing I want people to notice about this place is that it's simple, relaxed, and comfortable."

With energy and assurance, Gomez tosses in unequivocally modern furnishings with objects, art, and furniture from widely separated—and only superficially mismatched—periods and cul-



Didier Gomez, above, beside a Georgian column. Top: In the library a Gomez sofa with a 1930s African-inspired drawing by André Maire and a 1940s armchair and vase. Left: Otto Wagner chairs beside a Gomez table. Sconce by André Dubreuil. Opposite: A blond wood Gomez table with a tapered ceramic table by sculptor Eugène Brunelle.

tleties are part of his cool and linear signature style, which he identifies simply as "contemporary with historical or cultural references." An antimacassar laces up the back of a 1940s armchair in his library like a pair of sailor's pants, and



tures. "The most fundamental notion of our age," he holds, "is the notion of mixing, of combining to achieve a kind of poetry." In one corner of his salon a rather severe stone and wroughtiron console from the 1940s holds two sixteenthcentury Spanish terra-cotta pots, a menacingly scabrous branch of bronze from the last century, and a 1950s openwork ceramic bowl braided like rope. Above the console hangs an enormous painting of three voluptuously round and fleshy women frolicking with a horse. While the picture could have been done anytime from 1650 to yesterday—and therein lies its charm for Didier Gomez—it was in fact painted forty-four years ago by Émile Baer, a French artist known for his cycloramas on glamorous prewar ocean liners.



"Just as a person is composed like a collage-of his childhood, his personal taste, his travels-so it is with the place in which he lives," Gomez says. "I feel as suffocated in a house where everything is Louis XVI as I do in one that is all modern. My idea is to give a place a historical base with its own patina for the sort of basic contemporary

furniture I design myself. Whether the job before me is a house, an office, or a factory, I always work for a balance between the past and the present. By playing with different materials I also like to suggest contrasts between rich and humble, masculine and feminine."

Moving into the seventh arrondissement flat almost two years ago, Gomez set out to assuage his disappointment at not having the one huge room he originally wanted. This he did by removing the French doors (Continued on page 156)

The bedroom walls, right, are in the same Manuel Canovas cotton duck used for the curtains. The table lamp in the foreground is from First Time. Above: Trompe l'oeil bird's-eye maple in the dressing room is the backdrop for a sycamore armchair by Christian Liaigre, a standard lamp by Gilles Derain, a chrome and glass Eileen Gray table, and a Japanese stool.



He sees his subtle details in musical



terms: "An overdecorated room is like a Bellini opera. I prefer Mozart"



## Alpine Palazzo

THE SALIS FAMILY HERITAGE HAS BEEN PRESERVED

FOR FIVE GENERATIONS IN A SWISS MOUNTAIN VILLAGE

BY CHARLES MACLEAN Photographs by Evelyn Hofer



NDER A CROWN of wild peaks, Palazzo Salis stands at the edge of the tiny village of Bondo looking out across herb- and flower-filled meadows to where the Val Bregaglia declines gently into Italy. One of the loveliest glens in the canton of the Grisons, steeply wooded, strewn with bucolic villages and crumbling watchtow-

ers, the Bregaglia was a popular route through the Alps from Roman until Victorian times. It has long since lost favor to more expeditious passes, and its reclaimed seclusion now fosters an air of sleepy enchantment. At the gates of the palazzo, an eighteenth-century nobleman's maison de plaisance that time passed over, one gets a sense of entering the citadel of some lost mountain kingdom, a Swiss Shangri-la.

It's an illusion that Charles and Carolyn de Salis do little to dispel. With family and friends they've been summering at Bondo -as they refer with seignorial simplicity to the palace-since Charles inherited it from his father more than thirty years ago. Apart from bringing the plumbing firmly into the twentieth century, they have changed almost nothing. The house, which lies in perpetual shadow a quarter of the year, is only habitable between late May and early October. When, three years ago, the Salises decided to extend their welcome to paying guests to help meet the growing cost of upkeep, the family tradition of leisurely summer house parties proved the ideal

way to share with a wider circle their own enjoyment of the palazzo, its romantic history, and the restorative climate of the Bregaglia.

The house was built between 1773 and 1776 by Count Peter de Salis, greatgreat-great-grandfather of the present owner, as



a cool refuge from the summer heat of northern Italy. The English-born Salis, recently made governor of the Valtelline region where he had his main residences, wanted his mountain retreat to be constructed in a suitably impressive Italian palatial style. Although the roof had to be of local design to withstand the weight of snow, sterner climatic imperatives were ignored since the house was not intended to be lived in during the winter. In contrast to the small, dark, wood-lined interiors typical of most Swiss houses, Palazzo Salis's thick stone walls and marble and granite floors (which keep out the heat rather than the cold) made it possible to create light, generously proportioned spaces of a magnificence unexampled in the Grisons.

Charles and Carolyn de Salis, above, with three of their daughters—Julia, Theresa, and Frances. Below: A Palazzo Salis house party sets off on a hike through the Bondasca valley. Opposite: In the Chinese Room, 18th-century Japanese screens hang above fanciful scenes of the Orient painted by Milanese craftsmen, who also created the parquet floor. The corner room is used as a private spot for letter writing.

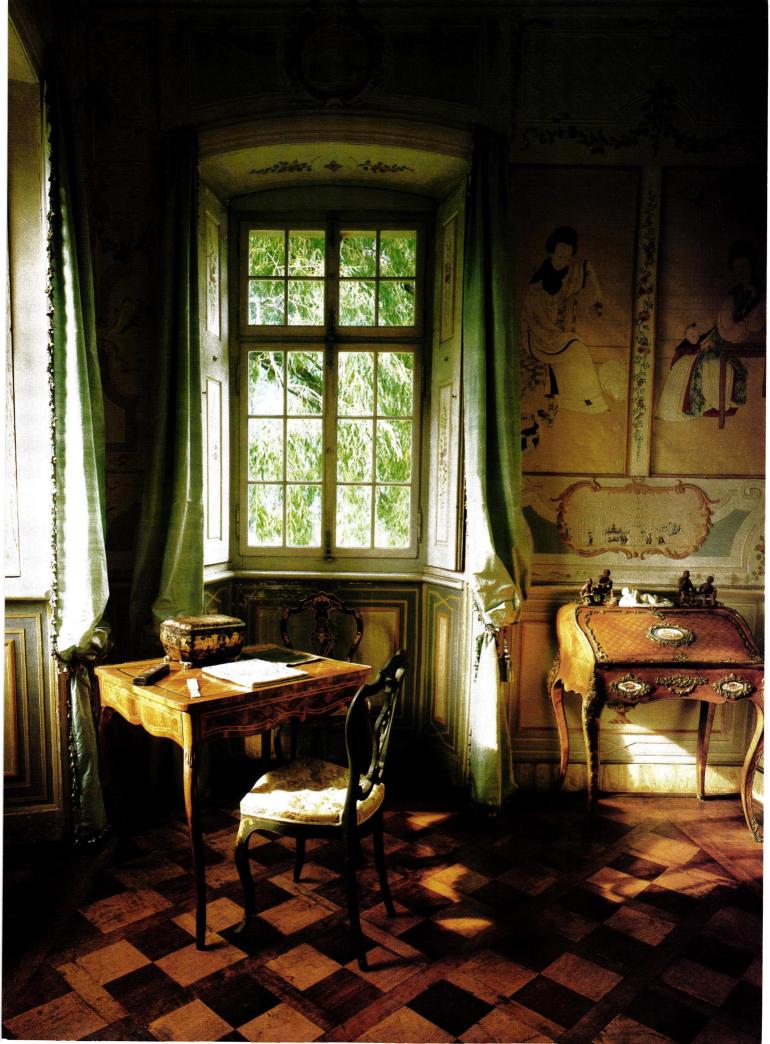


"In short," Count Peter de Salis dutifully wrote to his father in England, on December 22, 1773, "I flatter myself that what will be spent and done at Bondo will encounter your approbation, as I assure you I have no other ambition." Their lengthy correspondence throughout the project—which his father helped finance has survived, provid-

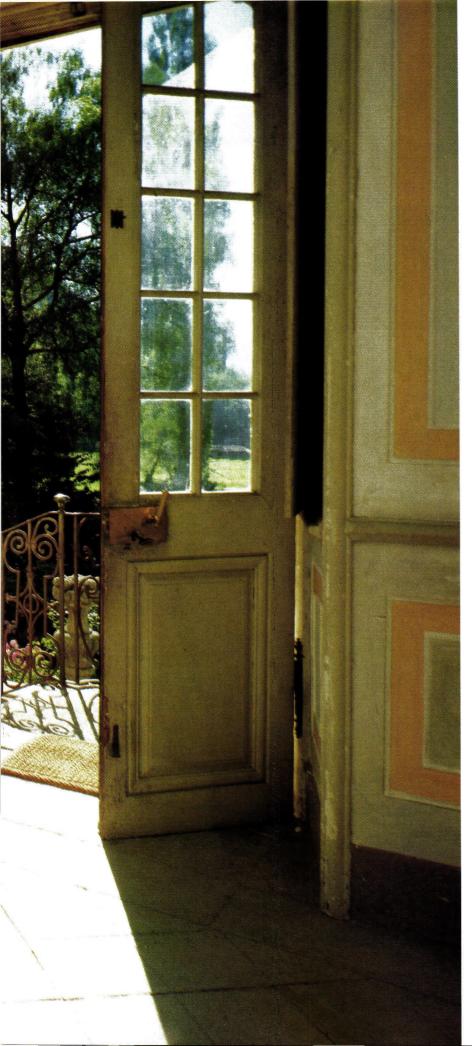
ing a fascinating step-by-step account of the building's genesis. Count Peter shared with his father all the familiar frustrations and anxieties of construction. Whether it was the workmen using unseasoned timber on the roof, the questionable design for a balustrade, or the scarcity of reliable locks (his father had to send a supply from England), he was passionately concerned about every last detail. There were the inevitable setbacks, including a mysterious fire that almost razed the entire building, but in his last letter home he declared himself well satisfied, finding his new palazzo "by much the best house in this whole country."

His boast would be justified by the central staircase alone, which Count Peter likely designed himself. Made of solid granite, it soars through three stories with open landings that span tall deep-set windows like bridges, allowing streams of sunlight to flood the hall from above and below. The fuguelike play of light on walls washed pale green and pink is taken up by a gracefully ornate Murano glass chandelier that gives a taste of riches to come.

In the principal rooms, the stuccowork ceilings, plaster cartouches, and decorated stoves are by Domenico Spinelli, recommended to Count Peter as "one of the best stuccators of the Milanese." An enormously fat man who agreed to work at Bondo for less money because of the







cool enabling climate, Spinelli spun nymphishly delicate confections that have none of the overblown quality of their German equivalent. The blithe coupling of asymmetrical profusion and formal harmony in some of his designs reflects—as does the exterior of the house, unadorned except for a baroque carving over the front door—the incomplete transition from rococo to neoclassicism that gives the palazzo its ambivalent air of a well-ordered fantasy.

Robert de Montesquiou, the Belle Époque dilettante and one of the people who inspired Proust's charac-



ter Baron de Charlus, visited Bondo in 1909 and thought it would make an ideal setting for a mystery novel. "It is full of old stuffs and old portraits," he noted, "and under its ceilings stuccoed with colored and illuminated flowers and birds, great stoves rise up, round which march a procession of dwarves, and beds which seem towers of faded material. There are chests still full of the finery of the eighteenth century."

The description might have been

The garden room, *left*, where family and guests gather before meals, is furnished with a wicker chaise positioned to take in views of the garden and the surrounding Alpine meadows. *Above*: Count Peter de Salis, in a 1776 painting by T. I. de Span, built the palazzo as a summer refuge.





The palazzo is an eighteenthcentury nobleman's maison de plaisance that time passed over written yesterday. Obscurely inviting, the high canopied beds are covered in the same faded damask; a collection of commedia dell'arte figurines (Montesquiou's "dwarves") still parade around the ledge of a Spinelli stove—nobody can remember who put them there or why—and the old traveling chests remain stuffed with period costumes, as if an earlier house party had simply forgotten to unpack.

"We're still coming across amazing things," Carolyn de Salis remarks as we wander through the house like time travelers. In the Red Drawing Room I succeed in tugging open a reluctant drawer in an impressive bureau Mazarin. Shrieks of delight from my accomplice. A sad bouquet of desiccated roses held together by tulle—Carolyn swears she's never seen it before—releases its dusty scent, conjuring up some disappointed English governess, a Miss Havisham of the mountains.

Original Georgian flock wallpaper imported from England, French furniture (much of it made specially for the house), portraits by local Grisons artists, and Italian architectural detailing reveal the vigorous eclecticism of an ancient European clan. The Salises have no difficulty tracing themselves back to the twelfth century, when the family moved to the Bregaglia from Como in the north of Italy. "Before that," Charles de Salis admits, "one's never quite certain how generations fit." The first Count de Salis was created in 1748 by Francis I, the Holy Roman Emperor who married the formidable Maria Theresa of Austria. Loyalty to the Habsburgs, a tradition of raising a Salis regiment for the kings of France, and strong English connections through marriage helped the family keep a cosmopolitan, pan-European outlook without sacrificing its sturdy Bregaglian roots.

Charles de Salis, who served in the Scots Guards and now farms in Somerset, feels equally at home in France and Switzerland. England's last genuine count, he enjoys the ceremonious (Continued on page 157)



The baroque vaulted ceiling of the Green Bedroom, above, is a tour de force of 18th-century stuccowork by Milanese craftsman Domenico Spinelli. The canopy bed was made locally and is original to the house. Opposite above: Spinelli's decorative confections in the Red Bedroom, including the towering stove, seem no more extravagant than the 18th-century flock wallpaper from England. The canopy bed, like its Green Room counterpart, is hung with damask for warmth. Opposite below: A house party dressed in Swiss period costumes found in the palazzo.



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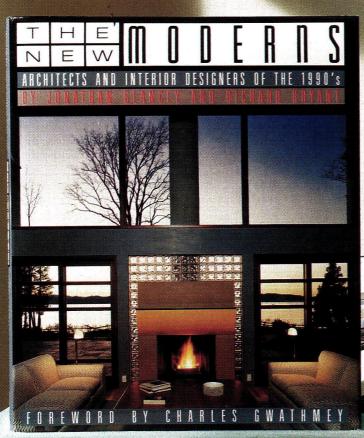
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the pavilion, above,

the house and the pool.

Right: A banquette and

Clerestory windows are

framed in mahogany.

backlit cabinets in ash

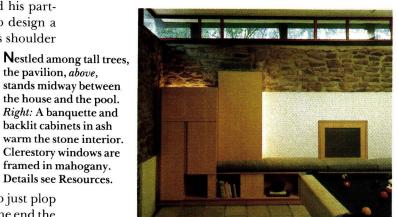
THE FIRST TIME ARCHITECT JOHN KEENEN VISITED THE New Jersey country house of a family interested in turning a stable into a place for relaxing and playing pool, he had a hard time concentrating on the building at hand. Although the stable represented for him and his partner, Terence Riley, their first opportunity to design a whole building, Keenen kept looking over his shoulder

at an old millhouse on the property. Its stone walls were a feast for the eyes of these young New York architects accustomed (reluctantly) to working in Sheetrock. What's more, its form suited a room for a pool table; its proximity to the pool and tennis court made it a logical spot for a kitchen and bath; and its roof was perfect for a terrace and porch.

Details see Resources. Still, the millhouse presented design challenges. "We kept wrestling with not wanting to just plop one volume on top of another," says Riley. In the end the screened-in porch does sit atop the stone base housing the poolroom, but what makes this project so accomplished is how the two volumes work as opposites while being perfectly integrated. With its slender framework, thin screened walls, and roof bent in a gentle curve, the new porch seems lighter than air. The altered millhouse, on the other hand, is firmly weighted to the ground by its two-foot-thick stone walls, a broad steel beam painted dark gray, and concrete floor, lintel, and sills.

Keenen/Riley chose materials that not only distinguish the open and closed character of the rooms but also link them. Steel supports the canopy over the porch and forms the frame for a concrete platform that serves as a

## Great



## ROOMS

A pleasure pavilion takes shape in a stone millhouse

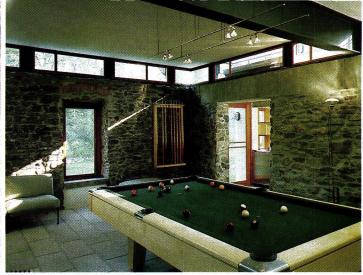
BY HEATHER SMITH MACISAAC

**HG** JUNE 1991









#### Mahogany is used as a delicate counterpoint to tougher materials

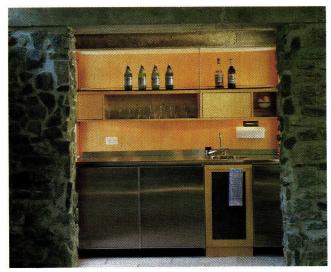


terrace. The curved lead-coated copper wall of a new addition housing the kitchen and bath echoes the porch's roof. Mahogany is used as a delicate counterpoint to tougher materials—it serves as marinelike decking and delineates the screened area. The rich warm wood also frames the doors and small windows of the old millhouse and its new clerestory, which cleanly connects the room to the addition above.

Riley notes that the building, which the architects have dubbed the Casino, is a "relatively small structure that was broadly conceived." Both Keenen and Riley are quick to acknowledge how fortunate they were to have clients who "understood the difference between a remodeling job and a piece of architecture." Luckily for them, the clients wanted the latter, and happily for all parties, they got it.

## Great

Life in the main room, above, revolves around a custom pool table in ash with stainless-steel cuffs. Above center: Steel, lead-coated copper, stucco, and mahogany play off the stone mill building. Above left: A bowed ceiling complements the airiness of the screened porch. Left: Half of a millstone found in a nearby stream anchors a stair of steel with mahogany decking which leads to the terrace and porch. Below: A small but sleek kitchen is tucked into a new addition beyond the stone walls.



#### Decorator's Holiday

(Continued from page 116) trained some of the best known names in decorating, often reminded her protégés of Elsie de Wolfe's dictum, "Suitability, suitability, suitability." Betty Sherrill echoes it now: "You must never put something in a house that doesn't belong there, or sell someone a \$200-a-yard taffeta when all they can afford is chintz. I don't like a country house to be all fixed up. I want it to be lived in. And I belong to the Hildreth school of decorating when it comes to the second floor," she says with a laugh, referring to a local dry goods store. "I want organdy curtains, so you can wash them in the summer and have them crisp. I hate carved rugs, and if I see another cloud shade, I'll die. Anything is better than pretension." 

Editor: Carolyn Englefield

#### Lifetime Collage

(Continued from page 122) devote herself to art full-time until she was forty and recently widowed, with fourteen years behind her as a proofreader for a legal publisher. At Chicago's Institute of Design she became a favorite student of Alexander Archipenko but, after several engrossing years under his influence, realized she wanted more in her life than sculpture, so she gave it up. "Then I found weaving," she says, "and it too became everything to me."

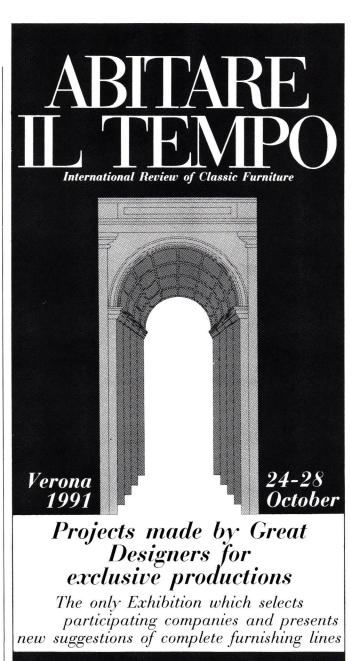
Long ago, Tawney also found meditation. Visible from every vantage point in her loft are pictures of her two gurus' smiling faces and silhouettes of their feet as well as signs reminding her to BREATHE! Measuring threads and tying thousands of knots, Tawney says, is one of her forms of meditation, as is patching together eggshell fragments to make "mended eggs." A meditation pyramid of copper tubing and cotton is pitched in a corner of her bedroom, where she keeps a second bed specially equipped to "repolarize energies—or so my healer says," she adds. Even the telephone and answering machine, once on the blink, now run smoothly, cradled under the frame of a wooden pyramid. But all is not otherworldly at Lenore Tawney's. Guiding me to her favorite place to sit, she plops down into a deep leather chair and leans back to demonstrate that it's an update of the classic La-Z-Boy recliner. ▲ Editor: Susan Goldberger

#### Bayou Baroque

(Continued from page 128) and a witty Villa console table adorned with brass swags that look as if they were piped from a pastry tube adds manic energy to the house.

Whether the stuff is old or new, if it's in Villa's house, it's not likely to be the product of a machine. Perfection is not his game. Instead, mistakes and irregularities are caressed and magnified like the heart's offerings. "I like custommade furniture," he says. "That's the look I want—for things to be made by wonderful hands. The feeling that a little old man or a little old lady worked on the table and gave it especially to you." 

\*\*Editor: Babs Simpson\*\*



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Spazio Comunicativo

#### Prince and Potager

(Continued from page 82) green. Seated on a bench inside the Bellerive garden wall, one looks beyond walnut trees and mixed borders of artichokes and nasturtiums to a high circular hedge of hornbeam. Framed by arches cut through the hedge, the view continues on to borders of lavender, a hornbeam arbor, more lavender and roses, and finally pear trees pruned en gobelet in one of the classic manners still taught at the Centre Horticole de Lullier in the Geneva countryside.

"Thank you for bringing plants and shrubs from England," Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan wrote to Lanning Roper in 1972. "I have always felt...that they have both scent and charm, which is hard to find on the continent." Like an Englishman living abroad, the walled garden may have retained its basic character, but over the past twenty years it has also acquired Continental charm of its own.

#### Classical Modernist

(Continued from page 104) tropical-leaf fabric (the "Hawaii-Rio" look). And later he designed Chinese-influenced pieces, which apparently earned him the nickname in the trade of Subgum Gibbings. His shifting styles were widely copied on both sides of the Atlantic. Perhaps bored with being ripped off, Robsjohn-Gibbings himself got into the act. One of the first important designers to sign on with a Grand Rapids firm, he began producing collections for Widdicomb in 1946. His Colosseum-shaped cocktail table, handleless chests, and sleek glass-topped desksall a valiant stab at making sophisticated uncluttered design affordablechanged the look of middle-class American houses.

Ultimately, however, the pull of ancient Greece was too strong for this

classical modernist to resist. In 1960, on Robsjohn-Gibbings's annual trip to Greece, his companion, Carlton Pullin, suggested they continue his research on early Greek furniture and have some of it made. They met Susan and Eleftherios Saridis, owners of a celebrated Athens furniture firm, who realized Gibby's archaeological designs down to the striped linen cushions in patterns and colors taken from fabric depicted in ancient paintings. Even the shade of walnut used to make klismos was carefully modeled after a klismos on an Attic oil jar. The Saridis line continues to be produced and is distributed in the U.S. by Gretchen Bellinger. When it debuted in 1961, Life photographed it set against Greek ruins, and Tiffany spotlit miniature versions in its windows. Robsjohn-Gibbings and Pullin published the designs with their source materials in a 1963 book, Furniture of Classical Greece. Three years later the two settled in Athens, where Robsjohn-Gibbings spent the last ten years of his life designing for the Goulandrises and Aristotle Onassis, among others, working out of his apartment overlooking the Acropolis.

His style remained distinct to the end. Although he rejected the Bauhaus, which he said was "responsible for promoting the idea that modern rooms should resemble a waiting room in a hospital," he never overlooked function. He announced optimistically in the 1940s that a new generation of Americans were talking "about Frank Lloyd Wright-not Louis XIV. They don't see rooms any more as pretty pictures—they see them in terms of usefulness and comfort in everyday life." Functionalist and elitist, classicist and modernist, Robsjohn-Gibbings's own contradictions in many ways reflect the contrasting attitudes that continue to shape contemporary design.

#### **New Harmonies**

(Continued from page 140) that separated the salon, the dining room, and the library, a room largely devoted to African colonial furniture and art, the oldest pieces dating from the 1930s. To increase the feeling of openness, a wall dividing the dining room was taken down, clearing the way for the Pleyel piano without which a Stuttgart conservatory prizewinner could not reasonably be expected to live.

Gomez's bracing design ethic has been unfolding since he became artistic director of the Paris shop First Time in 1978. In those frustrating days before the movement usually identified with Andrée Putman had taken off, he says it was impossible to find in France the kind of classic modern seating and tables that combine freely with other

styles-the equivalent of a good blazer and polo shirt-which were then available throughout the United States. "At that time in this country there were only two possibilities," recalls Gomez. "Either it was traditional French decoration with forty fabrics, fifteen curtains at each window, tiebacks and passementerie, or else it was a Gae Aulenti lamp with an abstract painting and a Saarinen table surrounded by Eames chairs." Having filled the void, First Time continues to produce a collection that includes severely geometric sofas and daybeds—discreet leather piping is the only permitted detaillike the ones in the designer's own apartment and the Paris pied-à-terre he recently did for Harrison Ford.

Among his French film clients Gomez numbers Emmanuelle Béart and Daniel Auteuil, the couple who appeared in Pagnol's Manon of the Spring.

Pierre Bergé, chairman of Yves Saint Laurent and president of Paris's three opera houses, has meanwhile chosen Gomez to decorate his salon, conference room, and screening room at the Opéra de la Bastille. "Monsieur Bergé has an extraordinary collection of African objects, and I have designed all the furniture and carpets around them," reports Gomez. (Similar African-inspired pieces were introduced at First Time earlier this year.) His other big commission currently is the addition of a club-restaurant to La Pagode, the legendary Parisian movie house built in 1895 as a private ballroom in the unlikely shape of an outrageously winged pagoda. Everyone agrees that as the setting for one of Gomez's close encounters between now and then, between cultures divided by a hemisphere, it seems very promising Editor: Deborah Webster indeed.

#### Marital Arts

(Continued from page 110) family, he had an instinctive appreciation for simple forms and undecorated surfaces. He bought his first piece—a federal-style card table—with \$800 in back pay from the navy, and inherited a seventeenth-century Belgian chest and several Windsor chairs from his family. The Thomas Crow clock in the dining room and the Restoration table in the foyer were purchased for the house.

Warren maintains that he is not nearly as organized a collector as his wife, who counters that she is less methodical than her husband implies. "I don't go around with a checklist," she says. "There are many holes in the collection. I'll probably never have a Cézanne watercolor, for example, or a Homer. But I don't worry about that. The important thing is to keep looking and educating yourself."

The two have learned to consult without presuming on each other's taste. "David once asked my opinion of a favorite print of his, and I told him it was a disaster," Janie laughs. "Later I asked what he thought of a table of mine, and he said it was on the same level as his print. We defer to each other."

Editor: Carolyn Sollis

#### Valentino on Capri

(Continued from page 91) modern things, lots of Perspex and steel. Then, as now, fashion in interior design can be short-lived." A change for the better came to the villa in 1978, and the result has remained more or less constant.

A good example of the fanciful beauty that now prevails is the frescoed dining room. On even the dreariest day sunlight seems to filter through this painted bower of flowering branches. The chairs are covered in the plaid Valentino calls his trademark. "For me decorating a house is like making a dress. You can make a simple room just as you can make a simple dress—but both can be full of fantasy.

You might put a wicker chair next to a Second Empire table and a straw basket—each has its own charm. If you use things you like, and if they are brought together with taste, you succeed."

Listening to Valentino speak about the exquisite care he has applied to his dolce far niente on Capri, you are reminded that the simple things in life—in his life—are based on years of refining, distilling, and editing. After all, this is the Roman couturier who creates what may be the most elegant clothes in the world, for women who know the power of even the subtlest detail.

A thirty-year retrospective of Valentino fashions will be on view at the Accademia Valentino, June 7-Nov. 3; photographs at the Capitoline Museums, June 6-July 28.

#### Alpine Palazzo

(Continued from page 149) flimflam, but only in its historical context. Although a few Bondo locals still address him as "Your Highbornness," paying guests are soon drawn into the comfortably informal atmosphere that he and Carolyn have created at the palazzo. A scholarly man, Charles, whenever possible, escapes to the archives room where he spends hours poring over a Napoleonic bibliography and numismatic catalogues. "Useful place," he mutters, "to get away from everyone else. What Bondo's all about."

There are enough quiet corners of the palace for an entire house party to

lose itself, but guests rarely want to stay indoors. A baroque parterre shaded by chestnuts and willows (the Salis family emblem) leads through wrought-iron gates into the countryside. Days are typically spent walking, sketching—the valley's Sound of Music scenery and gnomishly sweet villages have always tempted artists—sightseeing across the Italian border, or simply lazing in the sun. On cool, mosquito-free August nights, a narrow vault of stars opens up over the mountains, the air smells of pine resin and wood smoke, and the drowsy murmur of falling water and crickets in the meadows charms one into deep slumber. These are the pleasures, after all, for which the house at Bondo was built and blessed.



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#### Resources

#### PEOPLE

Pages 54, 56 Decoration, by Gary Hutton, San Francisco (415) 282-4787. Landscaping, by Edward Nicolaus, San Francisco (415) 982-3293. 54 New Antrim Stripe linen/cotton on chairs, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils, NYC, Atlanta, Beachwood, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Dania, Denver, Houston, Laguna Niguel, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Troy, Washington, D.C. New Hanover Cloth cotton on sofa, to the trade at Hinson & Co., for showrooms (212) 475-4100. Venetian glass chandelier, from Luciano Antiques, Carmel (408) 624-9396. 56 Primitive wrought-iron chandelier, to the trade at Dennis & Leen, Los Angeles, for showrooms (213) 652-0855. Dhurrie rug, to the trade from Floordesigns, San Francisco (415) 626-1005. Handpainted plates on table, from Sue Fisher King, San Francisco (415) 922-7276. Beleares Ottoman Print cotton on sofa, to the trade at Brunschwig (see above). Albemarle cotton on Victorian chair, to the trade at Hinson (see above).

**DECORATION** Pages 62, 64 Decoration and boutique, at Christian Benais, 18 rue Cortambert, 75116 Paris; (1) 45-03-15-55. 62 Baby basket with Napoléon III linens and Valenciennes lace, \$1,800, pillows in new fabrics, \$150-\$400 ea depending on size, Italian cashmere coverlets on shelves, \$1,600 single-\$2,000 queen size, at Christian Benais (see above). Freha cotton/viscose damask for sofa and pillow, Hiromi polyester/viscose tufted velvet for second pillow, both by Christian Benais for Chotard, to the trade at Boussac of France, NYC; Curran, Atlanta, High Point; Ostrer House, Boston; Holly Hunt, Chicago, Minneapolis; DeCioccio Showroom, Cincinnati; Decorators Walk, Dallas, Denver, Houston; Todd Wiggins, Dania; Newton-Edwards, Laguna Niguel; Janus et Cie, Los Angeles; Delk & Morrison, New Orleans; André Bertrand & Michel Jarr, Panama; Taggart-Zwiebel, Philadelphia; S. C. Smith, Phoenix; Sloan-Miyasato, San Francisco; Jane Piper Reid & Co., Seattle; Donghia, Washington, D.C. Custom rosette and tassels for Christian Benais, similar to order from Passementerie Nouvelle, Paris (1) 42-36-30-01. Sofa as shown, \$18,400, pillows, \$300 ea, at Christian Benais (see above). Freha cotton/viscose damask for banquettes and bench pillow, by Christian Benais for Chotard, to the trade at Boussac (see above). 64 Batalha cotton/spun rayon damask on stripe enlarged and on bed, Belem cotton/ spun rayon stripe as base, Marie-Louise cotton jacquard on screens, all by Christian Benais for Chotard, to the trade at Boussac (see above). Anglo-Indian 19th-century mahogany bed, \$7,000, 1920s Richelieu queen sheet and two pillows, approx \$1,200, ebonized pearwood Napoléon III tabouret, \$1,300, French ceramic lamp in next room, c. 1940, \$3,200, at Christian Benais (see above). 1920 Sicilian linen napkins with pink ribbon, \$200 set of 12, at Christian Benais (see above). English burled walnut partners' writing table, c. 1860, at Didier Aaron, NYC (212) 988-5248. Estoril spun rayon/cotton for shade (without appliqué), by Christian Benais for Chotard, to the trade at Boussac (see above)

#### VALENTINO ON CAPRI

Page 84 Dress, to order from Maison Valentino, Rome (6) 67-39-1. 87, 88-89 Plaid Grande cotton/viscose (#VA 022), Valentino Più Collection, 56" wide, \$118 yd, to the trade at Coraggio Textiles, for showrooms (800) 624-2420. 88-89 Geraniums cotton tablecloth, 96" dia, \$906, napkins, 20"x20", \$32 ea. to special order from D. Porthault & Co., NYC; for other stores (212) 688-1660.

#### **GEOMETRY IN THE VINEYARD**

Pages 92–99 Architecture, by Jim Jennings, Jim Jennings Arkitekture. San Francisco (415) 255-1514, and William Stout, William Stout Architect, San Francisco (415) 391-6808. Decoration, by Gary Hutton, San Francisco (415) 282-4787. 94

Custom steel/glass dining table, designed by Jim Jennings (see above). Verónica chairs, to the trade at ICF, for showrooms (212) 750-0900. 95 Staircase, fabricated by Chris Wilhelmsen, Santa Rosa (707) 586-1714. 96 Drappo chairs, to the trade at Niedermaier, for showrooms (213) 855-1896. Custom ottoman, similar commissions from Gary Hutton (see above). Art Moderne linen/cotton/nylon on ottoman, to the trade at Clarence House, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Dania, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Troy. Custom Rodeo Mills wool carpet, to the trade at Decorative Carpets, Los Angeles (213) 657-8840. 97 Stainless-steel/terrazzo table, similar commissions from Gary Hutton (see above). Rubber stools, \$550 each, to the trade at Metropolitan Furniture, for showrooms (415) 871-6222. 98-99 Leather LC/2 chair, by Le Corbusier, to the trade at Atelier International, for showrooms (800) 645-7254, in NY state (718) 392-0300. Custom Rodeo Mills wool carpet, to the trade at Decorative Carpets (see above). Lacquered wood bed, similar commissions from Gary Hutton (see above). Cabinets and bed, built by Steinbach Cabinetry, San Rafael (415) 453-7322

#### AMERICA'S CLASSICAL MODERNIST

Page 102 Klismos Greek walnut chair (#8812-07) shown in showroom, Klismos Greek walnut chair (#8812-03), both available in five finishes or custom finishes with leather thongs and loose cushion, by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings for Saridis Classical Collection, to the trade to order from Gretchen Bellinger, for showrooms (518) 235-2828. 103 Circular Greek walnut animal-legged table (#8813-06) in Greek ruin photo, Klismos Greek walnut chairs (#8812-03) in Athens dining room, both available in five finishes or custom finishes, by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings for Saridis Classical Collection, to the trade to order from Gretchen Bellinger (see above). Greek walnut dining table with fluted base faced in bronze (#8826-149) in Athens dining room, available in five finishes or custom finishes, by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings for Saridis Contemporary Collection, to the trade to order from Gretchen Bellinger (see above). One of a pair of carved harewood and American walnut figural torchères, c. 1937, by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, \$42,000 pr. at Newel Art Galleries, NYC (212) 758-1970. 105 Leather upholstered dining chairs with reeded Greek walnut legs (#8822-65) in Dallas dining room, upholstered settees with recessed Greek walnut bases (#8822-123) in Palm Springs living room, both available in five finishes or custom finishes, by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings for Saridis Contemporary Collection, to the trade to order from Gretchen Bellinger (see above).

#### MARITAL ARTS

Pages 106–07 Mies van der Rohe Barcelona table and stools, to the trade at KnollStudio, division of Knoll Group, for showrooms (800) 343-5665. Sabrina calfskin on stools, to the trade at Spinneybeck Leather, division of Knoll Group, for showrooms (800) 482-7777. Custom wool carpet, to the trade at Edward Fields, for showrooms (212) 310-0400. 110 Shan silk on library sofas and ottomans, to the trade at Jack Lenor Larsen, NYC, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, D.C.; Jerry Pair & Assocs., Atlanta, Dania; Holly Hunt, Minneapolis; Duncan Huggins Perez, Philadelphia; Wayne Martin, Portland; Primavera, Toronto; Zelsing, Troy, 110–11 Custom wool carpet, to the trade at Edward Fields (see above).

#### **DECORATOR'S HOLIDAY**

Page 113 Gazebo cotton (#8919) on table, from Cyrus Clark, NYC, for stores (212) 684-5312. Verveine wool rug and stair runner, to the trade at Stark Carpet, NYC, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Dania, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Troy, Washington, D.C.; Gregory Alonso, Cleveland; Dean-Warren, Phoenix; Designers Showroom, Seattle. 114–15 Laconia cotton for curtains, to the trade at Kravet Fabrics, for showrooms (516) 293-2000.

#### **BAYOU BAROQUE**

Pages 124-29 Decoration and custom furniture

design, by Mario Villa, New Orleans (800) 783-8003, in La. (504) 899-2631. 124-25 Province Duck cotton (#T 37591) on lit de parade, to the trade from J. H. Thorp & Co., division of Decorators Walk, for showrooms (212) 319-7100. European square Irish linen pillow with gold cord and silk border, \$150, copper palm frond, \$575, Tripod steel/ bronze table with faux marbre top, \$566, custom Victory steel/glass console table, \$4,200, Circle Cross steel/copper/brass lamp, \$700, copper shade, \$50. Obélisque steel/brass side chair, \$900 COM, Luciana steel/brass chair (back not shown), \$758 COM, all by Mario Villa, at Mario Villa, New Orleans, Chicago; Barbara Angela Interiors, Toronto; to the trade at George Cameron Nash, Dallas; Randolph & Hein, Los Angeles; Shears & Window, San Francisco; Rist, Washington, D.C. Acanthus Chinese needlepoint wool rug, at Jacqueline Vance Oriental Rugs, New Orleans; to the trade at Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges, for showrooms (212) 688-7700; Rosecore Carpet, for showrooms (212) 421-7272. **125** Planting, by Robert Truxillo, New Orleans (504) 482-7730. **126–29** Bouclé-weave sisal rugs, to the trade at Brown & Damaré, New Orleans; Stark (see above for pg 113); Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges (see above); Rosecore (see above). 126 Nefertiti glass/brass table with cast-bronze heads, \$4,200, Palm steel/brass sofa, \$4,084 COM, Candlestick steel/brass lamp, \$300, copper shade, \$20, embroidered damask pillow with gold fringe, \$175, all by Mario Villa, at Villa showrooms (see above). Raku ceramic vase, \$475, by Mario Villa, at Lowe Gallery, Atlanta (to order); Mario Villa, New Orleans, Chicago; Galerie Simonne Stern, New Orleans. 127 Swag steel/brass love seat, \$3,200 COM, Mars steel/brass demilune console with faux marbre top and cast-bronze face, \$3,267, Snake steel/brass lamp, \$558, copper shade, \$50, One-Knot steel/brass stool, \$600, Hercules steel/brass desk, \$3,100, Swag Mirror with Face of Steel with cast-bronze face and brass swag, \$1,200, Nefertiti steel/brass lamp with castbronze head, \$1,041, copper shade, \$50, all by Mario Villa, at Villa showrooms (see above). Oneof-a-kind bronze sculpture on desk, by Gyuri Hollosy, \$4,000, similar at Mario Villa, New Orleans. Chicago. Raku ceramic vase on Mars console table, by Mario Villa, \$450, at Lowe Gallery, Atlanta (to order); Mario Villa, New Orleans, Chicago; Galerie Simonne Stern, New Orleans. Verdure Tapestry cotton (#T 38550) on armchair, to the trade from J. H. Thorp & Co., division of Decorators Walk (see above). Winged bronze/copper bust, \$18,000, by Mario Villa, at Lowe Gallery, Atlanta (to order), Mario Villa, New Orleans, Chicago; Galerie Simonne Stern, New Orleans. 128 Dragonfly and Leaf steel/brass/bronze candlesticks, \$416 ea, by Mario Villa at Villa showrooms (see above). 128-29 Winged Victory and Royal Palm steel/brass bed with bronze finials, \$4,700 double, steel/alabaster screen, \$4,200, Temple of Knowledge poplar cabinet on steel base, \$3,500, Nefertiti steel/brass lamp with cast-bronze head, \$1,041, copper shade, \$50, Sonny laser steel/brass table lamp, \$875, Nobilis-Fontan cotton pillow with gold cord and silk border, \$150, embroidered dragonfly pillow with gold cord and silk border, \$250, all by Mario Villa, at Villa showrooms (see above). Zephre et Notus cotton (#9850) on pillow, Signe de Neptune cotton (#9849) on chair, by Nobilis-Fontan, for showrooms (908) 464-1177. Large papier-mâché/wood/clay figure, by Mario Villa, \$4,000, at Lowe Gallery, Atlanta (to order); Mario Villa, New Orleans, Chicago; Galerie Simonne Stern, New Orleans. Italian linens on bed, Irish linen curtains, similar at Linens, New Orleans (504) 586-8148.

#### REFRAMING THE FIFTIES

Pages 130–35 Architecture, by Hubert/Zelnio, 5727 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019, (213) 936-1194. Contracting, by K. N. Young Constructs, NYC (212) 741-0433. 130–31 Handmade polished cement Mexican tiles, by Astra, to order from Brian Flynn Assocs., West Hollywood (213) 659-2614. 131 Metal fabrication, by sculptor Paul Geshilder, Brooklyn (718) 349-2538. 132, 135 Cabinets, fabricated by Eric Seibel of the Woodshop, Brooklyn

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(718) 383-5556. 133 1949 Gio Ponti stained walnut table and chairs, starburst 1950s brass chandelier similar at Futurama. Hollywood (213) 468-8885 Verner Panton chrome-based chairs, similar to order from Shaunna & Nicholas Brown, NYC (212) 563-6026 by appt. Sofa (#150BC), remake of 1949 design, \$8,000-\$12,000 COM depending on size, from the Classic Furniture Collection of Vladimir Kagan, remade on a custom basis, by Vladimir Kagan, NYC (212) 289-0031 by appt. 134 Venetian glass mosaics, by Bisazza Mosaico, to order from Brian Flynn Assocs., West Hollywood; Nemo Tile, NYC, Hicksville, Jamaica. Bathroom plumbing fixtures, by Kohler, for dealers (414) 457-4441. 135 Wilton-weave Ocelot wool carpet, at Einstein Moomjy, NYC, Lawrenceville, North Plainfield, Paramus, Whippany. Faux-leopard throw with fauxjaguar trim, \$800, to order from ABC Carpet & Home, NYC (212) 473-3000

FINDING NEW HARMONIES

Pages 136-41 Decoration and furniture design, by Didier Gomez Design Studio. Paris (1) 42-74-07-65. 136-37 Cotton Club cotton duck for sofas, to the trade at Manuel Canovas, for showrooms (212) 752-9588. Corone cotton on pillows, 47"-49" wide, \$237 yd, at Fortuny, NYC; for showrooms (212) 753-7153. Mixer bucket armchairs, Fr4,200 ea COM, gilded ceramic bowls, Fr340 ea, at First Time, 27 rue Mazarine, 75006 Paris; (1) 43-25-55-00. Olympe brass table lamp in chrome finish, at First Time, Paris; to the trade at Mirak, Los Angeles; for other showrooms (213) 657-1486. 138 Park Avenue sofa, Fr13,925 COM, Open poufs, Fr5,500 ea COM, both by Didier Gomez for First Time, at First Time (see above). Melilla cotton on pillows, 53" wide, \$237 yd, at Fortuny (see above). Berenice halogen die-cast aluminum floor lamps, at First Time, Paris, for U.S. dealers call Artemide, Farmingdale (516) 694-9292. Otto Wagner leather/ wood chairs, Fr5.500 ea, at First Time (see above). Applique Soleil steel bar/copper candleholder with glass lens, by André Dubreuil, to custom order from A. D. Decorative Arts, London (81) 960-3304. 139 Around oak/glass table, Fr4,350. Park Avenue resting sofa under window, Fr10,410 COM, both by

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Didier Gomez for First Time, Limbo ceramic table, available in aluminum, by Eugène Brunelle. Fr6.500, at First Time (see above). Ashanti cotton for orange pillow, 45 1/2"-46 1/2" wide, \$247.50 yd, at Fortuny (see above). 140 Stall sycamore armchair, to order at Christian Liaigre, Paris (1) 47-53-78-76. MCP painted aluminum halogen lamp, by Gilles Derain, at First Time, Paris: Modern Age, NYC. Japanese Loufofaya wood stool, Fr4,900, at First Time (see above). 140-41 Cotton Club cotton duck for walls, curtains, bed upholstery, to the trade at Manuel Canovas (see above). Regina aluminum lamp in foreground, by Jorge Pensi, for dealers call Artup, Santa Ana (714) 850-1966. Tolomeo aluminum lamp by bed, at First Time, Paris, for U.S. dealers call Artemide (see above)

#### **ALPINE PALAZZO**

Pages 142–49 Palazzo Salis 1991 house parties are available Aug. 25–Sept. 1; Sept. 1–Sept. 8. Rates: SFr3,460–SFr4,100 per person per week. Contact Mrs. Rutger Smith, NYC (212) 831-3354.

**GREAT ROOMS** 

Pages 153–54 Architecture. by Keenen/Riley, NYC (212) 645-9210. Contracting, by T & L General Contracting, NYC (212) 534-3128. Metal Fabrication, by Aileron Design, Brooklyn (718) 963-1032. 153 Parlor Car cotton on banquette, to the trade at Jack Lenor Larsen (see above for pg 110). Cabinetry, by On-J Woodworking, Brooklyn (718) 388-8493. 154 Refrigerator, ice-maker, from Sub-Zero Freezer, for dealers (800) 222-7820. ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE

#### Why don't <u>you</u> become an Interior Decorator?



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HAVEN'T YOU WISHED you could find an outlet for that creative urge of yours?

If you have ever enjoyed re-doing even a corner of your home or helping a friend solve a decorating problem, you may have the potential for success in a very fulfilling career. Interior decorating is a field brimming with opportunity. You can start your own profitable business, choose your own hours—part-time or full-time. Or simply enjoy making your home more beautiful.

You have entree to glamorous show-rooms and treasure-filled shops not usually open to the public. You move in a world of fashion and design, of colorful fabrics, beautiful furniture, exciting accessories.

#### What Sheffield training can do for you.

Sheffield offers you a fascinating new training program expressly designed for study in your spare time. No previous experience or special skills are necessary to qualify for enrollment.

Our lavishly illustrated lessons come to you by mail. You also receive "Listen-and-Learn" cassette tapes on which you actually hear members of the staff guiding you It's like having a private tutor at home.

#### Classroom was never like this!

You start with easy-to-follow training in the basics of interior decorating. You then



211 East 43 Street, New York, NY 10017

move step by step through every phase of furniture selection, room arrangement, color planning, wall and window treatment, and much more. You are even taught how to gain access to showrooms and get top discounts.

You are assigned decorating projects which you work on at home. Then you mail them back to the school where a professional decorator reviews them and then—speaking to you by name on a personal cassette tape—offers specific tips, ideas, and friendly advice. It's a most enjoyable new way to learn!

#### Free booklet tells all.

Send for Sheffield School's beautifully illustrated color booklet which explains this remarkable course in detail. There's no obligation. No salesman will call.

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## Cande at large

### decorators

Dialing for If the Avon Lady kidnapped Mario Buatta and 5,000 of his samples and swatches, then hijacked the bookmobile to use as her getaway car, the peculiar result might be something akin to a

franchised consortium of 1,100 women and men who cruise the streets of America in white panel trucks emblazoned with the logo Decorating Den, murmuring their motto and mantra: "We came. We saw. We coordinated."

Having difficulty grasping the concept? Conjuring up the image? You're a show-me kind of gal or guy? No problem. Pick up the phone and dial 1-800-DEC-DENS. But be prepared with a question. Such as? Such as: "Hello, Decorating Den. Help! The in-laws are coming and the guest room is drab. Can you spruce it up fast? My budget? Oh, say, \$500—give or take \$50."

What you'll receive in response to your call for help is,

of course, the swatch-filled ColorVan, as it's called, rolling into your driveway and, behind the wheel, a bona fide Decorating Den decorator who has invested somewhere between \$7,000 and \$30,000 in her or his franchise. Before summoning your peripatetic decorator, however, you should know that both franchise and ColorVan were presented after completion of an eight-day training program at the Decorating Den's Lifestyle University in Bethesda, Maryland. Questionable qualifications for gussying up the guest room? Don't be so quick to judge. According to the official Decorating Den Systems Fast Facts flier, that eight-day crash course is followed by a sixmonth period of home study, meetings, seminars, on-the-job experience, and training with an "experienced" decorator before-move over Mario-a card-

carrying Decorating Den decorator is ready to roll.

"It's the trendsetting company of the nineties," if you ask Carol Donayre Bugg, Decorating Den's vice president and director of design. Carol—everybody calls her Carol, nobody calls her Ms. Bugg—is entitled to her selfcongratulatory enthusiasm because she has statistics on her side. For example, when she and husband Jim (Jim is president) got involved with Decorating Den back in 1984, the then-fourteen-year-old organization had a mere 125 Color Vans on the road and an annual sales volume of \$8 million. Now there are 1,100 Color Vans (and an annual sales volume of \$50 million), which places Decorating Den in the franchise pantheon, that is, in the top two percent of U.S. franchisers, alongside such legendary giants as Kentucky Fried Chicken and McDonald's. "Our time has come," adds Carol with the unmistakable pride and perkiness of Decorating Den devotees.

The true meaning of Decorating Den was brought home to me one Thursday morning not long ago when I was summoned to the gilt Louis XV suite on the second floor of the Plaza Hotel for the annual Decorating Den Dream Room Contest. For three unforgettable hours I served as a juror reviewing the best that Decorating Den

Carol Donayre Bugg and her ColorVan, below, at the Plaza. Inset: Detail of Bugg's chintz homage to Barbara Bush.

had to offer. After the coffee and Danish get-acquainted period but before the first of 215 boards were displayed on their easels we were told, with breezy matterof-factness, "Even though our decorators have professionally shopped the rooms, they may not be up to the caliber that you all are used to in your magazines—so keep that in mind as you judge." They were not. And we did.

My only comment on what I saw that Thursday morning will be to suggest that if Decorating Den should ever consider changing its name, I would like to place Window Treatments Galore! in the running. Besides, there's really no need for critical review. Anyone with \$29.95 can see what Decorating Den decorators have



According to Carol Bugg,

#### Decorating Den's time has come

to offer by picking up a copy of Carol's recently published book, *Dream Rooms for Real People* (Acropolis).

Although I was sad after the deliberations not to be able to stay for the celebratory luncheon in the Plaza's Edwardian Room—Mario Buatta was the guest of honor—I did walk away somewhat cheered by my experience. Perhaps it was the giant swath of Tefloncoated chintz thrust under my arm as I was leaving. (Designed by Carol as a tribute to Barbara Bush, the chintz is Decorating Den's first official new product introduction. As you might expect, it's red, white, and blue. With eagles. And garlands of pearls in honor of our first lady.) Or perhaps my good humor was attributable to the not very remarkable realization that gussying up the guest room for \$500 is a good thing. Besides, who makes house calls anymore? **Charles Gandee** 

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