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### **HOUSE & GARDEN MAY 1988**

Volume 160, Number 5



COVER

The spirit of Gauguin: architect Hugh Newell Jacabsen's pavilian in the Dominican Republic. Page 142. Dress af cattan and hemp and shaes by Azzedine Alaïa. Details page 253. Hair: Danilo for Oribe at Parachute. Makeup: Jaseph McDevitt far Bumble & Bumble. Style: André Lean Talley. Phatagraph by Max Vadukul.



Michael Chaw's living raam in New York. Phatagraph by Français Halard. Page 164.

**Antiques** Gilded Mirrors 106

Style by Laurie Schechter 110

Gardening by Mac Griswold 120

TalleySheet by André Leon Talley 134

**HG View** by Anna Wintour 141

Home Front Shopping, Essentials, Electronics 222

Real Estate by Charles Gandee 240

Cars by James Truman 244

Sources Where to Find It 253

Duka's Diary by John Duka 254

Diana Vreeland's favarite partrait, by William Acton, in her Manhattan apartment. Page 214.

**Heat Wave:** The spirit of Gauguin...Flower power...Bold strokes, simple structures ... Sunstruck color... Summer reveries... Fringe on the move 142

Tahitian Mythology: The legend of Gauguin is nearly as potent as his art. But only the work, says John Richardson, merits our attention 144

**Garouste & Garouste:** Liza Campbell visits the Normandy manor house of the painter and the designer and finds it part workshop, part gallery, and entirely idiosyncratic 156

**Chow Wow!:** Michael Chow fills his restaurants and his New York apartment with sensuous shapes and polished surfaces, reports Philippe Garner 164

The English Manner: Photographer Christopher Simon Sykes explains his family's eccentric Gothic-style "castle" overlooking the Yorkshire Wolds 172

**Picture Post:** The almost-lost art of the illustrated letter is kept alive by a coterie of correspondents around the world 178

More, More, Moore: Architect Charles Moore describes the eighth house he's built for himself—the crowded center of a crowded life 182

Towers of Weakness: Frank Lloyd Wright said every building with a roof leaks. Leaks are the least of it, reports Suzanne Stephens 188

Animal Farm: Christina de Liagre discovers creatures everywhere in artist Gérard Rigot's country house 190

Apprentice to Four Stars: Jeffrey Steingarten spends a week at work in the kitchen of Le Bernardin 196

Lord of the Follies: On his Hampshire estate, Alistair McAlpine carries on the noble tradition of English garden fantasies. Hannah Rothschild tours the grounds 198

Beyond the Fringe: James Truman talks with Brian Murphy about the limitless options of "found architecture" 206

Lady in Red: Diana Vreeland's New York apartment is a reflection of an unparalleled life in style. André Leon Talley finds DV around every corner and in every closet 214

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### JOHN RICHARDSON

Editor-at-Large John Richardson's enthusiasm and passion for art, people, and places—coupled with a mind that hunts for the story behind the story-results, happily, in a steady flow of ideas and articles for HG. This month he wants people to get the story straight on Gauguin. In our lead article he emphasizes "how the National Gallery in Washington has done away with the novelettish old legends about Gauguin and made us see him anew." Art historian Richardson has also been long at work on telling another painter's story-Picasso's-and the first of his four volumes on the artist is due out early next year from Random House.

### **BROOKE ASTOR**

Inarguably the grande dame of the New York philanthropic community, Mrs. Vincent Astor is the president of the Vincent Astor Foundation and a trustee of the New York Public Library. She also contributes to the library in another way, as the author of four books, most recently the 1986 novel *The Last Blossom on the Plum Tree*.

In the midst of all this and her many charitable and social obligations, Mrs. Astor has also recently rejoined the staff of HG. From 1946–56 she was head of House & Garden's features department: she now serves as a consulting editor. Her piece this month for Homelife is, appropriately, about reading groups.





### MAX VADUKUL

"My specialty is eccentric behavior," says photographer Max Vadukul, who photographed our lead feature on Gauguin. "I'm good at making people do what they might not naturally do in front of the camera, and with HG I'm given the flexibility to carry out my point of view." Born in Kenya, Vadukul lives in London and works there and in New York in the fashion and recording worlds. His photographs can also be seen in a new Rizzoli book. All That Glitters: The Glory of Costume Jewelry. Vadukul has directed television commercials and is at work on a feature film, which he describes as "a Western about an Indian rock star."

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### MICHAEL BOODRO

"I'm not a snob. I'll look at anything, talk to anyone, if it's intriguing and seems somehow different," says Michael Boodro, HG's new features editor. After a decade in the art world and four years in publishing, Boodro has the right stuff to keep on top of trends in art, decorating, and new-wave rock and roll. In his spare moments ("What spare moments?"), he has completed a novel.



### OBERTO GILI

Oberto Gili's photographs of interiors make you feel as if you've just walked into the room. His work appears effortless, neither too precious nor monumental, and is a perfect match for the new HG. For this issue Gili photographed Brian Murphy's house in Santa Monica, a house "full of ideas and taste." When not traveling, Gili is happiest "being a farmer and growing peonies at my farmhouse in Italy."

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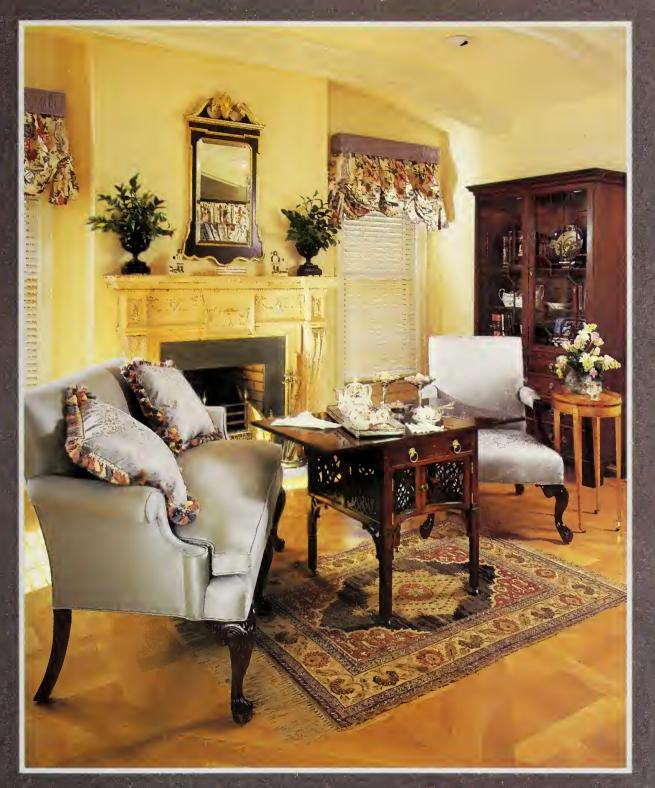
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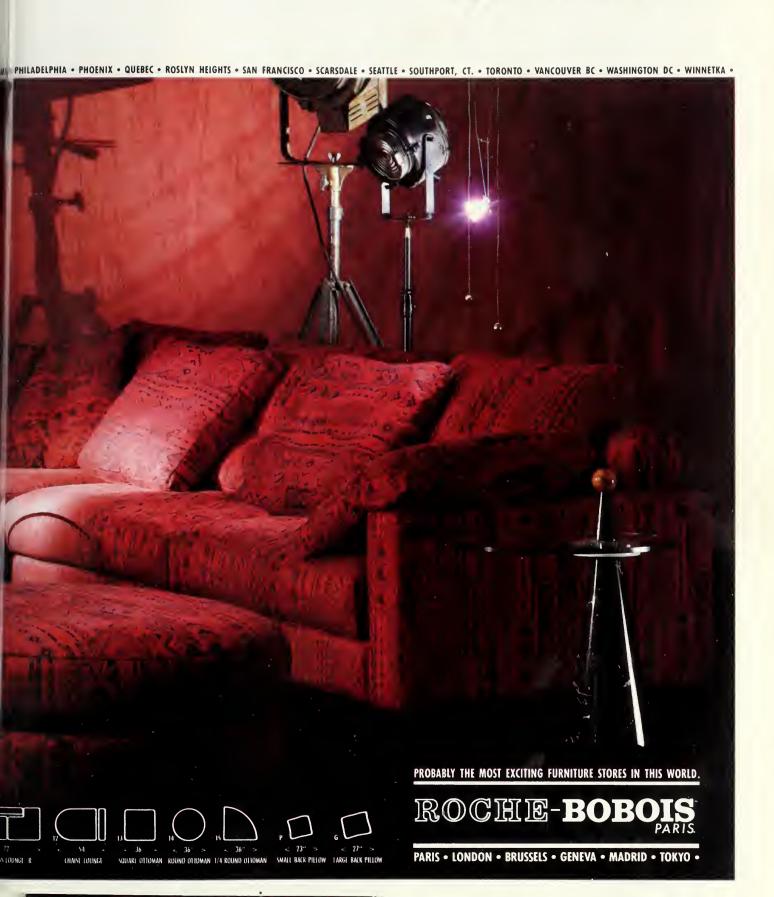
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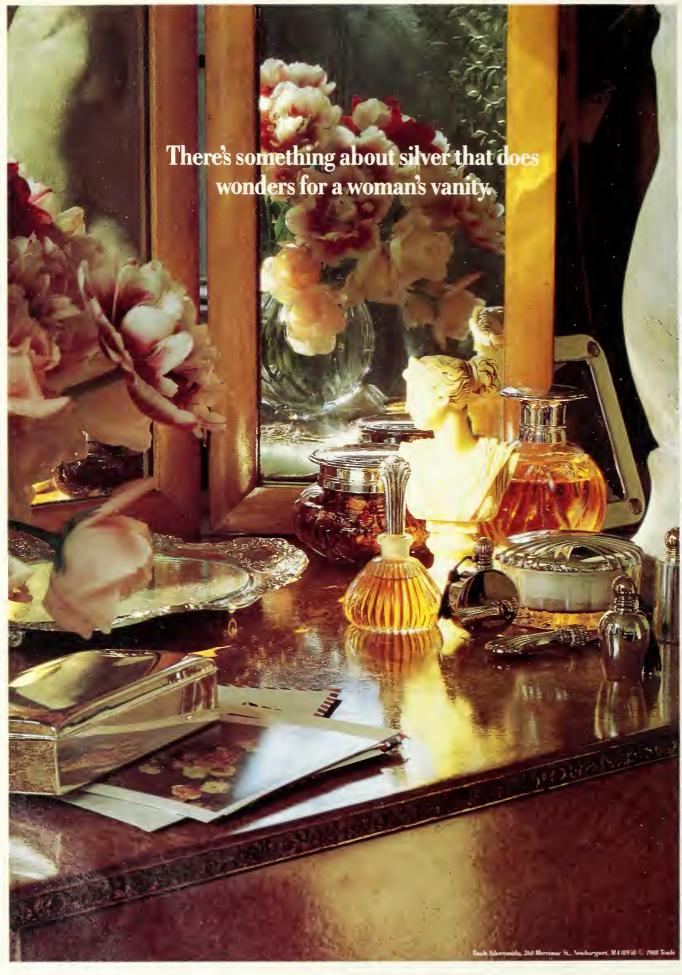
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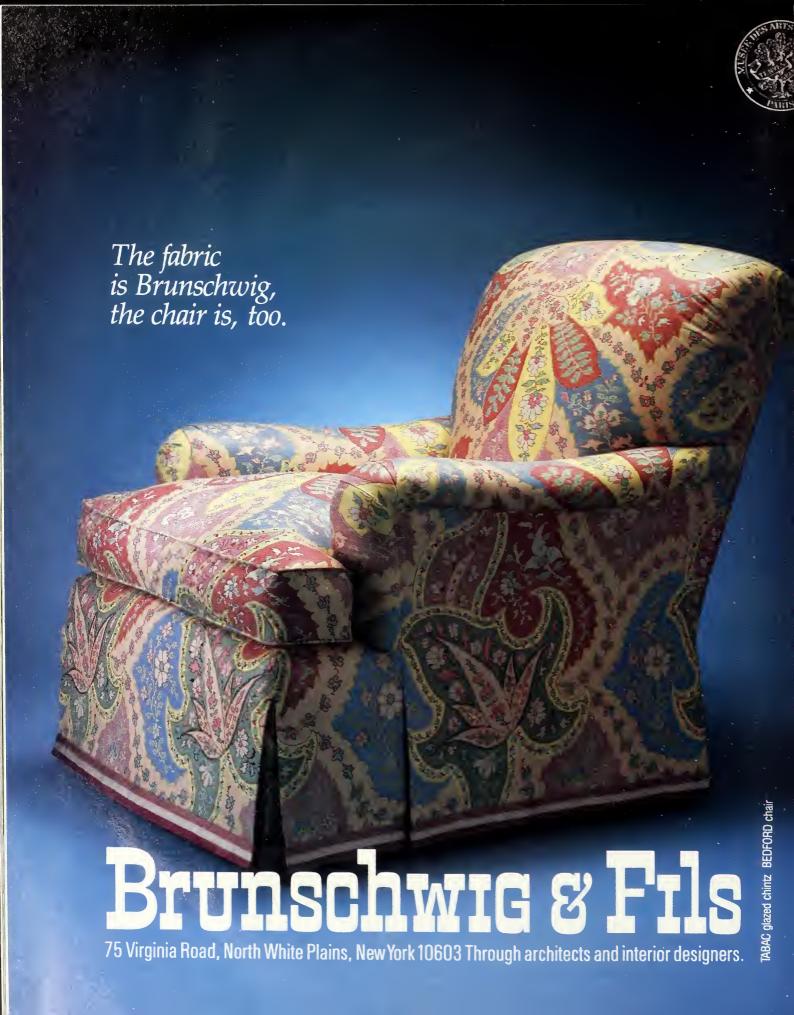
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# Beyond Peter Rabbit

Beatrix Potter's love of animals was far

more than a childhood enchantment

eatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* is one of the most popular children's books of all time, having sold 60 million copies in English and been translated into fifteen languages. This and its author's other little masterpieces—including *The Tailor of Glouces*-

ter and The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck—led P. L. Travers, creator of the Mary Poppins books, to call Potter "one of the great archangels of literature."

Potter was also a remarkable naturalist and watercolorist, and 350 of her watercolors, drawings, sketches, studies, and other memorabilia will be on display May 12 through August 21 at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City. These works reveal an extraordinary artist who transformed a life of painful solitariness into a sensibility that discovered its solidarity with the realm of leaves, flowers, and fungi and with creatures like rabbits, pigs, and mice. She painstakingly rendered in word and picture all types of sentient life. As she once said: "What we call the highest and the lowest in nature are both equally perfect. A willow bush is as beautiful as the human form divine."

Beatrix Potter (1866–1943) spent most of her youth sequestered on the third floor of her parents' Kensington home in Lon-

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# 



don-"my unloved birthplace," as she once called it. Early on, her father and mother, cotton heirs who did not need to work, provided their daughter with a Scottish nanny—a Miss McKenzie about whom Beatrix would later recall, "She had a firm belief in witches, fairies and the creed of the terrible John Calvin (the creed rubbed off but the fairies re-

mained)." Every day Miss McKenzie would present her charge with a clean piqué frock and striped cotton stockings. A butler would climb up the back stairs promptly at one o'clock to bring the little girl an unvarying lunch consisting of a cutlet and rice pudding. And in the afternoon Miss McKenzie would take Beatrix out for a brisk walk. She had no neighborhood friends, did not go to school, and was taken downstairs to see her parents only to say goodnight.

close study of a beetle. Beatrix Potter's salvation lay in her early interest in drawing—an interest that became an obsession and later a vocation that served to connect her to the world outside and, with her indefatigable sense of humor, helped her overcome depressive moods. "I cannot rest, I must draw, however poor the result, and when I have a bad time come over me it is a stronger desire than ever, and settles on the queerest things.... Last time...I caught myself in the back yard making a careful and admiring copy of the swill bucket, and the laugh it gave me brought me round."

Beatrix Potter at fifteen with a

beloved pet. Top right: Her

Thanks to her parents' frequent holiday trips to the English, Welsh, and Scottish countrysides, she discovered early on that, like Timmy Willie in her book The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse (the mouse that liked to protect its head from the sun with a leaf umbrella while nibbling on a luscious strawberry), she preferred the country to the city.

Her first surviving sketchbook, made when she was nine years old, includes drawings of butterflies, caterpillars, and birds' eggs. Her second, completed a year later, shows rabbits skating on the ice and pushing one another on sleds.

Potter's drawings were always faithful to an animal's character and to nature. Thus, even when Peter Rabbit acts like an irrepressible little boy, he is irrefutably a carefully delineated rabbit; Mr. Jeremy

> Fisher both a squat Pickwickian bachelor and a perfectly realized frog. Beatrix would take umbrage at a passage in The Wind in the Willows in which Kenneth Grahame describes Toad combing his hair. "A mistake to fly in the face of nature," she wrote. "A frog may wear goloshes, but I don't hold with toads having beards or wigs!"

She developed and trained her eve by keeping, with the help of her younger brother, Bertram, an amazingly varied and ever-changing menagerie set up in the schoolroom of the thirdfloor nursery. At one

time there were four black newts, two salamanders, two lizards, a family of snails, a dormouse, a tortoise, and a bat. Beatrix was especially fond of two Belgian rabbits-Benjamin H. Bouncer and Peter Piper—and a score of mice, which she was able to tame and feed out of her hand. When traveling, she carried these creatures with her in rabbit hutches and baskets, and she smuggled them down to the garden for an occasional romp. She recorded their measurements and occasionally boiled them after they died in order to study their skeletons—though some, like Tiggy the hedgehog (the model for Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle), were given aggrieved burials in the back garden.

And, of course, Potter drew these creatures over and over, thereby preserving the memory, specificity, humor, and vitality of these short-lived creatures—the true and dearest companions of her lifewhom she loved and portrayed with at least as much devotion as Lewis Carroll loved and photographed his many prepubescent little female friends.

From a Miss Cameron—a drawing teacher provided by her parents-she learned freehand drawing, modeling, geometry, perspective, and watercoloring, but she resented her lessons and her teacher, saying, "I shall paint just as I like when not with her. . . l am convinced it lies chiefly with oneself. . . . It may just be that one sees [things] because one has an open mind, not in a groove." The painter Sir John Everett

Millais, a friend of "A frog may paid her one of her when, after seeing with toads a selection of her commented: "Plenty of people can

Beatrix's father, wear goloshes. finest compliments but I don't hold work, he astutely having beards"

Nature was Beatrix Potter's only real teacher. So it was inevitable that she would eventually live permanently in the country. In 1896 her parents rented a house near the Lake District village of Sawrey. "It is as nearly perfect a little place as I ever lived in," Beatrix would

draw, but you ... have observation."

write in her journal.

Nine years later, in 1905, Beatrix Potter bought a farm in Near Sawrey called Hill Top, whose interiors—dressers, claret-colored curtains, flagged floorsand exteriors-cottage garden, slateroofed porches, purple clematis-provided the settings for many of her best books, such as The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck, The Tale of Tom Kitten, The Tale of Pigling Bland. In and around her cherished Lancashire village she depicted the beauties of north-country life with its surrounding lakes, fells, and whitewashed farms. In 1913 she married a property solicitor named William Heelis and spent the rest of her life cultivating her garden, farming, breeding Herdwick sheep, and working to conserve the land and the animals she had spent her life portraying so often, so accurately and so beautifully because she had loved them so selflessly and so deeply. Jonathan Cott

Frederick Warne &. Company, the original publisher of Beatrix Potter's books, has recently issued new editions of 23 volumes of her Peter Rabbit books with four-color plates printed from Potter's original watercolors, \$4.95 hardcover, \$2.95 paper.

# Art Takes Shape

Sculpture achieves a new dimension in importance

igh stakes and sometimes bloody skirmishes on the battlefield of contemporary painting during the past two decades-from Minimalism and Conceptualism to the wild excesses of Neo-Expressionism to the Day-Glo hard edges of Neo-Geo-have made it easy to ignore the quieter if weightier art of sculpture. Indeed, the last time many people paid attention, sculpture seemed mired in a tired formalism. Yet the evidence is mounting that sculpture may be the most vital medium of the moment. Many of the best young artists are choosing to express themselves in three-dimensions. Of the eleven artists the Museum of Modern Art has showcased in its innovative Projects series since it was resumed in 1986, seven have been sculptors.

In Britain a new generation of sculptors—including Barry Flanagan, Richard Long, and Bill Woodrow—are producing what's generally acknowledged to be the most important art in that country, as documented last year in the traveling exhibition "A Quiet Revolution: British Sculpture Since 1965."

One of the easiest ways to get a quick take on the vitality and diversity of the current sculpture scene can be found in Minneapolis at an exhibition celebrating the opening in September of the sevenacre Minneapolis Sculpture Garden. The Walker Art Center's "Sculpture Inside Outside," on view from May 22 through the summer, features seventeen young sculptors, among them Judith Shea, Jene Highstein, Peter Shelton, and Martin Puryear. Their wildly varying styles and techniques-from unique ways of using traditional materials to a willful and playful tampering with icons of popular culture—prove sculpture is able to encompass virtually any artistic impulse from the romantic to the deliberately disturbing.

Any further doubts about this sculptural renaissance should be dispelled by a number of solo exhibitions this month and

next. John Duff, 45, has been working for more than two decades, and his latest works will be shown at New York's Blum Helman Gallery May 4–28. Although he shuns publicity, Duff's sensuous colored

fiberglass wall pieces and freestanding structures have inspired many.

In April young artist Hanno Ahrens, in his second exhibition at SoHo's Sharpe Gallery, continues his investigation of the properties of dense roughhewn wood and the pliable smoothness of plaster.

Christy Rupp has always been concerned with the confrontation between urbanized man and nature—her most famous piece was a large cast-stone snail dragging an ear of corn. At P.P.O.W. Gallery in the East Village through April 24, her new work continues her fascination with the underside of biology.

Robert Gober, at the Art Institute of Chicago April 26–June 26, totally upsets expectations about familiar

household objects in his work—as in his lovingly handcrafted kitchen sinks and urinals that evoke both drudgery and Duchamp. His *X Crib* takes the familiar and reassuring form of a cradle and denies it all possibility of shelter.

Gober works in the tradition of Richard Artschwager, one of the first artists to play with the forms of furniture. Artschwager's retrospective, a recent hit at the Whitney, is at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art beginning June 16.

These shows may be the ultimate proof that sculpture now offers possibilities for innovation and idiosyncrasy which the tyranny of the picture plane simply does not allow.

Michael Boodro



Sculptors in their element. From top: Christy Rupp with her life-size cardboard dinosaur. Hanno Ahrens in his studio. Robert Gober leans on his X Crib.

# architecture



Andrée Putman gives an early Le Corbusier masterpiece

a discreet and sympathetic infusion of her own distinctive style

any architects are ashamed of their earliest buildings, deleting them from their résumés and hoping those tentative efforts will be forgotten. But the more famous the architect, the less possible that is. Like most of his coprofessionals, Le Corbusier got his start designing houses for his family and friends in his hometown. Born in 1887 in La Chaux-de-Fonds (then the watchmaking capital of Switzerland), Le Corbusier was justly proud of the last of his seven houses there, the Villa Schwob of 1916-17. Built for a rich industrialist. it was unlike any other residence around. Its flat roof, almost-blank street façade, and Byzantine massing won it the nickname of

Villa Turque. Less visibly, its concrete structural frame made it one of the most technically advanced houses of its day.

With a fine sense of high-profile, highstyle image making, the Ebel watch company recently bought the house for use as a public relations center. Tactfully restored by the architect Pierre Studer, it has been given a fresh and somewhat unexpected interior redesign by Andrée Putman, best known for her personal reinterpretations of the early Modern style. Rather than using Le Corbusier's own furniture classics, which weren't introduced until a decade after the Villa Schwob was completed, she relied on the now-familiar pieces produced by her Par-

is firm, Ecart. Putman's reeditions, including Eileen Gray's Transat chair and Mariano Fortuny's desk lamp, work remarkably well in the imposing doubleheight salon and avoid the fake historichouse feeling that too literal an approach would have given. Furthermore, she never pushes her personality to the fore at the expense of the master's. The rooms, and therefore the villa itself, seem much more modern now than when the house was first completed. Furnished then with a heavy haut bourgeois hand, it did not look as architecturally innovative as it actually was. Now Andrée Putman's deft but discreet touch clarifies the timelessness of this work of youthful genius. **Martin Filler** 



Postmodernism is passé, according to

an upcoming exhibition at MOMA

hilip Johnson is excited. He's on to something new. Forget the AT&T Building. Broken pediments were yesterday. "The revolution is against Postmodernism," declares the peripatetic Pied Piper of architecture. "Michael Graves's fifteen minutes are up."

Although this will undoubtedly come as sad news to many, including Graves

(who's busier than ever), Johnson does have a point. The bloom has been off the rose of Postmodernism for quite some time now, but it is an open question whether or not "Deconstructivist Architecture," the exhibition Johnson is guest-curating with his new 31-year-old protégé, Mark Wigley, contains the stuff of which the next fifteen minutes will be made. Will

architects flock to New York's Museum of Modern Art between June 23 and August 30 and be so moved that they return home to their drawing boards filled with what Johnson calls the new feeling? Maybe. If so, they would do well to read up on Russian Constructivism, the au courant font of architectural inspiration, before putting pen to paper. Certainly Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, Wolf Prix/Helmut Swiczinsky, and Bernard Tschumi—the architects whose drawings and models are included in the MOMA exhibition—have more than a nodding acquaintance with this particular branch of the early Modern movement, although their individual variations on the themes of fracture and fragmentation are wildly idiosyncratic, as a glimpse of their designs, right, confirms.

And as for that nasty rumor about Johnson stealing the idea for "Deconstructivist Architecture" from younger minds? "I'm in a wonderful position," quips the 81-year-old architect. "I'm so old I don't give a damn." Charles Gandee

Selections from the portfolios of the architects in the MOMA exhibition reveol on "interesting stylistic confluence," occording to guest curotor Philip Johnson.



Drowings ond models, clockwise from top right, by Peter Eisenmon, Zoho Hadid, Fronk Gehry, Doniel Libeskind, Rem Koolhaas, Bernord Tschumi, ond Wolf Prix ond Helmut Swiczinsky of Coop Himmelblou.







# Little Nells

Will the English drawing-room look suffocate

post-disco club life in New York?

n the myriad of Manhattan nightclubs—tatty, pretentious, life-threatening, slick, small, sleazy, and just plain dull—there is always one that swims to the surface and reigns supreme over its rivals. How long its heyday lasts is decided at the whim of the notoriously capricious New York night crawlers. At the moment it is Nell's, which has been the leader since it opened in October 1986. One identifiable reason for its popularity is Nell herself, the eccentric and witty hostess who has long been a cult figure thanks to her bizarre cabarets and appearances in both the theater and movie versions of *The Rocky Horror Show*. Another tangible reason is that the design of the club, brainchild of Keith McNally, and his wife, Lynn Wagenknecht, has turned its back on those ultramodern disco

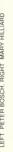


Clockwise, from far left: A marble fireplace at Au Bar; books line the wall, also at Au Bar; at Farty Worth a custamer waits far a shoeshine; a cauple in a curtained baoth at Forty Worth.

schemes of mirror and chrome with enough bulbs and strobes to illuminate downtown Las Vegas. Nell's went for the comfort of large sofas, wood paneling, and soft lighting: the overall effect is similar to the English drawing room. In the red corner we have Nell's, the reigning champ, and in the blue we have the newcomers: Undochine, Forty Worth, Au Bar, and the newest new boy, MK's.

Undochine, which has been open since October 1987, is the largest of the four. In fact, it has no official title because the coowners. Frederick Sutherland and Jon Sidel, could not pick a name from the scores they had drafted. It has variously been nicknamed Fred's Place, Place King, and Weird Boat, but the most popular is Undochine, coined because the club is underneath Indochine—the massively successful restaurant on Lafayette Street owned by the massively successful restaurateur and social commentator Brian McNally, Keith McNally's brother.

Undochine roughly divides into three different sections: near the entrance a bar shaped like a ship's prow—thus Weird Boat—serves a series of booths, made out





Sofas, a red wing chair, and a drum coffee table, above, at Au Bar. Right: At Forty Worth bright red sofas line a deep blue niche.

anyway. Frederick Sutherland concludes,

"I don't know how long it the guests. His repertoire Nell's went for the will last; clubs have a short life span. One week you're riding the crest of cool, the next you're old news."

Forty Worth was conceived by the powerfully built Mitch Perl, a former

bouncer and bartender at Danceteria. A nice enough man, he can tell a Biancacame-down-here-one-night story with the best of them. His club is in a basement on West Broadway which used to house a restaurant called Ira's, a place where, apparently, politicians fraternized with denizens of the underworld. It is perhaps interesting to note that Forty Worth is next door to the massively successful Odeon, owned by none other than Keith McNally and his wife, part owners of Nell's.

When Ira's closed, the space lay empty it. No one enjoys themselves there; they all just look at one another checking out who has what bow in their hair. It's a real showcase, but they do great business-my hat's off to them.

"I had a fantasy about owning a house in Manhattan and having a basement for my friends to hang out in. The club came out close to this dream by being open six nights a week and being extremely comfortable." As at Undochine, I was clearly not on the same wavelength when it comes to what they consider comfortable. There is the obvious problem that a lesser-known tributary of the Hudson River is wont to snake through parts of the club when it rains. The seating is designed to make one remain vertical despite aching feet. The center-

piece of the club is a large handsome clock, which formerly resided in the lobby of the original Manhattan Savings Bank. Also bought from the same bank are several olive leather conference chairs. The transition has not been a happy one. Strangely the dated smell of patchouli oil pervades the atmosphere, and one is forced to ask: what am I doing in this dive? The regulars are described as "a real downtown crowd interested in the arts, people who go out all the time.' These people for whom black is de rigueur are no doubt oblivious to the Amtrak seating and are more than happy to prop up the bar until dawn, but for a newcomer the atmosphere is about as appealing as the subway.

Au Bar on 58th Street is owned by Howard Stein, who is older than the other contenders by about fifteen years. Stein has had a long career as an entrepreneur. He started as a concert promoter back in the sixties, when his Uncle Iggy gave him a job touring with Herman's Hermits. He then moved on to nightclubs and developed a talent for seeing what was the hottest spot in town and then ripping off the idea. First he had Xenon to rival Steve Rubell's Studio 54. When meta-chic restaurants opened up, Stein followed suit with Prima Donna, although he was less successful with it than with Xenon. Now, of the four newcomers, Stein has attempted the closest copy of Nell's.

The club has been decorated by three previously unknown English girls em-

of bird's-eye maple, and continues through to the woodwork of the bar and deejay's console in the main room where the walls have been stripped back to the raw brick. There is absolutely nothing decorated about this section other than dim red lights and three mirrored balls which throw specks of light into the dusky atmosphere. Beyond the black wood dance floor a spiral staircase leads to the third section where Undochine's punk

chef produces snacks for consists of processed- comfort of sofas, cheese sandwiches. Period. Frederick Sutherland, wood paneling, who describes himself as a and soft lighting functional artist and designed many of the club's

fittings, says: "There was a need for a club, as there was only Nell's and Madame Rosa's as far as anyone was concerned. There's little pretense here. We wanted it to be simple, comfortable, and with no real attitude. This is New York and everyone's seen everything so there's no need to try and impress anybody.' Here they succeed magnificently. It's not so much a dancing place as a hangout. "On Mondays we have local and L.A. rock bands," says Sutherland. "And Captain Whizzo comes down to do his superpsychedelic light show. He's been putting them on since 1965." And by the looks of it he hasn't changed his style since then—swirling globules of orange and pink oil being the order of the day.

The club has a following at the moment—people are frequently turned away, but how long will that last? It lacks style and comfort, which can always be sacrificed for the sake of good music, but, as at so many similar clubs, only plastic Pop is offered. Of course, knowing one is going to see friends can be a big incentive, but facilities for conversation are limited, and it is so dark you might never find them

for twenty years until Perl, who was looking for an ideal place in the west teens, stumbled across it: "There was no place to go except Nell's, and I'd grown tired of

# design

ployed because they impressed Stein with their first hand knowledge of such exclusive London clubs as Annabel's and Mark's. Ideas were also stolen from Pratts, but as women, they would not have had access to its venerable chambers.

The large basement room has been divided into different sections around its perimeter. There is the "attic" decorated with crossed field-hockey sticks and old trunks. The "salon" is The "salon" of graced by a fake Sargent; next door is the "library" Au Bar is graced by ter my namesake. Gerwith shelves of dusty en- a fake Sargent cyclopedias and old se-

pia-toned photographs on the plum-colored walls. There is also a dining area, which serves finger food as well as dinner and breakfast. The deep damask-covered sofas and tapestry armchairs provide a degree of comfort here. A large ventilator in the section known as the men's club dispels smoke from cigars and pipes, and in the men's bathrooms the cover stories (changed daily) from leading newspapers are framed on the wall above the urinals. The pseudo-Englishness is Stein's great joy. "I've been wanting to do a club like this for a long time,

especially after the six years I spent at Xenon. That was an era dedicated to overproduction-more was better, which is the opposite of the little details we concentrate on here." Although it mimics all things British, Au Bar's name has been taken from the title of a Cocteau drawing, which was done at Le Boeuf sur le Toit, a Parisian bar frequented by expatriates. "I was looking for a name from

that time. First 1 thought I'd call it Gertrude's, aftrude Stein, but then 1 thought, my God, they are going to think I'm im-

itating Nell's. I like the name Au Barit's simple—although no one can spell it and people who don't like it call it Au Shit and Au No.'

One has to conclude that unless someone arrives on the night scene with a great deal more chutzpah, the status quo will remain. But Nell better hang fire before she goes jitterbugging to the bank because MK's might just have the right ingredients to scrawl the writing on Nell's paneling. Eric Goode, the dashing bohemian who used to run Area, has converted an

old bank on Fifth and 25th Street into four floors of idiosyncratic adventure. The third floor has a bedroom where neurotics can hyperventilate in the peace of creamy damask. Next door is a powder room, which includes a tub for general use. On the same floor is a pool table in a room decorated like a mad old uncle's library. A cabinet contains a science-laboratory display of bones; a lion rampant and a Doberman (both stuffed) also lurk about the place-Goode is a taxidermophile. The mezzanine has a restaurant with mosaic tiling and an air of fin de siècle.

Downstairs the lobby features a goldleaf ceiling, a huge crystal chandelier, a marble floor, and the two bars. Along the whole of one wall the taxidermophile has built a vast fish tank. If you've never got into the mesmeric effect of these tanks, now is your chance; however, how long the fish will be allowed to dwell in water as opposed to formaldehyde is anyone's guess. The dance floor is housed in the former bank vault. Little has been altered here, so the effect is similar to Frankenstein's castle, exaggerated by low and sinister lighting. Bring on the night.

Liza Campbell

### Chair of the Month

Dr. Ruth analyzes the possibilities for a new design

ow I wonder what Sigmund Freud would say to a couch like this. Let me tell you what Dr. Ruth Westheimer is going to say. If you need to talk about some problems with your mother-in-law, I can see a couch like this. But for talking about good sex, let me design a different couch. But maybe for talking about some dreams, some horror dreams or some really out-in-space kind of voyage, it might be great. Or as a pièce de conversation when people have very little to talk about, I think it is brilliant.

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### HOMELIFE

# Social Studies

There's more to reading groups than books. **Brooke Astor** reports

was nineteen and married for two years when I joined my first reading group. It came about in this way. My family had been living in Washington for the last five years when, with their reluctant consent, I took the leap into matrimony and went to live in New Jersey.

It was the time between the wars, and welloff Americans were dedicated to copying English country life. Somerset County, New
Jersey, with its rolling hills and lush meadows, was the perfect setting for building their
Georgian manor houses and indulging a taste
for outdoor sports such as fox hunting, beagling, and cross-country races. These sports
were enjoyed along with their attendant hunt
balls, hunt breakfasts, hearty beagling teas,
and magnificent picnic lunches on hillsides
to watch the races. For me, this was quite

new—totally different from life in Washington, which had been confined to tea dances with the children of diplomats and riding in Rock Creek Park with a group from school. So here I was in New Jersey, and as I was so young I became quite a pet among the older ladies. At first it was delicious for me. After

two years, however, in spite of the beauty of the countryside and all the kindness of these delightful people, I was not happy. My husband was very difficult, and my family was in Haiti, as father had been appointed High Commissioner. At this time I met a woman who asked if I would like to join a reading group, I accepted with alacrity. I had been brought up reading and discussing books, and I think unconsciously I missed that.

The group turned out to be fascinating, mostly because it was dominated by an extraordinary lady, Mrs. Cromwell, who was at least 25 years older (and wiser) than the rest of us. She had the presence of a woman from a Henry James novel and was quite lovely-looking with dark penetrating eyes, a small oval face, and graying hair parted in the middle and pulled back into a bun. Her voice was among her greatest attractions, and one never missed a word. We were to read the Greeks, starting with Thucydides, and I can see Mrs. Cromwell now, sitting straight as a ramrod in a large Chippendale chair, looking down at us (we usually sat on the floor) to make sure we were all attentive as she read a favorite passage in her mellifluous voice. It was her own intensity and interest that brought the words to life. Reading Thucydides's History of the Peloponnesian War was quite an experience; it catapulted us

into the day-to-day life of the Peloponnesus and gave us a close-up view of what war and expansion can do to a nation. Mrs. Cronwell asked us to evaluate: If this should happen in our times, to our nation, what would we do? We wrote out our responses with fervor, and discussions were heated. Whenever we be-

gan to go beyond the bounds of civil conversation, Mrs. Cronwell would call a halt and would then take each of us on. One of our members was later elected to Congress; she became particularly articulate and continued to be so for many years in government service. I was in this group for three years and stopped when my son was born.

The reading-group experience helped to discipline my thinking and, indirectly, my life. Soon after it. I got a divorce and moved to New York with my little boy. I already knew quite a lot of people, as my husband and I had usually rented a house in New York for the winter, and most of the New Jersey people had town houses there. So I had a good time seeing old friends and meeting new ones. Among the new friends was Hermann Oelrichs. I met him through Ernest Boyd, who, among other things, wrote an excellent life of Maupassant. It seems that Hermann, who wished to be au courant about what was going on in the literary world, paid Ernest a small sum to write a résumé each week of what should or should not be readin other words, to give Hermann a chance to appear to have brilliant opinions. I was told this in secrecy by Ernest and so, of course, longed to meet Hermie.

Although Hermann Oelrichs had a house in Newport and another in New York, he also owned a two-story building on East 52nd Street, which he turned into a sort of club. He received there every Tuesday and Thursday from three o'clock on; one was given a pass to present at the door, then went up to the second floor into a large room filled with comfortable chairs and floor-to-ceiling bookshelves on three walls. Here one could find Deems Taylor, George Jean Nathan, Mencken, Woollcott, Oliver St. John Gogarty (As I Was Going Down Sackville Street), Sean O'Casey, Noël Coward, the Lunts, Emlyn Williams, and occasionally Dumpy Oelrichs (Hermann's wife) would bring friends Tookie Mortimer, Anita Loos, and Peggy Leech (later Mrs. Ralph Pulitzer).

It was at Hermann Oelrichs's 52nd Street house that I met Orage. Ernest introduced me and then left me with him. He was a small, dark, furtive-looking person with dead white skin and soft brown eyes. As I talked to him he told me that he was a philosopher, a follower of Gurdjieff and of Ouspensky. I knew nothing of these men. Orage had just finished

Mrs. Cromwell sat

straight as a ramrod in

a Chippendale chair

to see if we were all

and looked down at us

attentive as she read in

her mellifluous voice





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### **HOMELIFE**

his book Consciousness, concerning human, animal, and sublime consciousness. Looking back now, I think he was one of those men who mask themselves under the guise of philosophers, but are actually part of a cult wishing to attract disciples. At the time, never having seen his like before (but I have seen plenty since), I was fascinated and asked if he would come to my house every two weeks to instruct us and tell us what to read. We were all young and extremely curious about ourselves, and he nurtured in us a sense of superiority toward the rest of mankind. We read only his own books, starting with Consciousness, and were in the middle of On Love when he was called back to Europe, which was perhaps just as well because his pockets were full and our heads were quite confused and empty. I should not call this experience a reading group. It was closer to a session with an unlicensed psychiatrist.

After Orage my life became so busy that not until three years ago did I have the time to start a real reading group with a married couple who had excellent ideas on how to organize it. First, they asked a well-known British literary critic to be our guide. Then they assembled a group with an interesting mix (all with different types of publications): three publishers; two authors; two musicians, who are also writers; a well-known prima ballerina; three married ladies, who are mixed up with everything interesting in New York; and myself. This time our leader chose a theme for each year. The first year's theme was manners and money. We read Little Dorrit by Charles Dickens, The Custom of the Country by Edith Wharton, The Way We Live Now by Anthony Trollope, and Tono-Bungay by H. G. Wells. Last year's readings were on the beginnings of revolution: Flaubert's A Sentimental Education, Turgenev's First Love and On the Eve, followed by Conrad's Under Western Eyes, and Henry James's Princess Casamassima.

Our topic this year is men and women. The first book was Adolphe by Benjamin Constant. The second Persuasion by Jane Austen, and then Middlemarch by George Eliot. We are presently reading Anna Karenina, which I have read, but not for years. Reading it for a group discussion will be very different from reading it for oneself—it will have much more depth.

We meet once a month. We talk and talk, which is what one wants in a reading group. There is no point in reading if you do not form opinions. The whole idea is to take a look at life through books and then to have the fun of discussing them with other people.



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# Design for Living

### William Hamilton delves into a new encyclopedia of design and finds more than he bargained for

lthough it is a very dire way, leaving your marriage is one method of discovering what interior-decorating talent you may have. Denuded of home, you start freshly, if not innocently, to dwell again. This restart, cautioned by disaster, can obtain unexpected aesthetic intensity from the emotional cocktail mixed of guilt, self-justification, and the euphoria of escape. The first apartment of the marital émigré tries to be everything that the exited maze of pain, deceit, and woe was not.

There are no wedding presents in the escape apartment, and divorce presents are still unheard of, so the furnishing decisions are as unprejudiced as deep space. Souvenirs of the defunct past are abhorrent. Everything must be new—at least new to the newly single shopper—preferably cheap, and from as close by as possible. These conditions lead to unexpected intensity in such heretofore obliviously presumed bazaars as Woolworth and K Mart.

My own first decisions under these conditions produced a mattress, a brown gooseneck lamp, and six prickly rolls of sisal matting in the bare square of my just-leased studio apartment. Sisal carpeted the diving

boards of my youth, so it had a symbolic as Professor Pile marches us well as an economic appeal for me as 1 along like an educated. plunged into postmarital bachelorhood.

After the big things,

I began to browse for accessories. Six plain white mugs from Woolworth-so refreshingly opposite to the complex decorative heirlooms I'd fled. Six heavy white restaurant-ware plates. The plainest glasses and some wooden-handled cutlery completed my spartan table setting. I even soaked the labels off my liquor bottles so the bar would also be a display of essential unadorned form and informationless color.

authoritarian nun

My lair was as pure in shape, form, color, size, scale, proportion, unity, balance, em-



phasis, pattern, ornament—in short, all of the ingredients charted in John F. Pile's exhaustive volume Interior Design—as an egg. It did not last, of course. Eggs don't. I am currently writing this on a pillow cut from an Aubusson rug. The turrets and towers of as much aesthetic period furniture as I've been able to lay my hands on cut a Constantinople skyline all around me. A new wife has arrived. The Woolworth mugs are gone.

Professor Pile's book feels like a life's

work. His prose is careful, his information encyclopedic. Interior Design (Harry N. Abrams. \$49.50), however, is a lot more fun than an encyclopedia be-

cause it is thick with gorgeous photographs of contemporary interiors plotted by the most important designers of our day.

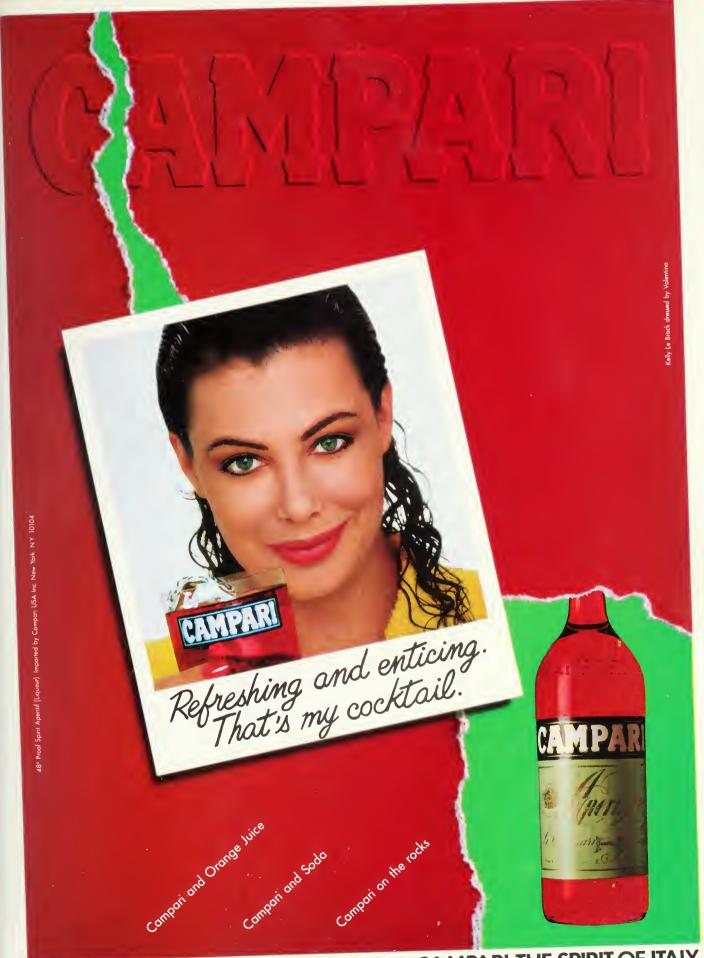
If his prose at times harkens back to earlier days ("It seems that we were best off in an automobile or traveling on an ocean liner"), his information brims up through his absolutely contemporary photographic examples to a glossy and entertaining present with complete and authoritative relevance. He philosophizes with an unshakably patrician perspective: "Living things are invariably of excellent design." Only an optimistic tastemaker unfamiliar with Times Square and the New York subway system could conclude that "one can find design merit in even the most threatening of life-forms."

The author marches us through the splendors of rich and grand and simple and brilliant and public and private rooms like a supremely educated and authoritarian nun managing a sixth-grade cultural outing. He has attacked interior decoration with the logic and deliberation of a grammarian. Like the original decliners of Latin, who marked off the parts of their language around a circle, spinning it like lab technicians breaking down a blood sample, Professor Pile declines interior design.

Nothing is presumed to be understood. which is invaluable when he charts and examines such arcane aspects of the field as lighting or textiles. But such pedagogy can be unintentionally amusing when he explains less technical, more philosophical matters like the nature of difference: "It is design differences that make one house different from another, one room different from another, and that allow us to speak of one example as better or worse than another.'

The old boy is also not without his opinions. Plastic imitation makes him furious: "Serious design work of good quality rejects all such imitation as cheap, shoddy, and generally of such poor appearance as to fool no one." The subject sets him sputtering for hundreds of words until he beholds anathema itself: "Plastic butcher block or knotty pine, linoleum marble or flagstone, simulated brick and tile, fake fireplaces, and plastic plants are among the absurdities that have no place in a well-designed interior."

Once I chose Saint Patrick's Day to exchange a pair of gloves at a snooty boutique devoted to horsewear on Madison Avenue. In front of its window stood a pair of cast-iron benches bearing fox-hunting motifs. Saint Patrick's Day in New York City attracts the youth of New Jersey and other nearby popu-



CAMPARI. THE SPIRIT OF ITALY.

### Encore

La Petite Danseuse de Quatorze Ans, a bronze by Edgar Degas, from the Estate of Belle Linsky, is one of the most famous sculptures of the nineteenth century.

Mr. and Mrs. Linsky acquired this work of art in 1971 at Sotheby's auction of property from the Collection of Norton Simon. Now, it has returned to Sotheby's in New York where it will be offered for sale at an auction of Impressionist and Modern Paintings and Sculpture on May 10.

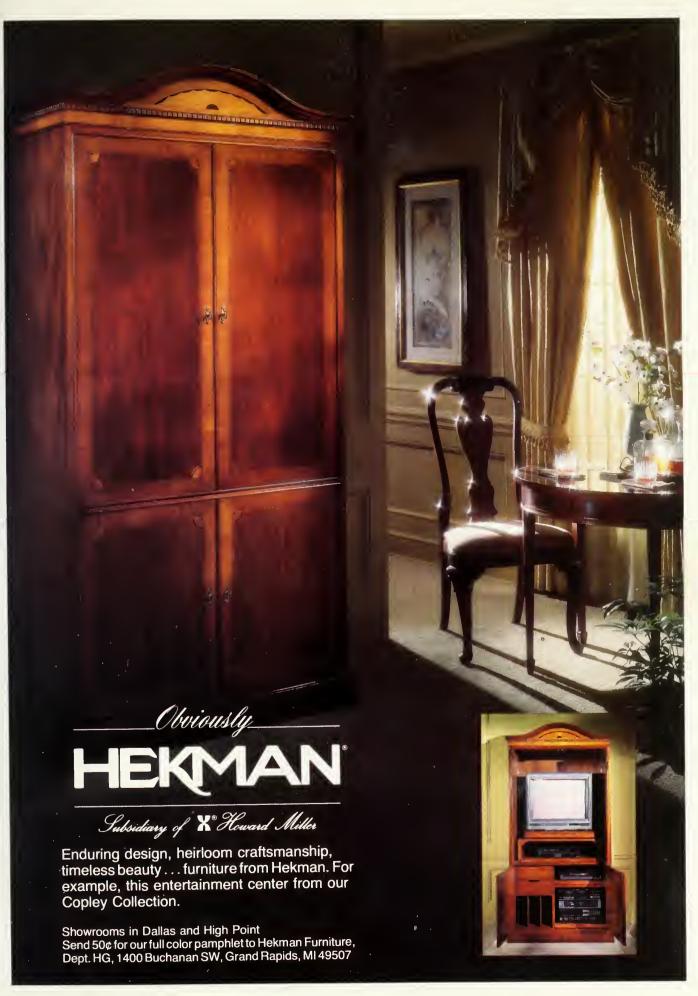
La Petite Danseuse was the only one of Degas' sculptures exhibited during his lifetime, and none was cast until after his death in 1917. This bronze is one of a limited number of casts made of La Petite Danseuse in the 1920s.

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### **BOOKS**

lation centers the way Fort Lauderdale does at the spring break. They flow in, pooling together around the parade. The sight of the splendid tallyho benches in front of the tony equine equipper was mistakenly welcome to half a dozen such celebrants. The proprietor grew anxious over the rowdy arrivals outside his window. Past the saddles, hunting horns, velvet hunting caps, and horse-flecked silk scarves he glared at the barbaric teens. When he could bear it no more he excused himself and strode in a fury to the door.

"You're common!" he shouted at the boys. "Common as dirt!"

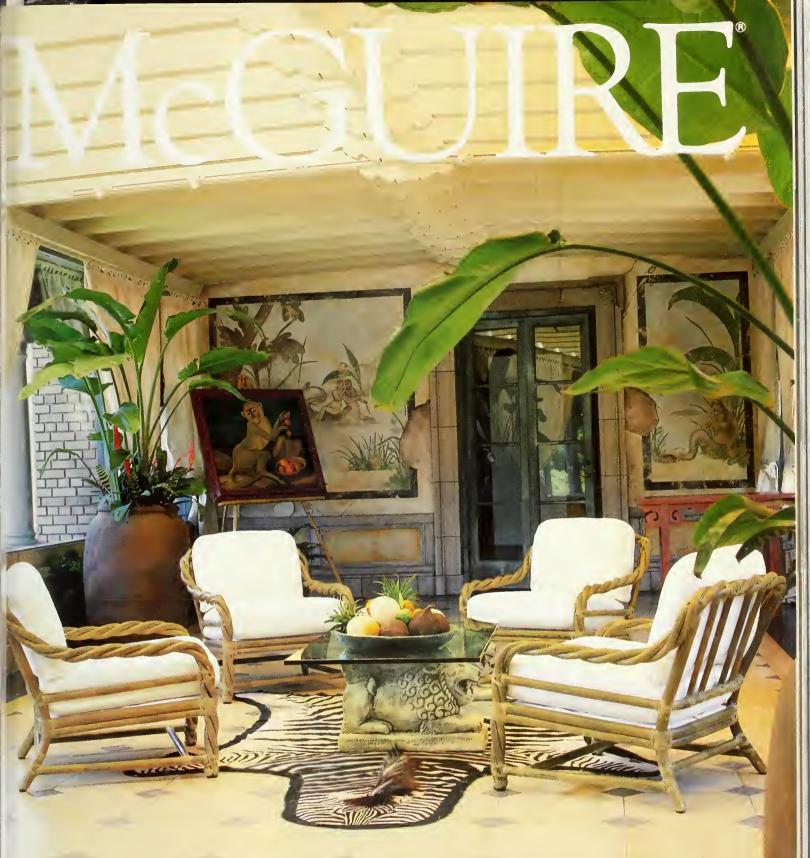
Pile redresses plastic brick and hand-hewn fiberglass beams with the same revealing vehemence. Was he given artificial flowers at a critical moment in his emotional development? Did he once find himself infatuated with someone whose taste appalled him?

How brutally Freud puts it in his demarcation of id, ego, and superego. Yet it's not impossible to explain Pile's outburst against current imitation technology by imagining him stressed by just such a Freudian triangle: drawn by desire for another to a room of plastic knotty pine, false wormholes, and linoleum bricks, he is at once repelled and enthralled. His id brings him where his ego is appalled by his superego, leaving a scar that will later surface in a rare emotional display in his otherwise minutely objective and profoundly comprehensive *Interior Design*.

In a section headed "Human Problems," the author warns: "For the designer, any hint that a prospective client is contentious, suspicious, devious, mean, or cranky suggests that it is best to leave the project to someone else." Lest he develop any such unpleasant intimations about this reviewer, I will cancel further speculation to merely laud and preview his extremely thoughtful, careful, and comprehensive examination of interior design. Students or professionals in the field have it in an almanac fated to be sliding out of and neatly back into their undoubtedly handsome bookcases with rush-hour frequency.

In addition to comprehensive assays and charts on such materials as textiles, lighting, walls, doors, bathrooms, and the like, the book contains scientifically thorough information on the color spectrum, architectural structure, and the psychological impact of space and color on the inhabitants and transients experiencing interiors.

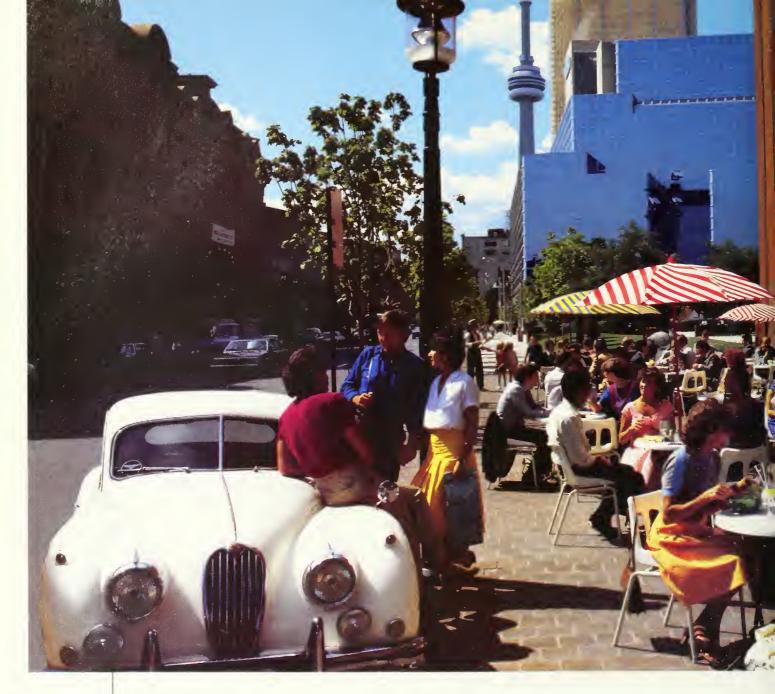
From the first adorable bubble diagrams of a baby design project to a mature and serious case study of Pile's own work on an institutional scale, the Alumni Hall of Alfred University, we grow and graduate through the



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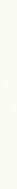
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### **BOOKS**

book. I can't imagine anything left out of its relentless consideration, plants to fire extinguishers, slub yarn to the generator room of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Then, of course, there are the handsome photographs, which will serve some of us scholars the way looking out the window did during Algebra II. The photography revealing interior decoration, however, can be confusingly glamorous and impractical. In figure 643, for example, we have a sparkling white kitchen enlivened by blue and yellow accents, nine sources of the yellow being lemons and two more being coffee cans-Bustelo and Chock Full O' Nuts-with yellow labels. Yellow, the author explains, is the complement of blue. Does this mean only lemonade and two brands of coffee can be prepared here? Would a green salad spoil the room? Would tomatoes make it look too much like a picture by Piet Mondrian?

Pile would have designers who find professional apotheosis in magazine exposure return a year later to discover how their handiwork fared in actual use. He shows us a well-designed jail cell by Ehrendrantz & Eckstut as well as gushes of chintz and dreamy pavilions beside attractive lakes. He includes a solid condensed history of architecture as well as advice on establishing and running a business and on such serious, unentertaining considerations as the reach of an elderly man and the turning circumference of a wheelchair.

Were this the book taken to the proverbial desert island, rescuers would understandably discover that Robinson Crusoe had built a handsome, functional, beautiful city in which they would probably prefer to dwell.

### Clarice Cliff: The Bizarre Affair

by Leonard Griffin and Louis K. and Susan
Pear Meisel
Harry N. Abrams, 80 pp.,
\$19.95
Just as collectors are rediscovering Clarice
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her biggest fans have
put together a detailed—pot by pot—account of her life: from her

birth in Britain's pottery region through her scandalous relationship with mentor Colley Shorter and the production of Cliff's colorful Bizarre ware. Includes 165 illustrations (85 in color). Ellen Silberman



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# The Tides of Taste

We're all subject to changing moods in acquisitive

behavior. Martin Filler tracks five fast-moving decade

hat do you collect?" is to the eighties as "What's your sign?" was to the sixties—a kind of basic social litmus test that can instantly reveal more about one's personality than shillyshallying about occupation, religion, or sexual preferences. Implicit in this quintessential eighties interrogative is the assumption that everyone today collects something. Given the pandemic rise in unashamedly acquisitive tendencies during the past decade, there seems to be solid evidence to support this. Although some sentimental collectors hang onto the very first thing they ever bought—that Matisse etching if you were lucky, that Steinlen cat litho if you were less so-most of us would be more than a bit embarrassed if confronted with our initial accession or even our third or fourth. But fear not: in the game of

keepers, editing is all. As with Vegas high rollers or pre-Crash investors, we hear much about the wins and very little about the losses. Henry Clay Frick, deemed faultless today, bought many ghastly Brown Cow pictures before he lucked out with his Bellini, Rembrandts, and Vermeers. We know sad tales of those who bought a Pollock for \$500 and sold it when it reached a preposterous \$5,000. Yet the luckless purchasers of Huldahs or Keenes tend to keep their mouths shut as they move on to bigger and better things.

Then there are those strange unaccountable lemminglike movements when collectors suddenly begin to off-load one artist (lately, Morris Louis or Kenneth Noland) and simply must have another whose importance had previously gone unnoticed (like Philip Guston or Richard Artschwager). In some instances these late-breaking reevaluations are thoroughly justified, but in others they reveal an ill-advised herding instinct. As

Gerald Reitlinger's cautionary classic *The Economics of Taste* makes abundantly clear, these inexplicable ups and downs have happened throughout history. Only a century ago, Vermeers now in the Met and the Frick went for an incredible £16 apiece. Herewith are the past four decades of collecting fashions summarized, along with predictions as to where the decade to come might take us in this never-ending farandole:

**Tycoons: 50s** Impressionists **60s** Post-Impressionists **70s** Old master paintings **80s** Old master drawings **90s** Armor

Clockwise from <u>right:</u> Josper Johns, Double Flog, 1962; Van Cleef & Arpels clip; Kazak rug, 19th century; Jocques Émile Ruhlmann, Sun bed, 1930; Hans Coper, stonewore vose, 1969; Josef Hoffmann, Wiener Werkstätte silver, c. 1904.



Movie Moguls: 50s School of Paris 60s Abstract Expressionists 70s Henry Moore 80s Late Frank Stella 90s Post–Neo-Geo

Nouveaux Riches: 50s Jade 60s Dubuffet 70s Fabergé 80s Art Deco 90s Boulle

**Decorators: 50s** Tôle *bouillotte* lamps **60s** Obelisks and eggs **70s** Dog paintings **80s** 19th-century watercolor interiors **90s** George Bullock furniture

**Architects:** 50s Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier. and Alvar Aalto furniture 60s Geometric Oriental rugs 70s Early Modernist books 80s Wiener Werkstätte 90s Christopher Dresser objects

Currier & lves 60s Maps 70s Ansel Adams 80s Audubon prints 90s Daumier lithographs

(Continued on page 72)





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## TRAVEL

# New European Museums

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ince the dollar is down, you may be less inclined to spend your time in Europe scooping up incredible buys or gorging night and day on four-star cuisine. Save these indulgences for another day: right now there are healthier, cheaper, and more uplifting alternatives in the many art museums that have sprung up in recent years. Not only are there paintings and sculpture to scrutinize but also the new architecture for you to become enraptured over or get irate about. Just to prepare you for the cheapest European pastime—a heated discussion—here is a sample of key museums considered must-sees by architecture and design profes-

sionals. They are rated on their ostensible purpose: the viewing of art in a meaningful, memorable, and comfortable context. Not every one succeeds in this aim, but perhaps that was intended—to fan the flames of controversy.

#### Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Gae Aulenti, Architect, in collaboration with A.C.T. Architecture In its march toward architectural destiny, the French government has rammed through contro-

versial *projets* in Paris over the past decade or so. Of these the conversion of the Gare d'Orsay on the Left Bank from a railroad station into a museum is arguably the most successful—or maybe the least reprehensible. After all, nothing too drastic was done to the outside. The station, a magnificently vaulted Beaux-Arts extravaganza designed by Victor Laloux in 1900, was overhauled last year by Italian architect-of-the-moment Gae Aulenti (in a standoffish collaboration with A.C.T. Architecture). The drop-dead display

Architecture for art: <u>Top left:</u> Clore Gallery lobby. <u>Above, clockwise:</u> Rotunda, Museum Abteiberg; Musée d'Orsay; skylights, Abteiberg; Femme lisante, in Musée Picasso.

structures she designed within the iron-andglass arched shell virtually scream formidable. Installed within Laloux's celestial space are small buildings made of limestone and shaped like Egyptian mastabas where Zoser and kin would no doubt have felt at home. Those housing nineteenth-century French art are arranged along a central axis that organizes the space with a funereal monumentality. This answer to the Babylonian Processional Way is grandiloquently punctuated by tortured nineteenth-century Neoclassical statues that could be equally at home at the cemetery of Père La Chaise. All of a sudden one is struck by Aulenti's achievement: she has created a cenotaph to art as awe-in-

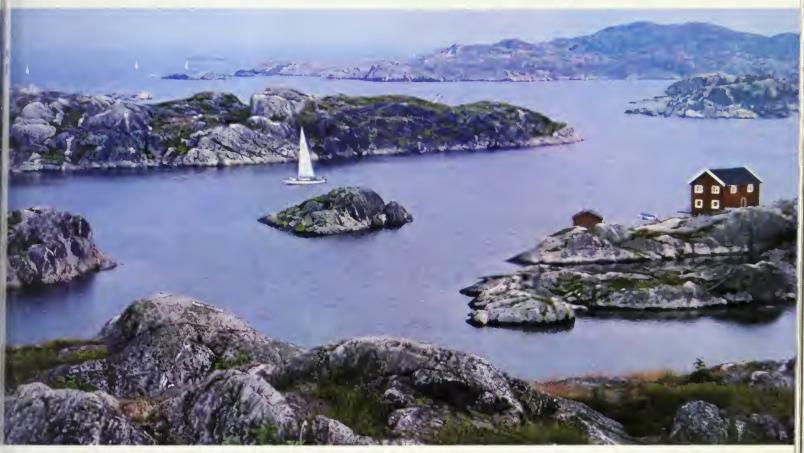
spiring as it is moribund. Indeed, the assortment of French nineteenth-century paintings installed within these little temples—including works by Ingres, Courbet, Manet, Degas, Fantin-Latour—are shrouded in a fitting pallor of indirect shadow-free lighting. In many of the rooms where drawings are displayed, the tomblike gloom caused by the low lighting levels (deemed necessary for conservation) further pro-

claims this homage to Thanatos.

The heavenly reaches of the Orsay's upper spaces—galleries for the Impressionists—are perfunctory, even though they are bathed in natural light. Monet looks a little sick. Aulenti is clearly more at home designing for the art of the grand gesture in the purgatory below.

The inevitable question of whether a train station can be successfully made into a museum goes unanswered here. But the Musée d'Orsay does serve to enshrine and embalm a century of art—only you wish you could remember what the art looked like when you used to see it alive and well at the Jeu de Paume and other former homes.

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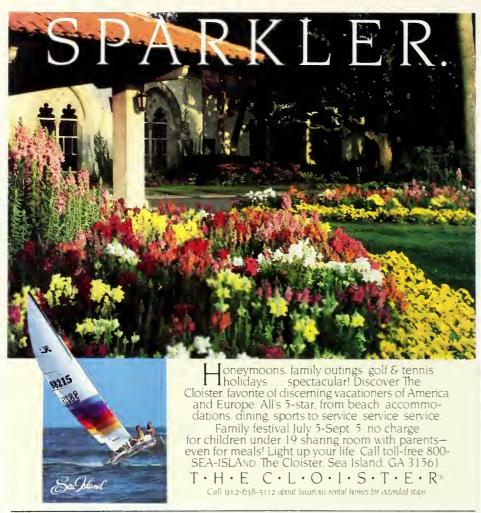
of the eastern lake district. Sample Iceland's hot and cold running water, by visiting Geysir, the giant hot spring all others are named for, or Dettifoss, Europe's highest waterfall. Or, travel the length of the Danish kolde bord, filling your plate with mouth-watering cold meats, salads and pâtés fit for a king.

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## TRAVEL

Ambience: Cecil B. De Mille meets Dante Sense of orientation: Straightforward in axes: otherwise, access confusing Communication with art: Strangers on a train

Architecture/art interaction: Display architecture wrestles both art and original architecture to the ground

#### Musée National d'Art Modern, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

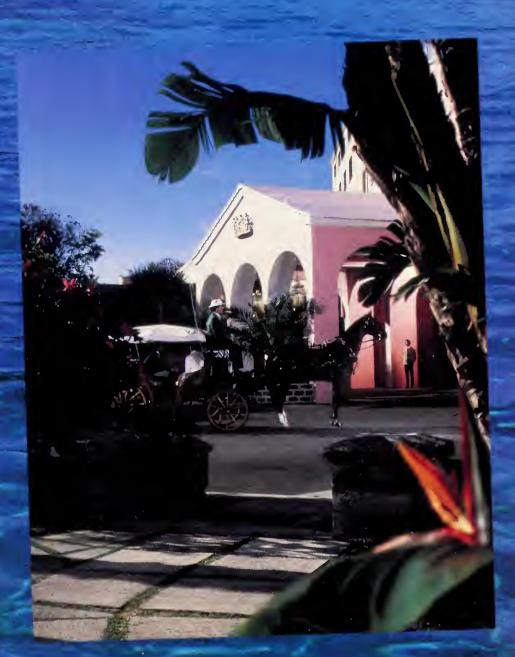
Gae Aulenti, Architect, renovation It's not often that a new building is renovated. But vagaries of time and use are not necessarily on the side of experiments in architecture. When the Piano and Rogers's high-tech steel cage opened in 1977 in the Beaubourg section of Paris, it was the ne plus ultra of cultural-center design-adjustable, transparent, neutral. As for the fourth-floor Museum of Modern Art, however, there were a few flaws. The Matisses and the Braques competed for attention with the mechanistic viscera of ducts and pipes of the ceiling's exposed structure. The gallery spaces, subdivided by flimsy screenlike partitions, were amorphous. So in 1985 Gae Aulenti was brought in to inject the proper intimacy and sense of containment needed for the museum's prized collection of smallscale early-twentieth-century art. Aulenti created courtlike spaces for the galleries: doorways were carved in the center of walls; and small clerestory windows concealing lights were punched along the top. The industrial-strength ceiling wasn't covered up, but awninglike structures mounted above the windows effectively lowered the space and partially hid it from view. Between these courts Aulenti put narrow corridors with vitrines on either side for more intimate exhibition spaces. All of a sudden works that had looked like display ads in a convention hall, such as Matisse's Première Nature morte orange or Braque's Le Billard, became breathtakingly luminous. Now the museumgoer can be aware of Piano and Rogers's original "container" but still be able to savor the various flavors of the contents.

Ambience: Underdone but not raw
Sense of orientation: Always present
Communication with art: Now allowed
Architecture/art interaction: L'art est servi

#### Musée Picasso, Paris

Roland Simounet, Architect

There are those who will argue that no matter how architects try to create the awe-inspiring museum of all time, the best way to show art is still in an old palatial house. The Picasso



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## TRAVEL

Museum, now ensconced in the stately Hôtel Salé, does extraordinarily well to settle the matter forever in favor of palaces. Built in 1656 in the Marais section of Paris as a tax collector's house, the Renaissance-style structure has been chastely and imaginatively adapted for its current mission of displaying the incomparable paintings, drawings, and sketches of the twentieth-century master. A richly carved lobby and grand stair set the stage for high-ceilinged rooms in which architect Roland Simounet has introduced stark white walls and partitions as backdrops for Picasso's paintings. The exhibition spaces are manipulated with Minimalist detailing that is as unobtrusive as it is complex. The museumgoer floats through a series of ethereally spare rooms with long French windows that provide much of the lighting for the vibrantly energetic Picassos within.

Even the groin-vaulted crypts have been dramatically transformed into unexpectedly lively display spaces for the boldly fractured compositions of Picasso's later work. Picasso liked old buildings. You can see why. Ambience: Austerity meets opulence Sense of orientation: Manipulated but direct

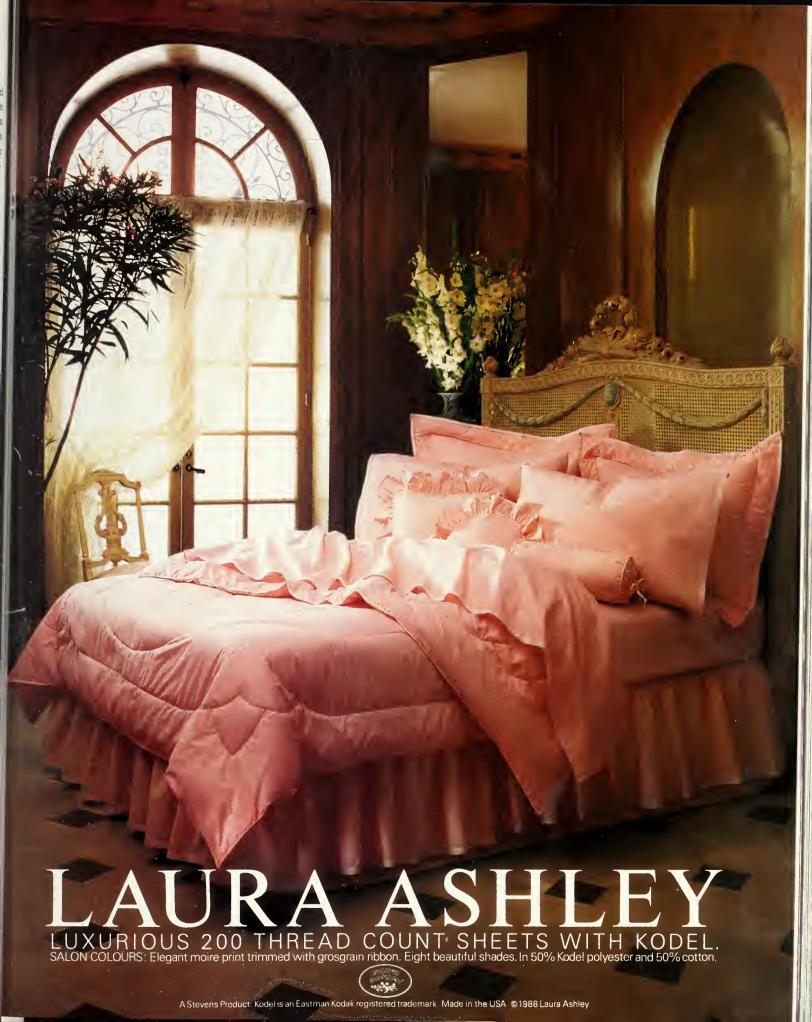
Communication with art: Didacticism con brio

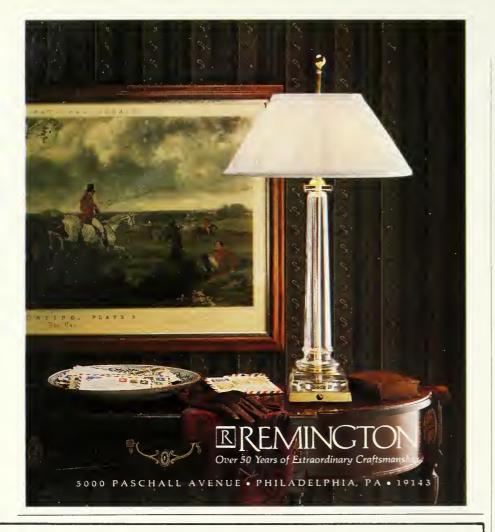
Architecture/art interaction: Epiphany in high relief

#### Clore Gallery at the Tate Gallery, London

James Stirling, Michael Wilford & Associates

Everyone carries on about the coruscating yellow and acidic green that James Stirling splashed all over the lobby of his new addition to the Tate. But what about the Clore galleries themselves? Frankly they are too blahbeige. The famous collection of Turners is strangely suffocated by concealed fluorescent lighting that lulls everything into a grainy haze best left to British World War II movies. The beige carpeting is already wearing thin. Not very cheery, dearie. And the axes established by the plan are strangely aligned. To be sure, there are certain redeeming features: Stirling has designed the rooms to have top lighting so that a soft daylight bounces onto the evanescent paintings below. But these deeply configured ceilings are short on oomph, and the soupçon of cornices, moldings, pilasters, and other Classical paraphernalia can't compare with the detailing of the older galleries of the Tate. The architecture doesn't fight with the art: it can't make up its mind whether to back off or stick it out.





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## TRAVEL

The Clore's exterior, however, is a different matter. Here the 10,495-square-foot L-shaped annex is in overdrive. With an exaggerated glassed-in pediment surrounding the Clore's entrance, triangular oriel window popping out of the other façade, a grid of Portland stone framing redbrick or yellow stucco walls, the architecture quickly shifts from first to fourth gear and back again.

Ambience: Gloomy in galleries: too sparky elsewhere

Sense of orientation: Good in spite of axes to nowhere

Communication with art: Boring Architecture/art interaction: Inconclusive

#### Whitechapel Art Gallery, London

Colquhoun, Miller & Partners, Architects There are just a few simple design elements that make a museum a great place in which to look at art. The Whitechapel Art Gallery, a chunkily idiosyncratic Arts and Crafts-style building designed by C. Harrison Townsend in 1901 and renovated by John Miller and Alan Colquhoun in 1985, has them. Due to an artful expansion of the original plan, all three galleries on its two floors come supplied with skylights. Even on winter days there is little need for artificial light. The gently gabled iron-and-glass roof of the type in the old Tate has been kept upstairs. cleaned up, and revamped with all the technical fittings inserted in its spine. The job was as difficult as a bone marrow transplant, but the surgery is clearly a success.

The path through the museum is circuitous, but the new and elegantly executed toplit stairs cut an impressive swath to the second-floor galleries and to a new café, auditorium, and offices. While the interior colors swing between white and off-white, the spareness, clarity, and linearity of architectural elements heighten the decorative effect. *Ambience:* Top drawer

Sense of orientation: First-rate
Communication with art: Spot on
Architecture/art interaction: Rather!

#### Saatchi Collection, St. John's Wood, London

Max Gordon Associates, Architects
The way Max Gordon approached a collection of old brick industrial buildings that now house the fabled Saatchi Collection of modern art is deeply instructive. Gordon was lucky in that these buildings came with serrated glass roofs, spreading gable roofs, and gently single-pitched shed roofs. Here the buildings are grafted together by Gordon so that you can move from one gallery to anoth-

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er aware only of a change in level or in the type of exposed ceiling above. The white partitions placed within the brick structures provide the properly understated backdrop for showing art of high impact. Unfortunately much of the Neo-Geo art on display this past winter bounced out at the spectator with more impact than staying power. The quietly crafted setting cries out for art of dynamism and quality—one thinks longingly of the Stella retrospective last year at New York's Museum of Modern Art.

Ambience: Poetic no-nonsense industrial aesthetic

Sense of orientation: Subtle variation

on a Minimalist theme

Communication with art: High impact

needs good art

Architecture/art interaction: Punchy

#### Museum Abteiberg, Monchengladbach, Germany

Hans Hollein, Architect

If you want to take a dizzying plunge into a mélange of Modernist and traditional architecture which contains a riveting collection of contemporary art, this museum is a mustvisit. It is not a museum you warm up to easily, however. Outside, a steel-and-glass tower, aluminum-clad cubes, and concrete boxes have been casually chained together on the crest of a steeply terraced hill. Inside, almost every type of gallery design currently in high regard has been captured alive and confined there. You enter a low space browbeaten by a grid of exposed fluorescent lights. But then as you make your way up toward the top skylit galleries where large New York School paintings are displayed, a calm sense of expansiveness takes over.

But in case you might become too relaxed or possibly bored, the architect has supplied curved serpentine galleries, a rotunda with a domed skylight, and a two-story gallery covered by a barrel vault to punch up the Modernist art. But going from one space to another is often as disorienting as Alice's path in Wonderland. The fluorescent light in some galleries is as oppressively bleak as a parking garage. To be sure, Joseph Beuys's art, combining the repulsive and the aesthetic—embalmed gobs of animal fat artfully arranged inside wood vitrines—is served well by Hollein's fluorescent obsession.

Ambience: Imaginatively schizy—calm,

but chilling and eerie

Sense of orientation: Artfully disorienting Communication with art: Always effective Architecture art interaction: Excellent,

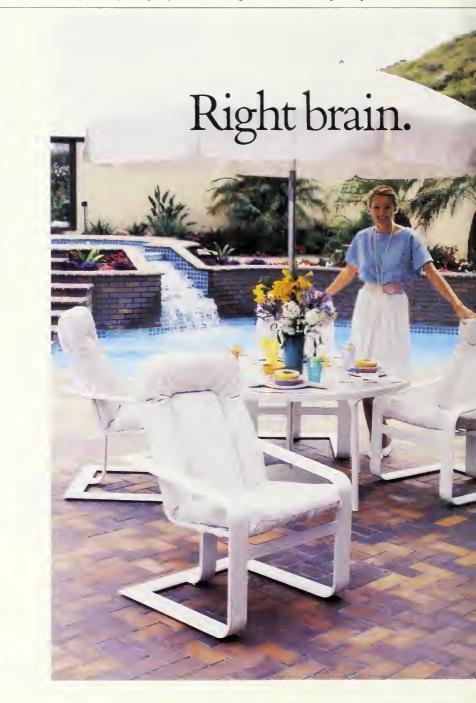
even when perverse

#### Neve Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Germany

James Stirling, Michael Wilford & Associates, Architects

The sheer meatiness and brawn of Stuttgart's sandstone-and-travertine block masses cascading down a hill make it one of the most striking additions to a museum built in years. The Stirling-designed gallery adjoining Stuttgart's nineteenth-century Neoclassical museum confidently announces it is a bold synthesis of Modernist and traditional concepts of space, movement, light, ornament, and structure. By having a huge open-air ro-

tunda gouged out of the center of the museum, Stirling deftly defers to golden oldies of museum design, including the pivotal 1830 Altesmuseum that Karl Friedrich Schinkel built in Berlin. Stirling's roomlike galleries on the second level for the permanent collection of contemporary art are arranged in enfilade in a U around the rotunda. Stirling's trademark abstract-traditional embellishments applied around centered doorways, large French windows overlooking the rotunda, and the cove-mounted light fixtures successfully bring back the ambience of the great museums of yesteryear.





Yet the ground-floor spaces are out and out Modernist: loftlike galleries, asymmetrical spaces, and now-we-can-save-money materials (rubber flooring and concrete columns) are bold but not often beautiful. The worst part: looking at art under cheap icc-cube baffles of fluorescent lighting.

But the imperfections, including even the overjolly pink tubular handrails outside, serve as important reminders that "Alles ist Architektur."

Ambience: Narrative as eternal return Sense of orientation: Deft orchestration of old and new Communication with art: Excellent in upper galleries, blah below Architecture/art interaction: Highs outnumber the lows

#### Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Richard Meier & Partners, Architects
Richard Meier is best known for his refining
and honing of the Modernist vocabulary into
luminous architectural objects, but the presence here of the museum's traditional Neoclassical villa (and the client's wishes) laid
the ground rules for Meier's addition.

The villa's cubiform shape, proportions, and even the size of its windows, not to mention the creamy color of its stucco walls, provided the cues by which Meicr would mold his Modernist museum spaces. His loftlike galleries are subdivided by finely proportioned partitions and vitrines in the Meieresque mode. But because white oak vitrines are arranged in the center of the halls to form small courtyards, the visitor's route through the decorative-arts museum is carefully manipulated and guided. The whirring of the automatic blinds (which adjust to every change in the daylight outside) reminds you that a lot of natural light is coming in from the large windows and glassed-in ramps. But that's about it for shocks to the nervous system: unlike Monchengladbach, there is no perversely idiosyncratic edge. Unlike Stuttgart, no major surprises. Meier's achievement here is a well-calibrated and nicely sustained exercise in aesthetic consistency.

Ambience: Serene

Sense of orientation: Intricate but clear Communication with art: Luminous Architecture/art interaction: Even keel

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#### **Exhibition Schedule**

#### PARIS

#### Musée d'Orsay

Mar. 7-June 5: "Mary Cassatt."

#### **Centre Georges Pompidou**

May 18-Aug. 28: "Frank Stella." June 30-Oct. 10: "Les Années Cinquantes."

#### Musée Picasso

Ongoing: The regular collection.

#### LONDON Clore Gallery

Through July 10: "Turner and Architecture." July 18–Oct. 3: A selection of Turner's works on paper.

#### Whitechapel Art Gallery

May 13–June 26: "Michael Sandle." July 8–Sept. 18: A Lucio Fontana retrospective.

#### Saatchi Collection

Apr. 29–Sept.: Works by Sigmar Polke, Joel Shapiro, Leon Golub, and Philip Guston.

#### GERMANY

#### **Museum Abteiberg**

May 8-June 26: "Tony Smith." July 10-Aug. 28: "Barry Le Va."

#### Neve Staatsgalerie

Through June 14: "Fernand Leger."

#### Museum für Kunsthandwerk

Apr. 28–June 16: Japanese woodcuts. May 19–July 17: ''Otto and Gertrud Schamschula: Gold and Silversmith Work.'' June 29–Aug. 21: 18th-century Mainz furniture.



## **Brut Force**

# **Jason Cooper** finds dash and distinction in the champagnes of California

hen Jack and Jamie Davies first bought the Schramsberg vineyards in 1965, the entire Napa Valley estate was a shambles: all of Jacob Schram's original vines, planted in the nineteenth century, had long since been destroyed by root louse, and by the 1950s the entire property had been abandoned altogether. Today the estate produces what is often considered to be the noblest of all America's champagnes. This is the home of Schramsberg, whose Blanc de Blancs was selected for Nixon's Beijing summit with Jou En-lai in 1972 and whose wines have been sealing toasts made by every president since.

The Davies' first efforts at making champagne were not without problems: a temperamental crushing machine had Jamie treading barefoot on more than one occasion, and Jack once had a narrow escape when an oak cask, thick with brandy fumes, blew up in his face. But making champagne has never been an occupation for the fainthearted: legend has it that when Dom Pérignon made the first champagne centuries ago, well over three quarters of the bottles exploded on him in his cellars. Undeterred, he somewhat gingerly

approached one of the few that remained intact and downed the contents. "I am drinking the stars," he said. The *méthode champenoise* was born.

We left Miguel riddling to "La Bamba" in the gathering gloom

As any maker of true champagne is at pains to point out, there are many ways to make a wine sparkle, but only one *méthode champenoise*. Once a number of cuvées have been blended from a selection of base wines, the blend must then be bottled, with a precise liquor of sugar and select yeast, until a second fermentation is completed. The bottles are then riddled—placed neck-down and turned daily—until all the yeast sediment has fallen into the neck. Finally the neck of each bottle is frozen, and the sediment is then dis-



gorged under pressure from within the bottle. The wine, sparkling and clear, is now at last ready to be sealed with cork and wire.

Schramsberg itself—the German translates literally as Schram's Mountain—is largely volcanic and thus ideally suited for a labyrinth of caves that maintain a damp and naturally controlled temperature of 58 degrees. Here I was witness to the curious skills

of a Schramsberg's riddler, a man named Miguel Moreno. The vast majority of riddling still takes place by hand with each bottle turned an eighth or a

quarter a day for six weeks. Miguel's current record is 50,000 bottles in one day. (If this doesn't sound like much fun, his lot is at least a bit improved by a substantial grotto blaster; we left him riddling to "La Bamba" in the gathering gloom.) I tried Schramsberg's 1982 Blanc de Noirs, made in the classic French style with a blend of pinot noir and a little chardonnay and found a full freshness beautifully balanced with a lovely finish. I was also impressed by their Crémant Demi-Sec '84, whose greatly reduced

effervescence allowed the taste of the flora grape full rein.

About a quarter hour to the southeast in the Napa Valley lie the cellars of champagne master Hanns Kornell-a man every bit as remarkable as the considerable reputation of the champagne he makes. The son of a distinguished wine-making family, he was brought up in Germany until, in 1938, after a year in Dachau, he was given 48 hours to leave the fatherland. A year later he was hitchhiking across America with two dollars in his pocket and a small quantity of mother yeast, which he had managed to smuggle out of Germany. Today, 36 years after the production of his first bottle of American champagne. Hanns Kornell is the proud head of his own winery. Kornell does not produce the base wines for the champagnes: he contracts with grape growers who bring the wine to his cellars after the first fermentation. There the wine is left to ferment en tirage an unusually long time, from between two to seven years, after which every bottle is riddled by hand and individually checked for clarity by candlelight. (Incidentally their riddling record is held by ace-riddler Dieter Walkhoff at a staggering 67,000 bottles in one day. Sorry, Miguel...)

However it is only in their tasting rooms that Kornell's remarkable achievement is best appreciated. I began with their Blanc de Blancs '82 and found its bold dry fruitiness interestingly offset by a complex apple finish. I must confess I was slightly disappointed by Hanns Kornell's Brut. But certainly the most idiosyncratic of Kornell's work is his Sehr Trocken. Extremely dry—it is given none of champagne's usual dosage of sugar and cognac to increase sweetness—I could have sworn I detected the faintest trace of peaches.

I would also thoroughly recommend a visit to the very charming Folie à Deux vineyard, not ten minutes away from Kornell's door. Its name stems from the principal occupation of its founders, Larry Dizmang, a psychia-





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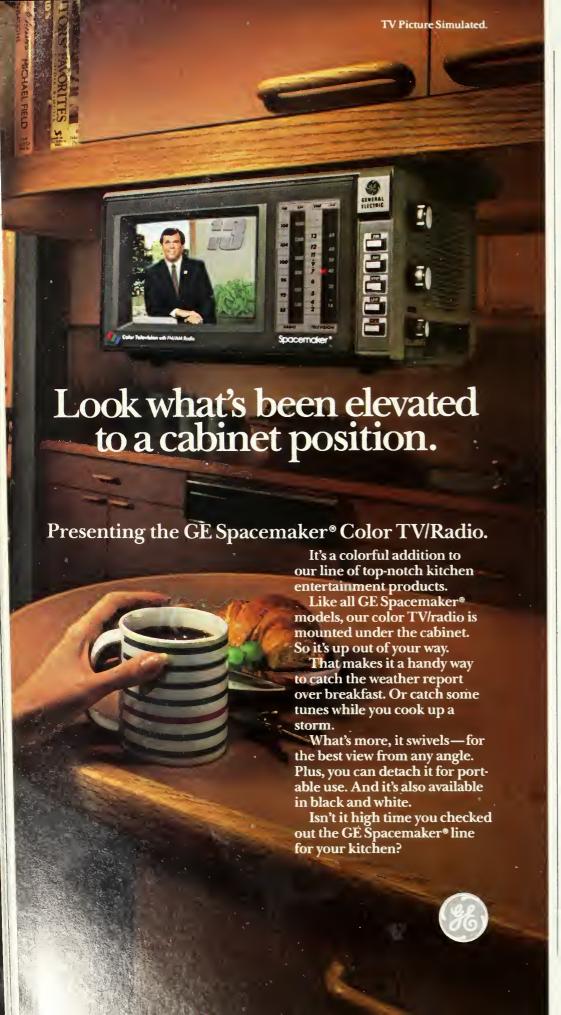
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trist, and his wife, Evie, a psychologist. (Folie à deux, or shared delusion, is a genuine psychiatric diagnosis.) Although the vineyard is known primarily for its still wines—if you've never tried their Cabernet Sauvignon, start now!—1987 marked their first year as a champagne producer. The result is a sparkling muscat, Fantasie. It's fruit, youth, and exuberance, if a little sweet for my taste, will earn it the friendship of Asti Spumante lovers.

But by far the largest and most experienced producer of American premium champagne is Korbel, whose vast premises are to be found a good half hour west of St. Helena, high up in the hills overlooking the Russian River. Korbel has now been producing champagne for well over a century, and the result is one of the most impressively broad ranges of champagnes offered anywhere. With the Fantasie still lingering in my memory I began a tasting with Korbel's Brut Rosé. This wine is in fact produced entirely from pinot noir, which, slightly less sweet, offers a lovely delicacy of touch to the faint, characteristically vanilla taste of this grape. In 1985. Korbel's Brut was honored by being chosen the exclusive champagne of the fiftyfirst presidential inaugural. Once again, however, I found myself disappointed. I suppose the long and short of it is that I just don't much care for the American approach to the brut style. Although admirably clean, crisp and dry, American bruts are short on complexity and taste. But certainly the best of those I tried was their Blanc de Blancs: made from 100 percent chardonnay, I found this a lovely balance of clear crispness and long. silky flavors. An individually numbered, registered release, here is greatness.

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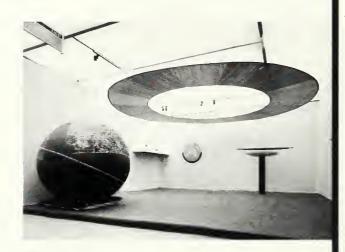
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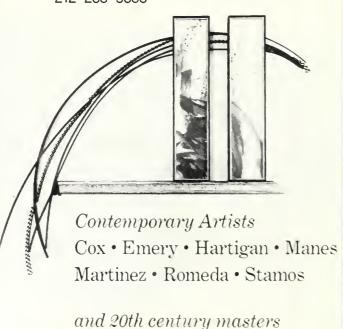
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Hans Kooi Composition of wood, magnetism, acryl, stone, steel-wire, 1987.

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Frank Stella, *Il Dimezzato* 1987, 88" x 953/4" x 533/8"

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John Wilde, Just Help Yourself 1951, oil on board, 231/2" x 20"

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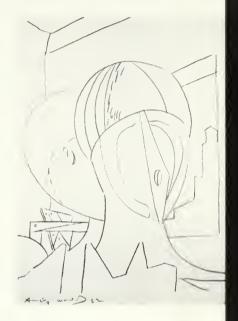
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Alexander Calder, The Black Mask c. 1950, mobile, 40" x 611/2" BOOTH 6-141

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Andy Warhol, *The Two Sisters* 1982, charcoal on paper, 32 x 23".

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James Havard, *Mimbre with Cow Kachina* 1987, acrylic and collage on canvas, 46" x 40"

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Russell T. Gordon, One Man Show, CIAE 1988

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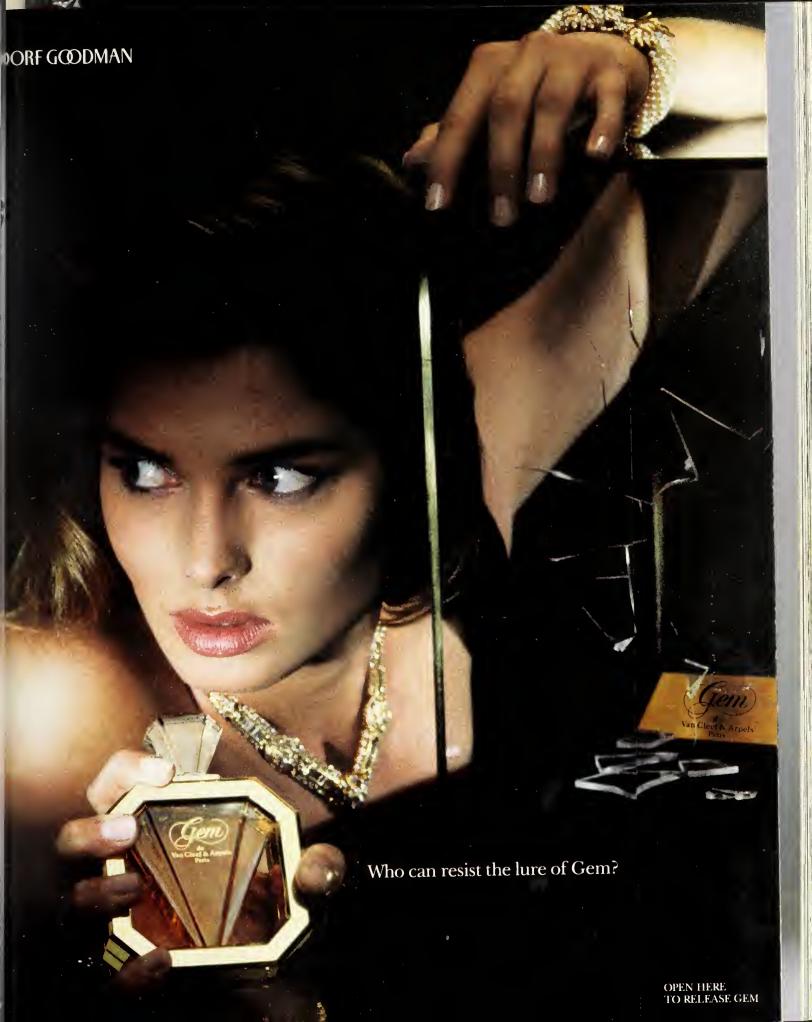
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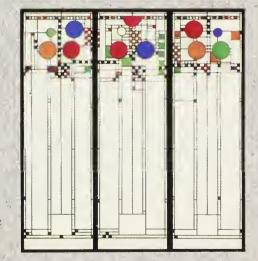
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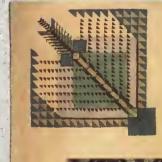
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### GARDENING

## Climbing the Walls

Few roses are as pretty and abundant as climbers, says **Mac Griswold** 

urely the most romantic roses are the bare wintry ones that Mary Lennox saw when she slipped through the long-hidden door into the secret garden: "It was the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place anyone could imagine. The high walls which shut it in were covered with the leafless stems of climbing roses. There were other trees in the garden and roses had run all over them and swung down long tendrils and here and there they had caught at each other or at a far-reaching branch and

made lovely bridges of themselves.'' Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* was published in 1911. But in 1902 in *Roses for English* 

Gardens Gertrude Jekyll had already written that the great virtue of climbing roses is the way they fall down, cascading from tree and bank and wall.

They're carefree—

even if it means teetering on

a ladder to prune them

Climbers, ranging in size from 4 to 40 feet, are refreshingly more carefree than other roses, except rugosas, even if it means teetering on a ladder once a year to prune the most vigorous varieties. (Planting them within pruning reach has another benefit: their fragrance will be closer too.) Make sure the supports will last longer than the roses will—and if you plant on a fence, as Washington Post garden correspondent Henry Mitchell bitterly recalls, "Don't plant right at the post. It seems so obvious: when the post rots you'll end up replacing the plant and the post."

What Jekyll celebrated about climbers as much as their flowers and fragrance was their graceful habit, the year-round quality and characae of the plant in the landscape. English rose thority Peter Beales writes that climbers classified as "decorative roses" in English as a redian catalogues and were used more image and were used more image. Now the vogue for old roses (roses in cure lation before 1867) has made many old climages available again.

The dictionary does not differentiate between climbers and ramblers. But the acknowledged king of roses, Graham Stuart Thomas—garden designer, writer, and National Trust consultant—says that ramblers are the small-flowered wild species and their domesticated relatives that bloom once, while climbers are the large-flowered repeat-blooming hybrids.

Repeat blooming should not be the only criterion for choosing a rose, especially a climber. We have come to expect from roses

what we would be astonished to find in any other flower—people don't rip out their lilacs because they only bloom once! Many old roses bloom luxuri-

antly for a month and then sport the odd flower or bright autumn foliage and brilliant hips.

Irish textile and clothes designer Sybil Connolly has a small Dublin town garden smothered in roses, including many old climbers. "There's never a bit of the garden one can hide," she says, wisely growing late-flowering clematis with her climbers to provide color once the roses are gone. "Plant viticella hybrids," advises Graham Stuart Thomas. "Everything else gets tangled with the roses, but viticellas are cut to a foot every winter, making it easier to prune the climber."

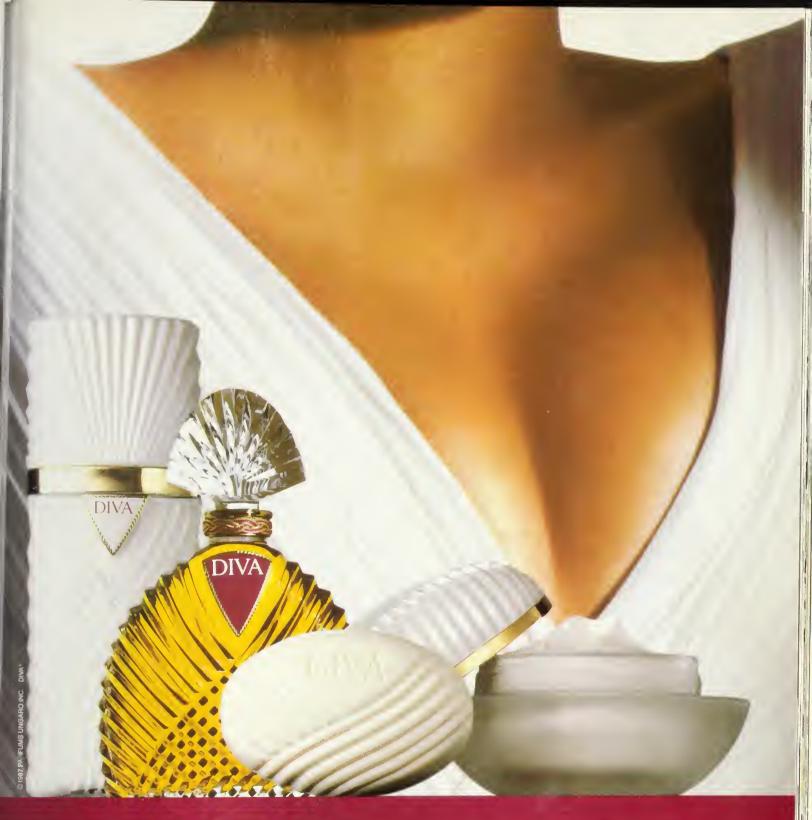
If you have only one rose, most experts would recommend 'New Dawn' (25 feet), whose clusters of medium-size flowers bloom from June till the end of autumn. Fragrant and silvery pink with deepest green foliage. 'New Dawn' is hardy and disease-resistant, and its growing habit is strong and graceful.

But after 'New Dawn', then what? There are climbing roses for every situation. Tiny double ramblers upholster arbor and love seat in white, pink, yellow, blush, or mauve. Screens of roses create secrecy and surprise—try 'May Queen' (25 feet), a flat lilac





'Allgald' and 'Maigold' rases, tap, at Heale House in Salisbury, England. Abave: 'Fritz Nobis' rases, the Hughes-Hallett's garden in Glaucestershire



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### **GARDENING**

pink rose packed with petals, which makes a thick network of tiny branches. Some are allpurpose. 'Golden Showers' (8-10 feet), a hybrid tea that Henry Mitchell thinks is the best modern yellow climber, flowers continuously, with good foliage and scent. For a clear pink rose he loves 'Blossomtime' (6-8 feet), a 'New Dawn' cross with classically formed flowers. "It has a tea scent you can smell ten feet away," he says. But like most committed rose lovers, he saves his strongest praise for the old roses. 'Jaune Desprez' (20 feet), he says, "has apricot petals flushed with pink, shading to soft buff, with the texture of waxed silk. It could be in the running for the most beautiful rose ever produced." He adds, "It's hardy as far north as Philadelphia." So now you know the trouble.

Grow climbers together on a big wall. New Hampshire rosarian Malcolm Lowe recommends the deep plum of hardy thornless 'Amadis' (10 feet) with the soft blushwhite clusters of tough 'Baltimore Belle' (15 feet). 'Amadis' will bloom for six to seven weeks and 'Baltimore Belle' almost as long. In winter the canes also make a show together—chocolate purple against ice green.

Secret Garden roses that you do not want

to plant lightheartedly in a small garden include most of the great species roses, such as Rosa filipes 'Kiftsgate', which reaches 40 feet. Slightly less vigorous hybrids look good on a high strong fence—or hide a shed roof you'd rather not see again in a cloud of small white midsummer flowers. 'Bobbie James' (30 feet) and 'Rambling Rector' (15–20 feet) are tough, highly fragrant R. multiflora crosses. In the south the same effects are achieved with tiny tender Banksia roses, both white and yellow, single and double (20 feet), and the single white Cherokee Rose, R. laevigata (25 feet), which is beautiful in and out of flower. R. eglanteria (8 feet and bushy) is a cold-resistant pink single-flowered American species with perfumed foliage and long-lasting hips.

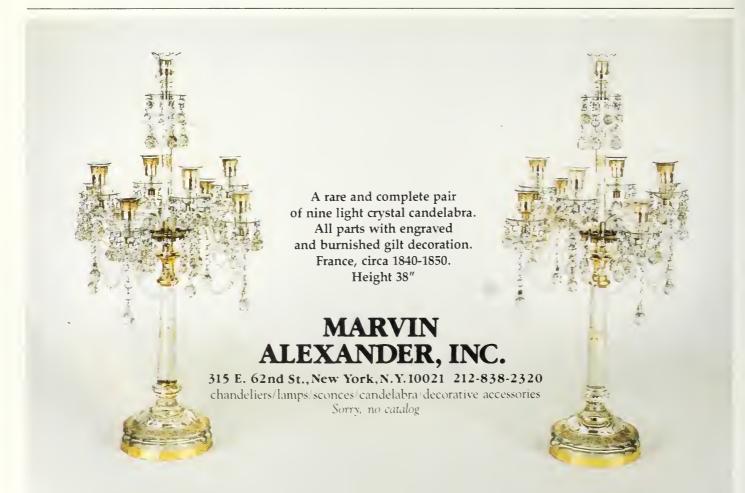
Shorter climbers can be grown on free-standing trellises in the back of any deep border. 'Belinda' (4–6 feet), hardy and fragrant, flowers repeatedly in big clusters of small single bright pink flowers to make a fountain effect. Another good pillar rose is 'White Cockade' (8 feet), a pure-white double. 'Climbing Talisman' (8 feet) and 'Pink Pillar' (7 feet) are, respectively, red gold with a copper cast and pink gold with orange. All

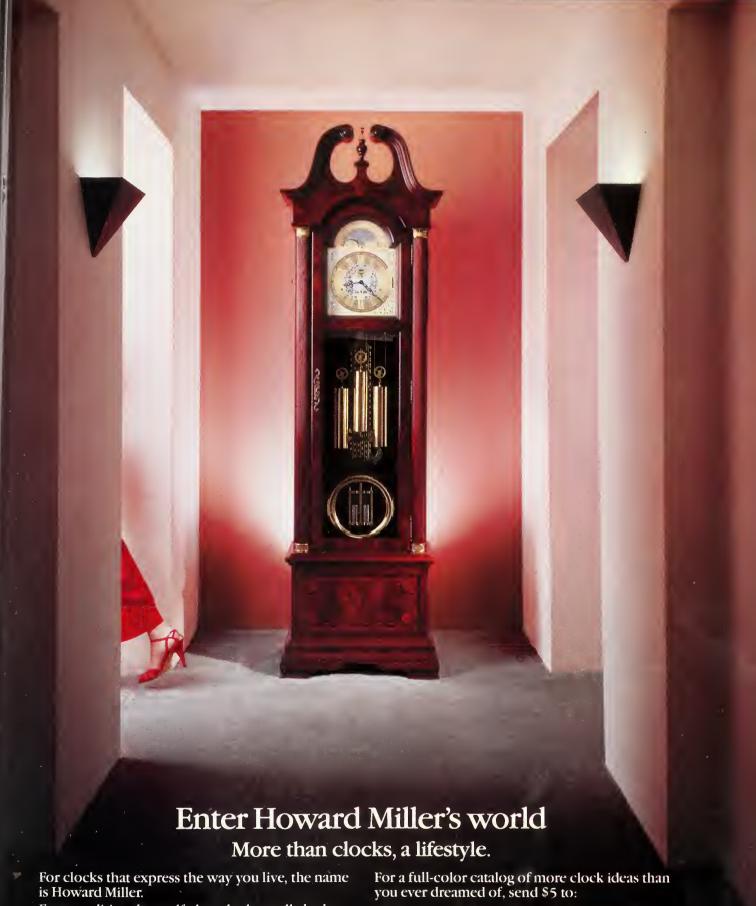
bloom repeatedly. The Chatsworth Carpenters, at the estate of the Duke of Devonshire, make the most elegant—and expensive—finial-topped rose trellis pillars according to Edwardian designs.

In Connecticut, Mrs. William Buckley bought old-fashioned rose arches from Burpee to surround her rose garden with a circle of climbers, which she chooses as much for cutting as decoration. Climbers that produce enough flowers continuously for house and garden include the fine single 'Climbing Dainty Bess' (7–10 feet), whose four-inch dusky pink flowers open to show maroon stamens, and 'Climbing Shot Silk' (10–15 feet), as dramatic as its name, cerise shot with gold.

Roses with petals whose reverse is deeper, roses that have a subtle shading or cast of another color, or roses that change with age have extra charm. One such is fragrant, hardy, repeat-blooming 'Buff Beauty' (5 feet) with apricot buds and three-inch old-gold flowers.

If you must have red, Thomas and Mitchell both sing the praises of 'Guinée' (15 feet), whose black-shaded, fragrant, recurrent flowers are the size of a small grapefruit. A





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### **GARDENING**

much castigated though often-grown red rose is 'American Pillar' (15 feet). Old-rose fanciers call its color loud and its foliage coarse. Undeniably it smells like iceberg lettuce, not like a rose. But to me it has the spirit of a Gilded Age pergola rose, erupting in a tremendous garden-partyish display of huge trusses of deep pink single blossoms with little white centers. Henry Mitchell points out that Monet loved 'American Pillar', training it all over the blue green arches of Giverny. So every rose has its own romance.

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#### **ROSE GARDENS**

#### Arnold Arboretum, Boston

Massachusetts; (617) 524-1717/1718 Good species collection includes Himalayan musk rose *R. brunonii*, creamy-flowered *R. arvensis*, and August-blooming *R. wichuraiana*. June 21, rose lectures with a field trip; June 28 to the Fuller Gardens in Northampton, New Hampshire.

Brooklyn Botanic @arden, Brooklyn

New York; (718) 622-4433

Nearly 1,000 varieties in the Cranford Rose Garden, one of the nation's largest and oldest rose gardens. Climbers and ramblers on picket fences, latticework pavilion and arches, and thirty pillars. A rose symposium, June 18, with Peter Beales, Beverly Dobson, Harmon Saville, Howard Walters. A video



on rose history and culture is for sale.

#### Capaha Park Rose Display Garden

Cape Girardeau, Missouri; (314) 335-3312 Climbing roses, 50-60 varieties, include some very old ones, planted on the fence surrounding this 1-acre formal rose garden.

**Elizabeth Park,** Hartford, Connecticut (203) 722-6490

The 1½ acres of the oldest (1903) municipal rose garden in the U.S. are laid out in concentric circles around a rustic gazebo. Fences, arches, and pillars are covered with dozens of old and unusual varieties of climbers and ramblers.

**Filoli,** Woodside, California (415) 366-4640

The 17 acres of formal gardens include Banksia, China, and noisette roses, also many good old singles trained on walls, plus a garden of historically important old roses, which features many ramblers.

Hershey Gardens, Hershey, Pennsylvania (717) 534-3492

A 4-acre rose garden, established in 1937, displays 'New Dawn' on arches, arbors pillars, and tripods; 850 rose varieties include 'Golden Showers' plus 'Amélie Gravereaux' (8–10 feet), a rare red rugosa that can be trained as a climber.

Michael H. Horvath Garden of Legend and Romance, Wooster, Ohio (216) 263-3764

Formal rose garden established in 1970 with 500 varieties of old roses suitable for the area, including climbers and species roses such as recurrent white 'Sombreuil' and the Bengal rose, *R. chinensis*.

Huntington Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California; (818) 405-2125 Here is the place in the U.S. to see roses in trees. Older climbers and ramblers are well displayed on a long pergola, arbors, two trellis gazebos, walls, and pillars.

James P. Kelleher Rose Garden

Boston, Massachusetts; (617) 524-0611 Just across from the Museum of Fine Arts is a small enclosed old-fashioned rose garden. Well-maintained climbers and ramblers include 'Summer Snow', covering a circular arbor of arches.

**Longwood Gardens,** Kennett Square Pennsylvania: (215) 388-6741

A magnificent display of 'American Pillar'. A new rose garden will feature 200 feet of arches covered with 'Climbing Iceberg', 'City of York', 'New Dawn', 'Dortmund', 'Handel', and 'America'.

Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Pennsylvania: (215) 242-3399
Marion Rivinus Rose Garden has a fine small collection of species roses, including the delicious Persian musk rose, *R. moschata nastarana*, which blooms well into autumn.

National Arboretum, Washington, D.C. (202) 475-4815

Old shrub roses and climbers are a major



**LENOR** 

part of the design of the herb garden. Also an interesting collection of nearly twenty species roses.

Old Westbury Gardens, Old Westbury New York; (516) 333-0048

About 30 climbers and ramblers include 'Handel', ivory white with deep rose edge. A good display of pillars connected by chains in sheltered walled garden includes the fabulous lemon yellow single 'Mermaid', also 'Climbing La France', a sport of the first hybrid tea.

**Wyck House,** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (215) 848-1690

The 37 old-rose varieties include climbers, ramblers, and species, many of a period consonant with the 1825 house restoration.

#### **NURSERIES**

**The Combined Rose List,** Beverly Dobson, 215 Harriman Rd., Irvington, NY 10533; (914) 591-6736

If the catalogues below do not have the roses you want, try Dobson's annually updated compendium, which includes hard-to-find varieties.

Antique Rose Emporium, Rte. 5, Box 143, Brenham, TX 77833; (409) 836-9051 Noisette, tea, and China roses good for the entire South, including about 30 climbers. High Country Rosarium, 1717 Downing St., Denver, CO 80218; (303) 832-4026 Hardy old roses for mountain climates, with seven climbers, including 'Queen of the Prairies', fragrant, double, and rose pink with a white stripe on each petal.

Lowe's Own-Root Rose Nursery 6 Sheffield Rd., Nashua, NH 03062 (603) 888-2214

An excellent collection of ramblers and climbers with an additional 50 varieties not listed but available in quantity on request.

**Pickering Nurseries,** 670 Kingston Rd. Pickering, Ontario, Canada LIV 1A6 (416) 839-2111

About 40 climbing roses. A number are cold-resistant, although don't get your hopes up about all of them since this part of Canada is known as the Banana Belt because of its proximity to Lake Ontario.

Roses of Yesterday and Today, 802 Brown's Valley Rd., Watsonville, CA 95076; (408) 724-3537

The most informative catalogue of all includes 60 climbing roses shipped nationwide.

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**Chatsworth Carpenters,** Estate Office Edensor, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE4 1PH 688-2242, ext. 371

Triangular rose trellis pillars are available in three finishes: white paint, natural wood, and a primed paint-ready wood.

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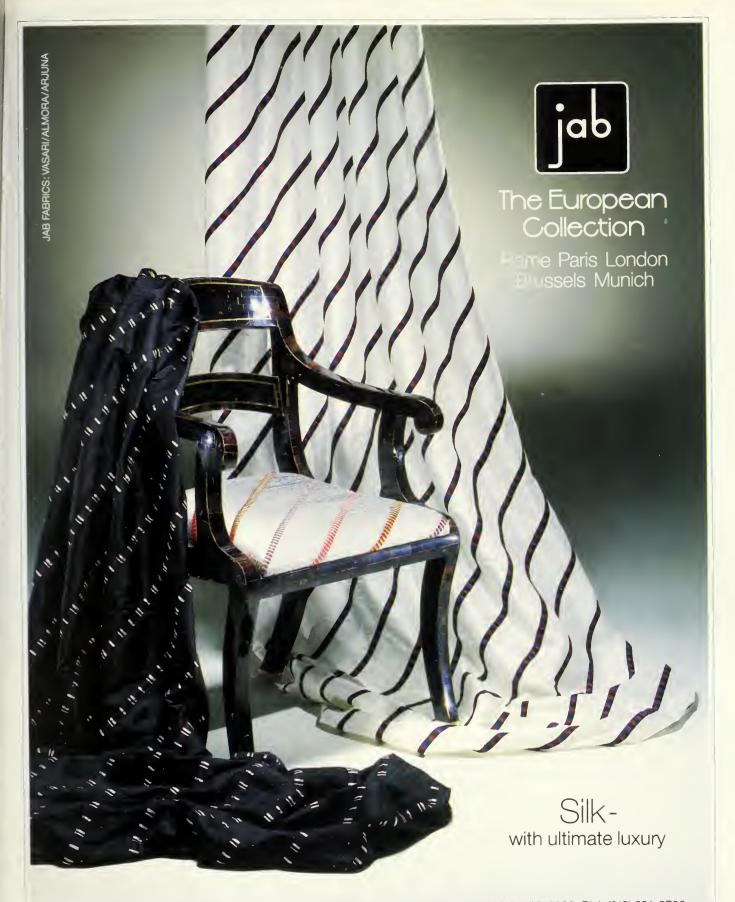
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## Talleysheet

State of the arts at YSL...

Bedding down in opulence

. . Racy late-day Loulou

hagall once said: "Braque's colors would be ideal on women's backs." Yves Saint Laurent, the undisputed king of haute couture, looked no further than his Paris living room and Cubist paintings for inspiration. "I have been walking around with Braque and Cubists in my head for a long time," says YSL, who brilliantly mixed fantasy with unparalleled tailoring. Highlights: birds in flight on summer capes, abstract Cubist motifs on shaped suits with short skirts. YSL's long-

ist motifs on shaped suits with short skirts. YSL's long-time associate Loulou Klossowski is another fashion inspiration. • Nineteenth-century rooms: Parisbased antiques dealer Bernard Steinitz, who recently opened a town-house shop in New York, sells fine French antiques from his apartment in Paris to clients Susan Gutfreund, Annette Reed, Jayne Wrightsman. At the annual Winter Antiques Show this year his leopard-covered Empire bed belonged to Marie Louise Bonaparte. • Pierre Bergé, chairman and co-owner of YSL, had Jacques Grange decorate his bedroom with Indian courtly paintings inlaid with semiprecious stones.

André Leon Talley

YSL's universe. Above left: Embroidered Lesage fantasies: a Cubist wool suit; a Braque cape in linen from his spring 1988 couture collection.



For the Klossowski fete at Paris's Bains-Douches, above, spring apples with white flowers. Left inset: Bernard Steinitz's fantasy bedroom. Left: Pierre Bergé's bedroom with portraits of rajas.



Loulou Klossowski,

above, in YSL satin

cycle pants before

her Bains-Douches

party celebrating YSL couture. Left:

Rive Gauche

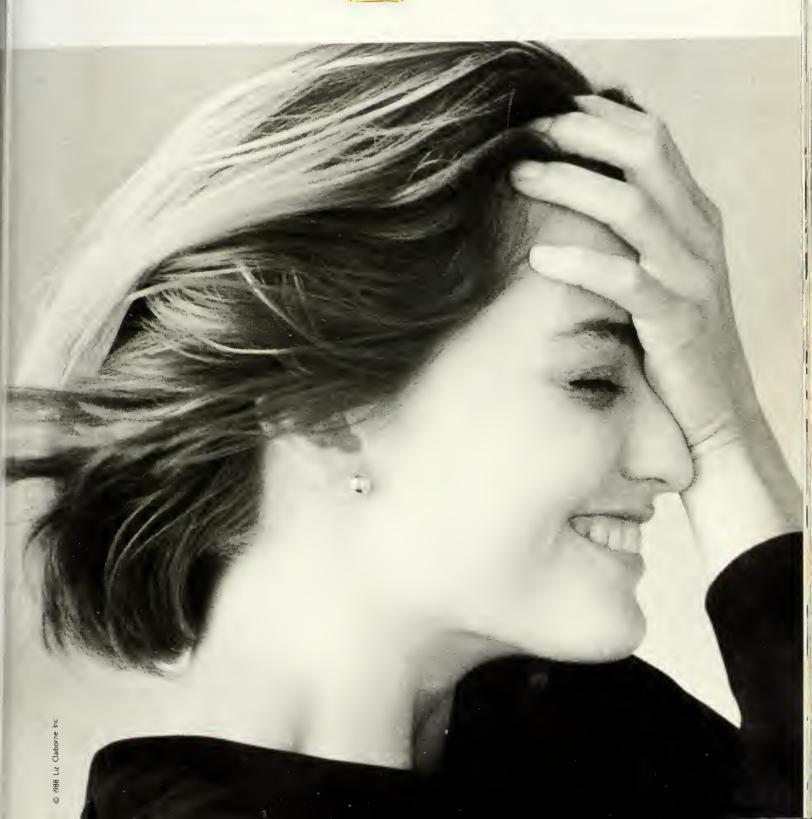
Loulou with

A YSL couture show tradition: Spring flowers are pruned into extravagant evening floral ball dresses in silk taffeta from Abraham.

**HG** MAY 1988

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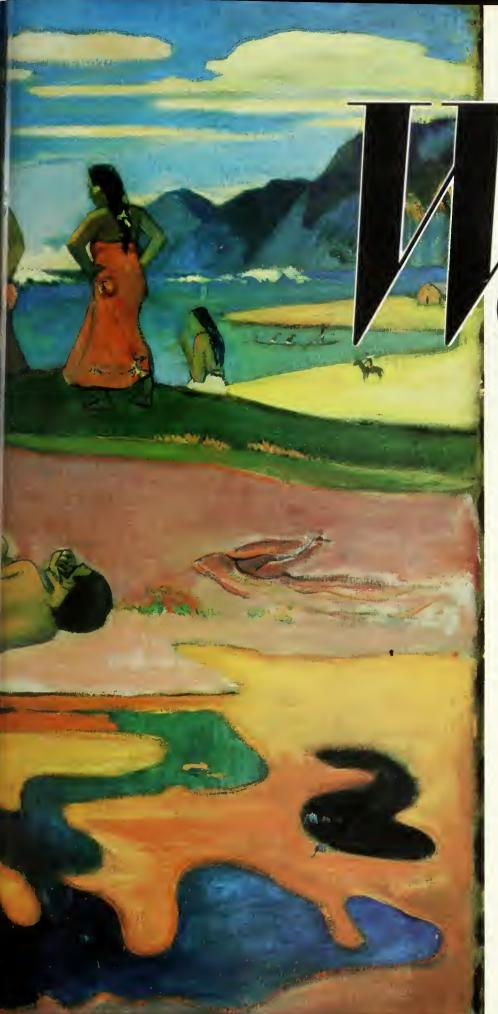
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# Heat

Throw caution and convention to the trade winds. There's a sybaritic side to architecture, design, and fashion that beckons the adventurous to explore the exotic. Succumb to the temptation of unabashed color, to the allure of uninhibited pattern. Let Gauguin be your guide, through July 31 at the National Gallery in Washington

Paul Gauguin's Mahana no Atua— Day of the Gods, 1894, Art Institute of Chicago.

## Tahitian Mythology

The legend of Gauguin is nearly as poter

as his art. But only the work, says John Richards

merits our attention

efore settling
on Tahiti,
Gauguin
considered Java,
Tonkin,
and Madagascar as a

base for his "studio of the tropics"—a never-to-be-realized commune of modern artists. He was inspired by memories of the thatched native huts he had seen at the World's Fair of 1889, also possibly by Pierre Loti's autobiographical account of a French sailor's romance with a fourteen-year-old Tahitian *vahine*. Gauguin's first trip to the South Seas lasted from 1891 to 1893; his second from 1895 until his death eight years later. Both turned out to involve much agony besides "ecstasy, calm, and art."

The paintings inspired by Gauguin's Polynesian "paradise" have exerted as mesmeric an influence on the Modern movement as Cézanne's—and only Van Gogh has proved more popular with gallerygoers, not to speak of art investors. Yet prior to the present eye-opening exhibition at the

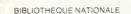
National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., on view through July 31 (with subsequent stops at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Grand Palais in Paris), Gauguin was always rather a puzzle. He was both original and derivative, bafflingly great and on occasion bafflingly bad. With this show—discerningly chosen and exhaustively catalogued by Charles Stuckey and Richard Brettell—all such conflicts have been resolved. We can now see Gauguin as an artist of immense visionary as well as painterly and decorative powers—both vic-

tor and victim of the sacred pool of art which figures in the foreground of the great painting *Mahana no Atua*.

The exhibition charts Gauguin's gradual metamorphosis from an inept Sunday painter to a charismatic master—part monster, part martyr. First steps were amateurish: bad Pissarro. Gauguin's gifts only began to emerge when he gave up banking and moved his family to Copenhagen, his wife's hometown. Denmark was a disaster. Leaving his family behind, he returned to France and proceeded to quarrel with a succession of well-wishers, notably Degas and Seurat. After dabbling in Divisionism. Gauguin embarked in 1887 on his first trip to the tropics: Panama. Another disaster! First he worked as a laborer on the Panama Canal, then, after moving to Martinique, he succumbed to fever.

On returning to France in 1888, Gauguin opted for the primitivism of Brittany. And there at Pont-Aven, surrounded by a group of progressive young painters, he finally came into his own and blazed a trail that would be followed by the heroes of the Modern movement: Picasso as well as Matisse, Expressionists as well as abstractionists. Drawing on sources as disparate as Cézanne. Japanese woodcuts. Italian primitives. Romanesque sculpture, and art populaire, Gauguin came up with his famous Synthetism: a style that enabled artists to take hitherto unheard-of liberties with appearances. Gauguin's Breton works are as decorative and expressive as medieval stained glass; at the same time, they are deeply rooted in his dark "barbaric heart, which [was] so hard, so loving." After primitive Brittany, Gauguin tried his luck with Van Gogh in primitive Provence. Yet another disaster! Artistic togetherness in Van Gogh's yellow house in Arles came to an abrupt halt when the doomed Dutchman tried to slash Gauguin with a razor. Back north he divided the next two years between Paris and Brittany, making little money but a great name for himself as the leader of Symbolist painters. In April 1891, he took off for the South Seas.

In the light of Stuckey and Brettell's scholarship the old Gauguin legends look decidedly novelettish, especially the notion of the archetypal *peintre maudit:* the



stockbroker who threw up everything to find redemption through primitivism, priapism, and drink. The prime perpetrator of this poppycock was Somerset Maugham or rather his roman à clef *The Moon and Sixpence*. Thanks to a chance meeting in Paris with one of the artist's cronies—a rotten painter named Roderick O'Conor—Maugham had developed an obsession with Gauguin's story shortly after the latter's death in 1903.

O'Conor must have let out a lot of disparaging facts about his former mentor, for in Maugham's first best-seller, Of Human Bondage, we come across not only a travesty of O'Conor ("a failure and he knows it, and the bitterness has warped his soul") but a travesty of Gauguin ("he chucked it all to become a painter.... He's behaved like a perfect cad to his wife and children... the way he treats the people who've helped him... is simply beastly"). After the success of Of Human Bondage, Maugham decided to base his next novel entirely on Gauguin—a project that necessitated giving up his work as a spy in Switzerland, at the height of World War I, and going to Tahiti in search of local color.

Most of Maugham's research for The Moon and Sixpence was done by his shifty American companion, Gerald Haxton, who would scour the local bars for tall stories about the perfect cad who had died of drink and morphine, had run up bills all over the island, and carried on a hate campaign against the local priests and colonial administrators. Years later, I remember Maugham boasting how he and Haxton had driven to Papeete, where in a flyblown bungalow belonging to the children of Gauguin's landlord they had discovered a glass door painted by the artist. Six panes depicting a whimsical rabbit and a bare-breasted woman holding a breadfruit were all that remained of an elaborate decorative scheme. Maugham bought it for 200 francs and stuck it in his study at Cap Ferrat; he sold it in 1962 for \$37,400. History would have been better served, Stuckey growls, if the writer had photographed his find in situ and not jettisoned the bottom section.

Maugham's view of Gauguin as the Trader Vic of modern art has inspired many a bored businessman to envision escaping to a never-never land in the South Seas, especially when Kon Tiki added another dimension to the Gauguinesque myth: the swish of surf on the silver strand; topless *vahines* dispensing *dolce fa niente* to middle-aged dropouts. How Gauguin, that sardonic utopian, would have despised the dreams that his example inspired. Brettell rightly complains that his art has come to be admired for "reasons that he would find loathsome or trivial," and he bids us imagine "the snide invective" that one of today's eight-figure sales would invoke.

For all that he was unable to endow his drunken boor of a Gauguin (Strickland he called him) with the least glimmer of greatness, Maugham went to the trouble of visiting Tahiti; this was more than most Gauguin experts ever bothered to do. Most academics preferred to stay put, bickering over stylistic and chronological

niceties, coming to blows over questions of authenticity.

**HEAT WAVE** 

As a result, the artist's image and reputation came to be in dire need of reappraisal. The organizers of the current show have approached their task with exemplary ardor, leaving no fact or theory or attribution unquestioned, none of the flora or fauna or phantasmagoria unidentified. As well as reviewing all relevant records and documents, they submitted every potential exhibit to exhaustive scientific examination. They studied the hundreds of sources the artist drew upon. They traced his subjects back to the Polynesian customs and ancient religious beliefs Gauguin claimed to have learned as he lay in bed with his mistress, Tehamana. And for the first time they diligently unearthed all his fascinating and underappreciated writing, much of it unpublished or long out of print. Hence their unexpected conclusion that the alter ego of the artist was not so much a banker as a writer. Brettell goes on to claim that Gauguin's "striving for the ideal did not take place only within the arena of art. This constant meddling in the affairs of colonial government was...part of his search for a utopia on earth...no less important for having been futile."

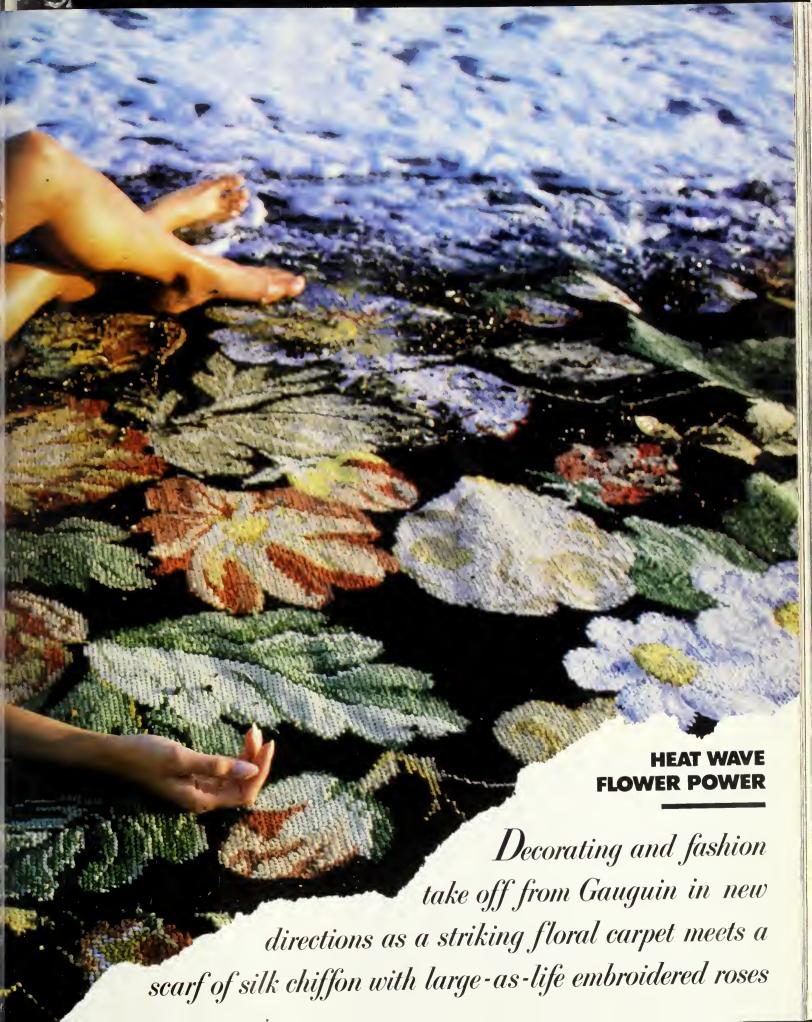
The organizers also made a point of visiting most of the stops on Gauguin's escape route from bourgeois civilization: Martinique, Brittany, Provence, Tahiti, and finally Hiva-Oa (part of the most remote island group on earth), where the artist busied himself with his last total work of art, the famous House of Pleasure, and where he died in 1903.

Ever since he first kicked over the traces, Gauguin had always had a following, but it was only in the last years of his life that the enormous significance of his instinctive genius began to be recognized—in Belgium, Germany, and Scandinavia as well as in France—by a new generation of painters—above all, Picasso, who at the start of his career filched almost as much from Gauguin as Gauguin had filched from his precursors. Didn't both artists have an innate ability to digest stylistic borrowings and come up with a synthesis of the utmost originality? If Picasso acknowledged his debts to Cézanne and Van Gogh while he unaccount-

(Text continued on page 248)

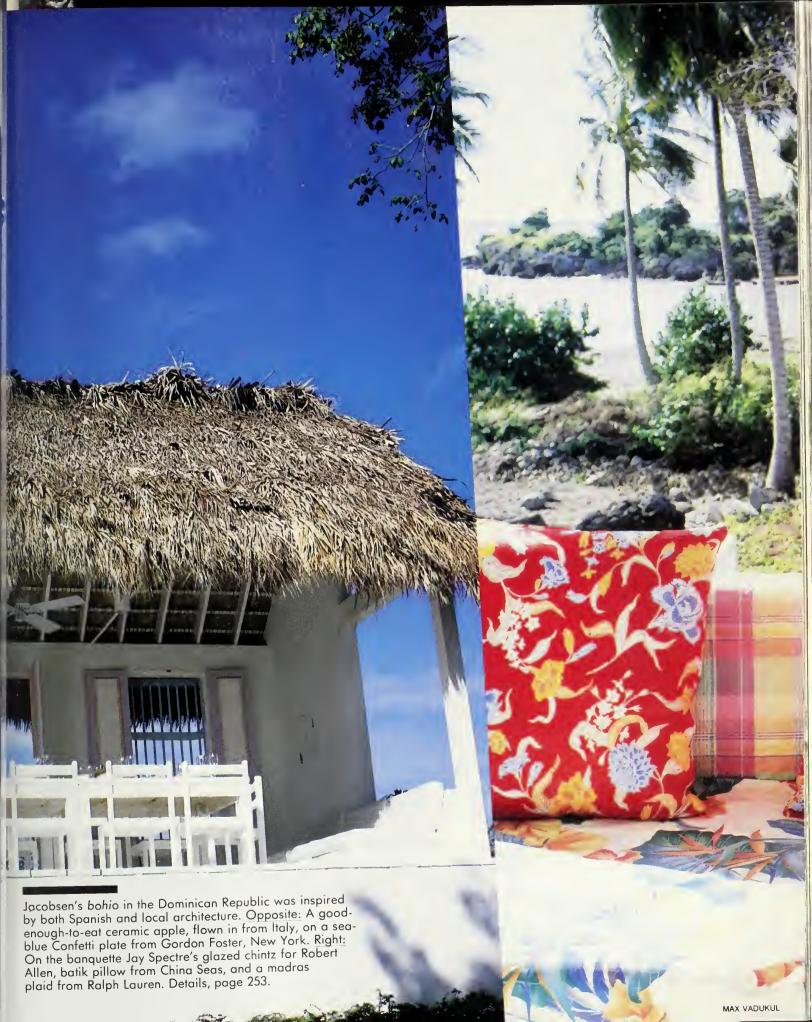
Gauguin's ornamental impulses are clear in the detail, right, of Ancien Culte mahorie, 1893. Opposite: His dark power is exemplified in the 1898 print Three Figures, detail.





### **HEAT WAVE**





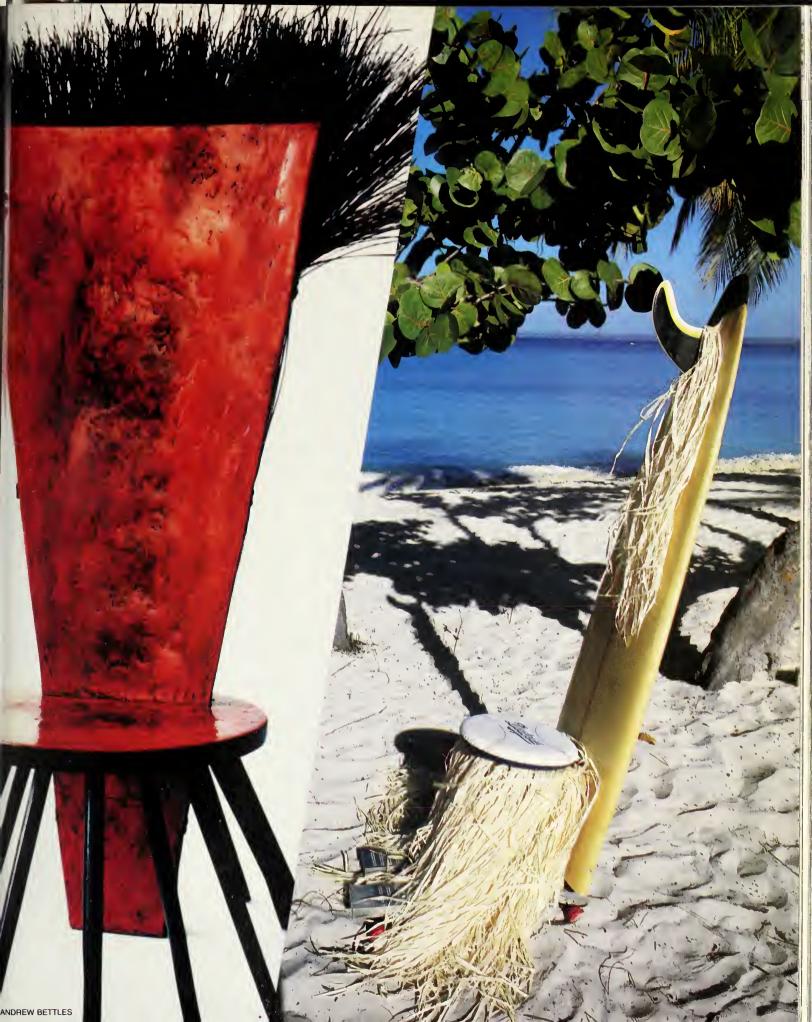


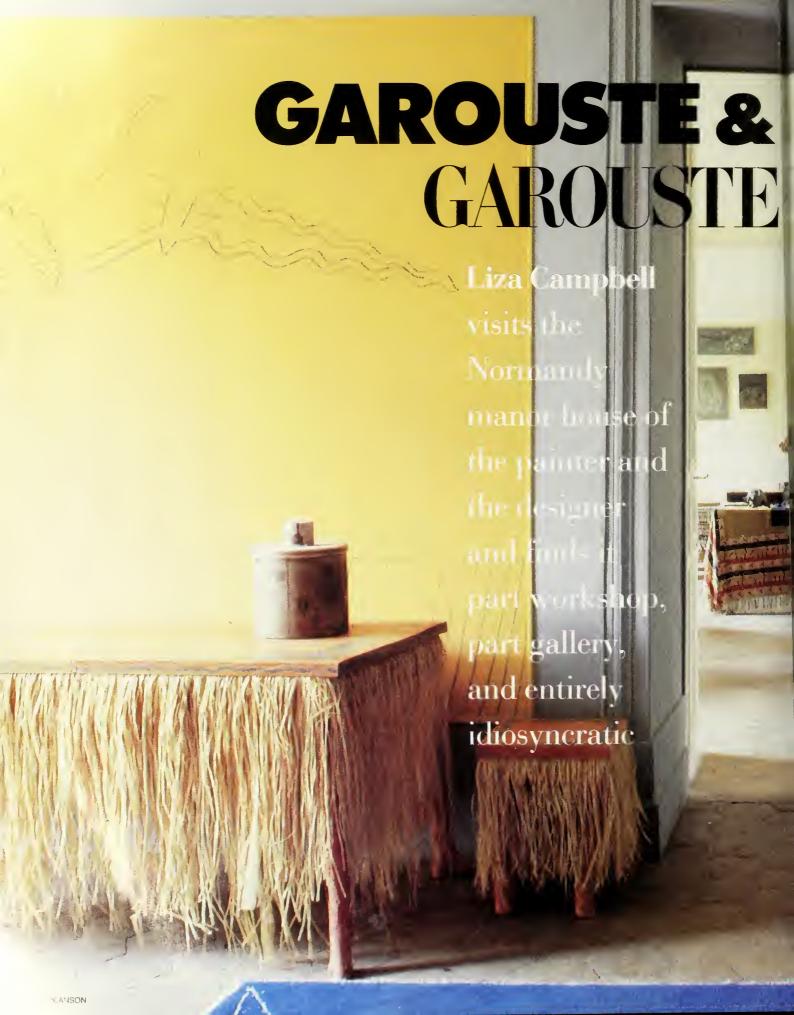
















fter a painful start to his career (his first exhibition was in 1969, and he wasn't given another for ten years), Gérard Garouste's creative urge has swelled in direct proportion to his reputation and success. From dawn, when he gets up for the early morning light, until dusk, when he leaves his studio and returns home, his painting is accompanied by music of unimaginable megawattage blasting out of speakers standing on either side of an enormous fireplace. But the work doesn't stop when the sun goes down. In the living room the walls, the telephone, even the ceiling are splattered with paint from Gérard's hyperactive brush. There's a handsome printing press at the back of the room, so in the odd moment between dinner and coffee and playing with his children he can run off multiple editions. "Painting is not my work, it is my pleasure. My best moments are when I'm working surrounded by my family and friends—a bit like a grandmother who sits in her chair knitting while her family recounts the day's events."

Gérard and his wife, Elizabeth, bought their white-shuttered Normandy manor house four years ago so that he could concentrate on his paintings and sculptures in the tranquillity of the countryside. The house was built by a man who trained birds for Louis XIV and rebuilt in the eighteenth century after a fire. Now because of the Garoustes' prodigious combined output, it has evolved into a series of workshops. Two years ago they converted a stable into a large high-ceilinged studio where Gérard works on as many as forty paintings at once.

For Elizabeth the move to the country has been a compromise, and on most days she makes an hour-long journey through Haute Normandy into Paris to join Mattia Bonetti, her partner in decorating and furniture design. Past triumphs of their collaboration include the restaurant of the Palace nightclub, Christian Lacroix's boldly colored salon on the rue du Fau-





bourg-Saint-Honoré and Geopoly, Paris's hippest hangout for the modeling crowd. At the moment, they are working on the installation for an exhibition for the Fondation Cartier, which sponsors contemporary artists. An exhibition of their pieces at Furniture of the Twentieth Century showroom in New York opens on May 15. Elizabeth also runs the Garouste household and oversees the schooling of Olivier, age eight, and Guillaume, thirteen.

"Sometimes it is frustrating having to travel so much, but I have an office upstairs and a room in the attic where I make work in terra-cotta," explained Elizabeth, who The house was
built by a man who
trained birds for
Louis XIV and has
evolved into a series
of workshops

## What decoration there is could never be described as finished

The state of the s

has built a career out of designing bizarre furniture with mutant shapes and forms that are frequently molded in papier-mâ-ché. "We use a factory in Italy run by old men who normally produce floats for local carnivals and festivals. I think they are a little bemused by us."

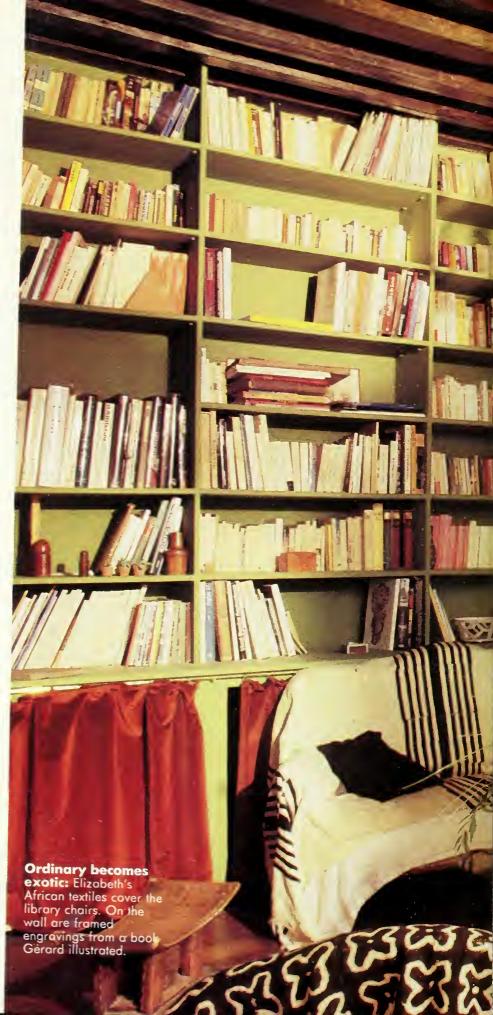
Indeed, Elizabeth and Mattia Bonetti were described as New Barbarians after the first exhibition, in 1980, of their consciously 'prehistoric' designs, which made use of rough wood and twine and a favorite medium, papier-mâché, to simulate stone. Some of the more humorous pieces were chairs with hula-girl grass skirts and a side table supported by potbellied, saggy-breasted caryatids.

nimals are every-

where in the house. An outsize black dog called Vasco ambles amiably around, and the dining room houses a guinea pig and a hamster. The humans have yet to colonize this extremely cold room, preferring to eat in the simple farmhouse kitchen, which is reached by passing through the rug-strewn library. The library is the domain of the Garoustes' cat, which stealthily prowls the shelves stuffed with books. On the walls of this sage-green room hang engravings for a book Gérard did on his printing press. Upstairs in Elizabeth's study lives a striped squirrel in a cage she designed. When

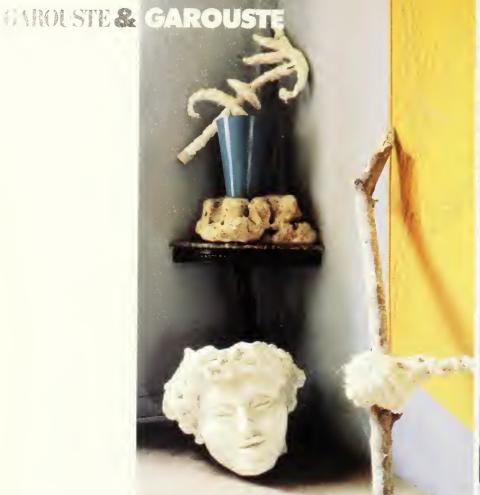
The stylistic influences in the house are African and Oriental. Elizabeth collects African textiles, which are draped over the chairs and anything else that needs camouflage. Gérard's father deals in Far Eastern goods and (Text continued on page 248)

asked its name. Olivier replied haughtily, "I do not know its name, as it belongs to



my brother."







Art is everywhere:
Top raw fram left: In the carner, Elizabeth's "prehistoric" blue lamp and Gerard's plaster Gerard's plaster maquette an the floor. Studies for paintings. A detail of Gérard's pastel, The Mirror. A maquette for Defying the Sun, against a Chinese screen.

Bottam row fram left: Hats and sack farm a back-hall tarm a back-hall still life. Gérard's Beatrice Partinari.
Another figure fram Defying the Sun. A Lune lamp by Garauste and Bonetti shines an a Battom-like figure by Gérard.







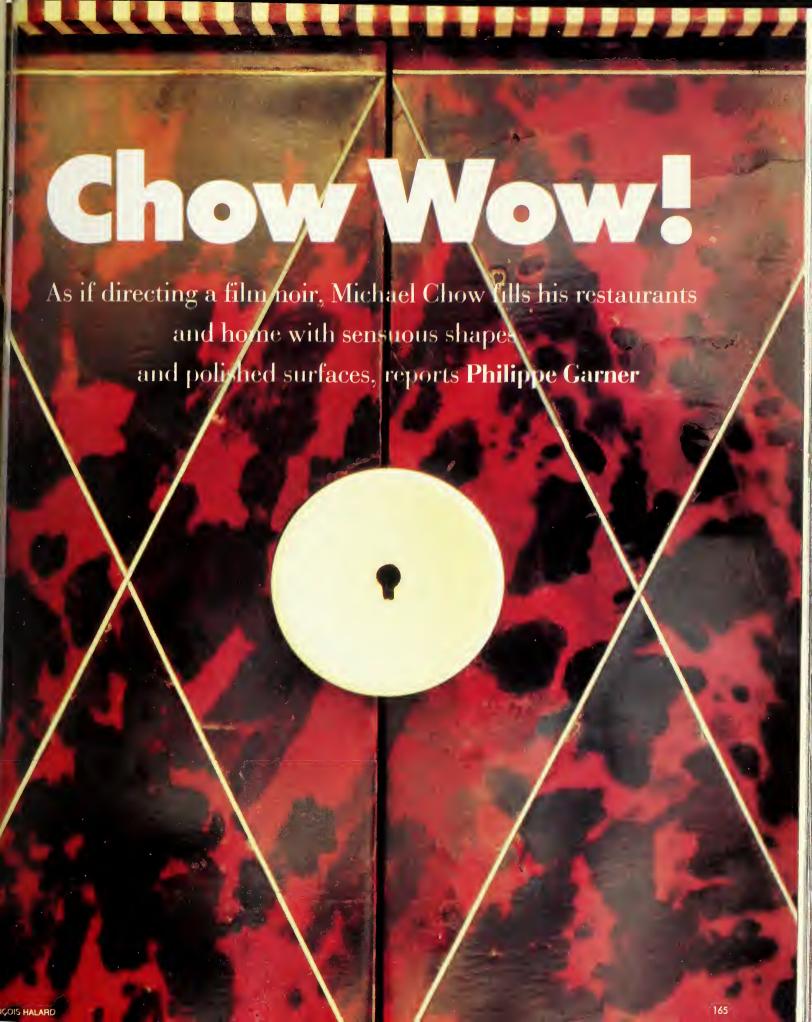


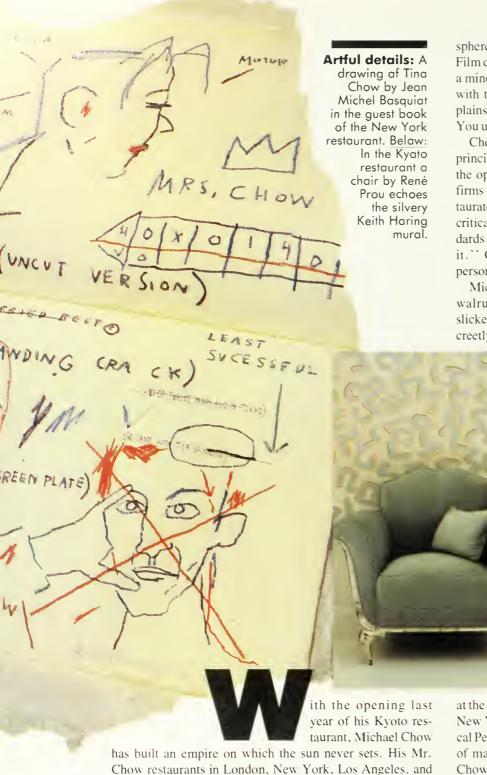




The main influences for his monumental landscapes with obscure figures flitting about are Dante's Inferno and the music of the Russian composer Arvo Pärt







now Kyoto have rewritten most of the rules in the business of

serving food. But the restaurants are just the most public facet

of Chow's world, and the ideas that have brought them such

renown are indivisible from those Chow applies to every as-

grams for complex ideas. Conversation takes on the atmo-

Chow expresses himself wittily, cryptically, with apt epi-

pect of his life.

sphere of a chess game or a gentle but rapid interrogation. Film director Billy Wilder calls him "an original, a man with a mind of his own. It is a pleasure to engage in a verbal duel with that guy." His friend photographer David Bailey explains, "He has tunnel vision when he believes in something. You understand the Long March when you talk to Michael."

Chow himself has said, "Most businesses are run on the principle that the customer is always right. My philosophy is the opposite." Another friend, artist Julian Schnabel, confirms this. "I think Michael is a somewhat misanthropic restaurateur. But I say that with affection and respect. He is a critical person, which comes with pros and cons. His standards are high, and he pursues what he believes in to the limit." Chow simply quotes William Blake: "The more personal, the more universal."

Michael Chow is of slight build. He sports a distinctive walrus mustache and hair alternately long or short and slicked. His hands are small with fine fingers, his dress discreetly dandified. He would be the first to remind you that

Beau Brummell was not flamboyant.

No sooner is the subject of dress broached than Chow reveals his passion for refinement and quality. From collar to shoes, every detail represents an act of choice: "The shirt collar is important. Once the width is determined, the rest follows. Make it an eighth of an inch out, and you destroy the whole thing." Even his shoelaces represent an ultimate: "Hermès, silk, different widths, different colors, including white. Tina found them for me and bought the entire stock." Tina, his wife, is a half-American and half-Japanese beauty with a considerable sense of style, which she is currently applying to her new venture in jewelry design.

Chow recognizes his intense pursuit of style as a part of his search for an identity, which began with a dramatic rupture from his country and his family

at the age of thirteen. He was born in 1938 in Shanghai, "the New York of China." His father was a highly revered classical Peking Opera actor, a stage celebrity from age six, creator of major roles, author of three hundred plays. At thirteen Chow was sent to boarding school in England. It was ultimately for his well-being, for his father was to suffer persecution and death during the Cultural Revolution. "It was tough for me," he says. "I suffered an identity crisis. But I learned to be a survivor." He developed a determination to excel, to be "the best in the world" at whatever he did in tribute to the image he has cherished, with some awe, of his father. "I have a professional refugee mentality," he claims

"He has tunnel vision," explains David Bailey. "You understand the Long March when you talk to Michael"







Jaow Mow!









Polished personal appointments:

Clockwise fram top left: Antique Mont Blanc pens rest on a gilded mirror. A dressing table by Dunand and Ruhlmann. Animal magnetism in a detail af a cabinet by Ruhlmann, Dunand, and Jeon Lambert-Rucki. A Sèvres cup and soucer by Ruhlmonn on o Dunand table. Left: The restaurants' motchbaaks reproduce a 1969 Hackney portrait of Chow.

laundry and so I chose to open a restaurant."

The original Mr. Chow opened in London twenty years ago, on Valentine's Day, 1968. Chow set the tone with his stylish decor, intimate, carefully considered lighting, art on the walls, and an artist clientele. He commissioned artist friends to create works for the restaurant, their fees a credit to be consumed. Jim Dine painted five hearts for Valentine's Day and, as he was shortly to return to the United States, burned his way through his credit with a quick-fire succession of parties. Peter Blake painted a Pop group portrait, Frisco and Lorenzo Wong & Wildman Michael Chow, which now hangs in the New York restaurant, and adorned it with the kitsch chinoiserie so notably absent from the decor. Patrick Caulfield painted a big nude. Dick Smith made a metal wall sculpture, Clive Barker created his silvered bronze Peking Duck. "My restaurant started like a party, every night a party that goes on forever," quipped Chow. The Los Angeles restaurant opened in 1974, New York followed in 1979. "I was trying to build a country for me. I feel secure in my restaurants."

Chow talks passionately of abstract ideals yet remains acutely perceptive to light, sound, color, and texture. "I like the sound of walking on carpet, over fine floor-boards," he says, "a certain creak between shoes and floorboards underneath—half movie, half reality.

"My big thing is lighting to create a feeling. The colors, textures, and surfaces are chosen to fit the lighting." For the New York restaurant he selected tiles of white marble, a warm white gloss lacquer for the walls. "I wanted it to be translucent, like a swimming pool at night or a film noir."

In creating interiors Chow follows certain principles but avoids formulas. In his restaurants he devises seductive spaces by apply-

ing a principle he explains with reference to an instruction supposedly given by John Ford to John Wayne: "Don't annoy the audience! Just walk through the picture. I'll let you know when I want you to do something special." "This is easier said than done." says Chow. "When you design something, make it neutral; let people walk through. Not everything must be a statement. But when you do something special, make it magic."

The new Kyoto restaurant (Text continued on page 252)

"Some things have their places waiting," says Chow. "A true collector wills certain pieces to become his"

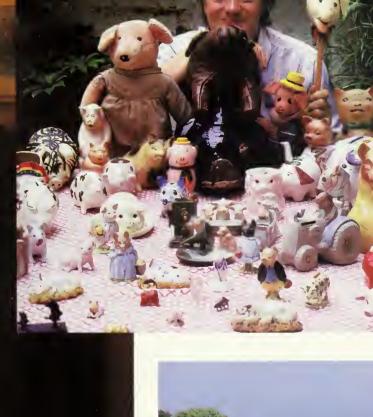




Family influences: The entronce hall, obove, with on ontique rocking horse lent by the outhor's brother and Neo-Gothic furniture purchosed from his brother-in-law. Opposite obove: The outhor with port of his pig collection. Opposite below: The Costle seen from the main drive.

## The English MANNER

Photographer
Christopher Simon Sykes
explains his family's
eccentric Gothic-style
"castle" overlooking the
Yorkshire Wolds. Once
dilapidated and
allegedly haunted, this
proud inheritance of the
third son is now the
favored hideaway for
relaxing weekends and
festive house parties



CHRISTOPHER SIMON SYKES





hen I was in my early twenties and dating a girl of whom my father particularly approved, he would bring me up to the Castle—a place he knew I loved—and say, "If you marry that girl, I will give you the Castle." I never took him seriously.

The Castle is a farmhouse situated high on the Yorkshire Wolds, a bank of chalk hills. It commands a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside, overlooking Sledmere House, the ancestral seat of the Sykes family. It was built in 1778 by my namesake, Sir Christopher Sykes, from plans by John Carr of York. He designed it as a folly, or eye-catcher, since it occupies a strategic position in the landscaping of Sledmere Park as drawn up by Lancelot "Capability" Brown. The original plans called for pavilions on either side of the main block. But all that was completed as the central portion—two castellated ers in the Gothic style adjoining a great arched doorway. The Castle is often hard to see in the morning when it is in shadow. In the late afternoon and early evening, however, when the dying sun finally hits its twin towers, it is lit up like a beacon, visible for miles around.

The Castle was later offered to me again by my eldest brother who had toyed with the idea of living there himself before deciding it was not for him after all. He then promptly changed his mind and took it back. It was a smart decision. The day came when living on top of my father in the family home became unbearable, and my brother began to make elaborate plans to move. Roofers, plumbers, electricians. and painters moved into the Castle. Architects drew up ambitious plans. A flagpole was all but planted when my father decided to die. The move was abandoned. After a suitable interlude I made a cautious approach, and a few months later, in the summer of 1982, the keys to the Castle were mine. They could not have come into my hands at a more opportune moment, for in September of that year I married.

Belinda and I decided to approach the

somewhat daunting problem of the Castle very slowly. My brother had left it in what is known as builder's order, leaving us to paint, decorate, and furnish—no mean task considering its size and our limited budget. As far as the latter was concerned, the location was very much in our favor. The farther away one is from London, the cheaper things become, with no loss ofand often a rise in-quality. We started with the painting, carried out by a local family firm. Dobson & Son of Driffield, which had just completed the somewhat grander job of gilding the ceiling of the 120-foot library in the big house. Since the northern light is cold we chose to use a series of warm bright colors throughout the house, painted on in a wash in the Italian style. Mr. Dobson understood at oncebut no expensive oil-based paints and scumble glazes for him. He used emulsion paints diluted like watercolors, applied wet, finished with a dry brush. The final effect was exactly what we wanted.

The next stage involved much begging and borrowing and a certain amount of ingenuity, often both combined. I was forev-

### The English MANNER

With the exception
of a large community of mice
and a short stay
by a pop group, the house
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for twenty years











Outdoor pleasures: Lily Sykes and a friend, opposite, create a splash in the garden. Top: Guests breakfasting on the terrace on a sunny Sunday. Above left: The terrace table with fresh butter and eggs from the farm. Above right: Babars resting on an 18th-century library steps chair; a Shaker pig standing guard. Left: In the utility room flowers from the garden of the big house await arrangement. The pig was custom-made in New York, the tiles are by artist Jonathan Heale.

**Purloined prizes:** Belinda and Lily Sykes, right, reading together in the drawing room on the sofo Sykes finagled from his brother's bedroom. Below: In the Blue Hall, a Neo-Gothic side table with a portrait and bust of Sykes's grandfather. The pot was found in the attic of the big house. Opposite: A view from the drawing room across the Blue Hall to the study. The leather side chair was a wedding gift; the club fender ollows close warming by the fire.



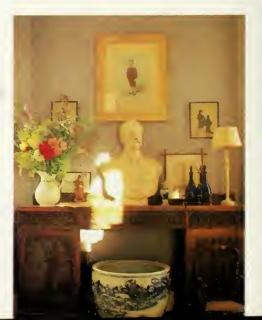
er padding about the big house with one eye open for things I considered might be surplus to my brother's requirements. On one occasion, for example, he made the mistake of suggesting I needed a sofa in a particular place. Did I know of one that might be suitable, he asked. "Well, yes, as a matter of fact I do," I replied. "It's in your bedroom, at the end of your bed actually. The one you put vour clothes on. You never sit on it." He scarcely had time to nod his assent before I'd enlisted the help of two able-bodied guests and whisked it out of his room and into its new home. He learned to curb his tongue.

When we finally moved into the Castle in the early summer of 1985, it was painted and partly furnished. Mitzi Addison, an elderly Austrian lady who had worked for my mother, moved in with us to make curtains and covers. My brother-in-law, a cabinetmaker by trade, also came along. With the exception of a large community of mice and a short occupation many years previously by a pop group with which my younger brother was then involved, the house had not been lived in for twenty years—since the demise of old Cecil Poritt, the previous tenant, whose ghost was bought by many in the village to haunt the We had dealt with this problem the ding Christmas when we had solemnaround the house with a Catholic priest, chanting and sprinkling holy water in each room.) For the first three days of our occupancy the cold and damp of former years seemed to cling to the house. But as fires blazed in every grate and the human presence began to make itself felt, the Castle gradually began to thaw out and feel inhabited. Suddenly we felt welcome there, and after our first ten days we felt as though we had lived there a lifetime.

Even though we only get to spend up to four months a year at the Castle, every moment of that time is a joy in spite of the rain and fog and howling gales which usually assail us (the east Yorkshire coast is not noted for its climate). It is a time for walks, for reading and cooking, for catching more than a fleeting glimpse of friends, and for our daughter, Lily, to learn about the country.

The Castle surprises everybody who visits it, as well as some who have not. Once when Belinda, a television producer who then worked for the BBC, returned to her office, a colleague asked, "Do you have a title or something?" "No," she replied, "what do you mean?" "Well," he said, "when I rang up the number you left and asked to speak to you, a grand voice said, I'm afraid that madam is at the Castle and will not be returning to the big house till later. "How could they ever have guessed that working among them was the chatelaine of a country castle?

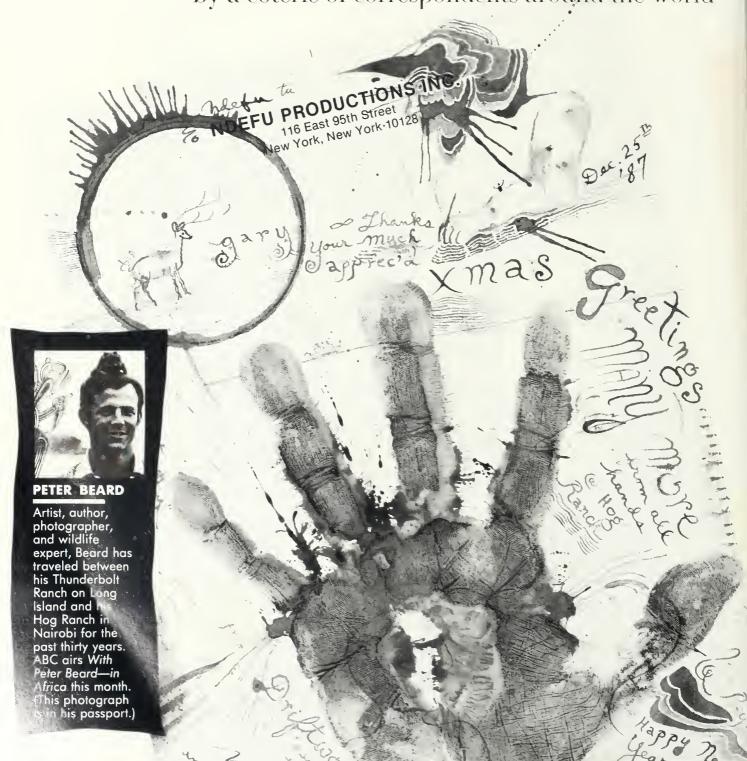
We dealt with the ghost by solemnly walking around with a Catholic priest. chanting and sprinkling holy water





# Picture Post

The almost-lost art of the illustrated letter is kept alive by a coterie of correspondents around the world



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ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS. PICCADILLY, LONDON, WIV ODS relephone 01 734 905 Cables Royacad, Londo

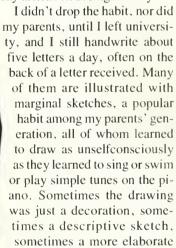
ROYAL ACADEMY PICCADILLY, LONDON

### **Thy not draw**

verybody likes getting letters—even dull ones. A telephone bell is an irritant, but that gentle thump on the doormat is always a heart twister. Sometimes the sight of a familiar, much-loved hand on an envelope is so rewarding it is hardly necessary to open it.

I am of a generation that wrote and re-

ceived letters as regularly as we brushed our teeth. My parents lived in India, as did many of my relations. We children grew up in England, and before the days of airlines we got together with our families only at intervals of two or more years. Weekly letters—they took six weeks each way—were our only contact. We wrote every Sunday evening at school, where the letters were read before dispatch by the headmaster, and every Sunday afternoon during holidays.

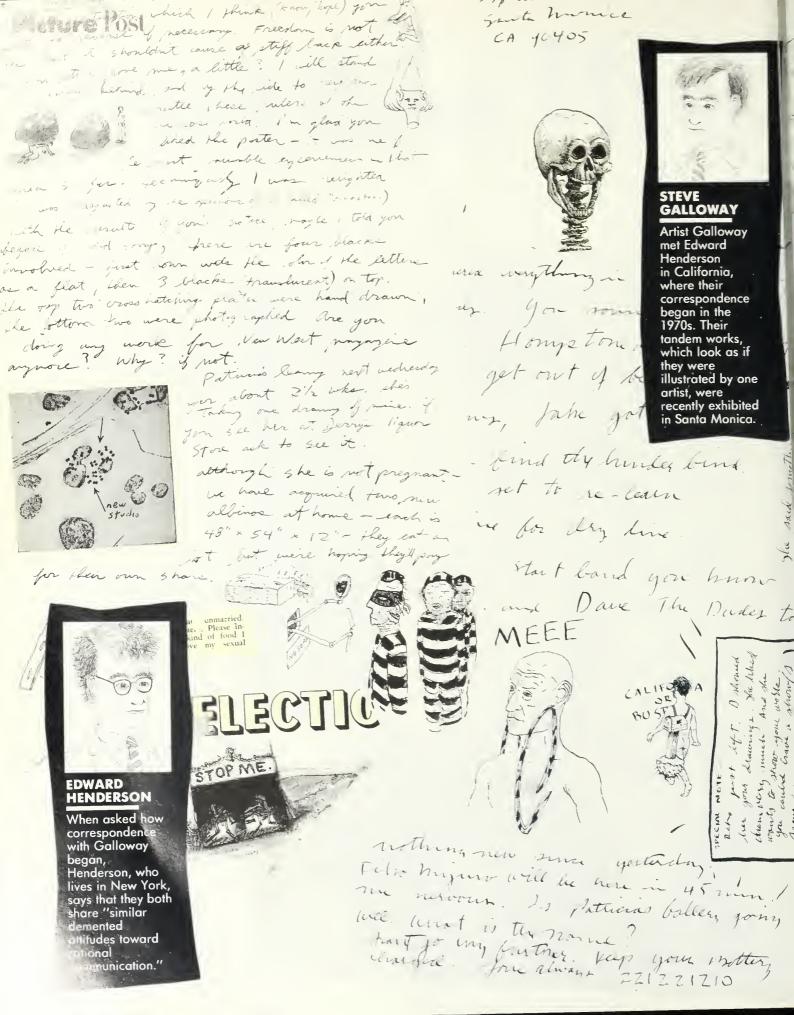


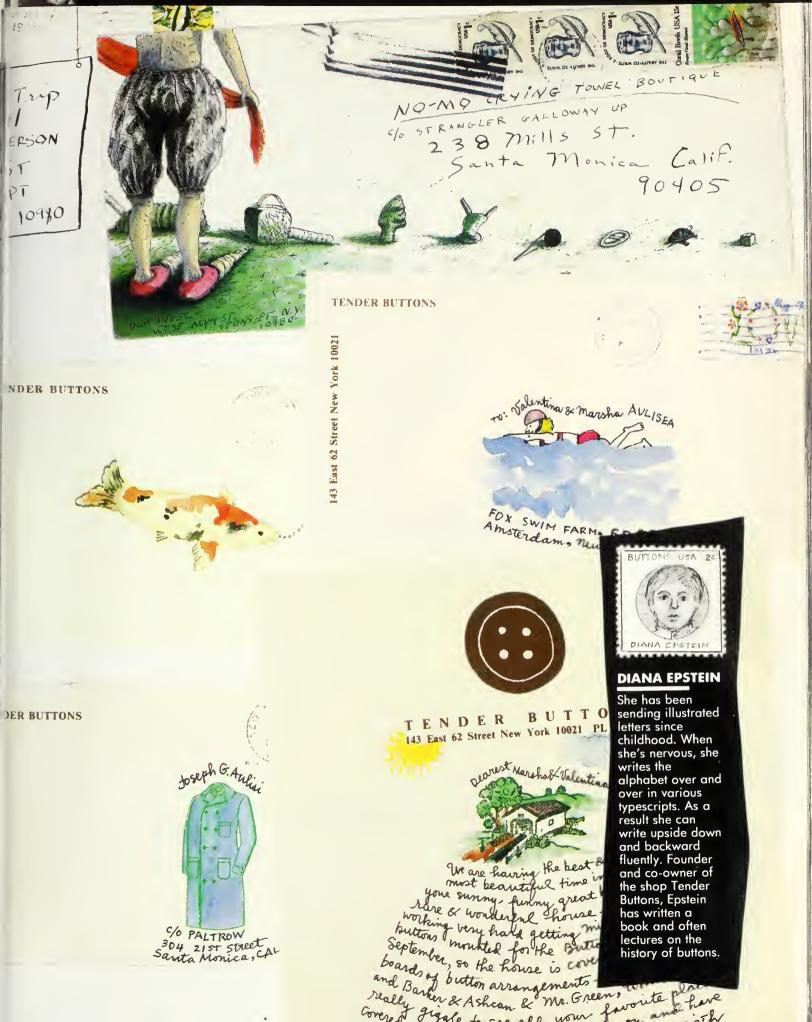
concoction that needed time to decipher.

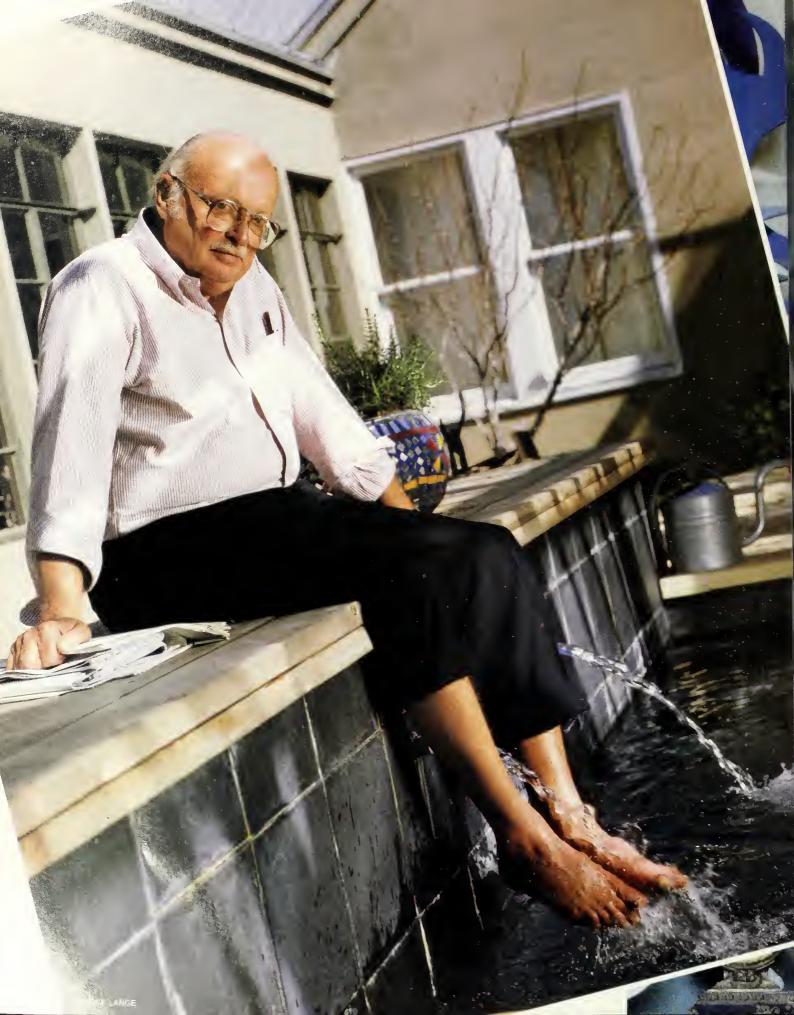
I adopted the habit as a child, partly because I enjoyed drawing and partly out of laziness. Drawings are the best and most attractively efficient form of shorthand. They can be witty, disarming, pointed, or explicit. They are immediately interpreted and magically personal. The picture is unique to you. However clumsily drawn, it is fresh-minted for the sole enjoyment of you and your recipient. Nobody else has done it exactly the same way or ever will. Words get fatigued (Rose Macauley said all of them run downhill)—drawings never. Why not have a go? **Hugh Casson** 



An architect, painter, and authar and illustrator of many books, Sir Hugh Cassan frequently exhibits his wark in London and elsewhere. He has recently retired as president of the Royal Academy of Arts, a post he held for eight years. His latest book is Hugh Casson's Landan.









### MORE, MORE, MORE!

Architect Charles Moore describes
the eighth house he's built
for himself—the crowded
center of a crowded life

S

ometimes architects have at hand an extraordinary opportunity to test their most evanescent and unprovable (that is to say, slippery) notions about space or light or color or fit or function. The opportunity comes in their own houses, with minimum penalties if the evanescent

notions slither out of hand. This house in Austin is the eighth I have done for myself and presumably one of the last. It is larger than others I have made for myself and considerably more comfortable, more inhabitable, than its predecessors.

Inhabiting, as I claim from lecterns everywhere, is a basic human need, not far behind eating and sleeping, though far less universally achieved. It involves a place of one's own, a center of one's universe, where one has that feeling of well-being dancers call being centered. The architect's task is not to make or purify some abstraction, but rather to design a stage for the centered inhabitant, for him or her or them to act out their lives. "Bah! This is

Charles Moore, opposite, by the pool at his home-and-office compound in Austin, Texas. The plain stucco exterior of Moore's house gives little hint of the richness within, including, left, whimsical cutouts over the fireplace.



theater!" snorted angry Harvard architecture students when I first lectured to them twenty years ago, and I would say, "So be it." But by now I have an architect-nephew, David Weingarten, who thinks the architecture-as-theater figure suggests far too loose a fit and that architecture should be more like clothes,

fitting snug.

My tall narrow town house in Los Angeles was fitting rather too tightly around me four years ago: I had been ordered to bed for several weeks with a troublesome back, and the walls of my sixteen-foot-wide dwelling were pressing closer and closer while I focused

my mind on an offer from the University of Texas at Austin and the spread—in my mind it was always a spread—I would in-

habit when I got there.

When I did get there, at the height of Austin's high-priced prosperity, the spreads were elusive: there were ten-acre parcels of rather claustrophobic brush too far from town and big and little houses shoehorned onto inadequate lots. Where was the spread? When suddenly the wife of the dean of the architecture school, who was also my agent. found it—a gently sloping acre of Spanish oak and post oak in

a pleasant old neighborhood, fairly close to town, where fancy and modest houses mingle comfortably. The house that shortly became mine was one of the modest ones, but heavy with pretension: it was all too easy to imagine it as something a minor mafioso in, say, New Brunswick, New Jersey, might have established for his paramour in 1936. Actually a nice old lady had lived there, but it had been built in 1936, a two-bedroom, one-

bathhouse, with an extra two bedrooms, bath, and glass porch added at some architectural nadir in 1949. But the oak trees were beautiful. The property, zoned for two houses, had been bought by developers who meant to make it for seventeen. But within the area alerted to the zoning

changes lived something like 44 lawyers. so the developers were in full retreat. I went halves with Arthur Andersson, who had come to Austin to take charge of my office there, and I had my spread.

Then it was time to design something. The process included architect Richard Dodge and Arthur Andersson and went on for many months. We decided that I would remodel the existing house, and we'd add a studio and a smaller house for Arthur. We would try for a courtyard, out of the wind but able to catch the breezes, where we could have a swimming pool. I had an image of it, remembering a long raised tank at Geoffrey Bawa's office in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I had another image, from an old Roger Sturtevant photograph, of an entrance for wagons to the Sherwood Ranch in Salinas, California-big but very simple. And for the living room I kept remembering the lift of wide stairs in Bantry House in the west of Ireland.

Curiously, I felt a kind of archaeologist's morality about the existing house, awful as I thought it was: I didn't want to cover up anything or to change anything unless I had to. Perhaps that qualifies as frugality, or is it only eccentricity? However, I did end up with all the windows left as they were, except two, and I added one big one. A pitched roof was added over the flat one, and the ceilings were removed along with many of the interior partitions.

Most of the remodeling was very selective erasure. That left the critical act of adding something, the dramatized act of inhabitation, the gesture that would settle us in. It had to be a big gesture to include my house, Arthur's house, the studio, and the courtyard. That gesture soon became an ellipse. The plan also provided the best suggestion for a house name: Lazy Oval, or Lazy O in the language of cattle brands.

Once you are inside my front door, which is Viennese and came from a splendid local architectural fragments shop, the curved wall takes over. Its passage is marked by pilasters, with bookshelves between, then openings to the kitchen, an alcove, the fireplace, and then more alcoves before the curve sweeps outdoors again. The pilasters themselves owe much to the airy suits of armor on top of an early Karl Friedrich Schinkel scheme for the Neue Wache in Berlin, except mine are plywood (painted by members of my class at the university), surmounted by masks, over pilasters of galvanized metal with dowel fasces.

ost of the remodeling was selective erasure, which left the critical act of adding something

> Moore's inspirations for his awn hause, tap, include the pool of architect Geotfrey Bawa's affice in Colamba, Sri Lanka, center, and the wagon entrance to the Sherwood Ranch in Salinas, California, above.

The warriors' chests are open to reveal various wonders, including giant kachinas my sister makes me for Christmas. Long before the armorial pilasters were finished, though, the curved wall was evoking responses. I note a positive one from Hal Box, who is the dean of the architecture school at Austin: "It's like canoeing along the steep bank of a curving stream toward a point out of sight. I like canoeing, so I like this." The curved wall swings around past the fireplace to the view out over the oak trees. Up a few steps is a seating corner that looks out through the giant window to the courtyard, where wisteria will soon spread summertime shadow.

he removal of the ceilings revealed the underside of the roof, which is complex, contradictory, and mostly just confused and which I like to think is a suitable foil to the single-minded sweep of the enveloping ellipse. Also, it is painted almost white in restful contrast to the hubbub elsewhere. The floor is the original 1936 wood and 1949 concrete with the handsome patterns of mastic left after the green asphalt tile was peeled off and with a net of colors in a pattern of squares and circles painted over it all to camouflage some of the more serious disasters. On it are kilims. The biggest rug in front of the fireplace, brought home from a London antiques store when the dollar was up, provides the color scheme for the rest of the room.

On the high green wall, facing an area for dining, hang my great-great-grandparents Moore, whom I first remember hanging in my grandfather's stair hall in Michigan. They have moved to California twice with me and to Connecticut not very far from the town in Vermont where they started, and now they seem to take in Texas with the same equanimity with which they faced the rest.

A fine Baltic plywood is the material for the sofa in the dining area, locally built. The design is the first in a series that owes something to Karl Friedrich Schinkel and a host of Biedermeier designers as well as to really good plywood.

The fireplace in the elliptical wall received no more than several coats of paint and a new tile hearth. Above it is an overmantel meant to house a few objects and to filter light from an upper window. It is presently made of Fome-Cor to simplify

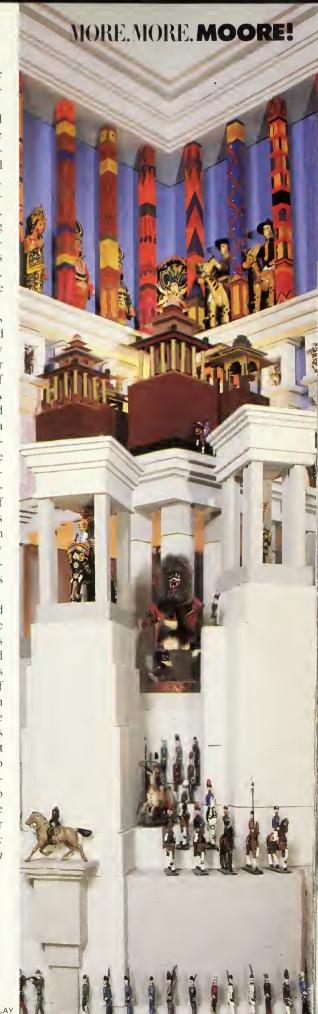
the numerous changes we'll make before we get it just the way we want it, whereupon it will be recut in everlasting plywood.

The kitchen is worth a note: the original was well made, but narrow and tight. We retained the side with sink, dishwasher, refrigerator, and cabinets, and demolished the opposite wall, which included a stove. That became an island counter with a cooking top that extends to the elliptical wall, and additional cabinets were built along the outside wall of what had been the dining room. Everything old and new was then covered with a marbleized laminate, which makes the kitchen an acceptable neighbor to the living room.

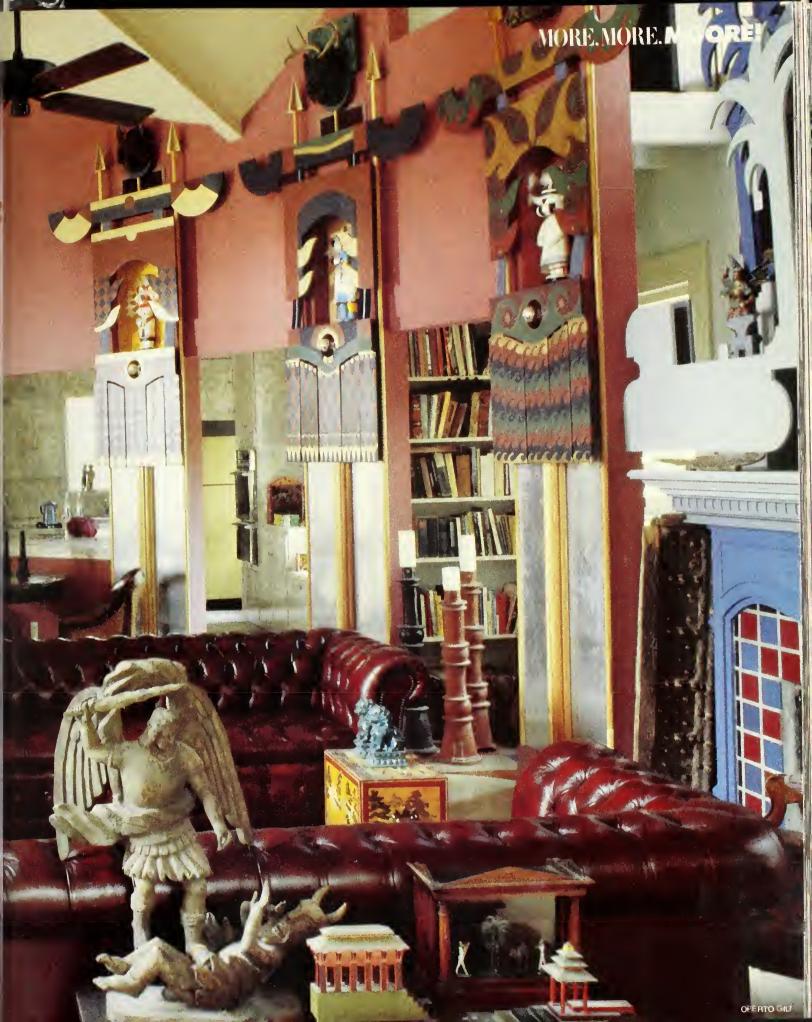
Through a door just left of the entrance is my study/dressing room, bedroom, and bath with a giant shower, which is the only addition to the original house. The shower is bright with a translucent roof, walls of metal roofing, and duckboard flooring. A sliding glass door separates the shower and bedroom and lights up the bedroom with a bright and even glow. Adjoining the shower is the remodeled bath, the one place where I allowed myself some fancy surfaces: stainless-steel counter, nickel lavatory, black faucets. And on the walls of bathroom, bedroom, and study, as well as living room, are shelves jammed with books and objects. The books are very tidy, but the whole house is filled with objects—awash with objects—and that is its most notable characteristic.

From earliest youth I have collected things that appealed to me: miniature buildings and figures and objects, puppets and cars and ornaments, kachina dolls and pictures—mostly toys. They are souvenirs of places I've been, they form pieces of miniature cities or of little scenes with staggering contrasts of scale. I used to see myself as a pack rat, and only lately has anyone called me a collector. So the next step is to figure out how to insinuate into this house miracles of organization: vitrines, glass-top tables, and new ways to look at little objects made into miniature worlds. If I don't take charge, they will. Or maybe they have. Architecture Editor: Elizabeth Sverbeyeff Byron

Moore's love of "little objects made into miniature worlds" is reflected in an installation he designed for an exhibition of toys at his Hood Museum at Dartmouth College.







### TOWERS OF

### Peakiness

Frank Lloyd Wright said every building with a roof leaks. Leaks are the least of it, reports **Suzanne Stephens** 

uildings have always leaked. But these days you can add problems of heat, cold, glare, and noise to the list of malfunctions that frequently plague new construction. While architects carry on about new advances in design and technology, the drones living and working in and around the new buildings form their own opinions from firsthand experience. Last summer when the new United Airlines terminal designed by architect Helmut Jahn of Murphy/Jahn opened at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, critics salivated over its sensuous curvilinear forms. But the air-traffic controllers in their tower insisted that glare from the terminal's glass roof prevented them from seeing the planes. Although some cynical travelers claimed O'Hare's

air controllers had never shown that much concern about air traffic before, it was clear that something needed to be done. United ended up slathering 27,000 square feet of the glass roof with wax. The next step is to scrape off the goo and etch the glass with acid to cut the glare for good.

The problem was fairly minor compared with having a structure collapse (as did Murphy/Jahn's award-winning Kemper Arena in Kansas City in 1979) or with having windows pop out (as happened in the mid 1970s at the John Hancock tower in Boston designed by the much-respected I. M. Pei & Partners). Since the construction process involves so many people, including builders and suppliers of materials, the architect can hardly be blamed as the sole villain if something goes terribly wrong. Nevertheless, when it comes to the mundane matters of temperature, noise, and the like, there is always the lurking suspicion

that the architect is more obsessed with innovative design than the comfort of the building's inhabitants. Frank Lloyd Wright provided a favorite role model for the profession: when one of his clients complained that a leak in the roof made dinner guests a little soggy in rainy weather, Wright suggested moving the dining-room table.

Building botch-ups are often linked to some adventurous design feature. Observes Thomas Fisher of *Progressive Architecture* magazine: "All great architects push their materials to the limit. They have to take risks." But architects are also designing in an age when materials and methods of building are entering the marketplace faster than new wrinkle creams. Like any purchaser of the latest bee pollen or Retin-A cosmetic miracle, architects also want to believe that new

building products and techniques will work all the time.

Sometimes the gap between faith and

fact is not visible right away. The Faculty of History Building at Cambridge University designed by England's James Stirling is a case in point. The twenty-year-old landmark L-shaped structure of brick and tile wraps around a fan-shaped glass reading room, and over the years it has come to look like a creature from the deep. Water seeping through apparently porous concrete terraces has left a residue of chalky encrustations on the now grotty-looking glass walls. Elsewhere parts of the building tiles crumbled. Inside the building heat loss and leaks have created an atmosphere too dank even for the hardy English. Sev-

eral years ago Cambridge University was

advised that the requisite repairs would

cost about £1.4 million. A bit steep. The suggestion that the whole building be torn

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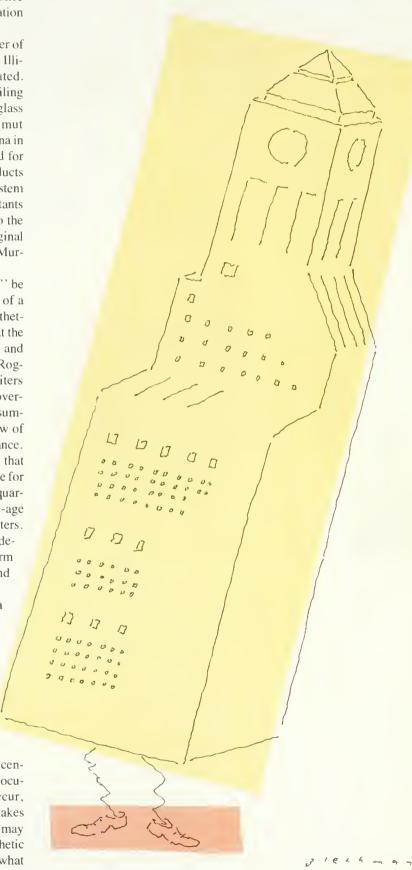
down seemed like a good idea to some. But a hue and cry arose from Modernist architects turned preservationists (once a contradiction in terms). So now a more modified renovation is being undertaken at a cost of £700,000.

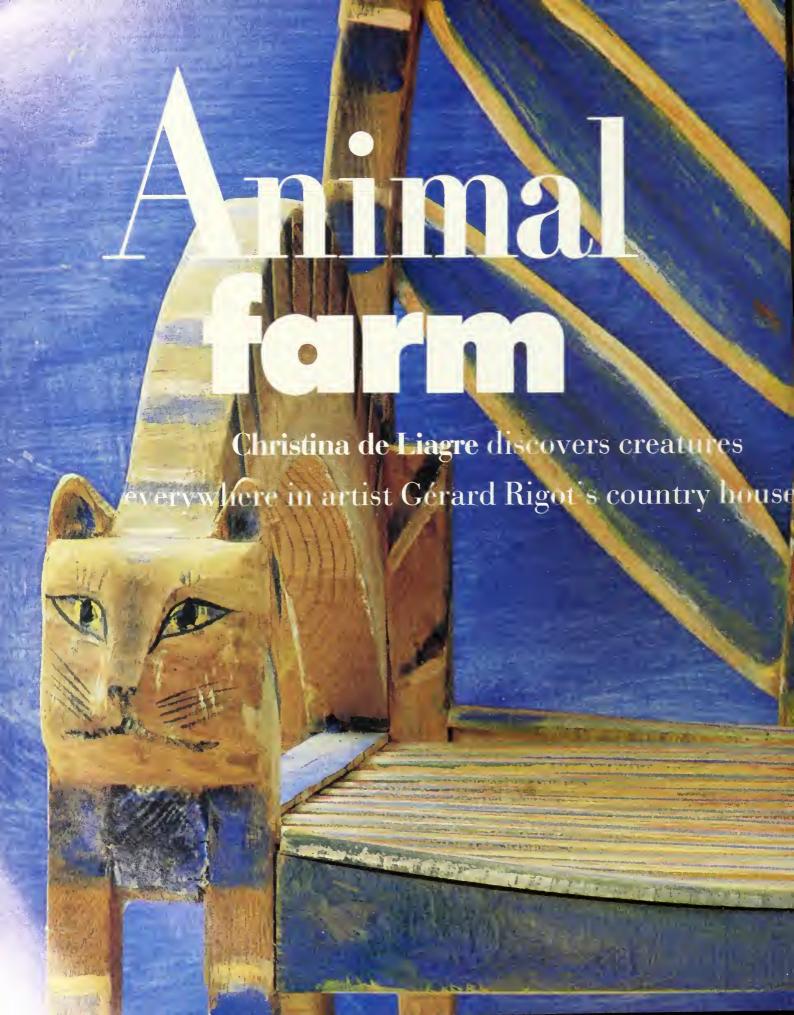
Such renovation costs often lead to lawsuits, as another of Murphy/Jahn's buildings—the three-year-old State of Illinois Center in Chicago—has dramatically demonstrated. Soon after the building's completion, the employees toiling in the upper reaches of the truncated beehive's gigantic glass atrium—onto which their offices open—found Helmut Jahn's scheme had provided them with a 110-degree sauna in the summer months. Good for losing water weight, bad for concentration. It turned out that the air-conditioning ducts and ice-making equipment of the innovative cooling system were not big enough. State-hired engineering consultants charged \$10.9 million for the necessary corrections. So the state filed a \$20 million suit against the architects, the original engineers, and others involved in the project. Since then Murphy/Jahn has sued the engineers.

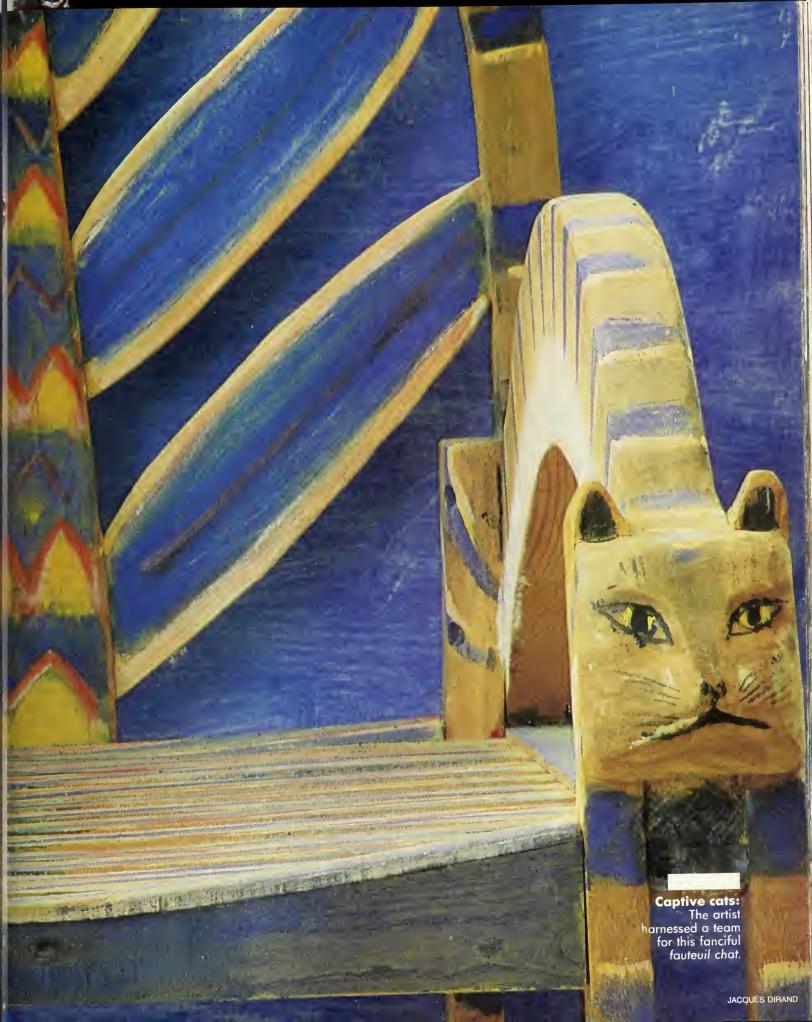
Some observers would prefer that "Helmut's Helmet" be taken to court on aesthetic grounds. In fact, criticisms of a building's function may really be about its looks, but aesthetic issues are hard to prove. For instance, it is thought that the brouhaha over Lloyd's of London, the stainless-steel and concrete tube and pipe assemblage designed by Richard Rogers, is based on style rather than function. Underwriters working in the building contend that their open offices overlooking the vast atrium are noisy, drafty in winter, hot in summer, but most important the many levels hinder the flow of business. Many complained they couldn't find the entrance. One of Lloyd's spokesmen has conjectured, however, that the gripes actually stem from the underwriters' preference for the traditional gentlemen's-club look of the 1928 headquarters building, which had been torn down for the space-age structure. Lloyd's had a research outfit poll the underwriters. After an overwhelmingly negative response last fall, it decided to bring in Fitch & Company, an architectural firm with experience in the design of airport terminals and shopping malls, to modify the interiors.

One minute the architect of a high-profile structure is a celebrity lauded by critics, and the next a scapegoat blamed for all the building's glitches. You pay a lot for public life. Indeed, because of their potential liability for structural and technical failures, architects are paying more than ever for insurance. John Loss of the Architecture and Engineering Performance Information Center at the University of Maryland estimates that at least one claim each year is filed against 43 to 47 percent of all insured architectural firms. Now, however, some sort of help is on the way. The Maryland center is compiling data on building failures. With more docu-

nowever, some sort of help is on the way. The Maryland center is compiling data on building failures. With more documented case studies about why certain problems occur, architects should soon be able to learn from others' mistakes in ways that were not feasible before the computer. They may not be able to do much about grumblings that have aesthetic underpinnings, but knowing in advance what works and what doesn't should give them an edge on innovation.







nlike those you could not keep down on the farm once they had seen Paree, Gérard Rigot decided quite the reverse route was to be his. After a frustrated career as a painter and a marriage that produced eight children and a divorce, Rigot picked himself up and put down roots in the middle of nowhere.

When making ar-

rangements from Paris to visit his farmhouse, I called to suggest I stay nearby. After a pause on the line I was told, "There is no nearby."

Indeed. His pastoral paradise in the rolling hills of Gascony, west of Toulouse, is foie gras country where unlucky ducks are force-fed corn kernels by strong-armed peasant women traditionally known as gaveuses. Although these robust women still gather to do the plucking together, this is about the only form of contact from farm to farm. It's a lonely life.

Gérard Rigot has spent twelve years down on his farm, an animal farm if there ever was one. "I came here to lose myself," Rigot says, as I settle into a blue wolf armchair in the storybook living room. "You were lost and then found," I say. "Exactement, ça va ensemble," he replies, easing into an elephant armchair.

Running his hand through a shock of gray hair, he recalls, "I was showing my paintings in Paris, and on the night of the

> into an argument with the gallery owner, so I took





Kissing giraffes form the back of a chair, left, and lotus flowers, above, stand tall for another. Details, page 253. Right: Denise Dessirier feeds the real chickens.



all my paintings off the walls that instant. Then I came here. 1 had just been divorced. I was totally lost and thought I'd try to start my life over again, raising sheep, without thinking much about painting." The entire house now looks like illustrations come alive from the pages of Aesop's Fables or The Jungle Book, with Ol' Mac-

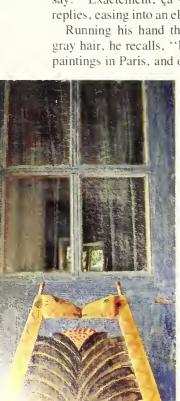
Donald thrown in for good measure.

"There was nothing here when I came," he continues, "only a rusted car that dated from 1908—an Ursus—one of the first and proof of how prosperous the farm had been. Vineyards used to cover these hills, but they have long since disappeared. When I arrived, the land was used only for pasture."

While Rigot's sheep grazed, he tackled the farmhouse to make, no doubt, the first improvements in two centuries. A coin found in one of the walls dated the house to 1792. "The king hadn't been guillotined yet," Rigot is quick to specify, the way the French do as though that happened only the day before yesterday. It was customary among peasants to place a coin in the wall to bring prosperity to the house.

Agnès, Elisabeth, Marie, Anne, Alice, Jérôme, Antoine, and Jean Baptiste joined their father during vacations to help fix up the house. "This is the first thing we did together," Rigot says, turning around to look up at a blue hanging cabinet through his no-nonsense granny glasses. "I constructed it out of window frames I found in an abandoned building. Then the children did paintings on each pane of glass." Patchwork art is thumbtacked to the walls, as are some of Rigot's paintings. "Frames create distance.

The point of departure in this effort to see what he could salvage and transform was Algeria, where Rigot and his famille nombreuse spent several years in the 1960s. Directing my attention to a table, which is painted green and decorated with small diamond-shaped mirrors, Rigot says "That piece comes from Mascara, where I did a stint as a schoolteacher to support us all. It's made out of soap crates. I loved the







way they would create things out of whatever they could find. It gives such freshness and spontaneity to their decoration. If you don't have any means, you have to find other ways of bringing joie de vivre into your life. Above all, it's the colors they use—the transparent colors you see on the walls of their houses, inside and out. That was my prime source of inspi-

ration because I rely on somewhat the same techniques: I don't use pure color; I use very diluted color on a white background.' Not only his furniture but all the walls in the house are painted this way.

s Hook about the room, taking in the luminosity of Rigot's Arab palette, like the perfect pastels of Easter eggs, a flaming redhead suddenly introduces herself into this quiet color scheme. I had heard there was a woman on the premises with fatal-attraction hair. Denise Dessirier, a Parisian poet who for ten years has been mistress to this manor (her handwoven tapestries adorn the walls), muse to the artist, and Jane to the animal kingdom. "Company!" she exclaims, as though I were Dr. Livingstone. "How wonderful. We never see anybody around here. I'll make tea."

Arab fabrications became Rigot's fabulations; his imagination was triggered. "To continue furnishing the house, one day I made a cat chair for my daughter Marie. Then I made a chest that looked like a sheep for my son Jean Baptiste." That was it: Rigot decided the only sheep he wanted to raise would not go to the slaughterhouse but to the museum. He brought the two original pieces to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs for a show in 1980, and before he knew it he was asked to shepherd his flock around the world. ("Americans are very hygienic: the customs people burned the straw I used for packing material!") Neiman Marcus found their berger de luxe in Gérard Rigot, and le tout Texas turned out to cart off his menagerie in hmousines. The Gallery of Applied Arts in New York heralded Rigot as the Douanier Rousseau

of French naïf furniture and gave the artist his first comprehensive show in 1986, which was a sellout—even Mick Jagger and Jerry Hall took home one of Rigot's love seats.

Gallery director Patrick Steede, who is planning another

Patrick Steede, who is planning another show for autumn, says, "Some people are nervous about choosing furniture on the forefront of

design, but in this case people make their choice as if they're choosing a pet.' Although he has termed Rigot's work naïf, Steede is quick to disassociate it from the more anonymous folk-art traditions of early American and Mexican painted furniture. "Rigot's pieces are so distinctive, clearly identified with one artisan, and

money to throw out the window!"

Rigot proposes a tour of his works in progress in the atelier across the courtyard, and Denise goes to the piano room. The Bach Fantasie she plays is illuminated by tin-owl appliqués that Rigot has set into the upright. Denise, sitting erect on her wolf bench, is not alone in her Fantasic. Two identical cats lie on the radiator. One is real. One is not. A bulldog guards the front door: it is in fact a storage chest.

"You can't do just anything with wood, it's not plastic," Rigot continues as we walk across the courtyard, where I swear a real-live rooster set his alarm clock extra early for me the following morning. "There are constraints in working with wood, which is why I like it. It is within constraints that you have to use your imagination. That's the trouble with modern furniture designers who use materials that can be shaped every which way."

Rigot's exuberant imagination and sense of whimsy are in full force in this atelier, which used to be the chicken coop.

#### Game preserve: Rigot,

preserve: Rigot, above, seated on a cheetah bench.
Right: Hand-crafted toys on a bird console.
Opposite: A chair struts on the patio while a wooden cat lounges on the table and a real dog appears from behind the door.



much more knowing than pure naiveté."

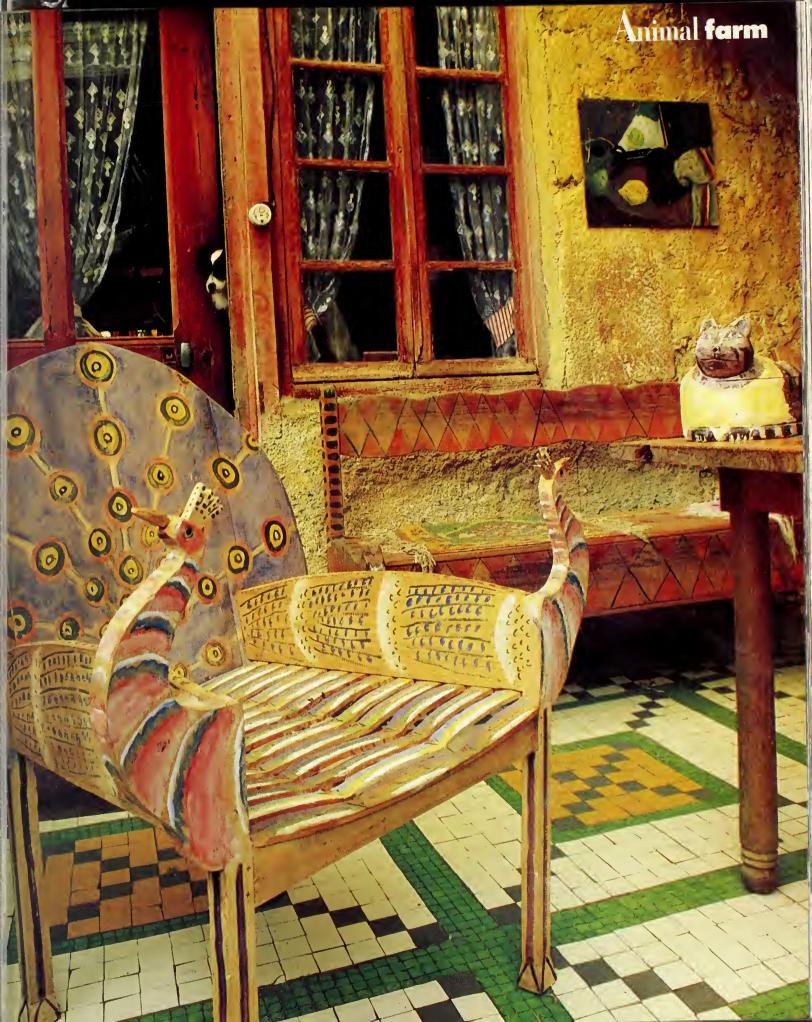
"What do the farmers around here think of your animal farm?" I query, as Denise returns with a cup of tea on a *plateau maison*: her fingers are slipped into the open mouths of two tiger heads Rigot has carved as handles on the tray. "They think I'm an oddball who tinkers about," he says.

"Remember when we showed our neighbor Madame Chauvin the toy?" Denise interjects, laughing. She turns to me: "We showed her a chicken Gérard had made out of wood—the wings flap when you roll it along its wire wheels—and Madame Chauvin asked, 'How much do you sell that for?' When we told her 400 francs, she said, 'My God, some people sure have

There is a swinging giraffe cradle, a peacock chair, an owl cabinet, a lion bench. As we pass a chair formed by two kissing giraffes. I note there seems to be a lot of smooching going on. "C'est normal—this is a Noah's ark of sorts," he says shyly, a bit like someone who's been found out.

Yes, many of his constructions are based on "two of every sort," as the Great Book says. A project to make a dragon love seat for three was put into question by Denise: "That'll never work. It's hard enough to get along as two." Heeding these wise words, Gérard Rigot shelved his plans for the *conversation à trois* and decided instead to do a double bed.

Decorating Editor: Babs Simpson



### Apprentice to Four Stars

**Jeffrey Steingarten** spends a week at work in the kitchen of Le Bernardin

have nearly learned to cook the perfect fish. My tutor was Gilbert Le Coze, the celebrated chef-owner of Le Bernardin restaurant in New York and one of the finest fish cooks of them all. For no good reason, Le Coze agreed to let me hang around his kitchen for a week and make away with his most essential secrets.

Unfortunately the first most essential secret is a visit to the Fulton Fish Market at three in the morning on the second-coldest night of the year. For two hours Le Coze and I roam about the market, a vast shed open to the icy air. The catch is late today because of storms off the Florida coast and unusual cold in the northern fishing grounds. Everybody complains that there are no fish to be had, but all I see are several city blocks covered with boxes, sacks, crates, pallets, racks, handcarts, forklifts, and vans crammed with fish.

In one hand Le Coze holds an elaborate shopping list on a metal clipboard, in the other an iron hook with a wooden handle. We pass the crates of salmon—Le Coze can tell from twenty feet away that they are inferior. He takes a live green sea urchin from a box lined with seaweed and snips it in half, and we share the yellow roe inside. In front of one stall tuna are butchered by two Japanese fishmen, who will array the 25-pound fillets on a rack and pin a customer's number on each one. Le Coze keeps circling back to the tuna men, watching for his number.

Le Coze uses his hook to open a box of perfect Dover sole flown in from Portugal and smiles approvingly. Their stiff bodies, protruding eyes, and the slime that covers them are signs of freshness. He explains the problem of buying fish: some of the boats have been out for ten or fifteen days. While a fish may reach the market only a few hours after the boat docks, it can still have been dead for two weeks. His favorite supplier seems to be the Blue Ribbon Fish Company, whose young president, David Samuels, takes me aside to extol Le Coze's talent, his willingness to try underused species, his passion for fish.

Born in Brittany 41 years ago to a family of fishermen, Le Coze worked on his father's boat and in the family's restau-

rant from age thirteen. When he and his sister, Maguy, opened their first tiny restaurant in Paris, Le Coze was at the fish market at two every morning. Before deciding to open his restaurant in New York, Le Coze made several trips here to check the quality of the fish and learn about North American species. He uses only sea creatures, ignoring freshwater varieties because, he says, he is a man of the sea. Le Coze has never worked in anyone's kitchen except his father's. "I went

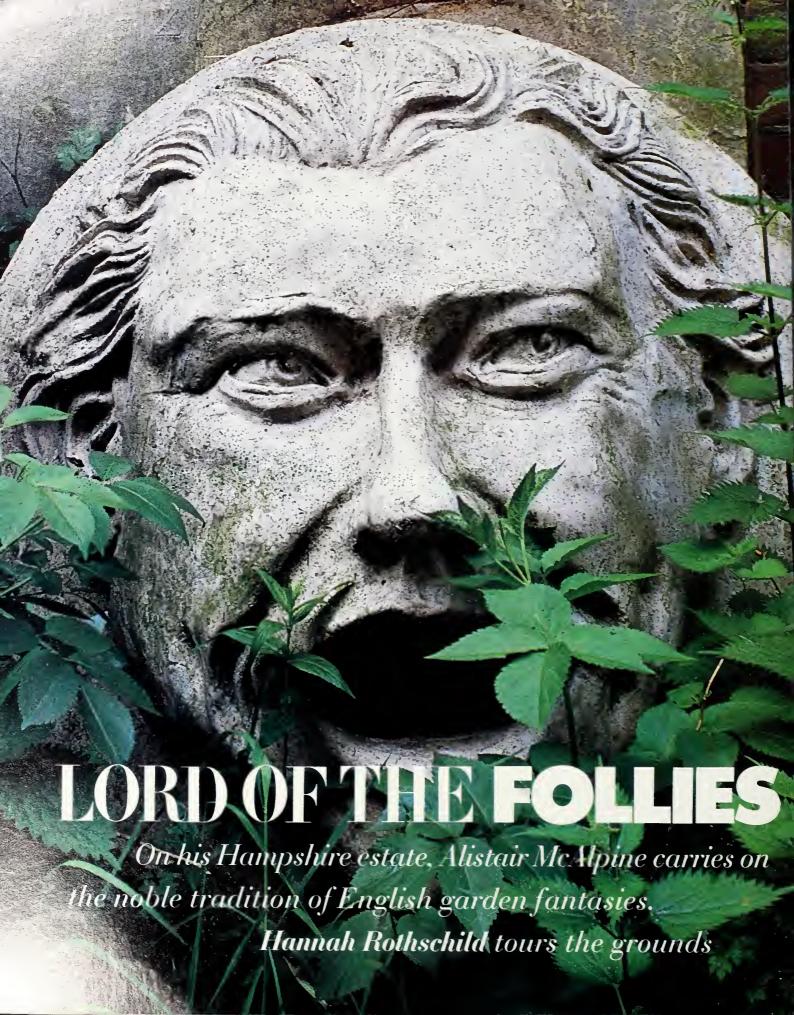
I discover dessert cooks are the most generous souls in the kitchen. I munch on warm millefeuilles as Diane forms oeufs à la neige by rolling a handful of meringue against the rim of a bowl. She encourages me to try, resulting in a puffy white smear on my hand

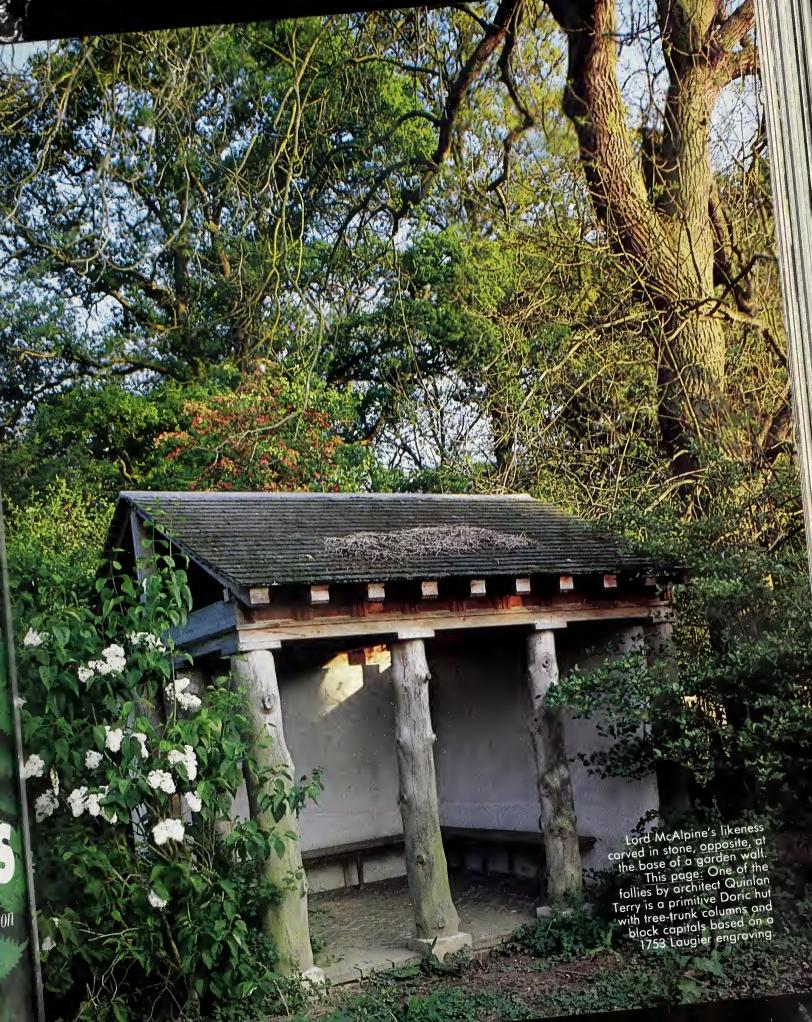
to school with the mussels," he says. He loves the market and the men who work here.

As we move among the stalls, Le Coze buys a hundred pounds each of black sea bass, grouper, monkfish, red snapper, mahi, and skate; fifty pounds each of pompano, codfish, halibut, squid, fresh shrimp, and tuna; four cartons of salmon flown in from Norway; one bushel bag each of mussels, periwinkles, and bluepoint and chowder oysters; four boxes of live sea urchins and one of Belon ovsters. There is no crab today, no tilefish or rouget, no sea trout or blowfish. Finally, at five thirty in the morning, Le Coze's number appears on two fine tuna fillets. He grunts with satisfaction. Now we can leave.

Two hours later twelve (Continued on page 250)









I'm a congenital builder.

I can't resist building things.

It's just as well, as that's

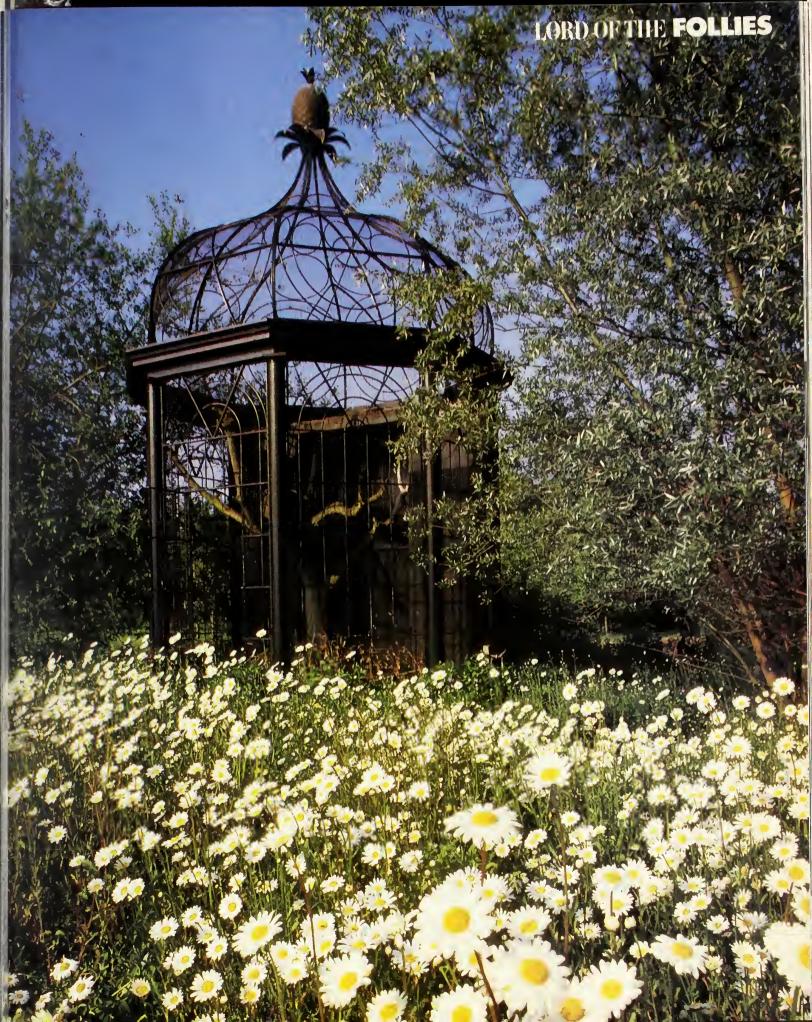
my family's trade'

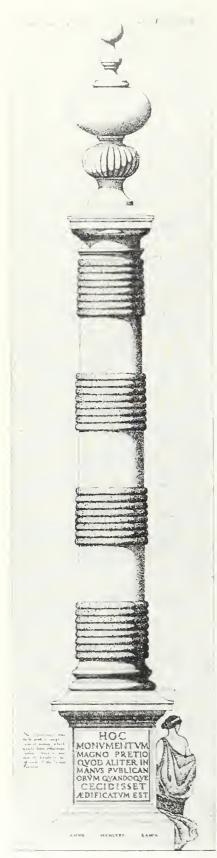
listair McAlpine's curriculum vitae makes very confusing reading. How can one man be involved in so many and such diverse activities? He is treasurer of the Conservative party and owns a herd of camels; he has a seat in the House of Lords but spends as much time championing the causes of aborigines in a remote part of Australia; he donated his remarkable collection of modern sculpture to the Tate Gallery yet really enjoys wheeling and dealing with customers at his London antiques shop; he has been involved with theater, opera, museums and is a committed partner in his family's construction company; he has a list of directorships that would make most businessmen weep with envy; and he still finds time to help his wife, Romilly, devise recipes. If visions of his daily schedule are making you feel rather tired, there is more to come—Alistair McAlpine also manages to travel extensively and maintain several homes in different corners of the world.

One of these is West Green, the Hampshire estate where Lord McAlpine has let his imagination run riot in a garden that is a startling combination of the natural and the artificial. If your idea of a beautiful garden is the well-ordered manicured model, then you should not attempt a visit to West Green. It has as much in common with Sissinghurst as a little black Azzedine Alaïa dress has with a Scaasi ball gown. The general effect of West Green is overblown and rundown—in short, carefully cultivated dilapidation. Weeds creep up through loosely graveled paths, borders explode with a profusion of flowers, bushes and trees fight for space, roses wrap themselves around hedgerows, and great areas have been taken over by single species. This wild unkempt appearance is cleverly contrasted with sharp contours; clumps of flowers are kept at bay in a bed by smartly clipped box hedges, or an elegant piece of topiary stands at attention at the end of a long line of cabbages. Avenues of clipped hornbeams and hollies frame sweeping vistas and provide contrast with a runaway spring garden.

What really distinguishes this garden, however, is the mixture of animate with inanimate: at the edge of a great clump of

Alistair McAlpine, <u>left.</u> A wrought-iron aviary, <u>opposite</u>, stands on an island in the garden lake.





winlan Terry's drawing for 1976 memorial column: Latin inscription mays money used to build it would make the same gone for taxes.

## There is an exquisite Classical folly which turns out to be a trompe l'oeil façade hiding a cow shed

giant daisies there is a beautiful wrought-iron folly crowned with a pineapple. Or wander through the kitchen garden, for example, and you will suddenly come across a mass of terracotta urns or some of Oliver Ford's circular fruit cages. Around the swimming pool you will find a strange collection of *objets trouvés*, and do not be surprised by the odd gargoyle propped against a redbrick wall. "It is a fanciful garden." McAlpine admits. "It doesn't stick to any rules, probably because I didn't know any. When I started it, I wasn't remotely interested in gardens, but I became absolutely passionate."

West Green House, originally a farmhouse, was remodeled in the mid eighteenth century by the infamous General Henry Hawley and today is owned by the National Trust. There was no garden to speak of when McAlpine leased the house in the mid 1970s. "The whole thing is rather whimsical and a bit confused, but I always knew it would sort itself out. I suppose I have tried to maintain it in the eighteenth-century mold, in keeping with the period of the house."

This vision was greatly enhanced by the involvement of the architect Quinlan Terry, who has designed most of the garden's hardware—the columns, gateposts, palisades, huts. seats, and grottoes. Says Terry: "The exciting thing about garden buildings is that they are one of the purest forms of architecture. They are judged on their design and not on their practical considerations." It is certainly rare for one architect to be so closely involved in the evolution of one garden. The obvious parallel is William Kent and Rousham. West Green, however, has more jokes: there is a large stone column with a Latin inscription dated 1976. One would expect this to contain some earnest Capability Brown quotation, but a translation reveals that the column cost a lot of money, which would have fallen sooner or later into the hands of the Inland Revenue. (And this coming from the treasurer of England's ruling party!) In another part of the garden there is an exquisite Classical folly, which turns out to be a trompe l'oeil façade hiding an ordinary cow shed.

By his own admission, McAlpine is not too interested in the details of gardening but has broad ideas about what he wants and leaves their execution to his gardener. "I tend to garden by extraction," he says. "If I don't like something, it is exterminated. But on the *(Text continued on page 248)* 



Astrolabe on a pedestal



Miniature glass hothouses

#### LORD OF THE FOLLIES



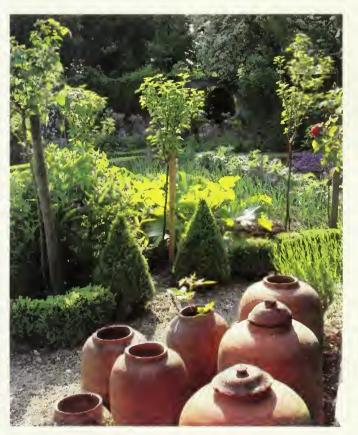
Cow trough with trompe l'oeil nymphaeum



Bolted timber bridge leading to the island aviary



West Green House rebuilt by McAlpine after a 1982 fire



An assortment of terra-cotta urns in the mixed-bed garden







# BEYOND THE TOUGH

James Truman talks with
Brian Murphy about
the limitless options of
"found architecture"





Designer of the moment: Brian Murphy, above, in his newly remodeled Santa Monica bungalow.

Left: Found objects and materials serve other uses: hula skirts become a room divider, fencing a table, Astroturf a rug, terra-cotta flowerpot a side table.

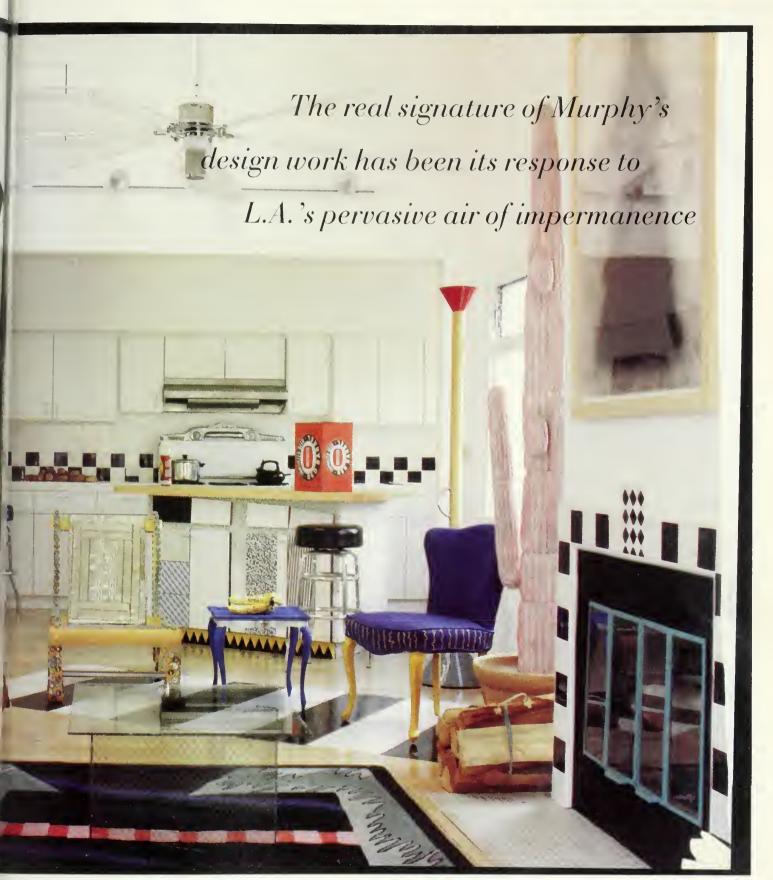
The Pringe

he architectural jumble stacked up behind the Venice and Santa Monica oceanfront is a significant achievement—even by the advanced standards of Los Angeles. "Everything is possible," says Brian A. Murphy, of BAM Construction/Design, as he drives past a particularly notable hillside cluster. "You want Tahitian Fiesta, you can have Tahitian Fiesta. Or Fascisti Moderne. Or Santa Fe Baroque. The options are limitless." At the top of the hill, overlooking the ocean, sits a timber cottage with a white stucco wall in front. Except for the garage doors, which have been upholstered with palm fronds, the exterior is bland Seaside Generic. The interior, which Murphy recently remodeled and furnished with Kaye Secomb of BAM as major contributing designer. could be described as Beachcomber Contemporary. Awash with light and planned around a tropical atrium, it is filled with found objects pulled out of context and given new functions: the slate top from an old pool table has been mounted on four automobile jacks to form a dining table; a chair is fashioned from a cut-up surfboard and skateboard wheels; a ceiling fan is made from bicycle gears, fishing rods, and silk; on the deck one bale of straw serves as a table, and a second, topped with a surfboard tail, functions as a bar.

Brian Murphy's work has often incorporated visual puns and pop references—he once decorated a bodybuilder's studio with barbed wire and finished another studio, for himself, with Astroturf and sandbags. If in this new house he occasionally lapses into self-conscious cleverness, he has also proven his belief that original design can be cheap, fast, and, in the literal sense, organic. "Cohesiveness and continuity come from grabbing whatever's around you, putting it together, and making it work," he says. "In third-world countries people use the trash. As Bucky Fuller said, pollution is just an untapped resource."

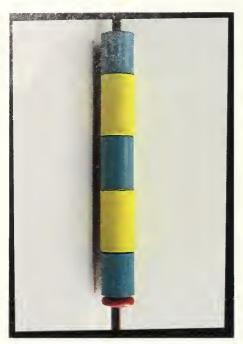
With more pollution and a better class of trash than most other cities, Los Angeles is Murphy's natural environment. He grew up around the beaches, studied fine art at UCLA, and, after dropping out of architecture school, worked construction locally for ten years. It was here that he learned the commic advantages of using discarded and unconventional merials. But the real signature of his design work has been many papers to the city—to L.A.'s unique polyglot architec-





**Playful inventions:** Painted yucca rises at left af family roam taward ceiling fan, made af bicycle gears, fishing rads, and silk, from Casablanca Fan Company. Mavable counter in kitchen has swatches af patterned laminate. Seen behind sofa is a display case for old-fashioned men's callars. Rug was designed by Billy Al Bengstan.

### THE Pringe



Imaginative details: Every carner of Murphy's hause shaws his idiasyncratic use of the ardinary: here, a hinge is painted in bright calars.



**Sports enthusiast:** Murphy keeps his bicycle beneath his painting of palm trees, beach, and acean—a "windaw" anta the Pacific scenery.



Something old, something new: Murphy left the ariginal window frame of the kitchen as is; black and white tiles are used as accents along floar and elsewhere in the bungalow.



**Temporary solutions:** Side table in family raam was made by Murphy fram twa beer cartans, cavered with Guatemalan fabric and glass tap.



**Edged for effect:** Kitchen drawers and cabinet daars are decarated with strips of calared, striped, checked, and patterned laminate.



**Fringe benefits:** Near the hula-skirt raam divider hangs a pair of palm frands. Cardbaard table with glass tap was designed by Frank Gehry.



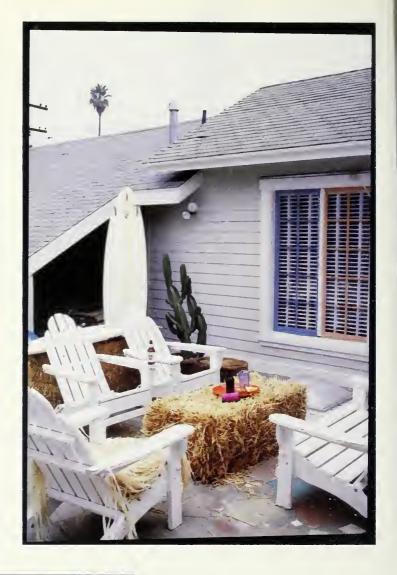
#### THE FINGE

ture and pervasive air of impermanence. Rather than address these as aesthetic or philosophical conundrums, Murphy takes them as an invitation to indulge in playful invention. For Dennis Hopper's Venice studio this took the form of a giant rolling-wave roof planted on a steel-wrapped Minimalist box. In the house he built for himself in Santa Monica Canyon three bridges connect the building and its entrance across a narrow gulch. The bridge house also reveals a softer side to Murphy's work; it is unabashedly romantic, restoring freshness and vigor to California's self-image as a Pacific Mediterranean. Nine months after completing it, Murphy sold the house.

"Right now I have this client who wants to remodel a house, live in it for eighteen months, and then tear it down. To me that's so stimulating I can't believe it. That's pure Hollywood, it's temporal, it's almost façade-itecture. It's what L.A. is best at, yet we can't acknowledge it as high art. High art is still something that arrives on the boat from Italy."

As an architect who also operates as contractor on his projects, Murphy has made each building his own. Though he insists that the impetus begins with the client, it is also true that he is his own best client. Currently installed with a mattress and a skeleton staff in a large 1960s shed that he plans to renovate and remodel, he lives a renegade and financially risky life—dependent on a small but rapidly growing coterie of admirers. "I've come to realize that my work alienates a lot of the potential market out there," he says. "But if you alienate 95 percent, then I figure that the 5 percent—once they see it—can't live without it. And the 95 percent, even if they hate it, come back with their families and children to show them that these possibilities exist. Either it's that or they figure it's cheaper than going to Disneyland."

Architecture Editor: Elizabeth Sverbeyeff Byron



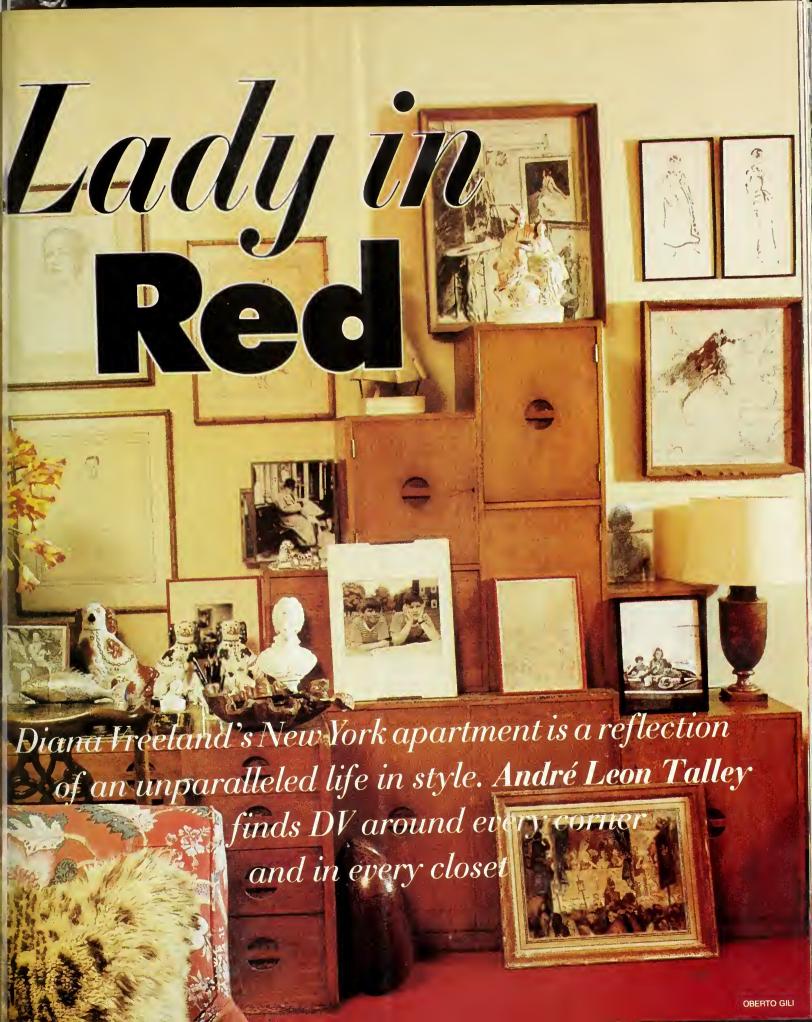


Seachcomber Contemporary: Murphy's materials amphasize the mament. Palm fronds line the garage daor, abave, and on the deck, top, bales af straw serve as a table and bar.

"Continuity comes
from grabbing
whatever's around,
putting it
together, and
making it work"







ow you must not forget that I was not a society woman, 's says Diana Vreeland in her legendary voice. "I had no time to sit around posing. I was always working, not hunting valued antiques. Couldn't afford them any-

way. Frankly antiques bore me to death.' The Park Avenue seraglio of the woman who was *Vogue*'s editor in chief from 1962 to 1971, and an editor at *Harper's Bazaar* for 25 years before that, was created over three decades ago with the assistance of the late Billy Baldwin. Nothing has been changed since then, only replaced, except that her Jansen slipper chairs, which had been spotted in leopard, are now done in scarlet Persian flowers.

She wanted a "garden in hell," which Baldwin translated into the Persian chintz from John Fowler's shop in London covering everything in the living room: chairs, bulletin boards, curtains, and the massive sofa with banks of needlepoint pillows made by Vreeland. Set on the scarlet wallto-wall carpeting are the Tinkertoy stackable varnished wood cases that Baldwin called Vreeland's shoeboxes. These units, flanking a writing desk, create a proscenium for her valued treasures: pictures of friends such as Marella Agnelli, two Christian Bérard portraits of Vreeland as a working editor, a Dufy watercolor of a Venetian canal, a plaster cast of her mother by Jo Davidson, porcelain leopards given to her by the late jeweler Jean Schlumberger, a school of brass fish, a small kennel of Staffordshire dogs, and a favorite gift her husband, Reed, gave her one Easter Sunday in Biarritz, a Zuloaga scene of Easter Sunday in Seville.

"The desk," says Vreeland, "was entirely me! I drew my living-room arrangement on a piece of brown wrapping paper. Reed and I found this great carpenter on Lexington Avenue who thought he was designing the most incredible kitchen. Had his heart set on it. I just let him think he was installing a kitchen in the living room."

Vreeland recalls time spent with their sons, Frederick and Thomas, in a converted carriage house in Brewster, New York. oved that house, It had one pink door,



one blue, one yellow. And I had a ball getting each color just right. The painter did samples fourteen times. When he finished, it was perfect. I said to this local painter, 'No one but Picasso could have done this.' He said. 'Mrs. Vreeland, who is Picasso? May I have the spelling of his name? I would like to look him up. Does he work out of Danbury?' ''

Eventually the Vreelands sold the house and its contents, including some 7,000 books. The treasures in the New York apartment remain intact—the giant seashells, the chorus line of Venetian blackamoors, the Scottish snuff horns with the silver tops and cabochons. Most are presents Vreeland collected "one by one" from people who knew what she liked.

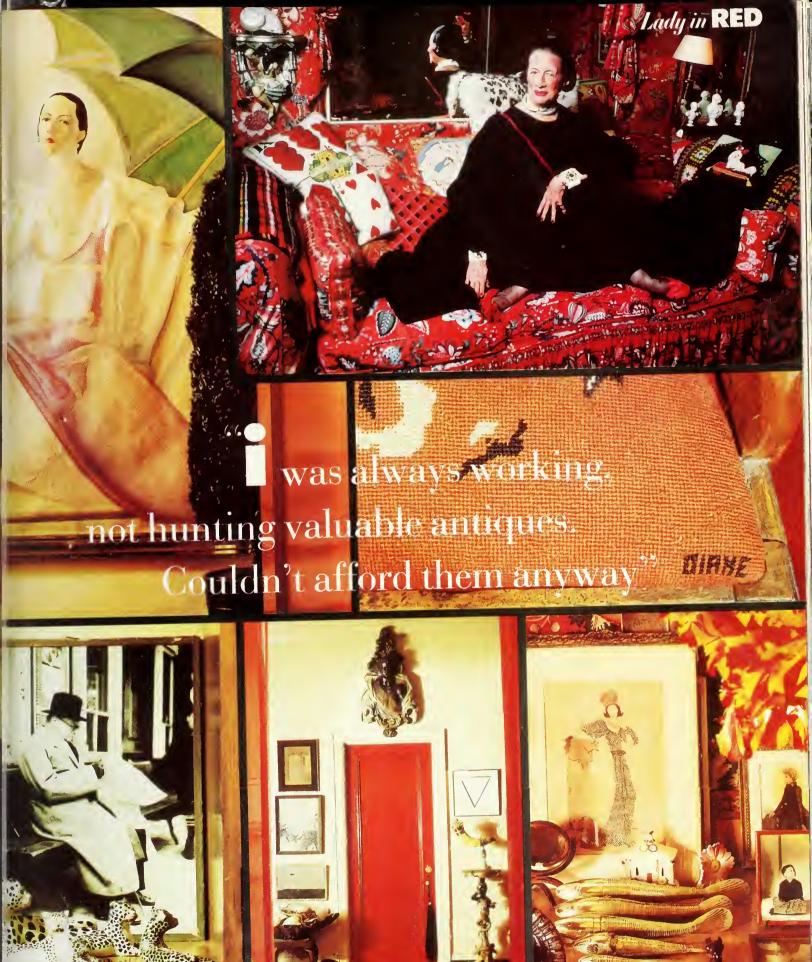
As special consultant to the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Mrs. Vreeland invented a new theatrical way of presenting fashion exhibitions. The inspiration came from her own approach to fashion and life. At home her closets are repositories of essential DV style: her 29 pairs of T-strap shoes, originally designed by the husband of the late Madame Vionnet, and her 11 pairs of rockstar boots from Roger Vivier and Dal Co of Rome. Yvonne, her maid for 38 years, would polish the shoes with rhinoceros horn and lacquer the soles with bootblack after each wearing.

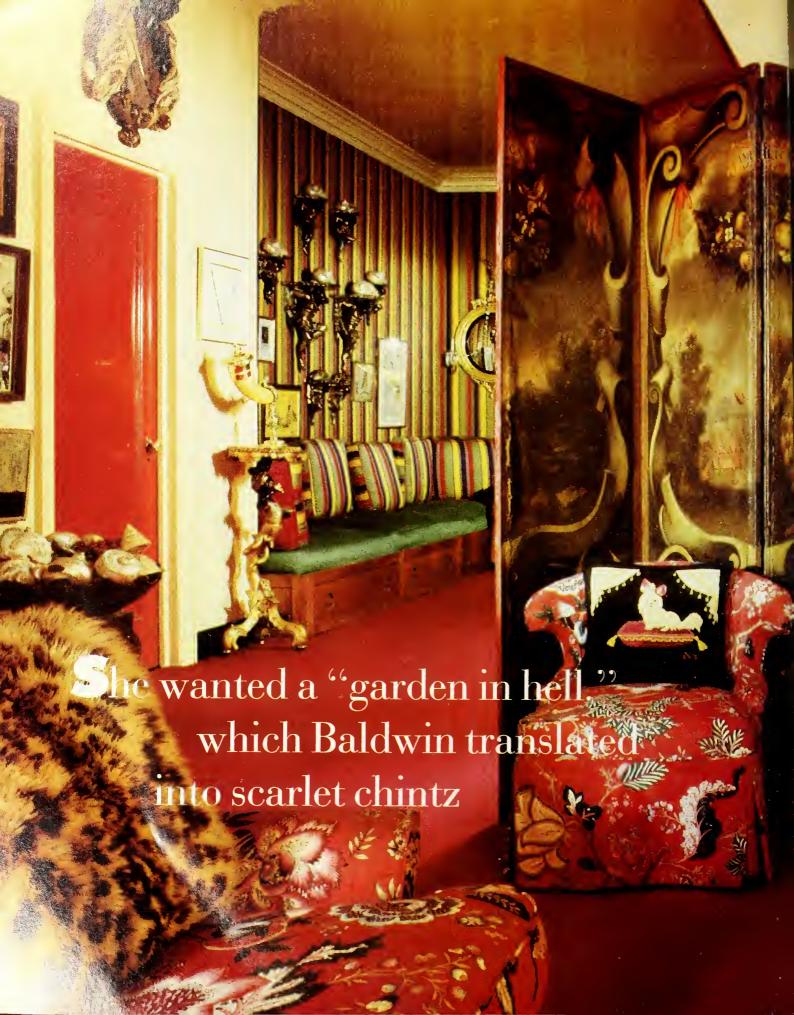
She also polished the Vuitton cases. "The cases would go back after each trip to be restored no matter if I had been to the Argentine or Russia. It pains me today when I hear what things cost. When I think of the luxury so available to a poor young bride like me in those days. Everything was so easily accessible. I mean you could stop in and have Augustus John do your portrait, then sweep off to lunch!"



captured in 1942 by Louise Dahl-Wolfe; 1930s portrait by Ned Murray; her favorite portrait, by William Acton at Villa La Pietra; Jonathan Becker's grand Vreeland in red pumps and Madame Grès.

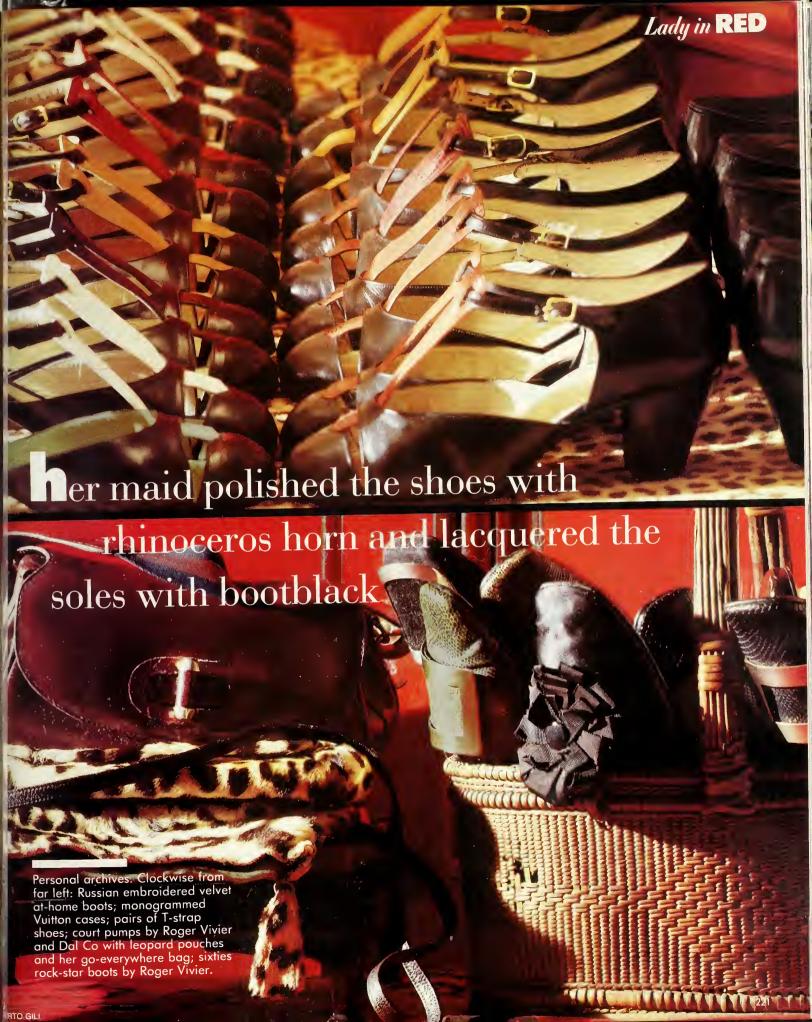
Middle row: Seascape of shells and coral necklace with jade clasp; detail of Mrs. Vreeland's needlepoint. Bottom row: China leopards guard photograph of Churchill; signature red lacquer door; fish in a row.















Painted furniture, whirligig, boxes, above, from E. G. H. Peter. Left: 1910 GOP sign, 19th-century coverlet from Three Ravens.

# Simply New England

From early American furniture to twentieth-century folk art. antiques abound in the region's country shops

he letter A was almost as much a curse for my mother as it was for Hester Prynne, the heroine of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. Luckily my mother's compulsion was not for adultery but for old furniture, a passion that led her to on at every road sign that started with an A and stiques. And by the quirk of inheritance

this penchant for wobbly old four-poster beds and blue-and-white spongeware has passed from mother to daughter, leading me, too, down many unmapped country roads and into the homes of strangers.

In my experience there is no place more pleasurable in which to roam than the hills of New England. On a recent trip to southern Vermont, the Berkshires in western Massachusetts, and Litchfield County, Connecticut, I sampled a wide variety of some of the best antiques shops in these areas. My selection, by no means comprehensive, can give you a place to start, but don't take your eyes off the road: if you do, you'll miss many other shops along the way. Another tip; if you

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are driving a long distance, it pays to call ahead. Antiques dealers are independent folk, and as Robert Jones of Mullin-Jones Antiquities in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, says, "It's an unwritten code that you can put up a CLOSED sign on an antiques store at any time."

### **SOUTHERN VERMONT**

Schommer Antiques, William and Shirley Schommer, Rte. 30, Newfane; (802) 365-7777. Hours: 9:30 A.M.-5:30 P.M. daily; late winter-early spring by chance or appointment. Newfane is the type of town where they play Bingo in the firehouse every Saturday night at seven thirty. It is also

home to some of the handsomest whitecolumned Federal buildings in New England. Just north of the village green is Schommer Antiques, in a white Victorian house, which, like the rest of the village, is a national historic landmark. In the main part of her house and in the woodshed and barn attached she also sells dolls and doll clothes, linens, paintings, china, and furniture from the nineteenth century. "Everything in our shop has come out of a local house," says Shirley Schommer.

Colt Barn Antiques, Howard Graff, Peaked Mountain Rd., Townshend (off Rte. 35, 2 mi. north of Townshend toward Grafton); (802) 365-7574. Hours: 8-5 daily. When Howard Graff, a New York photographer, decided to flee city life, he headed to southern Vermont to breed Morgan horses. Somehow an antiques store "just happened." In an old red colt barn he has primitive furniture—including cupboards, tables, and chests-old washboards, spongeware, farm equipment, and a vast, unusual collection of windmill weights. He also specializes in iron tools. Graff, who calls himself a frustrated designer, particularly enjoys finding small pieces of furniture to fit cramped city spaces. "I did so much photography in New York and know the limitations of small spaces that I'm constantly on the lookout for narrow pieces," he says. Last year over nine hundred people found their way off the beaten track to the Colt Barn. It's worth the trip. Unique Antique, Jonathan Flaccus, Main St. (Rte. 5), Putney (exit 4 off I-91); (802) 587-4488. Hours: 9-6 daily by chance or apoutment. What, you might ask, is ephem-



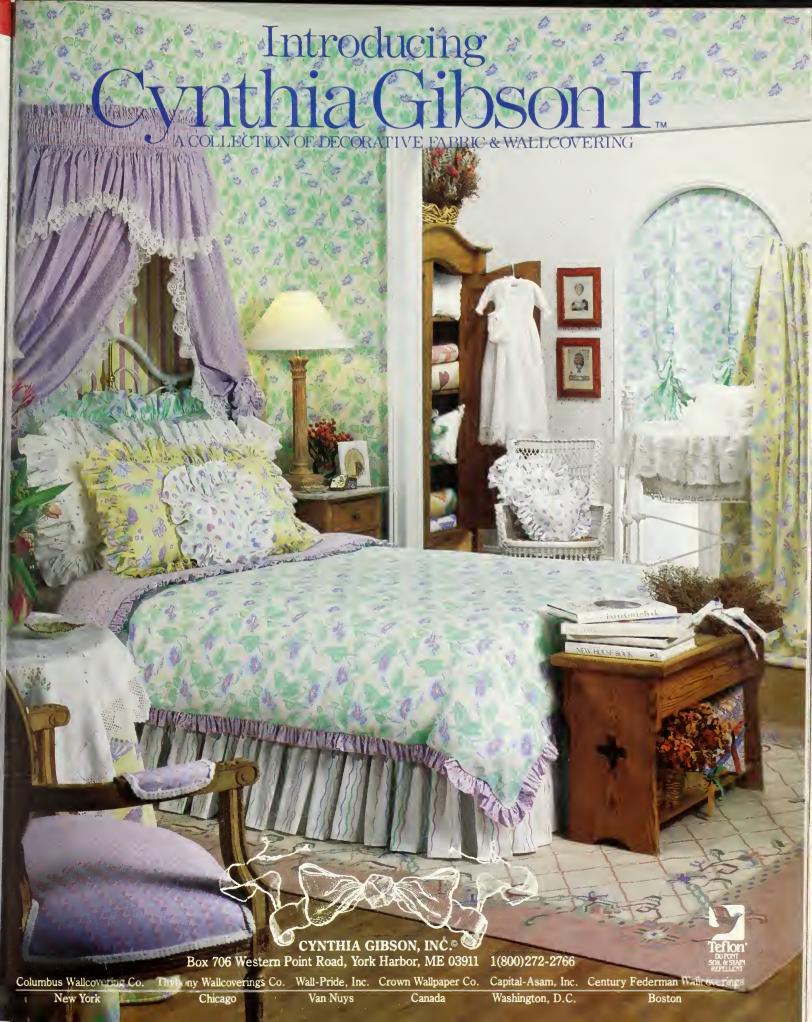
From tap: At Elizabeth S. Mankin: 18th- and early-19th-century English pieces. At E. G. H. Peter: Windsor chair, geese decays, pewter. At Three Ravens: Lester Gaba painting, 1940s, French Jaspé pattery, English delft tile, tapered-leg stand, Federal safa.

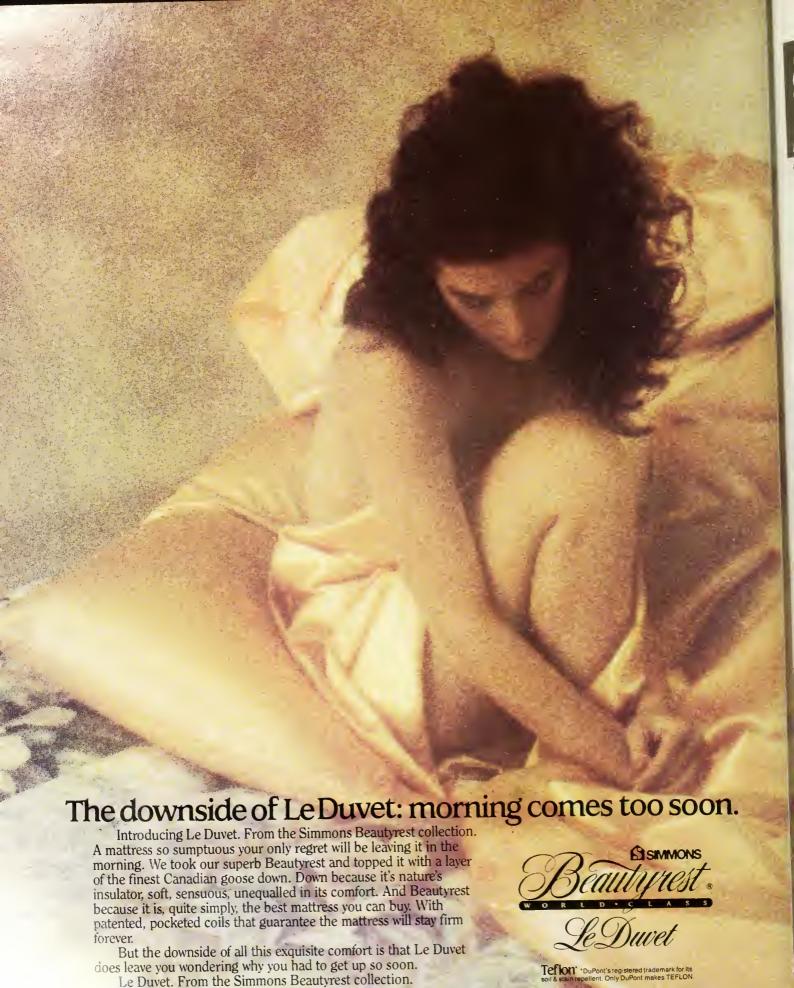
era? Jonathan Flaccus, who has been dealing in ephemera for eleven years, can explain. It is a variety of paper things, such as old bookplates, autographs, catalogues, letters, postcards, dance programs, political advertising, and broadsides. This shop, in a vellow Victorian house with light blue trim and a black cast-iron fence out front, also carries old and rare books, maps, drawings, prints, and nineteenth-century paintings. Books are arranged by subject, such as cookbooks and children's books, and by state, including an entire room on Vermont. "I wear many hats," says Flaccus, "and I buy basically what interests me and what's unusual.

Schoolhouse Antiques, Faith Boone and Sandy Saunders, Rte. 121, Saxtons River (2.2 mi. west of town); (802) 869-2332. Hours: 9-5 daily by chance. When else, except while antiquing, are you invited into strangers' homes, allowed to see how they live and what they wear on a normal day, and sometimes even offered a cup of coffee? A nicer experience cannot be had than in the house of Sandy Saunders, a school principal, and Faith Boone, a music teacher, both of whom retired from the Huntington, Long Island.

school system in 1972 (hence the name of their shop). Their stock, displayed in two rooms attached to the house, includes tavern tables, blanket chests. Nantucket baskets, hutches, and Shaker buckets. In a workroom behind the shop, Boone refinishes many of the antiques herself.

Equinox Antiques, Mark Reinfurt and Charles Dewey, Historic Rte. 7A, Manchester (opposite Equinox Hotel); (802) 362-3540. Hours: 10-5 daily except Mon. This shop carries museum-quality American furniture and accessories from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century. "We're dedicated to quality and to building private collections of merit," says Mark Reinfurt, who often entertains his clients by practicing the harpsichord in his shop. Here you will find highboys, banquette tables, Hepplewhite chairs, a tiger-maple drop-leaf table, a black walnut Chippendale table, brass candlesticks, china service plates, Oriental rugs, portraits, and sterling silver. He offers a written guarantee of authenticity on what he sells and a trade-up policy so \(\frac{1}{2}\)





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## homefront s H O P P I N G

that customers may exchange at full price anything purchased in the shop. He also keeps a file of items his clients are looking for and calls when such pieces have been located.

Four Corners East, Douglas Millay, 307 North St. (Rte. 7), Bennington; (802) 442-2612. Hours: 10–5 daily. In a yellow house with white trim, this small L-shaped shop has large glass windows with green awnings. The opinion of Doug Millay, one of the four owners, on how antiquing has changed in the past few years echoes that of many dealers: "I think people look for better quality than they used to. They buy more for investment now." And he carries many fine pieces to satisfy their rising expectations: a maple drop-leaf table, a cloisonné tureen, china and pewter pieces, prints, brass fireplace accessories, and cut glass.

## **WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

Hamlet Antiques, Brooks Butler, 116 East St., Lenox; (413) 637-2309. Hours: by appointment. Brooks Butler, an inveterate collector of English Staffordshire, deals in three types of the china: figures, often historical, such as the Duke of Wellington; cottages and castles, like Shakespeare's house; and a combination of figures and greenery, commonly called bocages. While these delicate porcelain figures may seem obsolete now, Butler reminds us, "You have to remember that back in the Victorian age these things sold like Scotch tape." The reason for their popularity, he explains, is that people either couldn't afford or didn't pay attention to newspapers, "so when something dramatic happened, they created a figure to commemorate it." They cast sports figures, political figures, criminals, nursery-rhyme characters, and theater people, all of which Butler sells from his house in Lenox. The average price is \$300-\$800.

Henry B. Holt, Inc., Henry Holt, Golden Hill, Lee; (413) 243-3184, (201) 316-8883. Hours: by appointment. Henry Holt's ancestors were among the original settlers of Lee, Massachusetts, in 1777, and his love for paintings began when he inherited twelve family portraits dating as far back as 1824. From his country home with a view of the Berkshires, Holt now sells nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American paintings, including the works of James E. Buttersworth, Daniel Garber, William Harnett, and W. L. Metcalf. Some of the paintings are on the premises, others in his home in New Jersey, but he always has a complete portfolio to show his customers.

Mullin-Jones Antiquities, Patrice Mullin and Robert Jones Jr., 525 South Main St. (Rte. 7), Great Barrington; (413) 528-4871. Hours: 10–5 daily except Tues. The French flag at the tip of the driveway gives away this shop's specialty: French antiques, including country furniture, fabric and lace. This husband and wife team go on buying trips to France two or three times a year where they buy armoires, buffets, settees, rush-seated chairs, tiles, marble mantelpieces, clocks, and terra-cotta pottery.

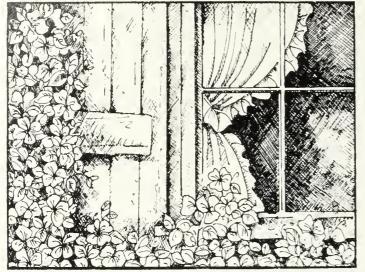
Kahn's Antique and Estate Jewelers, Steven and Nancy Kahn, 38 Railroad St., Great Barrington; (413) 528-9550. Hours: 10-5 daily, closed Sun. except in summer. A country shop this is not: it has gray carpeting and Art Deco glass cabinets and is located on one of Great Barrington's crowded side streets. But if you're looking for antique jewelry, this is the place to come in the Berkshires. Steven Kahn has been in the jewelry business for fourteen years selling earrings, stickpins, watches, and rings as well as picture frames, silver, and glassware.

Compass Antiques, Edward P. Lotz Jr., 224 State Rd. (Rte. 23), Great Barrington (at Belcher Sq.); (413) 528-1353. Hours: 11-6 daily. This shop sells antique scientific instruments, including scales, a specialty, and weights—made of brass. Lotz, who with his gray hair and mustache looks as if he too is right out of the nineteenth century, has been collecting these unique objects for 22 years, mostly because he likes brass: "The subject has been neglected, like all metalware. It has always been painting, porcelain, or glass." The heavy mahogany display cases are also filled with other brass and copper items, such as kitchen cranes, candlesticks, hooks, bowls, and fire screens.

Dovetail Antiques, Judith and David Steindler, North Main St. (Rte. 7), Sheffield; (413) 229-2628. Hours: 11-5 daily, except Tues., by chance or appointment. No need to wear a watch here. Walk in and you hear the ticktock of about forty clocks—wall clocks, grandfather clocks, and shelf clocks, most of which were made in nineteenth-century America. "We were collectors first like everyone else," says David Steindler. "You become a pusher to support your habit." He also repairs and restores clocks, and the ones he sells are guaranteed for a year. Blue-andwhite spongeware is a subspecialty, and the shop also features tables, blanket boxes, chests, and other furniture.

Lewis & Wilson, Don Lewis and Tom Wilson, East Main St., Ashley Falls; (413) 229-3330. Hours: 10-5 most days. You can't

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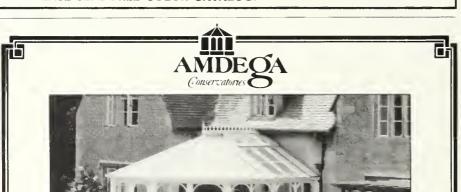
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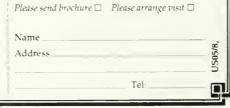
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## homefront

miss any of the antiques stores in the quaint village of Ashley Falls because of the prominent sign at the only crossroad in town. It reads ANTIQUES IN ASHLEY FALLS with arrows pointing to each of the town's five shops. Housed in the renovated train station, Lewis & Wilson carries a mélange of English, American. French, and Oriental furniture, paintings, china, ginger jars, and lighting fixtures. Before the building was a train station, it was a general store; look for the old green kerosene pump in front of the green building with yellow trim.

Elliott and Grace Snyder Antiques, Undermountain Rd. (Rte. 41), South Egremont (1/2 mi. south of Rte. 23); (413) 528-3581. Hours: by appointment. The Snyders became "increasingly obsessed with antiques" while they were in graduate school and have been full-time dealers since 1974. The shop consists of two rooms in their meticulously restored 1753 house; other pieces for sale are scattered among the family's living area. They specialize in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American furniture, textiles, and folk art, but Grace Snyder admits their inventory is "quite eclectic." This mixture currently includes some seventeenth-century European pottery, a large hooked rug, a cow weather vane, fireplace tools, assorted chairs, chests and beds, and a recently acquired carved and painted bureau made in Ohio. Ask Mrs. Snyder the story of how she came to live in this historic house; it'll make you believe in predestination.

## LITCHFIELD COUNTY, CONNECTICUT

Kenneth Hammitt Antiques, Main St. South, Woodbury; (203) 263-5676. Hours: 10-5:30 Mon.-Sat. From all accounts, the elegant Kenneth Hammitt is the granddaddy of antiques in Woodbury, a town famous for its antiques. In the business since 1954, he has stocked an entire house, built in 1753, with American antiques from the Colonial and Federal periods. Most of the furniture is formal: highboys, lowboys, chests on chests, dining-room tables and chairs. candlestands, tea tables, and a 1758 pencil-post bed. The accessories, many of which are English, include mirrors, sterling silver, paintings, Persian rugs, samplers, and a vast array of fireplace tools, lined up in front of a wide, open hearth. Hammitt gives a guarantee on everything he sells, including when and where it was made and a description of what alterations have been made on it.

Steven Calcagni Fine Art and Antiques, Rte. 47, Washington Depot; (203) 868-7667. Hours: 12–5 Mon.–Sat. "I sell a lot of

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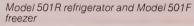
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## homefront s h o p p i N G

dining tables. It's my specialty," says Stephen Calcagni, who has been in the antiques business for ten years. He also sells the accessories that go with dining-room tables—chairs, sideboards, mirrors, china services—and, if you fancy, he currently has on hand a green birdcage, which might be just the thing for that empty corner. Chinese export porcelain is a subspecialty.

Black Swan Antiques, Hubert and Susan van Asch van Wyck, Main St., New Preston; (203) 868-2788. Hours: 10–5 Wed.—Mon. An unusual pair of four-foot wrought-iron candlesticks (\$700 the pair) can be found at this three-year-old shop. Hubert van Asch van Wyck's passion is early English furniture, what he says the British refer to as English country. He carries a wide array of tables, hutches, and chairs. This old river town also boasts three rare-book dealers and another antiques dealer.

Elizabeth S. Mankin Antiques, Main St., Kent; (203) 927-3288. Hours: 11-5 Mon.-Sat. Follow the red sign on Main Street to the mustard-colored house, circa 1840, and here you'll find paintings, English pottery, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century formal and country American furniture, and folk art. Of particular interest is the rare Queen Anne maple slant-front desk with nineteen interior drawers and a pair of late-eighteenth-century fiddleback andirons with penny feet. Look as well for the 1797 wedding chest on which the bride's and groom's names are inscribed. Buckley & Buckley, Don and Gloria Buckley, Main St. (Rte. 44), Salisbury (1/2 mi. west of Town Hall); (203) 435-9919. Hours: 11-12, 1:30-5 daily except Tues., 1-5 Sun. Housed in an exquisite white Colonial house behind a long picket fence, this shop carries William and Mary and country Queen Anne furniture and accessories. Three rooms of the house—one with an imposing black and white-checkerboard floor-are devoted to the antiques, which include drop-leaf tables, cupboards, chests, pewter, and a four-poster bed, all surrounded by personal touches. Ask if you can take a look at their kitchen mantelpiece (not for sale) with its inscription, "Old Wood to Burn, Old Wine to Drink, Old Books to Read, Old Friends to Trust.'

Three Ravens Antiques, Harold and Florie Corbin, Main St. (Rte. 44), Salisbury: (203) 435-9602. Hours: 10-5 daily by chance or appointment. If you happen to notice here a small, elegantly produced book of poetry thrown on an antique chair, chances are it was written by Harold Corbin, owner with his wife, Florie, of this shop. A gracious man, Corbin used to teach at the nearby

Salisbury School. "There was only one thing to do when we left the boy business, and that was to go into the trinket trade," he jokes. Three Ravens, however, carries far more than just trinkets: quilts, pottery, china, brass, and, in the barn out back, several architectural elements, such as louvers, fanlights, and doors.

E. G. H. Peter Antiques, Evan G. Hughes and Peter Ermacora, Rte. 44 and Canaan Valley Rd., East Canaan; (203) 824-1112. Hours: by appointment. Last July. Evan Hughes and Peter Ermacora moved from Bleecker Street, Manhattan's downtown antiques alley, to the sleepy town of East Canaan, Connecticut, where they bought and are restoring a farmhouse built in 1780. Color is the theme of this shop, which features hand-painted American furniture—such as a blue chest of drawers or a reddish yellow Boston rocker—and accessories like a green marbleized mantel, red and black-painted checkerboard, or redware pottery. "One of the things that originally attracted us to the antiques business was color," says Ermacora. "Color with two hundred years of grime on it." Painting furniture, he explains, was how people back then gave life to the house. "It was their decoration. They didn't have fancy wallpapers and those things.' The popularity of painted furniture is a relatively new phenomenon. Until recently, people stripped painted furniture of all its color. "Only in the last five years have people begun to appreciate the paint," says Ermacora. His antiques are masterfully displayed in a room with no color at all-beige floors and walls, white doors and ceilings—making the pieces shine like colors in the rainbow.

Ed Clerk Antiques, Goshen Rd., Norfolk; (203) 542-5884. Hours: by appointment. If the honesty and simplicity of Shaker design is your calling, Ed Clerk is your man. His parents dealt in Shaker furniture, as has he for twenty years. Some of the things he has on hand at the moment are a dining-room table, a sewing desk featured in the Whitney Museum's 1986 Shaker exhibit, rocking chairs, a washstand, buckets, and a stack of ten different-colored boxes (not for sale), all graduated in size, which fit snugly one on top of the other (the tiniest one, on top, is a pincushion). Besides the sect's furniture, he also sells country furniture: "You can't live by Shaker alone, so I also carry American country furniture." Clerk's house and barn are surrounded by nine barking Toulouse geese-described by Clerk as great watchdogs-as well as a goat, four dogs, two cats, and two ducks. Darlyn Brewer

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Above: Printed calared napkins, \$20, Porthault, NYC and Palm Beach; alsa East & Orient, Dallas; Country French Cannectian, Atlanta; Elizabeth's Staircase, L.A. Leaf mat, \$7, Frank McIntash far Henri Bendel; alsa Stanley Korshak at the Crescent, Dallas. Crocodile mat, \$18, and napkin, \$14, Barneys New York. Right: Nikitia mat, \$18, and matching napkin, \$14, handpainted cacktail napkin, \$20-\$35, flaral napkin, \$20-\$35, Barneys. Folded napkin, \$60 daz., China Seas, for nearest showraam call (212) 420-1170. Ceramic ring, \$34 pr., Thaxtan. Green silk mat by Jim Thampsan, set of faur with napkins, \$90, Blaamingdale's.

Above: Napkins, clockwise fram tap left, handpainted by Liz Wain, \$20–\$35, Barneys New York; plain sea green, \$4, D. F. Sanders, NYC; by Liz Wain, \$20–35, Barneys; handpainted, \$32, Frank McIntash for Henri Bendel. Folded napkin, \$14, Barneys. Gald-painted ceramic ring, \$34 pr., Thaxton, NYC. Green Ballauf mat, \$7, Frank McIntash far Henri Bendel. Handpainted mat by Liz Wain, \$16–\$28, Barneys. Mail arder: Barneys, 106 Seventh Ave., NYC 10011; (212) 929-9000.



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everything from security to watering the lawn

ouses have always been suspected of having lives of their own, spirits that dwell in the floorboards and fireplaces and either welcome guests or repel them. The methods of repulsion have often been grotesque. Witness the modern security system, which meant sticking foil on each window, attaching the foil to wires, then drilling dozens of holes in walls and snaking the wires down to the basement where the system control box was kept. When the circuit was broken, the house would shriek its alarm. The price was ugly windows, white and brown wire stapled to woodwork, and false alarms whenever an inhabitant unthinkingly opened a window for fresh air.

All that has changed: the house does not now have to look "wired" to respond to intrusion. Small sensors subtly placed on windows and around the house respond to breaking and entering; infrared sensors on baseboards detect motion and changes in heat; radio transmitters send information about a room to a central control without the use of wiring; handsome control panels are now designed to be seen rather than hidden.

AT&T, for example, has just introduced Security Systems 8000; it uses a newly designated radio frequency for wireless transmitters which send signals to the alarm control box. A wireless remote can even set the alarm-or defuse it-from any location in the house.

Some systems use wiring but are just as unobtrusive. For a decade a company named X-10 USA (185A LeGrand Ave., Northvale, NJ 07647) has been mak-

ing inexpensive control modules that plug into ordinary electrical outlets. Now licensed to other companies and sold in Radio Shack and Sears, X-10 equipment sends digital signals through the power lines, instructing any appliance or electrical apparatus to shut on and off, any light to dim or brighten or flash. When controlled by a computer program, these control modules can operate an intricate schedule of lighting, sound, and activity.

By using digital signals, more sophisticated sensors, and computer programs, the security system of old can now be merged with the other lifelines of the home—the telephone, the electrical system, the water supply, the heating system—giving the house the equivalent of an electronic nervous system. The same system can answer the

phone and set the alarm, cool the house, turn on the washing machine, and make a cup of coffee. In fact, so much attention is being devoted to home automation that the industry now has its own magazine, Electronic House. And there is already considerable rivalry over just what standards should rule the house. NEC Home Electronics has devel-





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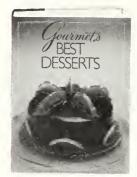
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oped a method of sending intricate signals over power lines, so not only can appliances be controlled, but a computer can receive data through an ordinary electric outlet. A project called Smart House, directed by the National Association of Home Builders, is attempting to create a different system; manufacturers of home appliances and equipment essentially buy into it, purchasing the right to use the technology that will allow their products to communicate with one another (so the vacuum cleaner can shut off, for example, when the doorbell rings). Rejecting the Smart House's notion of a proprietary system, the Electronics Industry Association will propose its own standards for the automated home later this year.

But it is already possible to glimpse the "smart" home in the intricate systems now being installed by such companies as Hometron USA (Bethesda, MD). Each offers a twist on the basic idea. The Home Manager (Unity Systems, 2606 Spring St., Redwood City, CA 94063) uses a wall-mounted touch screen that displays a map of the house: touch any room on the screen and the lights can be dimmed, temperature changed, the VCR turned on, the alarm armed. Like HomeBrain (Hypertek, Rte. 22E, Salem Industrial Park, P.O. Box 137, Whitehouse, NJ 08888), the Home Manager can be programmed for any heating or lighting schedule, can create zones within the house that deny access to those without the proper security code, and even water the lawn automatically when it's dry. Such systems range in price from \$5,000 to over \$25,000; the majority are installed in new houses but may also be added to existing structures.

Mitsubishi is about to introduce a more modestly priced system, Home Automation System (beginning at about \$1,500), that will be controlled through the keypad of a telephone, announce the condition of various rooms around the house with a synthesized voice, and control strategically placed video cameras. But the future belongs to systems like Max (Archinetics, 1750 Northwest Front Ave., Portland, OR 97209). Max can sense where people are in the house, talk with them over the intercom, and actually learn from observing living patterns how best to control the alarm system, the thermostat, and the telephone. It can announce messages to individuals, and even decide that the house is likely to be empty at noon, and adjust heating and security accordingly. Max is the first example of the next evolutionary stage in dwellings-the intelligent home with a life and voice all its own. **Edward Rothstein** 



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# **Eminent Domains**

## If you're looking for an architectural

landmark, be prepared to pay a premium

f you called up one of the more eminent architects in the country tomorrow morning, say, Charles Gwathmey or Richard Meier or Robert A. M. Stern, and asked him to build you a house, you would have to wait two or three years before calling the movers. Provided your architect of choice accepts the commission-and frequently they decline—design takes approximately twelve months and construction another eighteenlonger if you're what's known as a difficult client. (And who is not?) Don't want to wait or run the risk of rejection but still want to live in an

architecturally distinguished house? Buy one. Gwathmey, Meier, and Stern each have residential works now on the market, as do a host of other high-profile architects from

present and past generations.

There is a certain cachet to owning a house by Frank Lloyd Wright or Ward Bennett, just as there is to owning a painting by Mark Rothko or Julian Schnabel—at least among the cognoscenti. In both instances, of course, ownership has its price. "These houses are special properties deserving of a premium,"

reports Crosby Doe of the Los Angeles-based real estate firm Mossler, Deasy & Doe. That premium can run from 70 to 200 percent over comparable houses, estimates Doe, who has specialized in this particular segment of the residential market for fifteen years and who, more remarkably, possesses that all-too-rare quality among realtors, a genuine appreciation of architecture. To stay abreast of market activity, Mossler, Deasy & Doe recently went high-tech with a computer system that provides current data on "two thousand architecturally significant houses in greater L.A." Points of professionLe Corbusier, right, designed some of the most important houses of the 20th century. One of them—octuolly two—is Les Moisons Jooul, obove, completed in 1956 and now for sole.

The rugged concrete-ond-brick construction of Les Maisons Jooul just outside Poris serves os o not-so-subtle reminder that Le Corbusier's residential portfolio is not limited to crisp white houses.

al pride include linking up film producer Joel Silver with Frank Lloyd Wright's 1923 Storer house in the Hollywood Hills and art dealer Lou Baskerville with Richard Neutra's 1960 Loring house in Nichols Canyon. Current listings range from a 1933 International Style fourplex by R. M. Schindler on South Cochran to the 1949 Miesian Modern Broughton house by Craig Ellwood in Beverly Glen.

Another Los Angeles firm

with an impressive lineup of "world-class residential architecture," as it is regrettably referred to, is the Jon Douglas Company. Its communications director, Jann Hiller, reports that actor Mark Harmon visited Mandalay, architect Cliff May's sprawling twenty-acre compound in Brentwood, four times before deciding against the \$20 million estate and that farther up the coast

Frank Lloyd Wright's 1940-46 re-

treat for the late radio dramatist

Arch Oboler has also attracted con-

siderable interest, though its 105-acre site in the Santa Monica Mountains might be partly responsible.

Sotheby's International Realty, as its name implies, does not limit itself to one particular region or to one particular style, notes Stuart Siegel, vice president of marketing. Which means that clients can choose between a 1981 Sol LeWitt–like vacation house overlooking a lake in Wisconsin by Chicago architect Helmut Jahn and a 1929 Mediterranean villa overlooking the ocean in Palm Beach by Addison Mizner. Al-

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## REAL ESTATE

though Sotheby's also offers important houses by H. H. Richardson and, again, Frank Lloyd Wright, the architectural feather in the realtor's cap is surely Les Maisons Jaoul by Le Corbusier. Located in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine, fifteen minutes from the Eiffel Tower, the pair of houses included in the 1956 compound occupies a central position in the history of Modern architecture. "We're selling the mystique of living in an architectural monument," concludes Siegel. The current price of mystique is 20 million francs (about \$3.5 million).

Despite the allure that living in a landmark holds, a certain reserve is advised. Architectdesigned houses, at least the best ones, tend to be highly personal statements that speak of very particular visions. So if your taste runs to flocked wallpaper, a great International Style house is not for you. On the other hand, some houses are so extraordinary they might be worth giving up the flocked wallpaper. Charles Gandee

## **Architecture for Sale**

From Sotheby's International Realty (212) 606-4100

20 million francs Le Corbusier

Les Maisons Jaoul are two adjoining houses in Neuilly-sur-Seine outside Paris. Joined underneath by a shared garage, a wine cellar, and storage basement. Maison A includes two living rooms, interior garden, five bedrooms, two with terraces. Maison B includes living room plus library, five bedrooms, and studio plus three terraces.

Frank Lloyd Wright \$380,000

National Landmark solar hemicycle house on three acres in Middleton, Wis. Approximately 2,500 square feet with three bedrooms, one and a half baths. Indoor-outdoor reflecting pools, sunken garden, 6-foot recessed limestone fireplace, balcony, guesthouse.

Helmut Jahn \$350,000

Located on 3.5 acres on Catfish Lake, Wis., this is the architect's only built design for a house. The cubiform three-level cottage has three bedrooms with spaces arranged around a gridded central open skylit stairwell. Fireplaces in family bedroom and living room. Open-plan guesthouse also comes with fireplace.

H. H. Richardson \$2,900,000

The two and a half story Shingle-style Stoughton House in Cambridge, Mass., was built 1882-83. The seventeen-room house has approximately 8,000 square feet and includes six bedrooms and four and a half baths plus five staff bedrooms and two baths, ten fireplaces, a conservatory with two skylights, music room, and 10-by-59-foot gallery.

#### **Addison Mizner** \$9,000,000

This Spanish Mediterranean-style residence in Palm Beach, Fla., sits on 3 acres with 268 feet of ocean frontage. The two-story plus tower house has approximately 16,000 square feet. Included in the nineteen rooms are five bedrooms, seven and a half baths. Three fireplaces, elevator, wine cellar. Tiled pool with pool house, tennis court, four-room apartment over garage.

From Randolph Properties (914) 238-9001

#### Richard Meier \$995,000

Wooded 10-plus acres on secluded hilltop in Mount Kisco, N.Y. Two-story living room with sculptured fireplace, dining room with curved glass wall, skylit library. Two bedrooms, two baths. Pool and two-story guest/pool house with two bedrooms.

From Ion Douglas Company (213) 859-7007

Frank Lloyd Wright \$3,500,000

The redwood-and-stone fifteen-room house on 105 acres of Malibu, Calif., mountainside with panoramic ocean/canyon views includes built-in Wright-designed furniture. Four bedrooms plus staff quarters, three fireplaces, pool. Guesthouse nearby.

Richard Neutra \$1,475,000

Secluded one-story house on wooded 23/4 acres in Montecito, Calif., features soaring 21-foot windows in gallery-entry, 27-foot windows in library. Four bedrooms, four and a half baths. Library room has brick-andmarble fireplace. Comes with pool, guest/ pool house, four-car garage.

From Mossler, Deasy & Doe (213) 275-2222

#### R. M. Schindler \$335,000

The Mackey apartment building in Los Angeles, built in 1939, consists of three units, plus a large penthouse with rooftop garden. There are nine bedrooms and five baths. The two-story detached five-car garage includes a loft and roof garden.

From Housing Solutions (213) 665-4145

Greene & Greene \$310,000 Pasadena, Calif., bungalow built in 1911 has

shingle siding, arroyo rock foundation, and wide porches. Three bedrooms, two and a half baths, living room with fireplace, sleeping porch, and six-car garage.

From George Elkins Company (213) 826-4521

**Richard Neutra** \$2,400,000

Once the residence of Mae West, this estate on a beach lot in Santa Monica, Calif., was refurbished by Charles Gwathmey. Its 5,400 square feet include four bedrooms, six baths, formal living and dining rooms, three fireplaces, pool, Jacuzzi.

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# Topless Thrills

James Truman takes four brand-new convertibles out for a spin

The good news is

that the convertible is no

longer gender-specific

ack in the 1940s psychologist Ernest Dichter delivered himself of the observation that a man looks on a sedan as his wife, whereas he regards a convertible as his mistress. For all his failings as a progressive socialist, Dichter would surely have made a sporty addition to the national sales team: in the cutthroat competition of postwar Detroit, even pop Freudians could become team players. In newly opened offices of motivational research, they were employed to puzzle over the mysteries of the automobile's social function and the subconscious desires that deter-

mined the public's car-buying choices. What they discovered about the convertible owner was made readily apparent in the gloriously profane

chrome-and-steel sculptures that rolled off the assembly lines from the mid fifties to the late sixties. Although the European designers of the Jaguar XKE or the Mercedes 300SLR were clearly no slouches in the area of sexual symbolism, it was the American models with their extended bulges, heightened curves, and racy lines that defined the convertible as an object of desire; they were the unembarrassed purveyors of locomotive erotica.

Aside from the Chevy Corvette, there are no current American convertibles that meet this description. The good news is that the convertible is no longer gender-specific. The bad news is that during its nearly decade-long absence the energy crisis, emission-control laws, and aerodynamic advances killed off the convertible's classic virtues—that is to say, its speed, size, and rococo styling. So far, Detroit's attempts at a solution—an exotic fuel-efficient, flip-top compact-have been less than thrilling. Except in price, they have been consistently upstaged by imports from Europe, where the smaller-scale sports at is a long-standing tradition.

In what sounds like an enterprising response, Chrysler will shortly unveil a two-seater convertible, built in Italy in conjunction with

Maserati. Meanwhile, they have redesigned their own LeBaron. As a coupe, the new Le-Baron has been positioned against the Ford Thunderbird which it closely resembles. As a soft-top, its smooth elegant lines make Ford's Mustang look increasingly dated and boxy. The LeBaron's principal attraction is value for money: loaded with extras, including the optional 2.2-liter turbo engine, the price is still under \$20,000. The interior, fin-

ished in billowy vinyl and noticeably fakewood trim, boasts more gadgets per dollar than any car I've seen. The digital speedo sits between a

fluorescent RPM graph and fuel and temperature gauges; at the press of a button these become oil and battery gauges, rather more bright than seems necessary. The central console houses the standard radio and cassette player, optional CD player and graphic equalizer, a trip computer, digital temperature control, and something called a message center, which alerts the driver to any one of sixteen potential problems. Opening the glove compartment, I was unhappy not to find a courtesy phone; I would have liked Lee lacocca to explain these to me personally.

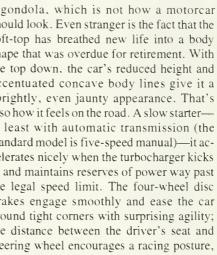
Driving the car through downtown L.A., I was disappointed to find that even with the turbocharged engine the new LeBaron felt as sluggish as the old LeBaron, which is to say that on the freeway it cruised comfortably at 60 mph but couldn't summon enough power to get me out of the fast lane in time for my exit. Traveling at high speeds with the roof down, taller drivers are likely to find their foreheads unprotected from headwinds and spray from the washer jets. If I owned this car, I'd experiment with hair gel in the fluid bottle. The LeBaron might not win any drag

races, but I'd accept Don Johnson's hairstyle as compensation.

The Saab 900 Turbo convertible looks like a gondola, which is not how a motorcar should look. Even stranger is the fact that the soft-top has breathed new life into a body shape that was overdue for retirement. With the top down, the car's reduced height and accentuated concave body lines give it a sprightly, even jaunty appearance. That's also how it feels on the road. A slow starterat least with automatic transmission (the standard model is five-speed manual)—it accelerates nicely when the turbocharger kicks in and maintains reserves of power way past the legal speed limit. The four-wheel disc brakes engage smoothly and ease the car around tight corners with surprising agility; the distance between the driver's seat and steering wheel encourages a racing posture, so one tends to hit curves hard.

The Saab's principal drawback is visibility. The electronic roof is blissfully easy to operate, but once it is up, one has to rely on wing mirrors for rear vision. The back window, which is real glass, is also real narrow; three-quarter visibility is nonexistent. Another annoyance is the built-in alarm system, which starts to squeal unless the key is put into the ignition within twenty seconds. Since the ignition is unconventionally positioned between the two front seats, this takes some practice. It also caused three valet parkers in Los Angeles to feel insecure about their professional skills.

The BMW325i convertible quietly arrived on the market last year in the shadow of BMW's new top-of-the-line 7-series models. Perhaps this was for the best: shortly after its debut the car's prospective clientele was pronounced an extinct species. Can the BMW survive the disgrace of the yuppie? As a preliminary measure, to test its potential for



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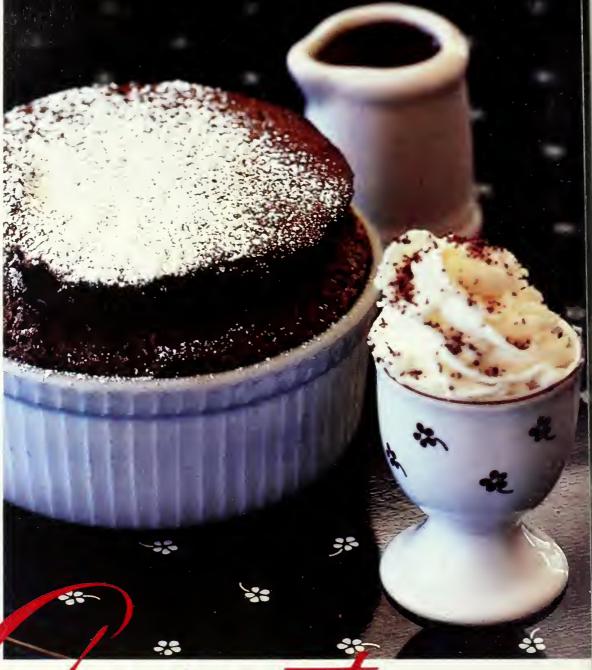
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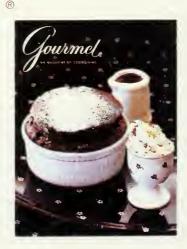
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## **CARS**

downward mobility, I packed the car with date, popcorn, and Mexican takeout and drove to the Valley, where Chuck Norris's latest was playing at a drive-in. Chuck Norris once explained to me that although America was the greatest nation in the history of the world, he personally drove a Mercedes, so the film didn't make me feel unwelcome. The BMW's heated seats proved useful, the interior acoustics excellent, and the engine idled so noiselessly that we could enjoy the advantages of trilevel heat without missing the finer points of the dialogue. As in many foreign cars, there turned out to be inadequate facilities for the storage and display of foodstuffs. Looking over at the 1966 Mustang parked next to us and the drama unfold-

# The BMW's heated seats proved useful, and the engine idled noiselessly

ing therein, I was reminded of another criticism of the BMW: they're simply not sexy. Even with a drop-top—a modification that the BMW hasn't accommodated all that comfortably—the 325 doesn't inflame the senses with thoughts of derring-do. The payback for this conservatism is nonetheless considerable and familiar to anyone who has driven a BMW: superb engineering, smooth acceleration, flawless braking, and a design that values the functional over the cosmetic.

There's something undignified in hearing an Aston Martin wheeze with emission-control asthma. Down-tuned for the American market, the new Vantage Volante is still an awesome machine. Billed as the fastest fourseater convertible, it is also one of the few high-performance sports that doesn't force the driver into dental-surgery posture. Driving the car is almost relaxing; its responsiveness is acute but unaggressive and shows few signs of rebellion at dawdling speeds. Apart from a couple of shameful lapses into plasticity, the interior preserves the classic gentility of the old DB series, just as the sawn-off rear end revives the styling of the DB6, the successor to the James Bond car. The only misgiving one could have is the woefully inappropriate addition of side and front spoilers. But fear not: a new Vantage Volante will be unveiled later this year. In the meantime—and for just \$12,000 more—\$179,500 will buy the 1988 Aston Martin Lagonda, which happens to be the most handsome and distinctive car in the world.



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## Carouste

(Continued from page 160) has given them various objects from his travels. Two enormous gold and terra-cotta lacquered screens dominate the living room, and there are small chairs with backs carved like Balinese masks of gods with protruding tongues.

Elisabeth cuts an altogether more unexpected figure than Gérard, who wanders around with his hair caught up in a metal clip and a sack tied round his waist in a vague attempt to protect his paint-caked overalls—though for some mysterious reason he likes to wear a tie. Elisabeth is neat and smart in a black sweater set, her dark hair elegantly smoothed by a velvet headband. Her appearance is a surprising contrast to the strange malformed furniture she creates.

Art critics have a tough time trying to pigeonhole Gérard's paintings and spend pages describing what category he's in, only to dismiss it. He's been called everything from Trans—Avant-garde to a Pittura Colta, but he refutes all labels. The main influences for his monumental murky landscapes, with obscure figures flitting about in the background, are Dante's *Inferno* and the music of Arvo Pärt. He listens with great passion to classical music, which he finds fundamental not only to his mood but also to the movement of his brush on the canvas. "I'm doing

some very large pieces almost purely *about* the music, and I would like to have them shown accompanied by it. I also incorporate scenes from *The Divine Comedy*, which is a book I return to again and again. I'd like to meet and talk to composers who are my contemporaries, but so far I have only met Arvo Pärt when he came to a nearby monastery."

For the time being Gérard has very little opportunity to seek out any other composers; not only has he had major one-man shows in Bordeaux and at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Belgium, but in April he also has a show at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York and in September another one-man show at the Beaubourg. His work is on permanent display in more and more museums around the world from Germany to Australia. Gérard, however, has steadfastly refused to join the international art-party circuit so tempting to other artists of equally lofty reputations; he prefers to live quietly at home, with the occasional foray into Paris. "Of course I stop working sometimes and have dinner with my friends. If a stranger is there with the preconceived notion that I am a mad artist, then I will play the businessman to fool him."

Gérard and Elisabeth get along with local villagers, although some of them are rather taken aback by the interior of the house. "Once a woman came to see us," says Elisabeth with a laugh. "She wandered around looking at all our things, then finally said, 'Oh, I do like *that*,' pointing at an extremely

dirty inset panel showing a herd of cows. She had picked the *only* thing that hadn't been painted by me or Gérard.

"We haven't really done anything to the house other than repaint the rooms," Elisabeth went on. "It is certainly not decorated. If we find we are short a chair, I'll go out and buy one—otherwise the house just contains the overspill from our studios."

What decoration there is could never be described as finished because Elisabeth and Gérard are both constantly adding things to each room. Their bedroom has a mysterious, dreamy atmosphere, created in part by an immense amount of smoke that finds its way from the fire burning in the living-room fireplace below. A chandelier, which looks like a cross between some strange creature from outer space and a plant picked from the depths of the ocean, lights the room; in a corner is a whimsical glass-top table containing sand and a few bright pebbles, which she calls her Zen table. Oddly, the children of such overtly creative parents show little interest in drawing or sculpture.

The walled garden, which stands a couple of hundred yards from the house, remains the only unconquered territory in the intensely personal world the Garoustes have concocted over four years. But Elisabeth has plans for it, and, no doubt, given the energy they put into their projects, the garden will be as weird and wonderful as the rest of the place.

Decorating Editor: Marie-Paule Pellé

## **Tahitian Mythology**

(Continued from page 145) obligation to someone as light-fingered as himself.

Let us also congratulate the organizers for having cajoled collectors and museum directors the world over to part with major treasures. Glasnost was on their side. The Soviet Union lent more Gauguins from its incomparably rich collection than ever before. Even if Stuckey and Brettell were unable to re-create, as they had hoped, the artist's dream—a total decorative ensemble, consisting of his huge masterpiece *Where Do We Come From?* (the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and the eight replicas and studies for it—they have assembled more than enough masterpieces to convey the mythic, the monumental and, yes, the ornamental impact of the late work as never before.

Lest, however, we succumb too easily to the paradisiacal charm of these Polynesian idylls, we should not forget that Gauguin was spiritually in league with the dark gods: the ubiquitous fox is a symbol of perversity, the androgynous figure in some of the late paintings might well be a native priest or a *mahu* (an effeminate man raised from childhood as a woman), and it is no accident that Tehamana, the artist's mistress, is depicted as polydactyl—seven-toed.

## Lord of the Follies

(Continued from page 202) other hand if a plant really takes off in a particular area, I'll let it. I am not the chap to say let's move that six inches." He is, however, an avid collector of plants. One can find more than 130 varieties of snowdrops at West Green and a huge range of hellebores.

But it is the architectural follies and the incomplete, untamed nature of the garden that leave a lasting impression on the visitor. When pressed, McAlpine does admit to a method for the garden's apparent madness: "There is a sort of grand philosophical theme, which I suppose you could call 'The Progress of Man.' It's done in a very loose way, and, of course, it's not finished yet." McAlpine intends to build more follies and monuments. "I am a congenital builder. I can't resist building things. I suppose it's just as well, as that's my family's trade."

Quinlan Terry, however, is not so keen on creating too many more buildings at West

Green. "I believe that ninety percent of a garden should be green, and buildings should be incidental. West Green will be all buildings and no garden and that's sad." The concept of restraint is obviously anathema to McAlpine. It is this compulsiveness that sets him apart from fellow mortals. Wherever McAlpine channels his boundless energies, one can be certain that even if West Green ends up looking more like Highgate Cemetery than a traditional garden, it will still be well worth a visit. 

Architecture Editor:

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## Four Stars

(Continued from page 196) cooks arrive at Le Bernardin to prepare for lunch. All young and mostly American, they change into white jackets and black and white-checked trousers. I button a long white smock over my street clothes. Soon they are working quietly and intently. Every cook does his own chopping, his own mise en place. All have brought their own knives.

At the cold-appetizer station Bonnie uses a tall-standing food mill with a huge hand crank to make fresh tomato puree for the scallops with sorrel. Severo pounds twenty slices of raw tuna paper-thin between two sheets of plastic wrap stretching down the counter from one side of the kitchen to the other. I am gratified to discover that cold poached salmon—the shrimp cocktail with ketchup sauce of the 1980s—appears nowhere on the menu. Across from Severo and Bonnie, at the hotappetizer station, Bennie makes croutons for soup. His partner Vinnie is off at the oyster station cleaning squid, washing them in salt water. Fresh water would drain their flavor.

Nearby Vincent pulls on pink rubber gloves to dismember twenty live lobsters, twisting off their flailing claws and tails. Then with the little feelers still wriggling he slides a dinner knife between the underside of the tail meat and the shells to keep them from curling in the poaching liquid. That's how the French do it. I remember trying a recipe of Michel Guérard's that demanded the same treatment. I handed over the challenge to the oldest salt at my local fish store, and his reward was a deep gash from the dying lobster. Vincent, who is from Barbados, says that it took him a while to get used to this part of his job. May the fish gods forgive him.

At the entrée station John and Bobby prepare the sweet fish fumet and the acidic vegetable nage that will find their way into half the items on the menu. Then they turn their attention to a red wine sauce, a lobster cream for the pasta, and a translucent *sauce Américaine* unlike any l've ever tasted. A pound of basil has been put to steep in tepid olive oil in the hope that after several days the basil will yield up its perfume for the sautéed red snapper. In another pot lobster shells are warmed in oil for several hours to flavor a vinaigrette.

The sous chef, Dominick Cerrone, has arrived. An articulate upstate New Yorker, he is a neocting a new dish for lunch—ravioli. made from the eggless dough he mixed last a Unit stuffed with duxelles and fennel puree. Ver a customer orders them, the ravioli we be poached with scallops in the vegeta-

ble nage that John and Bobby have made.

At nine o'clock on the loading dock downstairs I watch Paul, the steward, receive the fish that Le Coze selected at the market this morning. Later scallops and lobsters will arrive from Maine. Paul turns over one of the live sea urchins and wiggles a pencil in its mouth, which he finds too mushy; he taps its quills and they move sluggishly. The weather is getting too cold for perfect urchins. Two men will work downstairs for the rest of the day butchering the fish, gutting and degilling them, scaling or skinning them, and finally preparing fillets. Soon the air is filled with fish scales, which snow down on the worktables, the floor, my smock, my face.

I take refuge at the pastry station where I discover that dessert cooks are the most generous souls in the kitchen. Best known for its consummate fish preparations, Le Bernardin also serves some of the best desserts in town. I munch on warm chocolate mille-feuilles while Jun beats the crème anglaise for a baked apple dessert contributed to the menu by Georges Blanc when he was in New York. Diane forms oeufs à la neige with one hand by scraping and rolling a handful of meringue against the rim of the bowl. She encourages me to try it. The result is a puffy white smear on the palm of my hand. I accuse her of having omitted some crucial instruction. Jun mollifies me with a sablé.

Alain Thomas, the head pastry chef, is busy making a dark chocolate sorbet, and he gives me a taste. Here is the sorbet that has eluded me for a full decade of active ice cream making. The next day l pry the recipe out of Alain and try it at home. I think l may have burned the cocoa a little and possibly neglected to beat the mixture to an ideal silken smoothness before freezing. The result falls slightly short of perfection. My wife says that it tasted like dirt.

The staff breaks at eleven for the family meal that Bennie has cooked for them. To-day's meat loaf with mashed potatoes is much less popular than yesterday's roast chicken with pasta. But Bobby brightens my potatoes with a ladle full of sunny bourride.

The chef de cuisine. Eberhard Mueller, arrives. Thirty-four years old and a cook since the age of fifteen, sous chef at Archestrate in Paris and executive chef at Windows on the World, he signed on with Le Coze before Le Bernardin opened. From noon until midnight the intense and knowledgeable Eberhard supervises the kitchen. There will be 110 lunches served today and 220 dinners. Power brokers eat at lunch, celebrities at dinner, food-world luminaries at both. The average dinner check for each customer is \$91 before tax and tip and \$50 at lunch.

Noon approaches and the tension becomes palpable. Gilbert Le Coze enters the kitchen, handsome and tanned in a long white jacket and white trousers. Everything at Le Bernardin is cooked at the last minute in individual portions. There are no stews or cassoulets, no legs of lamb or fillets of beef cooked rare waiting to be carved, reheated, and sauced. "A slice of fish can be completely disgusting if you cook it in advance," Le Coze says. Oysters are opened only when a customer orders them. Even the desserts are assembled à la minute. So the ratio of cooks to customers is unusually high. The kitchen is almost as large as the dining room. Le Coze spent five months back in Paris designing, in stainless steel and tile, the perfect kitchen.

and

Eberhard and Dominick begin calling out orders to the appetizer stations. The words "broiled shrimp for table three" have hardly been uttered when Bennie ladles fish fumet, cream and parsley-shallot butter over four butterflied shrimp standing with their tails up in a casserole. He pops them under the salamander broiler until their shells redden, heats the casserole on a burner until the sauce boils, slides it into the oven to finish the shrimp, and puts it back on the burner to reduce the sauce as he removes the shrimp to a warm plate. When the sauce is thick and emulsified, he pours it around the shrimp and brings the plate to Dominick, who wipes a stray sauce molecule from the rim.

Soon the main course orders start coming and the frenzy moves to the entrée station. The fillets of grouper and red snapper have already been skinned and sliced on a bias into three pieces to a uniform quarter-inch thickness. Now they are sprinkled with salt and white pepper, dredged in flour on one side, and sautéed in separate pans only on that side until they are golden brown underneath and still pink on top. Then the sauces are quickly prepared—basil vinaigrette for the snapper and a butter sauce densely dotted with chopped chives, like a Pointillist painting. for the grouper. When the sauces are almost ready, the fillets are put briefly in an oven at 500 degrees Fahrenheit to finish cooking (all the ovens are run at full tilt except those at the pastry station), transferred to a serving plate, sauced, and decorated. They must be served immediately. If reheating is attempted, the butter sauce will break and the vinaigrette will release acid fumes.

Throughout it all Le Coze walks about watching and sampling. "We can never sleep," Le Coze tells me. "We constantly have to be extremely concentrated."

The action shifts to the pastry station and I with it. Diane is making a cloud of *cheveux d'ange*—stiff filaments of caramelized sugar

flicked off the tincs of a fork—which she will set atop a circle of four caramel desserts. Fortune smiles when somebody mistakenly prepares an unwanted hot passion-fruit mousse. As the error is not discovered until the dish emerges from under the salamander, there is nothing to do but feed it to me. Stoically enduring the third-degree burn I receive from touching the fiery plate, I plunge a fork into the glazed golden circle of mousse.

I cannot believe my tongue. This is the very creation I've been pursuing for three years, ever since a meal at Jacques Maximin's Chantecler restaurant at the Hôtel Negresco in Nice. As somebody sprays antiseptic on my injured hand, I polish off the mousse. No, I cannot have the recipe—it is a signature dish that everybody is trying to copy. Yes, Maximin popularized the hot fruit mousse, but he probably didn't invent it, and he uses lime instead of passion fruit. No, the formula published last year in New York magazine is not how we do it.

In desperation I threaten to write that Le Coze uses canned tuna and ultrapasteurized cream. They relent at last when I vow never to publish the recipe, and now my lips are sealed. The next morning I stay up until three making a clumsy version of my secret treasure. The passion-fruit store is closed at that hour, and I am forced to substitute tangerine. I overbeat the magic mixture, bake the mousses at an insufficient temperature, and glaze their tops a bit aggressively under the broiler. But they are so yummy 1 consume five before waking my wife to split the last one with her. She is extremely grateful.

By two thirty the customers have finished their lunches, and a new crew of young cooks arrives. The afternoon passes much as the morning did, and my next four days pass much as the first. In my week at Le Bernardin I come away with countless secrets. The little secrets are cooking tricks that one would likely pick up at any serious restaurant, but l am continually delighted to learn them nonetheless. If you add vinegar before caramelizing sugar, humidity will not make it sticky and soft. Wipe the inside of a stockpot frequently, or the splashes of liquid will burn and turn your sauce bitter. When you puree garlic in advance, add some oil to keep the paste moist and preserve the flavor. Toast bread for canapés in a hot oven between two baking sheets, and it will emerge flat and evenly browned. Use very hot olive oil to fry

thin slices of day-old bread for croutons, and they will brown almost instantly; rub them with a cut clove of garlic when they cool off a little. Maintain the court bouillon for poaching fish below the simmer—about 190 to 200 degrees—and the fish will be cooked through and intact, not torn apart in swirling liquid.

But these are, after all, merely little secrets. Le Coze's Big Secret is more elusive: trapping in a saucepan the pure elemental tastes of the sea. He and Eberhard stress that to develop the essential flavor of a fish, its broth or sauce must have the proper degree of acidity—just as we use lemon juice in a fruit dessert. But part of the trick is having the right attitude. Think of fish as the one truly wild creature we eat-free, brave, and primordial. Make fun of chickens and cows and the other idiotic barnyard vassals of humankind the way Le Coze does. Eat and cook mainly fish for a month or two, and sample every variety you can find. Do not overcook it or asphyxiate it in sauce or tart it up with grapes or currants or kiwi fruit. Fish is done in the millisecond between translucence and opacity, long before it flakes (the common cookbook test); it should still be a little chewy. Do not steam fish: Le Coze refers to

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## Four Stars

the pungent stock that seeps uselessly out of a steamed fish as the "blood of God."

Every evening at home I try to replicate one of the recipes I learned that day. When I think I understand the sautéed red snapper, I telephone ahead to my local fish store and am told that there were no reds at the market last night, a bald-faced lie. Next time they have no bones for fumet. (Do they buy their fish already filleted?) Forget about grouper till next week, forget about monkfish till next month. Forget about whitebait forever, we don't get much call for it. Now I know why Le Coze still goes to the Fulton Fish Market himself twice a week in the dead of night.

I am forced to make hasty substitutions. The first results are better than any fish I have ever cooked but embarrassing compared with what I have tasted in Le Coze's kitchen. My sauces do not mount properly. I used to think I was pretty good at chopping, but my finely shredded basil looks like garbage compared with theirs. With a little practice though, the technique of sautéing one side of a thin fillet over high heat and finishing it in the oven works perfectly. After a few tries the butter sauce for grouper with melted leeks holds together just fine.

One night Le Coze invites me to dinner at ten in the private dining room on the second floor of the restaurant. We begin with two appetizers made with our catch from the market that morning: raw tuna painted with olive oil and thin slices of black bass barely poached in an acidic coriander-scented broth. Next comes a project in research and development-four warm Belon oysters in their shells topped with a light smoky cream sauce and a little caviar. Coming after the fresh chaste sea flavors of the first two courses. they are opulent and astonishing. The recipe is simplicity itself except for the indispensable sauce: open the shells, remove the oysters and their liquor to a strainer in a bowl (you will need the liquor from one ovster for the sauce), discard half the shells, and wash the other half in salt water and dry them in the oven (you don't want them leaking into the sauce). When the sauce is ready, strain the oysters and sauté them briefly without oil in a very hot nonstick pan until their outsides are sealed and their insides barely cooked (about a half minute on each side), spoon a half teaspoon or so of sauce into each of the warm shells, plop in the oysters, top with another half teaspoon of sauce and an equal amount of fresh osetra caviar, eat. How to make the sauce? First set aside two or three hours. Then read the provisional recipe at the end of this article. It is based on a talk with Eberhard, two attempts at home, and a fading recollection of the real thing.

By now Le Coze and I are into the second bottle of white wine. He smokes a cigarette between each course. The waiter brings us the sautéed red snapper I had cooked at home, and then a crispy fillet of black sea bass in a pool of lobster sauce with a puree of fennel and potatoes. I'm filling up now, and I refrain from mopping up the rich sauce with

another crisp roll because I must leave room for dessert. There are three of these, the last a triumphant chocolate trio—chocolate millefeuilles with pistachio cream, chocolate cake, and my beloved dark chocolate sorbet.

Basking in one of those rare moments when my appetite is fully fed, my spirit nearly whole, I turn away a plate of delightful petits fours and don't regret the decision for almost five minutes. Over coffee Le Coze and I chat about fish.

## SMOKY CREAM AND WHITE WINE SAUCE

This recipe, for oysters with caviar, yields 4 cups, more than you'll need for three dozen oysters. First make 3 cups of fish fumet, and set aside. (I could give you Le Coze's recipe, but you will do just fine with Julia Child's.) Then chop two shallots, two inches of the white part of a leek, a quarter of a small onion, a small celery stalk, and four mushroom heads. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a 2-quart saucepan, add the vegetables, and soften them over low heat without browning for 10 minutes. Deglaze with 11/2 cups of white wine, turn up the heat, and reduce until the vegetables are almost dry. Add 3 cups of fumet, the liquor from one oyster, a sprig of thyme, a small mashed garlic clove, four peppercorns, and reduce by two thirds. Add 5 cups of cream, and cook at the slowest simmer for 10 minutes. Add 4 ounces of chopped finnan haddie (smoked haddock, the ultrasecret ingredient), and continue at a slow simmer for another 10 minutes. Strain through a chinois. The result should be a harmonious quartet—the acidity of the wine, the sweetness of the vegetables, the perfume of the fish stock, the smokiness of the finnan haddie.

## **Chow Wow**

(Continued from page 170) is a development of ideas used in New York. The spaces are smaller, the atmosphere serene. The main dining room is a subtle orchestration of warm whites, silver and white gold, and white marble floors. On the high-gloss walls glow Chow's touch of magic—alabaster wall lights designed by Pierre Chareau in the late twenties, set with the seeming randomness of a flight of birds. A 26-foot painting by Keith Haring fills the end wall. Sliding doors lead to a private dining room with wall panels in gold leaf on fifteen layers of caramel lacquer. Chow knows that as the gold leaf wears, the patina of age will enhance the quality, "like James Dean's jeans." As he does in New York, Chow displays in a vitrine precious or witty artifacts, a Jean Dunand lacquered vase, a Marinot glass vessel, a Warhol picture, which was a present from the artist.

Chow's New York apartment pays homage to a particular passion that has consumed him for many years—his admiration for the last great age of craftsmanship, French Art Deco of the twenties, in particular the work of two men, Jacques Émile Ruhlmann and Jean Dunand, Chow's analysis is succinct: "They are the best." He has brought together furniture and fittings by Ruhlmann, sometimes monumental, sometimes eccentric, almost awkward in form yet elegant, selfconfident, refined-and always exquisitely crafted. Work by Jean Dunand includes lyrical vases and virtuoso inlays of crushed eggshell like snowstorms in seas of lacquer, usually black. Chow relishes every idiosyncrasy: Ruhlmann's inlays of ivory, peeled from the tusk like an apple skin, not sliced like a cucumber, for the most attractive effect; the detail of a Dunand lacquer decoration, painted by a confident hand, like the painted line along a Rolls-Royce.

As a setting, the apartment is neutral, everything discreet, top quality. Every piece is placed with care. "Some things I haven't got, yet their places are waiting. A true collector wills certain pieces to become his." The grand living room with two tall windows is a harmony of creams, black lacquer, and ébène de Macassar. Helmut Newton says, "I admire the way Michael expresses himself. The apartment is the most beautiful I have ever seen—such a movie idea." Paloma Picasso describes her impression, "The apartment is organized, very beautiful to the eye," and adds, "it is almost too perfect."

Chow, who will next apply his rigorous sensibility to the design of a new 13,000-square-foot shop for Giorgio Armani in Beverly Hills, recognizes that the shrinelike atmosphere of his apartment is extremely demanding. "Everything is so perfect. I wouldn't advise anyone to live in an environment like that."

Decorating Editor: Marie-Paule Pellé

## Sources

#### COVER

Azzedine Alaïa dress and shoes, to arder at Alaïa New York, 131 Mercer St., NYC; Alaïa Chez Gallay, Beverly Hills; from a collection at Barneys New York, NYC; Ultimo, Chicago; Caron-Cherry, Miami; Knit Wit, Philadelphia; Emphatics, Pittsburgh; I. Magnin, San Francisco. La Lune Collection pedestals, large \$565, small \$370. Available to the trade at Bayberry Handprints, NYC; Ainsworth Noah & Assaciates, Atlanta; Devon Service, Boston; Karl Mann, Chicago; David Peysen, Dallas, Houstan; Blake Hause, Denver, Laguna Niguel; Matches, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C.; Thomas & Co., Phoenix; Collins-Draheim, Seattle; Habert Associates, Toronto; Janus et Cie, Las Angeles; D.F.D. Enterprises, High Paint, N.C. For dealers call (414) 263-5300.

#### STYLE

Page 110: Tapestries (clockwise from bottom right): Bonetti/Garouste, \$9,500, at Furniture of the Twentieth Century, NYC (212) 929-6023. Beaded pillow, \$1,350, at Barneys New York (212) 929-9000. Heraldic pitcher, \$233, at Country Floors, NYC, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Miami. Cartier La Maisan du Prince plates, \$440 5-piece set; La Maisan du Roi silverware, \$950 set; candlesticks, \$350 pr.; La Maison des Ballets Russes glasses, \$95, at Cartier, NYC, Los Angeles, Dallas, Chicago, Beverly Hills, Bal Harbor, Costa Mesa, Fort Lauderdale, Haustan, Palm Beach, San Francisco, and selected department stares nationwide. Graundworks and Lee Jofa fabric to the trade at Lee Jofa, NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Laguna Niguel, Houston, Dallas, Dania. For ather shawrooms call (201) 438-8444. French tapestry placemat, \$20, at Barneys New York (212) 929-9000. Antique tapestry at Chevalier, NYC (212) 249-3922. 112: Chaises (clockwise from top right): Miami chaise, \$600, at Pompeii Furniture, Miami (305) 576-3600, Newport Cappellini chaise, \$1,970, at Modern Age Gallery, NYC; Current, Seattle; Luminaire, Miami; Interna Design, Chicago; Diva, Los Angeles. Dakota Jackson Kazaa chaise, \$5,458, to the trade at Dakata Jacksan, NYC; Holly Hunt, Minneapalis, Chicago; Luxe, Miami, Dania. Petal chaise, \$1,230, to the trade at Luten Clarey Stern, NYC; Jerry Pair, Atlanta, Miami; Karl Mann, Chicago; Randolph & Hein, San Francisco, Los Angeles; David Sutherland, Dallas, Houston; Ostrer House, Bastan. Lavegrove/Brown chaise through Steven Halt, NYC (212) 219-3748. Linus Coraggia chaise, \$4,500, at Barneys New Yark (212) 929-9000. Marc Newson chaise at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, Australia 331-1919. Eleonora Triguboff chaise, about \$20,000, at Art et Industrie, NYC (212) 431-1661. Marble table, \$12,000, at Juan Partela Antiques, NYC (212) 650-0085. 114: Mosaics (clockwise from top right): Gianfranca Ferrè tiles at Internatianal Tile & Marble, West Hartford (203) 233-3309. Dan Bleier vase, \$275, at Civilisation, NYC (212) 254-3788.

### TALLEYSHEET

Page 136: Shoes, \$465, to order at Manola Blahnik, NYC (212) 582-3007.

## GAUGUIN

Pages 146–47: Giorgio di Sant' Angelo scarf, \$2,600, at Ultimo, Chicago; Barneys New York. Sant' Angela bandeau, \$300, at Barneys New York; Linda Dresner, Birmingham, Mich.; Knit Wit, Philadelphia; Jimmy's, Brooklyn, NY; Lina Lee, Beverly Hills; Shauna Stein, Los Angeles. Isabel Canovas flowered bracelet worn in hair, \$1,025, at Isabel Canavas, NYC (212) 517-2720. Schumacher Marvella rug, \$2,455, (800) 672-0068 for the trade. 148-49: Apple dish by Ceramiche V.B.C., similar style by Eigen Arts, at Nellie, NYC (212) 876-5775. Plate from Gordon Foster, NYC (212) 744-4922. Fabric by Jay Spectre to the trade at Robert Allen, Boston-or outside Mass. (800) 343-3920. China Seas fabric to the trade at China Seas, NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles and athers; (212) 420-1170. Ralph Lauren fabric at Polo/Ralph Lauren, NYC, Palm Beach, Beverly Hills, Dallas, Denver, and selected department stores. 150-51: Isabel Canovas flowered handbag, \$2,600, at Isabel Canovas, NYC (212) 517-2720. China Seas fabric, at China Seas (see above). Wooden table, \$775, and bawl, \$85, at Zona, NYC (212) 925-6750. 153: Mattahedeh Chelsea leaf plate, \$95, at Barneys New York; all Neiman Marcus, Lord & Taylor stores, for others call (212) 685-3050. 154**55:** Azzedine Alaïa dress and shoes: see Caver sources. Sue Golden chair information through Folk and Craft Museum Shop, Los Angeles (213) 937-9099. Brian Murphy chair to order at BAM Construction/Design, Pacific Palisades (213) 459-7547.

### **GAROUSTE & GAROUSTE**

Pages 156-63: Gérard Garouste's wark on exhibit April 2–23 at Leo Castelli Gallery, NYC (212) 431-5160, and available thereafter through the gallery. Designs by Bonetti/Garouste at Furniture of the Twentieth Century, NYC (212) 929-6023, after May 15, \$600-\$4,500.

### ANIMAL FARM

Pages 190-95: Gérard Rigat furniture at Galerie of Applied Arts, NYC (212) 765-3560.
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# Duka's DIARY

# Impolite Company

So few people are doing good manners these days, reports **John Duka** 

he wonder of social New York, according to its most virulent hostesses, is that there are any manners left to speak of. Worse, either through discretion or desuetude, the doyennes and demilunes of social grace find it nearly impossible to discuss the situation.

Mrs. John Barry ("Nin") Ryan, daughter of Otto Kahn, charm incarnate and known for the prettiness of her tables, said, "Mercy! I can't possibly talk about that! Ask me another question!"

After some coaxing, Mrs. R. Thornton Wilson, who once invited a skating simian to mingle with Manhattan's more upright primates at her annual Christmas party, said, "The stories I could tell you! But I just can't! All I can say is that when I was growing up there were things you never did but do now!"

Mrs. Douglas MacArthur, from the dizzyingly nostalgic heights of the Waldorf Towers, said, "I haven't given an interview since I married the General, heavens, no!"

And Mrs. Donald Trump, Ivana to anyone with a camera, wouldn't even come to the phone unless it was for a cover story.

Ah, the weeds that among New York's social orchids do grow!

To be sure, the subject of manners is not a pretty one. Yet there are a few intrepid members of society who do not shrink from discussing it even if they may not remember: Roman punch served at dinner demanded either canvasback or terrapin, two soups, a hot and a cold sweet, and full décolletage with short sleeves; ladies of fashion always laid aside their new dresses for one season; and money once counted for less than manners.

Suzy, Manhattan's in-house voluptu-

ary, whose Belle Époque bosom (visible beyond a barrier of lace and lamé) graces every important New York event and whose gossip column is devoured daily in the ten major markets, explains the Big Apple's manners thus: "So few people have good manners that I absolutely swoon when I find someone who does! Gallantry is comatose. And to sit next to

"A girl's got to find

sitting before dinner"

out where she's

one of society's rough-edged captains of industry, well! It's to die of boredom. These days, a girl's got to protect herself and

find out where she's sitting *before* dinner. It may be a big charm school out there, but the graduates haven't learned their lessons well."

Still, she admits that a few have—among them, Judy Peabody, Drue Heinz. Carroll Petrie, Nan Kempner, Brooke Astor, Carolyne Roehm, New York's girl of the moment who has a Sargent in her dining room, and Pat Buckley, a comet among New York's lesser meteors. Buckley, says Suzy, is 'always looking to see if everyone's OK.'

And according to Buckley, everyone is definitely *not* OK. "I think about manners daily," she said. "The number of people who talk with their mouths full chills the soul. I know Mexican peasants with better manners! I'm totally perplexed by the sight of guests sawing their food into pieces, then chasing the food around their plates. And I'm frankly shattered by the number of women who don't stand when someone enters a room. I stand for everyone."

So does Nan Kempner. "I'm so thrilled to see everyone." she says, "that I can't wait to jump up and kiss them. But the fact

is, nobody does good old-fashioned manners today. Everyone puts his elbows on the table. People bring their mistresses to dinner, especially lately. I remember when you wore plus fours when you golfed, you were decent at all hours on the train, and you never interrupted. Of course, I interrupt all the time. When you hang out with Jerry Zipkin, you have to.''

But how is it we have forgotten not to talk to our dinner partners during cocktails so that we'll have something to say over the

carré d'agneau? That no one knows the proper abbreviation of Répondez, s'il vous plaît is R.s.v.p. and not R.S.V.P.? And that if a woman waited for the man she's with to come around to her side of the car to open the door, she'd wait forever?

Fortunately Letitia Baldrige, the Amy Vanderbilt of the eighties and the only woman who manages to look like George Washington without sacrificing a shred of her femininity, has the answer.

"VCRs!" she cries. "Manners are so bad because people look at computer screens all day and VCRs all night. Except for the wealthy few, people don't get together at night. They're afraid to entertain because they think their apartments are too small and don't reflect where they are in their careers. At the same time, there's great upward mobility, and more of a chance for people to enter the higher social strata. But no one is teaching those people what to do. You go to their homes as a guest, and you end up asking: Where are the hangers? Where are the tissues? Where are the guest towels? And where, where are those pretty little soaps?"

My question exactly.

MARYANSKI