MAY 2003

DESIGN TO INSPIRE

HOUSE & GARDEN

COUNTRY CHARM AT HOME IN A WINDMILL

AMERICAN COLONIAL UPDATED

COURCHEVEL, BY HENREDON

It started with a French country armoire. Antique; with a glowing, magical presence. The quintessential expression of everything French; refined, self-confident, sophisticated. With a deeply rooted connection to the past. And so, like Proust's madeleine, this one armoire inspired a flood of images; that produced Courchevel. A luminous family of furniture for every room. Related in spirit; individual in personality. Crafted one by one of knotty walnut, knotty oak, knotty alder, cherry, European walnut burl. Each piece hand-padded and hand-rubbed in the manner of generations past. With marble, leather and metal accents; and wonderful carvings. Beautifully imagined flowers, scrolls, acanthus leaves—fitting tributes to the carver's art. Each design infused with the earthy and elegant spirit that uniquely defines France. A *joie de vivre…esprit.* Uniquely captured here in Courchevel. From Henredon (of course).

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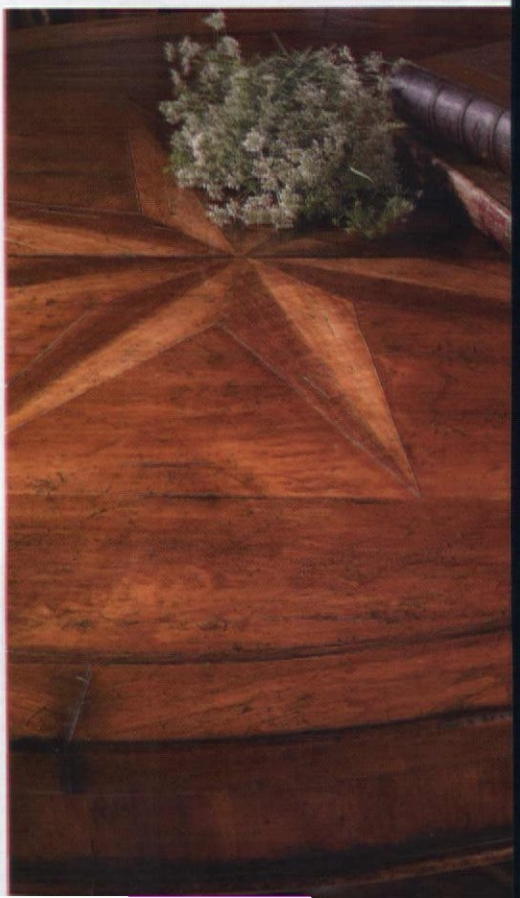

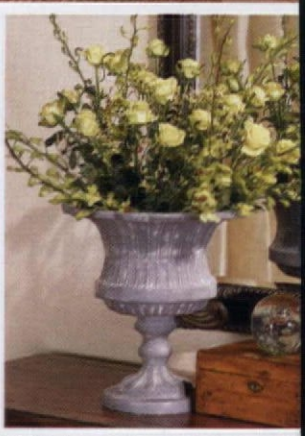

IN CONCERT, BY HENREDON

We'll bet that after the first few bars of your favorite music–jazz, classical, rock, opera; whatever–you have a pretty good idea who the artist is. Same for painting, sculpture, any of the arts. Certainly true, too, in the world of furniture design. For us, the finest work simply identifies itself. With a combination of imaginative forms, of character, of superb materials, expert ornamentation, beautiful finishes. With In Concert, for example; a Henredon destined-to-be-classic. Unmistakably contemporary furniture, but with those signature Henredon details. Of stone, metal and gleaming glass. Elegant double helix tables and Z-shaped forms. Designs that exhibit supreme self-confidence. Finished, by hand, of course; the artist's personal touch. This is furniture of infinite beauty; with a very rare kind of originality and urbane sophistication. A work of art indeed. In Concert; from Henredon (of course).

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HOW EVERYTHING HAPPENS SO FAST.

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THEN YOU BUILD.

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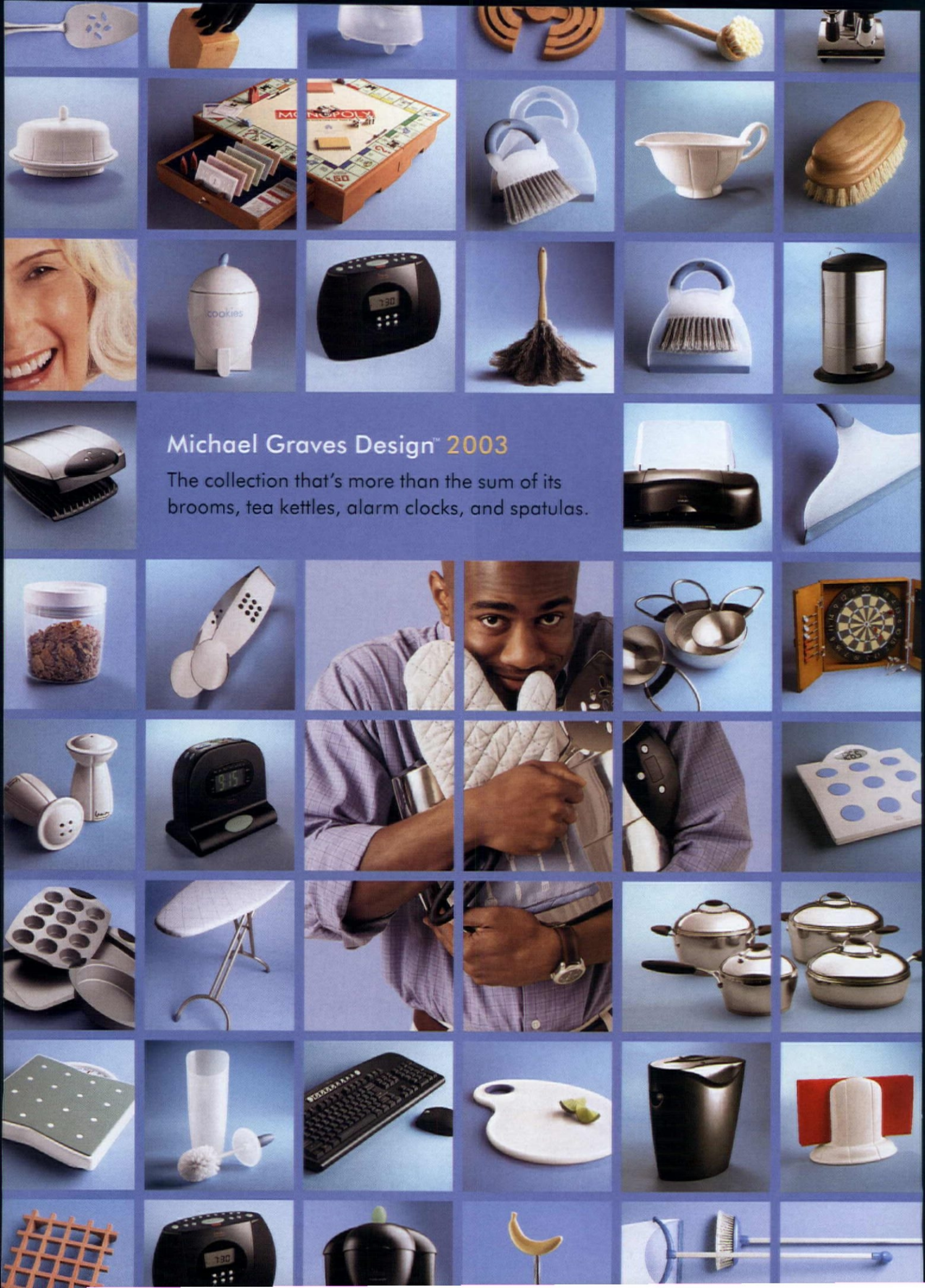
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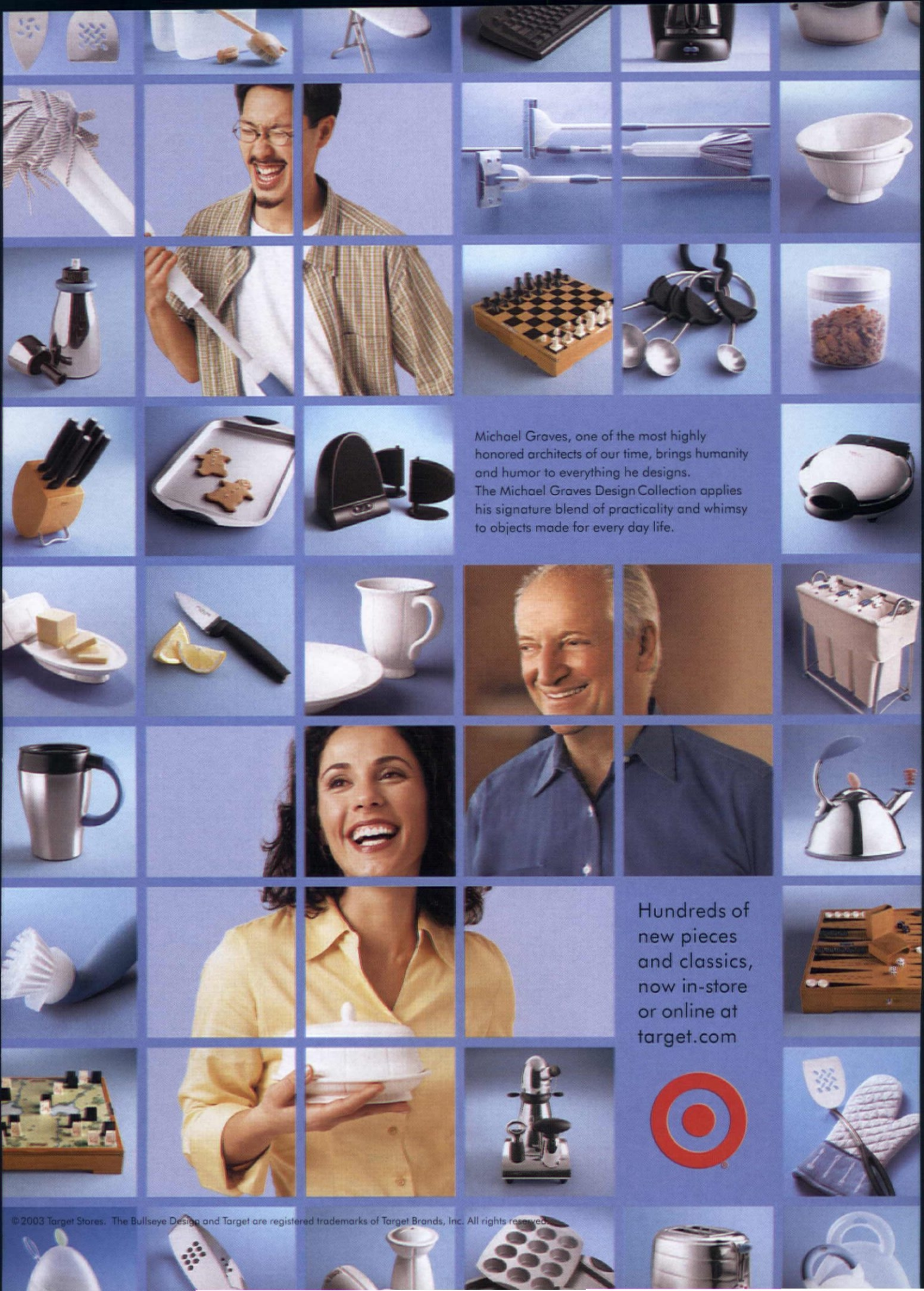

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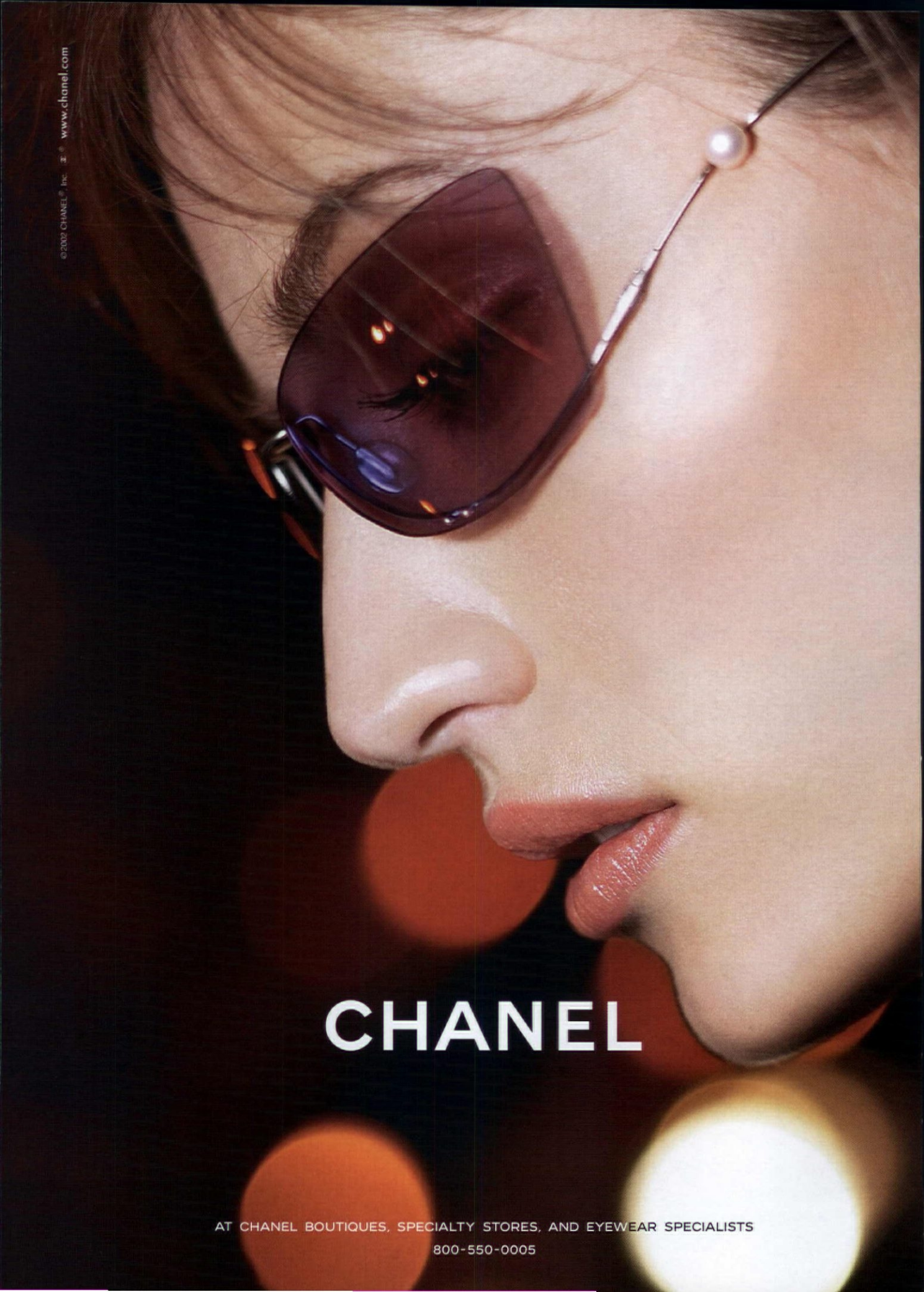
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HOUSE &GARDEN
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May

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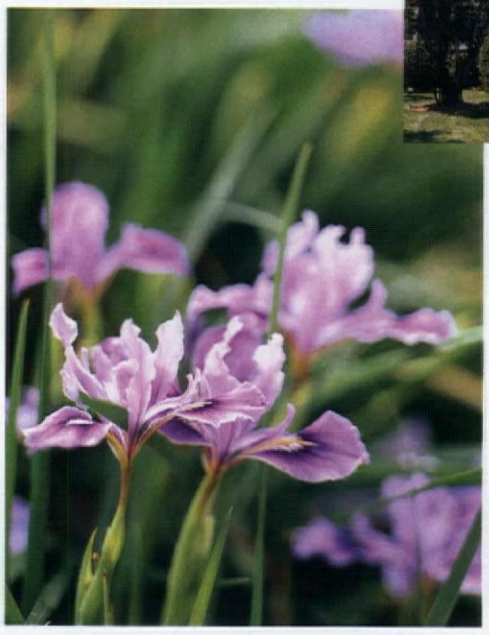

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on the cover

Designer Arthur Dunnam used spare furnishings in this entry to focus the eye on the architecture. Pollard walnut Gothic Revival table, English, ca. 1870, H. Blairman & Sons, London. 011-44-171-493-0444. Doulton Lambeth faience jardiniere, The Fine Arts Society, London. 011-44-20-7629-5116. The French, hand-forged iron chandelier, ca. 1900, fitted with Daum glass lenses, was purchased in Provence. The late-19th-century Egyptian mirror has bone and mother-of-pearl inlay, Cobweb Antiques, NYC. 212-505-1558. Oak bench is early 20th century, probably American. Paint is Pratt & Lambert #1877. Photographed by Eric Boman. Styled by Rebecca Omweg.

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welcome

service, please

ON THE LAST DAY OF DECEMBER, I made a resolution to go on a Money Diet. On the first day of January, my refrigerator went dead. I quickly learned that the biggest problem with an expensive Brand Name refrigerator is that its breakdowns are extravagant. However, as the thing had served us elegantly and quietly for 15 years, and as I had been the one to ignore the whining noises that had been emanating from the top for the past few months, I decided the price of a new motor was justifiable, even though it cost almost as much as a new refrigerator. I called the company; it would be weeks before someone could visit me, they said—and 15 years old? How about a new refrigerator? So I called Dr. S, a maverick appliance genius, who was working on January 1 and not hungover. The refrigerator was humming softly by January 3.

On January 4, my soufflé fell, and as soufflés rose weakly and collapsed for the next few days, it dawned on me that my technique in folding egg whites might not be the problem. I hung a thermometer in the oven, and saw that it was off by 25 degrees, which was the reason why the boys were (quite appropriately) grumbling over their pink chicken that night. I phoned the Brand Name Oven Company and they laughed sadistically, and said they could send someone out, but the repair would cost a fortune. I would be better off buying a new oven. Dr. S suggested I set the oven 25 degrees hotter and hope for the best. Which I do, anyway, when I cook, so that was an easy fix.

On January 6, the dishwasher sprang a leak. A small leak, to be sure, leaving just a tiny puddle on the floor, and the sort of thing one might easily ignore for a while, but I was trying to be responsive to signs of trouble, having learned the hard way (through the kitchen ceiling) that a leak today is a flood tomorrow. I called the Service Department for the Brand Name dishwasher. That, it turns out, was my big mistake.

The dishwasher had behaved perfectly for 15 years, scrubbing and swishing its way, night after night, through the remains of the table. The rubber lining of the door had simply given out a bit. My son jammed it back into place and fixed the leak; that should have been good enough, but no, I had to have a professional take a look. The professional did, and put in an order for a new part. It is infuriating to think of the number of times no one showed up for the second and then the third visit; or the times people showed up in the morning when they were supposed to be there in the afternoon, so no one was home; or, my favorite episode, when three different repairmen called for directions, and the whole thing was so confusing, what with trying to understand who I was talking to—"But I just told so-and-so how to get here" "Oh? He's coming? Then I won't bother"—that no one arrived.

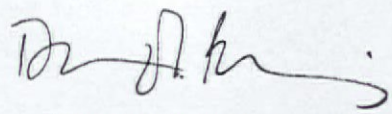
BRIGITTE LACOMBE

We are at the mercy of the Service Department, and the Service Department shows no mercy.

The last repairman to visit the dishwasher was so deranged that he began to kick and slam the door with such force that the latch broke off. Three months later the new latch has not arrived. In the meantime, Service has offered helpful advice along the lines of "That thing is so old you should just buy a new one." Never mind that the machine was functioning before help arrived. The goal of the Service Department, it turns out, is to get the customer so worn out that she, like the appliance, collapses in a heap and hands over her credit card. But after that treatment, I would never give my money to the same company again.

The Money Diet was beginning to seem unlucky. I had nothing to show for all I was spending on things I had already spent a lot to buy. But where can consumers turn when things break down? We can shout and complain and whine and even, on the worst days, weep over the phone to Service, but to little avail. We can threaten lawsuits, but who has the energy? I can accept breakdowns; they are part of everyone's life. But why is it too much to expect that things can be fixed?

The hope of a better life—if only for a few moments—is what puts us over the top in any decision to spend a lot of money. We buy things for our homes with high expectations that they are going to transform our lives: the gown that says the evening will be blissful, the car that promises a journey ahead, the tub that says you will be refreshed, the sofa that says linger a moment, the bed that says may your dreams come true, the oven that nourishes body and soul. We need to return to the days when service meant something. A breakdown in service means more than the loss of a machine. It means a breakdown in trust—and that means the loss of a relationship.



Dominique Browning, EDITOR

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maggio del 2003

Nuova Lexus

Macchina Bellissima

RX 330

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1981 I was shopping for a Mexican wedding dress when I came across some Mexican tiles ing sold as trivets. A childhood memory came back to me of beautiful showers in Mexico hich were entirely tiled. At the time I was a social worker and not looking for a new path, but fore I realized it, I was asking, "Why sell these as trivets when you can sell them as whole owers?" It wasn't long after that I started selling tile out of my home. Terra cotta tiles covered y wood floors and one of each decorative tile was displayed on my dining room table. Soon after, I visited a designer's resource room where they were oohing and ahhing over Formica rings of color. But it was through a chance encounter with a designer that I truly found my way. She was lamenting to me about some custom French lavs whose matching tile to complete a monochromatic plan had been discontinued. Again I asked, "Why not do with color for tile what Formica has done with laminates?" It was the beginning of the Ann Sacks Collection of custom tile and the birth of Ann Sacks tile, stone and plumbing.

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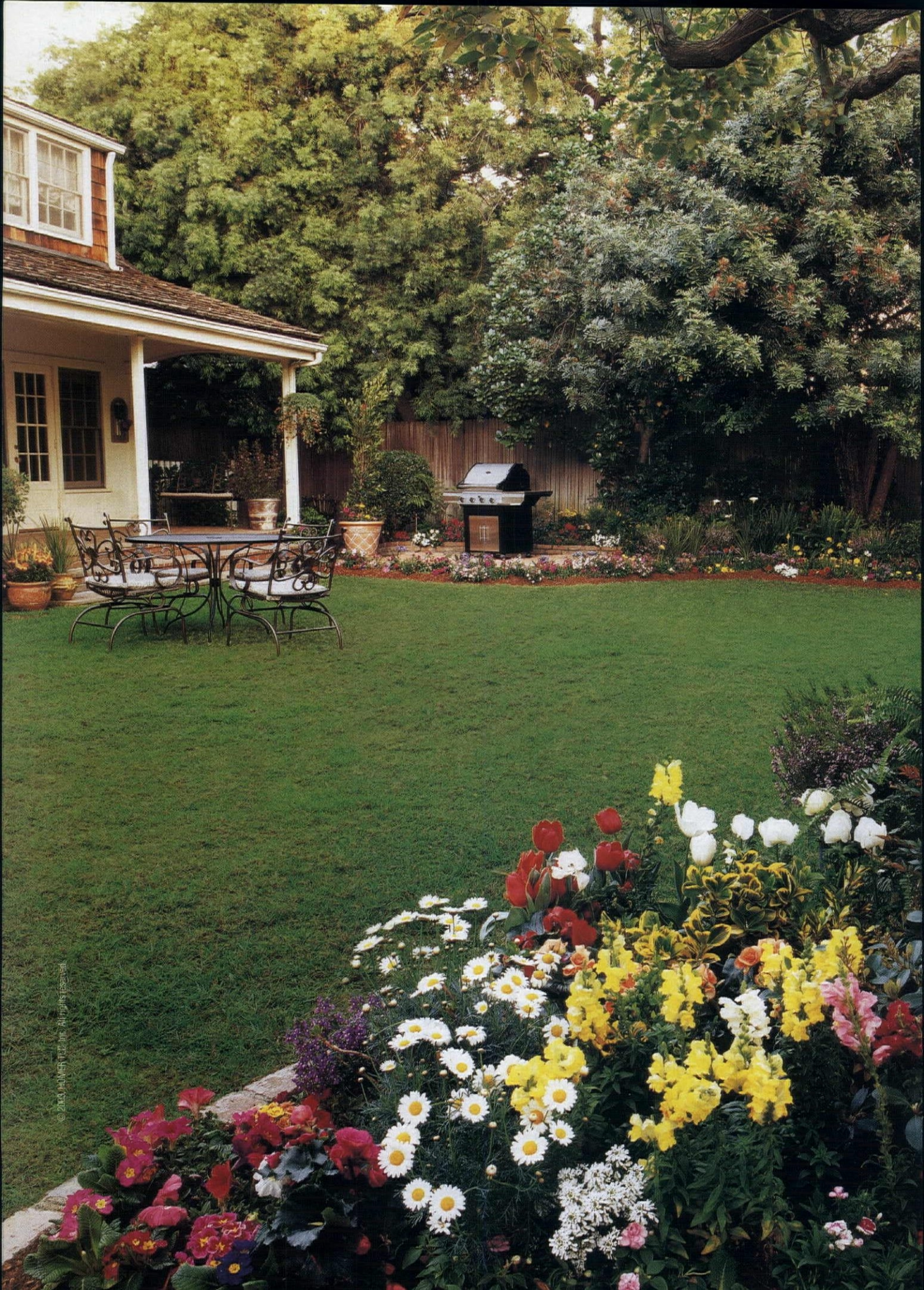
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letters

More of your letters in response to February's Welcome

I READ "The Winter Garden" and was only slightly disappointed that you didn't see the beauty of the bones. In the West we have greenery all year long, and while it is constantly lovely, one almost doesn't see it after a while. It is precious, your gift, of waiting and wondering, planning and pondering, awaiting the budding. I believe that if one loses the anticipation of spring (as we almost have here in our always temperate climate), one becomes spoiled—like those for whom a trip to Paris is just another, well, trip. Enjoy your books, but don't despair of the real garden.

DON LARSON
Beverly Hills, CA

MY FIRST REACTION to the February editor's letter was irritation, maybe tinged with genuine anger. But I realized, upon reflection, that everything you said is in some respects true. However, I'd like, with your indulgence, to provide a somewhat different perspective. White Flower Farm, under the direction of Mr. Pettingill, who is still very much at the helm, trialed more than 400 new varieties last year, created from scratch a 300-foot-long mixed border on our grounds, built two new greenhouses, launched a gardening magazine, and made very substantial changes in our series of catalogs to make them easier to use and more informative.

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Perhaps you would pay us a call this summer and take a look at the way we approach gardening. I think you'll be pleased and impressed.

ELIOT WADSWORTH
Owner, White Flower Farm
Litchfield, CT

FOR REAL WINTER JOY, read *Two Gardeners—A Friendship in Letters*, the correspondence between Katharine White of *The New Yorker* and Elizabeth Lawrence, author of several books and the garden column in *The Charlotte Observer*. One section is devoted to garden catalogs and will make your three feet of snow as warm as my Carolina backyard.

MARY R. LOWRY
York, SC

MY FAVORITE CATALOG is from High Country Gardens in Santa Fe [800-925-9387]. They seek out and grow their own plants, primarily for Xeriscapes, but the catalog has a section for and explanation of plants that will flourish in New York and Connecticut. The illustrations are attractive, but mainly informative, as is the text. The president, David Salman, who sometimes answers the phone, is pleasant and knowledgeable.

MARGARET M. BARRETT
Katonah, NY

I'VE PUT OFF discovering Beverley Nichols's books long enough. With both you and [writer] Michael Pollan recommending them, I'm sure I will be laughing soon. I'd like to recommend something wonderful to you: E. R. Rasmussen's seed catalog, "The Fragrant Path" [P. O. Box 328, Fort Calhoun, NE 68023]. I travel far in my imagination with this unassuming little photo-free catalog. I'm enclosing, from the catalog, seeds of the common love-in-a-mist (*Nigella damascena*), which when rubbed between the fingers smell of grape soda pop.

GAYLE BRYGGER
Neenah, WI

I, TOO, HAVE BEEN delighted reading Beverley Nichols's books about his houses and gardens. I was particularly intrigued by his insistence on having flowers blooming in his garden in the winter, even though he lived in an area where the winters were cold. He listed specific plants and varieties to grow for a winter flower garden, including heaths and heathers. He maintained that the same thing could be done in the United States. I would love to know if anyone in the United States or England is doing his kind of winter gardening now.

DOLLIE FRITSCHE
Hazelwood, MO

MARK BOLTON/GARDEN IMAGE

lucky bunch

I LOVE YOUR magazine and make sure I track it down in the U.K. each month. However, I was worried when I read in your February Need Help? Q & A on snowdrops that the writer suggested taking the blooms indoors. Here in the U.K. we love our first sight of spring, signaled by the snowdrop, but it is a long held and ancient belief that it is very unlucky to bring the snowdrop into our homes. So, please, American readers, take note: we all need as much luck as possible in our lives, especially so early in the year. Keep your snowdrops in the garden and enjoy them in their natural habitat, where they touch the hardest spirit on the darkest day and lift soul and spirit with promises of the year ahead.

CHRISTINE LUCAS
Gloucestershire, England

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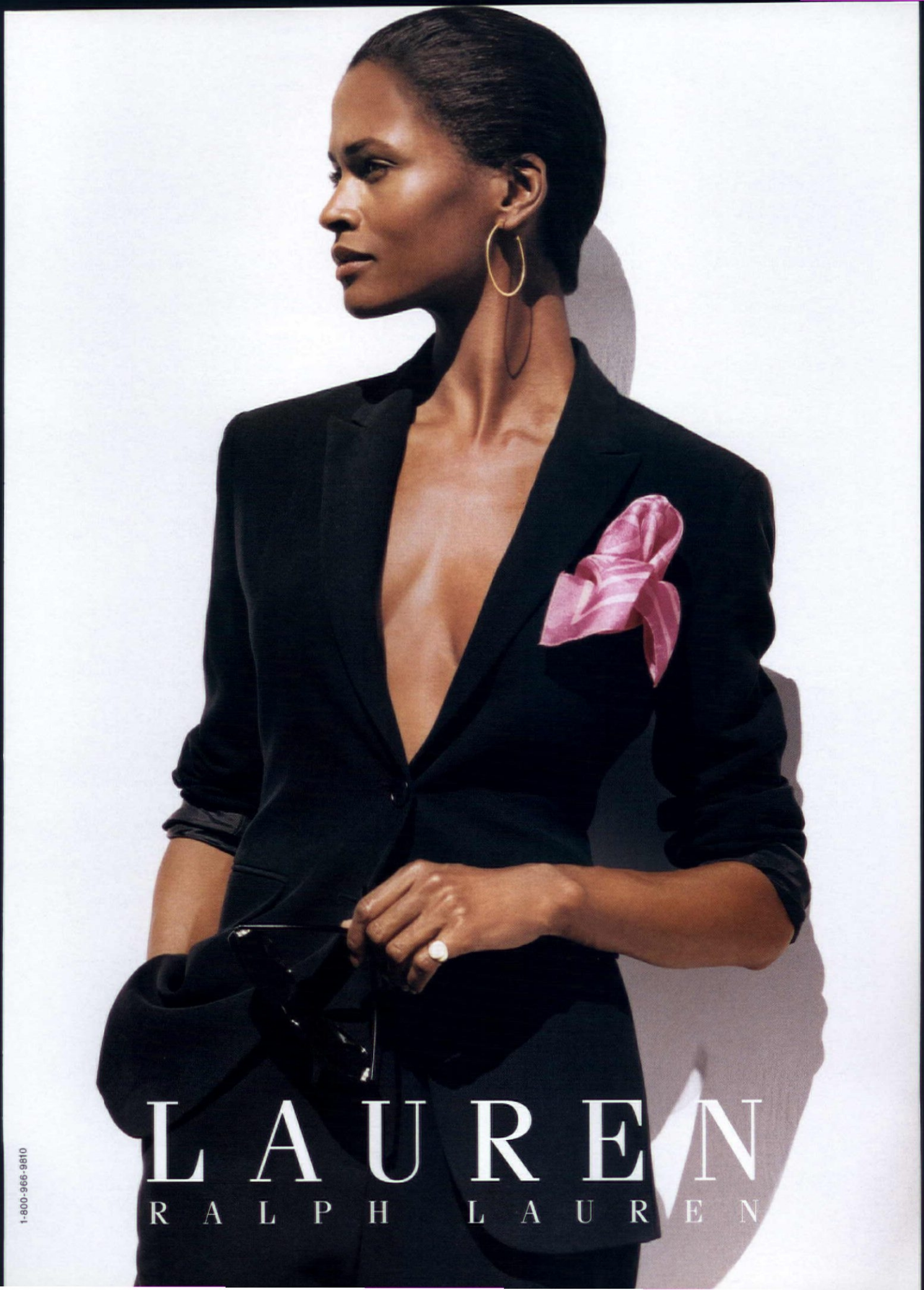
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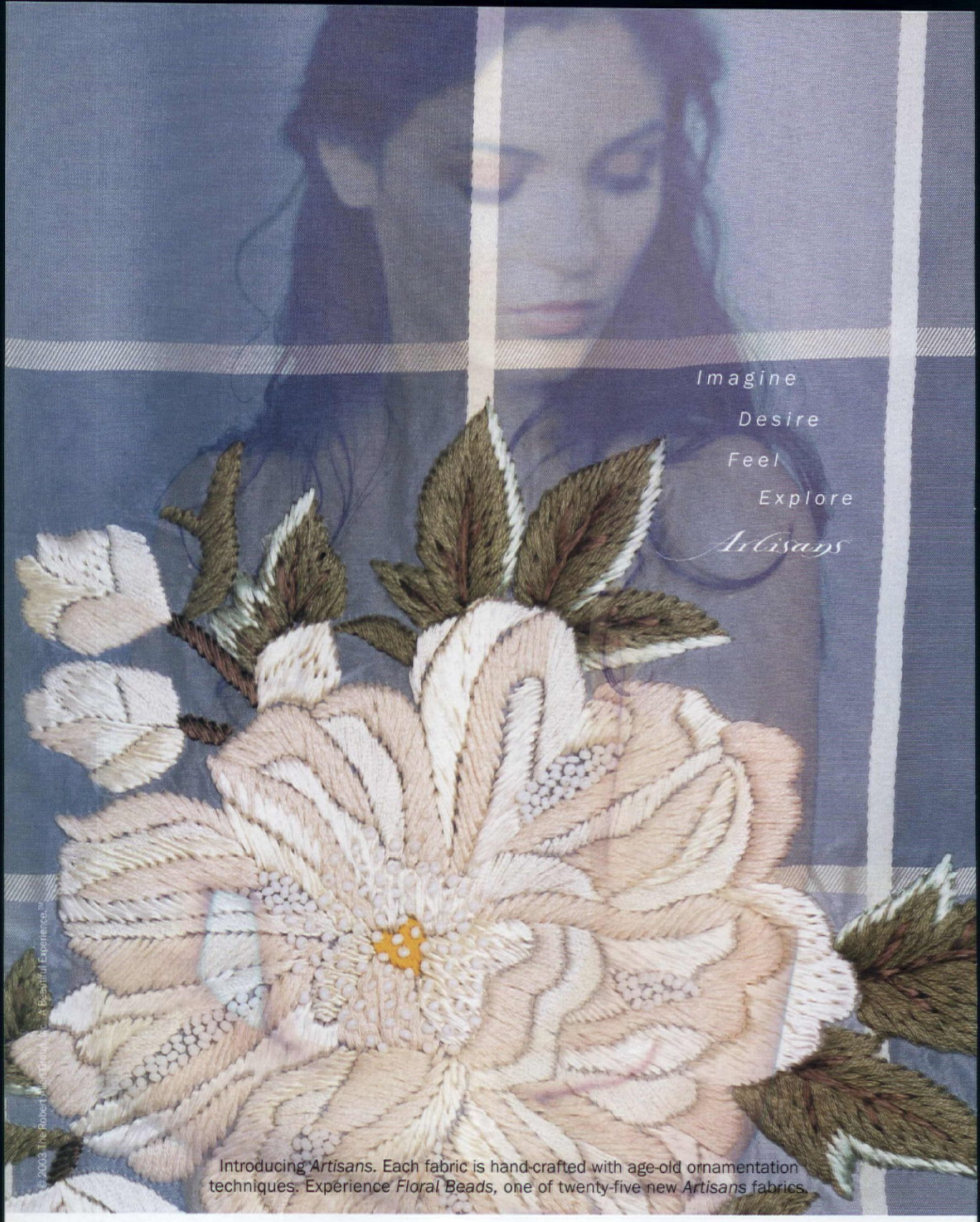

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OLD GLORY

Richard Keith Langham's parlor takes its inspiration from American classical design, a style that became popular just after the Revolution. The Greek key motif on the mantel and the floorcloth painted to resemble marble are very much of the period. See page 38 and back of book for source information.

Early American design is never out of style. Here, three designers present modern takes on Colonial, our first, and most enduring, decorating trend Written by Ingrid Abramovitch

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSOHN ■ PRODUCED BY JAMES SHEARRON

SET CONSTRUCTION BY COMPOSITION WORKSHOP

1 Richard Keith Langham

Langham grew up in the South, surrounded by Greek Revival architecture, so it's not surprising he has an affinity for the later American classical period (1810–1840). "It's a pared-down sensibility, with pure shapes, strength of line, and the power of color," he says. Like their Napoleonic Empire compatriots in France, American classicists drew heavily on ancient designs like the Greek key motif used throughout this room: it is carved into a pine mantelpiece, embroidered on a pillow, and etched onto a pair of hurricane globes. Peter Kenny, a curator of American decorative arts at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, says Langham's choice of furniture is also appropriate to the period. The recamier—a Roman-inspired couch that gets its name from a portrait of Mme. Recamier by Jacques-Louis David—seems fit for the Empress Josephine. In fact, the original upon which this reproduction is modeled was likely made in New York and is now on view at the Nathaniel Russell House in Charleston, SC.

2 Jeffrey Bilhuber

The early colonists drew on styles that were popular back home in England and Europe. As his inspiration, Bilhuber chose one of these, William and Mary, which emerged in England during the reign of Mary Stuart and her Dutch husband (1689–1702) and became the rage in Boston in the 1690s. "It introduced flourish and form in a gutsy, handsome way," Bilhuber says. His exuberant take on the period includes some faithful touches—and some improvisational ones. The authentic elements include the ladder-back chair and a curvy, high-backed settee (though it's doubtful that the colonists would have covered the latter in silk sateen and draped it with a cashmere throw). Bilhuber reasoned that the colonists wouldn't have been able to afford to rip out the earlier Colonial architecture—thus the plank door with hand-hammered black hinges. The hand-stenciled pineapples on the wallpaper are an "interesting choice that leans forward in time," says Kenny, who describes the pattern as a staple of the classical style. ▷

"William and Mary design has a muscular quality," says Jeffrey Bilhuber, who used several pieces in that style in his riff on an Early American room. "I don't decorate nostalgically," he says, "but culling from history makes great design timeless."

domestic bliss

OLD GLORY

A bedroom by Randy Ridless and Elizabeth Martell includes pieces in the Chippendale style, which was in vogue in America in the late Colonial era. But the showstopper is an American Colonial–style alcove bed inspired by one that Thomas Jefferson installed at Monticello.

OLD GLORY

Randy Ridless and Elizabeth Martell

Think of the Chippendale style (1750s–1780s) in America and what comes to mind are gracefully carved English designs like the piecrust table featured in this bedroom. A less obvious choice is the draped alcove bed shown here, decidedly more French than English in its provenance. Yet the juxtaposition isn't completely nonsensical, Kenny says. For one thing, Thomas Chippendale designed in both Rococo and the French neoclassical style. And just a few years after the death of Chippendale, America's minister to France, Thomas Jefferson, created his neoclassical masterpiece, Monticello, where he fitted nine bedrooms with alcove beds. Ridless and Martell took their inspiration for the shape of the bed's canopy from period furniture at the Metropolitan Museum. "We did sketches of eighteenth-century furniture, but then Billy Baldwin–ized everything," Ridless says—which means they freely mixed period touches with more modern ones. The walls are covered in squares of hand-painted paper, as they would have been in the eighteenth century. But instead of choosing the jewel tones and damask fabrics that would have been historically appropriate, the designers gave the room a crisp, contemporary palette of white, brown, and shades of pink. ▷

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OLD GLORY

How to get the Colonial look, and where to shop for it

1 Richard Keith Langham

Mahogany **recamier**, $6,909, Historic Charleston Collection, Baker Furniture. The original, ca. 1815, is on view at the Nathaniel Russell House in Charleston, SC. Recamier and pillow upholstered in **satin** from J. Robert Scott. Custom silk **pillow** with Greek key design, and silver **candlesticks**, by Langham & Co. American 19th-century pine **mantelpiece**, $5,200, Francis J. Purcell. Antique gilt-frame **mirrors**, bottom, from Hinson & Company; top, from Bernard & S. Dean Levy. Paris Strip **silk taffeta** on walls, from Christopher Hyland, NYC. Silver-plated **mint julep cup**, Two's Company. Hurricane **globes**, from the Brighton Collection at Christopher Norman, Inc. Vintage silver-plated **ice buckets**, Sentimento, NYC. Hand-painted **floorcloth** by Karen Sacks Glanternik.

2 Jeffrey Bilhuber

Elmwood ladder-back **dining chair** from Burton-Ching, Ltd. Les Insects **fabric** on chair cushion and pillows and cashmere **throw**, all from Chelsea Editions. Poplar and white pine tavern **table**, $1,700, from G. L. Sawyer, Ltd., Norfolk, VA. Blenheim **sofa** from Eric Lysdahl, Inc., NYC, covered in silk sateen from Rogers and Goffigon. Hanging coral **artwork**, $4,500, Red Coral, NY. Chinese **pewter paper** from Roger Arlington, used as wall covering. Pewter **fruit compote**, three **candlesticks**, and **water pitcher**, all from Match. Reproduction 18th-century **hardware**, $409 to $649, Ball and Ball, Exton, PA. Water hyacinth Almira **carpet**, Beauvais Carpets, NYC.

3 Randy Ridless and Elizabeth Martell

Walnut Irish Sheaf **armchair** from Waldo's Designs, L.A. Wool felt **pillow** with star motif, $50, from Triangle Studio. Philadelphia **piecrust table**, a reproduction of the original in the Winterthur Museum, $8,689, Kindel Furniture Company. Fairfield piqué **bed curtains**, **valence**, **chair upholstery**, and **pillows**, all F. Schumacher & Co. Taffeta **silk stripe lining**, by Bach Int'l. **Bark paper** hand-painted for Ridless by Osmundo Echevarria & Assoc. Inc., NYC. Reproduction English 19th-century **sconces**, $845, Price Glover, Inc., NYC. 18th-century girandole **mirror**, Kentshire Galleries. Articulated floor **lamp**, Lorin Marsh, NYC. Faux sable and cashmere **throws**, Pierre Frey. Sterling silver **boxes**, $1,500 and $995, Calvin Klein Home.

Six chairs from Winterthur chart the course of Early American style

17TH CENTURY (1630–1730) Sometimes referred to as the Early Colonial style. Furniture from the era, like this oak chair, places emphasis on verticality, elaborate carvings, and, at times, painted details.

WILLIAM AND MARY (1690–1725) Marked by strong vertical lines, attenuated proportions, and baroque carving—all attributes seen in this chair produced in Boston at the turn of the 18th century.

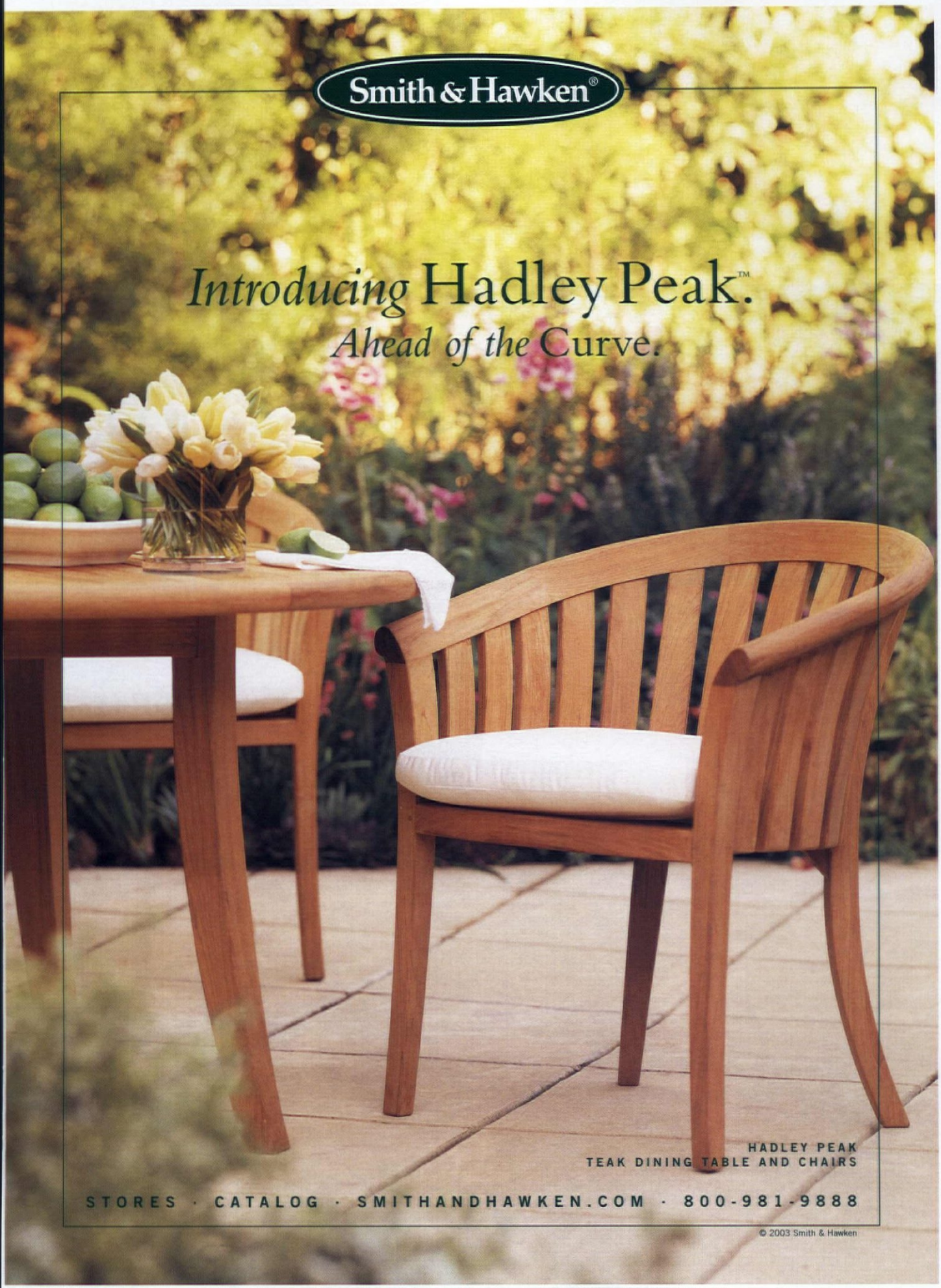
QUEEN ANNE (1725–1760) Subtlety of line and curve takes precedence over carving or inlaid decoration, as seen in this graceful walnut chair. Note the cabriole legs, a ubiquitous feature of this style.

CHIPPENDALE (1750–1780) Inspired by the pattern books of English cabinet-maker Thomas Chippendale, American craftsmen produced rococo furniture featuring pierced seat backs and intricate carvings.

EARLY CLASSICAL (1780–1810) Often referred to as Federal, because it came into fashion after the Revolution. Furniture in this style makes use of the symbols and shapes of ancient Greece and Rome.

LATE CLASSICAL (1815–1850) Also known as Empire, since it originated at Napoleon's court. Classical references continue—note the lyre—but there's also a new fascination for ancient Egyptian symbols. □

PIETER ESTERSOHN (INTERIORS); COURTESY OF WINTERTHUR (CHAIRS)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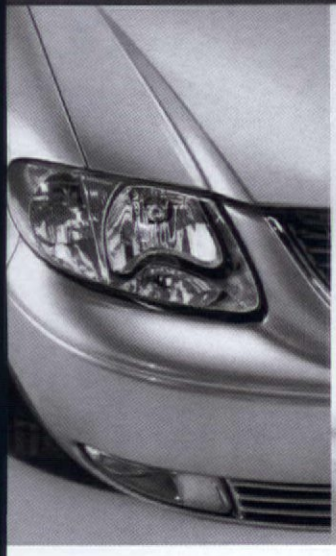

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LETTER FROM... LONDON

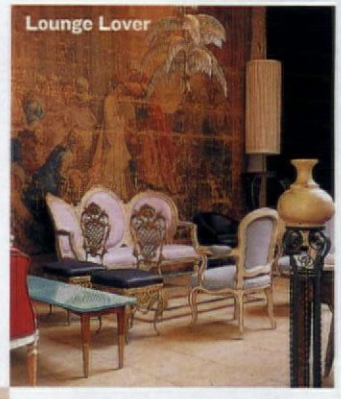
English writer and tastemaker Rita Konig leads us on a Sunday stroll through the East End

Columbia Road

You have not seen London until you've visited the East End. My new favorite shop, **Labour and Wait** (18 Cheshire St., E2 6EH; 011-44-207-729-6253; open Saturdays and Sundays only), is the hardware store to end all hardware stores. Rachel Wythe-Moran and Simon Watkins have created a shop that makes you immediately want to throw away everything and go and live in a potting shed. They have lovely vintage gardening tools: big old-fashioned watering cans that pour water like rain, trugs, and fisherman's kettles designed to stay alight during a gale—very handy for Scottish summer picnics. They have a selection of strings coated in different materials; get three balls packed in straw in one of their beautiful brown boxes and you'll have a very smart present for about $30. Wythe-Moran and Watkins's philosophy is selling simple, useful, and original designs that comfort the soul—the shop is all of those things. On a recent trip, I found enamel saucepans in the most delicious fondant colors. Can you imagine a lovelier way to heat your milk in the morning than in a lilac enamel saucepan? There really is something for everyone you know in their store.

From there, pop into **Brick Lane** for a coffee from the Italian gentleman who has a huge coffee machine in the back of his tiny Cinquecento (a.k.a. Fiat 500) van. Make your way up to **Columbia Road**, where you must visit the flower market, open only on Sundays. It is the epitome of cockney London as drawn by George Bernard Shaw in *Pygmalion*—a traditional terraced street lined with flower stalls and barrow boys shouting their wares. This is not a tourist attraction; it is a proper market used by Londoners to buy their flowers and plants. In fact, I don't think I have ever seen any tourists here.

Once you have fought your way down the street (it is very busy!), there is a turn on the left-hand side; follow the street to the most beautiful bakery, part of the **Jones Dairy** (23 Ezra St.), which has been there for about 100 years. On the left as you walk toward it is a little antiques shop worth popping into: **Odyssey Post War** (14 Ezra St.; 011-44-207-267-8272), full of twentieth-century vintage collectibles, especially glass, owned by Paul Runniff-Nutman. Follow the alley alongside the shop to an old junk shop that sells mostly Victorian gardening paraphernalia. It's hit or miss, but I found a really chic little dark brown ceramic colander the other day. Next door to the bakery is an old dairy where you can get another cup of coffee should you need one. It isn't as good as the one from the back of the Italian's van, but the building is lovely.


Lounge Lover

Labour and Wait

Just keep your eyes open here and you will see such gems. This whole area is London at its most beautiful, in my opinion. It's one of the oldest parts of the city, and you can see how scarred the area is from the severe bombing it suffered during the Second World War. The narrow streets are extremely picturesque, but they represent what were once the city's poorest areas. These days, it still doesn't take much to imagine what they were like with outside privies and cheek-by-jowl living.

If you have a friend in the city who has invited you home for lunch, pick up a huge bunch of flowers and be on your way. If you don't, go to **Lounge Lover** (1 Whitby St., E1; 011-44-207-012-1234), the new restaurant from the boys who started the chic Les Trois Garçons on Club Row. They have transformed an old meat factory with ravishing taste and furnished it with pale Swedish furniture upholstered in sugared-almond-colored leathers. Hassan Abdullah, one of the four owners, also owns Solaris, a fabulous antiques shop on Westbourne Grove. Be sure to book, as you may have trouble just poling up and chancing it—the place just opened in March.

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LARDER

Violets don't shrink in the kitchen

by Lora Zarubin

Violets always evoke the Victorian era for me, but they also strike a perfectly contemporary note for teatime or after dinner. Violets have been used in cooking for centuries. Here are some modern applications.

The sublime **violet cream** with bitter chocolate is a classic English combination that is not to be missed. I order a box from **Browne's Chocolates** in Devon when I need a violet fix. $22 for 9.3 oz. 011-44-164-723-1289. Violets from Logee's Greenhouses, Ltd. 888-330-8038.

C. Howard's violet products are a classic taste from my childhood, when you were really cool if you chewed the **violet scented gum** or sucked on a **violet mint**. It was a challenge to resist eating the entire package. Both $5 for five packs, from Candy Baron. 877-798-2339.

I found this jar of **Violettes bonbons** at La Grande Épicerie in Paris. They will make a great addition to your favorite candy dish. $9.25 for 5.3 oz., from Crossings. 800-209-6141.

Besides tasting great, **candied violets** make exquisite garnishes. One candied violet can transform a simple cupcake into a sophisticated dessert. $38 for 3.5 oz., Dean & DeLuca. 800-999-0306.

Serve **Liqueur à la Violette** chilled as an aperitif or as a cocktail with gin. $23 for 12 oz., from & Clarke's, in London. 011-44-207-229-2190. Place 2 oz. gin and 3/4 oz. Liqueur à la Violette in a shaker. Fill with ice, and shake. Serve chilled.

Though I am usually a black and white person, I couldn't resist bringing color to my kitchen with this violet **KitchenAid mixer**. $249, Williams-Sonoma. 800-541-2233.

I top off my scone with **violet jelly** from Fortnum & Mason. $6.25 for 8 oz. In London, 011-44-207-465-8668. Try **Hediard violet petal jelly** with a crumpet. $10.30 for 8.8 oz., Crossings.

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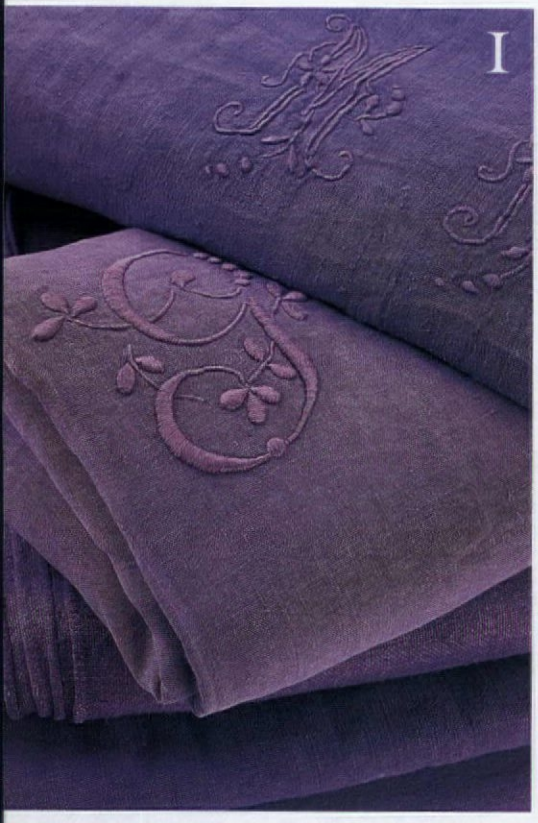
LINEN CLOSET

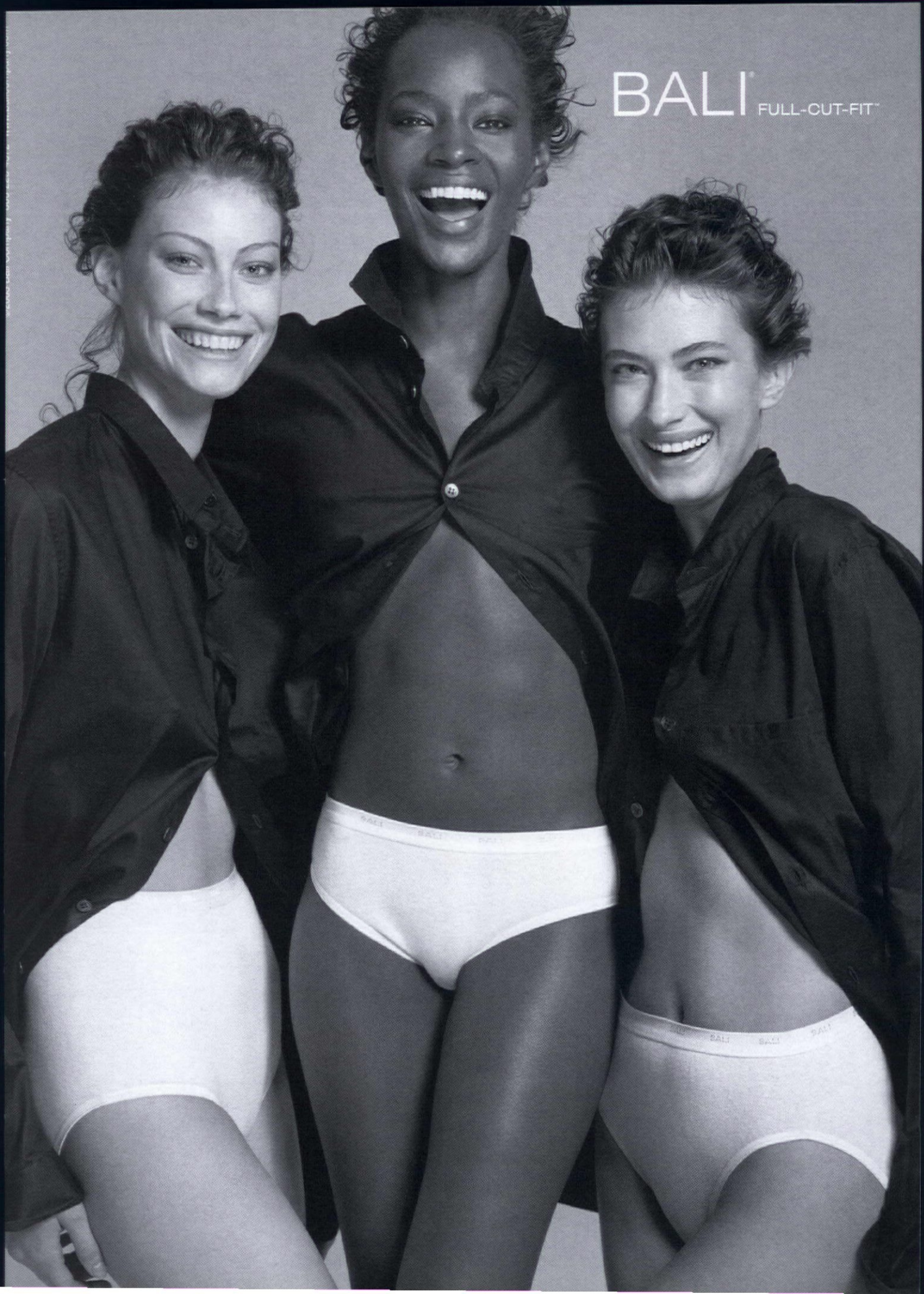
Use violet—the color and the scent—throughout the house

by Virginia Tupker



1 19th-century French linen sheets, $492 each, Guinevere Antiques Ltd., London. 011-44-207-736-2917. **2** Violette room spray, $32.50, and soap, $16.50 for three, Côté Bastide, at La Cafetiere. 866-486-0667. Violetta bath oil, $60, Penhaligon's. 877-736-4254. **3** Porthault's Bouquet of Violets cotton boudoir sham, $95. In NYC, 212-688-1660. Léron's hand-embroidered top sheet, $1,050. 800-954-6369. **4** Embroidered handkerchief, $25, E. Braun & Co. 800-3727-286. **5** Luxe cashmere throw, $935; Stelle blankets, $450 each, by Muse. 866-212-6873. **6** Classic perfumes, from left: Acqua di Colonia by Santa Maria Novella, $65 for 100 ml, Takashimaya. 800-753-2038. Violettes de Toulouse by Berdoues, $36 for 80 ml, C.O. Bigelow. 800-793-5433. La Violette by Annick Goutal, $65 for 1.7 oz., Bergdorf Goodman. 800-558-1855. **7** Calypso candle, $32. In NYC, 212-274-0449. La Mousseuse bath towel, $40, by Descamps, at the Ritz Connection. 866-748-9266.

TED MORRISON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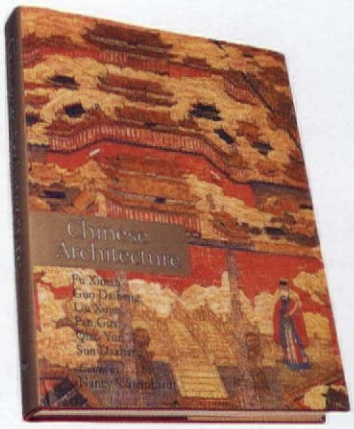
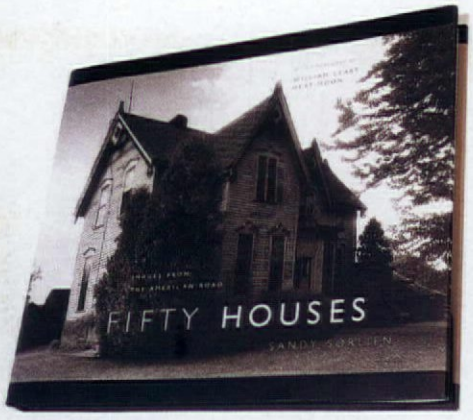
BOOKS

It's spring, and open season on good reading by Katrine Ames

THE PERFECT GAME (Abrams, $30) Baseball has been and is the impetus for much striking and imaginative folk art, from dartboards and quilts to andirons and a Navajo rug. The texts by Elizabeth V. Warren and Roger Angell are first-rate.



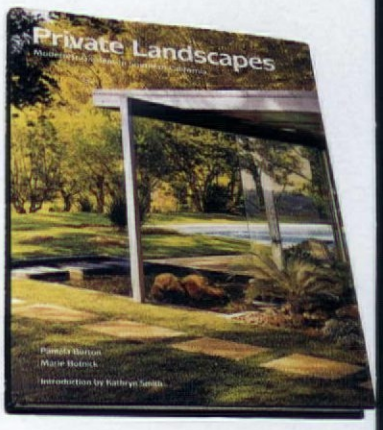
CHINESE ARCHITECTURE (Yale, $65) Managing to be both scholarly and extremely accessible, this gorgeous volume examines almost 5,000 years of building design in China. With photos, plans, and fascinating essays by several architectural historians, it should help to fill the chasm of ignorance most Westerners have about that vast country's traditions.



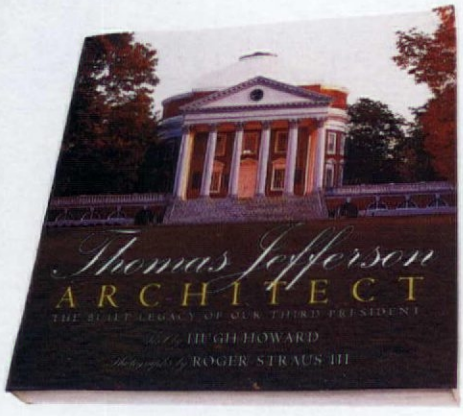
FIFTY HOUSES (Johns Hopkins, $35) Sandy Sorlien creates a moving, stunning document of America's rich and imperiled domestic architectural heritage. She shot from the road, giving each house—one per state—a sense of proud remove and individuality.

DAVID HICKS: DESIGNER (Trafalgar Square, $45) One of the most influential decorators of the past half century, and a revolutionary colorist, gets the royal—and personal—treatment from his son Ashley, also a well-known British designer. An ideal book for anyone interested in the history of interior design.

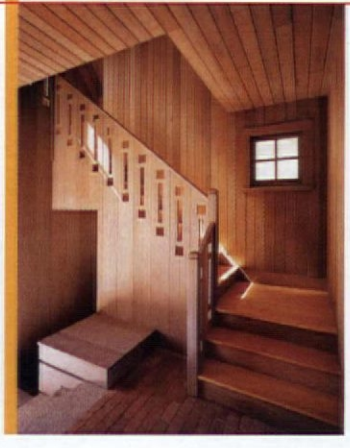
DEFINING EDGES (Abrams, $40) W. H. Bailey illuminates the role of the picture frame by examining several that surround works of art, from Renaissance altarpieces to Hockney drawings. His observations on the relationship of the frame to what it encloses, and on the whole picture, so to speak, are astute and engaging.



PRIVATE LANDSCAPES (Princeton Architectural Press, $40) This is a compelling look at 19 southern California gardens intrinsically linked to their houses, all designed by such midcentury modernists as Richard Neutra and John Lautner. The mere existence of the gardens will surprise many; their attention to scale and region is a revelation.



THOMAS JEFFERSON, ARCHITECT (Rizzoli, $40) The framer of the Declaration of Independence was also the framer of some of the most handsome buildings of a new nation, and his influence remains wide-ranging, as this book makes manifestly and beautifully clear.



THE DISTINCTIVE HOME (Taunton, $40) Focusing on site, floor plan, "the public face," and details (trim, doors, brackets), architect Jeremiah Eck explains how even the simplest house can be outstanding. This is a fine debut in a new series by Taunton and the American Institute of Architects.

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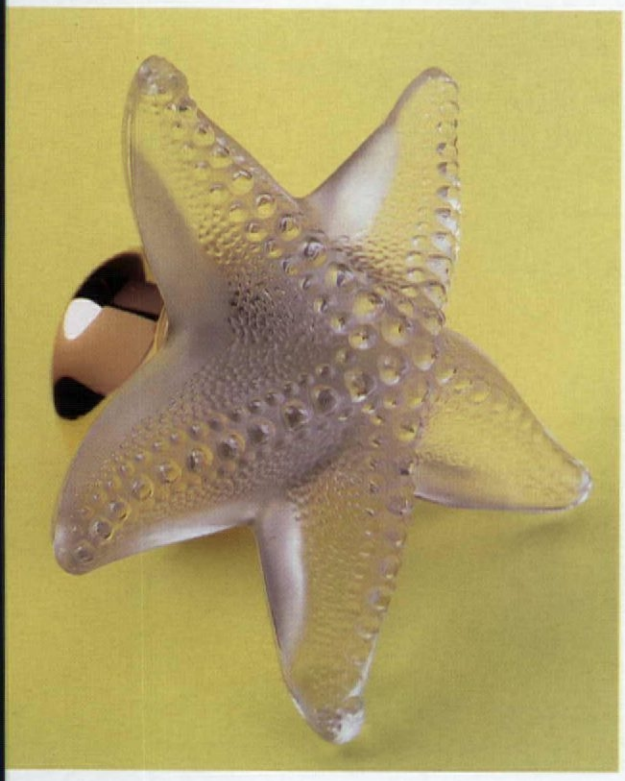

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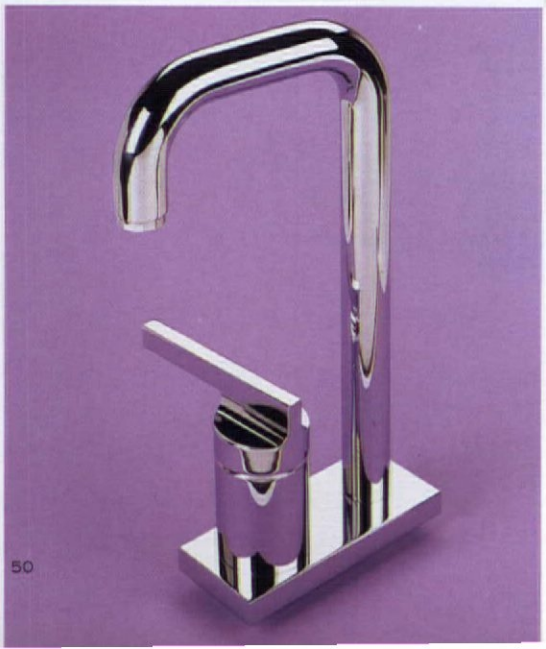
>> PIERO LISSONI

Italian architect and designer Lissoni has a long affiliation with Milan-based Boffi, the cutting-edge kitchen and bath manufacturer. He designed the new Liquid 1 faucet, here in chrome, $996, and Boffi's new Santa Monica showroom. In CA, 310-458-9300.



<< PHILIPPE STARCK

Duravit has just launched Starck 3, streamlined designs in which "the superfluous becomes superfluous." Pedestal Sink, $880. 888-387-2848. The line also includes baths and shower trays, a first for Duravit.

STEVEN SCLAROFF >>

Inspired by old silver tableware and objects from the 1930s, Sclaroff created the Boulevard line for Waterworks, turning bathroom fittings into sculptural objects. Lavatory set with cross handles, in nickel, $1,275. 800-899-6757. ▷

PRODUCED BY MELISSA FELDMAN. PRODUCTION COORDINATOR, VIRGINIA TUCKER. TED MORRISON, COURTESY OF DURAVIT (SINK)

As I See It, #3b in a series by Jean Claude Maillard.
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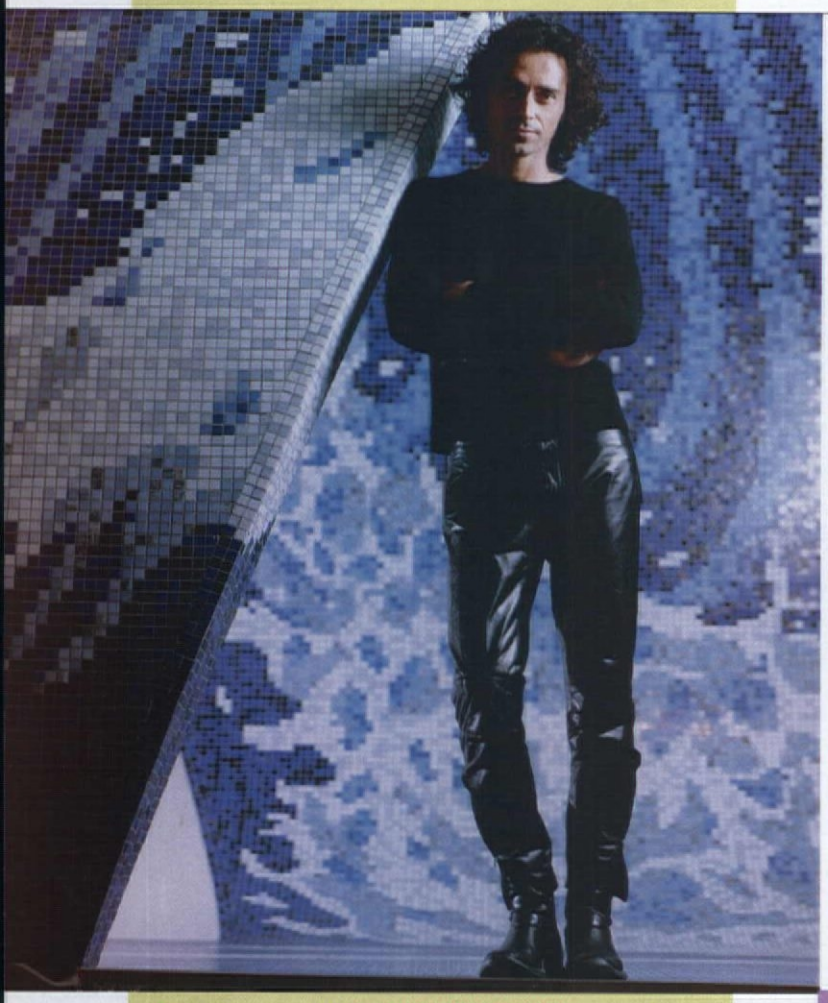


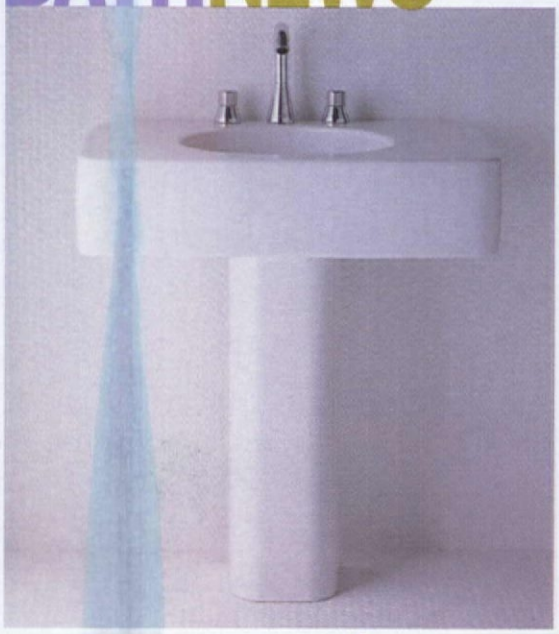
Catching up with FABIO NOVEMBRE, creative director of Bisazza, the Italian company famous for Venetian-style glass tiles

YOU'RE KNOWN FOR INSTALLING BEAUTIFUL MOSAICS. WHY DO YOU FIND MOSAIC SUCH A POWERFUL MEDIUM?
To me, mosaic is skin, the skin of the architecture. I am very interested in skin, the processes of the surface—tattoos and even scars fascinate me. The inner body is so complicated, you are almost not aware that you have lungs, a liver, whatever. But skin! You wash your skin; you caress the skin of your partner. The way you appear to, or look at, other people is mostly about skin. Mosaics can work in a similar way.

WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL BATHROOM?
A swimming pool. We need to pay more attention to the bathroom. And it should be much bigger in the house. Think about the Romans or the Greeks—they had a fantastic relationship with water. We've completely forgotten. I say, a swimming pool for everybody!

WHAT DOES WATER MEAN TO YOU?
Two-thirds of our body is made of water, and two-thirds of the planet is covered with water. We have such a strong relationship with the liquid, and the bathroom represents our relationship with water. Think about aging. It's basically just losing liquid. For me, enhancing our relationship to water is a fantastic metaphor for living better, living a more harmonious life. —MELISSA FELDMAN

BATHNEWS



MARC NEWSON

Having designed everything from lighting for Flos to a car for Ford, Newson turns to the bathroom. Pedestal lavatory in fire clay white porcelain, $700–$800, available mid-2003. 800-359-3261. porcher.com.

NICK MUNRO

Munro made his name with witty twists on traditional tabletop pieces. In the Urbanware collection for CHF Industries, he does the same for bath accessories. From top: stoneware tumbler, covered jar, and soap dish, $15 each. Bloomingdale's. 800-472-0788. ▷

COURTESY OF IDEAL STANDARD; TED MORRISON; ALBERTO CONTI (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT)

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BATHNEWS

MICHAEL SMITH

Kallista asked interior designer Smith to expand his popular industrial-looking For Loft collection. One of the results: a capacious mirrored and lighted medicine cabinet, $1,401. 888-452-5547.

ROBERTO AND LUDOVICA PALOMBA

When this husband and wife team—an architect and a designer—began working together in 1993, they focused on stage design. Since then, they've carried their taste for the theatrical into product design and architecture, exemplified by their Big Pill medicine cabinet, $236, for Dornbracht. 800-774-1181.

ALEXANDRA CHAMPALIMAUD

When Lucite and Champalimaud collaborated on bath designs for an exhibit exploring innovative uses of the material, neither anticipated the excitement that the tubs, sinks, and even toilet tanks would generate. The fixtures are currently available on a made-to-order basis, but the designer is hoping for a full-fledged commercial launch later this year. Doca bathtub. In NYC, 212-807-8869.

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HER BATH COLLECTION FOR ANN SACKS DEBUTS THIS SPRING

SHELTON, MINDEL & ASSOCIATES

By concealing most of the mechanics, architects Lee Mindel and Peter Shelton were able to make the faucets in Waterworks' new Opus collection as simple and minimal as possible. Crystal egg lavatory set in nickel finish, $1,075. 800-899-6757.□

COURTESY OF KALLISTA; TED MORRISON (2); COURTESY OF ALEXANDRA CHAMPALIMAUD (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT)

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in the garden

CULINARY HERBS

From left: Rosemary, mint, sage, and myrtle prefer to be outdoors in a sunny garden, but they can be grown indoors if necessary.

ERIC PIASECKI

Though herbs are loved for their beauty, it is their history of usefulness—real and imaginary—that earns them a place in our gardens Edited by Stephen Orr

CULINARY HERBS

ANNUAL herbs are grown easily if sown year to year

1 borage This hairy, weedy plant self-seeds promiscuously but is redeemed by its blue flowers. Use the flowers and young leaves to give a cucumber flavor to soups and salads. LORE: Added to wine, drives away melancholy.

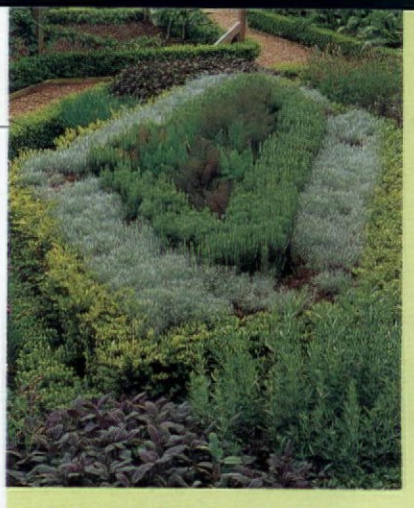
2 basil has outgrown the evil reputation given it by ancient herbalists. There are many varieties, including anise-flavored Thai basil. LORE: Early Romans thought seeds would grow if they planted them while cursing loudly.

3 cilantro To Americans, the leaves are called cilantro and the seeds are known as coriander. Sow early, since plants bolt (set seed) in hot weather. LORE: Said to be an aphrodisiac in *The Thousand and One Arabian Nights*.

4 perilla Known as *shiso* in Japanese cooking, perilla has a subtle mint/cilantro flavor. This murrey-colored variety has the decorative appearance of a coleus. It self-sows readily. LORE: Said to prevent seafood poisoning.

5 chervil is one of the versatile *fines herbes* of classic French cooking. Since it prefers cool weather and grows quickly, it is best sowed successively in spring and late summer. LORE: Thought to stop hiccups.

6 dill This tall (up to 5 feet) annual is grown for its strong-flavored leaves and seeds. Because it doesn't tolerate transplanting, sow seeds where they can grow in full sun. LORE: A drink made of dill lulls children to sleep.



GROWING HERBS

Give herbs what they want and they will flourish for years. But figuring out their needs can be a challenge. It helps to know how herbs grow in their native habitats.

PERENNIALS Many kitchen herbs are perennials. Easy to grow in summer, they can be a challenge to winter over. Some, like mint and chives, are tough customers that can easily sleep through a northern winter with little protection. Others, like lavender and rosemary, may not reawaken after a hard winter. To succeed year to year, imagine these plants in their home. On sunny but exposed hills, Mediterranean plants like rosemary, thyme, lavender, sage, and savory survive the cold, windy winters with ease. For many herbs, the secret is in the well-drained, sometimes poor soil. Plant these varieties in full sun in a sandy loam, and never fertilize. Too much nourishment makes for weak, not hardy, growth and dilutes the concentration of the flavorful oils in the leaves. A light bark mulch, kept clear of the plant's crown, will further increase winter survival rates.

ANNUALS Since hardiness is not an issue, one-season herbs are easy to grow. As with any annual, your main task will be to keep the plant from flowering, setting seed, and dying too early. Pinch off the flower buds as soon as they appear, but stop doing so at the end of summer, when plants will reseed.

INDOORS Herbs, especially tender ones, are well-suited to pots. Plants can be successfully wintered indoors, but be sure to keep them in full sun and away from heating units. Most herbs do not tolerate dry air and will shrivel up by February. A sunny bathroom window is an ideal spot. ▷

ANDREW LAWSON (1, GROWING HERBS); ERIC PIASECKI (2); MICHAEL KRAUS (3, 5); SAXON HOLT (4); STEVEN WOOSTER/GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY (6)

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PERENNIAL herbs range from winter tough to tender

1 caraway A biennial grown mainly for its savory seeds, but also for its edible roots. It dislikes transplanting, except when very young. LORE: Its retentive powers made it suitable for love potions and anti-theft talismans.

2 rosemary Rarely hardy north of zone 7, it can be potted and brought indoors over the winter. LORE: Thought to aid memory and fidelity, and used in old matrimonial rites and funerals.

3 oregano & marjoram These two types of *Origanum* are confusing. Visually similar, they differ mainly in flavor and hardiness. LORE: Marjoram growing on a grave signified the happiness of the dead.

4 mint Out of the dozens of mint varieties, I like soft apple mint the best. Plant all mint carefully, since it spreads vigorously in moist spots. LORE: Ancient Greeks rubbed it on the dining table to increase the appetite.

5 bay, a tender evergreen laurel, must be brought to a sunny spot indoors to survive cold winters. LORE: Used as an honorific wreath for heroes; the Latin term for "bachelor's degree" is from *bacca laureus* (laurel berry).

6 parsley has been maligned as a useless garnish, but anyone who has tasted tabbouleh would disagree. This biennial prefers cool summers. LORE: "Where parsley flourishes, the missus is master" is a Devonshire saying.

7 chamomile Propagate this tea herb from seeds or, more easily, by division. Roman chamomile is lower growing, while German is bushier. LORE: Called the "plant physician," thought to heal ailing plants in its vicinity.

8 lavender This perennial has a reputation for being cold tender, but it is most often killed by rot from poor winter drainage. The best essence comes from the flowers. LORE: Relieves hoarseness and laryngitis.

9 lemon verbena will not survive cold and must be brought indoors during winter. There the plant will promptly drop its leaves before growing new ones. LORE: Helps reduce fever and promotes a dreamless sleep. ▷

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10 lemon balm I find the sharp taste of this tea herb harsh in comparison to the more refined lemon verbena. A mint relative, it spreads invasively in fertile soil. LORE: Planted near the front door, it deters evil spirits.

11 chives This dainty but hardy member of the onion family is grown for its leaves and edible flowers. A few clumps will increase easily by seed and bulb offsets. LORE: Grown next to roses, said to discourage black spot fungus.

12 fennel This biennial is known for the anise flavor of its seeds and leaves. It grows easily from seed but hates transplanting. LORE: Promotes good eyesight. Serpents sharpen their sight by rubbing against the plant.

13 savory A short-lived perennial, winter savory has a stronger, peppery flavor and woodier growth than its seed-grown annual relative, summer savory. LORE: In medieval times, popular as a digestive aid.

14 tarragon French tarragon has the true flavor of licorice and mowed hay, while Russian tarragon is bland. Grow it from cuttings to be sure of the variety. LORE: Reputed to heal insect stings and the bites of mad dogs.

15 thyme English thyme is most often used in cooking. It can withstand cold winters, but only with good drainage. Cutting the plant back hard in late summer can weaken its hardiness. LORE: Helps the digestion of fatty foods.

16 sage is a tough, hardy plant, but it should be replaced every 3 to 4 years to keep its flavor. LORE: Its Latin name, *Salvia*, gives credence to the traditional curative powers of this herb. Thought to stimulate circulation.

CLASSIC HERB BOOKS

The history of herbs is a hand-me-down one. John Gerard, John Parkinson, and Nicholas Culpeper, English authors of the 16th and 17th centuries, combined the ancient writings of Pliny and Dioscorides with local folklore. Later authors recast this material for 20th-century readers. The results are a charming if sometimes unreliable library of recirculated arcana. Here are some easily obtained favorite volumes:

- **ELIXIRS OF LIFE**, Mrs. C. F. Leyel
- **GREEN ENCHANTMENT**, Rosetta Clarkson
- **HERBS AND THE FRAGRANT GARDEN**, Margaret Brownlow
- **HERBS AND HERB GARDENING**, Eleanour Sinclair Rohde
- **A MODERN HERBAL**, Mrs. M. Grieve (on-line at botanical.com)
- **THE YEARS IN MY HERB GARDEN**, Helen Morgenthau Fox
- Out-of-print books can often be located at abebooks.com or alibris.com.

GENERAL HERB REFERENCE

- **NEW BOOKS OF HERBS**, Jekka McVicar
- **NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HERBS AND THEIR USES**, Deni Brown
- **RODALE'S ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HERBS**, edited by Claire Kowalchik. □

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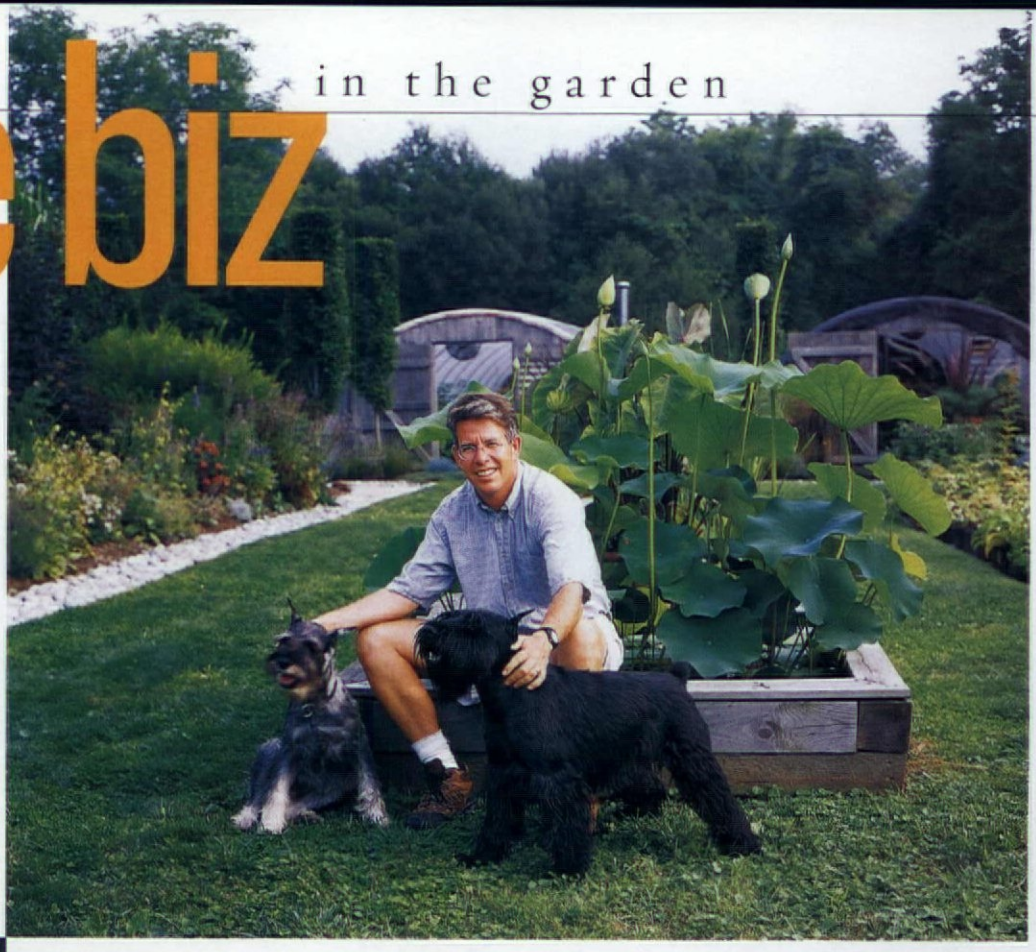
the biz in the garden



Sean Conway's nursery expands its reach with a line of merchandise at Marshall Field's

by Carol King

Sean Conway, top, acts as the curator of his collection of rare plants, including this *Stigmaphyllon ciliatum* vine, above. A pathway, right, is lined with potted plants with yellow flowers and foliage.

Imagine strolling through a beautiful garden filled with strange and wonderful plants that you, the experienced gardener, don't recognize. Imagine that the unfamiliar plants are grouped in inventive ways that highlight their unusual qualities and beg to be copied. Imagine that the plants are for sale.

This is the concept behind the boutique nurseries that specialize in rare plants and exciting display gardens. Conway's Nursery, in the tiny Rhode Island town of Tiverton Four Corners, draws knowledgeable gardeners, people with a strong sense of design, and well-known plantsmen from all over the country. Says owner Sean Conway, "A boutique nursery is like a beautiful garden book full of new plants used in new ways." At Conway's, the rare plants are for sale, but the ideas are free.

"Gardeners are more sophisticated today," Conway says. "They've gone through all the stages—the daylilies, the ornamental grasses, the exotic annuals. Now they're ready for the next level. They're looking for something new."

"Something new" is Conway's growing inventory of unusual plants, presented and displayed in strikingly original combinations and containers. To be included, a plant has to be not only new but also a good grower and not overly difficult.

Conway is famous for his container plantings, such as a long, low, water-filled pig trough stocked with evenly spaced clumps of red rice. Far from looking porcine, the container has a spare, Zen-like quality. (This item, however, is not for sale.)

But since his collection of unique vessels, found objects, and one-of-a-kind ornaments is too good to keep to himself, Conway has designed a line of garden containers and accessories based on some of his favorite artifacts.

To launch his collection, Marshall Field's is devoting 4,000 square feet of its State Street, Chicago, store to Sean Conway Gardens, a garden product and lifestyle shop. Savvy shoppers will find Conway's collection of accessories, gifts, planters, indoor and outdoor furniture, lanterns, antiques, and one-of-a-kind items, all presented the Conway way. Sean Conway Gardens will also be launched in three more Marshall Field's stores—in Minneapolis, Detroit, and Oakbrook, IL—with partial collections at the store's other locations. □

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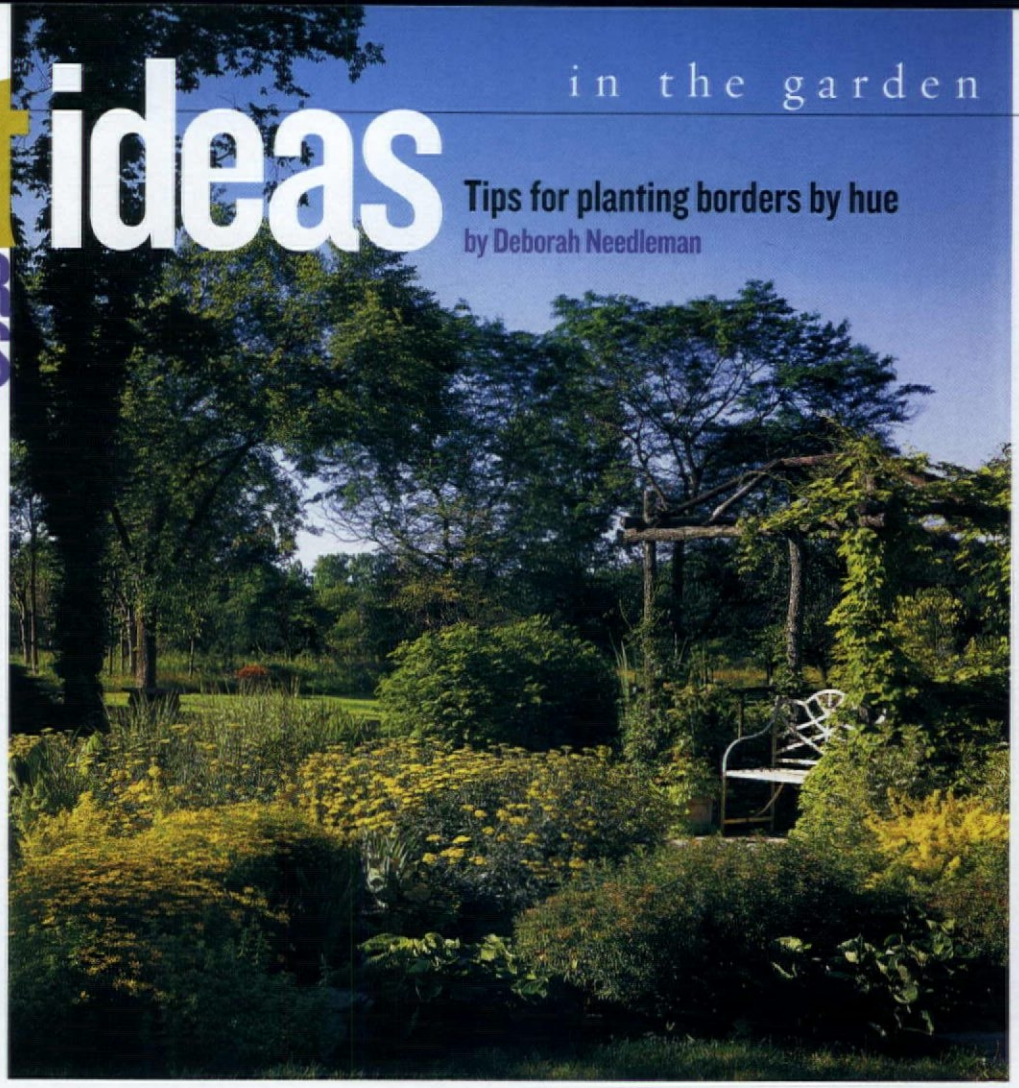
Tips for planting borders by hue

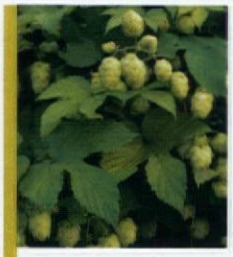
by Deborah Needleman



For the Illinois garden of Donna LaPietra and Bill Kurtis, landscape architect Craig Bergmann designed two areas devoted to different palettes. The gold garden is an exuberant mix of clambering vines, potted tender plants, shrubs, annuals, and perennials. Its chartreuse and yellow tones come from both flowers and foliage. A pair of pastel herbaceous borders (85 by 13 feet) is limited to perennials in a calm, sophisticated palette ranging from mauves to soft pinks, from grays to blues.

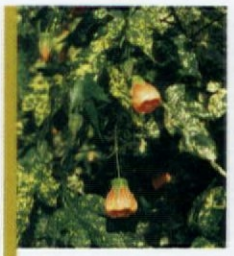
gold garden >>

- Bergmann used the bright setting as the inspiration for a garden in which it appears the sun is always shining.
- The plants are an eclectic mix of exotic and hardy, but all are suited to full sun.
- For color-themed plantings, Bergmann is wary of catalog photos and descriptions. Instead he suggests snipping a bit of a prospective plant or flower and placing it around the garden to see where it will work.
- Yellow-flowering bulbs like 'Crown Imperial' fritillaries and *Allium moly* give early color.
- Location can affect the way a plant looks: *Hosta* 'Sum and Substance' really shows its yellowy green hue when surrounded by other yellows.
- The texture of the foliage is as important as its color. When everything is of a similar hue, textural contrasts prevent the composition from looking like a jumble.



***Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus'** Vines such as golden hops are great for carrying the eye and the garden upward.

***Euphorbia griffithii* 'Fireglow'** Early color and great foliage make spurges invaluable planting partners.



***Abutilon pictum* 'Thompsonii'** Potted tender perennials such as flowering maple provide movable decorative accents.

***Achillea* 'Moonshine'** These pancake-flat, long-lasting flowers are the perfect contrast to delicate foliage and grasses.

***Canna* 'Pretoria'** The big leaves of tropicals provide a dramatic counterpoint unrivaled by most hardy foliage.

***Miscanthus sinensis* 'Zebrinus'** Grasses are essential for breaking up the rounded forms of most perennials and shrubs.

***Coreopsis verticillata* 'Zagreb'** Airy foliage and delicate, daisylike blooms are good foils for bolder leaves and blossoms.

***Berberis thunbergii* 'Aurea'** Variegated and golden-leaved shrubs form the structural backbone of this garden. ▷

DANA GALLAGHER (TOP); MARCUS HARPUR; EDWARD DEGREY; BRIAN CARTER/GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY; EDWARD DEGREY; JAMES GUILLIAM/GARDEN

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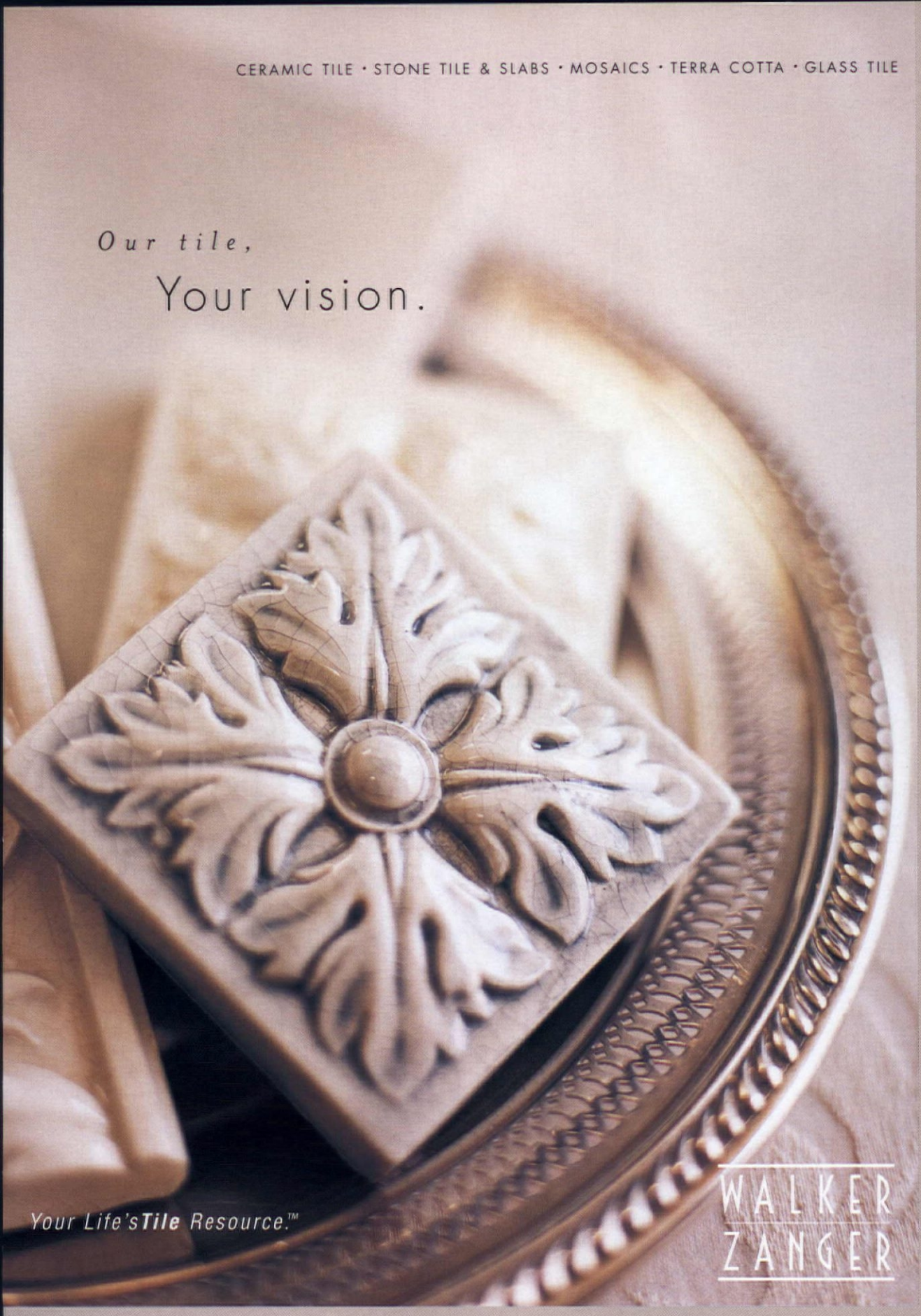

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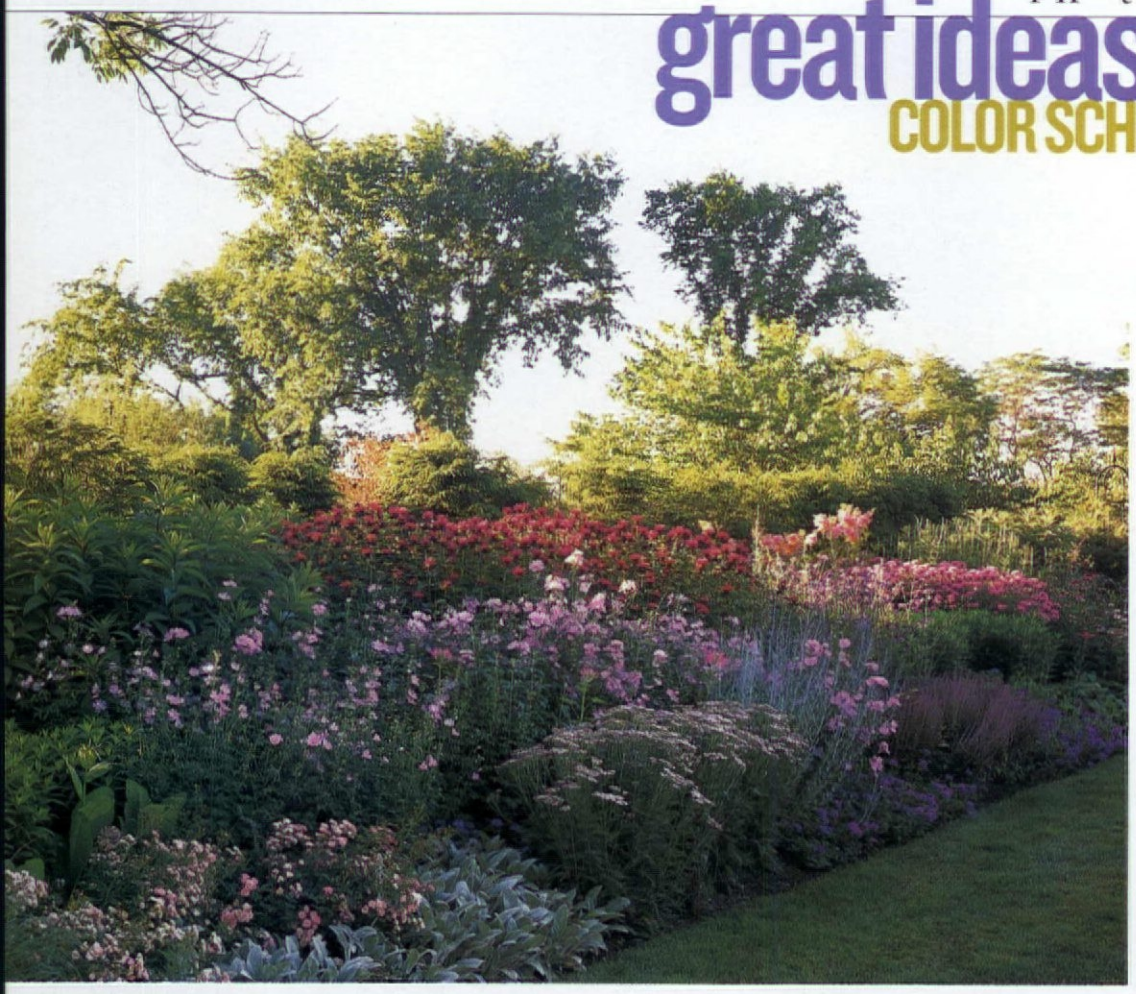

≪pastel border

- Bergmann designed the perennial border to be viewed from the terrace behind the house.
- The plants are grouped in large masses and arranged at an angle to the border, so that they are all visible from a distance.
- Since perennials are rarely in bloom for more than three weeks, the texture of the foliage is what holds the scene together.
- Bergmann chose plants with strong stature and durability, so that not just color reads well from afar but also texture.
- Delphinium and tiger lilies (whose wonderful blossoms are far more interesting than their foliage) are planted in long skinny ribbons, so that after they flower, neighboring plants fill in to hide the foliage.
- The contrast of silver-leaved lamb's ears (*Stachys byzantina*) against the green lawn helps define the edge of the border.
- To connect the border to the surrounding landscape, Bergmann used cultivated forms of Illinois prairie plants, like 'Mahogany' monarda and the joe-pye weed *Eupatorium purpureum*.
- The border is divided into two separate areas for cultivation, one with well-drained soil in the front for sun-loving plants that do not want a lot of water, and a moist, irrigated section in the back, shaded by the hemlock and tall perennials, for plants that prefer it wetter. □

***Filipendula rubra* 'Venusta'** This tall plant with cerise plumes works well behind the buttonlike blossoms of monarda.

***Salvia* 'May Night'** Compact flower spikes provide a nice contrast to ground covers at the front of the border.

***Rosa* 'The Fairy'** This low-lying, floriferous rose looks great at the front, peeking over silvery lamb's ears.

Echinacea purpurea The blossoms show up well when planted in front of a clump of silvery ornamental grass.

Malva alcea* var. *fastigiata Combined with Russian sage, this works well as a tall "see-through" plant at the front.

Eupatorium purpureum Cultivars of native joe-pye weed are tall, sturdy, late bloomers for the back of a border.

***Monarda* 'Croftway Pink'** This pale pink (like the crimson 'Mahogany') is a lovely, lesser-known variety of bee balm.

***Achillea* 'Cerise Queen'** The dense shape and soft color of this yarrow make a great foil for taller, pastel flower spires.

DANA GALLAGHER (TOP); JOAN DEGREY; SAXON HOLT; JOAN DEGREY; SAXON HOLT; JOAN DEGREY; JULIETTE WADE/GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY;

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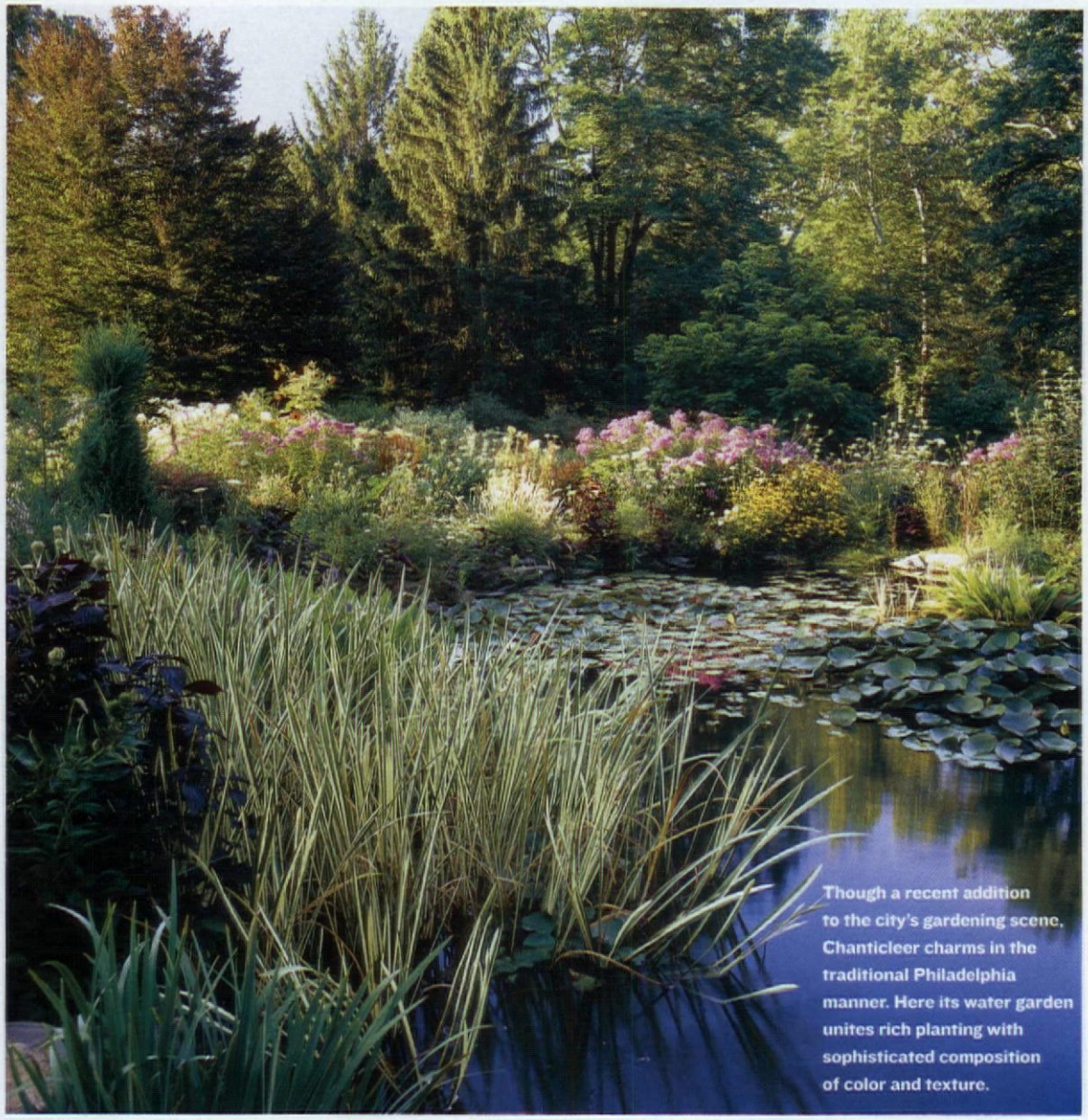
in the garden

green thoughts

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY From William Penn and John Bartram to the present day, the City of Brotherly Love remains our preeminent city of gardens and arboretums

by Tom Christopher



Though a recent addition to the city's gardening scene, Chanticleer charms in the traditional Philadelphia manner. Here its water garden unites rich planting with sophisticated composition of color and texture.

How did Philadelphia become the gardening capital of the eastern states? Chris Klemek ignores the implicit chauvinism of a visiting New Yorker's question; it was William Penn's doing, he explains. A graduate student of history at the University of Pennsylvania and cofounder of Poor Richard's Walking Tours, Klemek is taking his visitors, literally step by step, through the horticultural history of Colonial Philadelphia. We stand in one of the four great parklike squares that anchored the original city plan, and Klemek tells us that, as a young man, William Penn had witnessed London's destruction by the great fire of 1666. Fifteen years later, Penn was determined that nothing similar should befall the utopia he was establishing across the Atlantic. Accordingly, he instructed the fledgling city's commissioners that every house must be surrounded by a firebreak—

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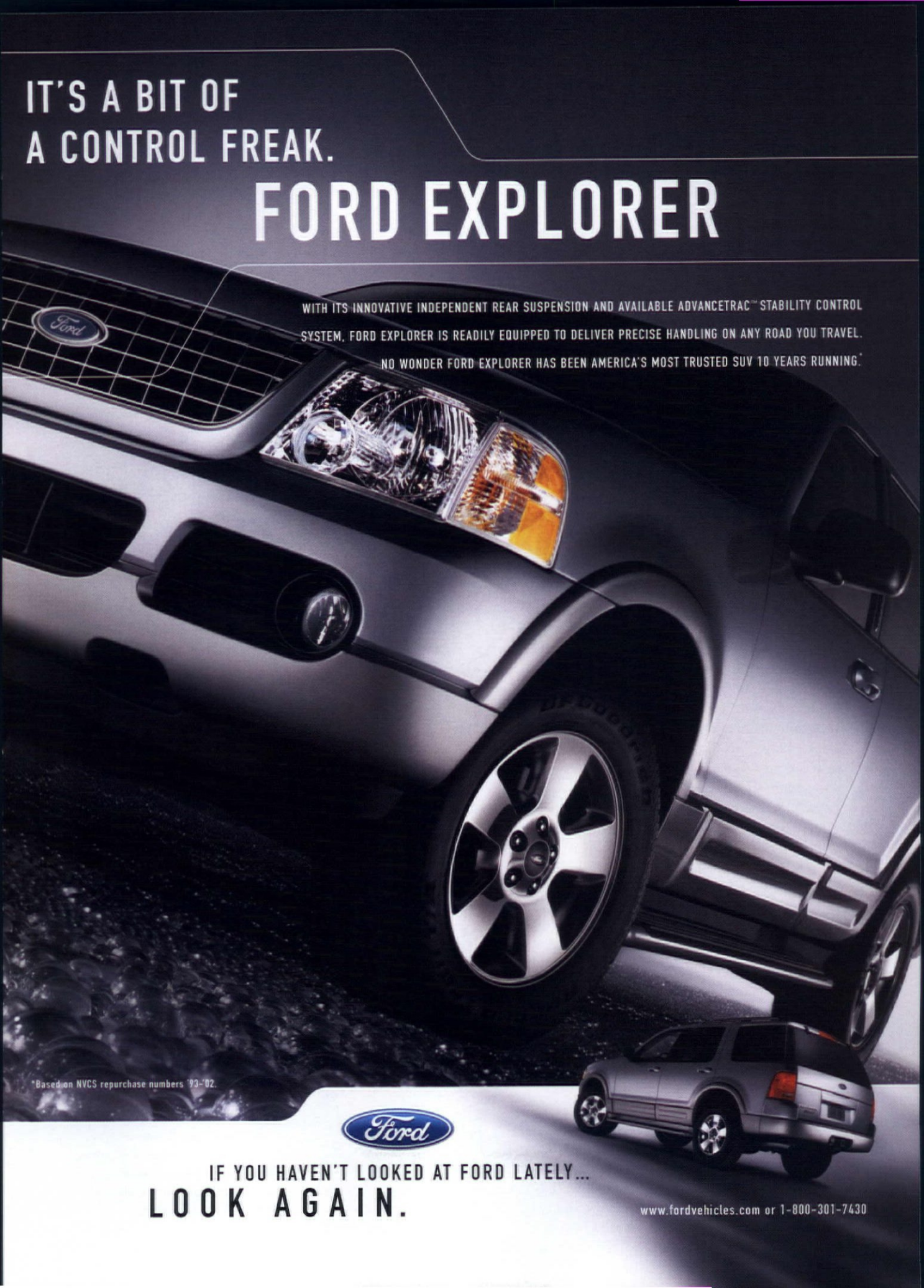

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a lush, flameproof expanse of orchard, field, or garden. His Quaker City of Brotherly Love was to be, Penn insisted, a "Greene Country Towne, which will never be burnt & always be wholesome."

Wholesome? Perhaps, but not excessively so. These days, Philadelphia prides itself on its adventurous cuisine and sophisticated nightlife. Certainly, this modern metropolis of 1.5 million has long since outgrown the status of a country town. Yet, in a fundamental sense, Penn's decree still shapes the tenor of life here. Philadelphians, far more than the residents of other major American cities, have retained a strong and personal connection to the landscape. Not every house has a garden, but an astonishing number do, even in center city. Wealthy or working-class, Philadelphians take their gardening seriously, and they do it very, very well.

To appreciate just how well, one can tour with Poor Richard's or reserve a spot on any of several dozen neighborhood house and garden tours sponsored every spring by the Friends of Independence National Historical Park (friendsofindependence.org). For a real appreciation of the Quaker heritage, though, you must cross the Schuylkill River to what was, 275 years ago, the farm of John Bartram. Legend has it that Bartram attributed his interest in botany to an encounter with a daisy while plowing. Undoubtedly, economics also had much to do with his conversion, as the seeds and specimens he collected on expeditions up and down the East Coast found a ready market with European plant collectors. The botanical garden Bartram created on the family farm was one of the colonies' first; after the Revolution, it prospered by growing native plants for newly patriotic patrons such as Washington and Jefferson.

Today, historic **Bartram's Garden** survives as a city museum. Bartram's house, faced with the crude columns he hewed from local schist, has been restored to its original sturdy simplicity, and curators have replanted many of the species listed in Bartram's catalog. More impressive, though, is a direct link: a pair of venerable trees, a yellowwood and a ginkgo, planted by Bartram's son and successor, William.

Such rough-barked patriarchs (and matriarchs) are surprisingly common in Philadelphia. For although the local Quakers opposed any ritual in their worship, they did make a cult of trees. Giving tree names—walnut, chestnut, spruce, pine, cherry, and locust—to their city's avenues, they planted compulsively. In particular, the Morrises, brother John and sister Lydia, pursued this avocation with druidic devotion on their estate at the city's northwestern edge. Preserved today as the **Morris Arboretum** of the University of Pennsylvania, this landscape offers an encyclopedic collection of mature, often magnificent trees

Question marks inlaid in the pavement, top left, are appropriate punctuation for Chanticleer's enigmatic "ruin garden," with its mysterious water features and stone sculptures by Marcia Donahue. ■ Chanticleer's "tropical teacup," above, strikes a sultry note with bold foliage and vibrant color. ■ A grove of tulip trees, left, furnishes a leafy ceiling for the Amphitheater at Swarthmore College's Scott Arboretum.

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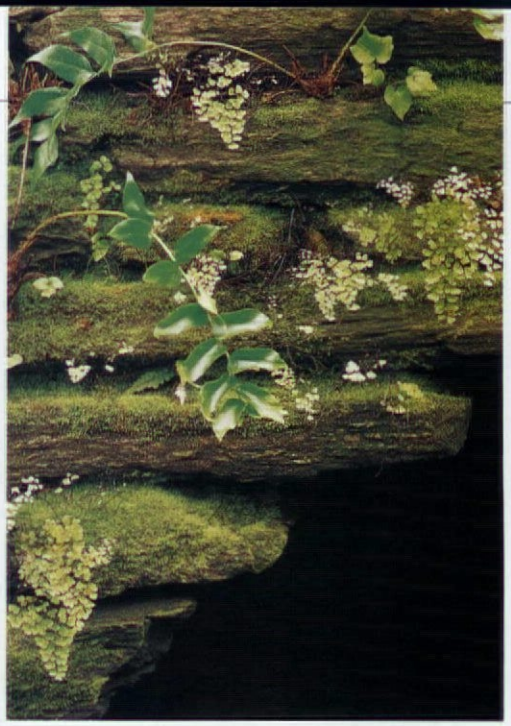

Meticulously restored in 1994, Morris Arboretum's Dorrance H. Hamilton Fernery is the nation's only surviving example of a once popular Victorian conceit. Constructed by arboretum founder John Morris in 1899, the fernery's filigreed steel and glass roof echoes the lacy foliage of the tropical and subtropical plants it shelters.

arranged in graceful vistas. It also offers an equally extraordinary collection of Victorian garden ornamentation—a marble love temple and swan pond, a Roman loggia and grotto complete with classical statuary, and a shamelessly rococo glasshouse fernery. Visitors must not leave without paying proper reverence to the century-old Japanese katsura tree, a sumo specimen whose gnarled branches cover an area almost 100 feet across.

An informal count reveals no less than ten more arboretums in the Philadelphia metropolitan area; tree lovers who would like to visit any of them may obtain information from the Gardens Collaborative (worldslargestgardenparty.org). Another superb collection is to be found at **Longwood Gardens**, grandest of the Philadelphia area's public gardens. It, too, was born as a Quaker tree preserve, but, after passing into the hands of industrialist Pierre S. du Pont, the landscape morphed into a twentieth-century American Versailles.

Longwood's towering allées, meticulously shaped topiaries, and illuminated fountains evoke strong reactions; visitors love or hate this garden. Those in search of subtler pleasures can escape to the conservatory, with its gallery of intimate gardens by master designers such as Roberto Burle Marx and Isabelle Greene, while home gardeners can find inspiration in Longwood's Idea Garden, which explores innovative uses of common garden plants.

A resource upon which Philadelphia gardeners have always drawn is the fecund beauty

A GARDEN ITINERARY

DAY ONE

- **CHANTICLEER** 786 Church Rd., Wayne, PA. 610-687-4163.
- **BRANDYWINE RIVER MUSEUM** U.S. Route 1, Chadds Ford, PA. 610-388-2700.

LUNCH

THE CAFE at Longwood, or **SIMON PEARCE**, West Chester, PA. 610-793-0948.

- **LONGWOOD GARDENS** U.S. Route 1, Kennett Square, PA. 610-388-1000.

DAY TWO

- **BARTRAM GARDEN** 54th St. and Lindbergh Blvd., Philadelphia. 215-729- 5281.
- **THE WOODLANDS CEMETERY AND HAMILTON MANSION** 4000 Woodland Ave., Philadelphia. 215-386-2181.

LUNCH

SONOMA (organic food and wine) 4411 Main St., Manayunk, PA. 215-483-9400.

- **MORRIS ARBORETUM** 100 Northwestern Ave., Philadelphia. 215-247-5777.
- **SCOTT ARBORETUM** 500 College Ave., Swarthmore, PA. 610-328-8025.

PRIVATE GARDENS

Private gardens open for the Friends of Independence National Historical Park's Philadelphia Open House Tours. For dates: friendsofindependence.org. Private group tours can be arranged through Philadelphia Hospitality at philahospitality.org.

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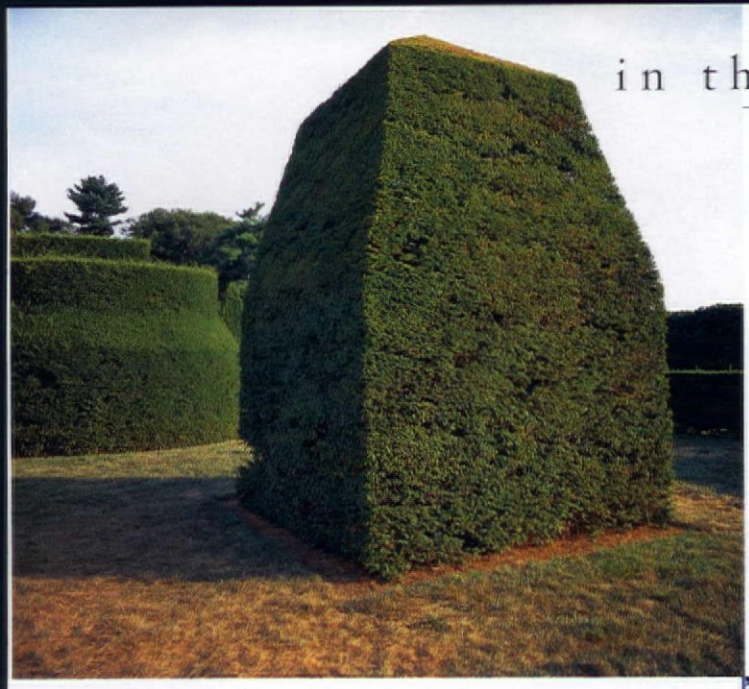

of the region's natural landscape. The best place to experience it is, unexpectedly, indoors. The **Brandywine River Museum** in Chadds Ford has amassed a superb collection of paintings by artists attracted to the scenery of this region—a visual archive that traces the landscape's history from the early nineteenth century. In addition, the museum provides an introduction to the painter's inspiration in the garden of native plants it has created on the bank of the Brandywine River.

Remarkable as Philadelphia's "Greene Country" heritage may be, however, what's most impressive is the tradition's continued vitality. The **Philadelphia Flower Show**, mounted every year in the first week of March by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, is the largest, most prestigious exhibit of its kind in the world. But if it's the rare species you seek, you're more likely to find it by joining the locally based Hardy Plant Society. Each year, the society's volunteers sort into individual packets an astonishing fund of seeds collected from the region's best gardens. This cornucopia, which in 2002 included almost 1,000 species and cultivars, is made available to the society's 900 members, some of whom, incidentally, garden as far away as England and Latvia.

Collaboration seems, in fact, to be the real secret to Philadelphia's continued preeminence. At **Chanticleer**, the public garden in suburban Wayne, for example, it's personal verve that, in recent years, has made this the region's most talked about landscape. But as Christopher Woods, who was, until recently, Chanticleer's horticultural mastermind, admits, personal doesn't mean a one-man show. Chanticleer's design, he says, was evolved through "conversations"—creative exchanges among the talented 15-person staff. The gardeners traveled together, gathering impressions and ideas in California, Europe, and Australia, and individual talents were encouraged to express themselves. Thus, the sculptural skill of staff artist Doug Randolph flowered in a monolithic stone couch (complete with television remote) that looks out, tongue in cheek, to the screen of an opposing hillside and its serpentine—a sort of elegant test pattern worked in corn.

Chanticleer, in short, is a joint achievement, as is the gardening of Philadelphia as a whole. There's competition and friction within the guild, of course. "We may not be one entirely happy family," Woods observes of his colleagues throughout the metropolitan area. But "we are one family." Or, an admiring outsider wonders, would dynasty be the more accurate description? □

Longwood Gardens' topiaries, top left, perpetuate the imperial vision of Pierre S. du Pont. ■ Philadelphians take a love of trees with them to the grave, as evidenced by this magnificent specimen in Woodlands Cemetery, top right. ■ California landscape architect Isabelle Greene contributed the Silver Garden, above, to Longwood Gardens.

THE BISTRO LIST

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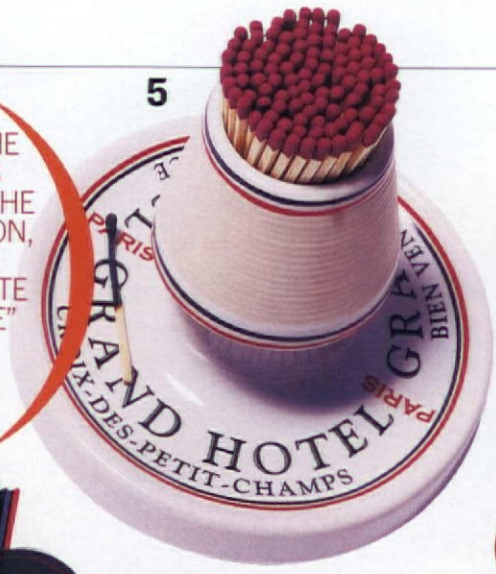

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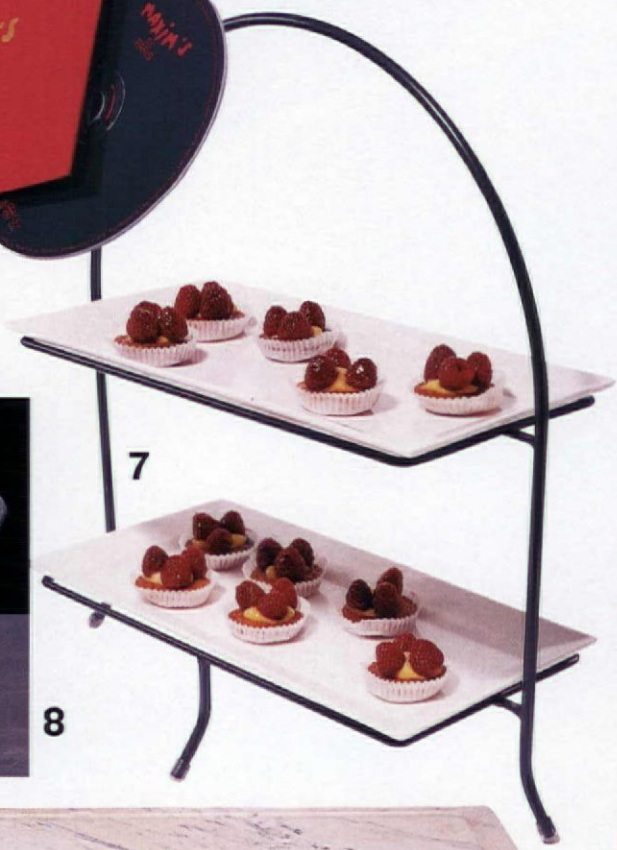

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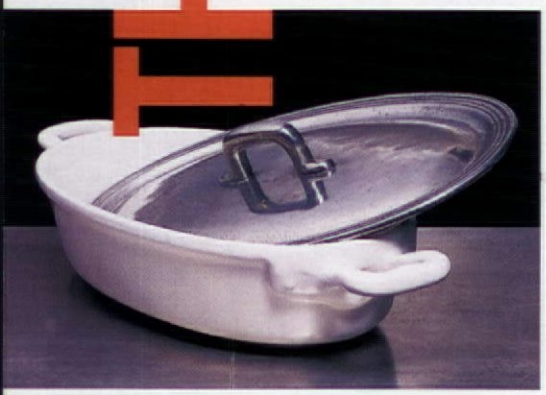

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5 Light up, and let the smoke evoke Charles Boyer. Ceramic match striker, $44, by David Thompson for Vagabond. Available at Providence, in Atlanta.

6 Boîte in a box: *Maxim's de Paris* two-CD set, $42, available at Saks Fifth Avenue. 800-330-8497. *Vive la musique!*

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twentieth-century fox

With his cunningly curated auctions, smart catalogs, and instinct for the best, James Zemaitis is beguiling the decorative arts world by martin filler

James Zemaitis with two highlights from Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg's 20-21st Century Design auction, to be held in New York on June 11: an Eileen Gray–designed perforated metal screen, ca. 1930–32, first owned by Gray, and George Nelson's Marshmallow sofa for Herman Miller, ca. 1960.

EVERY TEN YEARS OR SO, an exciting new figure emerges on New York's modern decorative arts scene and reshapes the way collectors think about historical design and influences how they acquire it. Now at the helm of the tellingly renamed 20-21st Century Design department of Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg (the upstart auction house going head-to-head with Christie's and Sotheby's) is the most talked about player of the postmillennial decade, 34-year-old James Zemaitis.

The stellar performance of Zemaitis's department (which grossed $7.7 million last year) has been one of the few bright spots in the overall disappointing repositioning of Phillips since Simon de Pury and Daniella Luxembourg took it over, three years ago. Indeed, this is one segment of the market where the smallest of the three major auction firms has been outflanking its competitors, as well as stealing the thunder of the regional sales where New Yorkers once had to go to find much of this merchandise.

In the art of salesmanship, personal attributes always have much to do with success. And Zemaitis possesses those gifts in spades. Tall and movie star handsome, he is also disarmingly direct and incredibly energetic. "Your first reaction to James is 'What is he on?'" one admiring client remarks. "But the only thing he's on is his own body chemistry."

Charisma apart, the secret of Zemaitis's rapid rise is his proactive, entrepreneurial approach, the opposite of his counterparts' habit of passively waiting for consignments to walk in the door and then ganging them together in ill-assorted auctions. Not for him the catchall twentieth-century roundups typical of Christie's and Sotheby's—opening with a predictable parade of Tiffany and Gallé glass, followed by a kitschy saunter through the dreaded Chiparus ivory inlaid statuettes and soft-porn Icart etchings, and winding up with a patchy sprint from the Eameses to Gehry. Those slipshod juxtapositions never seemed quite so disturbing before Zemaitis's crisply edited sales and reference-worthy catalogs showed up the competition's complacent approach.

"One of the reasons our prices are doing so well," Zemaitis admits, "is that we package things in a way that decorators and interior designers really appreciate. What we try to do, by focusing so relentlessly in one area, is to get huge firms like Peter Marino and Michael Smith to integrate modern design into their clients' collections."

Among Zemaitis's current desiderata—expect prices for these to jump after his next

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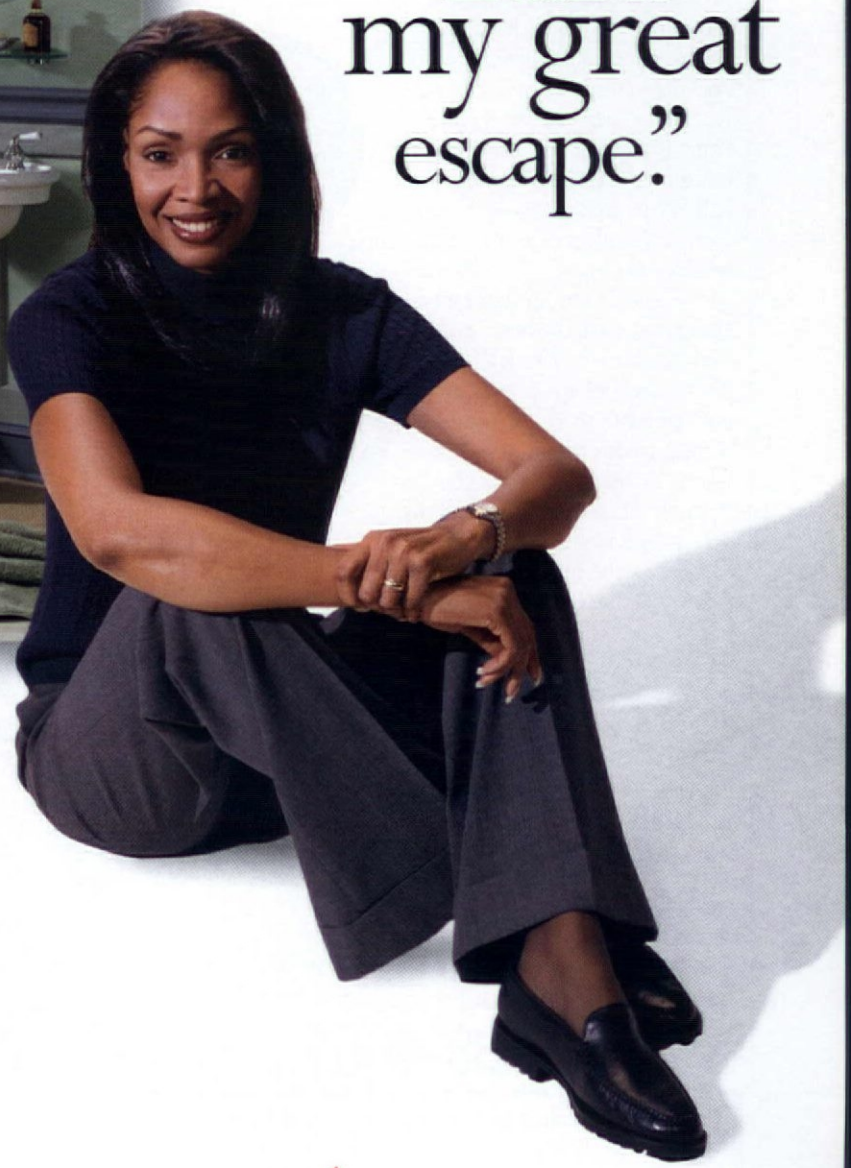

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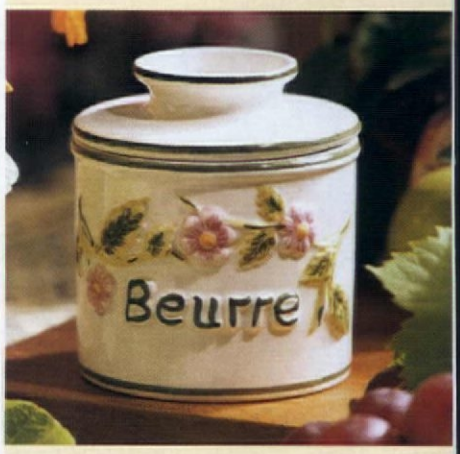

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ON THE BLOCK

1 Newson wicker prototype, 1990, $48,300
2 Kiesler ashtray, $27,600
3 Noguchi Cloud-form sofa, ca. 1948, $250,000

sale, on June 11—are the midcentury French designer Mathieu Matégot; the '50s California-born, Rome-based Dan Johnson; and the '60s and early '70s Italian designs shown in Emilio Ambasz's epochal 1972 MoMA exhibition, "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape," which captured the Milan School at its apogee. Once Zemaitis decides what he wants to showcase in a sale, "we then literally tell our pickers to go out and find it," he says of his broad network of scouts.

In getting the good stuff, Zemaitis gives full credit to "my coconspirator," Alexander Payne, the European director of the department, who scours neglected corners of the Continent and comes up with amazing discoveries. This spring the two are bringing out *The Coffee Table Coffee Table Book* (Black Dog Publishing Ltd.). The concept is based on a Kramer gag from *Seinfeld,* but the book is in fact a thorough survey of one of the twentieth century's most characteristic furniture forms.

Raised in a small town in northern New Jersey, Zemaitis (the name is Lithuanian) studied art history at Oberlin and Rutgers, but as a grad student realized he wasn't cut out for academe and made straight for the New York art market. After an instructive stint at a second-tier Art Nouveau glass gallery, where he learned the symbiotic relationship between dealers and auctioneers, he moved on to Christie's East and then to artnet.com, where he sharpened his writing skills until he got the career-making call from Phillips.

Among Zemaitis's biggest fans is New York collector John C. Waddell, whose peerless holdings of U.S. design from the period between the two World Wars were given a 2000 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition, "American Modern," which later toured the country. A quick study, Zemaitis paid Waddell the unusual accolade of basing his first sale, Pioneers of American Modernism, in large part on that extraordinary museum show. "John has style to burn," says Zemaitis, "and at the same time, he's very into the research that goes into every piece Phillips offers. That's our target collector."

Waddell returns the compliment: "James has a love affair with the material. Nobody can talk up an object like James. His enthusiasm is contagious, which is why he's expanding the market among thirty-somethings."

Zemaitis's highly selective sales are distinguished as much for what he refuses as for what he includes. "Dealers get upset because they show us thirty pieces of Ruhlmann and we'll accept one that fits into our modernist vision," he says. He has sworn off other auction staples, and reveals that "we've taken a blood vow in the department that we'll never, ever sell a piece of Lalique."

THE SELECTIVE method clearly pays off. Take, for example, a rigorously geometric (if completely impractical) tea infuser by the Bauhaus designer Marianne Brandt, which brought $262,500, a hefty price even for Georgian silver, let alone early-twentieth-century metal. In a much softer, decorative vein, a circa 1935 octagonal mirror by Serge Roche soared to a dazzling $114,700. A midcentury Noguchi Cloud-form sofa, one of only six known examples by the great sculptor-designer, went for a stunning $250,000, again competitive with prime eighteenth-century pieces.

Zemaitis has had equally remarkable results with almost new furniture by less than famous figures, provided that the piece is either unique or already scarce, thereby creating a lively secondary market. Collectors and curators are not waiting for the verdict of history when they shell out $48,300 for Marc Newson's vigorous developmental wicker chair, or $63,000 for a sleek Tom Dixon prototype lounge chair of plywood, stainless steel, and Formica, both circa 1990.

Among all the great things Zemaitis has sold, none excites him as much as an extremely rare, industrial-looking circular chrome ashtray designed by the Viennese émigré Frederick Kiesler in 1935, which last May went for $27,600. As he gazes starry-eyed at its catalog entry, he confesses, "This is everything to me. Kiesler is 'the man,' in that he represents all the European traditions of the avant-garde from Surrealism to de Stijl, transplanted to America, mixed with American Modern, and spewed out in occasional seminal works that you can count on ten fingers—so you have the rarity factor, too. It all comes together in this piece, which represents everything I want Phillips and my department to be. This is what's made me, in my heart of hearts, feel content that I've achieved something." Pretty good for an ashtray. □

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the searchers

A place where everyone seems to be looking for new insights or a new identity, Santa Fe is the epicenter of epiphany

by joan juliet buck

If the spirit moves you: time out for a sacred dance during the 1969 construction of a geodesic dome at the Lama Foundation in northern New Mexico.

"THE MIND IS THE ENEMY," say the mystics. I've heard them. In the slow life I'm willing to listen to them. Stop the noise, bring on the silence. With everyone living at unprecedented levels of panic and unease, that silence is the only safety. Let's imagine everything is the fault of the mind, and try to bypass its tricks.

It struck me a little late into this adventure that Santa Fe, for the Anglos who live here, represents a second chance and a rebirth. In Paris, where everyone is most afraid of ridicule, it is grammatically impossible to say the sentence "I was reborn." I used to set the challenge to guests at dinner, and it always came out sounding something like "I am René." The concept is alien to the French; if you bypass the awkward references to this René, it comes out "I underwent a renaissance." This word blazes with enlightenment, conveying the moment when perspective first appeared in painting, witch burning was definitely, if reluctantly, abandoned, and alchemists became scientists as the scales of superstition fell from their eyes.

That Renaissance has nothing to do with the concept of rebirth as we know it today: the actress I run into at the Christmas party who came to Santa Fe because, she says fearlessly, she had to dry out; the tragedies and misadventures that lead people to think otherwise of their lives and give it all up. There's a photo gallery downtown that sells classic black-and-white pictures. Its owners came because they have two children and didn't feel safe in New York after 9/11.

Are people here refugees, retirees, or dropouts? It's called the land of entrapment. There is no money to be made here, only spent, on the houses, mainly, which are the color of flesh, new shells for new lives. But here is the second chance. A family I know took some hermit crabs from Florida back to New York by car. The three hermit crabs were in a sand-filled aquarium, along with nine empty shells of different sizes and shapes, and even though the crabs had their own shells, they spent the entire journey trying out one new shell after another, frenzied by so many possibilities. How that second chance is taken varies.

It can be the action of letting everything go in a gentle way: the farmer who heard a mystic speak and saw the light; the lost children, ex-wives, part-timers, *pueri aeterni,* and dabblers; the ex-nun, no longer young, who wants to sing, and house-sits for a living. It is not a living, so she also gives Spanish lessons and cooks for people. Her voice is timid. It can be the mad optimism that strikes people after certain crises, when they see the light about themselves and realize with a slightly insane fervor that everything they have ever done is wrong for them. It can be a savage bolting from the obligations and restrictions of urban life. Today, it can be fear of large cities. Target is best kept as simply the name of a store. ▷

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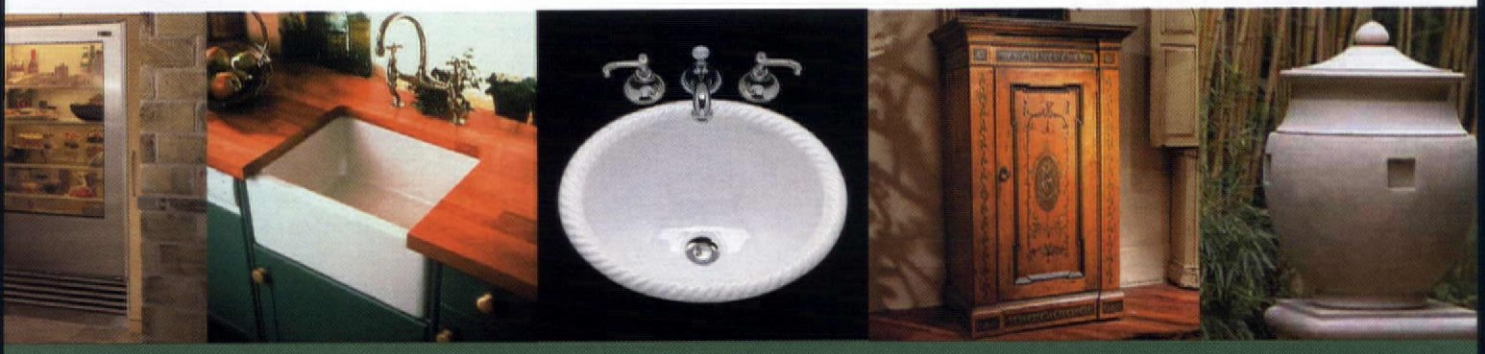

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And of course there are retirees: the former executives, heads of banks, businessmen, salesmen, who now study Indian petroglyphs, attempt to write or paint or even sing. The idea being that after all the annoying work is done, there is a small space left for self-discovery and fulfillment, for creativity, for the novels and the paintings, the development of talents that may or may not exist, that may once have been glimmers and are now the consolations at the end of the story, the prelude to death. A small, limited space and time at the end where things may flower.

Overheard: "So, how did your past life regression thing go?" "Great!"

And in this parched utopia, people come to find themselves, or to find God, serenity, the higher power, the energy of the universe. Some even see flying saucers, which Jung defined as evidence of man's need for God. Almost as many try to find themselves through art.

But here the New Age interferes. There is a difference between the making of art and the practices of the soul. For the specter that haunts Santa Fe—as it haunts all utopias where retirees and dropouts attend to higher pursuits—is the looming, laughable Hobby. The Hobby's curse is that art will be no more than crafts, that millennial spiritual practices will be just exercise. Tai chi and yoga will be workouts; meditation, a nap.

People see the light about themselves and realize with a slightly insane fervor that everything they have ever done is wrong for them

Because this is the locus of the quirky personal choice, the second chance, the third act, the third eye, there is leakage between disciplines. I see this in the workshops. In yoga class I am in the minority, in that I do not understand the many Indian syllables of the names of the poses. I recoil a little when I meet women who have renamed themselves Urja or Lakshmi, because I know they have won these names with years of long, difficult spiritual exercises at even higher altitudes than this, and that they have sat at the feet of gurus and opened their souls and seen the light and felt the universe in ways that I would not begin to contemplate, and, furthermore, the names piss me off.

Overheard, a man with pigtails to his waist: "I don't wear these for the look. I'm not trying to tell anyone anything. These are my sign of my spiritual belief."

Work upon the self: nutrition, exercise, clean living, clear thoughts. More people are reading Eckhart Tolle's *The Power of Now* in the big cities than here, but an astonishing number of them here have been talking about it. I did read *The Power of Now,* right at the beginning of this adventure. I was on a plane, and beset by intimations that things—those things that people mean when they say "How are things?"—those vast, pale, looming giants in our lives whose dance, when orderly, makes for a good life, but who can turn sour and mean—anyway, that things, or *things,* were turning against me. I read that time past and time future do not exist; they are both imaginary and destructive gremlins. When I got off the plane, lightning struck just beyond my feet outside the terminal. And when I learned an hour later that *things* had indeed turned on me, I let them have their way and slid, like Alice, down the rabbit hole and came out in New Mexico.

Thump. I am not retired. I am trying to lose my mind. But I am not a mystic. I have friends who attend Zen sessions, sitting from 4 A.M. until eternity. They go to mountain retreats and shave their heads and sign on for years. I have never been tempted by Zen.

I attend workshops. I tried, for something I am writing, a psychodrama workshop for trainee shrinks. It was not for me: the outcome of each psychodrama is mandated, the process is controlled, and I am not a trainee shrink. I went to St. John's College, where I paid to read Goethe's *Theory of Colors* right to the end, in the company of other people who could afford $720 for five mornings in August. We sat around a table at St. John's calling each other Miss, Mr., and Mrs., armed with small prisms from the Explorer shop. There was an older lady in multicolored glasses that hung on a chain from which dangled little multicolored figurines. She said she wanted to know the theory of color because she was very artistic and creative. A tight, taut scientist from Los Alamos seemed a promising participant, but he said little, which I suppose is part of the security vow scientists from Los Alamos must take. There was a funny man called Wilbur, a gourmet who told stories about the eight ravens in his arroyo, and there was a man I took to be an academic.

I THOUGHT I WAS exercising the remnants of rigor by taking the course, but of course I wanted a cheap Pythagorean thrill about inner harmonies. When the book turned out to be a refutation of Isaac Newton's theory of color, I rather lost interest, but the man I took to be an academic presented a brilliant interpretation of the work. A month later, I was disappointed to accidentally learn that he was a businessman who owned a jet.

Overheard: "He's a beautiful guy; he came to work on the roof. A Sufi. A really tender, open soul. And I don't think he's dating anyone."

I attended women's workshops that were aimed at the soul, where we bared our feelings about our relationships and, very fast, our weight. One woman seemed funnier than the others, so we went out to dinner. Over a meat loaf that was to prove pretty unpleasant later on that night, she told me that she was a telephone-sex-line worker, which she considered a branch of the healing arts.

The front halls of the various healing centers have tables full of flyers announcing medicine wheel retreats, Taoist health centers, space clearing, clutter control, intuitive massage, and energy medicine. You can take Nia classes—a fearsome method of dance or workout or meditation that combines yoga, ballet, martial arts, and Brazilian rhythms and is taught by the creative director of the publishing house Arena Editions.

I attended, for the first and last time in my life, a writer's workshop, where any

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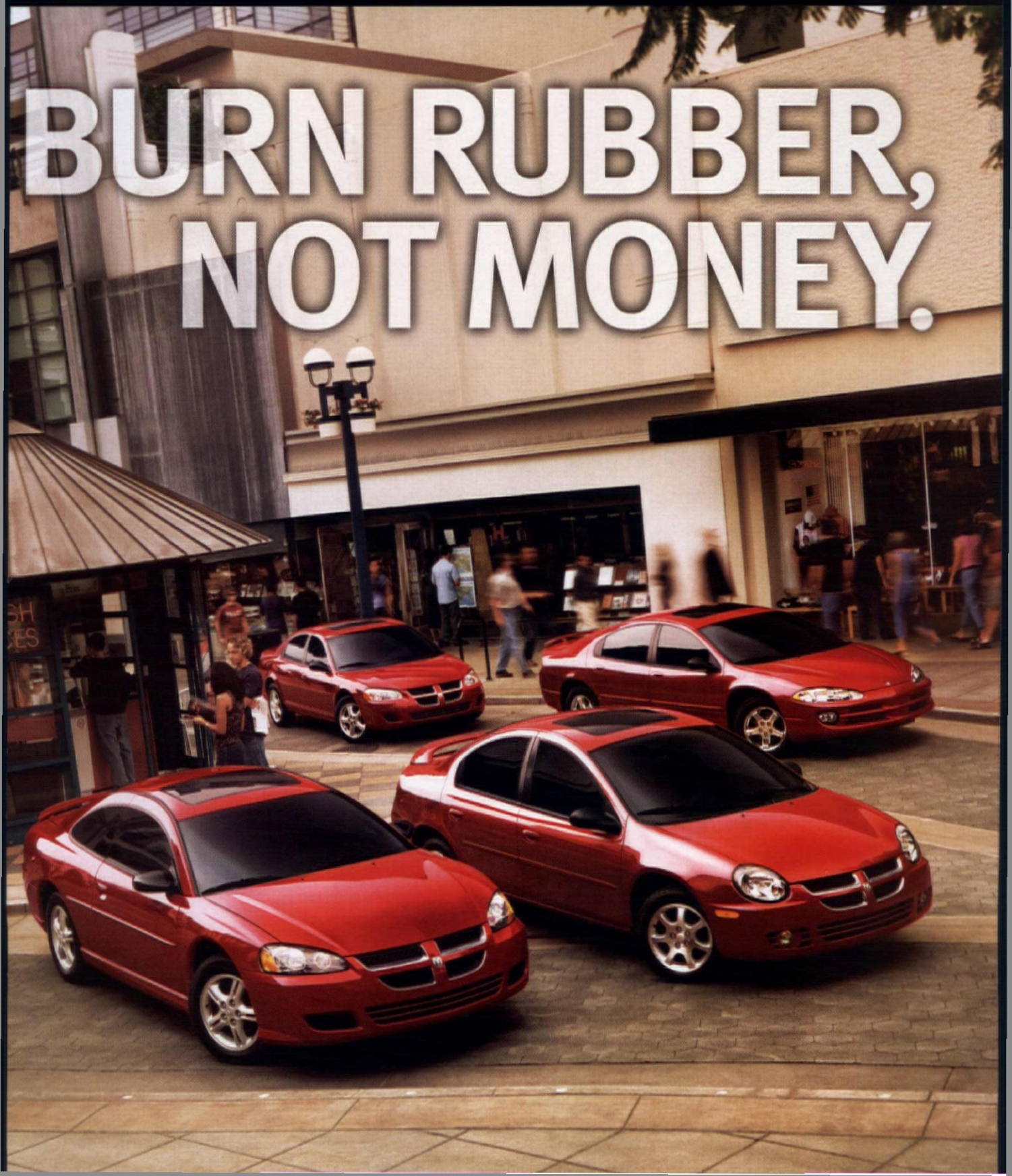

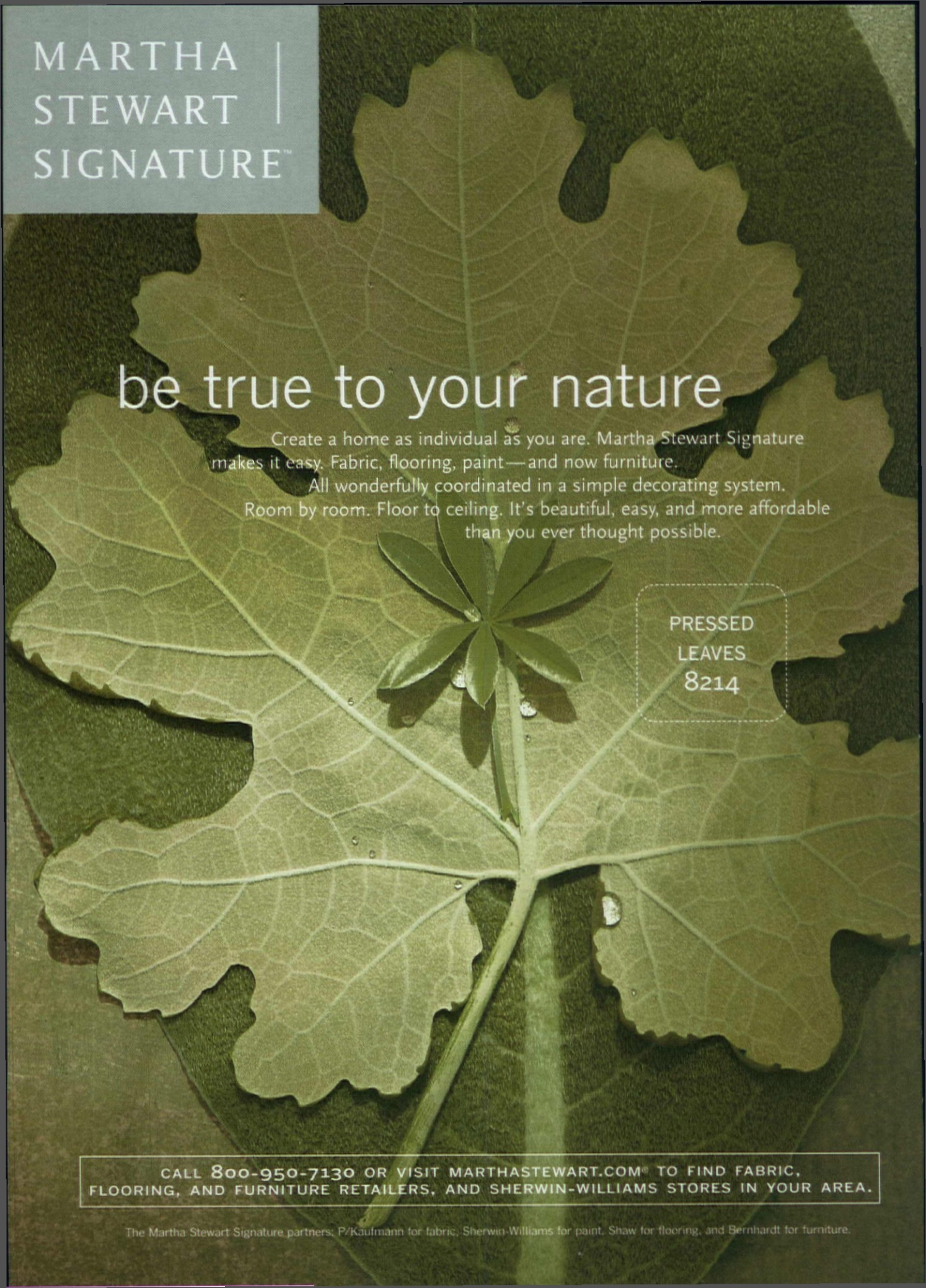
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assurance I had attained from 25 years of writing vanished in the face of a bunch of loud, confident, clueless neophytes. I realized then that these workshops were a kind of attempt to bottom out, to be tabula rasa, untaught and unpracticed, naked, as it were, and since that was the case, I might as well do something I gave up at age 11, and took up theater.

No, that's not quite how it happened. I told my friend Glenna that a large piece of writing that had died had died on my desk and was beginning to smell. Glenna is English and sounds like the stockbroker's wife she once was. But her hair is short and bright red, and she does various healing things: craniosacral massage, homeopathy, yoga teaching. A grandmother, Glenna has become an actress here where it doesn't pay, and she said, "Go to improv, because that'll get you out of your head, bypass your mind." This was the first method for losing the mind that had any appeal, so I called Ruth Zaporah and begged to be allowed in.

Ruth Zaporah, a dancer, wanted to work with sound as well as movement and locked herself in a studio for ten years, to evolve what she calls Action Theater. Neither pure movement nor the kind of competitive cerebral improvisation that we see on English television and dread at Christmas charades parties, Action Theater is a means of discovering freedom by making a total fool of yourself. The first workshops were held at Synergia Ranch, a tract of rocky volcanic land out by a formation known as Lone Butte, where the idea of the biosphere was born. It's a group of low buildings complemented by the requisite yurt and geodesic dome.

I ARRIVED TO FIND some 12 people sitting on the floor in a circle. One man was talking. "After last week, I found my relationships got better, and I seem to be more aware of my feelings," he said. "This is not therapy," said Ruth, quite sharply. "This is performance." She is a particularly bright-eyed and alive woman with hair a color I could not identify, until, much later, she told me it was merely a rapid application of pure bleach.

There was a woman with a slight resemblance to the comic Reno who sells hemp products in Taos and whose E-mail address is Hemptress. There was a former San Francisco ballet dancer, male. With a cold. The former editor of a magazine on shamanism, a former insurance executive who had had the revelation and now lives on whatever she gets from voice-overs and radio shows. The demographics of northern New Mexico make most of us

Workshops were a kind of attempt to bottom out, to be tabula rasa, untaught and unpracticed, naked, as it were

Formers, and the only calculable Future, a pretty girl with long black hair, moved to L.A. to try her luck.

This is the only workshop that has stuck. We stand, we walk, we stop, we move, we make sounds, and no one is watching. But we are watching one another, paying attention to the sounds and gestures being broadcast; we are aware, present, mindful. On one wall of the studio there is a garishly sincere painting of exotic and tribal dancers; a mouse regularly emerges from a hole beneath it, which in hantavirus and plague country is disturbing.

Our body language betrays our allegiances; just as in New York you catch people doing running warm-ups at odd times, here the reflexive stance is a deep yoga bend. People go into it for the security of a familiar discipline. But freedom consists of daring to go beyond the familiar. In Action Theater that means giving up your favorite gorilla grunts, letting the feet be neutral, instead of always going into ballet poses learned as a child. One winter day, bundled in mountain wear, ready to be barefoot in the studio with the mouse, we found Synergia Ranch alight with bright figures: men with white crocheted caps; women in feather boas, kimonos, and dangling tassels. They were Sufis on a retreat. I was heartened to find one smoking as he walked. We went inside and shifted from silence to noise to animal to mineral to huge to minuscule, and, liberated former everythings that we are, had no pretensions to spiritual or moral superiority. We just were whatever happened to be in the air at any time. Motes included. □

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natural wonders

by caroline cunningham

In his new series, John Pfahl has captured a number of curiosities he calls "extreme horticulture"

"Dr. Wadsworth's Tree," in Chautauqua, NY, above, and the Japanese maples in the Hershey Gardens, Hershey, PA, top, show where extremes meet in the relationship of man to the environment.

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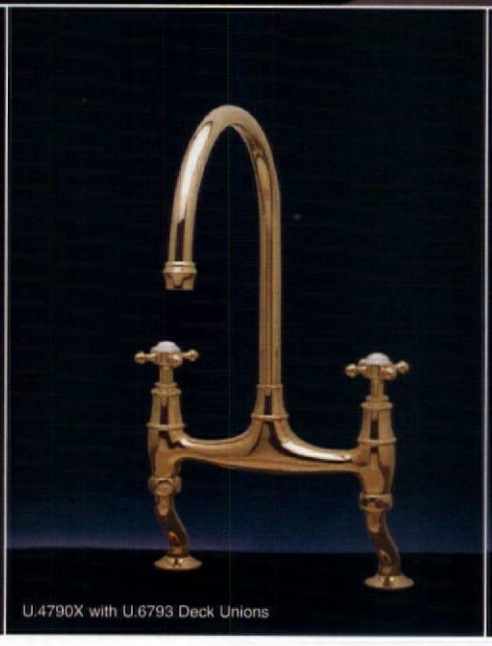

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Pfahl's camera lets a red bud grove in the Royal Arboretum in Hamilton, Ontario, top, and a commercial tulip field in Washington, above, speak for themselves.

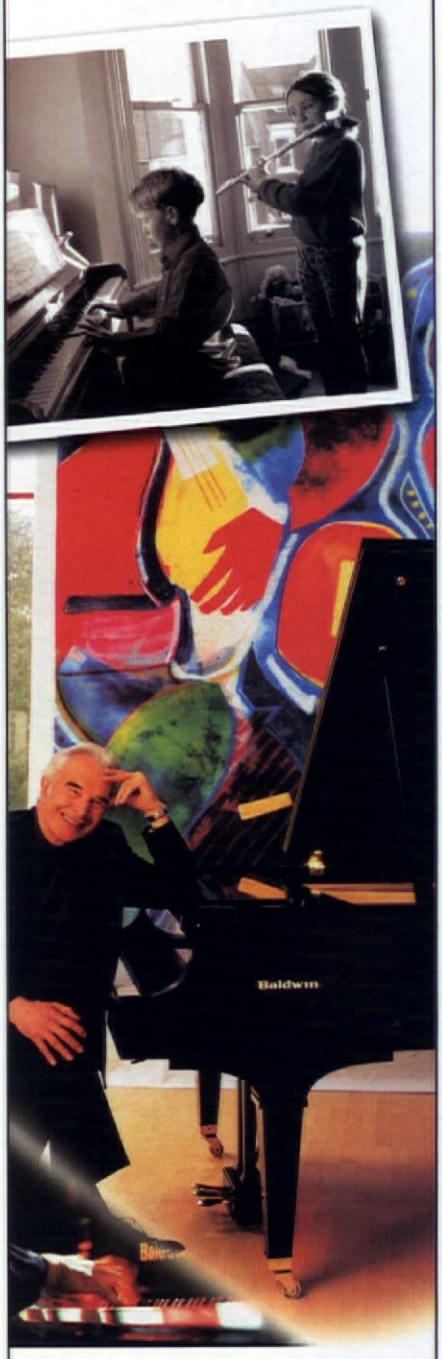
and English Romantic poetry. He is inspired by words as well as images, and it was, in fact, the phrase "extreme horticulture" that helped him to see the theme connecting these images. In some of them—for instance, the perfectly circular islands of impatiens at Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida—nature is so rigorously controlled as to provoke mirth; in others, like that of the largest fig tree in the United States, nature takes hold and expresses itself at the outer limits of the probable.

Pfahl is always interested in capturing a photographic experience that conveys both visual beauty and intellectual meaning. He works with a large-format 4-by-5 view camera, composing the shot over time to take full advantage of natural light and atmospheric conditions. He laughingly describes the decisive moment of the shot as being two hours long, but this may be a modest estimate, since he returns to a site again and again, over weeks and over seasons.

In "Dr. Wadsworth's tree," a sugar maple stands isolated against a pale background, its one branch extending like a plume of fire into the sky. The tree, which has been sheared by its owner of diseased limbs, is at once beautiful and shockingly deformed; it celebrates its own improbable magnificence with an explosion of color. The small bench at the base of the tree is a geometric grace note in the composition, suggesting a place where we might sit and contemplate everything that may have played a part in the history of this remarkable tree.

Pfahl has been an ardent philosophical conservationist for most of his life, but he manages to keep his photographs free of propaganda. He allows his images, straightforward and unembellished, to reflect the world and suggest ways of understanding it. He does not tell us how to think; he simply wants to show us how to see. □

Where Will My Baldwin Take Me?



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monk business

Had it not been for the diligent brothers of the Carthusian monasteries, we would not have the divinely aromatic libation Chartreuse

by jay mcinerney

Both green Chartreuse (55 percent alcohol) and the slightly milder yellow version (40 percent alcohol) will benefit from aging. Rumors of the curative properties of the drink remain unconfirmed.

THE HISTORY OF wine and spirits in Europe is inextricably, some would say excessively, bound up with that of the monastic orders of the Catholic Church; by the end of the Middle Ages, asceticism had become nearly synonymous with dipsomania in the popular imagination. The Cistercian, the Benedictine, and the Carthusian orders all contributed to the preservation and development of viticulture, wine making, and distillation. Among the most glorious examples of the symbiosis of spirits and the spiritual life is the mysterious elixir created by the Order of Chartreuse, the Carthusians, one of the oldest religious orders in Christianity.

The order was founded in 1084 by the scholarly ascetic Bruno in the shadow of the Chartreuse Mountains near Grenoble. In 1605, the monks at a Carthusian monastery in Vauvert, near Paris, received the gift of a manuscript titled "An Elixir of Long Life" from the marshal of artillery for King Henry IV. Already ancient when it came into the possession of the monks, this manuscript has a history as eventful as that of the Ark of the Covenant as narrated by George Lucas. The formula contained therein was so complex that it was more than a hundred years before the apothecary at the order's headquarters in Chartreuse finally unraveled its mysteries. The first batch of the medicinal beverage that came to bear the name Chartreuse was created in 1737, and rapidly gained popularity in the region.

In the wake of the French Revolution, members of religious orders were forced into exile. The Carthusians fled in 1793, after making a copy of the manuscript and entrusting that copy to one monk, who was allowed to remain in the monastery, and the original to a second monk, who was eventually arrested by the authorities and sent to prison in Bordeaux. Miraculously, he was not searched, and managed to pass the manuscript along to a supporter, who smuggled it back to Chartreuse to a third monk, who was hiding near the monastery. Convinced that the order was finished, this monk sold the manuscript to a pharmacist in Grenoble, who was unable to understand the complex recipe. When Napoleon issued an order that all medical

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formulas be sent to the minister of the interior, the pharmacist obliged. The recipe was promptly rejected and sent back to him. When he died, his heirs donated the manuscript to the monks, who had returned to the monastery in 1816.

The Chartreuse monks might have hoped that history had finally passed them by, until, in 1903, the French government nationalized the distillery, once again expelling the monks, who repaired to Spain with their precious manuscript. They built a new distillery in Tarragona, and another in Marseilles, both of which continued to produce the genuine Chartreuse. The government, meanwhile, sold the Chartreuse trademark to a group of distillers, who marketed a beverage that bore no relation to the original, and who went bankrupt in 1929. Shares of the now worthless stock were bought up by friends of the order and presented to the monks, who thereby regained possession of the Chartreuse trademark. No sooner had they returned to their monastery than an avalanche roared down the mountainside and destroyed the distillery. A new distillery was built in nearby Voiron, although the selection and blending of the herbs and botanicals is still performed at the monastery by three monks entrusted with the secret recipe.

Chartreuse has inspired a cult of secular devotees over the centuries. Its mystique was probably sealed early in the past century with the endorsement of the ultimate host, Jay Gatsby, who, according to his biographer, Nick Carraway, served the drink at his glittering parties on Long Island.

I find it stimulating to contemplate this history while passing a glass of Chartreuse under my nose; the survival of the recipe, with its obscure origins, seems nothing short of miraculous. Equally stimulating are the aromas from the glass, which provide endless opportunities for speculation—one of the reasons that Chartreuse is of interest to wine geeks like myself. The most prominent feature is the anise/fennel/licorice note. Dozens of other nuances tease you as they evanesce on the alcoholic vapors. More than 130 varieties of roots and leaves are allegedly involved in the production (including, according to rumor, wormwood, the active ingredient in absinthe).

My friend Jim Signorelli, a Chartreuse aficionado and movie director, suggests that it's enough just to smell the stuff. Hunter S. Thompson, another Chartreuse devotee, presumably swallows. Alice Waters, also a fan, can probably parse out more of the herbal aromatics than most of us.

Three kinds of Chartreuse are currently produced. Green chartreuse, the standard, was first adapted from the original recipe in 1764 and weighs in at 55 percent alcohol, slightly mellower than the original elixir of life, which was 71 percent. Milder still is yellow Chartreuse, at 40 percent, first distilled in 1838. A small portion of production is selected for extra aging in wood, and bottled in reproductions of the nineteenth-century bottles as V.E.P. (Vieillissement Exceptionnellement Prolongé) Chartreuse. Chartreuse benefits from aging. It is possible, especially in France, to find dated bottlings from the distillery in Tarragona, which finally closed in 1989.

Aficionados ascribe various curative properties to the liqueur, which was originally conceived as a life-prolonging medicine. A French wine maker of my acquaintance insists that a blend of one part green and one part yellow Chartreuse is the ultimate hangover remedy, though I haven't yet summoned the courage to test this theory. □

more chartreuse

For a Chartreuse soufflé, follow the recipe for the vanilla soufflé in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, substituting three tablespoons of Chartreuse for the vanilla in the recipe.

The Chartreuse mystique was sealed in the past century with the endorsement of the ultimate host, Jay Gatsby, who served the drink at his glittering parties

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AB

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may 1944

Margaret Mead turned an anthropological eye on the role of designers and architects in the United States. This is an excerpt

IN OLD AND STABLE societies, where habits of living are deeply ingrained, architects and decorators express the settled preferences of the people, however much they may seem to exercise a subtle influence in details. But in America they have greater potential power than in any other country.

In the United States we are a people who have left old ways of living behind us and come empty-handed to this country, preparing to take somebody else's word for what is a chair and how the color of the walls should accord with or contrast with the carpet. People, great numbers of them from the culturally disinherited section of Europe's population, were willing to look into magazines and shopwindows, or through their neighbor's windows, and accept these new ways of living, whole. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why American rooms so often look like stage sets, as if they had been prepared by one group for somebody else's tragedy or laughter.

From this willingness of the new citizen has grown a general willingness, in most Americans, to accept their houses as others have designed them. At the bidding of fashion, married couples exchange the double bed for twin beds, and then change back to a giant studio couch; the tablecloth, which held the meal table together, disappears, and mats, individual trays in disguise, replace it, to separate one diner from another; bathrooms become lush and lavender or green and cool, and curtains do or do not let the outside world in. All of these changes proceed at a pace which is breathtaking, each leaving its imprint on the character of the generation which was fated—by fashion—to be comfortable or uncomfortable, to do its courting with or without a hammock.

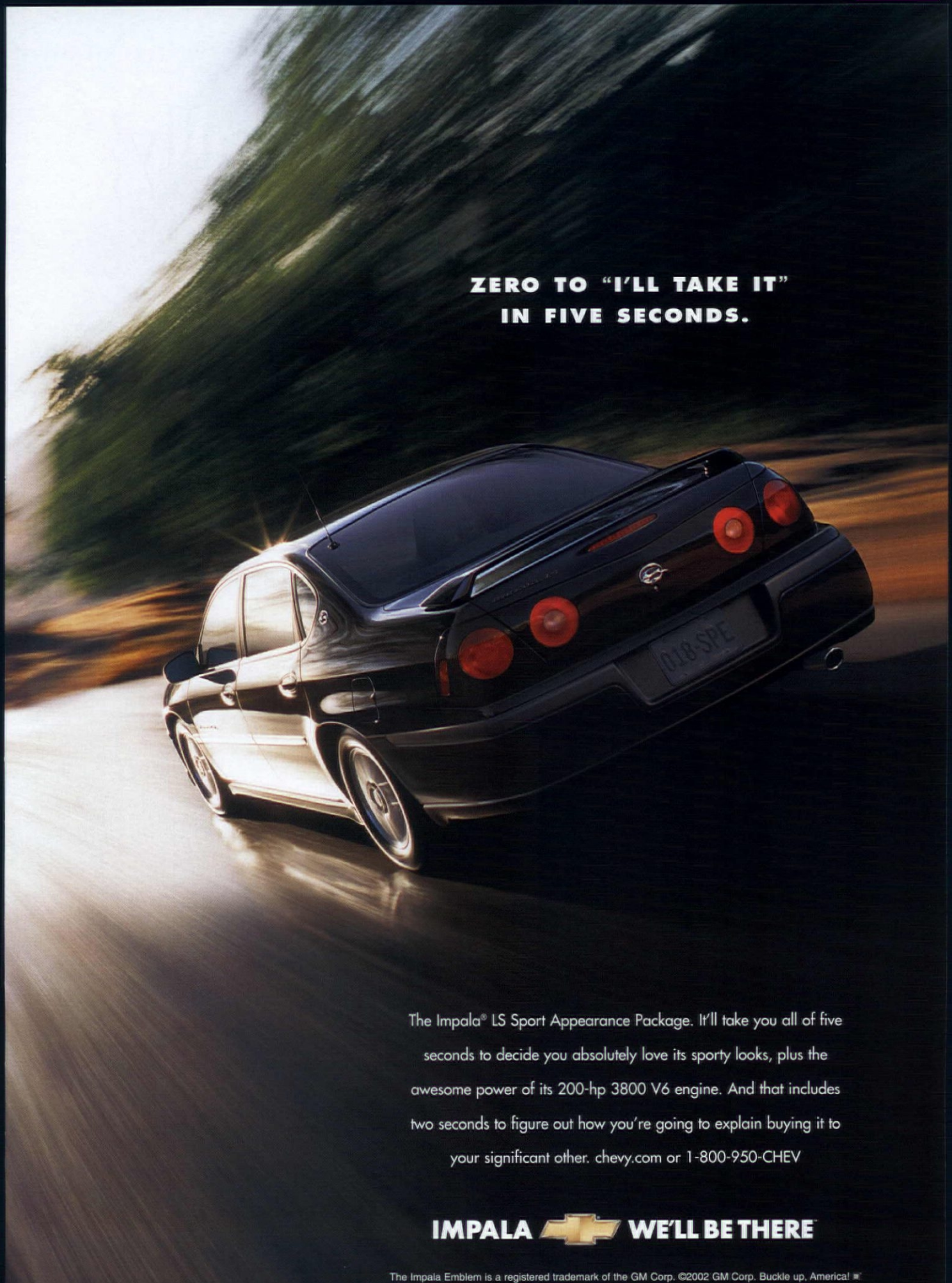
For even where furniture and the house itself are dictated not by an old custom but by the brains of improvisers and creators of new styles, there is still a relationship between the house and the people who live in it. A great number of these innovations will actually be reactions to what the designers themselves suffered in childhood, plus the demands of the moment, so that clothes designers and architects, designers of child furniture and tableware, and theorists in child psychology and family life will be more or less in step with each other. Rocking chairs went out of style at about the same time that pediatricians started frowning on rocking babies; the mustache cup and the dashing personality of Father disappear together; large palm leaf fans went out with languidness in ladies.

Because the American people do not demand too close a fit between the things they use and the way they want to live, a greater power is placed in the hands of architects and designers, for as they plan, so most people will be willing to live. The designers can pick and choose, appeal to false connections, promising distinction from a chair back, teaching everyone to want a kitchen so small and neat that there is no place in it for the baby, or the neighbor who comes in to chat. Or, the designers may choose to select from all the muddled and mixed motives of the average American, those which lend themselves best to sound design, because they are strengths, not weaknesses.

Nowhere in the world, since the machine took disciplined craftsmanship out of the hands of peasants who made beautiful things because they had made them for so long that all the excrescences of bad design had been pared away, has any people been able to make so many beautiful things, inexpensively, for the homes of the common people as has America today. If designers are interested in the personal relationships for which they are designing the setting, that setting will shape itself to beauty in their hands. □

high on society

Margaret Mead (1901–1978), above, right, was an anthropologist, writer, and longtime curator at the American Museum of Natural History. Her many books include *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) and *Blackberry Winter* (1972).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{practically} perfect

AT HOME IN CHICAGO, ALESSANDRA BRANCA, INTERIOR DESIGNER AND MOTHER OF THREE, WEDS CREATIVITY TO NECESSITY

designer savvy

Symmetry is the organizing principle, in both the garden, opposite page, and the living room, this pannnnnnnnnge.

trade secrets

FURNITURE The sofa is Atelier Branca. Louis XV chairs in front of the windows, a Louis XVI table in between, and a 1920s lacquered coffee table were found at auction.
FABRICS A Scalamandré damask covers the sofa. A Manuel Canovas fabric is on the Louis XV chairs.

designer savvy

The antique columns that Branca installed in the living room, this page, embody her "classic with a twist" philosophy.

trade secrets

FURNITURE In the living room, this page, a Louis XVI gilt wood bergère is next to an 18th-century Normandy chest. The dining room's 19th-century Russian gilt bronze chandelier, opposite page, was a gift. The George III gilt wood mirror was bought at auction. FABRICS The Louis XVI bergère is covered in a fabric from Rubelli. Curtains are Schumacher damask with Travers striped silk taffeta. Chair cushions are Clarence House linen velvet.

THE QUEEN—or a teen—would feel comfortable at Alessandra Branca's house on Chicago's Gold Coast. "It's very cozy," the Italian-born interior designer says. "It's not fancy."

But it is a paradox. The four-story house has seven bedrooms, yet it feels intimate. Sumptuous fabric covers many walls, but photo-filled bulletin boards hang on others. The entry has both its original marble and slate tiles and a bench full of Rollerblades. The living room curtains are silk, but the 16-year-old-boy's room has furniture from Crate & Barrel. "I'm not a rule person," Branca says. "People shouldn't live that way. When there are rules that have been applied, the house feels stagnant." (She will, however, admit to one rule: no food or shoes on the bedroom floors.)

Branca, her husband, and their children moved to the 1874 house 11 years ago. Built just three years after the devastating Chicago fire, it had a fine history—architect David Adler, who died in 1949, and his wife lived there for 15 years. And though it needed a great deal of work, it had "classic bones," Branca says. The new owners retained many of the house's original features (including three fireplaces, though they converted them to gas in order to avoid carting wood up and down stairs), but did make some structural changes. Finding the living room too confining, for example, they tore out a wall and, in what Branca calls her "nod to classical architecture," added Roman columns that look completely in place in the airy space. "My thing is classics with a twist," she says. "Borrowing the language but improving on it for today."

Branca compares decorating, whether a client's house or her own, to writing a business plan. "You can be creative, but you must be responsible," she says. With a cat, a cairn terrier, and three teenagers, she chooses "forgiving fabrics" and washable slipcovers for her furniture, and a durable

wool sisal carpet for the stairs. "You just have to think practically," she says. "A home is always a compromise."

Branca is the daughter of a microbiologist and an art historian and artist—many works by her mother, Anna Chiara Branca, a botanical watercolorist, hang in the Chicago house. She grew up in Rome surrounded by antiques and wanted them in her own house, too. So she taught her sons and daughter to be careful—they boast a lifetime record of no broken antiques—and has always put special pieces in sensible places. An 1810 Regency console with gilt wood legs, for instance, sits safely in the foyer. "You don't put the antique coffee table where you know people are going to put their feet up," Branca says.

She redecorates judiciously, but updates frequently. "I take things completely out of a room every year," she says. "I'm constantly rearranging. A home is exactly like a garden. If you don't tend to it regularly, it dies." Whether working for a client or herself, she is always mindful of present and future needs. "What is going to happen in this house in one year, three years, five years?" she asks. "What's it going to be like when the kids are gone?"

The kids are very much here at the moment, and the family, Branca says, "uses every single square foot" of the 5,000-square-foot main house and the 2,000-square-foot coach house behind it. "If you don't use a room, you shouldn't have it. That, to me, is wasteful." She has bathed those rooms in color, from the Naples yellow in the sitting room to the Pompeiian red dining room. White walls, she says, work for people who live alone. With so many children, she adds, "my house couldn't be minimalist. Color is so much more forgiving." The house is also tailored for a family of readers. Books are stacked everywhere, and most of the bedrooms have a daybed where you can curl up with a book.

Branca professes that no room is her favorite. Still, the master bedroom, in

designer savvy

Seating abounds even in the bedrooms, offering places for conversation or reading.

trade secrets

FURNITURE In the guest room, right, chairs, daybed, lamps, shades, and small japanned table are by Atelier Branca. Ottoman, above, is an 18th-century Louis XVI footstool. In the master bedroom, opposite page, the painted Louis XVI chair is from the Wrightsman collection at Sotheby's. Swing-arm lamp is from Hansen.

FABRICS Francesca by Manuel Canovas on the chairs, above, and Zoffany Red Strie Velvet covers the ottoman. Wall covering and curtains, opposite page, are linen toile by JG Baker, London. Table underskirt and bed covering by Scalamandre. Linens are from Schweitzer, NYC.

designer savvy

In warm weather, the terrace between the main house and the coach house serves as the family's outdoor dining room, just as it would in Branca's native Italy.

trade secrets

FURNITURE Branca and her three teenage children, left, at a table with a Montauk umbrella from Restoration Hardware. Chairs surrounding the table are from Ballard Designs. Banquette, settees, and Medici glassware by Atelier Branca.
FABRICS All from Perennials: settees are covered with Big Stripe in Black Tie; banquette is Jake Stripe in Black Tie; black trim on throw pillows is Shadows in Ebony.
TABLEWARE Dishes by Astier de Villatte, Paris.

apple green (a color she and her husband chose so "it would always be spring"), is clearly her sanctuary. Toile—a favorite of Branca's because it "runs a little deeper" than solid colors or floral patterns—covers the walls, and batting beneath it absorbs sound. "A bedroom should be a refuge," Branca says. "We've upholstered it to make it warm and cozy." Here, as almost everywhere else in the house, seating is more than ample, and in a scheme Branca refers to simply as "a mix of old and new," antiques blend comfortably with pieces from the designer's own line.

BRANCA CALLS the main kitchen Grand Central Station. With a large banquette on two sides of a triangular maple table, there's plenty of seating room. A black-and-white gingham bulletin board—"our wall of fame and shame," Branca says—behind the table helps give the room a casual air. The dining room (with the second kitchen adjoining it) is on the second floor. In this sumptuous space, rich in damasks and taffetas, with a gilt bronze and crystal nineteenth-century Russian chandelier hanging above the table, there are family dinners—which include the children's friends—twice a week. ▷

designer savvy

Unexpected stripes and bold splashes of color give a chic kick to the multipurpose room in the coach house.

trade secrets

FURNITURE Sofas, ottoman, and mirror are Atelier Branca. Foreground chairs are East Indian style.
FABRICS Sofa fabric is a quilted cotton ticking. Leather on ottoman is custom-dyed by Edelman Leather. Fabric on the rocking chair is Holly Hunt Great Plains.
RUG Wool sisal by Stark.

In warm weather, the family eats all its meals on the terrace, where colorful annuals nestle up to clipped boxwood. "In Italy," Branca says, "we grew up on terraces." She installed hand-cut limestone on this one, which links the main house and the coach house.

THE COACH HOUSE has a garage and a guest room (also done up in toile) on the first floor. A black iron spiral staircase leads to a giant multipurpose room whose centerpiece is a Branca-designed large red leather ottoman equipped with pullouts on which to rest drinks. Everything from free weights to a 54-inch flat-screen TV are stored behind cabinet doors. She installed four skylights to bring light in, and tempered formality by painting the doors, which were originally used for bringing in hay for the horses, in zebra stripes. Branca went to boarding school in Paris, where, she says, she learned "the French discipline of caring about the detail." The zebra stripes are just the kind of detail for which she is well-known.

But both the main house and the coach house are, above all, about family. On Saturday mornings, Branca frequently has at least ten teenagers to feed. "We're like a B&B," she says. "But we're a bed and pasta." And if the kids spill it on the toile, no problem: it's colorful and washable. ▷

Karen Springen is a Chicago-based correspondent for Newsweek.

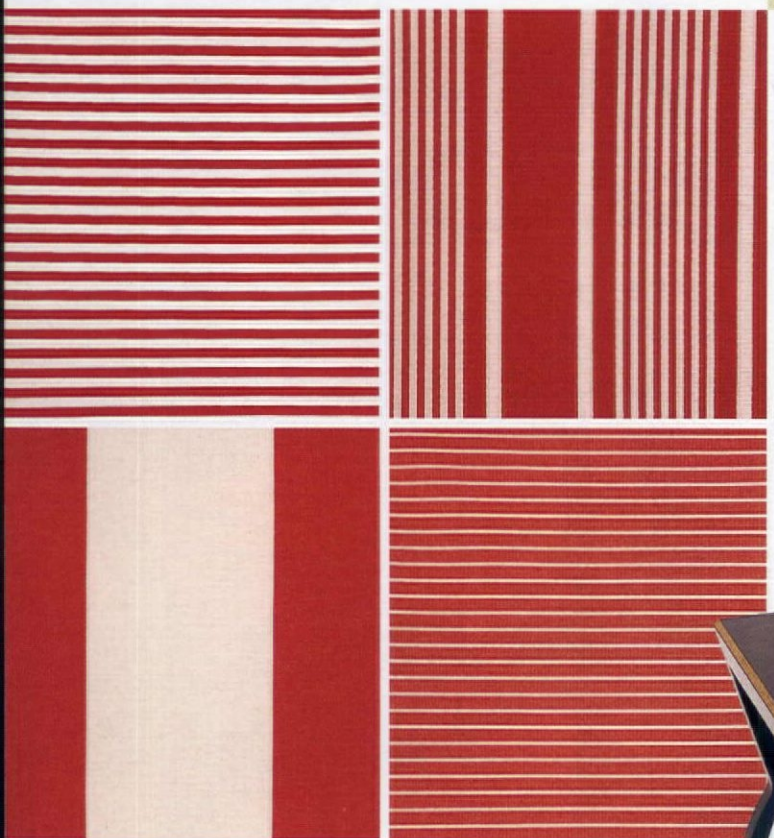
AB

{trade secrets}

WHAT'S BLACK AND WHITE AND RED ALL OVER? THE BRANCA LOOK

"Pick it and stick with it," Alessandra Branca says. Her coach house's color scheme—red, black, and white—proves the designer's wisdom. An edited palette allows her to superimpose pattern on classical form, creating a look that is layered but crisp. Red matches her exuberance. "Black is as neutral as white," she adds. "Even in a pale room, you need a touch of it to give the room depth and set off the other colors. That's why I love japanning, metal hardware, and lacquer. Black accents are like jewelry for the architecture." At Atelier Branca, her sensible chic is for sale to the public. The showroom features many pieces that decorate her home: custom furniture, botanical paintings, painted porcelain, and antiques. Branca also features work by Jansen and Bagues. Here, we've gathered fabric and furnishings that share her spirit.

black and white stripes These patterns satisfy twinned desires for order and variety. Clockwise from top left: Nya Nordiska's Teso (railroaded—turned on its side), at Randolph & Hein; Sconsett Stripe, by Diamond & Baratta, from Lee Jofa; Albert Hadley's Zina Stripe (railroaded), at Hinson and Company; Antibes glazed cotton, from Rose Cumming, Ltd.



red and white stripes Vertical stripes make a room or an object look taller; horizontal stripes can lengthen a hallway. Clockwise from top left: Nya Nordiska's Samba (railroaded), from Randolph & Hein; Pierre Frey's Pornic, at Donghia; Nya Nordiska's Bellini (railroaded), Randolph & Hein; Manuel Canovas's Georgica, through Cowtan & Tout.

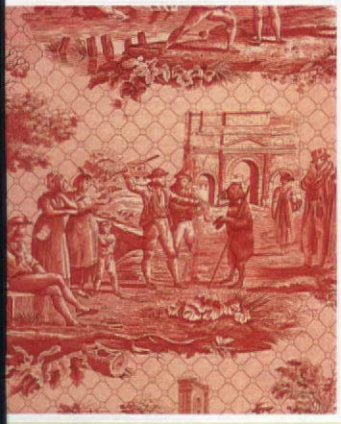
▶ Suzanne B. Allen & Co. LLC.'s Mayfair Bamboo Double Trey table in distressed red lacquer with gold edging, available through Christopher Norman, Inc., features removable trays.

▼ Clean lines distinguish the glossy Balmain coffee table, shown in dark cherry with gold leaf finish, available through Niermann Weeks.

▶ French tabletop designer Marie Daage makes this black-and-white-striped porcelain cachepot, $295, specially for Atelier Branca. At once pretty and graphic, it gives flower arrangements a sassy spin.

◀ We think Branca would love the chinoiserie decoration on this Regency-style lattice-back side chair (cushion not shown), available through John Rosselli & Associates, Ltd.

bedtime stories Walls upholstered in Charles Burger's Lafayette toile make the guest room cozy and muffle sound. Linen velvet, custom-gauffered by Daniel C. Duross, covers the Atelier Branca sleigh bed and a Regency chair from Sotheby's, NYC. Nineteenth-century English pedestal desk from Gary Young Antiques, Centreville, MD. Bed linens by Laurence Tavernier, Paris.



toile tales Quasi-historical and literary scenes may often be finely drawn yet feature politically incorrect images. Clockwise from top left: Branca used Charles Burger's Lafayette toile, from Quadrille; Robinson Crusoe toile, by Christopher Moore, through Lee Jofa; Trianon toile, by Christopher Moore, through Lee Jofa; Les Monuments du Midi, from Clarence House Inc.

▼ Velvet ribbon from Hyman Hendler & Sons, NYC, up to $5.50 per yard, is available in a range of colors. Branca used chocolate brown as trim, above; we're showing black; you could try any hue that complements your fabric. Keep it plain, or tack the ribbon down with brass Dome nailheads, from Houlès USA.

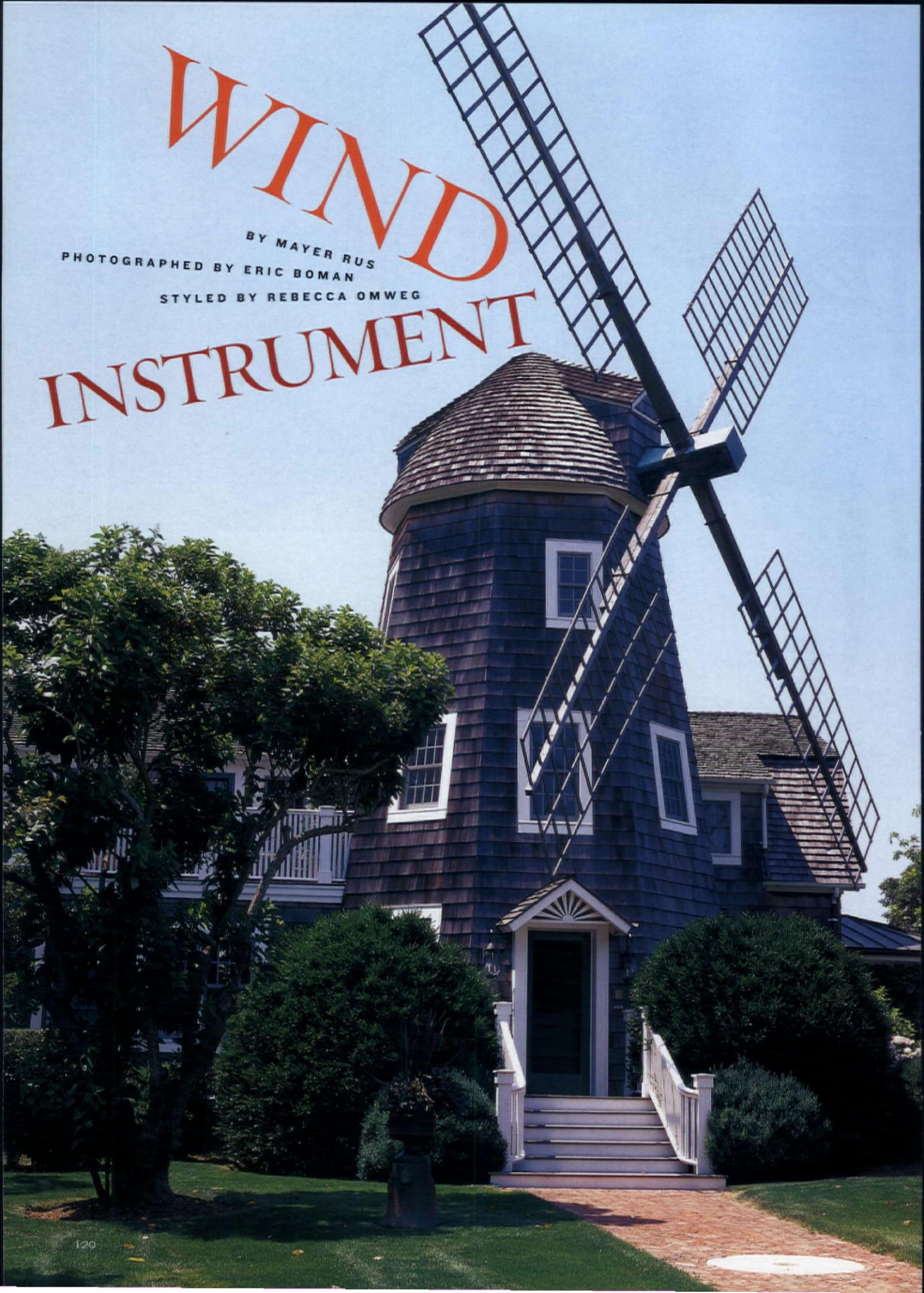
▶ We thought the classicism of this bronze Grange Urn lamp, from Vaughan, would appeal to the Italian-born designer, who tops her lamps with red silk shades that cast a warm, flattering glow. The Ruby gathered-pleat silk shade, 16 by 8 by 10 inches, $138, is from Gracious Home. Sources, see back of book. □

WIND INSTRUMENT

BY MAYER RUS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIC BOMAN

STYLED BY REBECCA OMWEG



designer savvy Dunnam moved the front door to emphasize the windmill, opposite page. The spare arrangement in the new entry hall, this page, highlights the character of the architecture.

trade secrets FURNITURE Pollard walnut Gothic Revival center table, English, ca. 1870, H. Blairman & Sons, London. ACCESSORIES French iron chandelier, ca. 1900, with Daum glass lenses. Egyptian mirror, late 19th century, Cobweb Antiques, NYC.

DECORATOR ARTHUR DUNNAM OF JED JOHNSON ASSOCIATES BREATHES NOTES OF CASUAL SOPHISTICATION INTO AN IRRESISTIBLY CHARMING EAST HAMPTON FOLLY

FIRST THINGS FIRST: this is not a story of adaptive reuse and alternative living. Unlike many of the windmills that dot the Hamptons landscape, this particular structure continues to fulfill its original purpose: delight. It was built in the late nineteenth century as a garden folly, a private playhouse for the residents of an estate on Main Street in East Hampton.

Some years later, two additions to the rear of the windmill transformed the folly into a viable, independent residence. A picturesque landscape of sweeping lawns and gardens magnified the windmill's idiosyncratic fairy-tale charm. Ken Kuchin and Bruce Anderson, a Manhattan couple long involved in philanthropic pursuits, were spellbound from the moment they saw it six years ago.

"Ken and Bruce had spent many summers in the area, and they wanted to find a place that evoked the spirit of the village of East Hampton in a special way," says decorator Arthur Dunnam, design director of the New York firm Jed Johnson Associates, who worked on the project with Andy Clark. "This house certainly fit the bill."

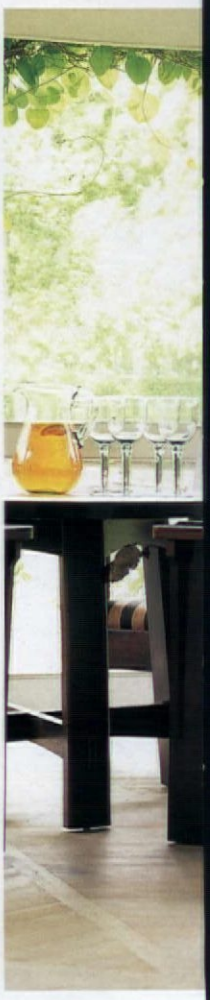
Although the windmill had what Dunnam calls "undeniable appeal," he still had some serious tilting to do. "The existing decor had a weird 1960s Palm Beach quality," he says. "Practically every room in the house had shirred, tented ceilings and

designer savvy

Refinished wood beams create a rhythmic pattern overhead, while a wool sisal carpet stenciled with Chinese Art Deco motifs anchors the living room composition.

trade secrets

FURNITURE In foreground, a custom-tufted Carr sofa by Simon's Upholstery, NYC, which also fabricated the Edwardian-style oak armchairs, custom-designed by Jed Johnson Associates. **FABRICS** Cowtan & Tout chenille is on the sofa.



Clockwise from opposite page, top: ■ An English Arts and Crafts sideboard presides over the dining room. The Edwardian dining table is from Ann Morris Antiques, NYC; the Art Nouveau chandelier is from Howard Kaplan, NYC. ■ Portiere curtains can separate the master bedroom's sleeping quarters from an adjacent sitting area. The bed, designed by Jed Johnson Associates, was based loosely on an Arts and Crafts design. ■ A screened porch connects the living room to the gardens. The custom chairs, table, and settee are based on Stickley originals. ■ Crisp lines of the beds in the guest quarters provide a foil to the sculptural brio of an Aesthetic Movement curio cabinet and late-19th-century American chair.

upholstered walls. The bright, preppy colors of the fabrics were dimmed only by the mildew that permeated them."

The extensive renovation project stopped short of total reinvention. "The additions that had been grafted onto the windmill created some awkward spaces," Dunnam says. "We made a conscious decision to retain a few quirky elements as evidence of the house's history."

The main entry to the house was shifted from a side porch to the original windmill, which had been utilized as a sitting room. "The porch opened directly into the living room, which didn't make for a very gracious entry," Dunnam says. "The windmill's octagonal form has a strong sculptural presence and natural attraction that make it perfect for an entry foyer. We tore out the old upholstery and exposed the beams to let the bones of the structure speak more clearly."

Deferring to the unique spatial character created by its canted, tapered walls, Dunnam decorated the new entry with a few carefully selected furnishings: a walnut Gothic Revival center table whose octagonal form mimics the architecture; two English benches with Gothic details; and a large Egyptian mirror, inlaid with bone and mother-of-pearl, which, he says, "adds an exotic note and acts like another window." Hanging above the center table is a wrought-iron chandelier of blossoming sunflowers that Kuchin and Anderson found in Provence.

In the main living quarters, Dunnam and his team installed larger windows and sets of French doors to foster a more intimate connection with the landscape.

"THE HOUSE CELEBRATES THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF LIFE IN EAST HAMPTON THE OWNERS VALUE MOST." —ARTHUR DUNNAM

designer savvy

Craftsman tiles in rich tones accent the subtle palette in the master bathroom, above, and kitchen, right.

trade secrets

FURNITURE In bathroom, custom ottoman, Simon's Upholstery, NYC. In kitchen, Robert Thompson hand-carved chairs, ca. 1920, Ann Morris Antiques. On terrace, opposite page, custom trestle table by Jed Johnson Associates; Smith & Hawken Avignon chairs. FIXTURES Kohler tub. TILE Custom Pratt & Larsen 2-inch Craftsman mosaic tile, through Country Floors. Sources, see back of book.

"Your eye is constantly drawn to views of the spectacular grounds," he says. "We reconfigured the garden so that it can be enjoyed inside as well as out."

Dunnam drew inspiration for his decorative scheme from his clients' growing collection of English Arts and Crafts furniture. He describes the overall color palette as "earthy and masculine." A custom wool sisal carpet stenciled with a multicolored Chinese Deco pattern anchors the living room. A new surround of glazed Craftsman tiles accents the fireplace, which is flanked by a pair of distinctive late-nineteenth-century English cabinets that stand on hippopotamus feet and feature the signs of the zodiac. The living room's wood beams, like those in the windmill, were stripped, bleached, and finished with pigmented wax in a warm coffee color that "brought life back to the wood."

In the totally renovated kitchen, Craftsman tiles complement new cabinetry of fumed oak. In the dining room, a dramatic Arts and Crafts sideboard from the clients' previous residence rivals the garden views for attention. The grand-scale piece provides ample display space for a collection of colorful English pottery by such masters as Christopher Dresser and Pilkington.

In deliberate contrast to the sculptural bravura of the antiques, Dunnam's interior treatments are restrained and crisply tailored, calculated to foster an atmosphere of gracious country living full of character and comfort. "This house not only reflects Ken and Bruce's individual personalities and tastes," Dunnam says, "it also celebrates the special qualities of life in East Hampton they value the most." And they lived happily ever after. □

Debo in Excelsis

Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, seat of the Cavendish family since the 1550s, was rebuilt in the classical style by the first duke, from 1686 to 1707. The south front, left, overlooks a baroque sea horse fountain by Caius Gabriel Cibber. Window frames are gilded to reflect the northern light. ■ In the west hall entrance, opposite page, the duchess pauses on a Victorian sofa amid carpet samples and baskets of her hens' freshly laid eggs. The huge amethyst geode is from the duke's mineral collection.

ONE THING THE BRITISH aristocracy has never been accused of is being chic. A glorious exception to that rule is Deborah Vivian Freeman-Mitford Cavendish, better known as the duchess of Devonshire, and to her family and friends as Debo. In the world of design, the chatelaine of Chatsworth, stateliest of the Stately Homes of England, is regarded as the doyenne of aristocratic style, whose flair for decorating, gardening, entertaining, and dress has been closely observed and widely imitated among high society for decades.

This is the peeress who as a young beauty outshone Queen Elizabeth II at her own coronation by wearing the off-the-shoulder eighteenth-century robes that had belonged to the scandalous Georgiana, duchess of Devonshire, and a dazzling tiara, but no necklace on her creamy *poitrine*. This is the hostess who has adorned her dinner table with a live cock and

With two new books and an exhibition, the Duchess of Devonshire looks back on her triumphant half-century as chatelaine of the legendary Chatsworth

BY MARTIN FILLER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANÇOIS HALARD

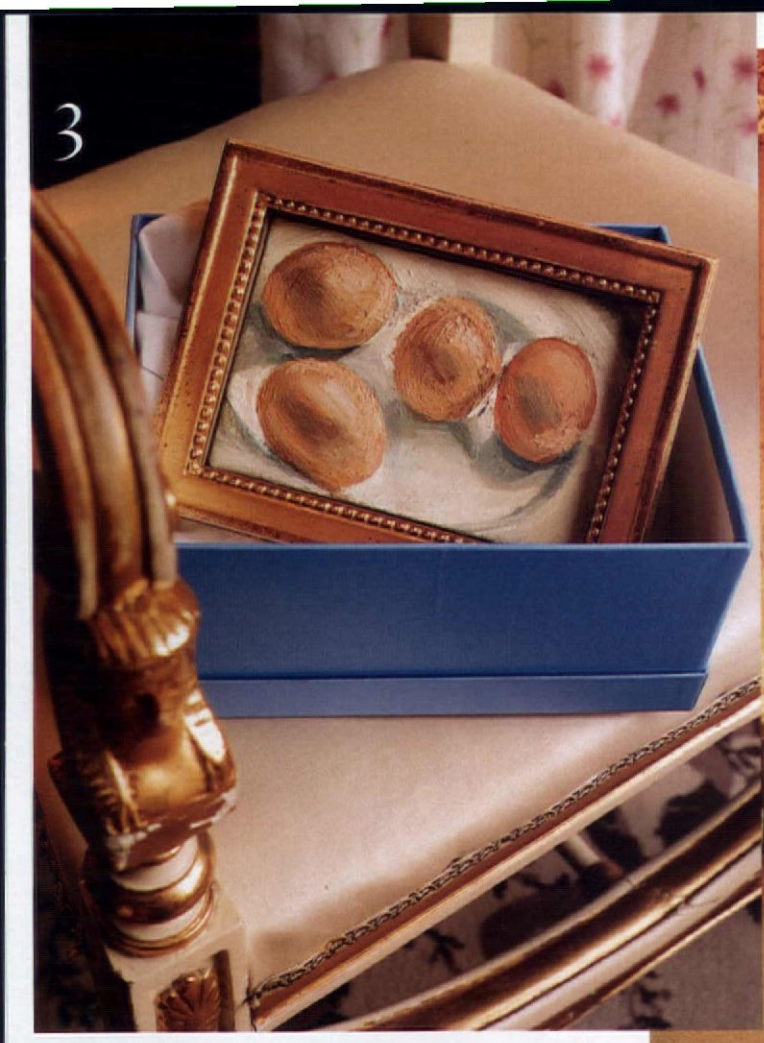
hen in glass tanks flanked by newly hatched chicks in baskets and eagle-handled Paul Storr silver ice pails heaped with brown and white eggs. This is the arts patron who sat for Lucian Freud years before he became famous. And as one of the celebrated Mitford girls—her siblings include the novelist and historian Nancy and the journalist Jessica—this author in her own right is part of the most publicized sister act since the Three Graces.

At 83, the dynamic duchess not only shows no signs of slowing down, but indeed seems to be accelerating her already prodigious rate of activity. In addition to overseeing Chatsworth's full-time staff of 59, she supervises the hugely successful Chatsworth Farm Shops at home and in London's Belgravia, which sell superb produce from the 35,000-acre Derbyshire estate. At opposite ends of the technological spectrum are the Chatsworth carpenters, who handcraft some of the most stylish garden furniture anywhere, and the well-designed Web site, chatsworth-house.co.uk, which offers a wide range of on-line shopping.

As if all that weren't enough, the duchess has just published two books, *Chatsworth: The House* (Frances Lincoln/Antique Collectors' Club) and *Counting My Chickens and Other Home Thoughts* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), proving herself a writer of considerable charm, erudition, and wit. And on April 27, 300 selections from the family's hoard of treasures, "The Devonshire Inheritance: Five Centuries of Collecting at Chatsworth," began its U.S. tour at the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis (home of one of her grand obsessions, Elvis Presley) and will reach the Bard Graduate Center Gallery in New York next year.

From an early age, the youngest Mitford possessed a clear sense of her destiny. Jessica wrote of her youngest sister's Gershwin-esque reverie: "Debo stated confidently that she was going to marry a duke and become a duchess—'One day he'll

1 Lucian Freud's early series of Cavendish family portraits includes his 1954 oil of the 34-year-old duchess, at right. 2 One of a pair of ancient Egyptian granite statues of the goddess Sekhmet, brought indoors in 1991 after standing in the garden for more than a century. 3 A small still life of eggs painted in 2002 was a recent gift from Freud. 4 In the blue drawing room, John Singer Sargent's 1902 portrait of the Acheson sisters hangs above a plain wooden trestle made on the estate and skirted in fabric, because, the duchess says, "you can't put pots on a good table." 5 On a Regency sofa in the chintz bedroom, 19th-century silk in stylish shreds. 6 The duchess and hounds photographed by Norman Parkinson, ca. 1952. She is an outspoken opponent of anti-foxhunting legislation. 7 A Regency lacquer-and-cane settee at the foot of the duchess's canopy bed is heaped with reading.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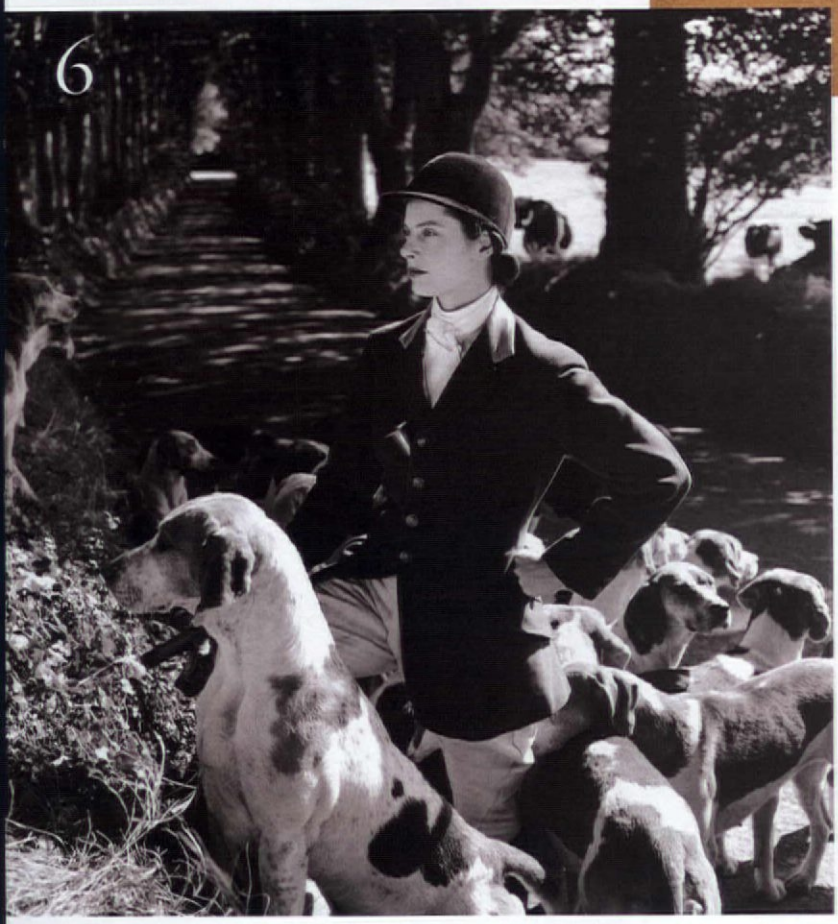
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From an early age, the youngest Mitford possessed a clear sense of her destiny

7

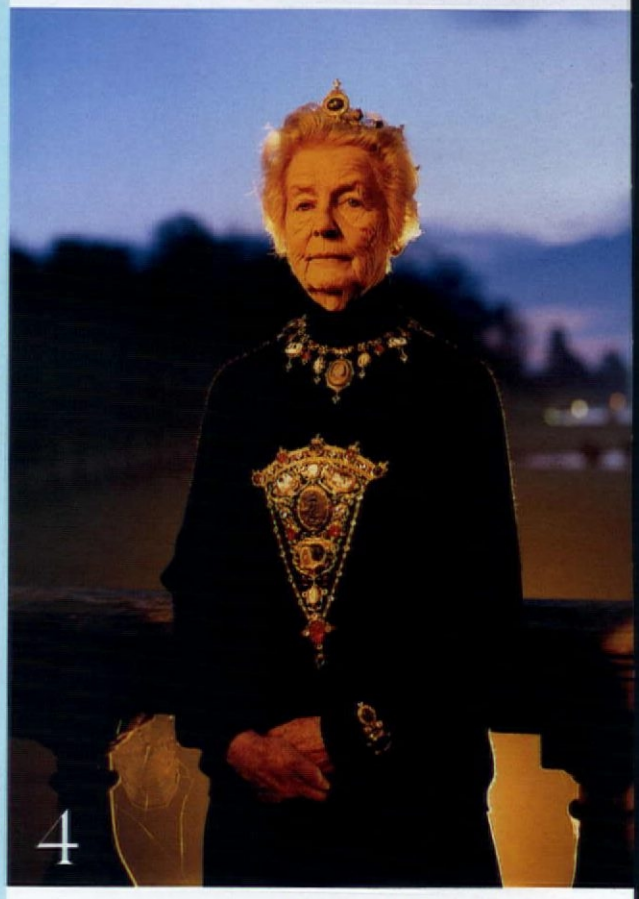
come along, the duke I love.' " At 18 she met and fell for Lord Andrew Cavendish, whose older brother, William, marquess of Hartington, was heir to the tenth duke of Devonshire. As second son, Andrew had slim prospects, and no one has ever doubted that Debo married for love. "I expect we'll be terrifically poor," she wrote to her sister Diana, "but think how nice it will be to have as many dear dogs and things as one likes without anyone saying they must get off the furniture."

But fate intervened, and when Billy Hartington was killed in action during World War II, his younger brother was thrust into the role of successor. The tenth duke, broken by the loss of his eldest child, died suddenly in 1950, leaving Andrew and Debo with the royal mess of the Chatsworth estate. New 80 percent inheritance taxes imposed by the Labour government threatened the loss of the house that had been in the family since the 1550s, but the new duke and duchess were determined not to be the generation to forfeit so ancient a heritage.

"To me, there's nothing deeper than places," says the duchess, and the tenacity she and the duke displayed in clinging to Chatsworth makes Scarlett O'Hara's passion for Tara look a bit feeble. To keep the house, the duke and duchess sold several subsidiary mansions, tens of thousands of acres of land, and millions of pounds' worth of artworks. At every step along the way, the duchess was by her husband's side. "Maybe we had a sort of dual role," she modestly proposes. "In the early days, he made the big decisions, which I, thank God, never had to. And in a supportive way I tried to carry on through when it came to details."

The duke is extravagant in praise for his wife and helpmeet: "There's no doubt about it, she's the motivation force. The way she puts it—which I think is fair—is I'm chaplain and she's chief executive. What's so extraordinary is that her father was the worst man of business imaginable, and yet Debo managed to be extremely good at that."

When it comes to decorating, the duchess is a confirmed do-it-yourselfer. "Oh, I can't have a decorator, no decorators," she says with a look of mock horror, quickly adding, "much as I love *(Cont. on page 162)*



1 The duke's sitting room, also known as the lower library, was redecorated in 1840 with painted panels by the same Parisian artists who did Le Grand Véfour restaurant. 2 In a Norman Parkinson portrait, ca. 1952, the duchess, in a Balenciaga copy, stands in the gold drawing room beneath Hans Eworth's ca. 1567 portrait of Henry VIII. At her feet lies her Labrador, Stout. 3 Cardboard trays are filled with eggs from the duchess's hens and given to favored guests. 4 Exclusively for *House & Garden*, the duchess is photographed for the first time wearing the Devonshire parure, a masterpiece of Victorian jewelry design. The seven-piece set of two tiaras, two necklaces, stomacher, comb, and bracelet was made from 88 classical cameos and intaglios from the ducal collection and set in gold with diamonds and enamel by Hancocks of London in 1856. 5 An urn of 'Blue John,' a rare Derbyshire fluorspar, lit from within. 6 Topiaries of yew and box in the west garden.

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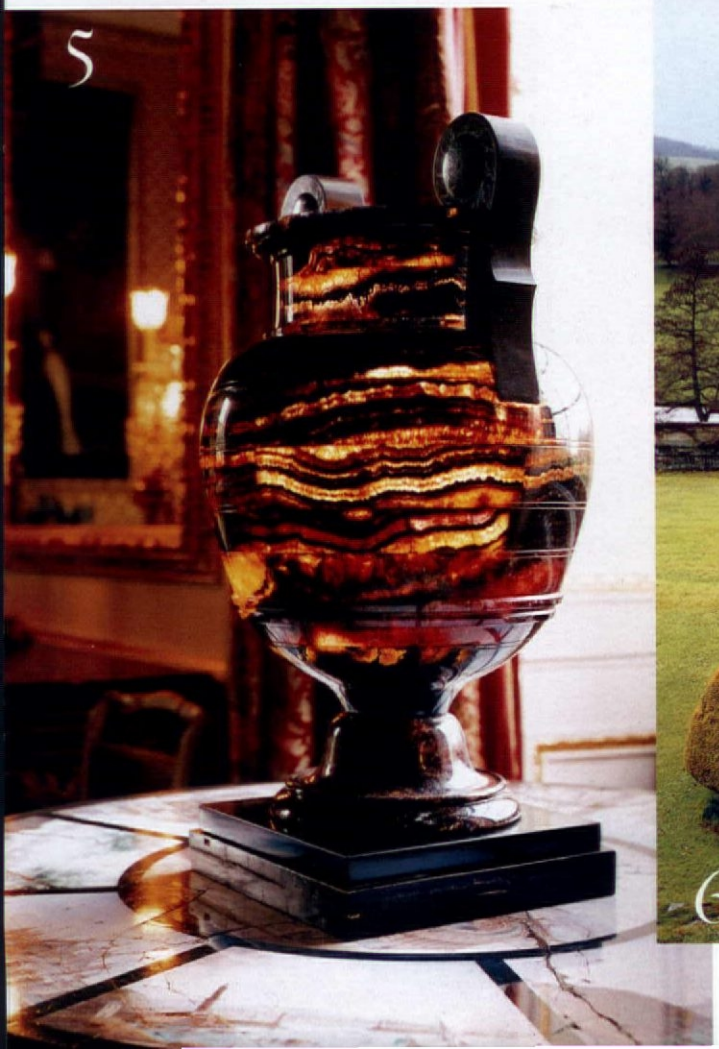
"You could live here for ten lifetimes and you'd never learn what goes on"



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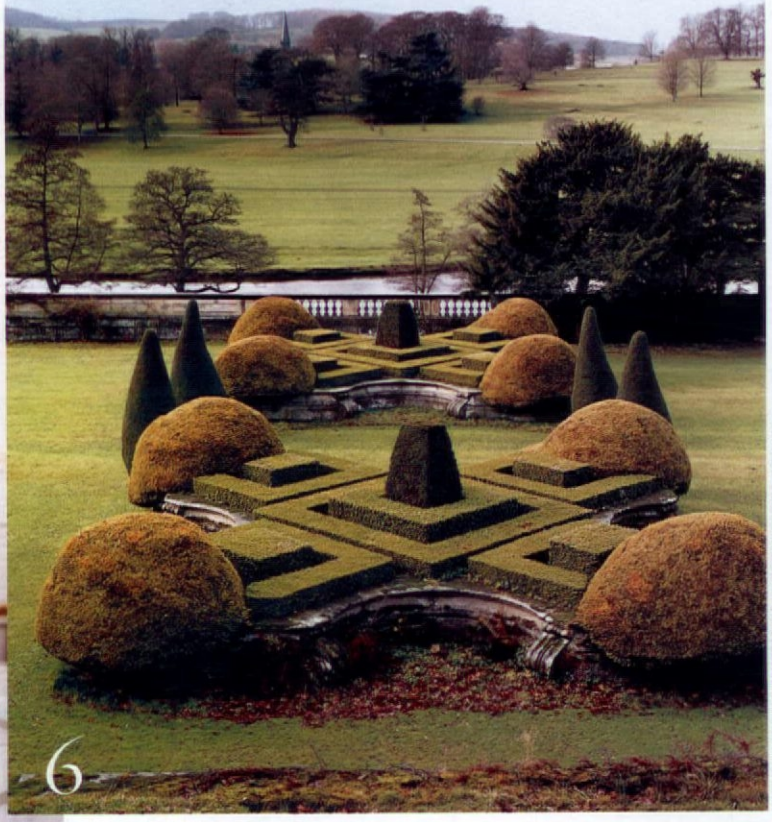

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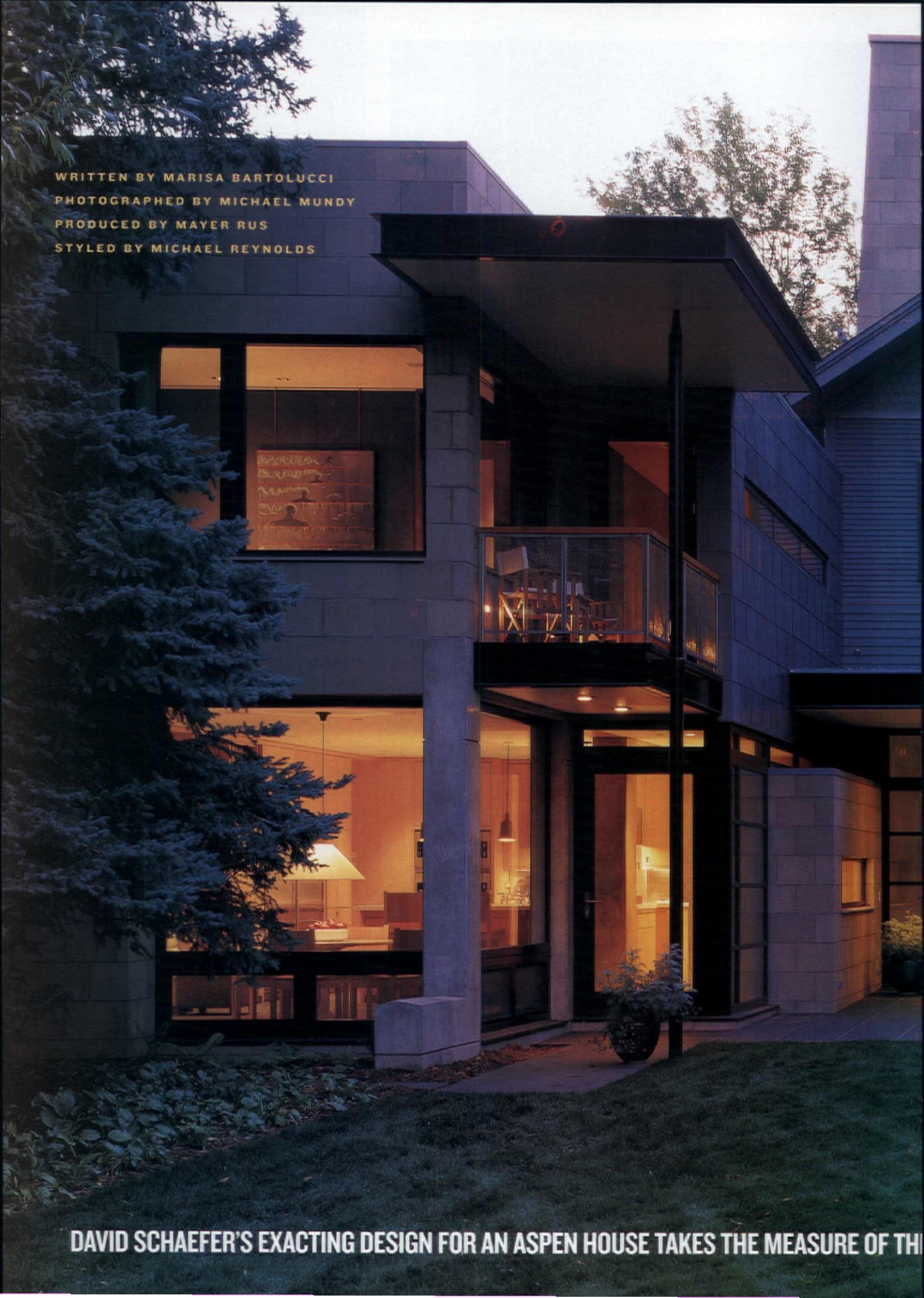
NORMAN PARKINSON LIMITED/FIONA COWAN/CORBIS (ARCHIVAL)



WRITTEN BY MARISA BARTOLUCCI
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL MUNDY
PRODUCED BY MAYER RUS
STYLED BY MICHAEL REYNOLDS

DAVID SCHAEFER'S EXACTING DESIGN FOR AN ASPEN HOUSE TAKES THE MEASURE OF TH

The discreet contemporary cement block and glass house that Schaefer designed is effortlessly joined to the traditional clapboard Victorian structure on the spruce-lined lot.

PRECISION MADE

OWNER'S LIFE RIGHT DOWN TO THE STATIONERY IN HIS DESK DRAWER

designer savvy

Schaefer's goal was to show just how comfortable a minimalist interior can be.

trade secrets

FURNITURE In the living room, the custom sofas are by Schaefer Studio. The blackened-steel Japanese stools are from Gulassa & Co., Seattle. The standing lamp is by Jacques Adnet, and the glass-topped cubic tables, in foreground, also French, are from the 1960s.
FABRIC On the sofa is Castellana from Furniture Co., NYC.
RUG Custom Berber is from Sam Kasten Handweaver, Stockbridge, MA.
ART Painting by Prudencio Irazabal.

ALTHOUGH SHE reveled in the frivolity of fashion, when it came to defining what constitutes elegance, Diana Vreeland was surprisingly austere in her assessment. "Elegance is innate," she declared. "Elegance is refusal."

The Aspen house of an entrepreneur and art collector embodies Vreeland's view. It is extraordinarily gracious in its restraint, and splendid in its subtlety. Achieving a work of such serene discipline proved no mean feat.

When he decided to put down roots in this alpine community some eight years ago, the owner wanted a house that could serve as both a personal retreat and a gathering place for the many cultural movers and shakers who regularly pass through town. "A kind of embassy" is how he describes his vision. There already was such a house, the former home of Aspen's first family, Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke. The couple were largely responsible for the postwar metamorphosis of this once near-deserted mining town into an international ski resort and cultural center. Their large, simply built Victorian was a beloved Aspen landmark. However, it

JASPER JOHNS

designer savvy

Schaefer keeps his minimalist interiors warm by using natural materials.

trade secrets

FURNITURE The sofa and armchair, right, are from Schaefer Studio. The baskets are from Colombia. In the hall, opposite page, the leather cabinet is by Jacques Adnet. **FABRICS** The armchair is covered with Matte Leather in Dillon by Holly Hunt Great Plains, and upholstered with Thorn Nutmeg wool fabric by Rogers & Goffigon. The sofa is olive chenille by Sam Kasten Handweaver. **LIGHTING** In the gallery, below, the track lights are Edison Price Magic Wand.

was in desperate need of a costly upgrade. The owner wanted to demolish the house; locals wanted to preserve it. Eventually, he won the right of demolition, as long as he saved the house's footprint, facade, stone wall, and glorious stand of spruce trees, which Mrs. Paepcke had devotedly watered every summer.

The project faltered again when the avant-garde plan that the homeowner commissioned from a young Belgian architect proved too ambitious for transatlantic execution. He then turned to his close friend David Schaefer. Schaefer was just about to set up his own furniture firm in New York, Furniture Co., after a successful career in retail design working for Esprit and J. Crew. "We had a similar sensibility, and the same taste in art," the owner explains diplomatically. In truth, his choice marked an aesthetic about-face.

"Architectural chest pounding doesn't interest me," says Schaefer. "Environments that make you feel great do." He achieves environmental states of well-being by crafting spare realms out of a palette of natural materials, which he rubs, oils, and buffs to rich, poetic effect. His intent is to create interiors that are ageless, that grow more beautiful with wear.

His inspiration comes from "conversing with my friends from the past—

1 The dining room as seen from the gallery. The red sculpture, *Ah, Roma*, is by Donald Lipski. Walnut and bronze dining table, with walnut chairs, designed by Schaefer Studio. 2 Breakfast room: Cast-iron Pendant lamp, Group One chairs, and ceramic bowl all by David Schaefer for Furniture Co. Saarinen dining table from Knoll. 3 Powder room: Wall and ceiling painting by Scott Kilgour. Faucet is Dornbracht's Madison. 4 Stairwell. 5 Kitchen: Hanging lamps by David Schaefer. Group One counter chairs by David Schaefer for Furniture Co. Fruit bowl by Stelton. Custom-plated Chicago Faucets hardware. Viking range and custom hood. Edison Price Darklite recessed down lights. 6 Sanctuary: Tub surround is custom-honed soapstone. Soapstone slab walls.

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Corbu, Perriand, Prouvé, and Gray." He is also, always, conversing with clients: "I feel such responsibility as a designer. I want the house to be everything to them, so I need to get way into their lives." The owner encouraged this mania for detail. However, he admits Schaefer took it to levels he still finds "staggering," drawing out the design and construction process to a patience-testing five and a half years.

Schaefer collaborated with Colorado architect Michael Ernemann on the house's exterior. Starkly contemporary, the cement-block-and-glass shell snakes out from behind the gray clapboard facade of the Paepcke house and nestles half-hidden among the spruces. The equally discreet interior is Schaefer's own. Its old and new sections, public and private spaces, fit together in a strict unity of material, form, and construction. The rigor and rhythm of the detailing confounded the local builders and tradesmen. "This wasn't the kind of job where you could hide the electrical outlets and security devices behind the crown moldings," says the owner. "These guys are used to building log cabins. Everyone thought we were absolutely nuts." Schaefer wasn't deterred. He explained patiently—and repeatedly—to the workers about the kind of seamless construction he was *(Cont. on page 162)*

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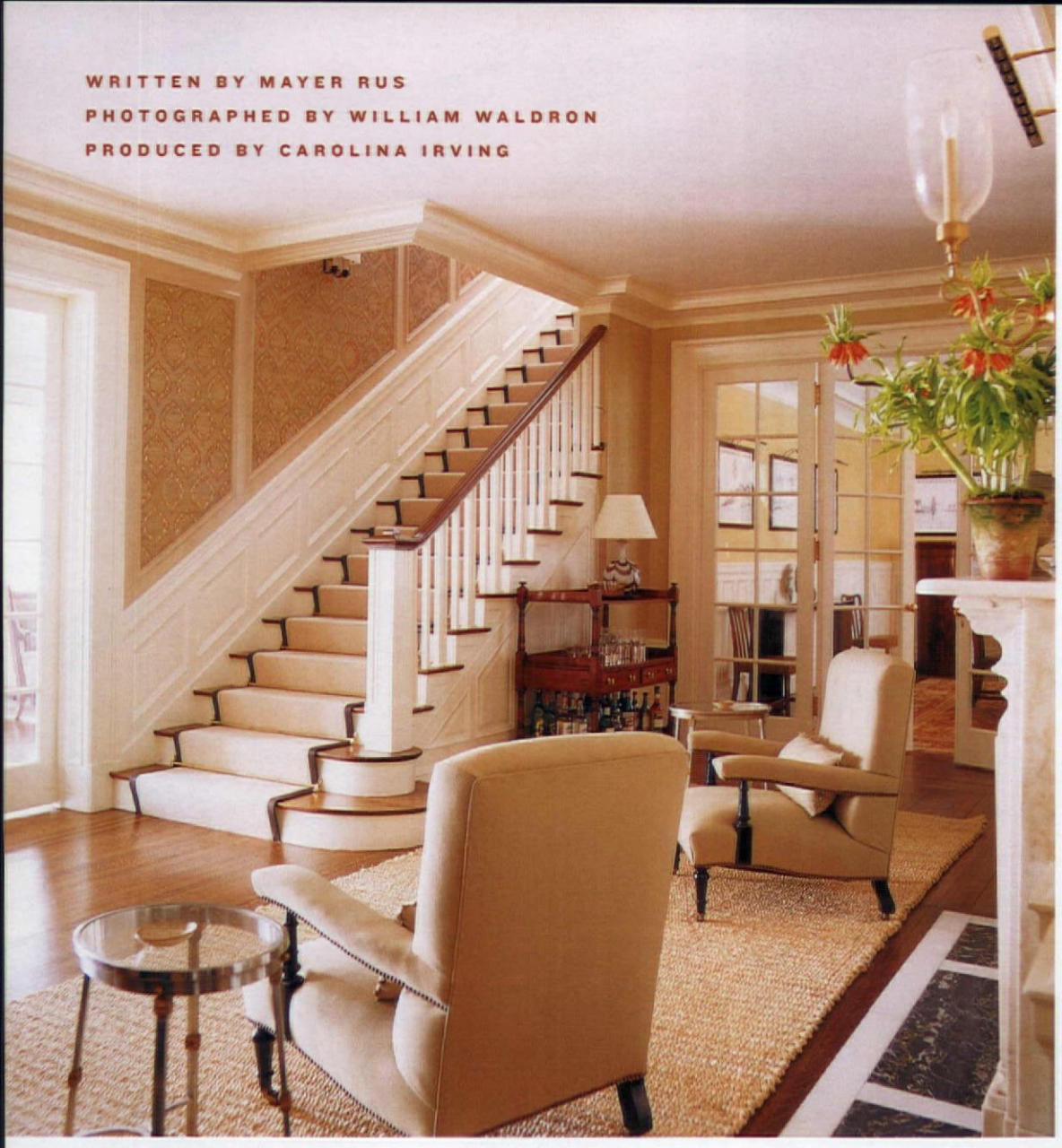
WRITTEN BY MAYER RUS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY WILLIAM WALDRON
PRODUCED BY CAROLINA IRVING



THINK PEACE

DAVID KLEINBERG DESIGNS A LIGHT-FILLED PARK AVENUE DUPLEX THAT GATHERS STRENGTH THROUGH SUBTLETY

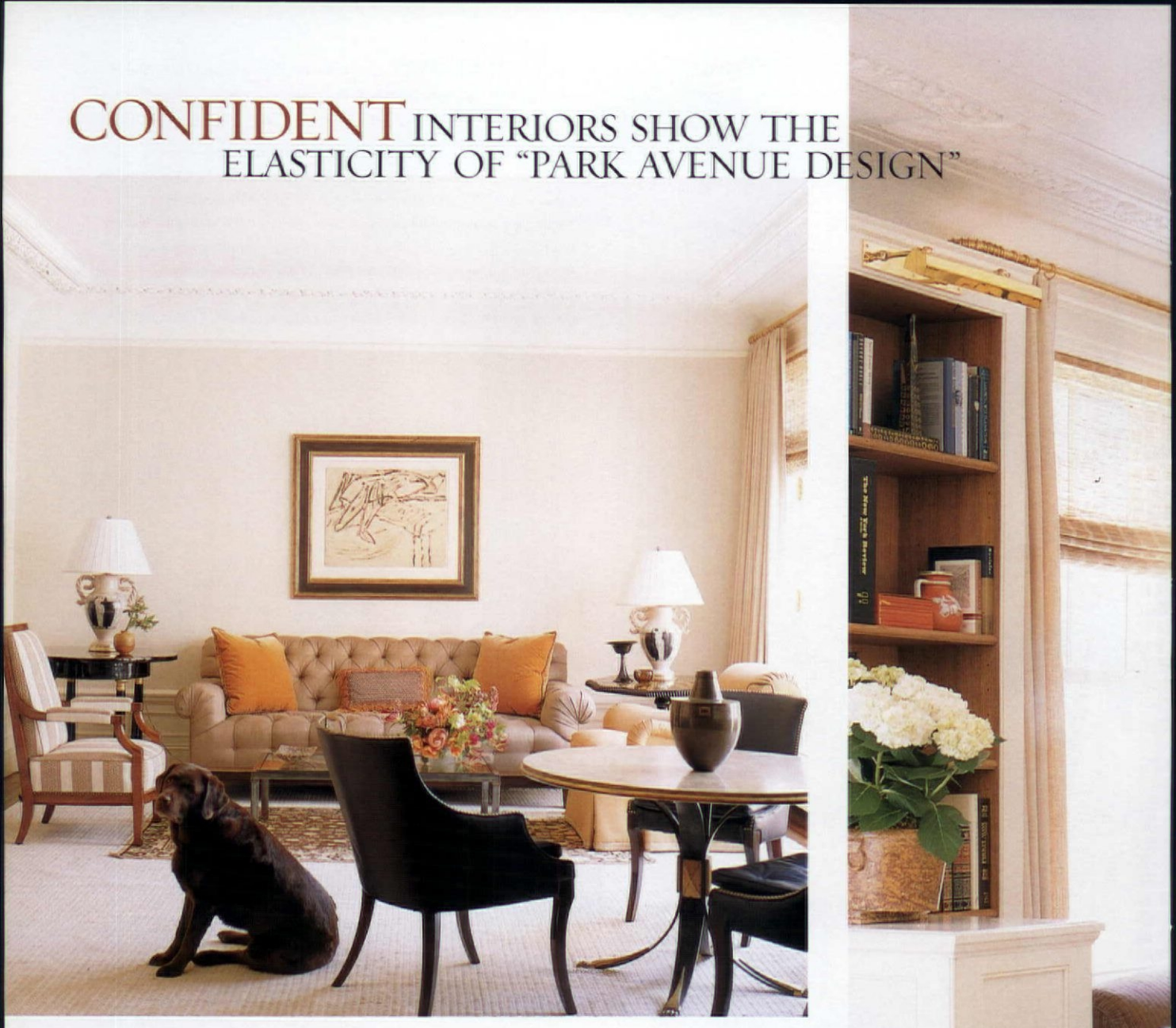
designer savvy

David Kleinberg's muted color palette and furniture scheme preserve the airiness of an uncommonly gracious New York entry hall.

trade secrets

FURNITURE English mid-19th-century armchairs, Amy Perlin Antiques, NYC. Steel and bronze French side tables, ca. 1940, from Brahms-Netski Antique Passage, NYC. Mahogany Italian neoclassical buffet against back wall was client's own. Late-19th-century English bar trolley, opposite page, topped by a Murano vase from Objets Plus, NYC, wired as a lamp. **CARPETING** Sisal rug from Patterson, Flynn & Martin, NYC. Seville Stripe cotton stair runner, opposite page, Elizabeth Eakins, NYC.

CONFIDENT INTERIORS SHOW THE ELASTICITY OF "PARK AVENUE DESIGN"



EVEN FOR AN ACCOMPLISHED DECORATOR, it's not always easy to discern the tastes and desires of a new client. Magazine clippings collected by someone about to embark on a major design project can facilitate communication, but only to a point. What's a decorator to do if his client comes to the table with images that seem to speak totally different languages—images of rooms by, say, Andrée Putman, high priestess of understated chic, as well as by Renzo Mongiardino, the late maestro of unapologetic decorative luxe?

"When I saw those pictures, I knew this assignment was going to be tricky, but potentially very interesting," recalls interior designer David Kleinberg. The assignment, to be specific, was the renovation of a 3,500-square-foot Park Avenue duplex for a "youngish" couple about to wed. From the earliest stages of design development, Kleinberg worked closely with architects Ann Chara Bailey and Francisco Ramirez. "The couple didn't want a classic, formal Park Avenue apartment with a yellow living room and a red library," says Kleinberg, "but they were still drawn to traditional forms. We reinterpreted traditional decor with a lighter touch and a slightly freewheeling combination of furnishings."

Happily, the space offered Kleinberg the opportunity to create well-proportioned rooms that take full advantage of natural light. The commodious foyer, which encompasses a central staircase, a fireplace, and lounge chairs, has the feel of a great hall. French doors that open to the living room spread the light from street-facing windows. "You never feel like you're trapped in a box," Kleinberg says. "The apartment really feels like a home." ▷

designer savvy One side of the expansive living room, opposite page, accommodates formal seating, while the other, this page, was designed as an intimate library.

trade secrets FURNITURE Custom-tufted rolled-back chair and sofa, opposite page, and ottoman and sofa, this page, from Anthony Lawrence-Belfair, NYC. Lacquer tray from Takashimaya, NYC. Tiered burl walnut side table, ca. 1935, from Maison Gerard, NYC. FABRICS Sofa, opposite page, covered in New Daughtry from Hinson. Striped armchairs in Christopher Hyland's Riga Ciniglia. RUGS A Samarkand, ca. 1910, opposite page, from Darius, NYC. Linen area rug, this page, by Stark.

designer savvy

A Murano glass chandelier complements walls finished in pale yellow stucco, while natural light animates the pristine white kitchen.

trade secrets

FURNITURE The dining table and chairs, this page, were the clients' own. **FABRICS** The chair seats are Edelman Leather's Luxe Calf in Asparagus. Curtains are Lee Jofa's Wheatley casement in Natural. **LIGHTING** Paolo Venini chandelier, ca. 1930, Lobel Modern, NYC. A Poul Henningsen chandelier in the kitchen, opposite page. **TILES** Ann Sacks handcrafted Subway wall tiles. Sources, see back of book.

STRATEGIC SHOTS OF COLOR ENLIVEN THE RESTRAINED DECOR

Kleinberg divided the large living room into two distinct areas. One side is furnished as a traditional living room, with a generous arrangement of upholstered seating; the opposite side is outfitted with bookcases of waxed oak that create the feeling of an intimate library. "We wanted to maintain the expansive, open quality of the room, but still allow it to serve multiple purposes," the decorator explains.

In the dining room, walls finished in pale yellow stucco *veneziano* provide a subtle backdrop for an uncluttered composition of furniture and artworks. Strategic shots of color, such as a green Venetian glass chandelier, enliven the restrained decor without disrupting the apartment's light, airy spirit. "We added depth and character to the neutral palette by using materials with interesting, rough textures, including stenciled burlap wall covering, linen and sisal rugs, and upholstery treatments of woven silk and leather," says Kleinberg. "It's a sophisticated roughness that has nothing to do with rustic."

Ultimately, Kleinberg's confident, unpretentious interiors make a strong statement about the elasticity of "traditional Park Avenue design," but they don't seem to have much to do with either Andrée Putman or Renzo Mongiardino. "The inspiration I drew from that exercise was not about borrowing specific design details," Kleinberg concludes. "It was about finding an appropriate expression for clients with a modern sensibility that embraces many ideas, traditional and contemporary." □

MARK BUELL PERFECTS THE ART OF BAKING AND

BREAKING BREAD

EARLY ON THE DAY that a small coastal community of northern California food enthusiasts are to gather for a harvest moon dinner, bread is already being made in the airy kitchen of Mark and Susie Buell. As Mark acts out phantom aggressions, slapping and punching his dough, the air is heady with yeast, and little cyclones of flour puff through streaks of the warm, fog-filtered sunlight. They fall across a stack of eucalyptus wood, soon to be burned to aromatic coals in the brick oven just outside the kitchen door.

Today, the former businessman, and husband of political activist Susie Tompkins Buell, celebrates his place at an epicurean table that will include, among other knowledgeable diners, Alice Waters, founder of Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California. Confident that he has honed his craft since he began baking bread in Corsica two years ago, Mark has gathered friends to share his passion and theirs.

When word came that Napoleon's mother and sister had once slept in the sixteenth-century Corsican farmhouse that the Buells' friend Waters had rented two years ago, Mark and Susie immediately booked a flight. Mark, a

Mark Buell tends the custom-made oven in which he has perfected the art of exceptional bread making. His loaves of ciabatta cool on a rack, above.

ARNS HIS PLACE AT THE TABLE OF HIS FELLOW FOOD ENTHUSIASTS

WRITTEN BY PEGGY KNICKERBOCKER PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE
PRODUCED BY LORA ZARUBIN

Napoleon enthusiast, will go to extremes to pursue his historical muse. But, as it turned out, it wasn't the Napoleonic saga that got under Mark's skin in the mountains of Corsica; it was something much more basic—the ancient craft of bread making.

Earlier in the month, when Waters and her friends had arrived at the rambling farmhouse in the small village of Bastelica, they set out to find the island's best provisions. But it was deep in the garden, dotted with old fruit trees, that they unearthed what would become the focus of most of their waking moments—a brick bread oven covered with brambles. After several sweepings and burnings, the oven was producing braised rabbits, roasted lamb, pizzas, and soups cooked in heavy iron pots.

1

WHEN DAVID TANIS, formerly chef at Chez Panisse, came to visit, he was drawn to the oven's bread-baking possibilities and immediately made a sourdough starter. The soupy mix of flour and water attracted natural wild yeasts and began to grow and bubble within a day. By the time Mark arrived, the oven was providing loaves of sweet-smelling bread. Buell watched carefully as Tanis kneaded the dough and placed it in flour-dusted baskets to rise. Together they added wood to the fire, moving the coals to the side as they slid a long-handled peel filled with unbaked loaves onto the hot stone floor.

4

Buell was taken by the process, the communal nature of duties, and the sharing of bread at the table. "I was totally smitten—the spirit of bread got inside of me," recalls Buell, who had previously preferred golf to any other leisure activity. As the holiday drew to a close, he vowed to build an oven of his own.

Back home, Buell learned that brick oven designer Alan Scott, from Petaluma, was the man to see. Convinced by Buell's enthusiasm that he was worthy of one of his ovens, Scott agreed to the job. Now all Buell needed to do was learn how to bake.

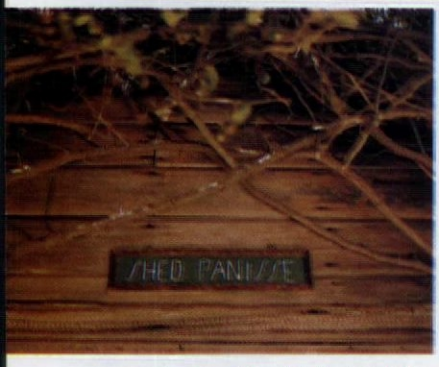
He had admired the craft of bakers Ed and Kathleen Weber, of Della Fattoria, so he asked to observe them at work. Setting his alarm for 1:00 A.M. on a chilly winter's night, he headed again to Petaluma to learn. "It was so invigorating," the novice explains, "that I felt as if I got a Ph.D. in bread baking from that family-run operation, and a great respect for the process and the product." But he still needed more hands-on training. The Webers suggested the San Francisco Baking Institute. There, Buell took three days of private lessons. But when he presented his first batch to his wife, she gently suggested that while his technique was admirable, his bread lacked a certain distinction. So he continued to practice, baking with rosemary

6

1 Figs roasted with olive oil and rosemary, cheeses from Cowgirl Creamery, and two of Buell's breads. **2** Sourdough bread. **3** A brick oven faced in stone by Alan Scott. ovencrafters.net. **4** The baker kneads his dough. **5** From left: Sean Thackrey, Mark Buell, Susie Buell, Alice Waters, Davia Nelson, and Ewan Macdonald. **6** The ingredients for loaves of sourdough bread with raisins and walnuts. **7** Loaves of sourdough raisin and walnut bread before baking. **8** Oysters.

BOOKS ON BREAD

Peter Reinhart's *The Bread Baker's Apprentice* (Ten Speed Press). Daniel Wing and Alan Scott's *The Bread Builders: Hearth Loaves and Masonry Ovens* (Chelsea Green).



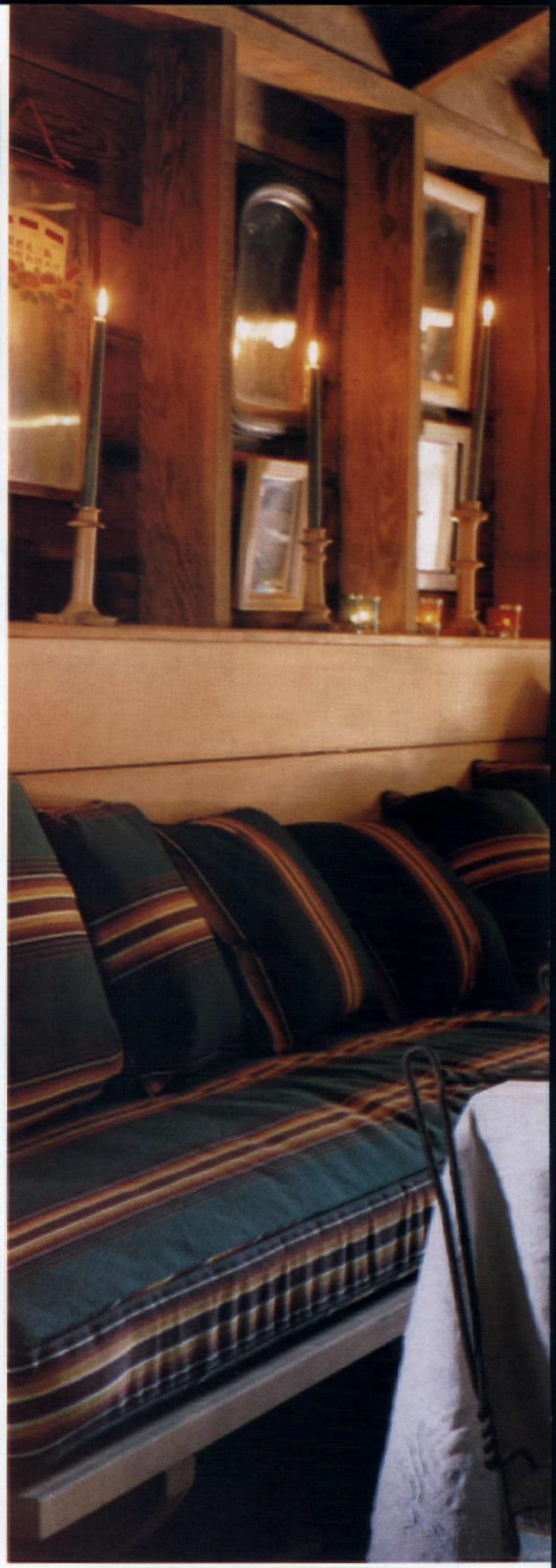
from his garden and using fallen eucalyptus for his fire. His bread developed an appealingly rugged, slightly salty flavor. His mission was to create a ciabatta worthy enough to be a birthday present for Alice Waters. On the last weekend of April, just seven months after his epiphany in Corsica, Buell delighted Waters with a basket of ciabatta.

"So now, with my bread, I feel I have a place at the table," Buell explains, referring to the loosely knit community of food enthusiasts with whom he dines regularly and who have been invited to celebrate his new devotion. The final loaves emerge from the oven just as Ewan Macdonald arrives with a silvery wild salmon he has caught in the cool currents off the Golden Gate Bridge. Wine maker Sean Thackrey has brought the wines he names after constellations: Pleiades, Orion, Taurus.

Guests gather for dinner in a restored 1930s garage on the property, called Shed Panisse, after all the festive dinners shared there with Waters. The redwood walls are covered in souvenir menus and mirrors, collected over the years by Susie in France and America. A chandelier dangles overhead, its candles joining others scattered about the room, chasing reflections in the mirrors.

As soon as the salmon is roasted in the embers of the oven, everyone heads inside for dinner. The first toast is to Waters, who inspired the meal by introducing Buell to bread baking. Many toasts follow, including a final one to the reassurance that, as one seasons, one has more to offer to the collective table. □

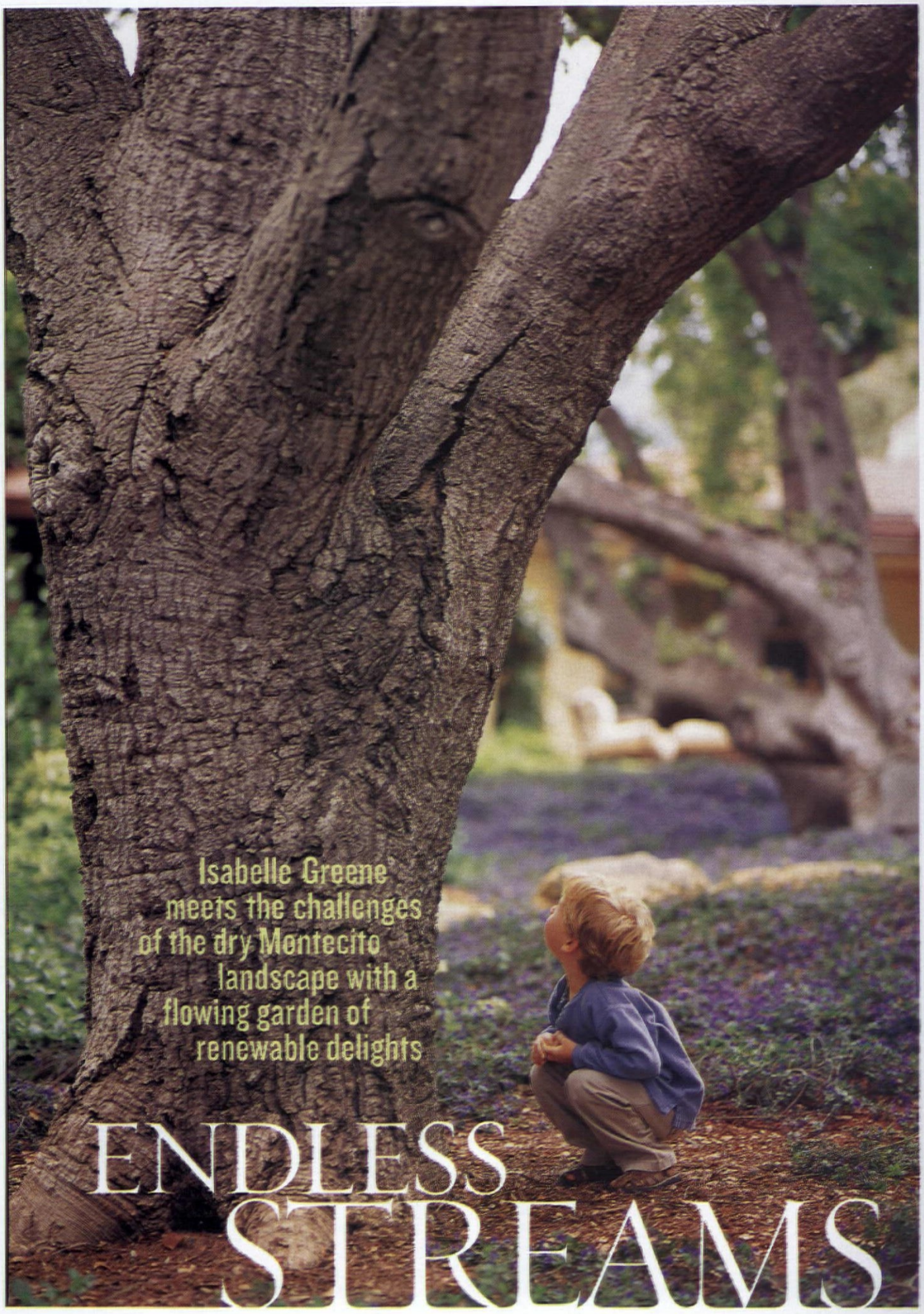
Peggy Knickerbocker is a freelance writer based in San Francisco and Paris.



A meringue, top, was baked in the cooling oven with berries from the garden. ■ The sign, above, on the garage, named in honor of Alice Waters's Berkeley restaurant. ■ Inside Shed Panisse, right, the atmosphere is casual, with furnishings collected over the years from flea markets here and abroad.

WRITTEN BY DIANA KETCHAM
PHOTOGRAPHED BY VICTORIA PEARSON
PRODUCED BY CHARLOTTE M. FRIEZE
AND STEPHEN ORR

The massive oaks, opposite page, inspired the Petersens to purchase the property and established the garden's tone. *Ceanothus* 'Centennial' and *Echeveria elegans* nestle in the joints of sandstone steps, this page.



Isabelle Greene meets the challenges of the dry Montecito landscape with a flowing garden of renewable delights

ENDLESS STREAMS

SANTA BARBARA landscape architect Isabelle Greene is a California original. Starting out in the 1950s as an artist and botanist, she took a roundabout path to garden design. She did not get her certification until she was nearly 50. Now, a decade later, Greene has become the great lady of southern California gardens and a hero to the movement for a sustainable landscape. But her gardens usually defy categories, especially the politically correct ones of dry and native plants.

On any given day in Montecito, the elegant hillside neighbor to Santa Barbara, you can visit an Isabelle Greene garden that is rigorously dry (with 98 percent native plants), another done in an English style, and still others whose styles lie somewhere between these extremes. Yet they all share an atmosphere that marks them as unmistakably by Greene.

Among her unclassifiable gardens is the one she completed in 2000 for Jody and Donald Petersen. Back in Michigan, where Donald had been chairman of the Ford Motor Company, Jody had designed her own garden, but in California she felt she needed professional help. "There was so much I didn't know about California," she explains. When she asked people in Santa Barbara about landscape architects, she reports, "everyone urged us to use Isabelle Greene."

The Petersens' property is in the heart of Montecito, in an area of old estates with a sprinkling of charming cottages. It is a neighborhood where the veneer of tranquillity conceals smoldering resentment as older houses are pulled down to make way for supermansions. In 1994, the Petersens bought an unimposing two-bedroom Mediterranean house built in the 1940s. The house may not have been spectacular, but the setting was unusually attractive, with a stream, magnificent old oaks and eucalyptus, and a gentle slope suitable for strolling.

The Petersens knew where they stood on the tear-down issue. "We made a choice not to enlarge the footprint of the house," Jody says. "But when I saw the garden, I said to myself that change was in order." ▷

The sandstone-lined dry creek bed cuts through white *Loropetalum chinense* and blue *Ceanothus* 'Centennial' on its journey to the swimming pool.

"I DON'T BELIEVE IN DEPRIVING PEOPLE OF EVERYTHING THEY LOVE. IF YOU LOVE ROSES, YOU CAN HAVE A FEW ROSES"—ISABELLE GREENE

Greene transformed the garden over the course of four years. Trees and boulders were moved. Concrete paving, Greene's nemesis, was replaced with hand-built stonework. Small pools and birdbaths were created. By the end, says Greene, "nothing was where it had been but the house."

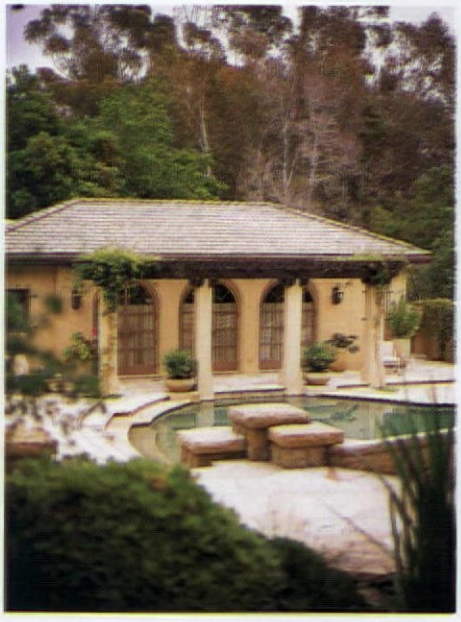
Yet, as you enter the new Petersen garden, it looks perfectly natural, or, as Greene describes it, "normal." The drive is lined with citrus trees, a standby of Santa Barbara's tradition. You might think that they were part of the earlier garden, but they were added by Greene. As you climb the hillside to the house, a spot of color draws your eye forward. It is rusty bougainvillea, a survivor from the old garden. The patch of green, a remnant of the original lawn, forms a backdrop for a sculpture that the Petersens brought from Michigan.

The intermingling of old and new has made this garden one of Greene's most romantic. In the spring, the sloping land is awash in rivers of blue blossoms. You hear flowing water and birdsong. Where, you ask, is the harsh, spiky, minimalist, drought-resistant southern California garden?

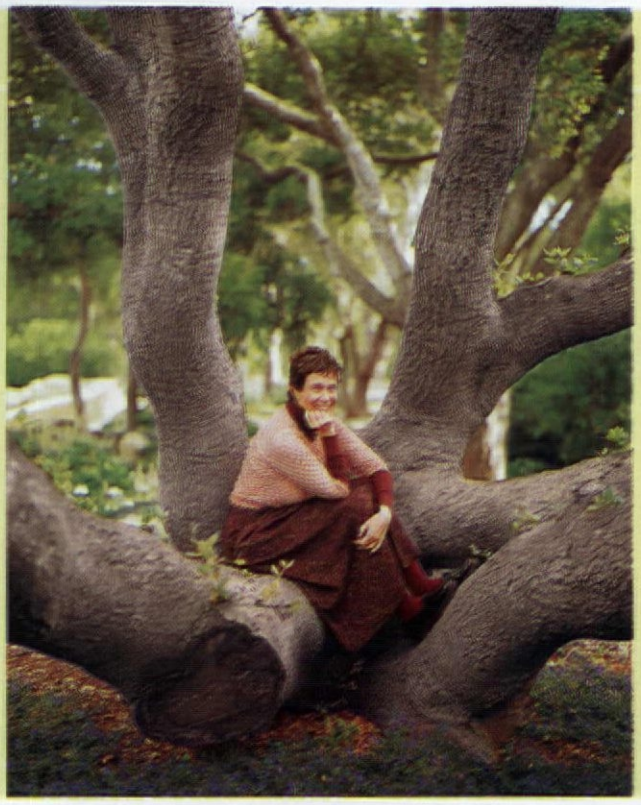
Santa Barbara suffered a severe six-year drought in the 1980s. Since then, it has been a laboratory for experimentation with drought-resistant plants. One important local crusade involves the preservation of the native California live oak. A Santa Barbara garden's trademark image used to be the spreading oak with an undergrowth of ferns and azaleas. Not anymore. The death of the oaks is now seen as linked to these plants. "The problem," Greene explains, "is that the oaks like a dry climate, and gardeners surrounded them with plants that like water. The watering weakens the oaks."

The Petersens were naturally concerned about their oaks. "We bought this place for the trees," Jody says. Greene's approach was to clear the hillside and replant it with 45 percent native plants and 50 percent drought-tolerant varieties, with the remaining 5 percent left for "thirsty" azaleas, ferns, and the spot of lawn.

Greene is an environmentalist, but she is no puritan. "I don't believe in depriving people of everything they love," she says. *(Cont. on page 164)*



Architect William R. LaVoie designed the pool house, above, at the foot of the garden. Greene used white *Iris japonica* and pink *Heuchera sanguinea* as vertical accents in the dry streambed, opposite page.



Roots of Greene

Isabelle Greene's work is strongly identified with the land forms and plants of southern California, where she has designed nearly 500 gardens. A third-generation Californian, she is the granddaughter of the architect Henry Mather Greene, of Greene and Greene Architects, pioneers of the Craftsman style and architects of the Gamble House in Pasadena. She received a B.A. in botany from the University of California at Los Angeles, then worked as a botanical illustrator. A self-taught garden designer, she designed her first garden in 1964. For seven years, she combined practice with courses in landscape architecture, and was certified in 1982.

Public Gardens La Casita del Arroyo, a demonstration garden in Pasadena, CA. The Silver Garden at Longwood Gardens, in Kennett Square, PA.

Inspirations The Japanese aesthetic; Roberto Burle Marx, James Rose, Fay Jones, Maya Lin; and especially architect Henry Mather Greene, her grandfather.

Philosophy "Design is a very small portion of a larger whole. Sometimes the greater whole is the wild setting; sometimes it is a streetscape, or a city, or a community, or something bigger. There is an old saying that if you pull on something hard enough, you find it is connected to everything else." ▷

GROUND RULES Planting Under Trees

by deborah needleman

Life under a mature tree is typically dark, dry, crowded, and competitive for the average plant. This condition of dry shade is one of the most challenging a gardener can face. Often the roots of a well-established tree have already pushed all living matter away from the trunk. (Even shade-tolerant grasses usually struggle until they reach the drip line and can claim enough sun and water for survival.) Fortunately, there are some tough, versatile ground covers that can survive, but to choose one you should know a little about the tree that will be hosting it. Since the two will compete for water and nourishment, it's crucial to find a ground cover that can live with the amount of shade the tree casts and prefers similar conditions.

Difficult Hosts: Know your tree

Will your tree tolerate guests, force them out, or suffer from their stay? Kim E. Tripp, vice president for horticulture at the New York Botanical Garden, stresses the impact a ground cover will have on an established tree. The main feeder roots for *all* trees, even shallow-rooted ones, are located in the top 12 inches of the soil; so anything you plant will affect the tree. Digging will damage some roots, and if a plant is deep-rooted and aggressive, the tree will suffer. A balance needs to be struck between plants and host tree.

- Some trees have sensitive surface roots, and damaging these can kill the tree. (Be careful around sugar maples and beech; franklinia and stewartia are too sensitive to plant under.)
- Some trees (especially Norway maples and beech) create such dense shade that little does well under them.
- Some trees (especially maples and oaks) are so thirsty that even drought-tolerant plants need extra water.
- Some trees are adapted to dry summers and will only tolerate watering in winter. (These include the California live oaks in the Petersen garden.) Such trees can be killed by frequent watering in summer.
- Many plants will not thrive near the shade of a black walnut, which produces substances toxic to other plants. For a list of ground covers that do thrive: msue.msu.edu.

Suitable Mates: Tips for successful pairings

- Common ground covers like pachysandra, vinca minor, and English ivy work almost anywhere, but can be invasive and must be kept in check.
- Epimedium is a lovely, shallow-rooted, flowering ground cover that thrives in dry shade.
- Ferns make great companions for trees that like a bit of moisture. Consider cinnamon fern, dryopteris, hay-scented ferns (watch out for their invasive tendencies), Christmas ferns, and male fern.
- Liriope works well in the South, but can be competitive with some trees. Its smaller cousin, ophiopogon, is slower-growing and less invasive. Hakonechola is also slow, but can brighten up a dark area.
- Shallow-rooted little bulbs like snowdrops and scilla can be worked in among the shallow surface roots of deciduous trees.
- Lily of the valley and sweet woodruff are pretty, but can be invasive and must be watched.
- Ceanothus and ice plants are good matches for trees that like dryness in summer and wet in winter.
- Low bush blueberry, pachysandra, and Christmas ferns can tolerate the acidity under a pine tree as long as the canopy is high enough.
- Lawn is the best ground cover for deciduous oaks. Regular lawn care—watering, fertilizing lightly with lime, and cutting with a lightweight mower—is not a problem under an established oak.

Covering Ground: Tips for planting

- **Choose a ground cover that is adapted to the growing conditions under the tree. For instance, a moisture lover like fern is not good under a water hogger like silver maple.**
- **Limb up trees to create more light.**
- **Disrupt the ground as little as possible.**
- **Adding topsoil around a tree's base can suffocate the roots.**
- **Buy small transplants, plant sparsely, and allow them to fill in.**
- **Water the tree as if it were newly planted, to help it recover after planting a ground cover,**
- **A light mulch is fine as long as it's well-decomposed.**
- **Irrigation is necessary to establish a ground cover, and supplemental water may be needed (if allowed) in a drought.**
- **If planting a tree for a garden area, choose one that gives dappled shade, like a honey locust.**
- **Consider the scale of the tree, and adjust the size of the ground cover bed accordingly.** □

Cuphea hyssopifolia flows like water down the hillside, this page. ■ *Senecio leucostachys*, *Gazania rigens leucolaena* 'Pink', *Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo', and *Salvia* 'Allen Chickering' line the path, opposite page.

debo in excelsis

(Cont. from page 132) them as individuals. But I couldn't work with them. If you want something like a comfortable sofa, then you have to go to the best person to get it. But we've never had a decorator working here."

In Chatsworth's newly created Irish library, made for the duke's collection of Hiberniana, the duchess turns to the tiers of brass swing-arm lamps with dark green silk shades, affixed to the ceiling-high bookcases, and reveals where she got the idea: "It's copied from Givenchy's place in Paris, and also Mrs. Bass's in New York. Each shelf has a tiny light behind it, because I'm so old I can't go look for books that I can't see." Awaiting placement is a staggering pair of gilded classical consoles. "Those wonderful William Kent tables were lent to the Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield, and then they couldn't afford the insurance so they sent them back. Useful."

The duchess absorbed much decorating knowledge from her mother, Sydney, Lady Redesdale. "She was brilliant at doing it up on very, very little money, because my father never gave her much for that sort of thing," she recalls. "Her house was always prettier, done on a thousandth the price of other people's. She'd have made a brilliant antiques shop person, had she had to earn her living."

Never did Lady Redesdale's decorating skills come in handier than at Debo and Andrew's wedding reception, during the London blitz in 1941. "It was in the big house we had in Rutland Gate, and two houses in the street were demolished two nights before," the bride remembers. "Our house lost all its windows, and my mother just got people with brooms, swept it all out, and hung wallpaper where the curtains should have been. The flowers were *Camellia reticulata,* which came from Chatsworth and certainly cheered it up, because they're coral pink and my mother's drawing room was gray. I'll always remember that."

Because most of the Mitford family's woes stemmed from politics, the duchess has steered clear of the public arena. "I've always hated anything to do with politics," she asserts. "I've had too much of it." Her sister Unity became a close friend of Hitler's and shot herself in Munich when war was declared, dying several years later of complications from her injury. Diana married Sir Oswald Mosley, head of the British Union of Fascists, and their pro-Hitler sympathies landed them in jail during the war. Jessica and her Jewish husband, Robert Treuhaft, a labor lawyer, were Communists who quit the party after learning of Stalin's atrocities.

When she was 16, Debo, her mother, and her sister Unity had tea with *der Führer* at his Munich apartment. "His flat was all decorated in brown and white," she recalls. "I'd never seen anything quite like it, very masculine. It was interesting seeing him completely alone. If you've ever seen a politician rousing the crowd with tremendous speeches, it's quite different to see just a man sitting there in his own room without any of that backup. It was fascinating."

Not that she hasn't been related to her share of politicians. The duke was a nephew of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and served in his government. The duke's older brother wed Kathleen Kennedy, sister of the future American president. "I'd known Jack since I was seventeen, but I never really noticed him much till he became president," the duchess confesses. "I loved him because he was the only politician I've known who could laugh at himself." More improbably, the duke's uncle was married to the sister of Fred Astaire, and the duchess remembers the dancer as "completely and absolutely charming."

One secret behind the duke and duchess's long-running success story is their accomplished and devoted staff; the couple are renowned for their loyal retainers. This attentiveness the duchess learned from her father, the second Baron Redesdale, who was famously kind to his servants. "They were friends, like ours are here," she says. "This place seems to have a strange pull. When people come to work here, they either find it suffocating and leave, or they stay for years and years."

"It's like a university of knowledge," she says of the Chatsworth estate, "whether it be cooking, carpentry, putting lead on roofs, gardening, farming, forestry, quarrying. You'd live here for ten lifetimes and you wouldn't learn what goes on." She does not exclude herself from that varied student body, adding, "I think you'd be an awful fool if you lived here and didn't have a good time." □

precision made

(Cont. from page 140) after, and they eventually rallied to the cause.

Schaefer was scrupulous about addressing the owner's need for privacy. He placed guest rooms on the second floor of one wing, so the entire second floor of the other could be the master suite. And he provided private access to the kitchen, gym, and library. As the owner enjoys waking up in the morning and changing the art on the wall, Schaefer conceived a flexible art installation system. He also equipped the basement with a storage system that can hold a gallery's worth of works.

Schaefer designed most of the furnishings, many of them built-ins. But the piece of which he is proudest is the exquisite staircase, a sculpture of waxed and buffed walnut and steel. A tour de force of engineering, it hangs between the floors with supports bolted into the concrete flooring only at the top, the landing, and the bottom. The carved walnut rails are gorgeously wrapped in deep olive green leather.

One of the boons of Schaefer's obsessiveness is that this luxuriously minimalist interior can be lived in comfortably without its spare harmony being disturbed. In other words, Schaefer solved the issue of storage. In the service entry, he installed an expansive mudroom with waterproof trays, drying areas, boot warmers, and lots of storage. Says the owner, "David knows how many hangers fit in a square foot, how many socks can be stored in a box." He also knows how many sheets of letterhead, note cards, and envelopes can be placed in a desk drawer. And yes, Schaefer designed both the stationery and the desk.

The owner has been living in the house for a year and a half now, and it has begun to take on the form of his life there. The leather on the railings is starting to wear; the faintest of patinas is developing on the Italian white marble kitchen counters. In time, the Brazilian soapstone in the bathroom will develop indentations from the tread of his feet. He couldn't be happier: "There's not a day that goes by that I don't look at something and sigh at its perfection. The house is like a precision instrument. Its exactness just doesn't let up. And for me, there is nothing so peaceful or so soothing." □

Marisa Bartolucci is the author of Gaetano Pesce *(Chronicle Books).*

sources
WHERE TO BUY IT

All retail sources follow. If a company is not listed under its corresponding page number, see Sources Through Architects and Designers Only, next page.

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Crocheted **towel**, $14–$48, by Nancy Koltes At Home, NYC. 212-219-2271.

DOMESTIC BLISS Pages 33-54
Page 34, Electrified **sconce** with circular beveled mirror, ca. 1920, from Lou Marotta, NYC. 212-223-0306. loumarotta.com. **Page 35,** Hollandaise **chandelier chain** 433/55, from Gracious Home. 800-338-7809. graciousshome.com. **Page 38,** Baker Furniture, 800-592-2537. bakerfurniture.com. Langham & Company, NYC. 212-759-7979. Francis J. Purcell, Philadelphia. 215-574-0700. francisjpurcell.com. Bernard & S. Dean Levy, Inc., NYC. 212-628-7088. Sentimento, NYC. 212-750-3111. Burton-Ching, Ltd., through Wood & Hogan. Basil Lawrence, NYC. 212-319-6965. basillawrence.com. Ball and Ball. 800-257-3711. ballandball.com. Beauvais Carpets, NYC. 212-688-2265. beauvaiscarpets.com. Triangle Studio. 800-820-4707. Price Glover, Inc., NYC. 212-772-1740. Kentshire Galleries, NYC. 212-673-6644. Calvin Klein Home, 877-256-7373. **Page 52,** Bisazza US, FL. 305-597-4099. bisazza.com.

IN THE GARDEN Pages 57-79
Pages 57-64, The Cook's Garden. 800-457-9703. cooksgarden.com. Papa Geno's Herb Farm, Roca, NE. 402-423-5051. papagenos.com. Richters Herbs, Goodwood, Ontario, Canada. 905-640-6677. richters.com. Sandy Mush Herb Nursery, Leicester, NC. 828-683-2014. **Page 72,** Poor Richard's Walking Tours. 215-206-1682. phillywalks.com.

THE BISTRO LIST Pages 80-82
Page 82, Benoît, 20 rue St. Martin, Paris. 011-33-142-72-25-76.

ON THE BLOCK Pages 84-88
Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg, NYC. 212-940-1200. phillips-auctions.com.

PHOTOGRAPHY Pages 100-101
Janet Borden, Inc., NYC. 212-431-0166.

PRACTICALLY PERFECT Pages 108-119
Branca, Inc., Chicago. 312-787-6123. branca.com. **Page 109,** green **fabric** on armchairs underneath windows is #4234-42 Polidoro silk velvet in Amande, from Manuel Canovas. **Fabric** on round side table in background, Brixton Squares by Travers. 011-33-1-43-45-72-72. **Page 111,** dining table **underskirt** is Nichols Stripe in Beige, from Travers. Overskirt **damask** by Lee Jofa. Jansen faux rosewood **chair** with original satin, R. Louis Bofferding, NYC. 212-744-6725. **Pages 112-113,** Sotheby's, NYC. 212-606-7000. Schweitzer Linen, NYC. 212-799-9629. schweitzer-linen.com. **Pages 114-115,** Restoration Hardware. 800-816-0901. restorationhardware.com. Ballard Designs, 800-367-2775. ballarddesigns.com. Astier de Villatte, Paris. 011-33-1-43-45-72-72. **Page 119,** Laurence Tavernier, Paris. 011-33-1-49-27-03-95. Gary E. Young Antiques and Works of Art, Centreville, MD. 410-758-2132. Hyman Hendler & Sons, NYC. 212-840-8393. hymanhendler.com.

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WIND INSTRUMENT Pages 120-127
Jed Johnson Associates Inc., NYC. 212-489-7840. jedjohnson.com. **Page 121,** see Table of Contents, page 18. **Pages 122-123,** Simon's Upholstery Inc., NYC. 212-727-7106. Late-19th-century English Arts and Crafts **writing table,** H. Blairman & Sons Ltd., London. 001-44-171-493-0444. Early-18th-century French **architectural model,** Axel Vervoordt Kanaal, Wijnegem, Belgium. 011-32-3-355-33-00. axel-vervoordt.com. American 20th-century drip **vases** wired as lamps, from Barbara Trujillo Antiques, Bridgehampton, NY. 631-537-3838. English Arts and Crafts **side table,** ca. 1880, Paul Reeves, London. 011-44-207-937-1594. Wool sisal **rug** from Beauvais Carpets, NYC. 212-688-2265. beauvaiscarpets.com. Bridgewater **chair** with oak legs near sofa, Simon's Upholstery. French 19th-century brass three-arm **wall sconces,** Marvin Alexander, Inc., NYC. 212-838-2320. **Pages 124-125,** Howard Kaplan Antiques, NYC. 212-674-1000. howardkaplanantiques.com. Elizabeth Eakins, Inc., NYC. 212-628-1950. Early-20th-century oak Gothic Revival **dining chairs** with original leather seats and caned backs, Sotheby's, London. 001-44-171-293-5000. sothebys.com. French Art Nouveau **wall sconce,** Yale R. Burge, NYC. Dining room **curtains,** custom-designed by Jed Johnson & Associates in handwoven cotton from Chelsea Editions. English Arts and Crafts oak **breakfront,** ca. 1880, Paul Reeves. Alabaster **table lamp,** American, ca. 1920, from Treasures & Trifles, NYC. 212-243-2723. In guest bedroom, **fabric** covering headboard and base of bed is Clarence House's Jean Baptiste Bouclé in Green. On patio, antique **side table** with iron base and leather top embossed with an Art Nouveau design, from John Rosselli, NYC. **Pages 126-127,** Smith & Hawken. 800-940-1170 for locations. smith-hawken.com. Kohler. 800-4-KOHLER for a nearby retailer. kohler.com. In the bathroom, **towel rod** is Broadway Collection through Architectural Details, Southampton, NY. 631-283-7791. Kitchen **table** is Saarinen dining table from Knoll, with custom glass top. For retailers, 877-61KNOLL. knoll.com.

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Dixon Gallery & Gardens, Memphis. 901-761-2409. dixon.org.

PRECISION MADE Pages 134-141
Schaefer Studio, NYC. 212-366-6804. **Pages 136-137,** Gulassa & Co., Seattle. 206-283-1810. gulassaco.com. Furniture Co., NYC. 212-352-2010. **Vase** on table in background, Baccarat, NYC. 212-826-4100. **Book** is Helmut Newton's *Sumo,* with Philippe Starck **book stand,** $2,500, through amazon.com. **Page 138, bowl** on table, Rupert Spira for Furniture Co. Pillar **lights,** BEGA recessed incandescent low-voltage step lights. **Page 139,** leather **cesta** by Henry Beguelin, Aspen. 970-920-2925. **Pages 140-141,** Knoll. 877-61KNOLL. knoll.com. Dining chair **upholstery** is John Boyd's Paso horsehair. Dining room **light fixtures** are Epic Angulux accent lights by

LINEN CLOSET
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Edison Price. **Wastebasket** by Henry Beguelin. In the sanctuary, porcelain **vase** by Rupert Spira for Furniture Co. Custom white quilted **bath mats** from Liz's Linens, Aspen. 970-920-0017.

THINK PEACE Pages 142-147
David Kleinberg Design Associates, NYC. 212-754-9500. **Pages 142-143,** Amy Perlin Antiques, NYC. 212-744-4923. Brahms–Netski Antique Passage, NYC. 212-755-8307. Objets Plus, NYC. 212-832-3386. Elizabeth Eakins, Inc. 212-628-1950. **Models** of the planets, 19th century, from Carleton Hobbs, London. 011-44-20-7340-1001. Mahogany 19th-century **stool,** from Westenholz Antiques, Ltd., London. 011-44-20-7824-8090. **Painting** is Simrel Achenbach's *Flower Diptych,* paint on paper laid on wood, 1996. **Page 144,** Rectangular **coffee table** with bronze patina base and glass top, Galerie Yves Gastou, Paris. 001-33-1-53-73-00-10. Recliner **upholstery** is Clarence House's Opera Satin in wool sateen. **Painting** above sofa is a gouache by David Bomberg, ca. 1930s. **Page 145,** Takashimaya, NYC. 212-350-0100. Maison Gerard, NYC. 212-674-7611. **Fabric** covering library sofa is Clarence House Velours Gascogne. Ottoman **upholstery** is Clarence House Noriker horsehair. **Painting** above mantel is Ken Kelly's *Stroke,* oil and acrylic on canvas, 1993. **Pages 146-147,** Lobel Modern, NYC. 212-242-9075. Dark elm Chinese scribe's **table,** ca. mid 19th century, from Koko Chinese Antiques, NYC. 212-439-6390. Spanish lusterware **pot** with salamander handles, 18th century, from H. M. Luther Antiques, Inc., NYC. 212-439-7917. Mid-20th-century French octagonal **mirror,** from Maison Gerard. **Wall sconces** are Agostini in patinated gilt bronze, French, ca. 1940, from Maison Gerard. Baltic neoclassical mahogany **cabinets** of elliptical form, Karl Kemp Antiques, NYC. 212-254-1877. **Chair** in kitchen upholstered with Nancy Corzine's Birmingham leather in Garnet.

ENDLESS STREAMS Pages 154-161
Isabelle Greene & Associates, Santa Barbara, CA. 805-569-4045. iga@isabellegreene.com. Special thanks to: Duke McPherson, McPherson, Clarke & Stevens Arborists, Santa Barbara, CA. 805-969-4676. Duane Hanna, Village Pool Builders, Santa Barbara, CA. 805-969-0211. Pat Scott and Eddie Langhorne, Pat Scott Masonry, Santa Barbara, CA. 805-683-9194. ▷

endless streams

(Cont. from page 158) "If you love roses, you can have a few roses. If you love color, there are ways to give you color. The Petersens had lived in the Midwest. I had a sense of what would seem familiar to them."

Greene's method of suggesting the familiar can be highly imaginative. She breaks with garden conventions popular in Santa Barbara and pursues a design method she calls intuitive. Yet her gardens do have themes and formal principles. Some of these derive from the Japanese tradition. Others she has abstracted from nature. At the Petersens', the theme is water. One impressive feature of the property is the streams and dry creek beds that run from top to bottom. Greene reinforced this vertical pattern with a network of stone paths. She amplified the sense of ubiquitous water with generous sweeps of flowering plants that flow down the hill. The repetition of blue *Ceanothus* 'Centennial' is key to the success of the water analogy. The garden has 17 varieties of this California native. Greene planted it under the oaks, where it fans out into a neat, flat ground cover. Elsewhere it grows in other heights and shapes, tying the garden together with its unobtrusive presence.

Part of Greene's intuitive design is plain good sense. She reused 90 percent of the existing plants and moved the swimming pool from the hilltop to a lower level, "because water runs downhill." With so many streams, both literal and suggested, coursing through the garden, it feels right to have a pool of water at the bottom.

If Greene has surpassed other environmentally concerned designers by introducing much more color and texture into a drought-resistant garden, it's because she can draw upon her early scientific training. She specialized in California taxonomy as a botany major at UCLA, so she approaches each design challenge armed with a large repertoire of plants. At the Petersens', she used 49 species of California natives alone. "I have faced many daunting problems in forty years," Greene says, "but I was saved by my first love, plants." □

Diana Ketcham writes on landscape architecture from San Francisco.

sources continued

Chuck Svboda, Svoboda Landscapes, Summerland, CA. 805-969-3493. Brad Swenson, general contractor, Santa Barbara, CA. 805-640-0269.

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Fabric: Bach Int'l, NYC. 212-719-0642. Chelsea Editions, NYC. 212-758-0005. Christopher Hyland Inc., NYC. 212-688-6121. christopherhyland.com. Clarence House. 800-632-0078. clarencehouse.com. Cowtan & Tout, NYC. 212-647-6900. Daniel C. Duross, through Jane Piper Reid & Company. Darius, NYC. 212-644-6600. Donghia Furniture/Textiles Ltd. 800-DONGHIA. donghia.com. Edelman Leather. 800-886-8339. edelmanleather.com. F. Schumacher & Co., NYC. 212-415-3900. fschumacher.com. G. P. & J. Baker, through Lee Jofa. Hinson & Company, NYC. 212-688-5538. Holly Hunt, Chicago. 312-329-5999. hollyhunt.com. J. Robert Scott. 800-322-4910. jrobertscott.com. Jane Piper Reid & Company, Seattle. 206-621-9290. jprco.com. John Boyd Textiles, Ltd., UK. 011-44-1963-350451. Karen Saks Glanternik, NYC. 212-734-2685. Lee Jofa Inc. 800-453-3563. leejofa.com. Lorenzo Rubelli, Venice. 001-39-41-5236110. Manuel Canovas, through Cowtan & Tout. Nancy Corzine, Inglewood, CA. 310-672-6775. Osmundo Echevarria & Assoc., Inc. 212-868-3029. Patterson, Flynn & Martin, through F. Schumacher. Perennials Fabrics. 888-322-4773. perennialsfabrics.com. Pierre Frey, through Roseanne Crowley, Inc. Quadrille Fabrics, NYC. 212-753-2995. Randolph & Hein, NYC. 212-826-9898. Roger Arlington, Inc., NYC. 212-752-5288. Rogers & Goffigon, NYC. 212-888-3242. Rose Cumming, Ltd., NYC 212-758-0844. rosecumming.com. Roseanne Crowley, Inc., Hamden, CT. 203-785-9376. Sam Kasten Handweaver, Stockbridge, MA. 413-298-5502. Sanderson, NYC. 212-319-7220. Scalamandré. 800-932-4361. Stark Carpet Corporation/Old World Weavers, NYC. 212-752-9000. starkcarpet.com. Travers, NYC. 212-888-7900. Zoffany. 800-395-8760. zoffany.com.

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THE BISTRO LIST
Pages 80-82

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CORRECTION

On page 184 of the April issue, lacquered roble wood Kouki boxes in Blueberry, $130–$630, Hermès. 800-441-4488. hermes.com.

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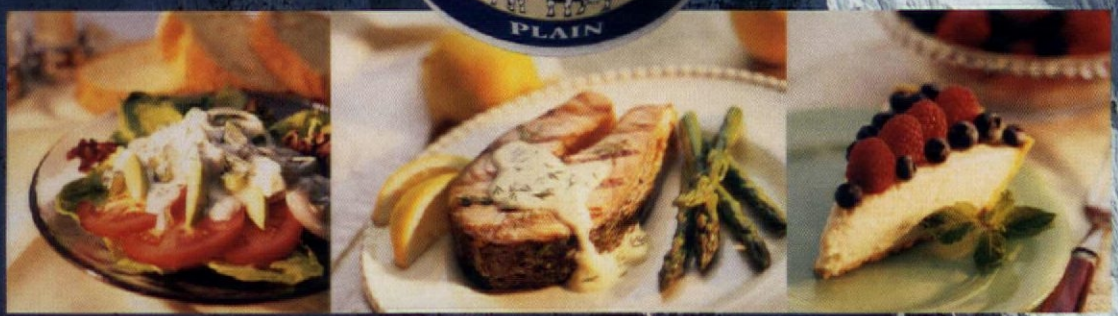

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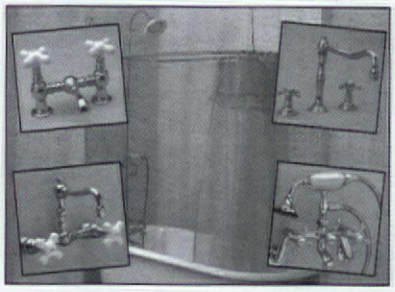

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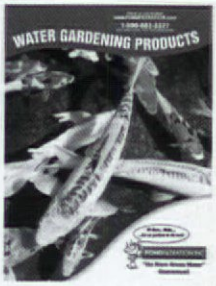

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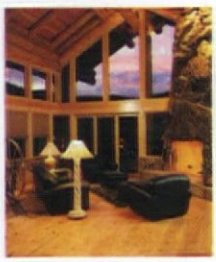

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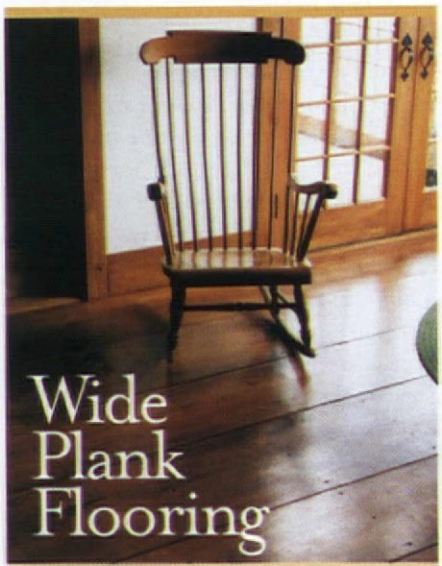

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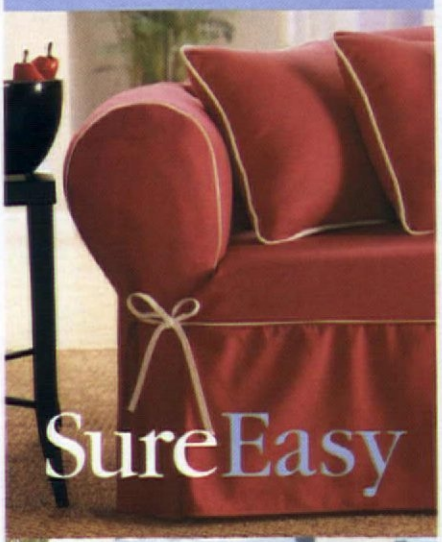

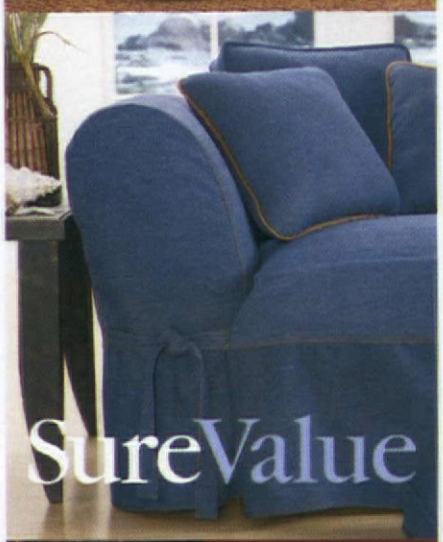

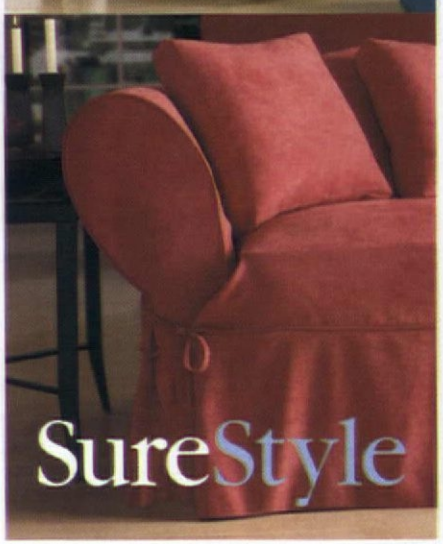

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by mayer rus

HERE'S MY TABLOID CONFESSION: Sean John showed me the light! For those of you who live outside the frontiers of fashion, Sean John is the apparel company founded by hip-hop mogul Sean "P. Diddy" Combs. On a bitterly cold night in February, I ventured out into the Manhattan wilderness to attend Sean John's Fall/Winter 2003 fashion show. As I sat surrounded by a gaggle of alien glamour-pusses, my thoughts turned to the fashion world's recent assault on the home design market, a trend I'd heretofore greeted with more than a little skepticism.

Whatever doubts I may have harbored disappeared in a mushroom cloud of glittering pixie dust. The Sean John show was profoundly, deliciously, inescapably dazzling. I was ensorcelled by the ritualized pageantry, the deafening music, the flashing lights, and the final coup de théâtre: bare-chested model Tyson Beckford commanding the catwalk in a shearling coat and the bottom half of a "black cashmere thrill zipper crotch long john jumpsuit." I left the show in a trance, contemplating the many lessons that the home design industry could learn from fashion: how to capture the public's attention; how to interpret and package the zeitgeist; how to create a phenomenon with a "thrill crotch."

Now that I've had a chance to get some distance on the whole affair, my attitude regarding the fashion/home nexus has predictably regained balance. Frocks and furniture may share similar aspirations, but the differences between the two disciplines remain profound. Smart fashion companies eager to move into the home arena acknowledge these critical nuances with appropriate investments of talent and attention. The ones that treat furniture design as a superficial exercise in lifestyle trend-spotting will disappear from the scene soon enough.

I'm told that Sean John has no immediate plans to venture beyond the borders of fashion. But if P. Diddy ever decides to invade the High Point furniture market, I'd welcome him with open arms. Diddy, just remember to bring Tyson with you.

■THE SAD REALITY of so-called special finishes is that most are desperately unspecial. I'm referring specifically to the blight of novelty paint treatments that debase the very walls and floors and ceilings they attempt to ennoble. Special finishes are a staple of do-it-yourself design guides, which is unfortunate, given the high level of expertise required to pull off something like faux marble or faux bois convincingly. And the problem is not just confined to amateur artisans. All too often I've seen clients spend small fortunes on tragic, sub-Turner landscape murals and antiqued finishes that are more distressing than distressed. It seems that all anyone needs to become a "professional" is a sponge and a dream.

Choosing just the right solid paint colors is tricky enough, even for savvy design enthusiasts with refined tastes. Creating special finishes of true beauty and artistry is exponentially more difficult. The impulse to enrich one's surroundings is certainly admirable, but poor specialty paint treatments—or even mediocre workmanlike efforts—have the power to cheapen the most elegant rooms. Unless you are lucky enough to engage the services of a genuine master, I recommend avoiding special finishes altogether. And as for those committed to doing it themselves, I pray the design gods have mercy on their homes.

■AT THE RISK of exacerbating national tensions, I have to issue a code yellow cliché alert for stylists who think that two crossed banana leaves in a simple glass cylinder make a refreshing alternative to traditional flower arrangements. Lee Mindel, one of my favorite architects, pioneered the double frond device at least seven or eight years ago. The arrangement's bold scale and abstract quality were perfectly suited to Mindel's sophisticated contemporary interiors. This increasingly popular decorative flourish is now in danger of becoming the lucky bamboo or Granny Smith apple bowl of 2003. Stay alert, America. Don't force me to move to code orange. □

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