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Live Help Live Help is eBay's support line for new users that's available via live computer chat to answer any questions you may have.

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AOL keyword: eBay

December

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'Tis the season when everything that plugs in, lights up, and is covered in glitter is suddenly the height of chic.

EDITED BY SHAX RIEGLER

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ONE GARDENER'S ALMANAC For a gardener, a great knife is the best gift. BY TOM CHRISTOPHER

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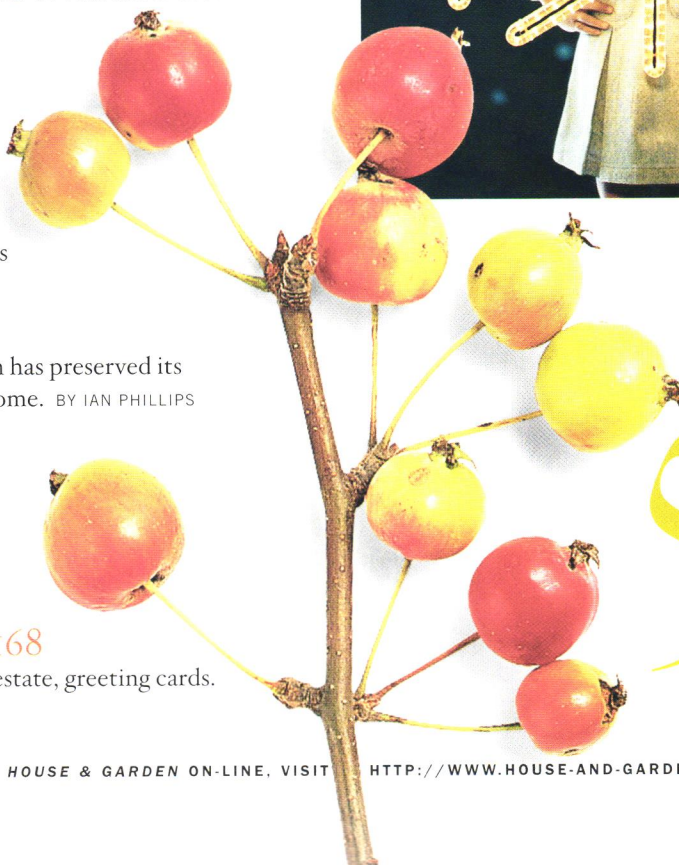
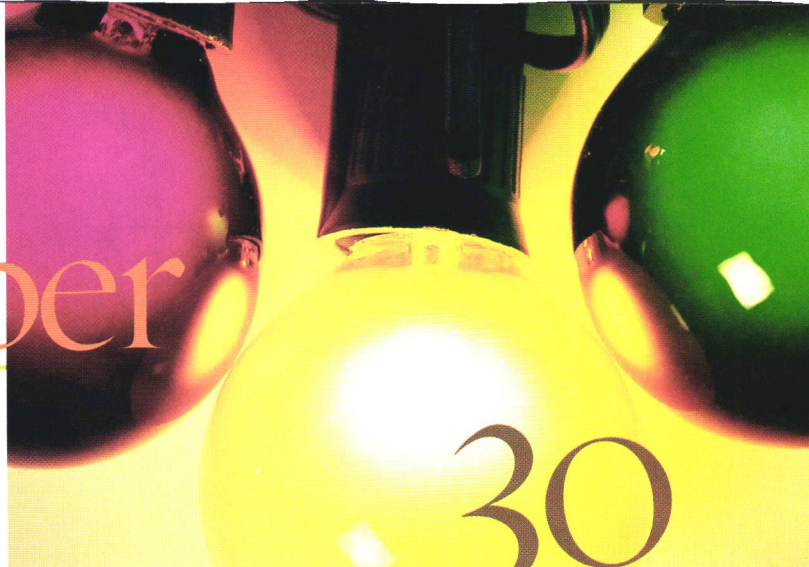
The secret of Christmas, Mary Cantwell thought, was to rejoice in the present.

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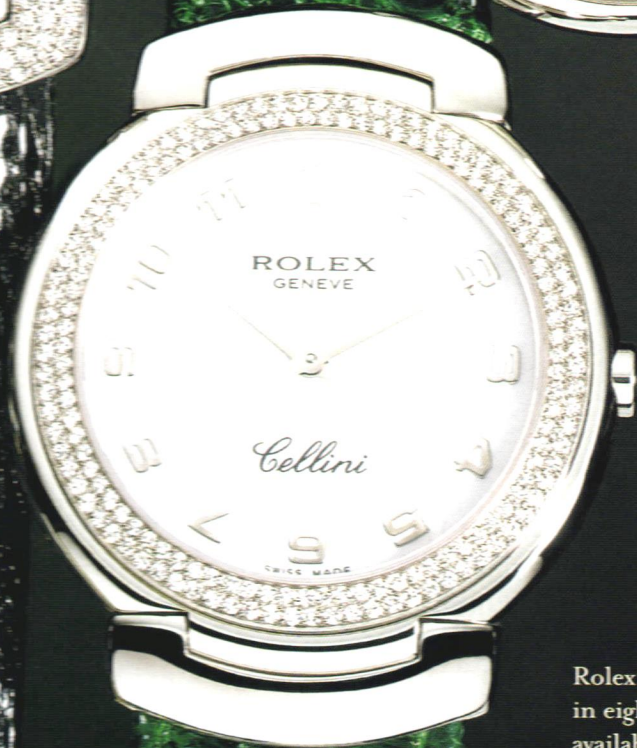
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Three strikes: Dale Chihuly, real estate, greeting cards.

BY MAYER RUS




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but some

December

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Designer Alexandra Champalimaud, best known for her luxurious hotel interiors, creates a personal retreat for her family—a log cabin in New Mexico with an updated Alpine style. BY MAYER RUS

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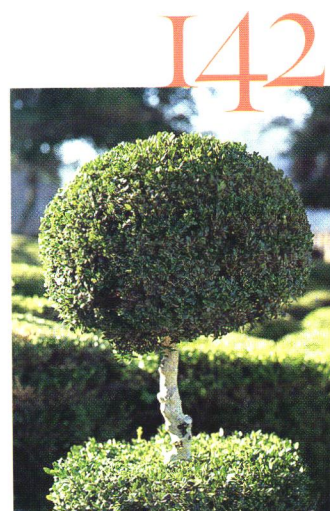
A 17th-century garden isolated on a promontory over the Dordogne River is brought back to life. BY STEPHEN ORR

Costume Drama 152

Photographer Hugh Hales-Tookey presents some of our favorite fabrics and furnishings in vignettes inspired by Edwardian-era home theatricals.

on the cover

A Plastic Fantastic Christmas: Fleece robe and flannel pajamas by Best & Co. The wreath is decorated in jumbo shiny plastic balls, Brite Star, britestar.com, and a set of 15 glazed-finish G50 lights, GKI/Bethlehem Lighting, both available at your holiday supply store. Photographed by Robert Trachtenberg. Produced by Stephen Orr.

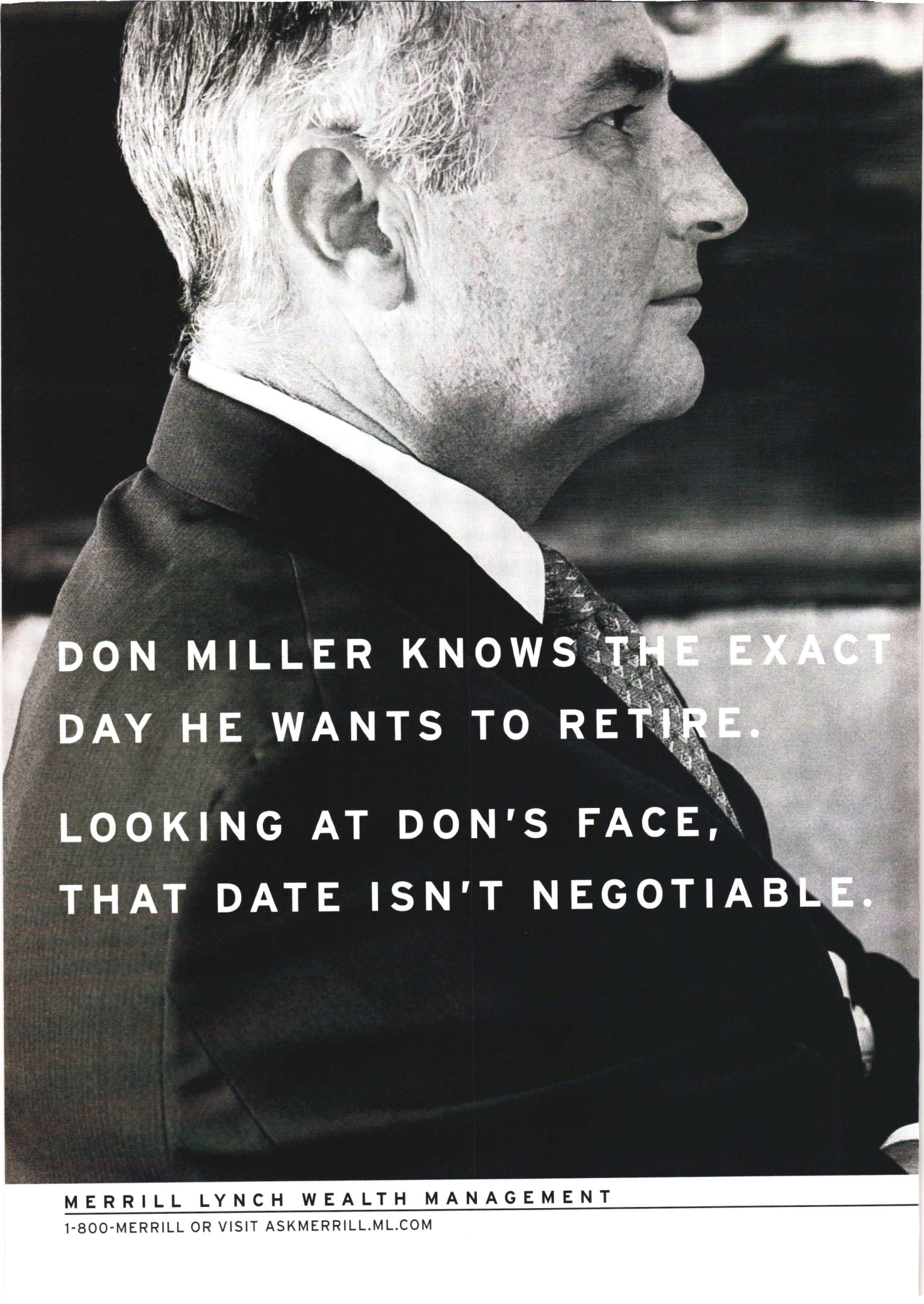


LORD & TAYLOR

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We simply looked at everything Don had, and his goals, and we set him up to get there.

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Together, Don and I found it."



BULLISH on AMERICA

welcome

the lesson of the bi disc

A FRIEND RECENTLY SAID that the only piece of jewelry his girlfriend wanted for Christmas was a bi disc. I was startled. A bi (pronounced *bee*) disc isn't jewelry. It's an ancient stone artifact—a flat circle with a hole in the center, usually made of jade or agate and about 4 to 12 inches in diameter. The Chinese used to place the bi disc on the chest of a body before burial. The hope was that it would give the soul a gateway to its next life. The idea of the bi disc as jewelry—perhaps ornamentation is more accurate—my friend explained,

is that the disc would be looped on a silken cord (no drilling through sacred objects) and worn as a necklace. That struck me, suddenly, as a lovely idea. To walk through your days carrying a gateway to another life. (Maybe you could even slip into your next life in the course of the day—during, say, a terrible phone conversation—only to return a while later and find everything had happily progressed.) There's something both comforting and exciting about the idea of a clear way in—or out.

How many of our houses no longer have a real front door—by that I mean one that's well considered, designed to welcome, and built to bear up under heavy traffic? Anyone living in a house constructed after the 1950s is probably making the passage indoors from the garage. Not much chance of a meaningful doorway experience there, and not much of a celebration of the moment of arrival, either.

Having lived in my house for 15 years, I have decided that I have two front doors. Though one opens into the kitchen, I can no longer think of it as the kitchen door. It's the door used most frequently; my children, my friends, and I come and go through that door—the garage is inconveniently and wonderfully unattached to the house. I have made an occasion of the small porch outside that door, filling it with stuff: an old Spanish wooden bench; an ever-changing collection of potted plants; statuary left one day long ago as a gift; a simple white marble bowl from India in which I sometimes float fragrant gardenias or orange blossoms; even an old-fashioned milk box, from the days when a milkman arrived with his bottles before dawn. I put down a rug that stays out from May to October, inexpensive enough to throw away at the end of the season, nice enough to give a cheery welcome. The door itself is half glass, which gives it a forthright openness; and maybe because of my Moroccan mother, I have hung bits of blue glass beads on the top

half, amulets against the evil eye. The bottom of the door is patched where I covered an old cat door that was far too hospitable, I discovered, to curious squirrels. In other words, the door bears some of the history of those who have come—and gone.

Though I enter through the kitchen, the first thing I do is go to the center hall to open the other door. It is a heavy, old, wooden door with bands of small windows running down either side of it. I have come to think of it as the front door to the garden. That door opens onto a small boxwood hedge, and behind that the late daylight filters through the leaves of the old trees and shrubs, which harbor the frantic activity of squirrels and rabbits and clicking cardinals. I will go through this ritual of opening two front doors when I get home—a front door to the house and a front door to the garden—even in the dead of winter, when all I can bear is a quick crack of cold air before I turn snugly inward.

The bi disc reminded me of the sacred importance of the front door. The way in, and the way out. After all, there is something special enough, or there ought to be, about walking into the house that it should be an opportunity for reverence. I hope the girlfriend gets her bi disc. (I'm assured the discs don't come from plundered graves; they are usually turned up by farmers as they plow land that was once a burial ground.)

I also hope that we all give ourselves the same sort of gift this holiday season, and let ourselves stop, even for a moment, before putting the key in the lock, to consider the next life. Are you opening the door, every evening, with the proper sense—glad-hearted, respectful—of ceremony? Are you sure you are opening the right door? After all, it is your passage home. In this life.



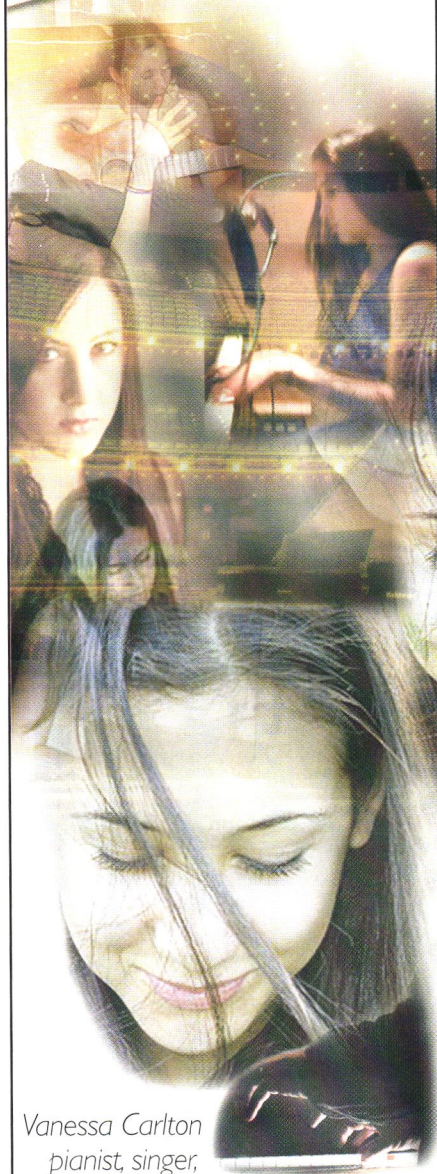
Dominique Browning

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contributors



HUGH HALES-TOOKEY

played servant, rabbit, and photographer for "Costume Drama," page 152. In the King Arthur scene (see *Table of Contents*), he was also a wooing lover. Hales-Tookey invited his girlfriend and her father to pose, popped the photo, then popped the question. "I was on my knees in a suit of armor," he says. "Meg can't say I didn't propose properly!" In fact, she was so surprised, she couldn't say anything. But off camera his mother-in-law-to-be (carrying champagne) shouted, "About time, too!"

ROBERT TRACHTENBERG

has been a freelance journalist, a photographer, and, more recently, a filmmaker—he wrote, directed, and produced documentaries on George Cukor and Gene Kelly. Trachtenberg still works mainly in photography, though, and he shot our "Plastic Fantastic" story, page 21, in an L.A. studio. "There was so much stuff!" he says. "I wish we'd taken a photo of the entire soundstage; it looked like the last scene of *Citizen Kane*."



LESLIE BENNETTS

has ancestors who saved innumerable things that she then inherited. In "Home Base," page 92, she praises collecting. Bennetts wanted to illustrate children's books, but journalism "was like finding the key to the lock." Now she covers many beats, and favors profiles: her subjects have ranged from Queen Noor to Jennifer Aniston. "Everyone's story is interesting in a different way," Bennetts says. —JENNY GAVACS

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■ Liberty's 8-foot-diameter Deluxe Garland Wreath comes already wired with large ball lights and overscaled bell decorations. Hang it on the side of your house, or prop it up on the roof. It comes in four sections for easy assembly and storage.

■ Finishing touch: Add several more strands of lights, like these icicles, to make the wreath even brighter. Clothes by Ralph Lauren; shoes by Stride Rite.

bigger is better
Make a department-store-sized statement with a giant wreath



PLASTIC
FANTASTIC
HOLIDAY

'Tis the season when everything that plugs in, lights up, and is covered with glitter is suddenly the height of chic Edited by Shax Riegler

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT TRACHTENBERG ■ PRODUCED BY STEPHEN ORR
FASHION STYLING BY ELIZABETH BRAGIN ■ SET DESIGN BY CHRISTINE IRWIN

PLASTIC
FANTASTIC
HOLIDAY

This holiday, declare war on timid, “tasteful” decorating. Fight the tyranny of subtle sage green and dainty white mini-lights.

This is your one chance each year to indulge your secret love of all things bright and shiny. Let your inner child, so well behaved for the previous 11 months, run wild. Don’t even think of confining yourself to homemade ornaments. Take a walk on the wild side: down the stuffed aisles at Target, Wal-Mart, or your local garden center. You won’t believe the holiday cheer you can buy!



ice storm

Create a front yard forest or allée. There's strength in numbers, so order a dozen of Sylvania's prewired Little Lite trees. Just plug them in to illuminate your winter wonderland. Be sure to unfold each wire branch for the most natural look.

Scatter giant glowing snowballs on the ground. Helten's hard plastic Moon lights come in four sizes. Bring them right up to the front door and into the house.

● Finishing touch: Hide the unsightly cords in the grass or the snow. Clothes by Tommy Hilfiger, Best & Co., Sonia Rykiel, and D&G Junior.





domestic bliss

candy feast

Take over the dining room table

to make a display worthy of Santa's workshop—
eat in the kitchen for the duration of the holidays.

Candy-colored decorations look like sweets.

If you're feeling crafty, make Wonka-esque topiaries by hot-gluing spice drops to
Styrofoam cones. Fasten scrumptious-looking bead garlands onto fabric to make a swag.

For the tablecloth, use an inexpensive piece of
bright fabric and—your kids will love this part—cut holes in it to
pass the electrical cords through. Presto—wires are out of sight.

Finishing touches: Use plastic Nativity
animals to make a lively centerpiece. Hang large metallic Starbursts
from C.I.T.E., NYC, above the table. Dress by Anavini.

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HOLIDAY



PLASTIC FANTASTIC HOLIDAY



winter windows

One-up Jack Frost with curtains of ice and snow

boxing day

Clever storage solutions make put-up and takedown easy

Nothing takes the charm out of decking the halls like snarls of lights, missing hooks, and cracked ornaments. In response, companies have introduced a slew of specialized storage items. At the pioneering Container Store (containerstore.com) alone, items include an archival-quality ornament chest, left, an ingenious box for keeping light strands tangle-free, cord holders, myriad gift wrap organizers, a Big Box for stowing artificial tree parts, and various wreath and garland storage options. Sharon Tindell, executive vice president of merchandising at the store, offers a few more tips to help alleviate stress in decorating—and undecorating:

■ **Think small.** Smaller boxes and bags are easier to get in and out of awkward areas. Small plastic boxes are also good for storing items like replacement hooks and the “just right” extension cord.

■ **Clearly label** each box's contents.

■ **Instructions are helpful.** Jot down the way you hang lights over the door or drape the garland on the banister, so you're not reinventing the wheel next year. —ELISABETH RIETVELT

■ **Take down your living room drapes.** Swag several strands of Grapevine lights, which have clusters of bulbs at various intervals, over the curtain rod. Add a layer of snowflake-shaped lights.

■ **Finishing touch:** For an even more arctic look, weave in sparkling crystalline decorations like icicles, frozen twigs, and wreaths. Hang glass balls in shades of white and pearl. You'll feel like you're at the North Pole. Cotton loungewear by Best & Co.





Once you drive one, there's no turning back.



Ahh, marriage. An agreement to spend your lives together. So what's another hour or two apart? Especially when spent in the new E500 Sedan with its 5-liter V-8 engine. Hey, Mr. Right will understand that the allure is almost impossible to resist. Call 1-800-FOR-MERCEDES or visit us at MBUSA.com. Introducing the all new E-Class. Experience. Unlike any other.



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forecast: flurries

Stop dreaming of the white Christmas of yore. Even back in 1942 everyone was nostalgic for a white Christmas. "Just like the ones I used to know," Bing Crosby crooned that year in the holiday standard, written by Irving Berlin. And with each passing year a new generation laments the lack of snow. Well, no more. The Backyard Blizzard Sport is a home-sized version of the snow makers used at ski resorts. When the temperature is below 25 degrees, just plug it in and hook it up to a garden hose—it will cover a thousand square feet with up to three inches of snow in about three hours. \$1,995. 877-989-7669. backyardblizzard.com.

**PLASTIC
FANTASTIC
HOLIDAY**



■ **Roman's majestic 17-foot Giant Everest tree** (it comes in even bigger sizes) will stand tall in your foyer or your garden. The prewired branches plug directly into a large metal framework and light up when you turn on the power.

■ **Finishing touch:** For such a large tree, drape extra-thick ropes of tinsel garland, then top with an oversized Moravian star. Clothes by D&G Junior.

towering trees

Really go over the top: get the biggest tree in the neighborhood

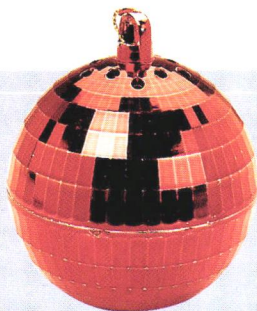
EST. 1941

domestic bliss

PLASTIC FANTASTIC HOLIDAY

a little christmas

Spread pint-sized trees throughout the house



No Burn's flashy little ornament is actually a heat-sensing fire alarm. \$17.45. 877-662-8767.

light right

Tips for decorating safely

Before you get out your ladder, consider this: According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), every year emergency rooms treat an estimated 8,700 people for holiday-decorating-related injuries. Last year, 3,110 made a trip to the ER because of mishaps involving electrical decorations.

■ "Never run a cord through a window or a door where it could be pinched, which damages the insulation," cautions John Drengenberg, manager of consumer affairs at Underwriters Laboratories, which tests and sets standards for most holiday decorations. For the same reason, keep cords away from foot traffic, and discard them as soon as they become frayed.

■ Outdoors, put plugs in a sheltered area, and wrap connecting joints in electrical tape to prevent short-circuiting. Immediately replace missing bulbs.

■ Holiday lights are intended for use no more than 90 days a year, says Kathy Presciano, lighting product and application specialist at GE Lighting. Remember to take them down—you'll be safer, and your neighbors will thank you.

■ For more information: cpsc.gov, consumerreports.org, and ul.com. —JENNY GAVACS

■ Give scrawny trees like this 3-foot-tall one by Midwest a home. They're perfect for bringing holiday cheer to side tables or a child's bedroom.

■ Finishing touch: Some lights, like these G30 satin globes, are too big; this is one case when diminutive is good.

■ Dress by Tommy Hilfiger; shoes by Stride Rite.

◇ The Forevermark is used under license.



www.adiamondisforever.com



What shape reflects your love?

teardrop

heart

marquise

oval



A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

domestic bliss

PLASTIC FANTASTIC HOLIDAY

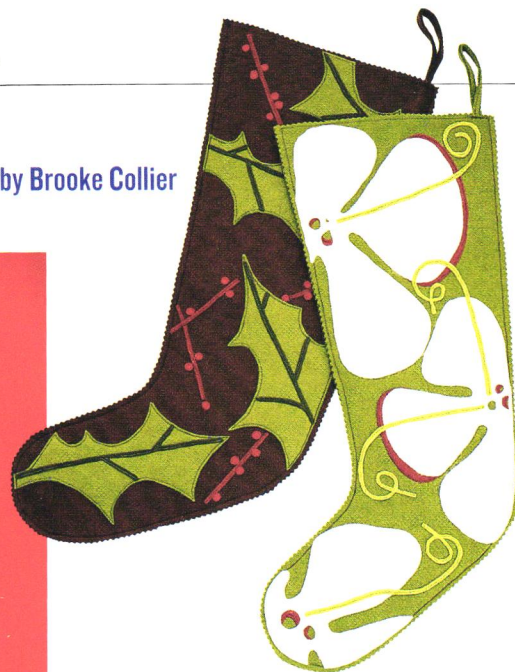
These swell holiday items take tradition for a spin by Brooke Collier



Add a retro touch to your table with **Rosanna's Do Not Open Before Christmas** dessert plates. Stickers from the '50s inspired the design. Set of four, \$40. Sur La Table. 800-243-0852.



This blue plaid **glass menorah** by Andrew Galvin is the preppiest take we've seen on the Festival of Lights. \$178; box of 45 candles, \$12. The Art Institute of Chicago. 888-301-9612.



Hip stockings? Hable Construction's appliquéd **Coco Holly** and **Avocado Poppy Wool Felt** stockings may be the most stylish things ever to grace your mantel. \$76 each. 212-343-8555.



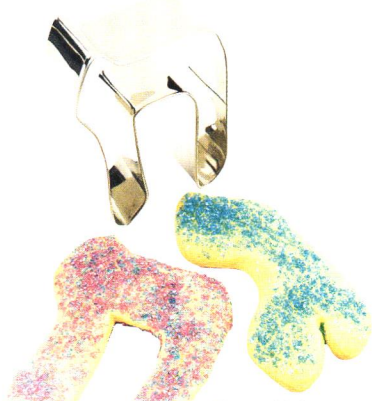
Dasher is dashing, Prancer is prancing, and Vixen is one hot number on Pottery Barn Bed + Bath's **Reindeer Flannel** sheets. \$119 for a full set. 888-779-4044.



Get an extra nutcracker. Guests won't be able to resist nuts and snacks offered by this jolly, big-bellied **Santa Bowl**. Good thing Santa never goes on a diet. \$19. Sur La Table.



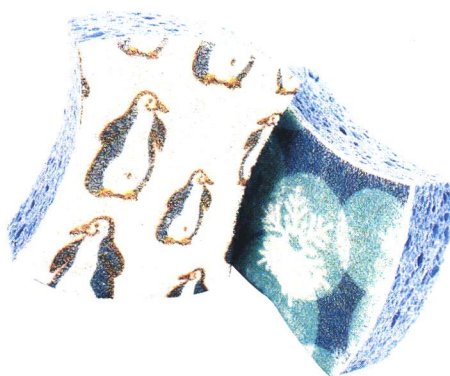
You may want the sniffles this winter just so you can pull out these adorable holiday **Shoe Hankies** from Caspari. Pack, with case, \$8.50; single pack, \$1.25. 800-227-7274.



Heth is for Hanukkah! The **Entire Hebrew Alphabet Cookie Cutters** are great for kids learning the language or for gift giving. \$30. The Kosher Cook, Cedarhurst, NY. 516-295-4468.



Williams-Sonoma's **Hot Drinks** mugs celebrate six classic holiday beverages that always take off a chill. The mugs arrive in a festive red hatbox, perfect for giving. \$39. 800-541-2233.



Scouring all those holiday dishes won't seem so dull with O-Cel-O's **Penguin** and **Snowflake** sponge scrubbers. Add whimsy to your kitchen for only \$1 a pop. 888-364-3577.



A language

more powerful than words.



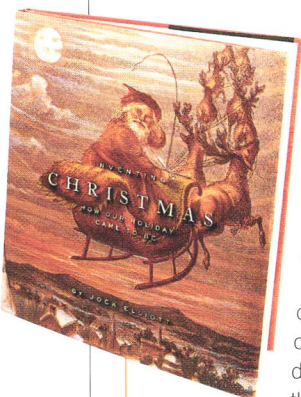
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1-800-444-4444

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PLASTIC FANTASTIC HOLIDAY

Have yourself a retro little Christmas
by Julia Lewis



**Jock Elliott's
Inventing
Christmas
(Abrams, \$25)
offers a history
of yuletide
traditions.**

Some say it's baby boomer nostalgia, others that it's simply a style trend, but everyone agrees that vintage Christmas decorations are bigger than ever. Old-fashioned lights and vintage-style ornaments—the ones that you remember from old family photos or *Miracle on 34th Street*—are all the rage.

Bill Nelson, a Home Depot millwork specialist, amateur historian, and Christmas lights collector, chronicles this fact on his extraordinary Web site, oldchristmaslights.com. In the months before Christmas, Nelson receives about 100 E-mails a day from people trying to find decorations they remember. "People want to recapture their childhoods," he says. Companies are responding to that urge. "Christmas is definitely about

nostalgia," agrees Christopher Radko, who recently revived Shiny-Brite, the company that "manufactured the ornaments, decorations, and lights that I knew as a child and I've collected as an adult." In relaunching the brand, he says, "we brought back the best of Shiny-Brite's designs, updated with a more vibrant palette." The Kurt S. Adler company has also tapped into the retro aesthetic, with Early Years, a new collection of '50s- and '60s-style Christmas decorations. Culled from the 56-year-old company's archives, the line includes replicas of early Adler ornaments, light sets, and tree toppers.

Feeling really sentimental? Curl up with *Inventing Christmas*, just out. Author Jock Elliott has collected more than 3,000 yuletide books over the past 50 years. "Christmastime has always been nostalgic," he says. "Year after year we take out our old decorations and reenact our family traditions."

With its row of nine glowing Saint Nicks, Shiny-Brite's Jolly Santa Candelier is guaranteed to spread holiday cheer. \$35. 866-456-9464.



Re-create the holiday style of yesteryear with Kurt S. Adler's Early Years collection. \$12 for four. Carson Pirie Scott. 800-374-3000.

Step back in time with the retro look of Shiny-Brite's decorations. Even the packaging harkens back to a "simple, heartfelt era," says owner Christopher Radko.



A Dyson has double
the suction of other vacuums.



Reinvented.

With 8 cyclones, a Dyson has double
the suction power of other vacuums,
after picking up just ten ounces of dust.
And while other vacuums quickly get
clogged and lose suction, a Dyson doesn't.
Come see a Dyson today. It's the vacuum.
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dyson

Available at Best Buy.

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the suction of other vacuums.



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With 8 cyclones, a Dyson has double
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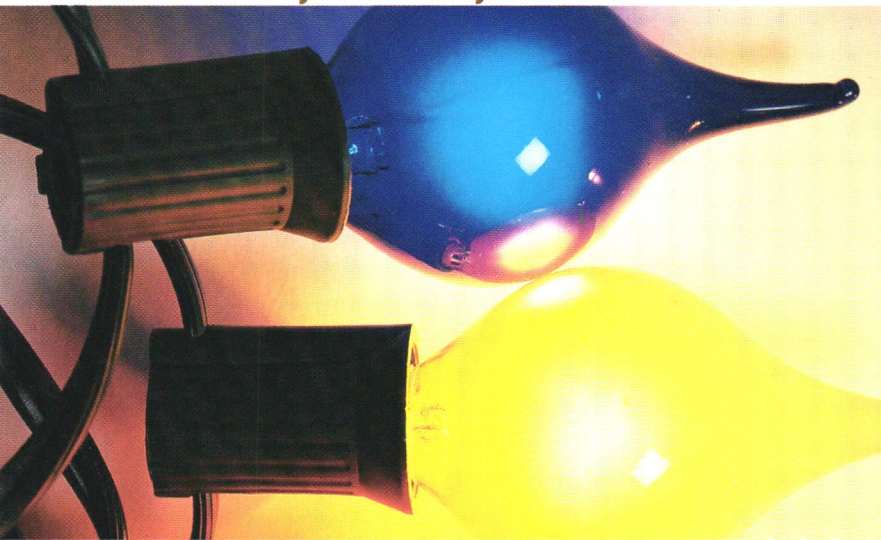
dyson

Available at Best Buy.

THE FIX

by Jackie Craven

Solutions to your holiday household dilemmas

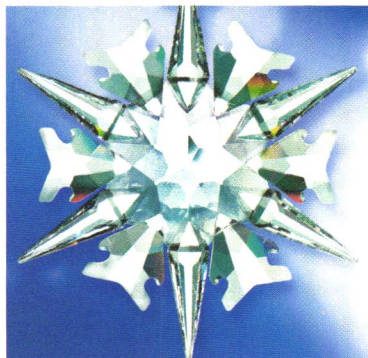


Q Our antique candleholders are caked with old wax. How can we scrape off the gunk without scratching the brass?

A Stick those candlesticks in the freezer. After an hour or so, the wax will turn brittle and flake off without scratching the brass. What about those hard chunks wedged in the candle cups? Jonathan Ward, a metalworker for Conant Custom Brass in Burlington, VT, recommends hot water. Let the candlesticks soak a few minutes, then gently wipe with a soft cloth or cotton swab. For stubborn buildup, you can also use a hair blow-dryer to apply gentle heat. Or pick up a commercial wax remover, available from candle shops and most hardware stores. Be extra careful if your brass is lacquered. Chemicals such as acetone or extreme heat from a blow-dryer might damage the finish. This holiday, to keep your candlesticks clean, choose candles made of natural beeswax. They will burn longer and drip less than those made of paraffin wax.

Q This holiday, we'd like to brighten our garden with strings of small lights along the trellises. How can we make sure the bulbs we buy are safe outdoors?

A As long as your outdoor lights are certified by an established testing laboratory, they are not likely to cause shocks or flames. In the United States, look for a "floating" holographic UL symbol on a silver label. This means the lights are approved by Underwriter Laboratories Inc., a highly trusted, not-for-profit testing organization. Also, read the instructions on the box carefully. Check the number of strands you can safely string together, and make certain that the lights are certified for outdoor use. To prevent shocks, keep the wires off the ground and away from pipes, power lines, wrought-iron railings, and metal surfaces. Before you drape lights over a trellis, be sure that it is made of wood or vinyl. Gently secure the light strings with plastic ties, or insulated staples, and check them often for signs of wear. Remember that most of these lights are meant for seasonal, not year-round use, and that extended exposure to the elements may damage the lights.



Q My clumsy brother-in-law broke my cherished crystal tree ornament. Is there any way to repair it?

A Go easy on the glue. The ordinary adhesives you find at your local hardware store will yellow with age, and the residue may be impossible to remove. For a crystal-clear bond, use a professional glue, or, better yet,

let a glass restoration pro do the mending. Many experts use a special acrylic that dries rapidly under an ultraviolet lamp. Others prefer a slow-drying two-part epoxy resin such as HXTAL NYL-1 from Conservator's Emporium (consemp.com). If the broken pieces fit together perfectly without missing chips, then your mended ornament will be almost like new. Enjoy it as an heirloom, learn to love its slight imperfection, and keep your brother-in-law away from the holiday tree.

Q Our tree is up, the wreaths are hung, and somehow we got evergreen sap on the sofa. How do we remove the sticky stuff?

A No one likes a sappy sofa. You'll stand a better chance of removing the pine resin if you can dissolve the oils in the stain. Check your sofa for a care label before you select your cleaning product. In most cases, you can treat pine resin oils with a solvent such as mineral spirits or lighter fluid. For sturdy fabrics, Werner Leutert, vice chairman at the International Guild of Professional Butlers, likes the potent stain remover Goof Off (goof-off.com). Whichever treatment you choose, it's always best if you can unzip the cushion cover and slip a clean towel beneath the stain. Use a spoon to gently scrape off excess sap, lightly dab on the solvent, and blot with a clean, dry cloth. Be wary of rinsing; some fabrics, like silk, will show water rings. When in doubt, call a professional upholstery cleaning service. The secret is to test all cleaning solutions, including plain water, on a hidden area until you find one that is both effective and safe.





Chrysler presents

The Line *on* Design

It's where form and function meet. The perfect marriage of passion and precision.

Memorable designs are those whose very appearance exposes their excellence.

And whose performance and engineering only intensify it. Here, world-renowned arbiters of design from DIFFA (The Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS),

led by David Rockwell, identify the five reigning movements of contemporary

design and some of the extraordinary objects they've inspired.

CHRYSLER

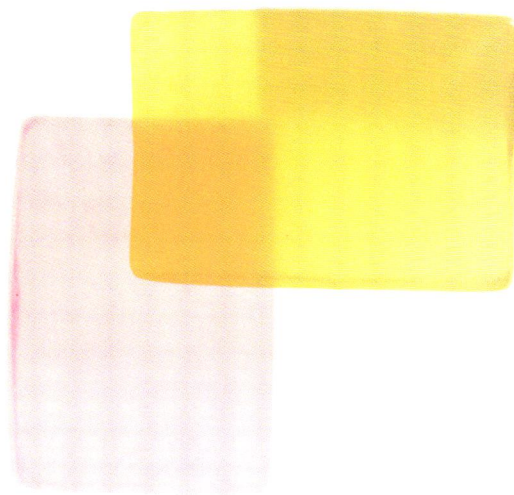


Color

Color works to surprise and inspire us, with traditional articles refashioned in unconventional palettes. Bold, bright hues appear in the most unexpected of places, injecting personality into inanimate objects.



Red Coat and Gold Boots, Valentino




Soaps, Bodum



M&M'S® Milk Chocolate Candy



A chair with a backrest and legs made of numerous vertical, colorful stripes in shades of pink, orange, yellow, green, and blue.

Rainbow Chair
by Patrick Norguet,
Cappellini



Makeup by Paige Smitherman for Marek & Associates



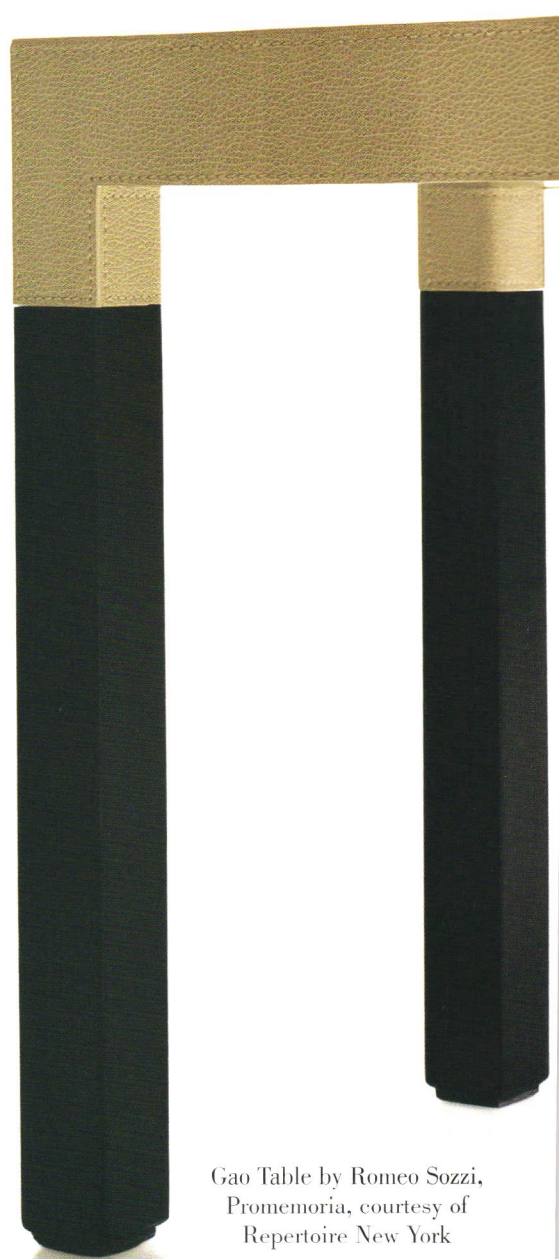
PT Cruiser by Chrysler in purple

Craft

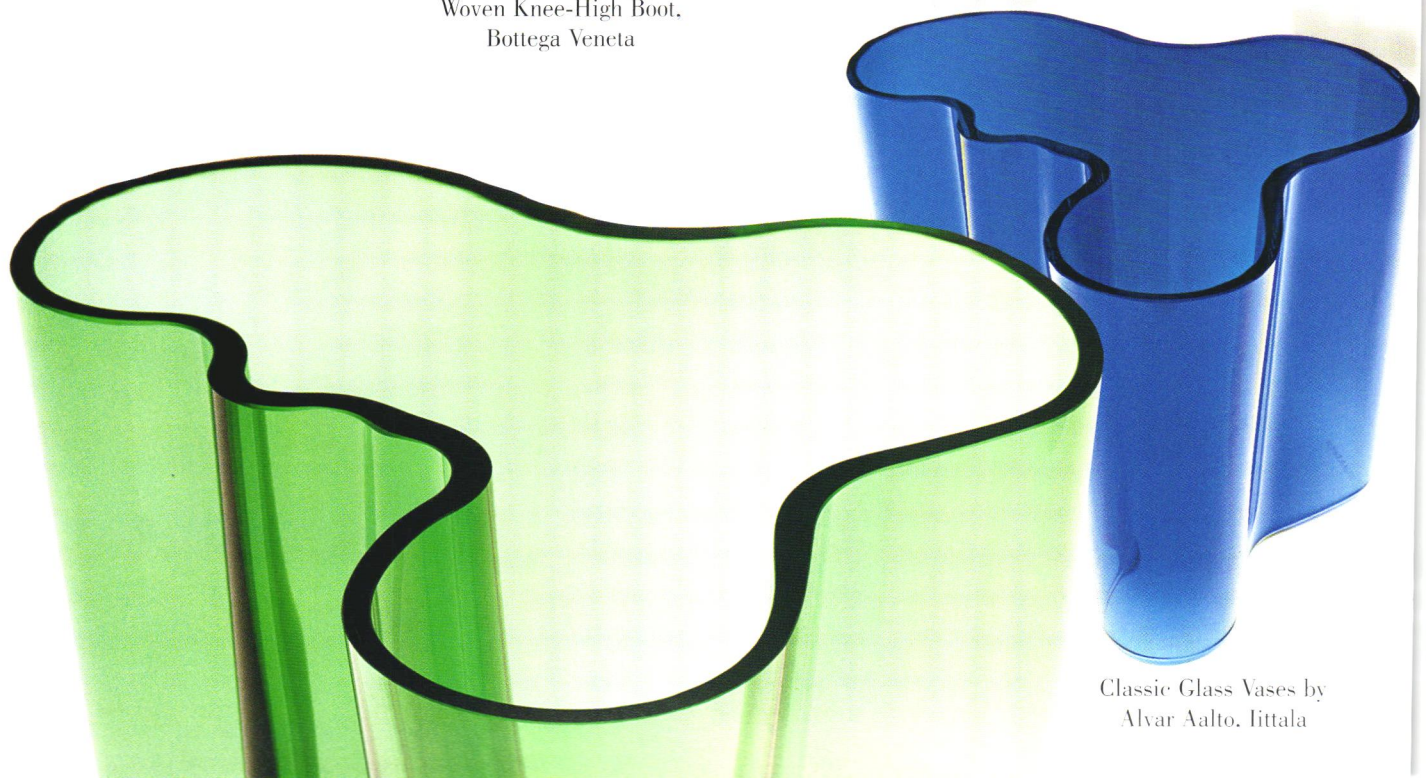
Every detail reflects the presence of the hand, the meticulous standard of quality and care involved in each object's creation. The result is a product that both looks and feels special and unique.



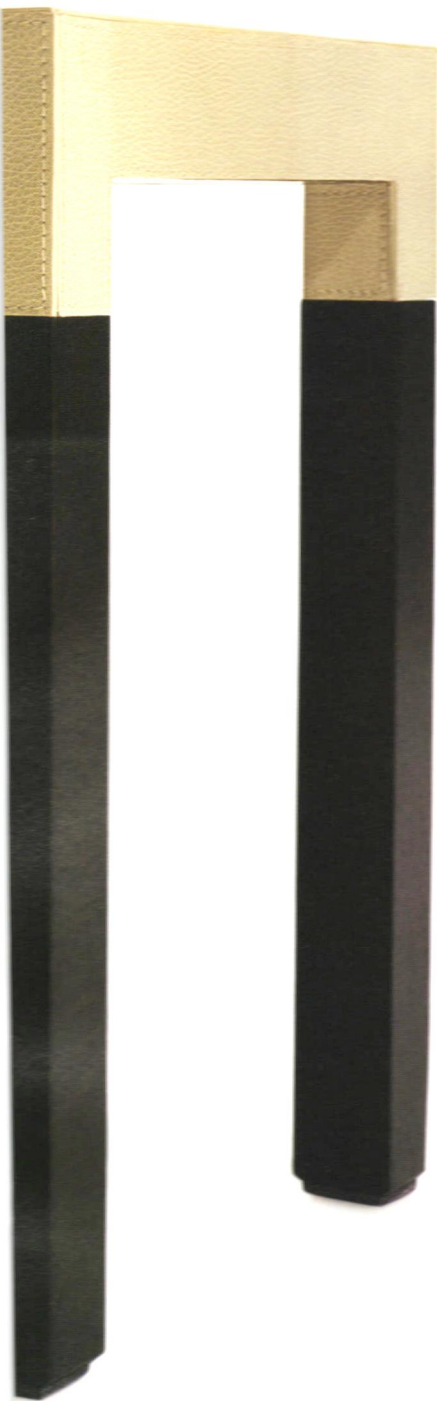
Woven Knee-High Boot,
Bottega Veneta



Gao Table by Romeo Sozzi,
Promemoria, courtesy of
Repertoire New York



Classic Glass Vases by
Alvar Aalto, Iittala



Gold Petal Necklace, Ted Muehling



PT Cruiser grill, 300M interior, Crossfire exterior detail, all by Chrysler

Technology

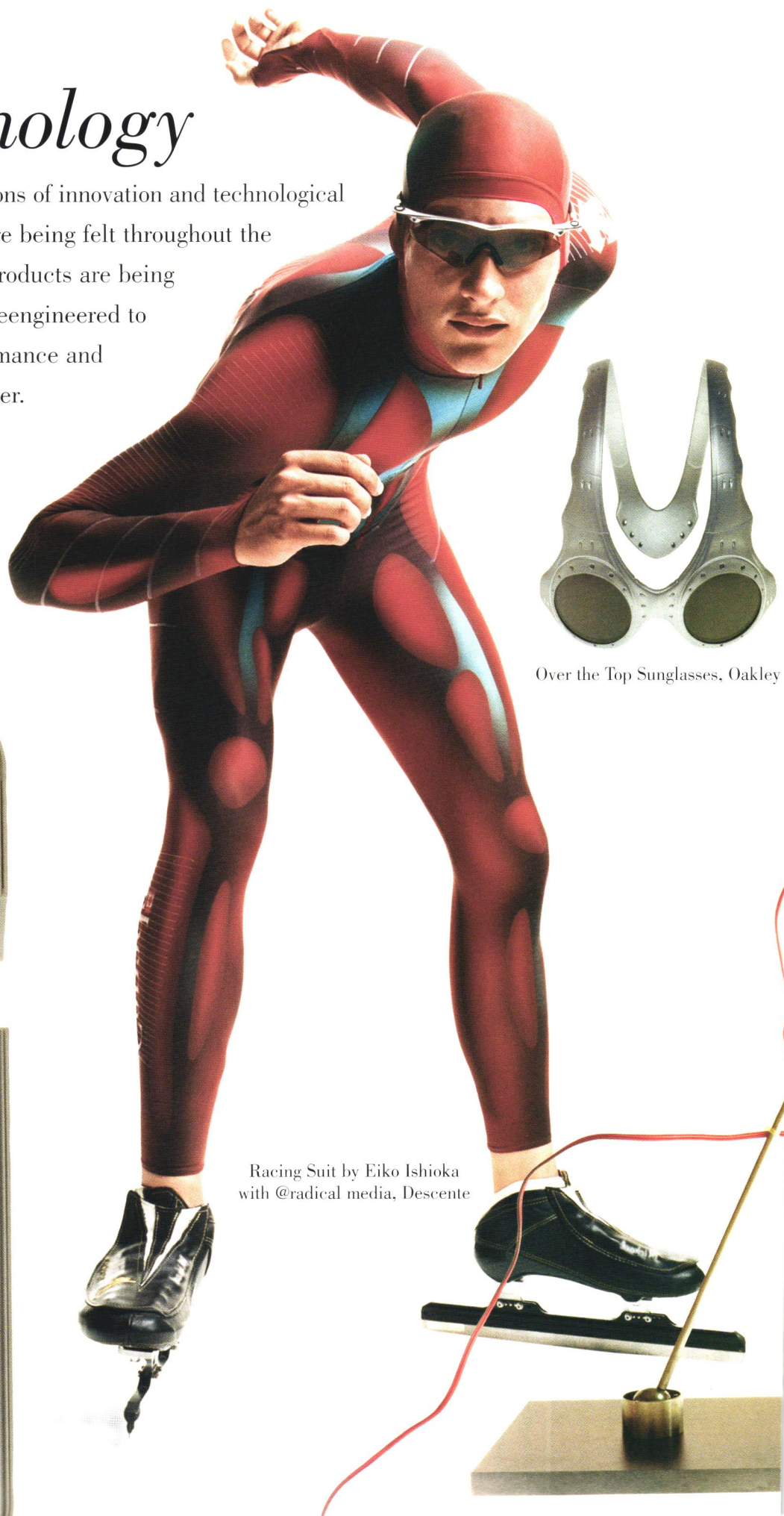
The reverberations of innovation and technological advancement are being felt throughout the design world. Products are being rethought and reengineered to enhance performance and empower the user.

Logitech Pocket Digital Camera



Over the Top Sunglasses, Oakley

Racing Suit by Eiko Ishioka
with @radical media, Descente





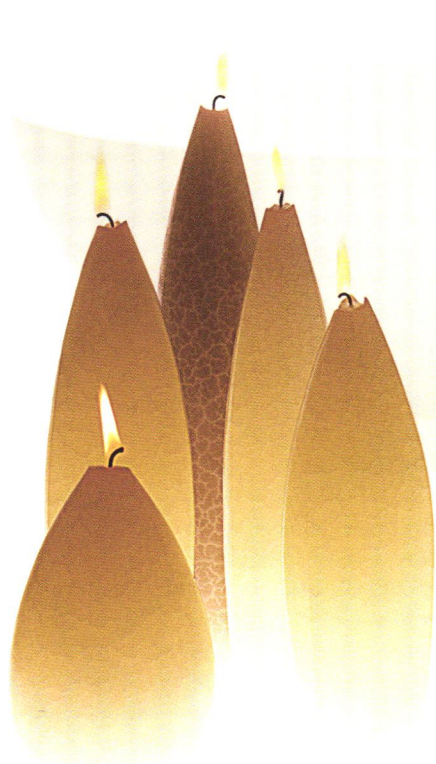
BeoSound 2. Bang & Olufsen

E.L.E. Dee Table Lamp
by Ingo Maurer

Pacifica by Chrysler

Comfort

Designers are answering the call for harmony and balance with products meant to soothe and envelop. Warm, nurturing characteristics appeal to the senses and provide a calming effect.



Crackle Candles by Barrick Design

Spoon Bathtub by G.P. Benedini,
Agape, courtesy of Moss



Cashmere Sweater and Pant, Michael Kors



Town & Country by Chrysler

Feltri chair by Gaetano Pesce, Cassina



Poodle Puppy

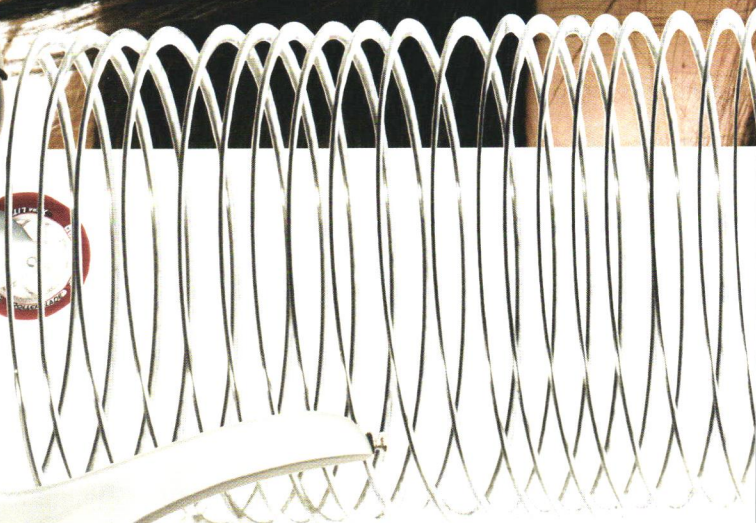
Dynamic

Designers' need for speed expresses itself in sleek silhouettes that seem on the verge of takeoff. Even the most stationary of objects takes on an aerodynamic quality with forms that evoke freedom, power and movement.

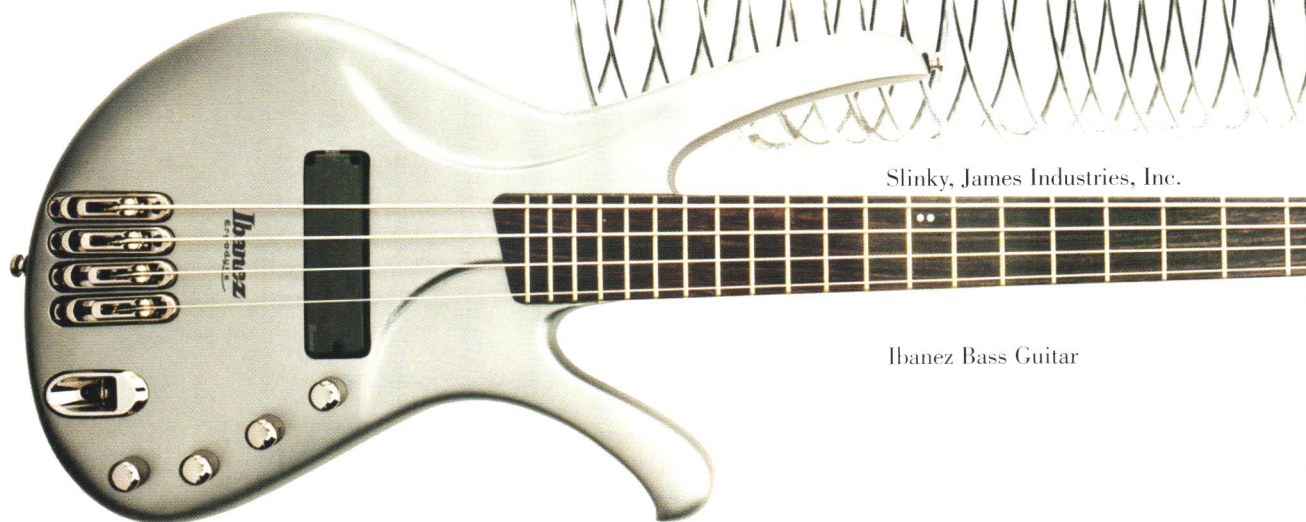
Hair by Renato Campora at The Wall Group



Lightning 09 Rollerblade



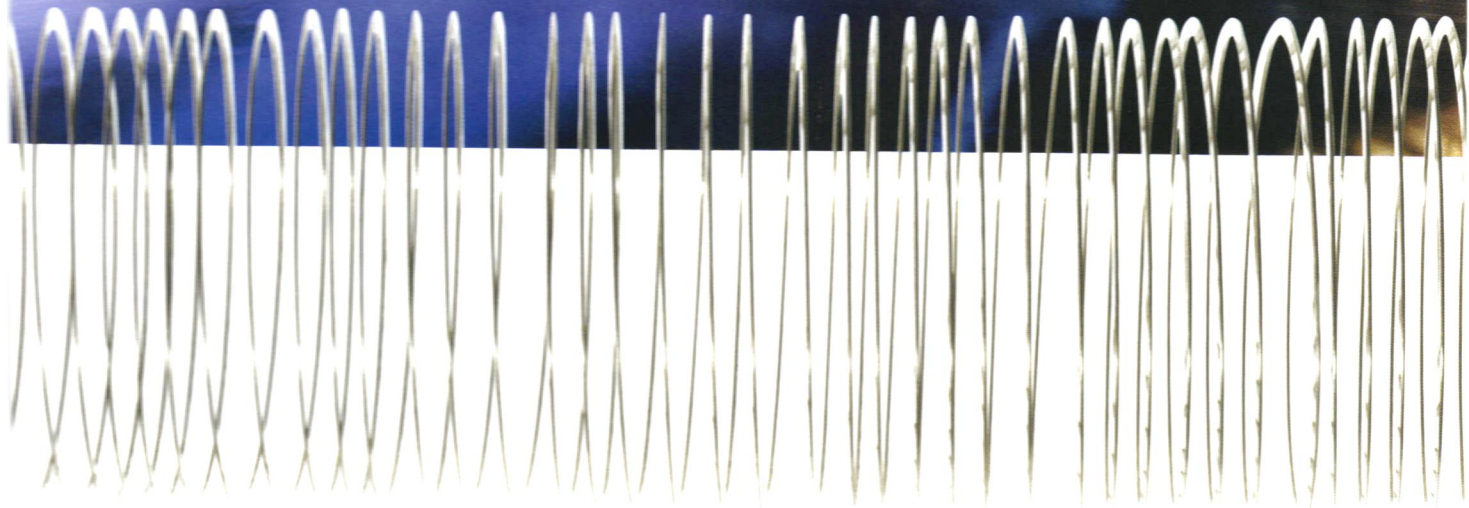
Slinky, James Industries, Inc.



Ibanez Bass Guitar



The Gateshead Millennium Bridge by Wilkinson Eyre Architects,
photograph by Doug Hall, courtesy of Gateshead Council



Crossfire by Chrysler



The Line on Design

Chrysler "Line on Design" Exhibit

Witness innovation unveiled as the five most influential trends in modern design come to life at the "Line on Design" Exhibit, sponsored by Chrysler. This extraordinary exhibition, opening in association with The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, at the Pacific Design Center, will showcase a collection of objects and images inspired by the preceding pages. Each piece was hand-selected by a team of renowned designers from DIFFA, the Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS.

Opening December 3, 2002

Pacific Design Center
8687 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles

Join the Chrysler Design Institute

Log on to www.lineondesign.com to join an exclusive design community online and to register for your chance to be Chrysler's exclusive guest for the ultimate design-inspired weekend in New York City.

As DIFFA's Chairman, I want to thank Chrysler for their generous support of the Foundation through the Line on Design project. Since 1984, DIFFA has mobilized the immense resources of the design communities to create some of the most celebrated fundraisers in AIDS philanthropy and provide over \$31 million to hundreds of AIDS organizations nationwide. We're passionate about our cause, and thrilled that Chrysler has joined forces with us. AIDS is not over. Find out how you can help DIFFA work toward a world without AIDS: www.diffa.org.

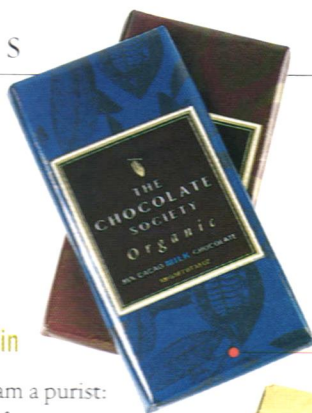
*Thanks for your support,
David Rockwell*



LARDER

Chocolate bars have come a long way. Here are the tastiest for the holidays by **Lora Zarubin**

When it comes to most things, but especially chocolate bars, I am a purist: give me the best, and keep it simple. But I'll make an exception for some of the extraordinary new filled, flavored, or decorated bars. Whether you are stuffing a stocking, baking your favorite dessert, or just in need of a chocolate fix, here are some bars that top my list.



If you're looking for perfection, the **Chocolate Society Organic Dark** bar and **Organic Milk** bar will hit the mark. Both are made from single-estate cocoa and are a must for true chocolate connoisseurs. \$4.60 per 3.5 oz. bar. chocolate.co.uk.



Recchiuti Confections' rich, hand-filled bars—**Hazelnut Praline** and **Honey Almond Nougat**—are like nothing I have ever tasted. \$6 per 4 oz. bar. 800-500-3396.



Dagoba Organic Chocolate's aromatic **Chai** has a great ginger finish. **Roseberry**, with rose hips and raspberries, evokes the holidays. \$3.50 per 2 oz. bar, from Chocosphere. 877-992-4626.



Dolfen Chocolat bars are made with Belgian chocolate and wrapped in resealable plastic pouches. The **Noir au Thé Earl Grey** has a subtle infusion of tea, and the **Noir aux Écorces d'Orange Confites** is a perfect marriage of orange and chocolate. \$12 for five 2.5 oz. bars. 800-214-4926. chocolatesource.com.



All five varieties of **Christopher Norman Chocolates'** handmade bars are exquisite, but if I had to pick, I'd go for the **Dark Chocolate Ginger** and the **Hazelnut Gianduja**. \$5 per 2 oz. bar. 212-677-3722.



Byrne & Carlson creates the most beautiful handmade chocolate, including the simple **Violet** and **Mint Amenity** bars—perfect stocking stuffers. \$4 per 2.25 oz. bar. 888-889-9778.



Valrhona is a chocolatier's dream. The **Chiuao** bar, with an almost burnt nut finish, is made solely with the 2001 harvest from Chiuao, a Venezuelan village. \$4 for a 2.6 oz. bar. The intense flavors of **Guanaja** dark chocolate are not for the light-minded. \$3.25 for 2.6 oz. 877-992-4626.

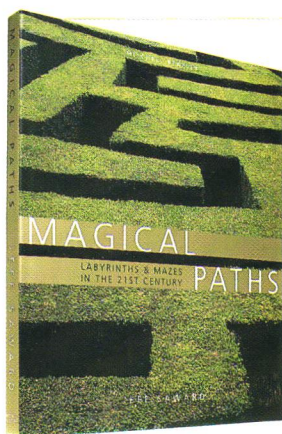
BAKING AND COOKING

The highest-quality chocolate makes all the difference in the kitchen. I choose chocolate by the cocoa content, depending on the recipe and the intensity I want. **Schokinat's** 71% **Special Edition** chocolate from **Christopher Norman**, \$13.75 for 1 lb., at Chocosphere, goes into my soufflés. I use **Scharffen Berger's** 70% **Bittersweet**, \$9 for 9.7 oz., 800-930-4528, for dipping candied orange or lemon peels. For chocolate chunk cookies, I love to mix different chocolates, like **Valrhona's** **Le Lacté Gastronomie** 41% **Cocoa** milk chocolate, \$8.75 for 7 oz., at Chocosphere, with **Fran's Chocolates** 56% **Dark Semisweet**, \$12 for two 8 oz. bars, 800-422-3726.

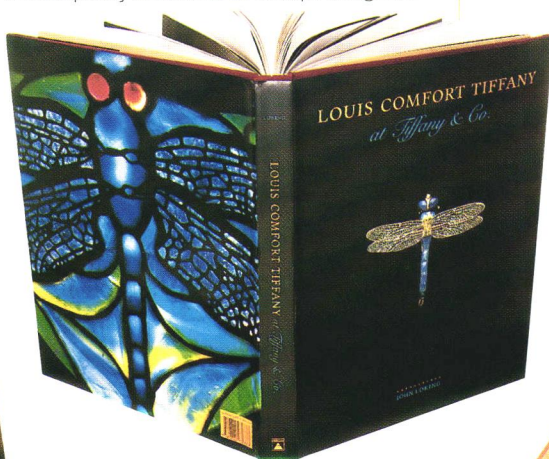
BOOKS

by Julia Lewis

They're easy to wrap and always the right size. Choose one for everyone on your shopping list!

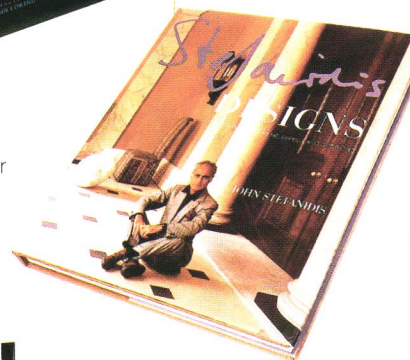


▼ **MAGICAL PATHS** (Mitchell Beazley, \$35) A compelling history of mazes and labyrinths—some of which date back thousands of years—plus recent examples by contemporary artists and landscape designers.

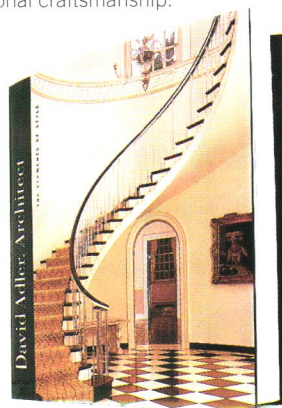
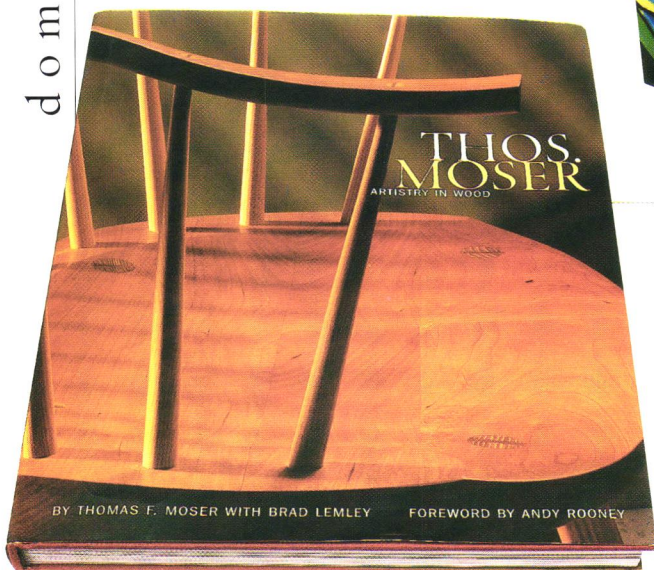


▼ **LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY AT TIFFANY & CO.** (Abrams, \$60) John Loring, Tiffany's design director, chronicles Louis Comfort Tiffany's extraordinary contributions to his father's illustrious firm—from magnificent stained-glass lamps to breathtaking jewelry.

▼ **JOHN STEFANIDIS DESIGNS** (Vendome, \$50) No library should be without this inspiring portfolio of interiors by one of today's most sought-after decorators. A legendary tastemaker, Stefanidis offers autobiographical anecdotes and discusses his approach to design.

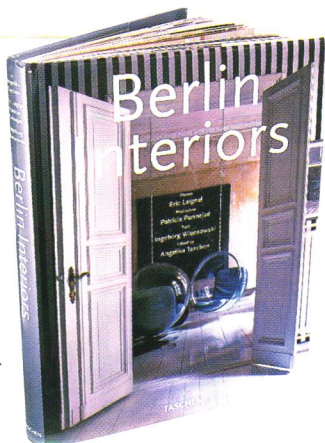


▼ **THOS. MOSER** (Chronicle, \$60) A history and celebration of Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers, the Auburn, Maine, woodworking studio that has become world-famous for its elegant, Shaker-inspired furniture designs and exceptional craftsmanship.

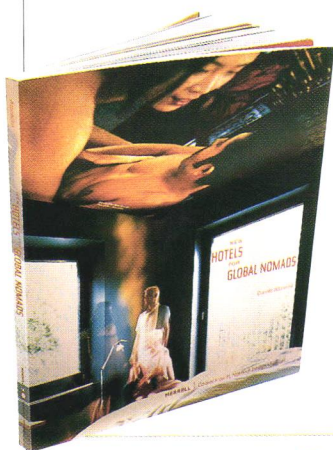
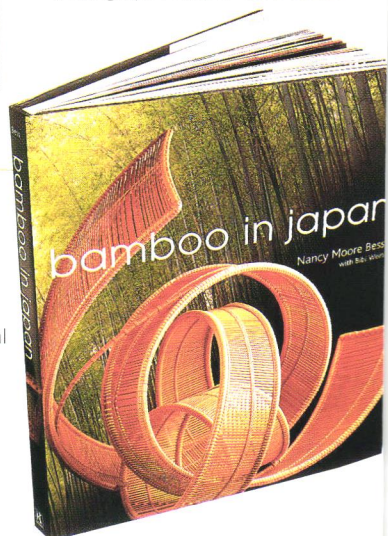


▼ **DAVID ADLER, ARCHITECT** (Yale, \$60) Adler is finally getting due recognition for his contributions to American architecture. Published in conjunction with an exhibition that opens December 7 at the Art Institute of Chicago, this luscious monograph features his best work.

▼ **BERLIN INTERIORS** (Taschen, \$40) The armchair traveler and design aficionado will appreciate the latest volume in Taschen's great ongoing interiors series. It's an intriguing tour of Berlin's old-world splendor as well as its cutting-edge design.



▼ **BAMBOO IN JAPAN** (Kodansha, \$50) Nancy Moore Bess illuminates the beauty and versatility of bamboo, a material that has long been integral to Japanese crafts and design. Even the most humble bamboo objects seem remarkably refined.



▼ **NEW HOTELS FOR GLOBAL NOMADS** (Merrell, \$40) This fascinating catalog of contemporary hotel design accompanies an exhibit now at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York.



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talbots.com

He'll drive.
You'll navigate.
Just like in life.

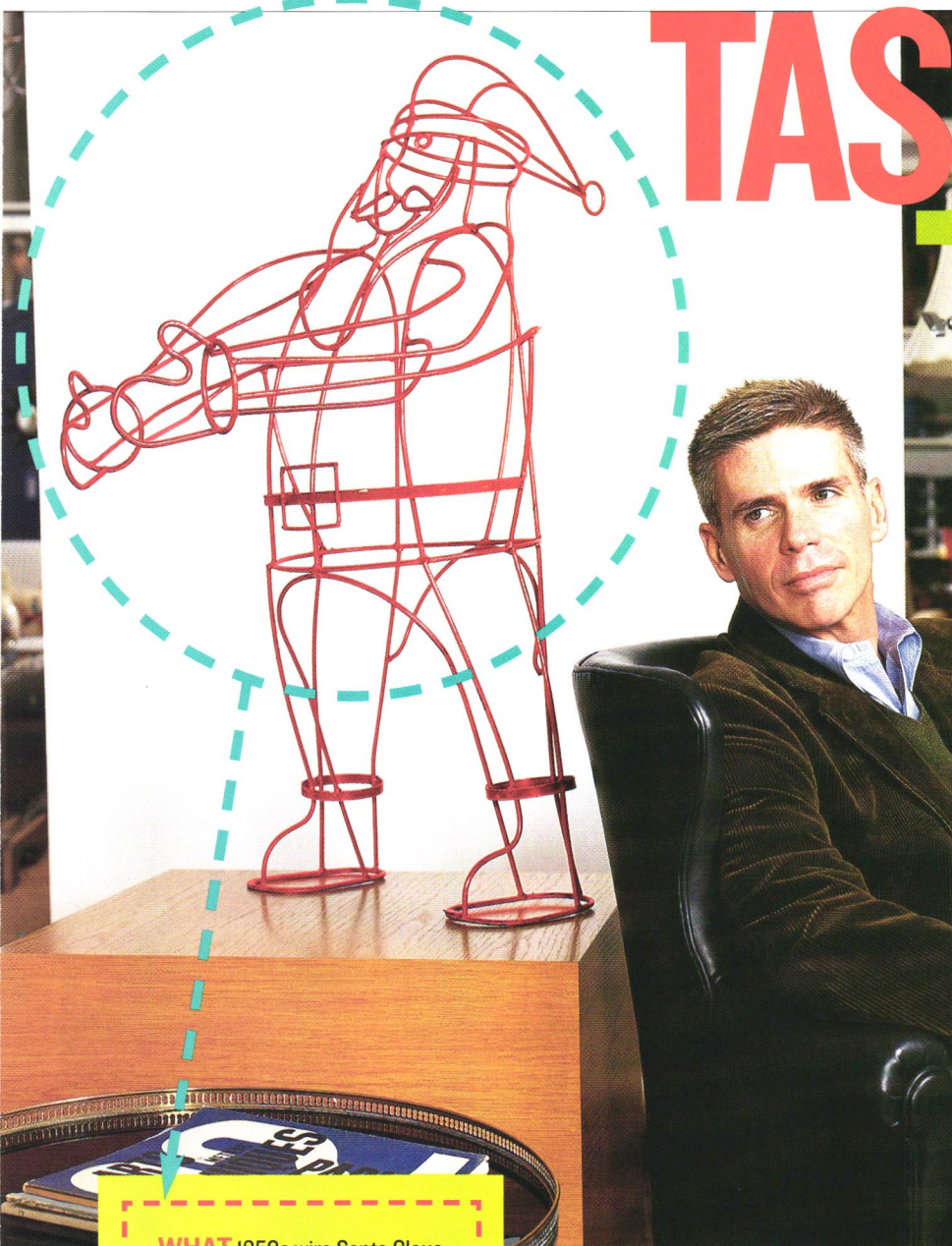


IT'S A CLASSIC

TASTE THIS!

Yule cool? Or a case of "Dreck the Halls"? It's hard to know what to make of New York designer Ward Denton's wire Santa sculpture

by Mayer Rus



WHAT 1950s wire Santa Claus department store decoration.

SIZE Just over 4 feet high.

MADE In America.


WHAT'S THE APPEAL?

"It reminds me of Alexander Calder's early wire sculptures—very charming and abstract."

TASTE VERDICT "Almost everyone finds it amusing. Occasionally someone raises an eyebrow and asks if it stays out all year. To them I say, 'Bah, humbug!'"

NEVER MIND THE PUMPKIN PIE AND THE CRANBERRY DRESSING.

For some people, the sweetest thing about Thanksgiving is the license it grants to start Christmas decorating in earnest. Designer Ward Denton is one of those people. His passion for Noëliana, however, doesn't take the conventional form of tree ornaments and garlands. Denton prefers offbeat Christmas props and display fixtures from department stores, which he deploys to dramatic effect in his Manhattan apartment on the Upper West Side as well as in his SoHo shop, Denton & Gardner. "When I was growing up in Baltimore, department stores recycled the same Christmas decorations year after year," he says. "It was comforting to see them reappear." Five years ago, in a hardware store in upstate New York, Denton stumbled upon the perfect addition to his collection: a vintage 1950s wire sculpture of Santa Claus manufactured for retail display. "It has a quality of abstract art that transcends tacky Christmas kitsch," he explains. After the Thanksgiving turkey takes its final trot on the dinner table, Denton's Santa comes out of the closet to herald another holiday season. It may not be as cuddly as a traditional department store Santa, but it still says Christmas.



happy
inside



happy
to
give





advertisement

twinkling icicle lights 7.99 lighted spheres 9.99 snowflake window decoration 12.99
8' Staylit tree 249.99 assorted tree trim 1.99-12.99 stocking 12.99 tree skirt 39.99
wire ornament tree 12.99 pre-lit wreath/garland 19.99/9.99 stocking holder 14.99
wreath from cover 19.99
Available at Target and target.com

happy
to
live



happy
to
fix

8-pc. Bialetti hibase aluminum cookset **79.99** Mr. Coffee pump espresso machine **59.99**
Eat, drink, and be merry dinnerware and accessories **2.99-19.99**
Oster chrome beehive blender **49.99** KitchenAid stand mixer **169.99**
mini copper cookie cutters and sprinkles set **9.99**
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happy
to
mix



advertisement

happy
to
dine





Poinsettia porcelain dinnerware with 24-karat gold accents 2.99–14.99 whimsy gold
 80-pc. flatware set 69.99 beaded charger 9.99 brass candelabra 24.99 amber tulip
 wine glasses, set of two 10.99 beaded wine bottle jewelry 7.99 wrap-around
 wine markers, set of six 7.99 Poinsettia dinner napkin 1.99 Poinsettia tablecloth 9.99
 Available at Target and target.com

happy
to
shine



happy
to
treat

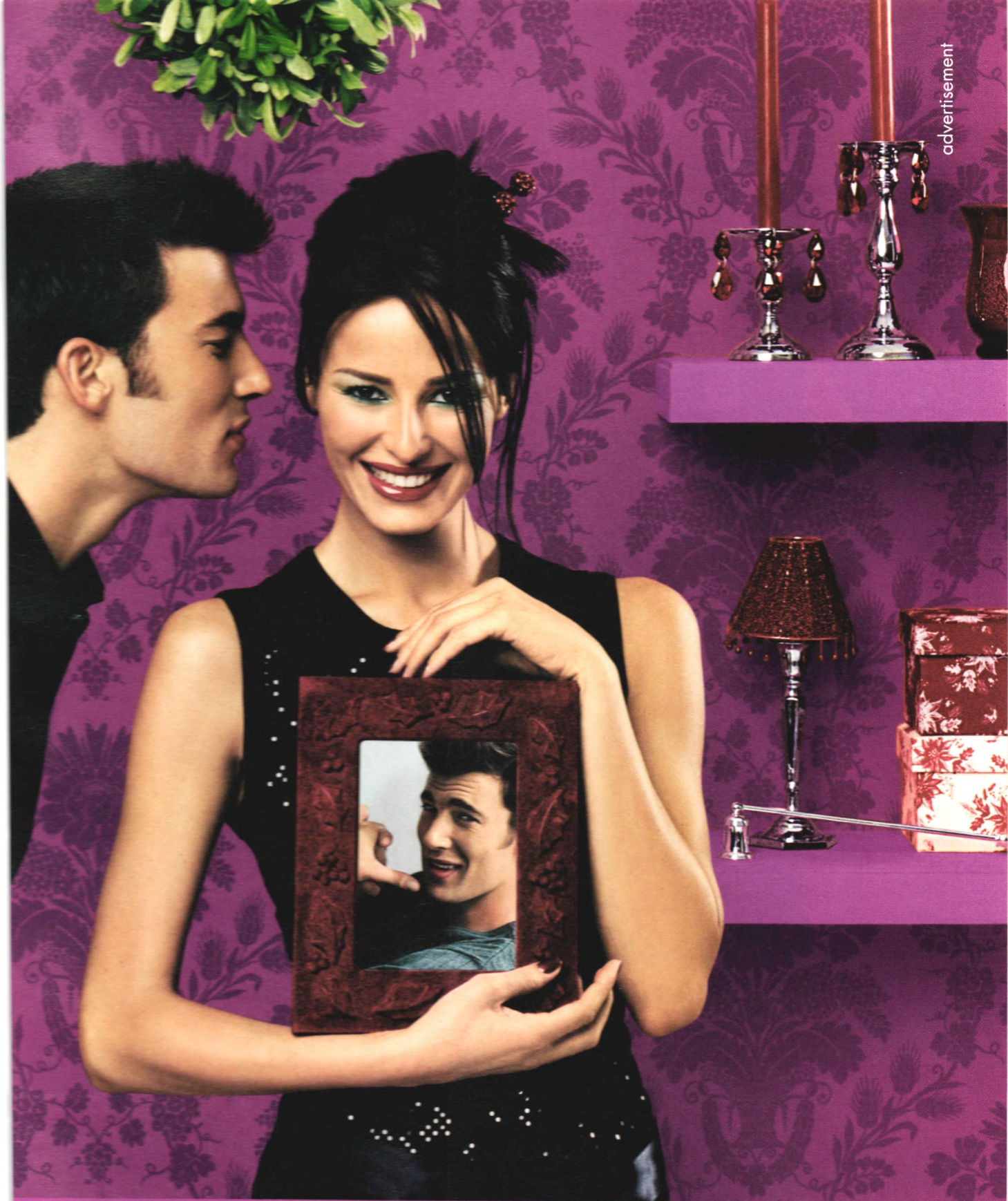
Introducing Christopher Radko dinnerware and accessories. Christopher Radko accessories 2.99–19.99 Christopher Radko 5-pc. place setting or 4-pk. dishes, 12.99 each Christopher Radko wine goblets, set of four 14.99 Christopher Radko celebration tablecloth 19.99 holiday wine markers, set of six 7.99 Available at Target and target.com

happy
to
meet



happy
to
glow





ivory ceramic bowl 16.99 decorative topiary trees available in 2 styles 24.99
 green or gold coasters, set of four 9.99 green glass mosaic hurricane 14.99
 velvet frames 9.99-11.99 prism candle holders 9.99 and 12.99 6" etched glass hurricane 14.99
 beaded shade votive holder 14.99 poinsettia photo box 11.99
 Available at Target and target.com

happy
to
show



happy
inside



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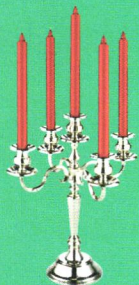
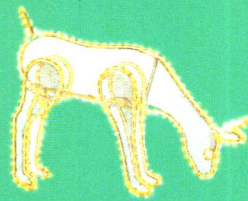
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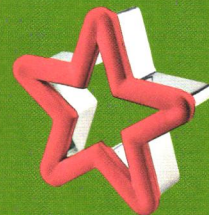
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in the garden



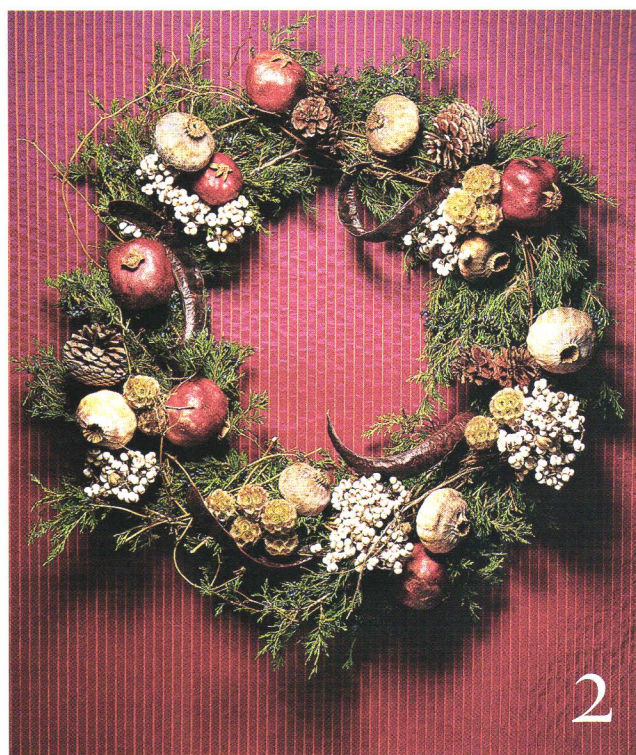
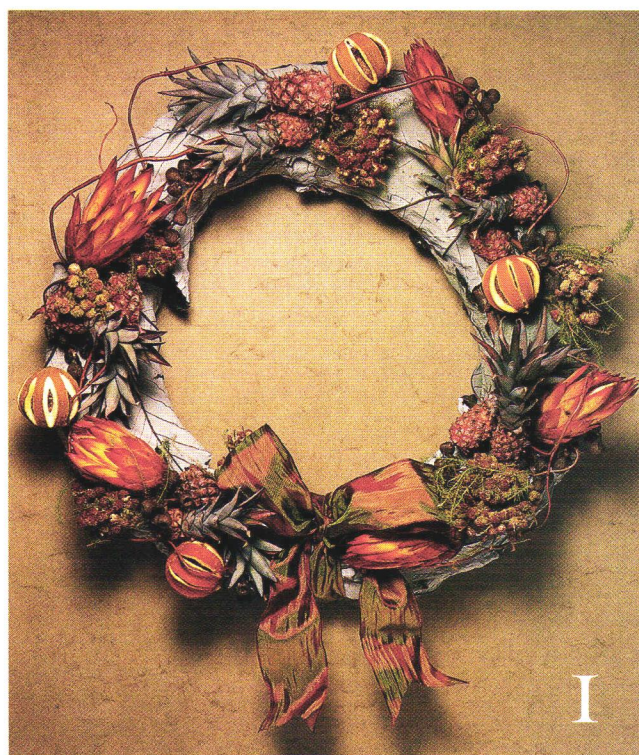
Bay Area floral designer Ariella Chezar (510-233-4490) ventures beyond the circular wreath with a rectangle of dark blue privet berries and miniature mandarin oranges. The wire-bundled fruits are attached to a sturdy metal frame.

HOLIDAY greenery

This season, deck your hallways with festive boughs that go beyond the traditional red and green by Stephen Orr

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN LAWTON

in the garden holiday greenery



WREATHS

1 A dried wreath can last far beyond one holiday season. This one from Dan Dahl at Gotham Gardens, NYC (212-877-8908), includes fresh cecropia leaves (which were wrapped to the wreath form and allowed to dry), mini-pineapples, protea, scored oranges, and eucalyptus. **2** A mixed wreath, also from Gotham Gardens, made of fresh juniper branches is wired with dried pomegranates, poppy pods, scabiosa seed heads, and honey locust pods. **3** A fresh wreath doesn't have to be short-lived. Ariella Chezar uses sturdy plants, like these leucadendron branches, and ivy berries, which will last for a few weeks without water. **4** A living wreath of succulents from Serra Gardens (cacti.com) is grown in a mix of soil and sphagnum moss. It will last for months if watered periodically and kept out of the cold.



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Teri Scaduto, *Sound & Vision*, 1/02



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THE MALL AT SHORT HILLS
SHORT HILLS, NJ

in the garden holiday greenery

A front yard can hold floral decorations both unexpected and traditional



1 Classic, firm-needled **spruce** ranges in color from green to yellow to blue.



2 Lush clusters of **pyracantha**, or firethorn, can be used in bouquets or woven in garlands.



3 Usually grown as a hedge, waxy **golden privet** can be cut for a dramatic centerpiece.



4 The suedelike reverse of **southern magnolia** leaves is even more decorative than the front.



5 **Hellebores**, or Christmas roses, are tough outdoors, but don't last long once cut.



6 Use glossy evergreen leaves of **camellias** for decoration even before they bloom.



7 Vivid hybrids of ivy like **'Gold Heart'** are perfect for garlands or twining around a tabletop.



8 The flat growth habit of **cedar** branches makes them good subjects for mantels.



9 **Viburnums** like *V. sargentii* and *V. setigerum* provide vivid but fragile red berries. ▷

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in the garden holiday greenery



10

The last of the **crab apples** make excellent decorations, unless the birds get them first.



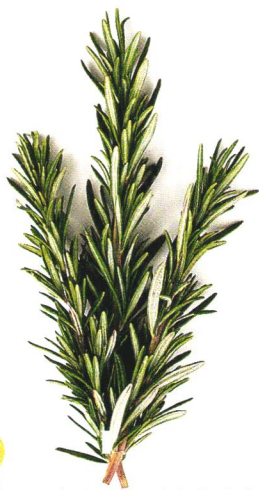
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Rangy **juniper** branches give a shaggy, casual look to garlands and swags.



12

Elegant sprays of **andromeda**, or pieris, are actually the buds for next year's flowers.



13

Rosemary just survives into the holidays in the North. The scent is perfect for table displays.



14

Aucuba is tropical-looking and hardy to zone 6. Its glossy leaves add drama to garlands.



15

Use the fruit of **Saint-John's-wort**, or hypericum, in place of ordinary berries.



16

Holly is the classic plant for a Dickensian Christmas. Female plants have the berries.



17

In mild climates, annuals like this silver senecio, **dusty miller**, linger until early in the year.



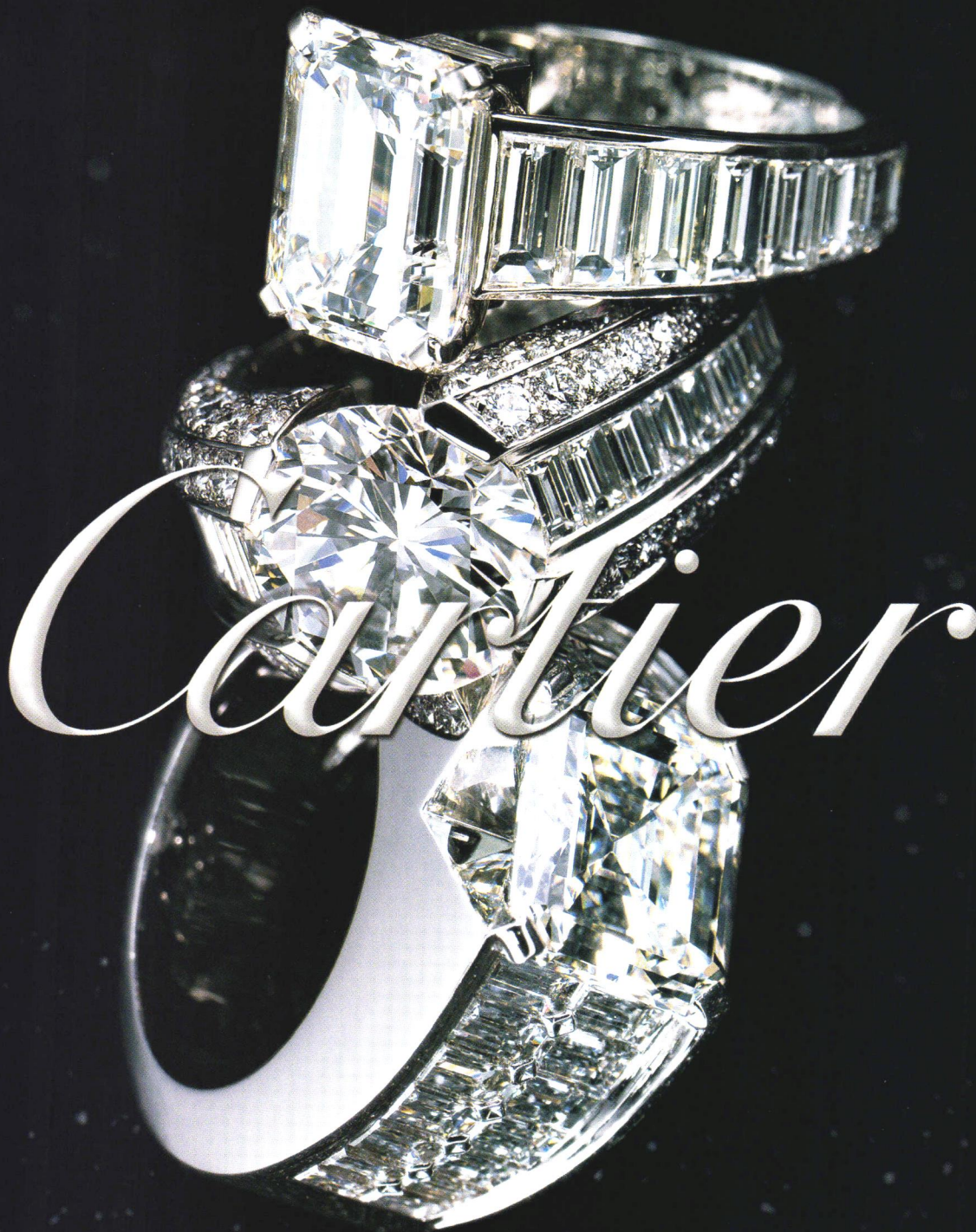
18

The adult form of English ivy, **arborescent ivy** has blackish berries dusted with blue.









dig it

in the garden

An amaryllis is easy to grow—at least at first

by Stephen Orr

Amaryllis always makes a good first impression. Even the most avid nongardener would be hard-pressed to keep these eager bulbs from blooming. The trouble starts after the honeymoon (the holidays, in most cases) ends. After the flowers fade, you have months with nothing more than a pot of lank, boring leaves. If you consider yourself a good nurturer, read on. Otherwise, don't feel guilty—just chuck the whole thing.



1 'Queen of Hearts'
2 'United Nations'
3 'Royal Velvet'
4 'Clown'
5 'Minerva'
6 'Orange Sovereign'

GROWING TIPS

A During the plant's first winter, water sparingly until the flower stalk is well developed, to avoid rotting the bulb. **B** Enjoy the glory of your fully blooming amaryllis. **C** Remove flower stalks as they fade. **D** As the weather warms and night temperatures climb above 50 degrees, begin fertilizing lightly and watering more often. **E** In autumn, withhold all water when the leaves start to yellow, which indicates that the bulb is ripe. **F** Cut off all dead or dying foliage, and store the bulb in its container or in a dark, cool room or the refrigerator for six to eight weeks. **G** In early winter, bring the plant into a warmer, sunny room, but withhold water until the flower bud pokes out of the bulb. **H** Repeat steps A through G.

one gardener's almanac



THE KINDEST CUT For a gardener, a knife is the best gift

by Tom Christopher

FAVORITE BLADES

From left: HEAVY-DUTY PRUNING KNIFE by Tina. Superb carbon steel blade; easy-grip curved walnut handle.

JAPANESE GARDENING KNIFE.

Ultra-hard steel sharpens to a razor's edge; good for fine work, too brittle for heavy-duty tasks.

ITALIAN PRUNING KNIFE.

Fine carbon steel blade; curved handle won't slip when pulling at blade to sever twig or shoot.

GRANDFATHER'S PRUNING KNIFE.

"Hawk bill" blade; well designed for general pruning.

LEFT-HANDED HORTICULTURAL KNIFE

by Tina. Superb carbon steel blade; snug walnut handle.

FLORIST'S KNIFE

by Schrade. Sturdy knife with stainless-steel blade; excellent for cutting flowers.

BUDDING AND GRAFTING KNIFE

by Victorinox. Keen stainless-steel blades for precision tasks.

AS ANYONE STILL wondering what to get me for a holiday present? (I have given a good deal of thought to this matter, but you perhaps have not.) The answer is a pocketknife, or, to be specific, a gardener's knife.

As a boy, I bought a pocketknife for my father every Christmas. I did this because I believed that a pocketknife is always useful, and because I hoped that my father would share with me what I got for him. Experience has since taught me I was wrong in both expectations.

In particular, I've learned I was wrong to assume that any pocketknife could help with the performance of every task. That's the theory behind the Swiss Army knife, and in my 30 years in the garden, I have found it to be a wretched horticultural tool. A Swiss Army knife will amputate a sucker from your apple tree or harvest an asparagus spear, but it's like using a rock to pound in a nail; you'll enjoy the experience so much more if you get the tool that was designed for the job.

Selecting the right knife for a gardening task is simple enough. To begin with, in most cases you need a sturdy knife, which means the pocketknife should be a single-bladed model. Yoking several blades together in the same handle requires lengthening, and thus weakening, the pivot on which the blades swivel. Aside from strength, you also need a knife with a blade of the right type. When pruning, for example, you'll find a "hawk bill" blade most effective. Blades of this sort are hooked like a raptor's beak, so they won't slip as they cut through a stem. I've also found hawk bill blades excellent for slashing a sheet of burlap or plastic mulch, for slicing open a bale of peat, and for cutting twine.

For the precise cuts required when taking cuttings or grafting, you'll want a knife with a razor-like cutting edge: keen, long, and straight. The pattern that best fits

these parameters is the "sheep foot" blade, and it is what you'll find, typically, in so-called florist or grafting knives. I love the precision and versatility of a sheep foot, which can slice a cutting from a begonia or trim the stem of a cut flower as neatly as it shapes a scion for grafting, and that is the blade I most often carry in my pocket.

I suspect, by now, that female readers are dismissing these distinctions as a typical guy ploy—an excuse to acquire more tools. Indeed, my wife has just told me (with a gentle, tolerant smile) that my knives certainly are wonderful, but that when she gardens, she uses whatever knife comes to hand (and not one of mine, for, like my father, I don't share).

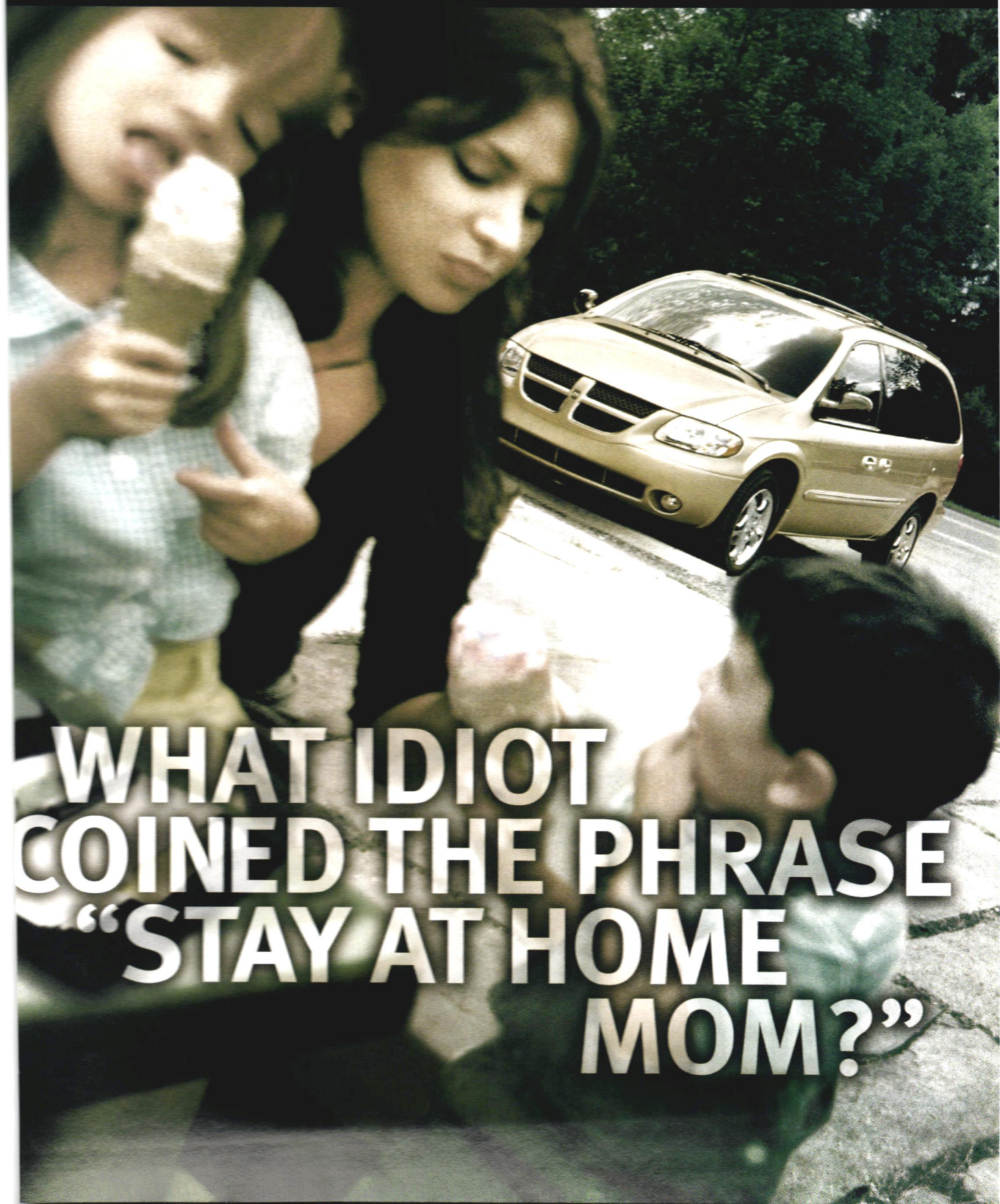
My response to skeptics is that the variations in blade design represent the accumulated experience of hundreds of generations. During a former life as a student of the classics, I studied specimens of ancient Roman pruning knives, *falculae arborariae*, which were remarkably similar to the

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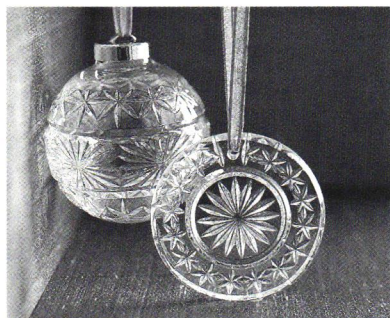
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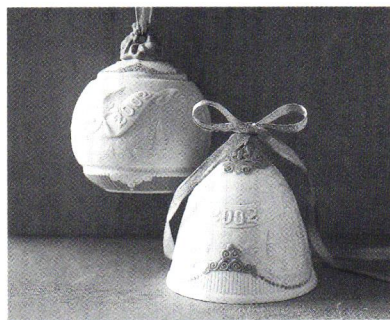
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one gardener's almanac

"grape pruning" knife my grandfather kept from his childhood on a California farm. The persistence of the same design over 2,000 years couldn't be accidental. Admittedly, my sheep foot knives are of more recent derivation, but even they have eighteenth-century prototypes.

NO MATTER HOW highly evolved its design, however, a knife will be only as good as the steel from which it has been forged. Different uses call for different types of steel, of course. The ultra-hard steel that is ideal for a razor would shatter at first stroke if made into the blade of a machete. Frankly, I don't understand those metallurgical distinctions, but I have noticed that the knives that work best for me all share one obvious virtue: their steel is such that they are easy to sharpen and also stay sharp, remaining keen through protracted usage.

I should confess that, along with that grape pruning knife, I inherited a prejudice from my grandfather. He always preferred knives made of carbon steel, the old-fashioned steel that will rust if not wiped dry and oiled before the tool is put away. My grandfather insisted that the newfangled stainless steel knives weren't tempered properly—that is, their steel was either made too hard and brittle or too soft—and so they wouldn't take and hold an edge.

He was right, Bernard Levine told me, though I am wrong. Levine is a Harvard-educated expert on the history, art, and technology of knives who consults for the Smithsonian Institution as well as for a range of private clients; I found him through his Web site, knife-expert.com. He explained that in my grandfather's day, the tempering of mass-produced stainless steel was hit or miss. However, since the introduction of something Levine called "chill quenching," in 1950, stainless has possessed an edge equal to that of the finest carbon steel and is, in addition, virtually rustproof.

Why, then, I demanded, does the German company Tina, manufacturer of my favorite gardening knives, still use carbon steel? Because, Levine replied, gardeners are conservatives. We are, after all, still using knives designed for the Caesars. Other knife users might demand the convenience of stainless steel, but

gardeners—knowledgeable gardeners—care more that Tina maintains the traditions. The company does so by using old-fashioned carbon steel and by offering an unmatched selection of time-tested designs. No other manufacturer, for instance, makes anything like my beloved Tina left-handed horticultural knife. On this knife, the "nail nick"—the half-moon niche that you grasp to pull the blade out of the handle—is set into the right-hand side of the sheep foot blade, rather than the left, so that lefties like me don't have to open the knife backward.

Such subtle distinctions, Levine reassured me, are important. If you stick with good brand names such as Tina or Schrade (an American manufacturer of horticultural knives) or Victorinox (a Swiss one), you are assured of getting a tool of good quality. All of those knives can do the work. But, Levine added, not all will suit you. Whether a handle fits your hand, and whether a particular blade suits your style of cutting, is something you can discover only by personally inspecting a knife and trying it out.

According to Levine, the fact that, with a collection of ten or more knives, I am still shopping is characteristic. He ended our conversation by referring me to a document on his Web site, a translation of *L'Art du Coutelier*, a manual for knife makers written by the eighteenth-century Parisian master Jean Jacques Perret. Perret was a craftsman of obsessive precision. He completed a full course of study in medicine, for example, so that he could improve the quality of the medical instruments he made. Once he perfected a knife, Perret would create a pattern, a metal blank that allowed him to re-create exactly the same blade shape and size whenever a customer required another knife of that type.

However, Perret warned the aspiring knife maker, this technique won't work with gardening knives. Every gardener wants something a little bit different, he noted. If you make a pattern of the pruning blade you supply to one gardener, you will only have to make another pattern for the next, because he will insist on a slightly different design. You will find yourself, Perret warned, with more pruning knife patterns than you can count.

When you find a left-handed one, get it for me. □

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in the garden need help?

Bringing the garden indoors, and other fall tasks

by Marilyn Young

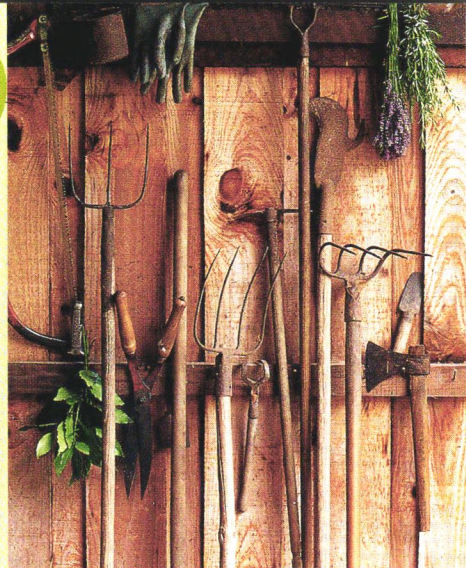


Q My potted geraniums flourished all summer but have been looking tired since I moved them indoors. Am I supposed to cut them back and store them in the basement?

A Pelargoniums, commonly known as geraniums, can be subjected to some rather harsh treatment and still survive. You needn't banish them to the basement; they will do wonderfully well as houseplants all winter if kept by a sunny window but away from heat. Pinch off old flower stems, leggy growth, and yellow or brown leaves. Be careful not to over-water or -mist, as they prefer to be dry. Turn the plants regularly to prevent the stems from leaning one way into the sun. Remember to feed your geraniums at least once a month, or up to once a week for blooms in late winter. The old-fashioned scented ones are especially nice to have indoors, and they require very little fertilizing.

Q After lots of hard work this year, my garden looks wonderful, but my hands look horrible. What can I do next year to help them?

A Devoted gardeners want to feel dirt and plants on their skin. However, when I look at my worn-out leather gloves, I can see what a beating my hands would take if I didn't protect them. I find that using a leather glove on one hand and a Foxglove (foxglovesgardengloves.com, 888-322-4450), made of a sensitive stretch fabric, on the other enables me to work with thorns and thistles yet manage the more delicate jobs as well. Sunscreen is a must for bare hands. To protect your nails, run them over a wet, softened bar of soap before going out to work in the garden. When you clean up, your scrub brush will be much more effective. You can also rinse your hands with hydrogen peroxide and follow up with an antibiotic ointment to soothe any cuts or nicks your skin may suffer.



Q Last winter I left my gardening tools in a heap in our garage, so in spring they were a jumbled mess. Any suggestions?

A After you have put the garden to bed, make it a year-end ritual to tuck your tools in, too. I like to head out to the garage on a rainy day with my dog and a radio to spend a few hours cleaning and organizing. A bucket of Murphy's oil soap and hot water, together with a scrubber or a block of wood, will help to chip and rinse off mud. Dry the blades and handles well. Use WD-40 with steel wool or fine sandpaper to remove rust. Give the wood handles a light coating of linseed oil. This is a good time to clear out the tools you never use, like all those rusty bulb planters. Keep the ones that feel like an extension of your hands. Make a list of what you need, and wait for the winter sales. Once you complete this task, you may be as proud of your tool room as you are of your garden.

Q How do I over-winter the elephant ears, cannas, and dahlias that make my garden so lively?

A Dan Benarcik is a horticulturist at Chanticleer, a public garden in Wayne, PA, where he specializes in growing tropical and subtropical plants. For anywhere colder than zone 9, he recommends cutting the plant back to 4 to 6 inches and digging up the clump of tubers (or bulbs) and roots with some soil. Then place the entire mass in one of those plastic milk crates that have holes on all sides, and store it in a basement. Cannas are rhizomes and may be lifted and stored in the same way. Before planting, they will need to be thinned and divided to give them a fresh start.

The recommendations for storing dahlias are as follows: A week or so after the first frost, cut their stems back to about 6 inches. Lift the tubers and cut off any damaged or diseased parts. Store them upside down for a week so that any excess moisture can flow from the hollow stems (they should not dry out completely). Store the tubers in a single layer in a shallow box, such as a wooden wine crate, and cover them (though not the crowns) with slightly damp compost, sand, peat, straw, sawdust, or shredded newspaper. Keep them in a cool, well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight.



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green thoughts

BOX STEP Pruning the glossy evergreen shrub is both an art and an act of love by Roxana Robinson

PINCHING BOX: it's a mysterious phrase. It might be an eccentric sort of fisticuffs, or an exquisite Asian torture, but in fact it's a peaceful horticultural task, pleasant, solitary, and satisfying.

Each spring, my box bushes put out a yellow-green froth of new growth, tiny furred leaves

that curl around themselves like empty peas. And each year, in the chilly spring sunlight, I pinch back the tender stems, asking the bush to spend its energy in more interior ways, to make a denser, bushier plant. It's one of my favorite chores.

As Henry Mitchell once wrote, a gardener's passions are serial. One year it's rugosa roses, and wherever you look, that's all you see, because that's all you think about. It's also all you want to hear about. How can your friend want to talk about *hemerocallis*? Hasn't she seen the gorgeous, crinkled, heartbreakingly intimate petals of 'Jens Munk'? For rugosa roses are all there is, for you, right then.

This year my passion is *Buxus*: box. I like the neat briskness of its single syllable; I like the mysterious eccentricity of the letter X. And of course I love the shrub itself, with its tidy, compact habit and its obliging evergreen foliage, dense, glossy, and problem-free. Modest, sturdy, discreet, box is best known as a handsome foil for showier plants, or as a hedge, or a backdrop for statuary. But, just as you might look at a painting for years before an unnoticed element of the composition suddenly rises up and claims your attention, so I found that the decorous, conventional, and ubiquitous box suddenly claimed mine.

Twenty-five years ago we moved into an old white clapboard farmhouse guarded by ancient and towering sugar maples. These cast deep shade across the front of the house, which was lined with dreary, conventional foundation planting: scrawny azaleas, droopy andromedas, and dismal yews, underplanted by sterile pachysandras. Design by Edward Gorey.

As a gardening neophyte, I knew better than everyone else, and I ripped most of these out. I planted lilac and viburnum, and left the andromeda and pachysandra. The front of the house was bare all winter, but I didn't care. All I wanted was flowers, and I never used the front door.

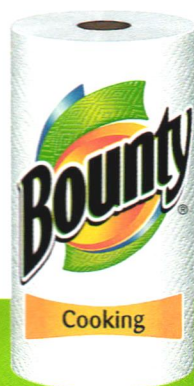
The back of the house is where the action is—perennial borders, kitchen garden, and, of course, the back door. Some years later, wanting structure, I planted box there. Two large



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and handsome *Buxus sempervirens* flank the back door, where they lend (I hope) some dignity to this modest portal. On each side of the white gate is a *Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'—English (or edging) box, small-leaved and slow-growing, enchantingly neat in its habit, dense and compact. In the corner of the kitchen garden is a small, low, glossy Korean box (*Buxus sinica* var. *insularis*). This has a cheerful, hoydenish habit, like a mop, and turns a bright chartreuse in the winter.

Once the bushes were planted, I realized that my *Buxus* responsibilities had just begun. Pruning box turned out to be an art, one I approached with trepidation. My friend Ellen was no help. "I just pinch it every time I walk past," she told me carelessly—the kind of comment made by someone very experienced, and useless to a nervous beginner. Where did she make the pinches, and how big were they? How often did she walk past?

The English pruning book *Craftsmanship in Yew and Box* explains that shape is crucial. The plant must taper upward for sunlight to reach the bottom, which is why the great ancient box hedges have a stately pyramidal form. To create this shape, you use a wooden form, since by leaning over the bush you can lose perspective. I nailed laths together to make a big slanted L with an angle of about 50 degrees. Leaning the form against the plant, I began hesitantly to pinch.

FOR YOU don't clip box. Clippers produce unsightly bright dashes throughout the foliage; the edges of the leaves and stems turn a hard and unpleasant white after being cut, no matter how carefully you wield the shears. Instead you pinch, with index finger and thumb. This is slow, and rather hard on your fingers, but it's a pleasant task, and one you can do early in the season, when there isn't much else to do.

Standing in the damp bed, still in a winter jacket, I take the tender shoots between finger and thumb, and as I do so I like to think of the gallant ladies of Dumbarton Oaks. That big Washington garden, one of Beatrix

Farrand's masterpieces, contains a great deal of handsome box. I'd heard that during World War II much of the gardening staff was called up, and neighborhood ladies stepped into the breach. In their pleated skirts and pearls they pinched back the box, shoot by tender shoot—their personal contribution to the war effort.

But what about the barren front of the house, neglected and untended all

"But English box," Joe said, "does fine in shade."

"It does?" I asked. The stealthy beat began in my brain.

Joe nodded.

"I'd need two big ones," I said. *Buxus Buxus Buxus*.

"I can get two big ones," Joe said.

"Right away?" I asked.

"This afternoon."

The bushes went in within hours. I

My passion is *Buxus*: box. I like the neat briskness of its single syllable. I like the mysterious eccentricity of the letter X

these years? Last summer, my daughter was married at home, on the lawn. The ceremony was to be by the white border, beside the fragrant and blooming rugosa "Schneekoppe": perfect. But every single guest would walk across the lawn, past the dismal front door, the spindly lilac and viburnum, the dull pachysandra. *Buxus* began beating a refrain in my brain.

I began seeing box. I saw box hedges. I saw topiary in photographs. I noticed huge bushes flanking ancient doorways. I met a collector of old box, who bought it from estates. He has a property full of these noble centenarians, a private Forest of Arden. He doesn't pinch them back, he said.

Never? I asked. He shook his head.

What do they look like, I asked, unclipped?

Like clouds, he answered.

Now I lamented. Twenty-five years, I thought. I could have had 25-year-old box bushes, dense, luxuriant, graceful, green floating clouds flanking the doorway. Instead, I had 25-year-old pachysandra beds, sterile, stupid, and common.

Two weeks before the wedding, talking with Joe, my gardening ally, I rued aloud my lack of box—though I knew I couldn't put American box in deep shade.



hoped they'd look as though they'd been there for decades, but of course they did not—one thing money cannot buy is established plants. These looked as new arrivals always do: somewhat unkempt, but cheerful and well-intentioned. I didn't care. I loved them.

The wedding, like all weddings, was enchanting. And in 25 years I'll have huge, dreamlike green clouds flanking the front door. In the meantime, I think about the boxes. I walk several times a day around the house to look at them. Hoping they're growing. Silently urging them on. Wondering why my friends want to talk about rugosas.

For more on box, see pages 150-151. □

Roxana Robinson is a gardener, novelist, and Guggenheim fellow.

THE ORNAMENT LIST

Keep your beloved old ones, but add some new dazzlers to give those evergreen boughs a holiday boost



1

I Glorious angles of refraction: Baccarat's crystal Irises Star, \$280. 800-777-0100. baccarat.fr.



2

2 Want a great case of the holiday blues? Rejoice in these. Hand-painted Polish stoneware, \$30 each, by Jolanta Okraska, left, and Maria Iwicka. The Zanger Company. 800-229-4687. polishstoneware.com.



3

3 Put your balsam on the best-dressed list with Armani Casa's mouth-blown glass Star ball, \$45 for large, shown, \$35 for small, available in hot pink, violet, blue, and light blue. In NYC, 212-334-1271; in L.A., 310-248-2440.

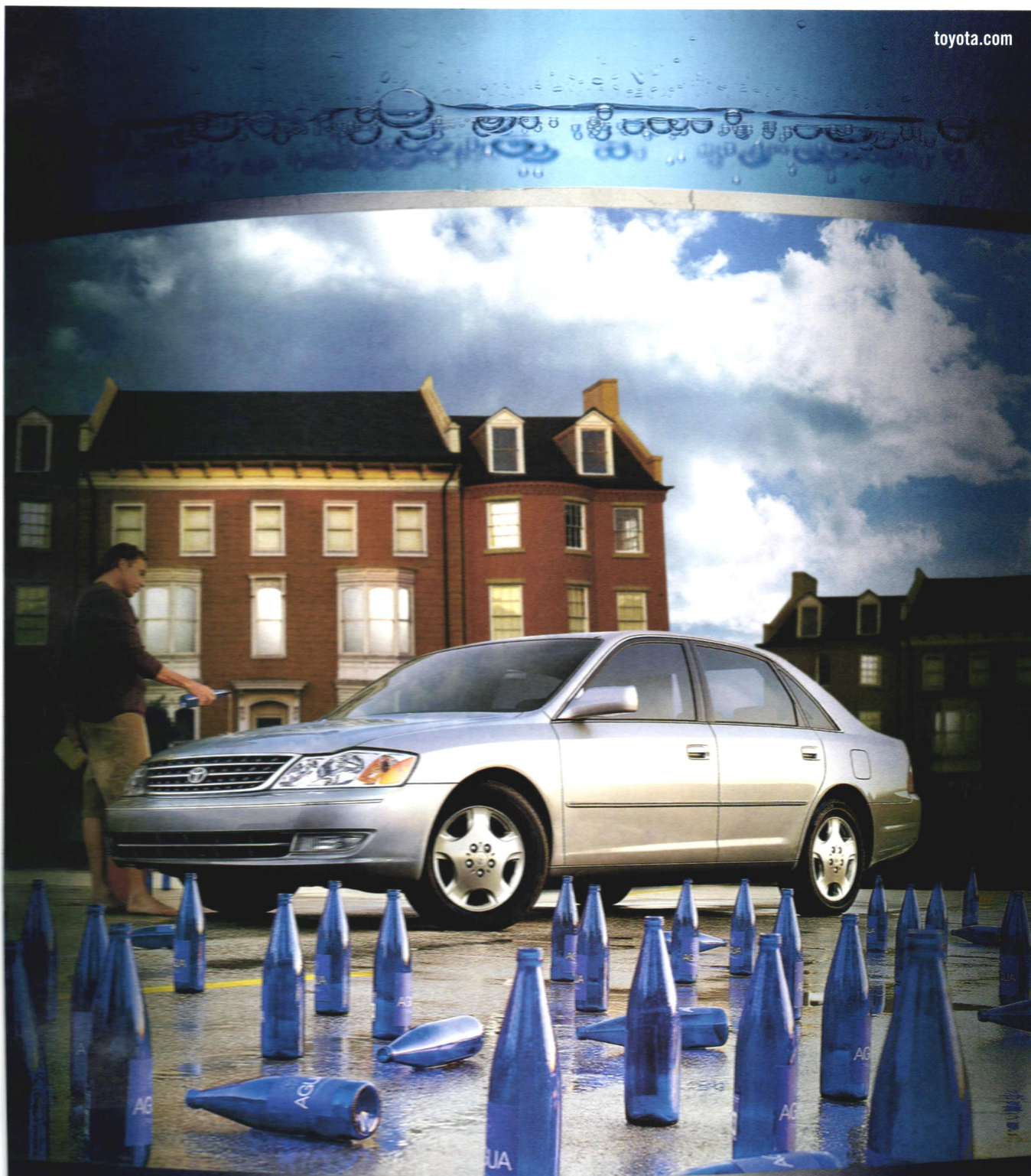
4



5

4 No-cal sweets, no kidding. These glass Pastel candies from Venezia are delectably inedible, and a treat for your tree. \$19 each in assorted colors, from Vietri. For store locations, call 800-277-5933. vietri.com.

S We're in a swirl over hand-blown glass globes, \$50 each, that come in shimmering red, orange, white, blue, and green. From Clio, in NYC. 212-966-8991. ▸



THE RESTYLED 2003 AVALON. With a car this luxurious, only one question remains—sparkling or still?

GET THE FEELING



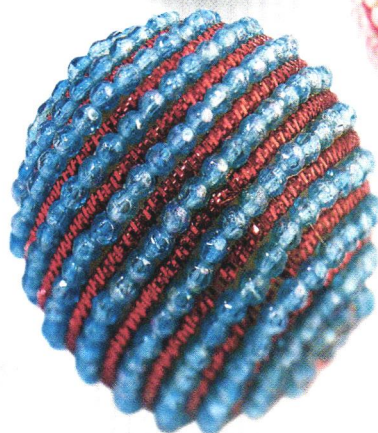
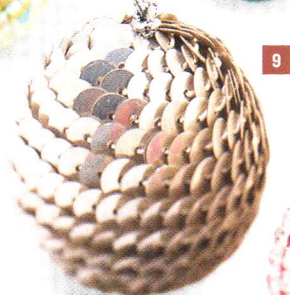
 **TOYOTA**

THE ORNAMENT LIST



"MY BABY-SITTER COVERED STYROFOAM BALLS IN SEQUINS—DIFFERENT COLORS EVERY YEAR. THEY'RE STILL MY FAVORITES"

—ALEXA HAMPTON
DESIGNER



It's as sparkling as the real McCoy, but a lot more colorful. And it won't melt indoors. Pier 1's snowflake of periwinkle pink, and clear glass beads, \$5. 800-245-4595. pier1.com.

Imagine Queen Anne's lace pressed into lead crystal. Voilà, the Umbels ornament, named for an inflorescence, in red, \$99. By Lalique, available exclusively at Neiman Marcus. 888-888-4757. neimanmarcus.com.

When it comes to tree trimming, we believe in knit picking. We chose a miniature beaded green sweater, \$14, from Anthropologie. For store locations, 800-309-2500.

It's Christmas, so, as Richard Wilbur advised in *Candide*, "glitter and be gay." Two Grace Sequin Baubles, \$39 for 12 in assorted colors, from the Terence Conran Shop. 866-755-9079. conran.com. Three multi-color plastic beaded ornaments, \$7 for a pack of six, at Kate's Paperie. 888-941-9169. katespaperie.com.

Collecting ornaments can be addictive. This mouth-blown, hand-painted glass Poppy ball, \$18, might help you understand why. From Smith & Hawken. 800-981-9888. smithandhawken.com. ▷

Galaxy Hen/077

Estro/077

Trillium III/077

IV/077

Telex/077

Kosile/077

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919-782-6010 |
| Myers Carpet, GA
404-352-8141 | Kiser's Floor Fashions, TN
901-458-8000 |
| Carpets by Design, IL
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(trade only) | Myers Carpet, TN
615-777-3344 |
| Village Carpets, IL
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THE ORNAMENT LIST



11



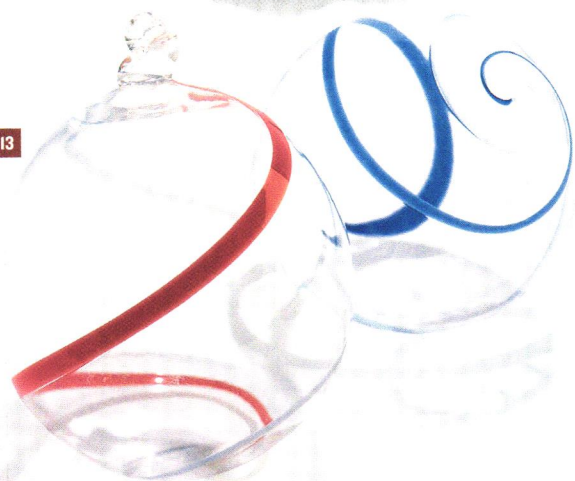
12

11 Hello. Ditch your cell and pick up a mouth-blown, hand-painted red glass phone, \$18, at the MoMA Design Store. 800-447-6662. momastore.org.

12 T. S. Eliot loved the “glittering rapture” of the Christmas tree. Arcadia Home’s hand-beaded snowflake tree topper, \$105, fits the bill. At Bergdorf Goodman. 800-558-1855. arcadiahomeinc.com.

13 Don’t use these for ringer, rolley hole, or other games of marbles. John Pomp’s handblown glass marbles, in red and blue, \$26.50 each, are purely, gorgeously for show. At Barneys New York. 888-822-7639.

14 The Georgian House Teapot in hand-painted mold-blown glass, \$32, is based on an 18th-century Staffordshire stoneware teapot. Metropolitan Museum of Art. 800-662-3397. metmuseum.org/store.



13



14

papering the house

Cards and wrapping are more artful than ever

▼ Go solar (system) with Pluto paper, \$3.50 a sheet, by Neisha Crosland. At Kate’s Paperie. Luminous green ribbon, \$6.58 a yard, Mokuba. In NYC, 212-869-8900.

**DON WE
NOW
OUR GAY
APPAREL**

▼ If you’re feeling a little clannish (as many do at this time of year), go for the MacGregor card, based on the genuine tartan. \$14 for a box of 10, at the MoMA Design Store.



▼ If you’ve seen enough stars, try spots. Jack & Lulu for Fred Flare polka-dot wrap, \$8 for a set of 3 different sheets. In Brooklyn, NY. fredflare.com. □



▲ This year, really send a message with your card, \$3 each, \$15 for a box of 8, from Bob’s Your Uncle, Boston. bobsyouruncle.com.



▲ Our favorite little primate cutup is now a cutout. Peaceable Kingdom’s Curious George cards, \$13.50 for 12. At Barnes & Noble, 800-843-2665, and Papyrus stores.





2002 Cross Bell
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Holiday Mesh Stocking



My Christmas Gift™



2002 Snow Fantasies
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And this year she knows
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Enter to Win

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Enter between October 1, 2002 and December 24, 2002 for your chance to win. See official rules.



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Lenox Holiday 2002 Sweepstakes Promotion. Lenox Celebrates You, Your Home, Your Family, Your Life OFFICIAL RULES.

Sponsored by Lenox Brands,
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TO ENTER OR WIN: To enter and become eligible to win three Lenox Holiday prize packages, please place your address and telephone number on a 3x5 post card and send to Lenox Brands at 100 Lenox Drive, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648. Lenox Holiday 2002 Sweepstakes Promotion. You may also win by contacting our Customer Service Department at 63-LENEX or by visiting our website at www.Lenox.com.

All entries that are submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than December 24, 2002 and received by no later than December 2002. All entries that are submitted through our customer department or through our website must be received by no later than December 24, 2002. No purchase is necessary to enter the Sweepstakes or to win. Please submit only one entry per person. Multiple or mechanically reproduced entries are ineligible. Lenox Brands is not responsible for lost, late, damaged, illegible, incomplete, misdirected or otherwise deficient entries. Such entries will be disqualified. All decisions regarding disqualification of entries shall be made by Lenox in its sole discretion.

Three (3) winners of the Lenox Holiday 2002 Sweepstakes will be selected in a random drawing from all eligible entries. The drawing will be held on or about January 15, 2003 at a facility located in Langhorne, PA. The odds of winning are based on the number of eligible entries received. Decisions of Lenox are final. Winners will be notified by telephone or mail within about fifteen (15) days after the drawing.

ELIGIBILITY: Entry is limited to individuals who are residents of the U.S. and at least 18 years of age or older at time of entry. This sweepstakes is not open to employees of Lenox Brands, Incorporated ("Lenox"), their families or employees of any company affiliated with Lenox or any company participating in this promotion.

THE PRIZES FOR THE LENOX HOLIDAY 2002 SWEEPSTAKES

One Prize Winner will be selected for each of the three prize packages listed below:

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A living room or family room makeover for your home, a personal interior design consultant* (\$2,500), a set of Lenox crystal (\$7,000), rugs & curtains (\$2,500) and an assortment of Lenox home decor items (\$2,000) including lamps, vases, frames and candlesticks. (Approximate Value of this Prize is \$14,000).

Celebrate Your Family with Lenox Prize Package
A special evening in your home for you and your family (family members). Includes a catered gourmet meal* (\$2,500), a set of Lenox Brands products for the table and (\$6,000), including a set of monogrammed dinnerware, Lenox place settings, a set of crystal stemware (14, 1 place settings), a set of stainless steel flatware (14, 1 place settings), and a dozen other Lenox gifts personal to you for your family; and a video camcorder* (\$1,000). (Approximate Value of this Prize Package is \$10,000).

Celebrate Your Life with Lenox Prize Package
A four day, three night trip** to New York City for you and a guest. Includes roundtrip airfare from the airport nearest to you to NYC (\$2,400), two Hartmann® suitcases (\$1,000), accommodations for 3 nights (\$1,000), two tickets to a Show (\$200), dinner for two (two nights) (\$500), one dollar in spending money (\$1,000). This prize package includes a shopping spree at Lenox's Retail Store in NJ (\$3,000) with limousine service between the store and home (\$300). (Approximate Value of this Prize Package is \$9,400).

GENERAL CONDITIONS: Entry constitutes permission to use winner's names, likeness and/or biographical data by Lenox Brands, Incorporated and its subsidiaries for promotional purposes without further compensation or unless prohibited by law. Winners will be required to sign an Affidavit of Eligibility/Release of Liability with their entry. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of alternate winners. Entrants acknowledge they have read, understand and will abide by all official rules and regulations. Prizes are subject to availability and may be substituted for prizes of comparable value.

This sweepstakes is subject to all federal, state and local laws and is void where prohibited or restricted by law. Winners are solely responsible for any applicable federal, state and local taxes. Prize winners are solely responsible for their own travel and hotel expenses. Lenox, its officers, directors, agents, subsidiaries, parent and affiliate companies (including Lenox Brands, Incorporated and its subsidiaries), and participating retailers are not liable for any liability arising in connection with their prize.

For the name of the winners, please send a stamped, addressed envelope between January 31, 2003 and February 28, 2003 to: Lenox Brands, 100 Lenox Drive, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648, Attn: Lenox Holiday 2002 Sweepstakes.

*These prizes will be awarded in the form of a gift certificate redeemable in the winner's local area.

**Trip must be completed by January 31, 2004. Actual travel dates are based on availability at the time of booking and selected blackout dates.

HOLIDAY INDULGENCES



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Introducing the new Briva[™] in-sink dishwasher, exclusively from KitchenAid! This revolutionary double-sink design houses a top-loading dishwasher on one side, offering the ease and efficiency of pre-rinsing wineglasses and trays before entertaining, cleaning up after a light dinner, or washing as many as five place-settings up to three times faster than standard full-size dishwashers. A fabulous addition to the well-equipped home!

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- **Celebrate Your Family**...with a catered celebration, a full Lenox table setting, and a digital camcorder.
- **Celebrate Your Life**...with a trip for two to New York! Experience fine dining, fabulous entertainment, and a Lenox shopping spree!

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For the ultimate in performance, choose wall-to-wall carpets made with Wear-Dated[®] carpet fiber. Wear-Dated offers such options as DuraSoft[®], the ultimate marriage of durability and softness; the wool-rich look of ThermaSealed[®] (at a fraction of the cost of wool); and Traffic Control[™], specifically designed to hold up in active areas. Available in a range of colors.

Log on to www.weardated.com for more information.

HOLIDAY INDULGENCES

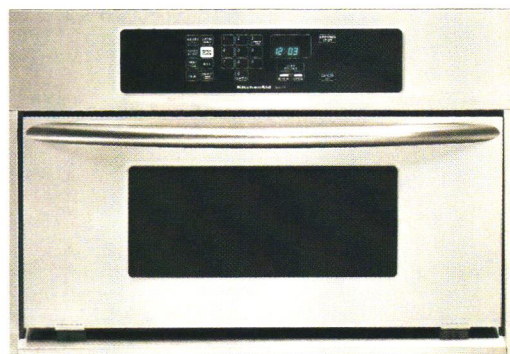


Briva™ In-Sink Dishwasher

Just put your dishes in the sink and go! This revolutionary double-sink design houses a top-loading dishwasher on one side. It cleans small loads up to three times faster than standard full-size dishwashers. Whether entertaining for a crowd or cooking for two, the Briva™ makes cleanup easy. The two-minute rinse-only cycle can be used to pre-rinse wineglasses before entertaining. It can fit up to five place-settings and complete full loads in just 30 minutes. Easily transforms into a functional sink and workspace.

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From the ultra-sleek KitchenAid® Architect® series comes this professional-caliber warming drawer. Boasting a 90- to 225-degree temperature range, temperature control sensor, and programmable timer, this convenient appliance can be located anywhere in the kitchen. Removable serving pans provide added flexibility.

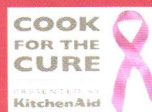
For more information, visit www.KitchenAid.com or call 800.422.1230. Cook for the Cure® is a registered trademark of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.® Registered trademark/™ trademark of KitchenAid®, U.S.A. © 2002. All rights reserved.

KitchenAid® FOR THE WAY IT'S MADE.®

From countertop appliances to cookware and cutlery, ranges to refrigerators, and washing machines to wine cellars, KitchenAid offers beautifully designed products that enable professional-quality results. Here, a selection of fabulous offerings for the holidays.

gift-giving ideas

- For aspiring chefs, try a creative gift basket of specialty prep tools and gadgets, such as a citrus zester, a mortar and pestle, and a good basic corkscrew. Dress it up with a few decorative accessories—or, for purists, white linen dishtowels.
- Know someone who loves to bake? Indulge your confection-loving companion with a gift that's big on taste and whimsy: a French pastry cookbook and collection of vintage cookie cutters packaged in a decorative tin.
- Give the gift of giving—Host a Cook for the Cure® Dinner Party! Simply ask guests to contribute by making a donation to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. KitchenAid® will provide a Dinner Party Kit with customizable invitations, menu suggestions, recipes and party tips from celebrity chefs, as well as the official donation envelope! To request a free kit visit www.cookforthe cure.com.



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Step 2: Load the KitchenAid® Dishwasher. Designed with a stainless steel interior and a 5-level wash system, insuring impeccable results.

Step 3: Bask in the glow of appreciative guests.



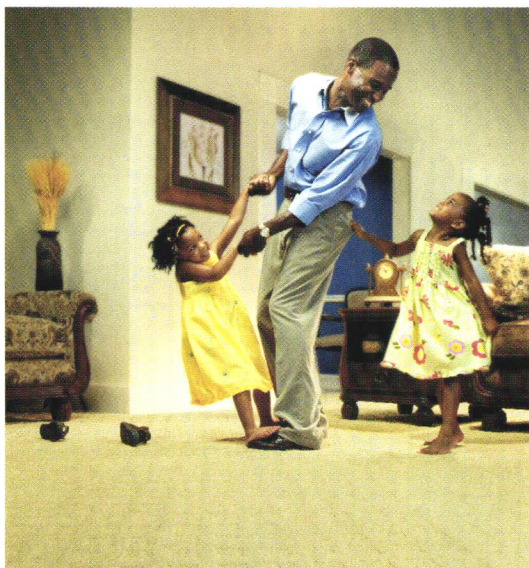
Recipe created by Marcel Desaulniers, author of *Desserts to Die For*.
For this recipe, visit KitchenAid.com. To learn more about the entire KitchenAid® line, call 1.800.422.1230.
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FOR THE WAY IT'S MADE.™

HOLIDAY INDULGENCES

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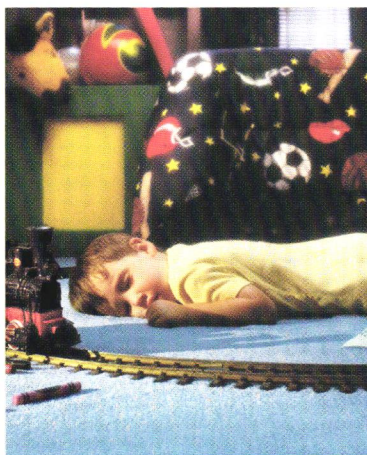


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Wear-Dated® carpet fiber provides unparalleled durability and recoverability despite daily wear. Traffic Control™ Wear-Dated® carpet fiber, specifically designed to keep its new look and prevent a high-traffic area from becoming disproportionately worn, is made of the same class of fiber specified 90 percent of the time by professional architects and designers.



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Winter Slumberland

A cushion for children camped by the Christmas tree, a makeshift bed for impromptu naps, a place to play, dream, and snuggle—a carpet is much more than a floor covering. That's why comfort and softness are essential. DuraSoft® Wear-Dated® carpet fiber provides that incredibly soft feel without the shiny look of some synthetic fibers.

gift-giving ideas

- Bring something beautiful to the party. A handful of winterberry branches, an elegant amaryllis, a miniature pine in a beaded silver mint julep cup. Natural seasonal accents are a fabulous host gift and complement any décor—from traditional to modern.
- The holidays are about relaxing and taking time to indulge in the comforts and warmth of home. Give gifts that encourage home time, such as a board game or a classic movie on DVD (with an accompanying stash of popcorn and candies).
- Resurrect the favorites of your childhood for today's children: simple comfort toys such as a stuffed animal, a tea party set, a dollhouse, a train set. While they might not have the bells and whistles of their more high-tech counterparts, these treasures have lasted through the years—for a reason.



**YOU'LL WEAR OUT
BEFORE
WEAR-DATED® DOES.**



Beautiful colors and styles for every need. Wear-Dated® carpet fiber is so durable we guarantee the entire carpet.* That's why carpet made with Wear-Dated is made for life.

Visit your local carpet retailer and ask about carpet featuring Wear-Dated carpet fiber. *See warranty for details. Wear-Dated is a registered trademark of Solus Inc. © 2002 Solus Inc. www.weardated.com

all that glitters

Perhaps our fascination with shiny, glowing, shimmering things masks a more elemental need by joan juliet buck



Little prayers in painted tin, the Mexican religious emblems called *milagros* (these are from a store in Santa Fe) represent petitions to heaven to mend anything from a broken heart to a broken leg.

WHEN I WAS a child I was in love with a small red tin tray from my doll's dinner set. I'd sit on the front steps of the Paris house, and if I held the tray up to the light a certain way, the red was intense enough to climb into. There was a depth to the surface that implied the existence of another universe just beyond the metal, one that was rich and dark, shining yet shadowed, complex and gaudy and warm. Across the courtyard was the little pavilion where the landlord's invalid aunt would tell me stories about Jesus and show me, on her bedside table, the pale green statue of the Virgin Mary that emitted light at night. I believed in miracles.

The strange intensity of colored tin still enchants me. Shimmering refracted beams confuse the eye, the way in a dream sometimes you can't focus enough to see what you're looking at. I took a course in Goethe's theory of color at St. John's College last summer because I thought that in one week I might find out what that mystery was. Instead I learned that red casts a green shadow, blue an orange one, and purple a yellow one. Which explained something about the choice of awnings outside Mediterranean restaurants, but didn't tell me how to fathom the mysteries of bright tin, or explain what it was that so attracted me.

It has to do with a grainy scintillation that I had only once seen manifested in real life, if you can call it that, at a biennale in Florence in 1996. An installation in the Palazzo Pitti's White Room was a fashion show of plaster mannequins in Pucci clothes, their feet attached to an electric track that ran down a runway and back again, in front of a parterre of empty silver chairs, some occupied by other plaster mannequins. There was a strange and subtle glimmer in the room. Thin beams came off the beading on the edges of some dresses as they caught the cunning dusty light, which suggested cigarette smoke and fog and was calibrated to mute and smudge the screaming Pucci patterns into something like memory rather than immediate experience. The broken-up quality of the veiled gray light, the muffled patterns, the slight squeaking of the tracks as the dummies proceeded endlessly, mindlessly, along the runway, the little silvered chairs in rows facing them, hit me hard. The mechanical movement, the absence of any human presence, and the art-directed sparkle evoked something profoundly moving, against all odds. It was a world I knew presented as Vanity, a place of idle amusement and insubstantial display, and, to my horror, this was where my memory was most excited.

Vanities? I thought that in moving to Santa Fe I'd give up foolish, bright, shiny, scintillating things. I had my rigorous and extraordinarily

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Care instructions: For darks, wash with new Quick Dissolving Tide. (It works better than before at leaving clothes residue free.) Machine wash hot, warm or cold. (It removes more tough stains in cold water than leading regular powder detergents.) Visit tide.com. (It has more than you could ever want on treating quality blends.)


"The spirit should
never grow old."

-JAMES A. GARFIELD



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heavy steel bookcases and my 100 percent functional, no-frills, solar house: I wore only black jeans and my father's shirts, and kept my hair in a ponytail. I refrained from buying things, which brought on the kind of rush that anorexics must feel when they refrain from eating.

I was moving into a higher order of being. "Don't buy turquoise," E-mailed a friend from Sarah Lawrence. "Heavens no," I E-mailed back.

SAM'S CLUB would be the shopping diversion. Kim had a membership, and he took me early in the morning. I learned to get off on trimestrial supplies of toilet paper and paper towels, a massive box of Twinings Earl Grey Tea, and pallets of mineral water, unfortunately packaged in liter bottles with red plastic baby teats. By 8:30 he and I would be at Horseman's Haven, where he ate steak and eggs and I ate sloppy, spicy things on top of tortillas, while the National Guardsmen at the next booths in incongruous jungle fatigues let us know that history was almost happening nearby: I could smoke in Horseman's Haven.

Once in a while I'd go down to Doodlet's on Water Street to buy a few flat, shiny, winged hearts or hands made from tin in Mexico. The best ones were painted with transparent red and purple and green, and if I held the red up to the light, I could still see that indistinct other place.

In Los Angeles, I found myself buying a painting by Ryan Sweeten, apparently executed entirely in glitter glue. It might have been plastic stuff out of tubes, but it suggested that grainy scintillation. It went up opposite the bed, where the shining spheres changed color and texture with the light.

I went to New York to see if I missed it, and when I came back, the town had suddenly transformed. The Sweeney Convention Center, which normally just sits on West Marcy Street doing nothing, had turned into a cornucopia of objects. First there was the Ethnographic Antiques show, where Mexican paintings on tin, called retablos, were displayed,

along with tables and shells and boxes and cupboards, Turkmenistan coats, Suzani wall hangings from Uzbekistan, tin crowns for processional virgins, hands and feet wrested from religious statues, and little gold sandals for El Santo Niño de Atocha. Sellers reported, slightly breathlessly, that Donna Karan had just bought the best belt they had ever had, or 27-circle skirts, or all of their lace. In the booth of a dealer called Federico, the woman patiently helping a buyer—no, a collector, it was all collectors—to try on 1940s silver Mexican necklaces was Ali MacGraw. Two days later the Antique Indian Arts show was up, and in Federico's booth Ali MacGraw was folding antique ponchos. On the walls there were now tribal dancing dresses: a black Apache one, hung with rows of conical silver



**Vanities?
I thought that
in moving to
Santa Fe I'd give
up foolish,
bright, shiny,
scintillating
things**

bells; a Pacific Northwest one of pale deerskin with iridescent shells. Then the Incan feather pieces, Bolivian textiles, painted parchment leather cases for arrows (called parfleches), Colima dogs, and nail-biting Nayarit figures were packed away. And then it was the SWAIA Indian Market, a vast and controlled competition for contemporary Indian craftsmen and artists. Actually, they're all called artists, just as all buyers are called collectors. Works were displayed with blue and red ribbons—best in show, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prize labels—for parfleches and beadwork, ridged black pots by Nancy Youngblood, Diego Romero's bowl decorated with a cartoon, black and white Acoma pottery, knives with beaded handles, shell mosaic bracelets and necklaces, and beaded jerkins. Collectors were at the outdoor booths by dawn the next day to nab what

they collected before any other collectors could get near them. You could tell they were collectors by the belts, worn by men and women, the silver disks, called conchas, studded with turquoise nuggets shining in the sun.

In the courtyard of the museum, the tribes were dancing, with competing drums. Women in beaded hide dresses and thick beaded boots stomped gently to the rhythm of the drums, their LensCrafters glasses incongruous with the bright, solemn costumes.

I bought some skirts of thick pleated cotton with a line of gold rickrack at the seams from a booth run by Navajo women from Arizona. I had a red skirt from the year before; I wasn't going to get into local costume, or even the Anglo approximation of it, but the black-jeans-and-Dad's-shirt routine was beginning to get a little sad.

At one booth a beautiful young Navajo woman selling pots wore traditional dress: a heavy black blanket, with a hole for the neck, held in place by a large silver concha belt. The weight of the blanket made the dress descend straight to her boots. Graphic and enormously thick, the dress was controlled by the heft of the belt, which lit up the woman's entire figure. On her, the silver conchas aligned on the belt were like a lock for a door, a beam for a roof. Something that made sense.

I went camping far out in the mesas, and on the way back from a night by a cliff, we stopped at a small shop in the middle of nowhere that sold Comet and dog food and toilet paper and a profusion of Indian silver. The Indians have been trading their jewelry and belts for goods for as long as the white men have been on this continent, and next to the household goods were brooches and necklaces and belts with silver conchas set with turquoises. Greed, which had been remarkably absent from my way of life for a year, suddenly took over. I bought two belts, and hung them up on hooks in my bathroom so I could look at them. Then I wore them over the Navajo skirts, and then over jackets, and finally I was in a version of costume. (Cont. on page 161)

selfpossessed

The author's house is overflowing with things she can't bear to get rid of. They are a reflection not only of her but of generations of family by leslie bennetts



Stacks upon stacks of linens, sets of china, spoons for every imaginable course, knives with mother-of-pearl handles, and salt and pepper shakers are only a fraction of an inventory of intertwined lives.

THE FIRST TIME I visited the apartment of my husband-to-be, I was stunned into silence. It was virtually empty. The bedroom had—well, a bed. The only furniture in the living room was a coffee table. Since my beloved was a drama critic, he had a considerable collection of framed theater posters, but they were all on the floor, propped up against the walls. An aesthetic statement? The by-product of a hectic life in which domestic appointments were something a man never quite got around to? It wasn't clear. All too clear, however, was his mania for order and precision. I mean, who has color-coded sock drawers?

If he is a minimalist, I guess you could call me a maximalist. My homes are never messy; they're just full. Very, very full. When the minimalist and I got married, the movers came to survey my old apartment and informed me that they could pack up everything in one day. When the

allotted day arrived, a team of six men worked nonstop. With every passing hour, they grew visibly more wild-eyed, sweaty, and frantic. Three days later, they were still at it. "You get the prize," the foreman told me. "I've been doing this for twenty years, but I've never seen anyone who had so much stuff." It was obvious that he didn't mean it as a compliment.

Why do I have so many belongings? A lot of them just happened to me. No one would want me to throw away my great-grandmother's Viennese porcelain hot chocolate cups, would they? (I'll admit I'm unlikely to use all four dozen at any one time, but this way I have spares if some of them break.) Or any of the linens

embroidered by my grandmother and her four sisters for various trousseaux? There are hand towels, pillowcases, silk blankets, napkins of every description. There are boxes of tablecloths, acres of damask and linen and lace. Surely I'm not expected to divest myself of my grandmother's collection of Revolutionary War-era coin silver spoons, engraved with generations of family initials? My great-grandmother's fish knives? Or my great-aunt's dessert plates, the Tiffany glass ones, the majolica service patterned with lavender wisteria?

But that's only the beginning. Open one box and you'll find an elaborately embroidered yellow silk shawl with a note in faded, spidery handwriting: "Uncle Comstock brought this back from China in 1926 for Aunt Lylia." A smaller box conceals a beautiful petit-point evening bag and another note: "Rae bought this in Paris, 1937." There's a vintage leather box with my elderly cousin's collection of

The room still needed something. The expert in the orange apron had a thought.



Mood lighting.



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home base

calligraphy pens, and an ancient monogrammed suitcase with my grandfather's architectural drafting tools. My closets and cupboards contain hundreds of such artifacts.

I will concede that I can't blame everything on my ancestors. I too have accumulated stuff over the years. Decades of travel have left me with various souvenirs, from Italian hand-painted pottery to Jordanian bud vases. Other collections I inherited and then augmented, like my vast array of Christmas tree ornaments.

All of this gives my husband the vapors. When we met, his shipshape kitchen contained exactly two of everything: two forks, two knives, two spoons, two plates, two glasses. "What if you want to have more than two people at dinner?" I asked timidly.

"I don't," he said.

Why he married someone who isn't comfortable unless she has enough china and crystal for 50 is another question. I scored a minor victory when I got pregnant and we needed to sell his apartment to buy a larger one. Month after

month, how could I resist that rose chintz transferware teapot, those enchanting teacups in Easter egg pastels? I bought them and integrated them discreetly into the household. No need to mention them. Sooner or later, of course, he discovered them. "Where did this come from?" he asked accusingly, holding out the offending item as if it were a dead rat.

"Oh, I've had that for ages," I said, hoping that five days qualified as "ages."

Unfortunately, other members of the family are beginning to gang up on me as well. "Mom, I think you have a problem," my 13-year-old daughter said as I unpacked some French provincial dinner plates I had found in an antique shop. "Maybe you should get some help. Is there a twelve-step program for people who can't stop collecting china?"

At least my apartment is still navigable. My mother's has begun to resemble a Collyer Brothers-style nightmare. My brother and I finally tackled the problem, but the process bogged down as our mother held each item, remembering

I guess you could call me a maximalist. My homes are never messy; they're just full. Very, very full

month went by. No one wanted his spotless, Spartan little cell. Eventually I got desperate. I carted one load of stuff after another into his apartment. I hung pictures on the walls, put flowers in vases. Then I borrowed a friend's puppy and sat back to wait. The apartment sold in four hours.

YOU WOULD THINK that my husband might have extracted some basic insights from this experience: about comfort, about coziness. But 15 years later, he's still struggling to cope with the chasm between his sensibility and my own. Whenever he spends too long in the kitchen and an ominous silence descends, I know I'm in trouble. "Can't we get rid of some of this stuff?" he asks, emerging with a stack of plastic food containers.

Such items are merely practical, but others reflect desire. As a result, I have increasingly resorted to stealth. When I started having mother-daughter tea

things she hadn't thought about in years. "I can't just throw it all away," she said tremulously. "It's my life!"

"It's not your life," I said. "It's your stuff. You are not your stuff. Your stuff is not you." But I knew I was lying. If I am not my stuff, my stuff is nevertheless the tangible expression of who I am. It is the physical manifestation of a family and its history.

And the saga continues. Every year, when we unwrap the Christmas tree ornaments, my children exclaim over each one. As they hang each precious ornament, I know they are adding to their own memories. And as they get older, I'm gradually turning over aspects of the inevitable stewardship to them. I've been polishing the family silver since I was 8. It's their turn. (Yes, bribes are involved.) "Someday, this will all be yours," I tell them as they labor away. I just hope they have big closets. □

Leslie Bennetts is a writer at Vanity Fair in New York.

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Blanc de blancs champagne from 100 percent chardonnay adds heft to finesse

by jay mcinerney



All chardonnay blancs de blancs refute the notion that champagne requires the addition of pinot noir to acquire intensity and longevity. These wines are, if anything, bigger than those from a blend of both grapes.

THE UNSPOILED LITTLE town of Le-Mesnil-sur-Oger sits almost smugly in the center of the rolling hills of Champagne's Côte des Blancs. BMWs and Mercedeses race through the narrow streets, driven by some of the world's most prosperous small farmers. These happy Frenchmen grow chardonnay grapes in grand cru designated plots on the chalky hillside, their fruit destined for some of the world's greatest champagnes. Hidden in the center of town,

behind eighteenth-century houses, is the fossil-strewn Clos du Mesnil vineyard, probably the most hallowed piece of ground in Champagne, run by the house of Krug.

Blanc de blancs, literally "white of whites," is made from chardonnay grapes. Don't groan. "A lot of my customers say, 'But I hate chardonnay,'" says Charles E. Stanfield, the tattooed, Sub-Zero-sized chief of sparkling wines at Sam's Wines in Chicago. "I tell 'em, 'Hey, get over it, there's chardonnay and there's chardonnay. Blanc de blancs is the Chablis of champagne—very crisp, very dry.'" Stanfield's customers never disagree with him, at least not to his face. And neither should you. For one thing, he's a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Côteaux de Champagne. He's also the Mr. T of wine retailing. He loves blanc de blancs. So should you.

The typical champagne is made from a blend of pinot noir, pinot Meunier, and chardonnay. Not a bad recipe. But if you ever taste a mature Clos du Mesnil or a Taittinger Comtes de Champagne, you will realize that there is something magical about the chardonnay grapes of this northerly region. Many hardcore champagne drinkers believe that 100 percent chardonnay champagne can achieve greater vinous intensity and longevity than pinot-heavy blends. Sipping a 1982 Salon or a 1988 Dom Ruinart blanc de blancs could forever destroy your preconceptions about white wine being light in body or delicate in flavor. Imagine hearing Beethoven's Ninth blasted through a stack of Marshall amps. These are wines; they are meant to be aged, and to be sipped with food. Big food. That said, there are lighter, leaner styles of blanc de blancs that make the ideal aperitif—for instance, the



*"It's not about
OAK BARRELS
and chemistry."*

A CONVERSATION WITH CLOS DU BOIS WINEMAKER MARGARET DAVENPORT

*"I*t's about emotion and memory. And it all starts with the idea that a wine signifies a place, what the French call 'terroir.' When we go to France, we love to rent a car and just wander. Once we happened into this wonderful little restaurant. Sitting there, looking over the town's ancient tile roofs—and modern antennas—I could see a field of lavender.

And when I asked the owner to bring a good bottle of local wine, I swear it tasted like lavender.

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uncorked

blancs de blancs of Michel Turgu, a small grower in Mesnil, which truly remind me of Chablis, with its chalky minerality. (The Côte des Blancs' Kimmeridgian chalk is part of the same geological formation that surfaces in Chablis.)

WHILE MOST OF US look to the big, famous champagne houses for our bubbly, an increasing number of smaller makers have begun to appear in recent years, and American importers have begun to seek them out. Many of the best blancs de blancs come from small proprietors like Larmandier-Bernier, Jacques Selosse, A.R. Lenoble, De Sousa & Fils, J. Lassalle, and P. Lancelot-Royers. Most of these wines are made in small quantities, from villages like Avize and Cramant, which are rated grand cru, the highest designation in champagne's grading system. (If you see that term on the label, it tells you the wine is 100 percent grand cru.) I'll be serving up several of these to guests over the holidays and beyond. While the styles vary, the quality is impeccable, and even wine snobs can appreciate the reverse snobbery of a relatively unknown

label. I suspect that boutique champagnes like these are the wave of the future in champagne—the bubbly equivalent of cult cabs.

Midsized producers like Delamotte, Deutz, and Jacquesson also make very good blanc de blancs. Delamotte gets first refusal on the grapes rejected by Salon—makers of perhaps the most exotic champagne in the world. It is produced only in exceptional years from

severely pruned, grandfatherly old vines on the mid-slope of grand cru vineyards in Mesnil. (I can't confirm if the grapes are harvested one at a time by blond virgins dressed in gossamer, but I wouldn't be at all surprised.) In the '20s, Salon achieved renown as the house wine at Maxim's, and has since become a password among true champagne freaks.

One hundred percent sparkling chardonnay is made elsewhere, including California. Schramsberg's blanc de blancs has always been the most interesting and champagnelike example to me. Mumm's Cuvée Napa makes a pleasant, affordable blanc de blancs, but most American versions are too fruity for my palate. Francis Ford Coppola has just put out a Hawaiian punch of a blanc de blancs, named after his daughter Sofia—a nice little quaff for a summer picnic, but a long way from Mesnil.

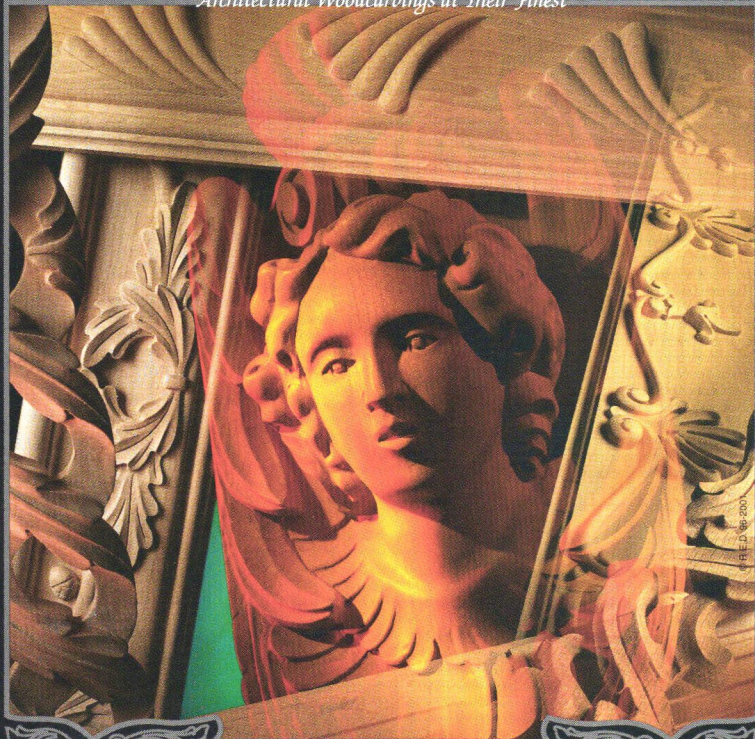
Like regular bubbly, blanc de blancs comes in both vintage bottlings and blends of different years. The current vintage to buy, if you choose to spend the money, is '96. The *tête de cuvée* super-luxury wines are released much later—the current Clos de Mesnil is the mind-blowing 1990. Salon's current release seems to be the exquisitely complicated 1985. And I have seen both the '88 and '90 Ruinart in stores recently—relative bargains at anything near \$100. But there are also many excellent nonvintage blancs de blancs, starting at around \$30.

So have a blanc Christmas. And a blanc New Year. □

THE OENO FILE

- **1988 DOM RUINART BLANC DE BLANCS** A secret treasure, this champagne is deep and long, with flavors of sherry and shortbread. Despite the color, it reminds me of great red Gevrey-Chambertin. \$100 to \$160
- **1995 POL ROGER BRUT CHARDONNAY** Pol has crafted a pure, structured, minerally wine—like a Puligny-Montrachet with bubbles. \$75
- **JACQUES SELOSSE GRAND CRU BLANC DE BLANCS** Lemon peel nose, apricot fruit in the glass. Intense, complex flavors with a ringing finish. \$46
- **A. R. LENOBLE GRAND CRU BLANC DE BLANCS CHAMPAGNE** Light and citrusy, with a little mineral streak. The perfect aperitif. \$32
- **MICHEL TURGU RESERVE SELECTION BLANC DE BLANCS** Grand cru Chablis with bubbles? A mineral bath for the tongue. \$36
- **DELAMOTTE MESNIL-SUR-OGER BLANC DE BLANCS** Smells and tastes like an aged vintage champagne, with a big core of poached-pear-like fruit with a squirt of caramel. Profound and long. \$40

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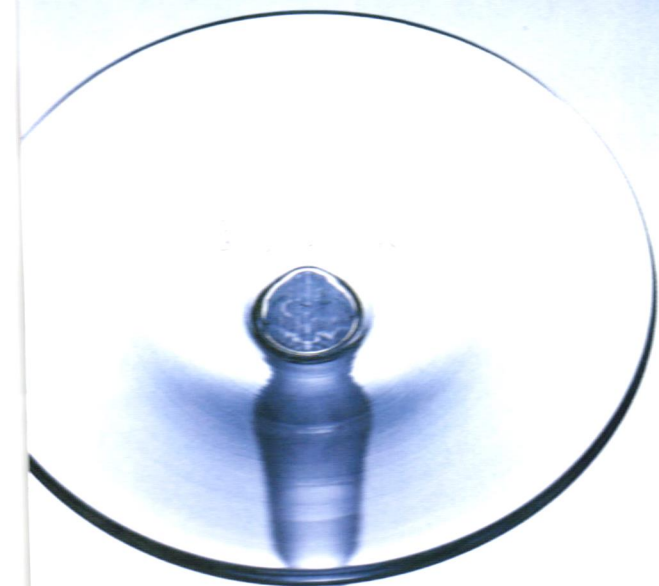
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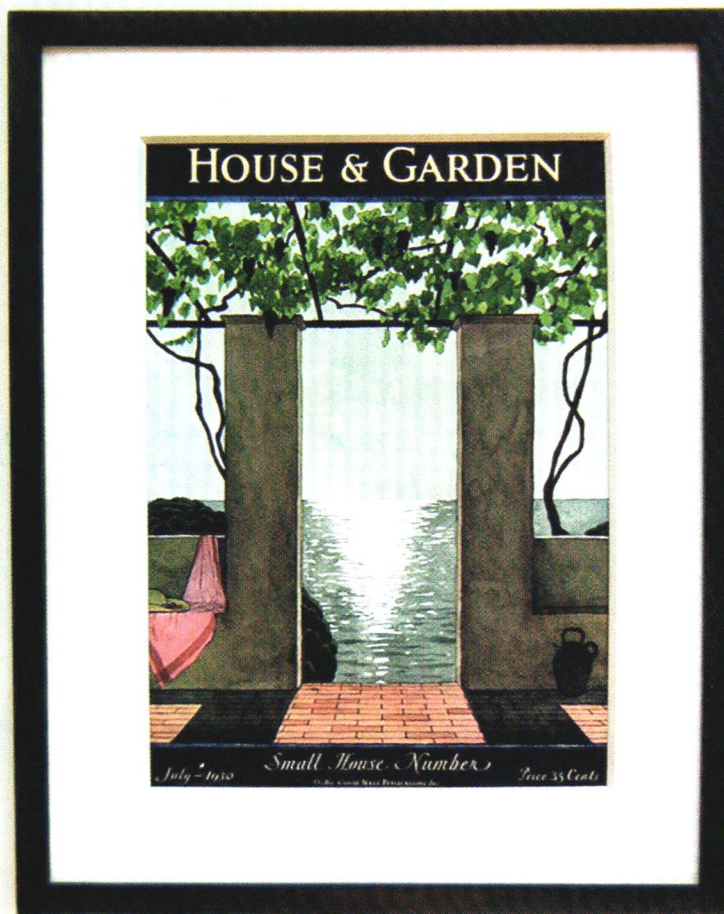


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The salon in the Vuitton house, below, features a ceramic Art Nouveau mantelpiece. ■ By the salon windows, right, sits a trunk made for conductor Leopold Stokowski in 1936.



a packed house

TODAY, ASNIÈRES is a busy if rather faceless suburb to the northwest of Paris. It was not always so. In the late nineteenth century, the Impressionist painters would take a train from the Gare Saint-Lazare to the then sleepy riverside village and return with magical, iridescent views of the Seine. Monet, Manet, and company were not the first to discover the town's charms. In 1859, Louis Vuitton, the founder of the luxury goods house that bears his name, purchased a plot of land just over an acre in size there. On it he built a factory, which remained the firm's sole production center until 1977. The factory is still a hive of activity, where some 200 employees painstakingly produce the label's trunks, case goods, and custom orders, and where designer Marc Jacobs

On the grounds of the company's original and still functioning factory near Paris, luxe luggage maker Louis Vuitton has preserved its founding family's Art Nouveau home
by ian phillips

devises specialty items for the biannual Vuitton fashion shows.

Louis Vuitton built something else on the site: a villa, which was inhabited by his family until 1964. His great-great-grandson Patrick-Louis Vuitton (currently head of the company's custom orders department) remembers playing in the garden as a child, and cavorting in the winter snow. "You could hear the sewing machines next door and see piles of wood being delivered to make suitcases," he says. He also recalls furnishings such as "fantastical easy chairs and an exquisite billiard table," and a visit to the house from Charles de Gaulle. His most vivid memory is of the celebration for his great-grandmother Joséphine's 100th birthday. "There must have been 300 people in total," he says. "There wasn't enough space for everyone at the same time, so the party went on all day."

The villa dates from 1869. Until then, Louis and his wife, Emilie, lived in a pied-à-terre on the top floor of the factory. Never one



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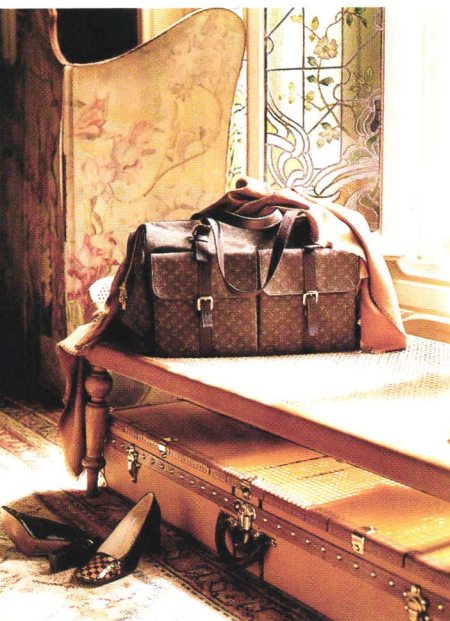
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REDISCOVERIES

The faces of 17th- and 18th-century trunks are displayed in the dining room, right.

■ A modern Vuitton travel bag, below, sits atop a ca. 1900 Thonet chaise in the salon.

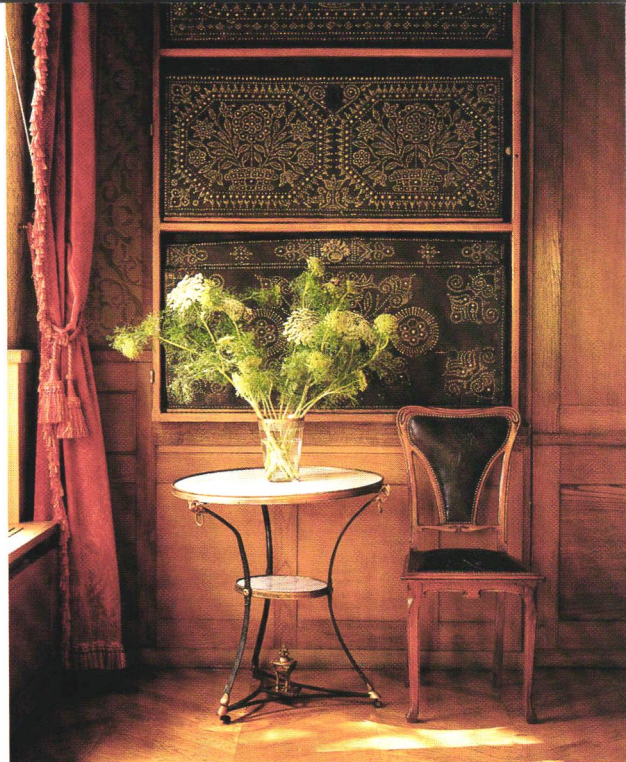
■ The salon, bottom, is highlighted by graceful Art Nouveau moldings and columns.



for extravagance, Louis aimed, he said at the time of construction, to create an interior that was simply "homely and comfortable." (That was just as well. In 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, army officers temporarily took over the villa and set up their mess in the sitting room.)

Vuitton's son Georges had a different take on interior design. After his father's death in 1892, Georges called upon Louis Majorelle to redecorate the drawing and billiard rooms in the most luxurious and up-to-date fashion.

Along with Louis Comfort Tiffany, René Lalique, and Émile Gallé, Majorelle was one of the leading proponents of Art Nouveau style, which dominated the decorative arts in the 1890s and early 1900s. In France, it was characterized by sweeping, curvilinear forms and organic motifs inspired by nature. The leaded, colored-glass windows in the drawing room of the Vuitton house are



a classic example of the period. Their design incorporates irises, colocynths, poppies, nasturtiums, chrysanthemums, and clematis, as well as several small, circular panes of clear glass, to allow Georges to spy on activities in the factory next door.

In the kitchen, the tiles are said to have borne the famous LV monogram, designed by Georges in 1897; all are gone now. Georges's widow, Joséphine, was the last member of the Vuitton family to live in the house. On her death at the age of 103, the furniture was dispersed among her heirs and the house was essentially gutted and transformed into storage space and offices.

BUT IN 1984 a decision was made to renovate the villa and turn it into a museum open to specially invited guests of the firm. One room on the second floor holds a permanent exhibition retracing the company's history. There is a vintage wardrobe trunk (devised in 1875 for transatlantic crossings) and a worn steamer bag (developed in 1901 to hold dirty linen). There are also a number of the remarkable special orders made over the years: a pigskin and silk-lined case that belonged to Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.; a tea chest made for the maharaja of Baroda in 1927 that includes a teapot with an ebony handle; the bed trunk created in 1878 for explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (it contains a bed frame, a leather mattress, two blankets, and four sheets); and a chest made for conductor Leopold Stokowski in 1936 that has a foldout table built into the door. An adjacent room is



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REDISCOVERIES

devoted to the collection of vintage cases and travel accessories amassed by Louis Vuitton's grandson Gaston. Among the more exceptional pieces are a case that once belonged to Marie de Medici and the stingray-skin-covered navigation case of an eighteenth-century sea captain.

On the first floor, the former sitting and dining rooms have been reconstituted with the aid of old photos. The floral friezes and moldings were re-created and a copy of the turquoise ceramic mantelpiece installed. Various furnishings were picked up at auction, each chosen to fit in with the Art Nouveau spirit of the old interior. In the sitting room sits a Freud chaise longue manufactured by Thonet, with a Vuitton billiard-cue trunk from the turn of the century tucked underneath it. The room contains an early gramophone, a big chesterfield sofa, a mother-of-pearl-inlaid Chinese coffee table, and a desk outfitted with a pair of Majorelle-designed gasoline-burning lamps. The dining room is furnished with a 1900s water colorist's table and six walnut Art Nouveau side chairs.



"My ancestors were always convivial, and the walls have maintained their spirit" —Patrick-Louis Vuitton



On the walls hang leather panels studded with flower, bird, and heart motifs that used to cover the fronts of a number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century marriage trunks in Gaston's collection.

Each year, some 5,000 privileged folks visit the house. They include every new Vuitton employee. Part of the workers' training is a three-day course at Asnières about the history of the company.

"The ambience of the house is exactly as it used to be," says Patrick-Louis Vuitton. "When people come here, they never want to leave. My ancestors were always very convivial, and it seems like the walls have maintained something of their spirit." Perhaps it's to be expected that a firm best known for helping its clients travel in style and comfort would also know how to offer a warm welcome. □



A ca. 1900 English cane furniture set, top, occupies one bay in the salon.

■ An artisan at work in the adjacent factory, above.

■ A model for a never produced travel vanity, left, is displayed. Sources, see back of book.

Ian Phillips is a Paris-based design writer.



Some of the most beautiful things remain unseen.



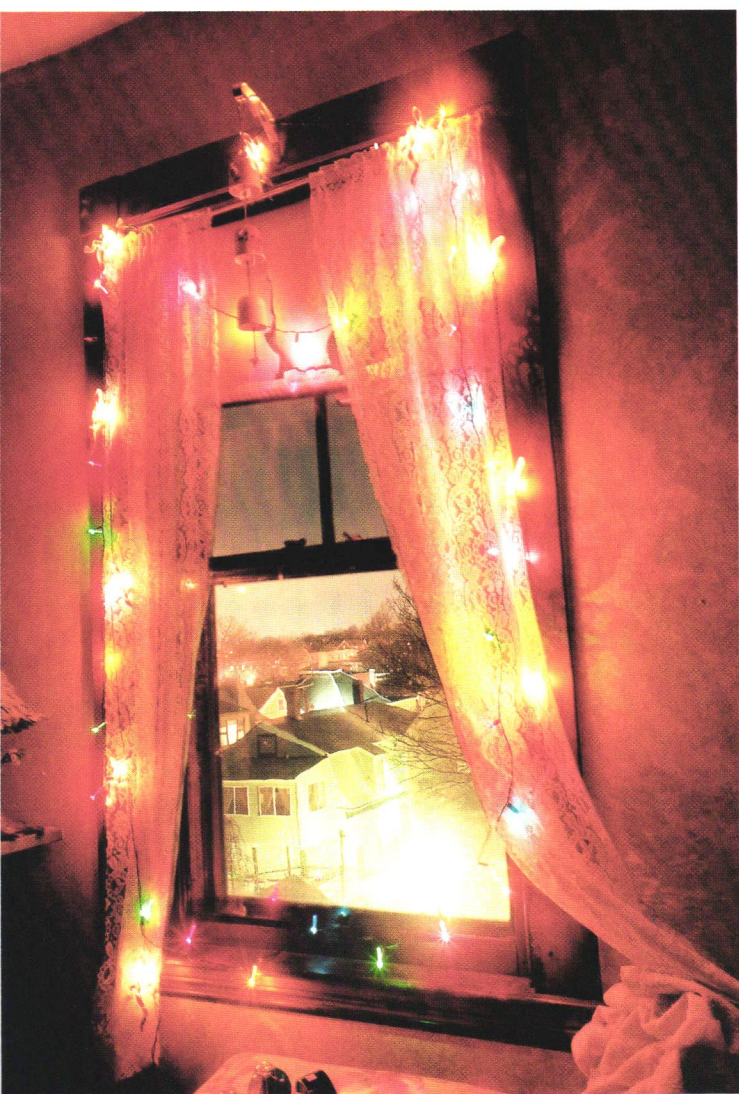
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 JENN-AIR

december 1980

The secret of being happy at Christmas, Mary Cantwell

thought, was to rejoice in the present. This is an excerpt



IT CAN BE DIFFICULT for an adult to be happy at Christmas: memories may flood and drown us. But it can be difficult for a child as well: what reality can match the expectation? Mine did. I remember the turkey sitting in the back entry on Christmas Eve (there because my grandmother never really trusted mechanical refrigeration), shrouded in a tea cloth, an object of veneration to my sister and myself. I remember the tree standing in the bay window, the tinsel shimmering in the gray dawn light, and my parents' pleas for us to go back to bed. I remember church, and the manger, and my impatience with the sermon, and my hunger for Christmas dinner. And because I remember so much, I cannot bear to lose anything. Nor have I, because the tree, the turkey, and the impatience with the sermon are still with me, still a part of my life.

A writer I once talked to characterized certain choices she had made as having been based on "an obstinate decision to be happy." A long time ago, I made an obstinate decision to continue to be happy at Christmas. If my mother had said a tree was too much bother now that my sister and I were in college, then I wouldn't listen. If my grandmother had gotten too old to roast the turkey, then I would do it. If my family lived too far away, then I would have another family, my friends, to share the feast. I make their Christmas dinner; they make my Christmas.

I have roasted turkey a dozen different ways and geese four or five. I've paired chestnuts with brussels sprouts and put them into stuffings, sautéed polenta squares in goose fat, bedded oysters in ice. I have prayed over gravies and the jelling of cranberries. Because I am both stingy and sentimental, the decorations are simple. (To the food, as I see it, belong the funds.) The tree stand will, as always, have a telephone book under one leg, it will be swathed in a sheet, and, also as always, aesthetic blindness will overtake me when I look in that direction. I think our Christmas tree is beautiful: judgment, discernment, taste desert me the minute its lights are turned on. "Oooooohhhh," the children and I say, sighing.

The dining room table seats six comfortably. I squeeze in eight and put six more at a table I carried in from the living room. The dishes don't match, because I don't have 14 place settings of any one pattern, and two of the guests have to bring their own chairs. The guests don't usually see one another at any other time. Their lives don't overlap, their paths don't cross. Our Christmas dinner is a reunion; it is also, I suppose, a still point in a turning world. My friends know where they'll be every December 25: at my house. I know where I'll be every December 25: at my stove. It is reassuring to all of us.

Christmas is, in truth, a dangerous day, evoking so much of one's past. One can become mired in memory, and because we fear its trap we press on, with a stubborn insistence on the present. "This is the best tree we've ever had," my children say. "I think I like this stuffing better than the one we had last year," I say. "This plum pudding! You've outdone yourself!" a friend says. We seize the day, and nothing is allowed to shadow it. We are together, my children, our friends, and I, in this room. There is food, there is wine, there is warmth, and, most important, there is now. We have made an obstinate decision to be happy, and we are. □

At Christmas, the author liked being at home, surrounded by familiar decorations.



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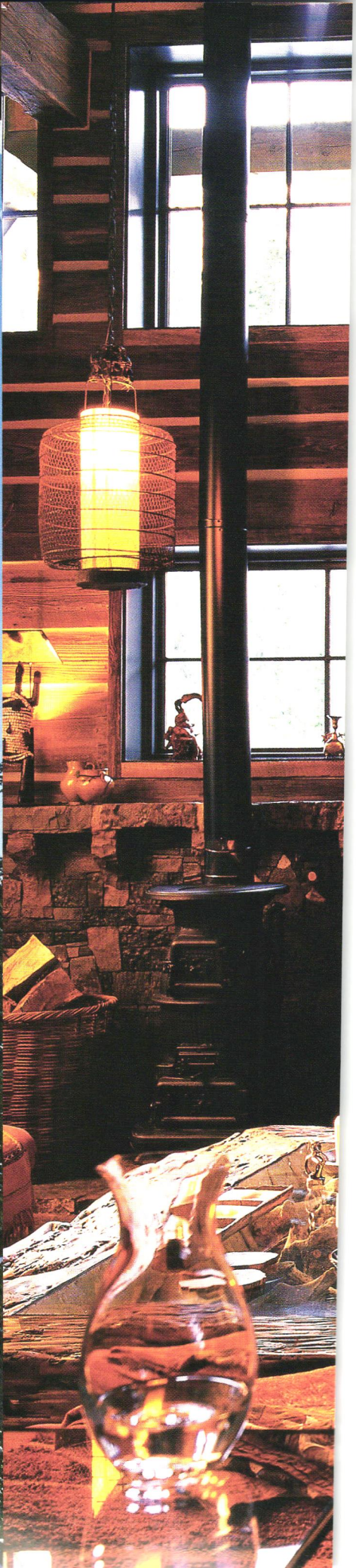
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winter moods

When the sun sits low and the thermometer lower, we crave warmth. Happily, warmth comes in many guises—in a remarkable log cabin nestled on a New Mexican mountainside; in an apartment in a New York town house that's swaddled in rich fabrics; in a grand old Newport "cottage" that glows especially, lavishly bright at Christmas; and in a small Manhattan apartment remade for cocooning, where all the furniture is made by a friend. Yes, it's winter, but inside, the chill is definitely, magnificently off. So, outside, yes, please, let it snow.

A Miramar chaise from Janus et Cie sits on the terrace of Alexandra Champalimaud's log cabin. The pillow is Donghia's Espadrille.



BY MAYER RUS PHOTOGRAPHED BY WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ
STYLED BY PETER FRANK

logging in

DESIGNER ALEXANDRA CHAMPALIMAUD, BEST KNOWN FOR HER LUXURIOUS HOTEL INTERIORS, CREATES A PERSONAL RETREAT FOR HER FAMILY—A LOG CABIN IN TAOS

designer savvy

A series of windows—not big plate glass, which is inappropriate for such a cabin—frames the views.

trade secrets

FURNITURE Champalimaud designed the living room sofas for her collection, available through her office. She had the coffee table custom-made in Nairobi.

FABRICS The couches are covered in wool and cotton. **ACCENTS** The votive tray and hurricane vase are African.



designer savvy

Horizontal beams give an intimate feel to the soaring living room, left; white chinking offsets the dark wood and brightens the space. The kitchen, opposite page, is a collage of pieces, rather than a seamless expanse of cabinets and countertops.

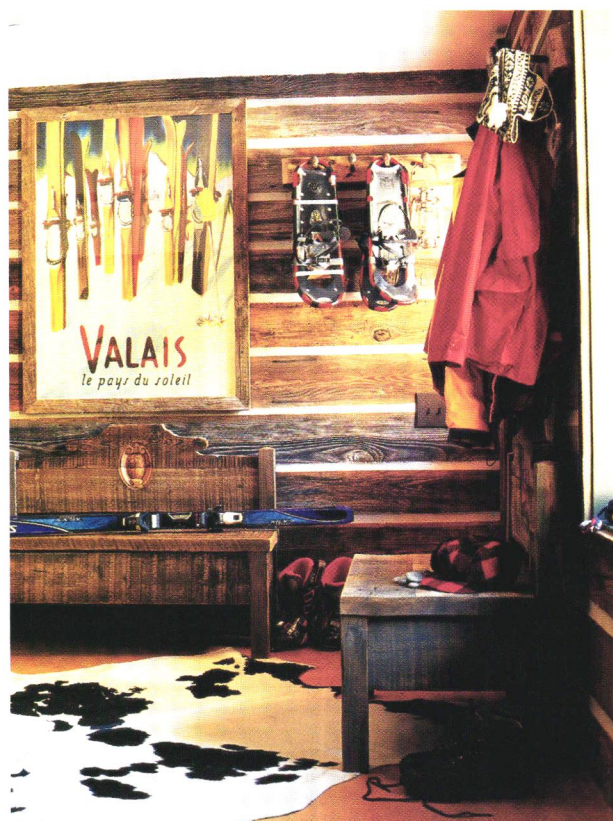
trade secrets

CARPETS The cow rug in the mudroom, below, is from Design Within Reach. Kitchen runners are from Crate & Barrel. **FURNITURE** The club chairs in the living room are from Champalimaud's collection. Kitchen stools, from Design Within Reach, pull up to a table by Champalimaud. The range is a Thermador.

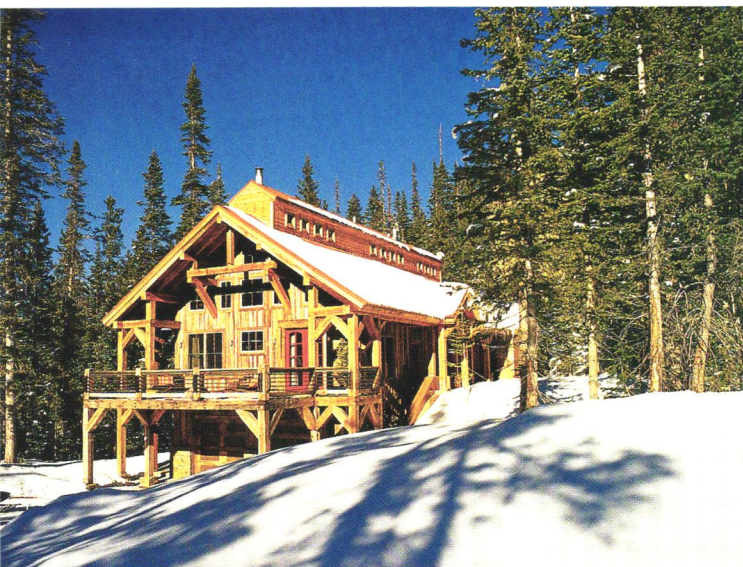
THE RUSTIC LOG CABIN occupies a special place in the popular imagination as a symbol of pioneering spirit, rugged pragmatism, and connection to the land. Even now, architects of mountain houses in the American West routinely draw upon the iconography and romantic allure of the log cabin vernacular. Unfortunately, reality and romance are not so easily reconciled: the humble log cabin of yesteryear isn't particularly amenable to plate-glass picture windows and five-car garages. All too often, contemporary houses designed to honor the past end up as bloodless exercises in strained nostalgia.

"There's no simple recipe or formula for building a house with soul—soul is not something you can buy," designer Alexandra Champalimaud insists. "Soul requires passion, commitment, and sensitivity to the land and its history. You can't give a house depth and character simply by re-creating a few architectural details. It's not that easy."

The extraordinary mountain house that Champalimaud designed for her family in Taos Ski Valley has serious soul. Her love affair with the land is evident in every beam and joint. "Taos is a very spiritual, earthy place," she says. "The mountains have a special aura that hasn't been spoiled by overdevelopment."▷







designer savvy

With simple upholstery and splashes of bold color, Champalimaud (below, with Shaemus) made a guest room, opposite page, crisply elegant. She used reclaimed wood both inside and out.

trade secrets

CARPET The woven grass area rug is from the Natural Carpet Company.

FURNITURE Antique Portuguese headboards belonged to Champalimaud's mother. The lamp and the bedside table are from Champalimaud's collection.

FABRICS The throw blankets are part of Champalimaud's collection.

Determined to build in a “contextually appropriate” style, Champalimaud found inspiration in the architecture of nineteenth-century miners’ cabins. She designed the house in collaboration with Bradford Reed, a local architect skilled in making “beautiful contemporary versions of old miners’ cabins that don’t look forced or trite.” At the beginning of the design process, Champalimaud brought Reed and their contractor, Mark Wilson, to see her eighteenth-century house in Litchfield, Connecticut. “I wanted to talk about old wood,” the designer says matter-of-factly.



SHE DID MORE than just talk. She procured a trove of antique wood beams and siding from a recently dismantled drying shed built 150 years ago for the Winchester gun company in Massachusetts. The shed provided enough material to construct all the interiors and most of the exterior walls of the Taos house. “We used rusted tin to cover parts of the facade when we ran out of wood,” Champalimaud explains. “It’s not perfect, but that’s fine with me. In a project like this, perfect can seem precious.”

Her resolve to honor the spirit of historical precedents meant that no Sheetrock or plastic was used in the building of the house. Wood beams alternate with strips of chinking, an infill process that uses a plasterlike substance as insulation. “The light color of the chinking helps balance the effect of the heavy, dark beams,” Champalimaud says. “In the large family room, which is not terribly wide but very high, the







striped pattern created by the chinking offsets the verticality of the space and makes it feel more intimately scaled.”

Issues of scale and light were in fact central to the development of the design of the house. “Moodiness is incredibly important,” she says. “When you step out of this house, you’re basically alone in the mountains. After a day of skiing and hiking and being out in the wild, you want to come home to a fireplace and an iron stove—you want to feel warm and protected.”

The decoration of the house reflects the influences of the many countries and cultures in which Champalimaud has lived and worked throughout her life. Lamps made from antique Japanese fishing baskets hang above an African daybed she bought on an island off the coast of Kenya. French Deco table lamps sit on a centuries-old Italian chest of drawers made of carved walnut. Fabrics woven in Africa commingle with textiles and other accessories from Rajasthan and Morocco. Yet, for all the polyglot brio of Champalimaud’s scheme, the overall effect is decidedly subtle.

“I never want the message to be shrill or obvious,” the designer claims. “Yes, there are elements in this house collected from all over the world, but the objects and fabrics and artworks were all chosen because they seemed appropriate. Nothing screams its culture. This house is the ultimate league of nations. Everything works together happily.” ▷

designer savvy

The master bedroom, opposite page, is evidence that rusticity doesn’t have to mean roughness.

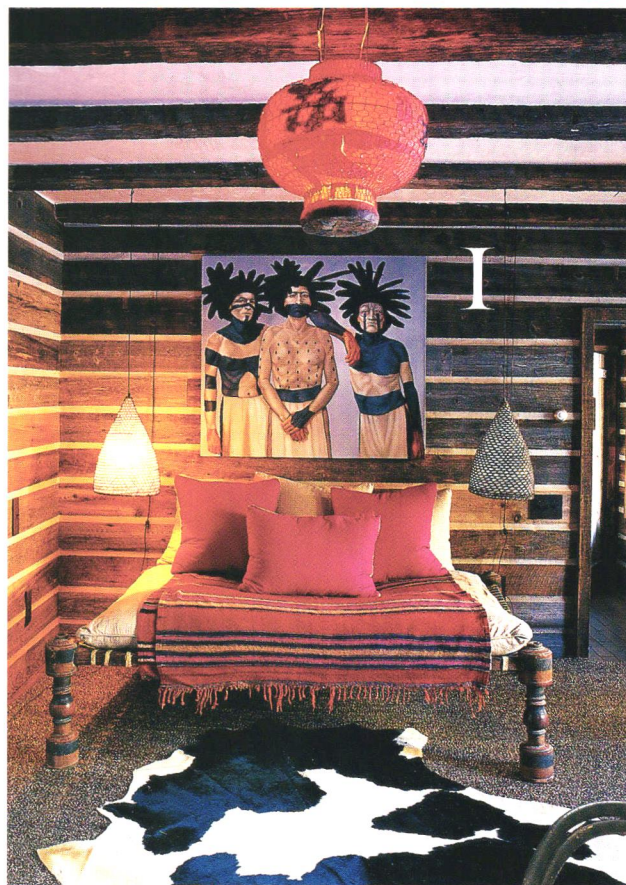
trade secrets

FURNITURE The sink, above, is Kohler’s Farmington model. Champalimaud designed the sink cabinetry in galvanized metal with a sandstone top. An antique mirror from Gray Gardens, Bridgehampton, NY, is behind the master bed. **FABRICS** The master bed’s tasseled antique pillow is from Champalimaud’s collection. Sources, see back of book.



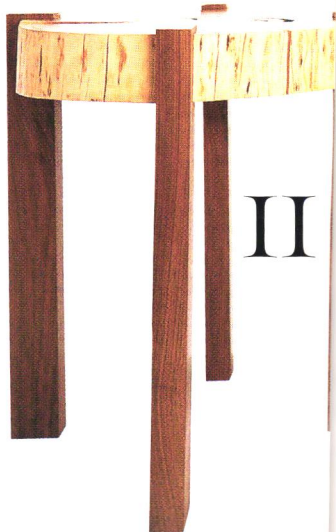


DESIGN TO INSPIRE



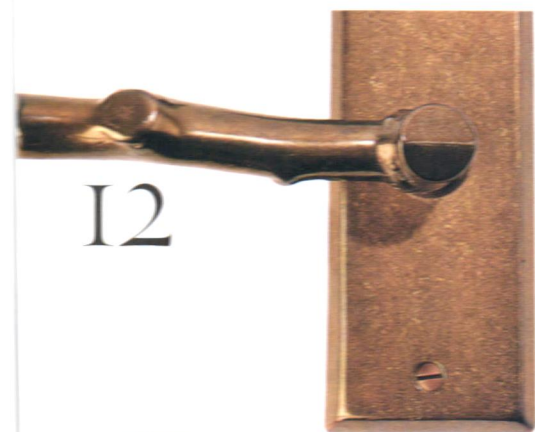
1 Alexandra Champalimaud's guest bedroom proves that you can create a cabin interior that is both attentive to design and true to the sylvan spirit. Here we assembled our own list of products to furnish a stylish, rustic retreat. **2** Warm, soft upholstery, from top: Kravet's polyester Ultrasuede, color 2; Baldwin Tartan wool by Ralph Lauren Home, \$103 per yard; Pindler & Pindler's wool with nylon Gallup in Mojave, \$76.50 per yard. **3** Michaelian + Kohlberg's Nambu Tibetan flat weave rug, \$945, by Teddy Sumner, is made with vegetable-dyed Himalayan wool. **4** In a living room, try the Big Country coffee table with an oak veneer top, \$1,089, from the venerable Old Hickory Furniture Company. **5** A 20-inch Chinese paper lantern, \$8.50, from Pearl River, NYC. **6** The Teardrop light, a rattan weave with rice paper, \$675, from Tucker Robbins, has a refined yet exotic look. **7** For bold color and simple pattern, line your floor with Paul Smith's wool Stripe rug, \$1,925, from the Rug Company, NYC.

Alpine update: ne





nds and rugged favorites for today's rustic retreat



14

8 Fur is a staple of the log cabin. Guilt-free faux throws, from top: Pottery Barn's Plush Fur throw in white, \$149; Pierre Frey's Loup et Vison in Chinchilla; Dior Collection Maison's Denim and Faux Fur blanket, \$1,090. **9** Christian Astuguevielle gives straightforward furniture a whimsical spin with a chestnut and rope Saulorme chair, through Holly Hunt, New York. **10** Trophees dinner plate by Pierre Frey. **11** André Joyau's wooden Forest table, \$360, Heptagon Creations, Brooklyn, NY. **12** Open up to the outdoors: Rocky Mountain Hardware's Entry Mortise lock set, \$764. **13** An early-1900s wool trade blanket, \$1,600, from Woodard & Greenstein, NYC. New, authentic Pendleton wool blankets may be purchased from Pendleton, \$75 to \$160. **14** Alpine spirit: a vintage French 1960s ski poster, \$600, from the Ross Group, Westport, CT. Or sample Christie's annual vintage ski art auction in London, set for February 2003. Sources: see back of book.

—PRODUCED BY THADDEUS KROMELIS



all over the map

With modern and antique art, with furnishings from as far afield as Japan, Morocco, and Flanders, and with the help of friends like decorator Ricky Clifton, a New York financial manager creates a worldly decor in his Manhattan apartment

designer savvy

With furnishings from the East and the West, the apartment exudes a quiet cosmopolitanism.

trade secrets

FABRICS A cotton and silk stripe found at Paris's Marché St. Pierre was used for the curtains, walls, and bedspread in the guest bedroom, this page.

ACCENTS The '20s brass lamp is from Historical Materialism, Hudson, NY.

WALLPAPER Ricky Clifton covered the office walls, opposite page, in rice paper he hand-stamped with an Indian woodblock.

designer savvy

In the living room, a Flemish church chandelier and a long ottoman used as a table suggest a playful attitude toward scale.

trade secrets

FURNITURE The Christian Liaigre sofa is available through Holly Hunt. The chandelier was bought in Antwerp.

CARPET A soumak from Mark Shilen Gallery, NYC.

ACCENTS The ca. 200 B.C. Han vases are from Axel Vervoord, Kanaal, Wijnegem, Belgium.

A "A BIT OF FLEMISH exuberance" is how the owner of an apartment in a nineteenth-century New York town house describes a seventeenth-century brass chandelier in his living room. "Flemish" and "exuberant," in fact, aptly describe the man himself, who hails from Brussels and knows how to enjoy life. His brio permeates the rambling flat he has layered with sumptuous fabrics, rugs, paintings, and eclectic furniture culled from Belgian shops, New York auctions, and Parisian flea markets. The chandelier, cast for a church, took two days to hang and required reinforcing the ceiling beams. But it casts a warm, ecclesiastical glow over its owner's frequent dinner parties. "It was a hangover purchase in Antwerp that I never regretted," he says with a laugh. "It's totally wrong, but it gives the room a bit of cachet. Otherwise, you risk being bourgeois and boring."

Boring this home is not, and whatever bourgeois elements exist are bourgeois in the original sense of the word. A stunning sixteenth-century tapestry, for instance, colored with vegetable dyes and depicting flora and fauna of the Old World, was made for a rich merchant and came down through the owner's mother's family. When he took possession of his







designer savvy

Dashes of color in an otherwise sober-hued decor provide visual energy.

trade secrets

FABRICS A Louis XV-style sofa, opposite page, is upholstered in purple silk.

ART *Parade*, by Lyle Starr, hangs over the sofa; the painting to the right of the fireplace is by Alessandro Twombly.

ACCENTS The gooseneck lamps are from Historical Materialism. Clifton found the Japanese temple censer on the hearth at New York City's Chelsea flea market. The Turkish brass lamps flanking the mantel were purchased at an estate auction in NYC.

apartment nearly six years ago, he decided to outfit the place “with furniture from the era of the building” and the kinds of appointments the original occupant might have chosen—Asian decorative arts, Persian carpets, and mirrors.

The high ceilings afforded plenty of wall space for the owner's art collection, which ranges from nineteenth-century prints to a Cecil Beaton photograph to the works of contemporary painters such as Donald Baechler and Andrew Lord. Like the carpets laid over burnished oak floors (“Some of the rugs are good, some are junky,” the owner says with a shrug), the artwork converses with the color and texture of the furniture and textiles in the house.

An elegant Adam Fuss photogram of a stained-glass window echoes the mottled swirls on three Han Chinese ceramic vessels dating from about 200 B.C., which sit below it. A vivacious, pop-inspired painting by Lyle Starr hangs over a faux Louis XV sofa upholstered in boysenberry silk and flanked by two vintage office lamps. And a naive Baechler owl leans against a mirror frame composed of scraps from eighteenth-century embroidered dresses. (The glass was so weighty that it fell out one day.)

A financial manager with a large circle of friends in the design and art worlds, the owner calls his apartment a joint effort. One friend, decorator Ricky Clifton, guided him to many of the New York acquisitions, such as a pair of nineteenth-century slipper chairs, tasseled and covered in their threadbare original mohair. Clifton calls them “nineteenth-century minimalism,” while the owner adores the chairs for being “in their juice, as the French say.” Clifton sheathed the office walls in Japanese rice paper that he stamped randomly with a big Indian mandala woodblock. The decorator also located a pair of lotus-blossom-shaped temple incense burners from Japan, an elegant Chinese table, and an Adirondack chandelier made from antlers. One benefit of offbeat taste, Clifton says, is extra sleep. “Everyone thinks you have to get to the flea market first thing in the morning,” he says. ▸





"Anything I want is still there at the end of the day."

In turn, the owner takes care of his friends. The tiny guest bedroom is a jewel box, "completely soundproof and cozy," he says, and upholstered entirely in a luxurious stripe from Marché St. Pierre in Paris. The sleigh bed was found in another apartment the owner once lived in, left behind by "the scion of a champagne family, who couldn't be bothered to take it with him."

The owner spends five months a year in Europe, and fills a shipping container with finds. One is an antique stepladder from a flea market, which now serves as an ersatz étagère in the guest room. Dinner guests sit under the brass chandelier on a sleek Christian Liaigre sofa, the only modern piece of furniture in the place. The owner liked its firmness: "I wanted comfort, but if it's too soft, people fall asleep." There's no dining table. Food and drink are served from big Moroccan platters set atop a long ottoman.

Along with the tapestry, the owner received another gift from his mother: a bit of decorating wisdom. "She taught me that you need one taste mistake to make a decor alive," he says. "Otherwise, things get dull." For him, that ingredient is a bulky, white cabinet with frilly

grillwork, of unknown provenance. "It's totally out of scale," he says, "but if you're tepid about a thing, it's going to look awful." When he spotted the cabinet at a shop, he says, interior designer Muriel Brandolini also had her eye on it. "I told her, 'Don't fight me for it, because I'll get it,'" the owner recalls. That old Flemish exuberance wins out every time. □

Mary Talbot is a New York writer and editor.

designer savvy

The master bedroom illustrates the maxim that you must trust your tastes, however offbeat.

trade secrets

FABRICS The late-19th-century Turkish slipper chairs, left and above, are covered in their original mohair velvet; the short asymmetrical sofa, called a *méridienne*, at the foot of the bed is covered with Reps Balzac from Madeleine Castaing, Paris.

FURNITURE The 19th-century mahogany table and the cat lamp, opposite page, were flea market finds. The mirror frame above the mantel (the glass fell out) is made of scraps of 18th-century dress fabric, and was bought at Florence Lopez Antiquities, Paris. Sources, see back of book.





designer savvy

Jay McInerney, left, and Campion Platt, who brought order and style to the writer's life.

trade secrets

CARPETS The semaphore rug, this page, is from the Campion Campaign collection, NYC. A cow skin is on the floor behind the bookshelf.

FURNITURE Elements from the Campion Campaign collection include the Inside Out folding bench, this page; alabaster vases, urns, and bowls, opposite page; and the Sleeping Hero daybed. The ebony bookshelf was custom-made by Jordache Woodworking Corp.

a fresh start

A NOVELIST RESETTLES IN A ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT
WITH FURNITURE DESIGNED BY ARCHITECT CAMPION PLATT



BY JAY MCINERNEY PHOTOGRAPHED BY MATTHEW HRANEK STYLED BY SAMANTHA BEER

"I WANT TO LIVE LIKE THIS," I TOLD CAMPION. "YO

NEW YORK is, among other things, the capital of the fresh start. I've made several here, one of the many reasons I remain infatuated with the city long after other romances have foundered and faded.

A little over a year ago I found myself living alone in a haunted eight-room duplex on the Upper East Side. Well, almost alone—my friend Campion Platt had taken up residence in the downstairs guest bedroom. But since he had his own entrance and tended to wake up about the time that I was going to sleep, we didn't see each other much. Even if I could have afforded to stay, the apartment was haunted by the ghosts of my recently departed family. And I'd never really felt at home on the Upper East Side.

After a brief layover in a Chelsea apartment, from which I watched the Twin Towers fall, I found what I was looking for in Greenwich Village: a well-proportioned one bedroom with wraparound windows in a 1932 Art Deco building on Fifth Avenue. Much of my first novel, *Bright Lights, Big City*, was written a block away, in Washington Mews, and much of it is set in the immediate neighborhood. Mark Twain, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Dawn Powell, Djuna Barnes, and Eugene O'Neill had all lived within a few blocks. Plenty of history, personal and literary. But, still, I wanted a fresh start.

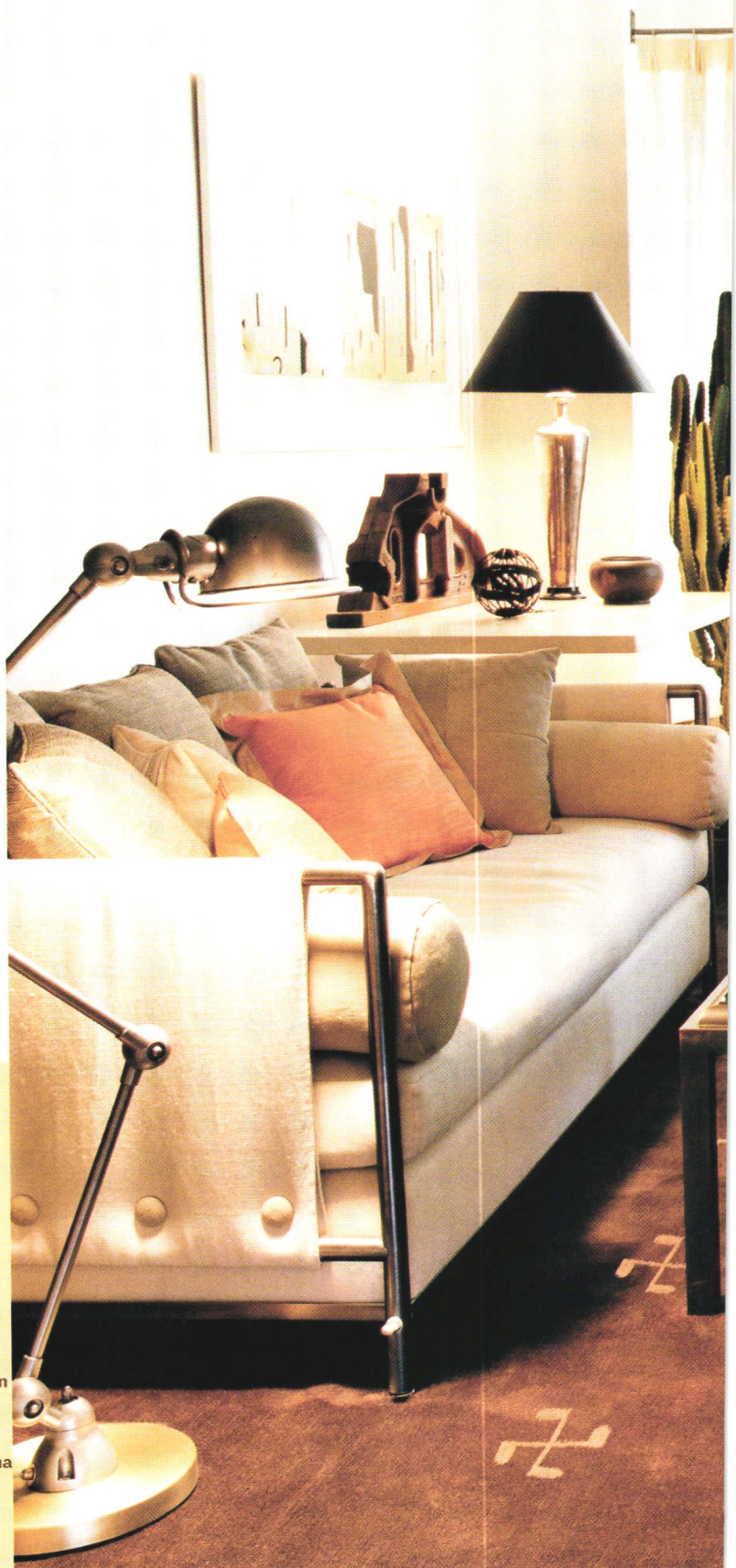
Over the course of many lives and several marriages, I had acquired a mishmash of furnishings, from antique to postmodern, mismatched and all too redolent of my fragmented history. I wanted to chuck it all and start from scratch. And I felt nostalgic for two years spent in Kyoto after college, in a four-room house with three pieces of furniture. I wanted a clean, aesthetically coherent environment. ▸

designer savvy

The style of the living room manages to be both warm and thought-provoking.

trade secrets

FABRICS Bergamo's Avila linen in Beige, by Rubelli, is on the daybed, pillows, armchair, and Napoleon & Josephine club chairs. The suede pillows are from Cortina Leathers; the orange pillows are Lena moiré in Melon from Schumacher.



AN'T AFFORD IT," HE SAID. "BUT LUCKILY YOU KNOW THE DESIGNER"





designer savvy The dining gallery, above, the entry gallery, below, the living room, right, and the bedroom, opposite page, contain elements that serve more than one purpose.

trade secrets WALL COVERINGS The bedroom has Venetian plaster walls that mimic parchment, and the entry and dining galleries are painted, with a pearlized finish.

FABRICS In the bedroom, the Take Five bench is covered with Cortina suede, and the headboard is done in Edelman leather. The cashmere coverlet, cashmere blanket, and camel cashmere body pillow are from Calvin Klein. Sources, see back of book.



WHO IS CAMPION PLATT?

■ **BIOGRAPHY** Since he is related to the society-savvy Charles Platt, an early-20th-century architect and landscape designer, Campion Platt's calling is no surprise. After receiving a masters degree in architecture from Columbia University, he polished his skills at Arquitectonica, a Miami-based firm.

■ **ON THE TOWN** By 1986, Platt had struck out on his own. A maker of spaces *and* scenes, he helped develop Hollywood's Chateau Marmont and New York's Mercer Hotel.

■ **COMMISSIONS** Celebrity clients like Meg Ryan, Al Pacino, and Russell Simmons allow Platt to design architecture, interiors, and custom furniture. In a way, they have been his "guinea pigs" for the Campaign line.

■ **SHOW IT OFF** He plans to open Campion SoHo, a showroom for his furniture collection, in summer 2003.



The plan really took shape when I attended a preview party for a new line of furniture designed by my former roommate, architect Campion Platt. The collection, called Campaign, was inspired in part by classic Bauhaus design and in part by English campaign furniture—the stuff that English colonels lugged around to make their colonial postings more homey. Fashioned from gunmetal, ebony, leather, and my favorite fabric, linen, it was warmer and more comfortable somehow than Mies and Corbusier, but lean, imaginative, and thought-provoking. The mood was part pukka sahib, part enlightened '50s bachelor who collects Abstract Expressionists. I could see myself reading Conrad in the club chairs in between having romantic interludes on the daybed.




I was especially taken with the fact that most of the pieces were convertible, serving more than one purpose, a prime attraction in the context of a one-bedroom apartment—the ebony and gunmetal sideboard, for instance, which opened out to become a dining table for ten. While most of the women at the preview party tried to position themselves to get a better view of Campion, who looks like the love child of Clark Gable and Bryan Ferry, I gazed rapturously at the black leather and ebony Note to Self desk, which seemed designed with a peripatetic novelist in mind, and which folds up to the size of a gun case. “I want to live like this,” I told Campion when I finally got him alone for a moment. “This is me.” “You can’t afford it,” he said. “But, luckily for you, you know the designer.”

I’d met him just after another divorce, when I hired his ex-wife, architect and designer Alison Spear, to decorate a loft for me. Since then I’d watched Campion’s work and aesthetic develop. He had helped me with other apartments in the past, most recently doing the plans and contracting to convert two apartments in the Carlyle into a duplex after I’d had kids. He knows my taste and my habits. We share an enthusiasm for bespoke English tailoring—it seemed time for me to get a bespoke apartment.

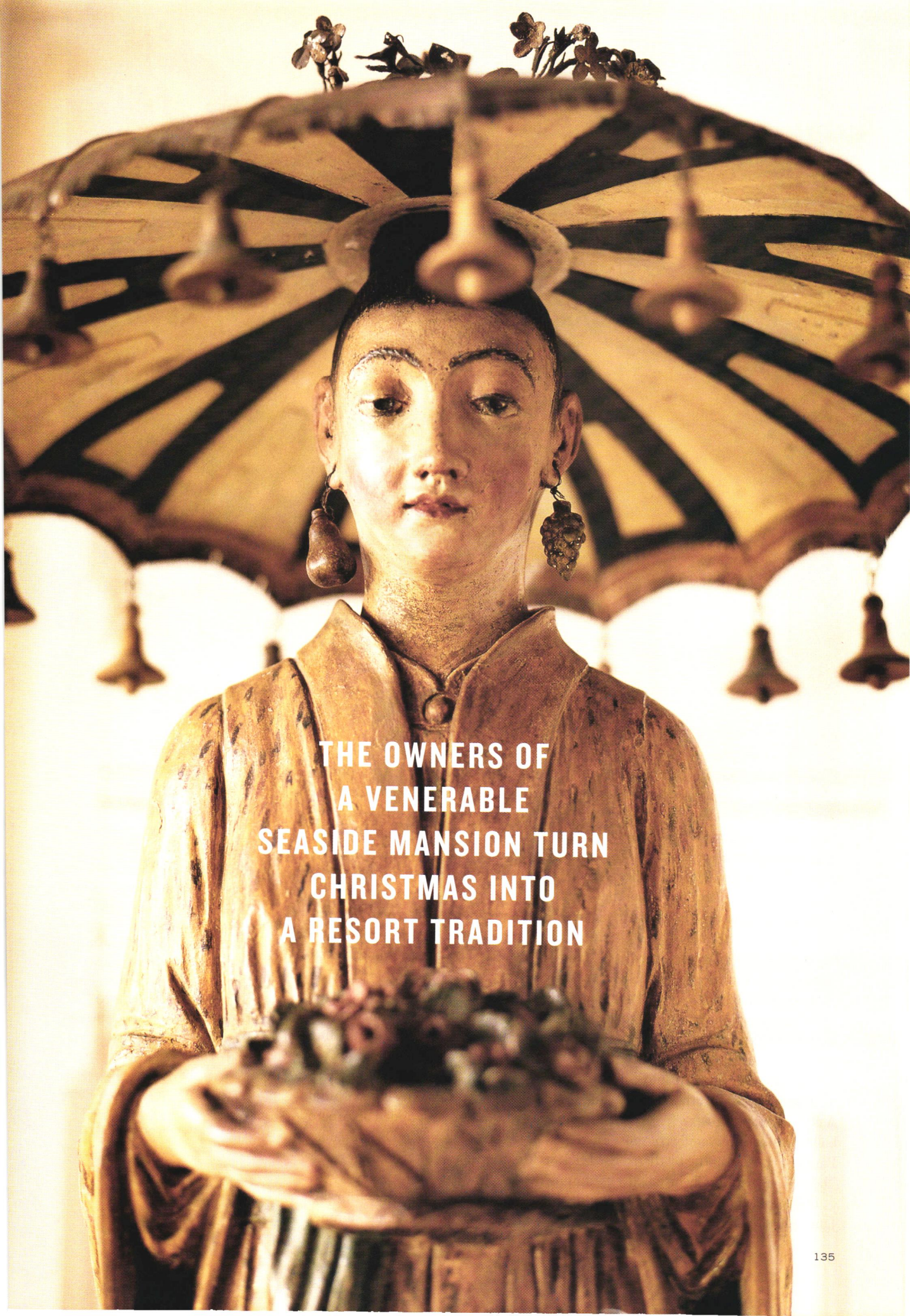
There were two exceptions to the fresh start idea—art and books. Even after selling off some 3,000 volumes as part of my fresh start, I needed several hundred feet of shelves for my core library. Generally speaking, designers of *(Cont. on page 161)*

NEWPORT'S NEW SEASON



The style of the entrance hall, this page, dates from the 1930s. The rugs are custom from Stark Carpet Corp. The chinoiserie figure to the right of the doorway, and opposite page, is one of a pair; they are polychrome 19th-century terra-cotta decorated with tole, on marbleized pedestals.

WRITTEN BY MARISA BARTOLUCCI PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSOHN PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRA

A full-page photograph of a woman in traditional East Asian clothing, possibly a kimono or qipao, holding a large bowl of fruit. She is standing under a large, ornate umbrella with a black and gold striped pattern. The background is a warm, golden light. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

**THE OWNERS OF
A VENERABLE
SEASIDE MANSION TURN
CHRISTMAS INTO
A RESORT TRADITION**

F



AIRHOLME, THE NEWPORT, Rhode Island, residence of Gilbert S. Kahn and his companion, John J. Noffo Kahn, was built in 1875, on the eve of that summer resort's transformation from a relaxed colony of handsome houses to a "breeding ground for white elephants," as Henry James dryly observed. The distinction is notable because, while the house is stately, it has always been first and foremost a welcoming place for family and friends. It was built by Fairman Rogers, a prominent Philadelphian, who bought a parcel of a picturesque Newport farm along the water's edge, called Ochre Point.

Rogers was a social progressive. He courted scandal in his hometown by commissioning a portrait by Thomas Eakins, whose realist paintings were shattering the bounds of Victorian decency. In Newport, he ventured into the vanguard by having his friend the idiosyncratic architect Frank Furness design for him an exuberant Stick-style Gothic house. A bold reworking of American vernaculars, Fairholme was about as cutting-edge as architecture got. Among its distinctive features was the technical marvel of floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows, affording the thrill of sweeping views of the sea.

Over the years, as Fairholme passed into the hands of different owners, there were architectural accretions generated as much by familial concerns as by fashion. A clan with a daughter soon to be presented to Newport society added an ornate ballroom. Another family commissioned New York society architect Dwight James Baum to transform the by then passé Stick-style exterior into an *au courant* mock Tudor. The next family installed a swimming pool.

It was some ten years ago that Gilbert Kahn's 88-year-old mother, philanthropist Janet Annenberg Hooker, visited Newport and decided she wanted her summer

designer savvy

The music room, opposite page, and the living room, above, are decorated for Christmas at Fairholme.

trade secrets

FURNITURE Queen Anne-style chairs surround a table in the music room.
FABRICS Trim on the table skirt was made by *Passementerie*; the shades are Silk Faille in Celadon from Clarence House. The chairs' seats are in *Scalamandré's Full Bloom* tapestry.
WALL COVERING Gracie, NYC, designed panels with Asian themes for the music room.
ACCENTS A Chippendale mirror hangs over the mantel in the living room, with an 18th-century Chinese enamel candle sconce next to it.
CARPET Custom-made by Stark Carpet Corp.



designer savvy

A Fairholme Christmas, clockwise from top left: the entrance hall, the greenhouse (with homegrown poinsettias), the entrance to the music room, the dining room, a chest in the entrance hall, and the poinsettias in the hall.

trade secrets

FURNITURE The William & Mary japanned cabinet rests on a Louis XIV gilt wood base. The dining table is mahogany and satinwood, and the chairs are George II-style mahogany with parcel gilt.

ACCENTS A 19th-century Italian carousel angel hangs over the entry hall molding.

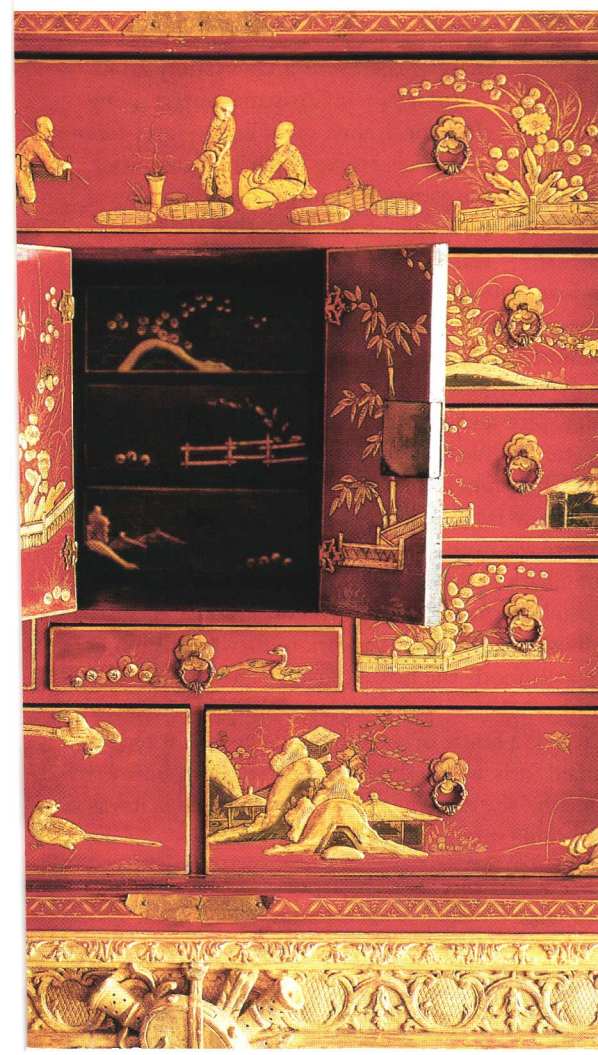
CARPETS All are custom by Stark Carpet Corp.

house there. Kahn still laughs at the fateful dispatch with which his discriminating mother acquired the house. Although her tastes ran to the opulent, she was enchanted by Fairholme's relaxed elegance. No sooner had she walked through its finely proportioned rooms and glimpsed its exceptional ocean views than she told the real estate agent, "I'll take it." Sadly, not long after, Hooker took ill; before she died, she spoke just once more of the house to her son, telling him, "You finish it and enjoy it."

The Kahns have, and Hooker's presence lives on there. Gilbert Kahn has furnished Fairholme with some of the best pieces from his mother's houses, more than a few of which he selected. In the drawing room, there's a set of English gilt armchairs that once belonged to the Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne and an extraordinary late-seventeenth-century pair of Italian wood mermaids. Adorning the ballroom is a quartet of outstanding eighteenth-century soldier vases. With the convivial spirit of the great English country houses in mind, Gilbert has assembled these treasures to create rooms that while formal are nevertheless inviting.

The Kahns had never thought about summering in Newport, much less taking on the running of such a large estate. "It seemed a crazy idea, living here," Gilbert admits. But, like Hooker, they fell under Newport's spell so deeply that







designer savvy

The spirit throughout the house is formal yet inviting enough to make guests feel welcome.

trade secrets

FURNITURE A pair of lacquered 18th-century Portuguese Queen Anne side chairs flank the George I-style silver-leaf console. A Louis XV-style fauteuil is near the window.

FABRICS Scalamandré's Louis XV lampas is on the Louis XV-style fauteuil. The curtains are Colefax and Fowler's Jubilee Rose.

ACCENTS The mirror above the console is 19th-century silver-leaf Chippendale. The lamp on the console is Charles X style. The Chinese embroidery of two herons is from Kenneth Neame, London.

one summer stay stretched well into the fall. As John, a Miamian, had never enjoyed Christmas in a wintry setting, the couple invited friends for the holidays. They were rewarded with a storybook snowstorm. And with that event the tradition of Christmas at Fairholme commenced. Other summer neighbors also stay on, making Newport a festive community during the holidays.

THE KAHNS take special pleasure in sharing their house with others, often entertaining on a grand scale. Two years ago, they hosted a gala dinner for 200, to celebrate Fairholme's 125th birthday. Among the guests were descendants of the first three owners, making the event a true family affair.

But it's their Christmas entertaining that the Kahns most enjoy—and fret over. Preparations begin in August, when the gardener starts growing the poinsettia seedlings. At the start of the holiday season, they deck the doors, mantels, and

gate with custom-designed garlands and wreaths, and festoon the great blue spruce outside with lights. After a lifetime of tropical Christmases, John admits to relishing all the trimmings of an old-fashioned English-German celebration. But what he especially adores is the delight that the lavishness gives others. "We like to create a special escape for guests, full of holiday spirit and warmth and our own traditions," he says. He decorates not one but two trees, while the ballroom's organ pipes the strains of carols through the rooms. For Christmas dinner the Kahns set an elaborate table that is quintessentially Victorian, as is the menu, with roast goose, plum pudding, and vintage port. One year there was even a gingerbread replica of Fairholme.

"It's a Christmas straight out of Charles Dickens," John says. Except, of course, there's no Scrooge; this isn't a celebration by way of redemption. To be sure, Fairholme's history has been curious: what started as a work of forward-thinking American architecture has come to embody the luxe, romance, and wonder of a world gone by. But one senses that through its transformations Fairholme's spirit of graciousness has never faltered. This is a house of splendor and cheer. If it recalls Dickens, it may be the manor named Satis, where the elusive Estella lives, in *Great Expectations*. The name means "enough," she explains to Pip. "It meant, when it was given, that whoever had this house could want nothing else." □

Marisa Bartolucci is a writer who lives in New York City.

designer savvy

All the elements of a high Victorian Christmas have been assembled on the dining table.

TABLE SETTING The handblown Murano glasses with graffito are from Ars Cenedese, Venice. The crackers are from the Nutcracker Suite Christmas Shop, Newport, RI. The English silver epergne is stamped 1898. Sources, see back of book.

Fairholme

Christmas Dinner, 2001

Porcini Mushroom Consommé

*Roast Turkey and Goose with Stuffing
Jus, Cranberry, Bread Sauce
Roast Potatoes
Brussels Sprouts
Baby Carrots*

*Christmas Pudding with Brandy Butter
Bûche de Noël*

*Bouchard Montrachet Grand Cru 1997
Chateau Margaux 1996
Sandeman Port 1963*

Fairholme

Sue





INLAND ISLAND

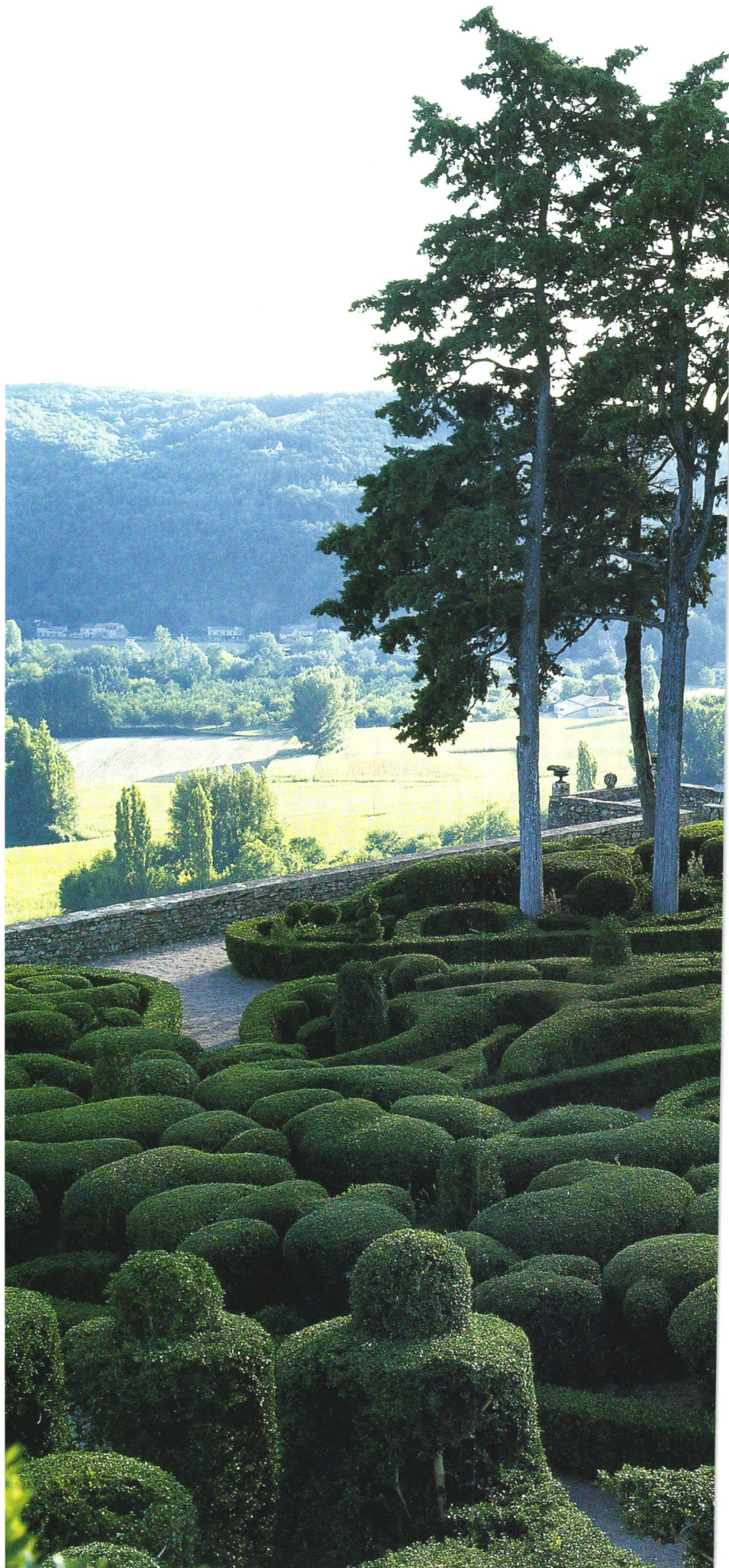
A 17TH-CENTURY GARDEN ISOLATED
ON A PROMONTORY ABOVE THE DORDOGNE
RIVER IS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE

At the Château de Marqueyssac, a steep series of terraces, opposite page, rises above the Dordogne Valley like a bastion. Thick morning fog often comes off the river far below. ■ A sea of clipped boxwood, this page, swirls on the parterre of the main house. On summer evenings, the winding paths are lit for visitors by thousands of candles.

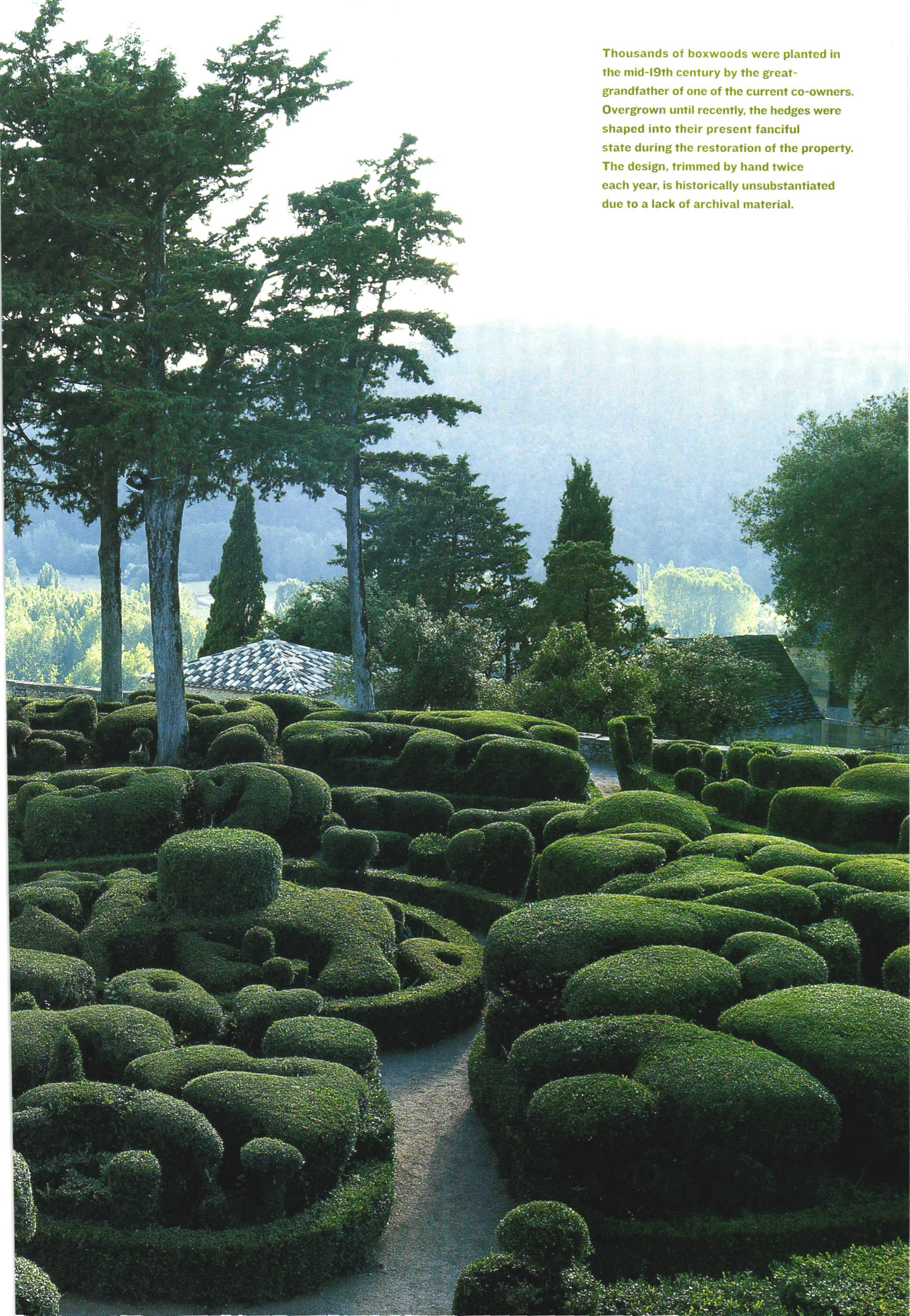


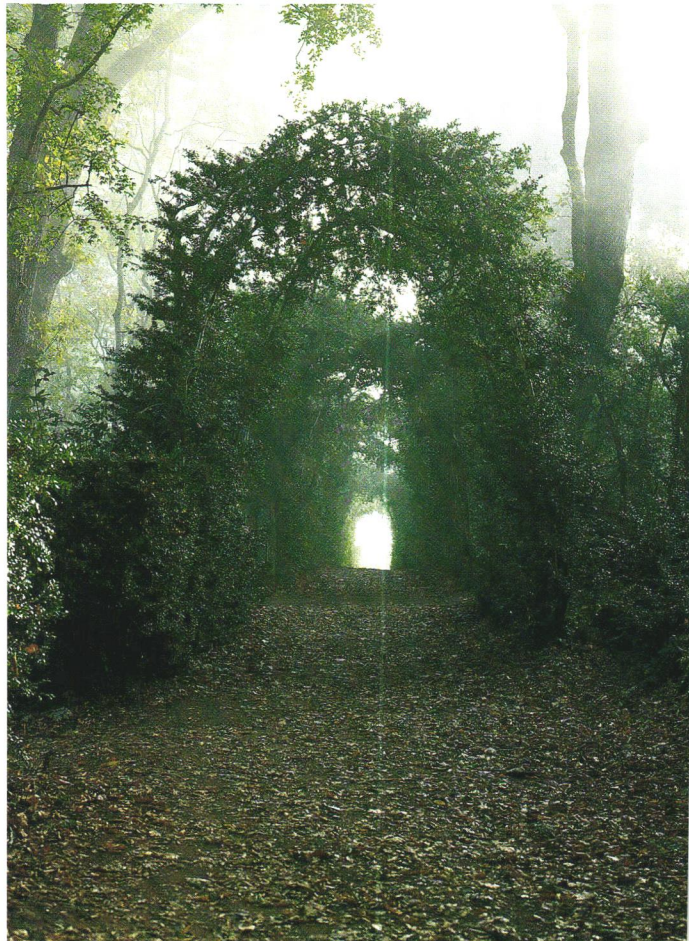
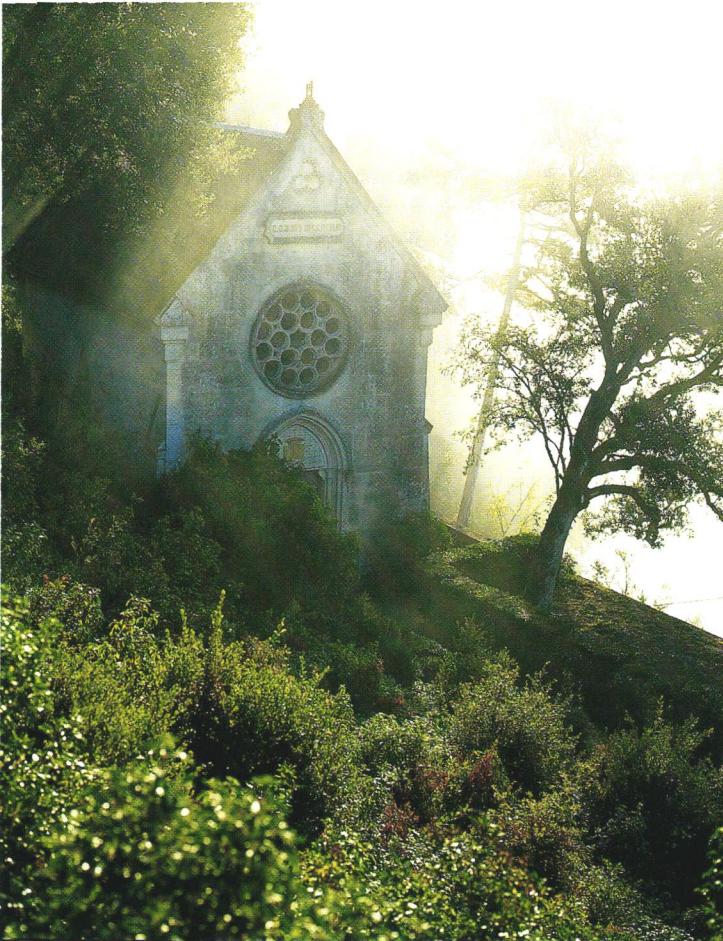
I

N THE PÉRIGORD region of France, time doesn't exactly stop, but it seems to slow down. History hangs heavily in the steep valleys lined with cliffs and forts that cross what was once the front in the Hundred Years' War. Even so, don't be surprised if your late-medieval idyll is interrupted by the sudden sight of a bus of senior citizens careening around one of the tight bends in the road. After all, it's history that brings the tourists here. In this photogenic terrain, the alliance between local authenticity and commerce is an uneasy one. Lascaux, the site of the world's most famous prehistoric cave art, had to be closed to the throngs that were endangering it and replicated nearby. The much visited La Roque Gageac (one of the tourist board's "Les Plus Beaux Villages de France") clings cliffside much as it has done since Gallo-Roman times. A tour of Les Milandes, the fifteenth-century castle once owned by American entertainer and misguided philanthropist Josephine Baker, teaches visitors about her utopian Rainbow Tribe of adopted children. Meanwhile, inside the region's private châteaux, where



Thousands of boxwoods were planted in the mid-19th century by the great-grandfather of one of the current co-owners. Overgrown until recently, the hedges were shaped into their present fanciful state during the restoration of the property. The design, trimmed by hand twice each year, is historically unsubstantiated due to a lack of archival material.



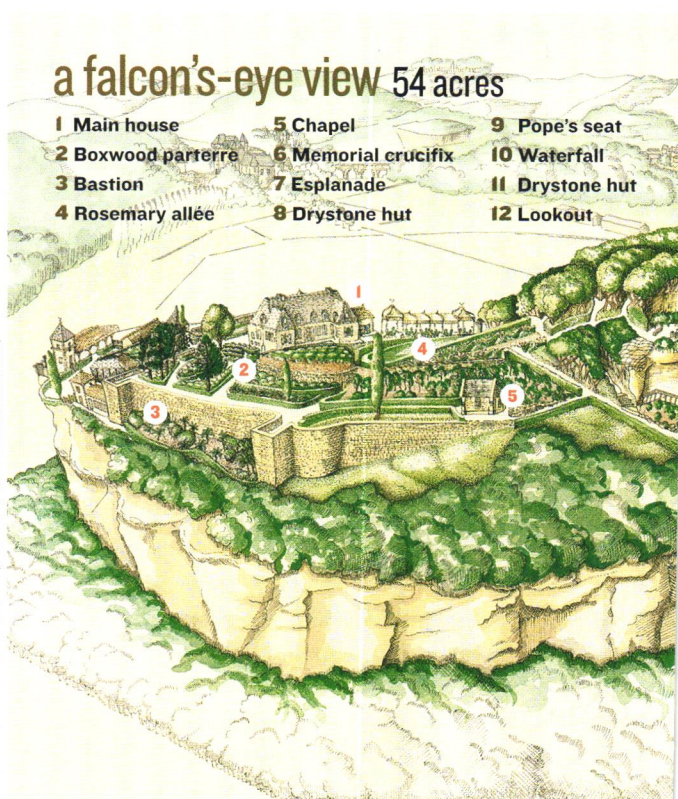


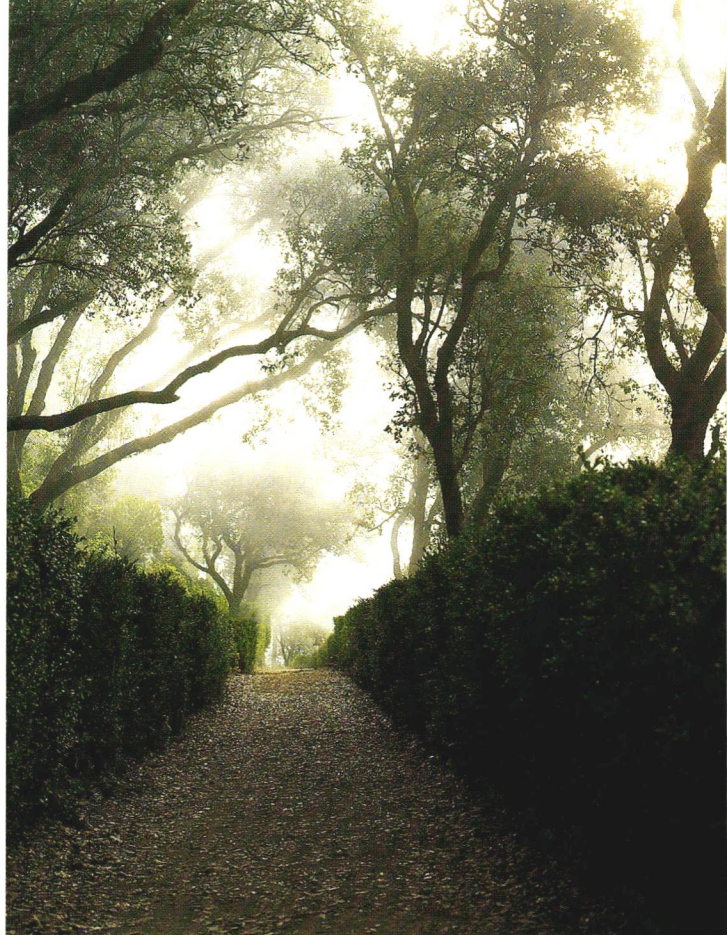
From left: The 19th-century family chapel is one of several features to be found in the clifftop park. ■ A newer planting of box is being made into a long tu

THE FEELING OF THE PLACE IS TIMELESS, MAGICAL

families count their residency in centuries instead of years, the heirs must decide how to keep possession of their ancestral homes while obeying the restrictions of present-day economics: increased land taxes and insurance, and no longer cheap labor.

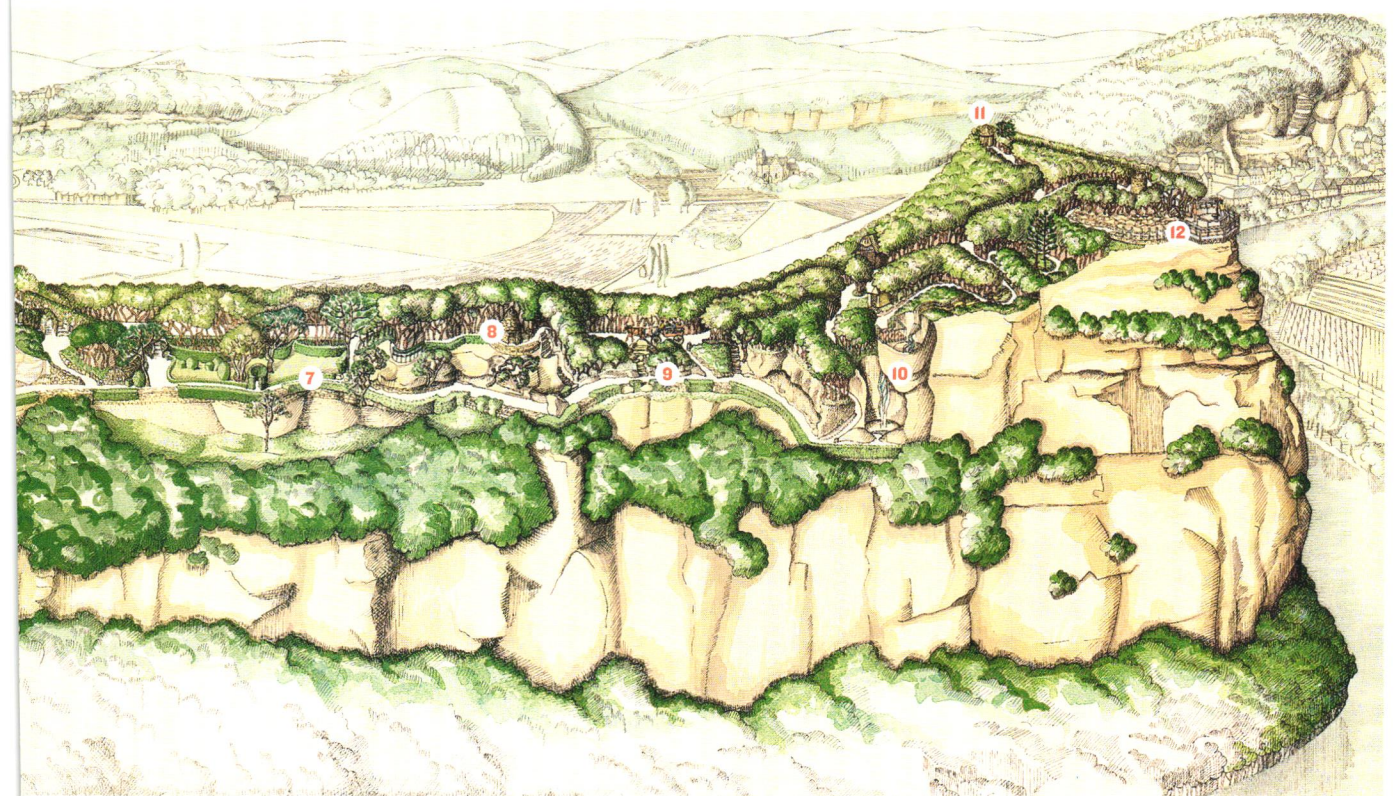
The Château of Marqueyssac is such a place. The property has been home to generations of one family since 1692. The main house and outbuildings, the elaborate gardens, and a large woodland park are set high on a promontory of limestone that points like a finger into the fields of corn and tobacco in the Dordogne Valley. The garden's heyday came during the time of Julien de Cerval, who inherited the property in 1861 and is the great-grandfather of one of the current owners. Inspired by his tour of duty in the Papal Roman Legion, de Cerval redesigned his family's working garden of vegetables and fruit into the formal Italianate terraces of boxwood plants and gravel paths that visitors see today. The long peninsula of a park, which includes nearly 54 stony acres of woodland, also attracted his attention. He constructed paths for rugged walks there, and added points of interest, including belvederes, drystone huts, carved benches, and an unclipped forest of scrubby 30-foot-tall boxwood trees. The feeling of the place is timeless and magical, especially to the family that still lives there. ▷





en from the road, the château sits above its cornfields. ■ A box-lined path runs beneath the twisting branches of wild holm oaks in the 54-acre woodland.

SPECIALLY TO THE FAMILY THAT STILL LIVES THERE



“OUR ANCESTORS ARE BURIED HERE. AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, WE HAD TO CONTINUE THINGS AS THEY HAD BEEN”—ARIANE DE BONVOISIN

In 1994, when the present owner, Michele de Jonghe d'Ardoye, and her siblings inherited the house from their parents, something needed to be done to counter decades of disrepair. The traditional *lauze* roof, 500 tons of limestone tiles, on the eighteenth-century main house was of questionable safety, the gardens were overgrown, and the woodland park and its trails were neglected. A solution to the exorbitant cost of the repairs was visible just across the Dordogne Valley at the medieval Château de Castelnau. The castle had been bought and restored

by Parisian-based businessman Kleber Rossillon, who opened it as a tourist business. At Marqueyssac, an agreement was reached between the family and Rossillon, and a private limited company was formed. “It was a hard decision to turn our home into a business, and it had to be done right,” says d'Ardoye's daughter, Ariane de Bonvoisin, who along with her mother guards the family tradition. Questions of propriety and privacy were paramount. “Generations of our ancestors are buried in the crypt under the family chapel,” she says. “As much as possible, we had to continue things as they had been.”

One of the first things requiring attention was the south parterre of six-foot-tall box hedges, which billowed wildly on one of the terraces, reputedly designed in the sev-

enteenth century by a pupil of Le Nôtre's. Under Rossillon's instruction, and with no master plan or archival reference, a team of ten gardeners set to work sculpting the hedges into a fanciful maze. The curving shapes now alternate, like clouds, between the abstract and the figurative. “To me it's like a Michelangelo statue,” de Bonvoisin says. “The gardeners just seem to know what the original forms should be.” The end result is now the garden's most distinctive feature. The practical adjustments that had to be made, for wheelchair access and traffic flow, were executed in an unobtrusive way, blending in with work done centuries before.

And, luckily, the partnership has worked seamlessly, too. In the five years since the gardens were opened to the public, restoration has continued and new features have been added. Many thousands of visitors have been able to experience this garden aerie in a way that the family finds both respectful and gracious. For the family, Marqueyssac is still a home, but one that they don't mind sharing. “I would never want to take it back to private ownership,” says de Bonvoisin. “You're never given something this special just to keep for yourself.”

▷

One of an estimated 150,000 boxwood plants in the garden, above. Water for the plantings is captured in centuries-old cisterns.

■ New garden features are added each year. This sinuous design of rosemary and santolina, opposite page, flanks a stone road discovered during the garden's restoration.

Les Jardins de Marqueyssac, Vézac, France. Open daily. 011-33-5-5331-3636. marqueyssac.com.



GROUND RULES

A mini-primer on selecting and growing box by Deborah Needleman

■ This simple shrub can be oddly confounding. While there are more than 150 different cultivars of box, most people know and use only two: English (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa') and American (*Buxus sempervirens*). Confusingly, neither type actually hails from the country its common name suggests, and no one variety of box is easily distinguishable from any other, particularly when sheared. As for boxwood's famed "cat pee" aroma, some love it, others hate it, and still others can't detect it. While boxwood is not gorgeous or even particularly striking, it can single-handedly transform a garden in a way that no other plant can. By choosing well, you may never have to shear box or wrap it for winter.



Jean Lemoussu, head gardener at Marquessy, touches up the grand forms.

PINCHING, SHEARING, THINNING

Your method of maintenance should be determined by the plant you've chosen and the look you want. If you've selected a plant with the right shape, and the look you want is natural and informal, you shouldn't have to fool with it much.

PINCHING Some aficionados prefer pinching, or plucking out new growth (see page 72), instead of shearing (which scars the leaves) to maintain the desired shape. Pinching is time-consuming and finger-numbing, but does allow for a more natural, less militaristic look, and perhaps lets a bit more light into the plant. A similar effect can be had by using a clipper and cutting back on the wood rather than snipping the leaves.

SHEARING Shearing with hedge clippers fractionalizes leaves, leaving brown dashes at each cut, but if you've got more than a few specimens, there is simply not enough time in a day for pinching. If you are after a formal or architectural shape, shearing is the only way to obtain it. Electric trimmers are faster, but also dangerous and unwieldy. Handheld shears give you more control. Get a tool that is lightweight, long-handled, and sharp. Some perfectionists go back after shearing and pinch out or clip back to the wood any untidy cuts.

THINNING Pinching and shearing will both result in about four new shoots per cut branch, which creates a dense canopy, crowding light and air out of the interior of the plant. You need to thin out some branches, especially those on the disease-susceptible English box, to allow sunlight into the plant's interior. If you do this thinning around the holidays, you'll be rewarded with a handsome supply of decorative greenery.

KEEPING BOX HAPPY AND HEALTHY

■ Boxwood, particularly English box, needs protection from the harsh midday sun, especially in winter. High dappled shade, even from leafless deciduous trees, is good. A northern exposure is ideal.

■ Box wants a good-draining, alkaline soil with a pH of 6.5 to 7.2, so if the spot you're considering is near thriving acid lovers, like rhododendrons, choose another.

■ Plant in fall. Trim or shear in early June. (Don't do touch-ups too late in the summer, because that will only encourage new growth that may die in winter.) Prune

and thin in late fall or very early winter.

■ Mulch (no more than 1 inch thick) in late fall after dormancy. Take care not to disturb box's shallow roots.

■ "Boxwood decline" affects and kills English box only if the plant is stressed. If you must give your box a place in the sun, try one of these more tolerant cultivars: American box (*B. sempervirens*), 'Justin Brouwers,' 'Green Beauty,' 'Wintergreen,' 'Green Mountain,' or 'Green Velvet.'

■ Resist the temptation to knock off snow; doing so can easily damage the plant.

THE SHAPE OF BOX A range of growth habits to suit a variety of uses

These highly recommended varieties—from mini to maxi—can be kept in check or allowed to achieve their mature size.



'Morris Midget'

'Green Gem'

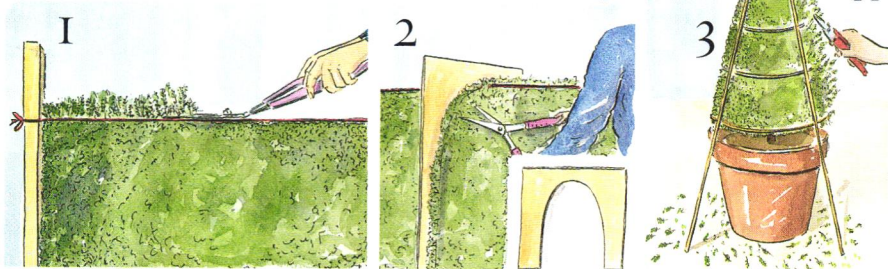
'Justin Brouwers'

'Glencoe'

'Suffruticosa'

'Green Velvet'

TRIMMING TIPS Let strings and forms guide your clippers to perfect shapes



1 Use a string tied to two posts to act as a guide for cutting. Keep the blades parallel to ensure your cut is level. In the first few years of a new hedge, don't cut the tops back hard; you will only encourage dense foliage on the top. 2 You may want to create a template to move along the hedge as you cut. For larger hedges, cut the sides on a slight angle, wider at the base than at the top, to allow light to penetrate the plant. 3 For cones, making a form out of bamboo stakes and wire will help to create an even shape.

GREAT BOX FOR COLD CLIMATES

- Instead of wrapping your hedge for winter, look for the Sheridan hybrids, which combine the cold-hardiness of Korean box with the attractiveness and good winter color of American box. These handsome and vigorous growers take well to shearing, and they're hardy to zone 5.
- 'Green Gem' grows as a perfect 2-by-2-foot ball needing no shearing.
- 'Green Mound' and 'Green Velvet' are also rounded, but bigger, growing to about 3 by 3 feet.
- 'Green Mountain' forms a wide, pyramidal oval, to about 5 by 3 feet, ideal for mid-height hedging.
- 'Glencoe,' an even more cold-tolerant variety, patented by the Chicago Botanic Garden, is more wide than tall, about 3 by 5 feet.

BEFORE BUYING

- Buy from a local nursery so you know what does well in your area.
- Check out any variety you're considering in Michael A. Dirr's *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. \$58. amazon.com.
- Nurseryman Paul Saunders's pamphlet "Best of the Best: Boxwood Cultivars Manual" has good photos and information. \$20. 434-277-5455.
- The Boxwood Handbook*, by Lynn R. Batdorf of the U.S. National Arboretum, tells you everything you need to know; used, from amazon.com.

THE BEST BOX Picking the right plant for the job



TOPIARY Box has been clipped into decorative shapes since Roman times. The versatile and relatively fast-growing American box (*B. sempervirens*) is most frequently used, and for good reason. The narrow 'Fastigiata' lends itself easily to pyramids and other vertical designs.



SPECIMEN PLANTS

For flanking a path, marking an entry, or making a single statement, try 'Vardar Valley,' a great bloblike mass; the variegated 'Elegantissima'; or the perfectly round balls of 'Green Gem.' For uprights, try the steeple-shaped 'Dee Runk,' the cigar-thin 'Graham Blandy,' or the more conical 'Fastigiata.'

FORMAL HEDGES

Boxwood's earliest known use was by the Egyptians, who decorated their gardens with clipped hedges in 4000 B.C. *B. sempervirens* is still the most popular hedge variety, but 'Green Mountain' makes a great 3-by-5-foot hedge, and 'Green Beauty' grows well in less than ideal conditions.



CONTAINER PLANTS

The tiny 'Morris Midget,' the medium-sized 'Justin Brouwers,' and the slender 'Graham Blandy' all take well to life in a pot. For bonsai, try *B. microphylla* 'Compacta' or 'Morris Dwarf.' To winter over in cold climates, put stone or clay pots in a trench and mulch with leaves or straw.



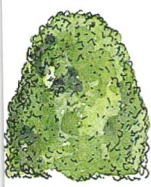
BILLOWING CLOUDS

Allow shrubs to achieve their innate splendor. 'Green Pillow' stays low and wide. English box, with its beautiful sculptural shape, is the quintessence of box. 'Justin Brouwers,' 'Green Mound,' and American box all look great massed—like undulating waves—or as individual accents in a mixed border.

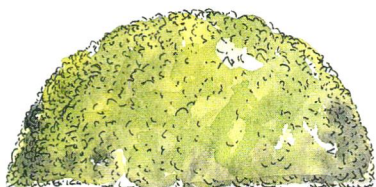


EDGING, KNOTS, AND PARTERRES

English box, a.k.a. edging box, is used for most low formal plantings. While it can grow to 10 or 12 feet, it can also be kept to a foot. If your site is sunny or your soil heavy, try 'Justin Brouwers' or 'Green Pillow.' For truly low parterres, try the foot-high 'Green Pillow' or 'Morris Midget.' □



'Green Mountain'



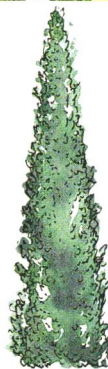
'Vardar Valley'



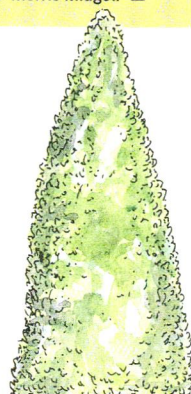
B. sempervirens



'Graham Blandy'



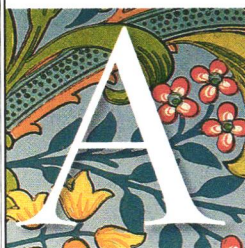
'Dee Runk'



'Fastigiata'

COSTUME

About 100 years ago, before radio, TV, stereo, and PlayStation 2, families made their own entertainment. In English homes at Christmastime, children and parents put on little plays—pantomimes and tableaux vivants based on fairy tales, epics, and Bible stories. Families turned curtains, tablecloths, and blankets into costumes, and rearranged furniture on a makeshift stage; crockery and silverware became props. In the spirit of that bygone holiday tradition, we present a fanciful bit of home theater, with wardrobe and sets made from upholstery and furnishings that have lately caught our eye. This season, the scenery steals the show.



ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Like our players, you can capture the innocence, humor, and eccentricity of Lewis Carroll's fable with a mix of organic William Morris design fabrics and bold, raffish prints. White Rabbit's **VEST**, Arlecchino Sea silk in Kaleidoscope, Lee Jofa; **COAT**, Faits Vos Jeux Matelasse in Cream, Brunswick & Fils. Alice's **DRESS**, Topper in Azure Blue, and **PINAFORE**, La Belle Epoque in off-white, both Scalamandré. Mad Hatter's **PANTS**, Colby Velvet Stripe in Marine, Kravet; period Edwardian **GLOVES**, Helen Uffner Vintage Clothing LLC. English Arts and Crafts **CHAIR**, with original William Morris upholstery, \$1,950, Denton + Gardner Ltd. Cotton **TABLECLOTH**, by Henry Dean, \$124, La Cafetière. Walnut Tuscany **TABLE**, by Rose Tarlowe-Melrose House, Holly Hunt New York. Rural Scenes **TEAPOT**, \$225; Tower jumbo blue **CUP AND SAUCER** (held by Alice), \$82.50; British Flowers jumbo **CUP AND SAUCER** (on table), \$82.50; and small blue Italian **CUPS AND SAUCERS**, \$25; all from Spode. **LEATHER CHAIR**, Counsellor's Wing Chair, \$9,770, Smith & Watson, NYC. Axminster 8-by-10 **RUG**, Herat Floral #900-904, \$1,999, Karastan. **WALL COVERING**, Golden Lily in Mineral by William Morris & Co., available at Sanderson. All tableaux photographed at the House of the Redeemer, NYC.

HAIR BY SHALOM SHARON AT BRADLEY CURRY; MAKEUP BY BIRGITTE PHILIPPDES AT BRADLEY CURRY

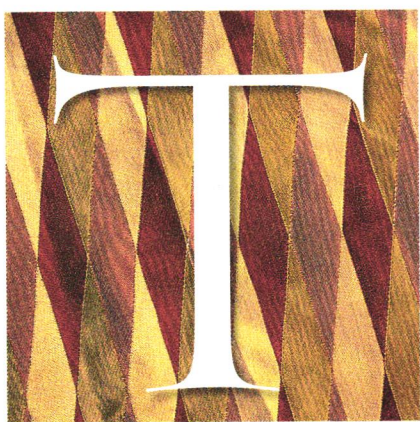


Favorite fabrics and furnishings in vignettes inspired by Edwardian-era home theatricals



PRODUCED BY JEFFREY W. MILLER

FASHION STYLED BY LINDA RODIN COSTUMES BY DIANE GRINGAS



THE THREE MUSKETEERS

One for all, and all for one powerful look. Summon up the late Renaissance with royal damasks, delicate lace, and sturdy furniture. Pinstripes and harlequin prints make the perfect foil. Anglesey walnut queen-sized **BED**, \$14,050; **CURTAINS**, **SPREAD**, and **EURO SHAMS**, Morello Damask in red, \$69 per yard; **Cordell STANDARD SHAM**, \$250; **BORDER**, on bedspread, Borgo velvet in Medieval Red, \$103 per yard; and **Wickward queen FLAT SHEET**, \$295, all Ralph Lauren Home. D'Artagnan's **VEST**, Lawhorn Velvet Stripe in Claret, and **PANTS**, Rittenhouse in Loden, both Kravet; **CAPE**, Woven Jester silk, by Mulberry, through Lee Jofa; turquoise **STICKPIN**, \$70, Jana Starr Antiques, NYC; feathered **HAT**, \$550, Patricia Underwood, NYC. Cardinal's **ROBE**, Geller Crimson silk, and **UNDERVERSTMENT**, #8289-101, both Kravet. Palazzo Capponi **BENCH**, and Portuguese Chippendale **ARMCHAIR** in English cherry, both William Switzer & Associates. Wool 8-by-10 **RUG**, Herat Floral #900-904, \$1,999, Karastan.







A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Ah, what fools these mortals be—except for those who appreciate the rich silks and pastoral prints, in floral and dragonfly motifs, used in this take on Shakespeare's dreamy classic. Titania's **DRESS** is #8262-101 silk by Kravet. Titania's **CUMMERBUND** and Puck's **JERKIN**, Libelulles in Vert, Clarence House. **BACKDROP**, Summer needlepoint rug #2148C, \$10,500, Asmara, Inc. Chelsea Seat mahogany **BENCH** from the carpenters at Chatsworth Estate, \$9,125, Janus et Cie. Fluted granite **URN**, \$1,400, Treillage Ltd. **FABRIC** wrapped around pillar, #4870-430 woven silk, Kravet.

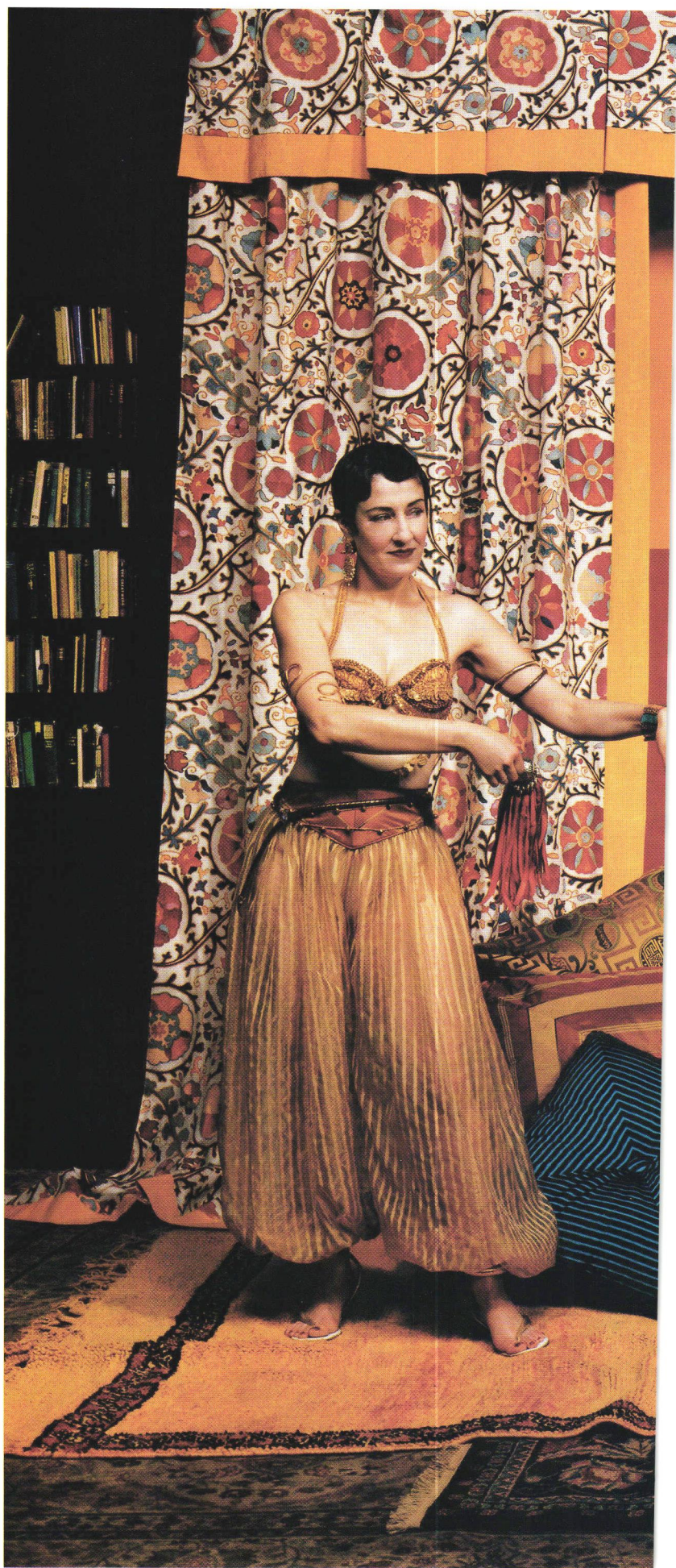






SALOME

The lush colors, textures, and complex patterns of Eastern-inspired upholstery and furnishings would cause any design lover to lose his head. **STAGE CURTAIN** is Dzhabul cotton and linen print in Raspberry and Orange, trimmed in linen moiré in Bouton d'Or; **BACKDROP** is Monteverdi Woven Stripe in Pompeian Red and Carrot, all Brunschwig & Fils. Salome's **PANTS**, #8210-4 nylon blend, with **WAISTBAND** of Le Beau Danube in Cognac, both Kravet; snake **BELT**, \$295, and snake **ARMBANDS**, \$150 each, Jana Starr Antiques. Servant's **TURBAN**, ca. 1900, \$60, John Derian, NYC; **COAT**, Renau silk in Fiesta, Jim Thompson. King Herod is wearing silk PJs and a silk brocade dressing gown; turquoise **STICKPIN**, \$70, Jana Starr Antiques. Marquetry **CHAIR**, \$3,400, Sarajo, NYC. **THROW**, Tiger #YS 0691 0001, Old World Weavers. Mosaic **SIDE TABLE** inlaid with mother-of-pearl, \$290, William-Wayne & Co. Berber wedding **TRUNK** inlaid with a tree-of-life pattern, \$5,400, Linda Horn. **PILLOWS**, from rear left: Calligraphic Chinoise silk, Clarence House; Le Beau Danube in Cognac, Kravet; Cameleon cotton blend in Violet, by Lelievre, from Old World Weavers; Bolero in Golden Leaf silk, Kravet; Livia in green, Zimmer & Rohde. Layered **RUGS**, from top: high-pile orange Moroccan, \$950, Cobweb, NYC; #900-902 Esfahan and #900-904 Herat Floral, both 8 by 10, both \$1,999, Karastan. All pillows and curtains by Furniture Masters. Sources, see back of book. □

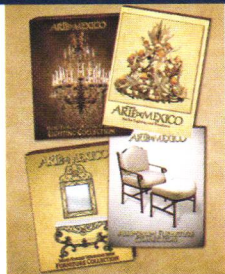




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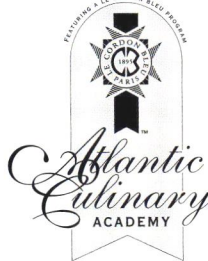
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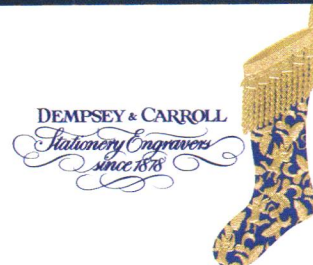
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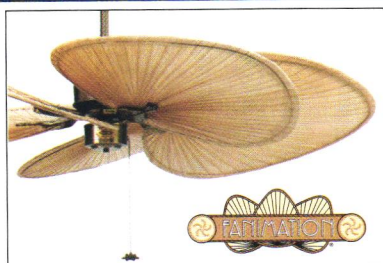
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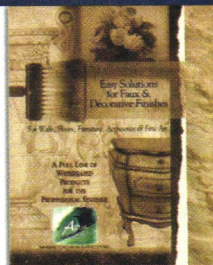
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the slow life

(Cont. from page 91) with turquoises at my waist. I had given in to worldliness, a bright hokey costume version of the vanities I thought I had left behind. And it didn't feel good at all.

The landlord's invalid aunt and her teachings were still with me. I knew what to do. I went back to Mass.

It was Fiesta Sunday, and the plaza was now full of booths selling food, fried bread, and fajitas. The Virgin of the Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi was carried in procession from the Palace of the Governors. She's called La Conquistadora, is three feet tall, has a stern face, and was brought to New Mexico with Captain Francisco Gomez in 1625.

BECAUSE IT WAS FIESTA, the music in the cathedral was by a mariachi band, and the songs were in Spanish. A group of children from the Santa Clara Pueblo did a largely invisible Buffalo Dance by the altar. The last song by the Mariachi Tenampa was a folk song that's become a hymn, "De Colores."

The church was full, and we all sang the last lines with full gusto:

Y por eso los grandes amores

De muchos colores me gustan a mi

Which I understood to mean, in the most literal translation: "And for this the great loves of many colors fill me with joy."

At the end of Mass I went up the aisle to have a better look at La Conquistadora. She was placed to the right of the altar, just by the ropes, so she could be touched. She wore a blue velvet cloak embroidered with stars and edged with silver. There was a line to touch her. A woman came up behind me and quickly kissed the hem of La Conquistadora's cloak. As it fell back down, thin beams of light glanced off the silver sequins that ran along its edge. It reminded me of something. In the smoky grainy light, a large cross on La Conquistadora's chest gave off a veiled silvery radiance. I couldn't tell whether the cross was silver or simply more sequins. I leaned forward and asked an altar server what the cross was made of.

He turned to look at the Virgin.

"Diamonds," he said.

Outside in the sunshine, it hit me that this glitter was the real thing. □

a fresh start

(Cont. from page 133) Champion's caliber, I gather, are commissioned by their busy, wealthy clients to purchase leather-bound books by the foot according to size and color. But Champion, to his credit, didn't seem to object to working around my preexisting collection of not entirely decorative books, designing a combination of sleek, portable, ebony and gunmetal shelves and built-ins made of inexpensive but elegantly finished fiberboard.

One bookshelf serves as a dramatic backdrop to the bed, with its chocolate leather headboard; another divides the study from the living area, imparting a sense of separation to the former dining area, which I converted into my study without entirely closing it off from the living room or the expansive entryway. The entryway remains open, except when I have dinner parties, at which point I unstack the cowhide-covered side chairs and slide the sideboard into the center of the space, opening the two leaves to create a plausible dining room.

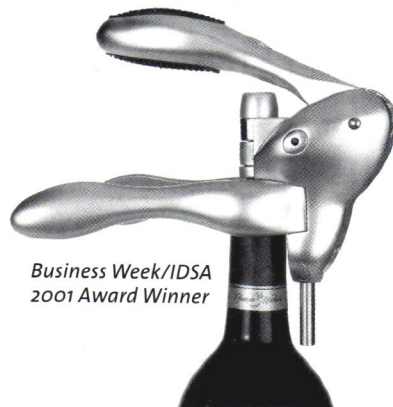
My modest art collection has no organizing principle, except for a collection of vintage photographs of my favorite authors—Joyce, Dylan Thomas, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald. Painters Caio Fonseca and Jeff Carpenter, and photographers Jack Spencer and Patrick McMullan, are friends. My treasures also include a Cartier-Bresson, anonymous Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock prints, and pieces by Tennessee artists Maisie and Barrett McInerney, my 7-year-old twins.

Another friend, Brazilian artist Ricardo Brizolla, took on the job of painting the interior. I wanted Venetian plaster in the bedroom—something he has done for me in two previous apartments. This time he and Champion came up with a plaster technique that creates the illusion of a palimpsest of parchment sheets. The curtains and bedding, designed by Platt and made by Barbara Fiore, indulged my enthusiasm for linen, that most natural, impractical fabric.

I find myself so comfortable and so enraptured with my new, bespoke environment that I'm going out far less often than I used to. This may eventually have a deleterious effect on the downtown economy. Already, one Village restaurateur, worried about his children's tuition payments, has called to ask if I'm sick and offered to send a car. □

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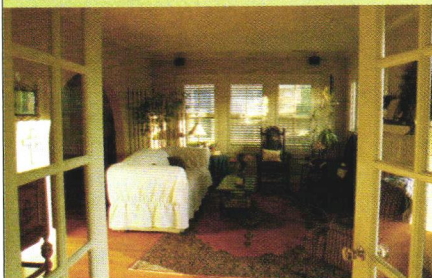
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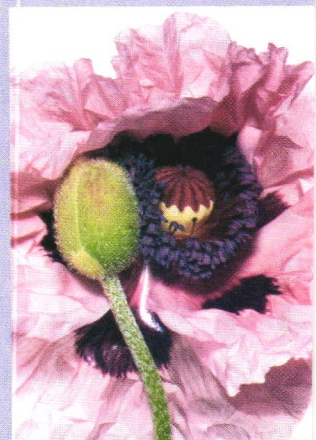
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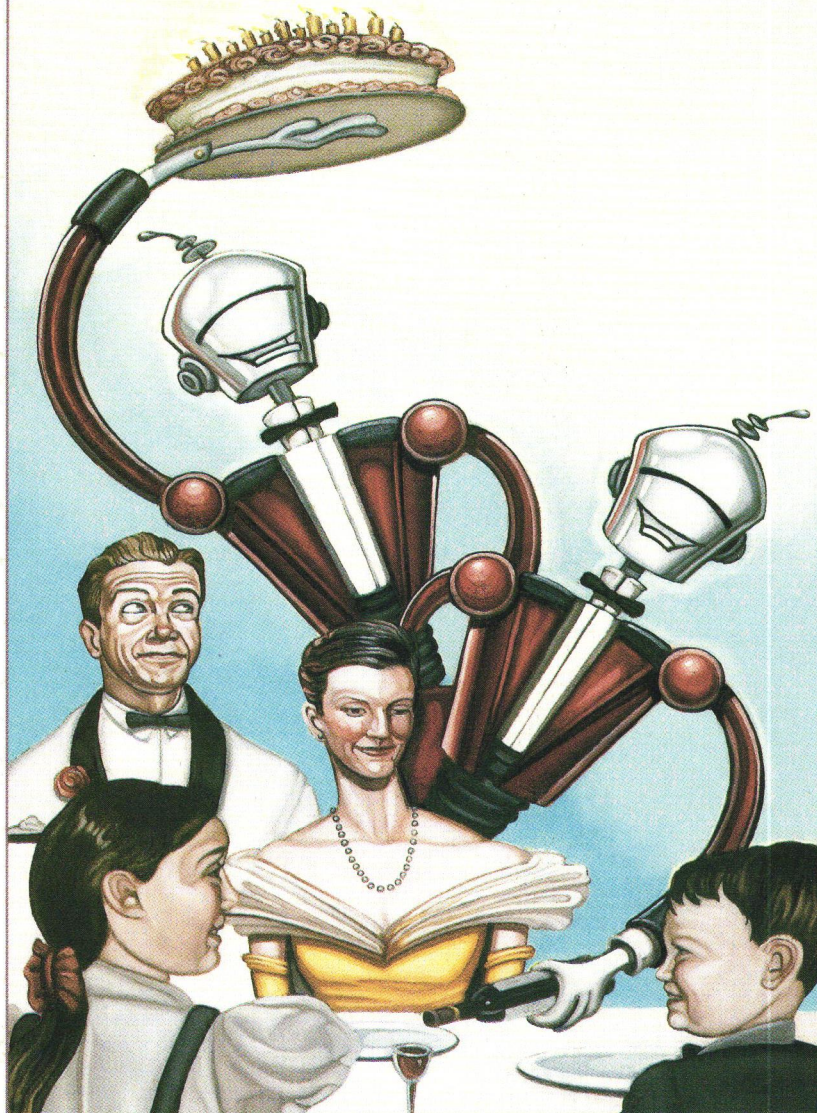
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59. **Rabbit Corkscrew:** The ultimate cork-pulling machine, it removes a wine cork in three seconds flat. See the Rabbit run at metrokane.com.

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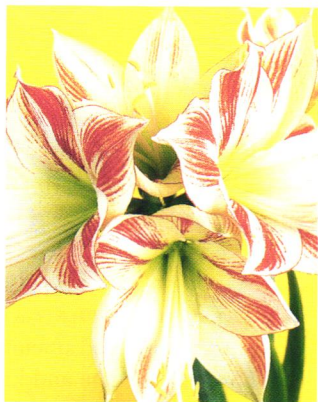
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ORRECTIONS

September 2002: **Page 87**, Old House Gardens, Ann Arbor, MI. 734-995-1486.

Here's a fresh dinner idea from Hunt's®



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Three strikes: Dale Chihuly's crass menagerie, real estate broker Jacques Derrida, and pulp friction

by mayer rus



most successful are the really huge, nutty ones. Anyone contemplating a Chihuly purchase should heed my advice: stay away from the cash-and-carry merchandise.

■ REMEMBER THE DAYS when real estate advertisements stressed amenities in straightforward language? Square footage and kitchen accoutrements are apparently no longer sexy enough to move Manhattan condos. Contemporary real estate literature revels in pretentious affectations and touchy-feely New Age-isms.

On a recent stroll through TriBeCa, I encountered a billboard for a new development called the Hubert. "Worth waiting for: Connoisseur Lofts, Maisonettes, and Town Houses," the sign read. Connoisseurs of what exactly? Byzantine frescoes? Directoire furniture? Cash?

I first noticed the wave of poseur advertising in a brochure for a Manhattan loft development named City Prairie. The booklet was illustrated with artsy-fartsy pictures by Jessica Craig-Martin, an artist whose work I admire. I suppose her dry images of exposed radiators and electrical coils were meant to appeal to aficionados of German conceptual photography who dream of Sub-Zero refrigerators grazing in open pastures.

Back in TriBeCa, there is a new luxury apartment building designed by architect Winka Dubbeldam called Greenwich Street [Project]. I might forgive the aspirational name and punctuation—it sounds like a sophomore architecture studio—if it were not for the highfalutin prose of the building's prospectus: "The crease as a system of inflections allows for a slippage between interior urbanism and urban privacy."

Who thinks this stuff up? Semiotics majors from Brown?

■ WITH THE HOLIDAY season fast approaching, I would like to reflect on the subject of greeting cards. In fact, I'd like to address a troubling phenomenon that now plagues all forms of stationery: alternative materials. I am talking about acetate envelopes, Mylar postcards, vellum overlays and underlays, and pulpy, rotting, recycled paper so thick and unwieldy it gives environmentalism a bad name. The once cheery process of opening my mail has in recent years been corrupted by countless forms of annoying, newfangled stationery that offend the eye and chafe the hand. What marketing hoax has convinced people that simple engraving and fine paper stock are old-fashioned or otherwise inadequate? The days of belles lettres may be numbered, but I for one am not giving up without a fight. □

WHAT'S THAT THEY SAY about people who ignore history? Dale Chihuly must have forgotten to read the book on Halston. Otherwise the renowned glass magician might have grasped the moral of Halston's tragic story: no artist can afford to let his name become cheap and ubiquitous. Poor Halston lived just long enough to see his vaunted imprimatur emblazoned on a pitiful assortment of down-market junk. Once he lost control of his name, not even Liza could help.

Although I am certain Mr. Chihuly possesses enough savvy to retain the rights to his own trademark, he nevertheless runs the risk of serious brand dilution. Did I say runs the risk? I mean Chihuly *ran* the risk of overexposure before he started cranking out enough of his signature glass flowers (or jellyfish, or amoebas, or whatever the hell they are) to fill every tacky curio cabinet from New Jersey to New Caledonia. These vitreous confections are like a sick fungus infecting anyone who walks into an Aspen crafts gallery or third-world airport.

In all fairness, I must admit that Chihuly has created some extraordinary environmental installations. Thierry Despont, an architect and designer who knows a thing or two about silk purses and sow's ears, has a fantastic phalanx of towering Chihuly glass spears in his New York office. In his recent renovation of Claridge's in London, Despont deployed one of Chihuly's Medusafied tendrils chandeliers to lovely effect.

Perhaps it's a question of scale and density. Of all the Chihulys I've seen—and, believe me, I've seen too many—the

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