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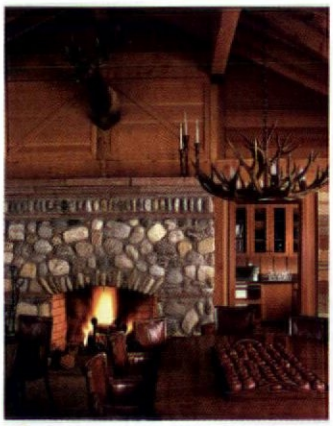

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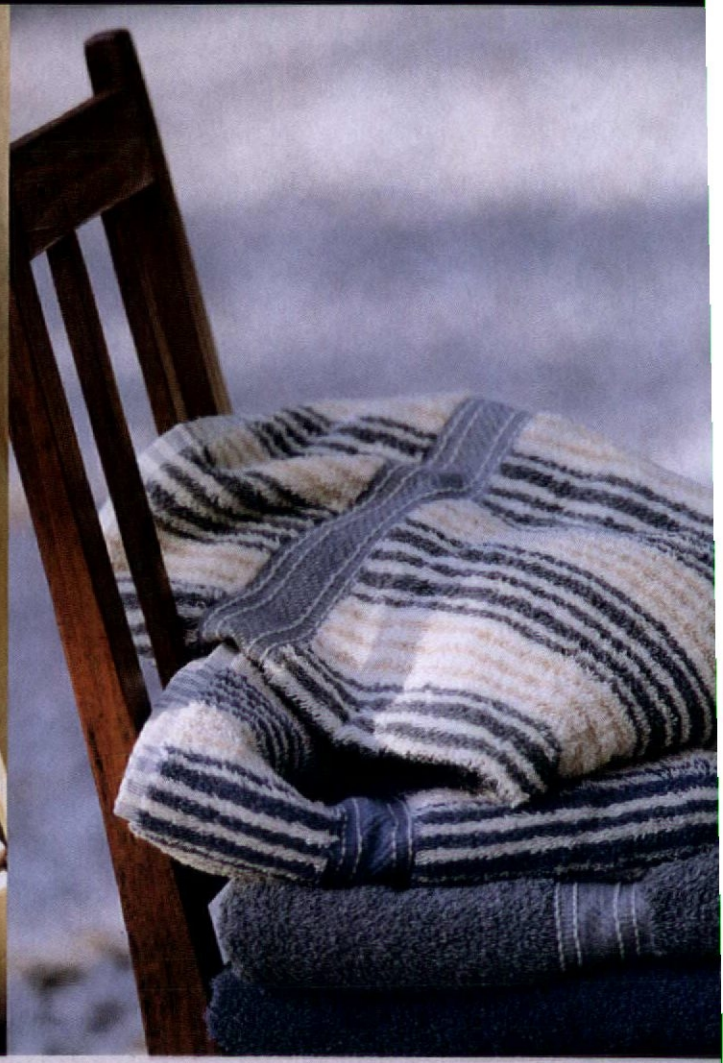

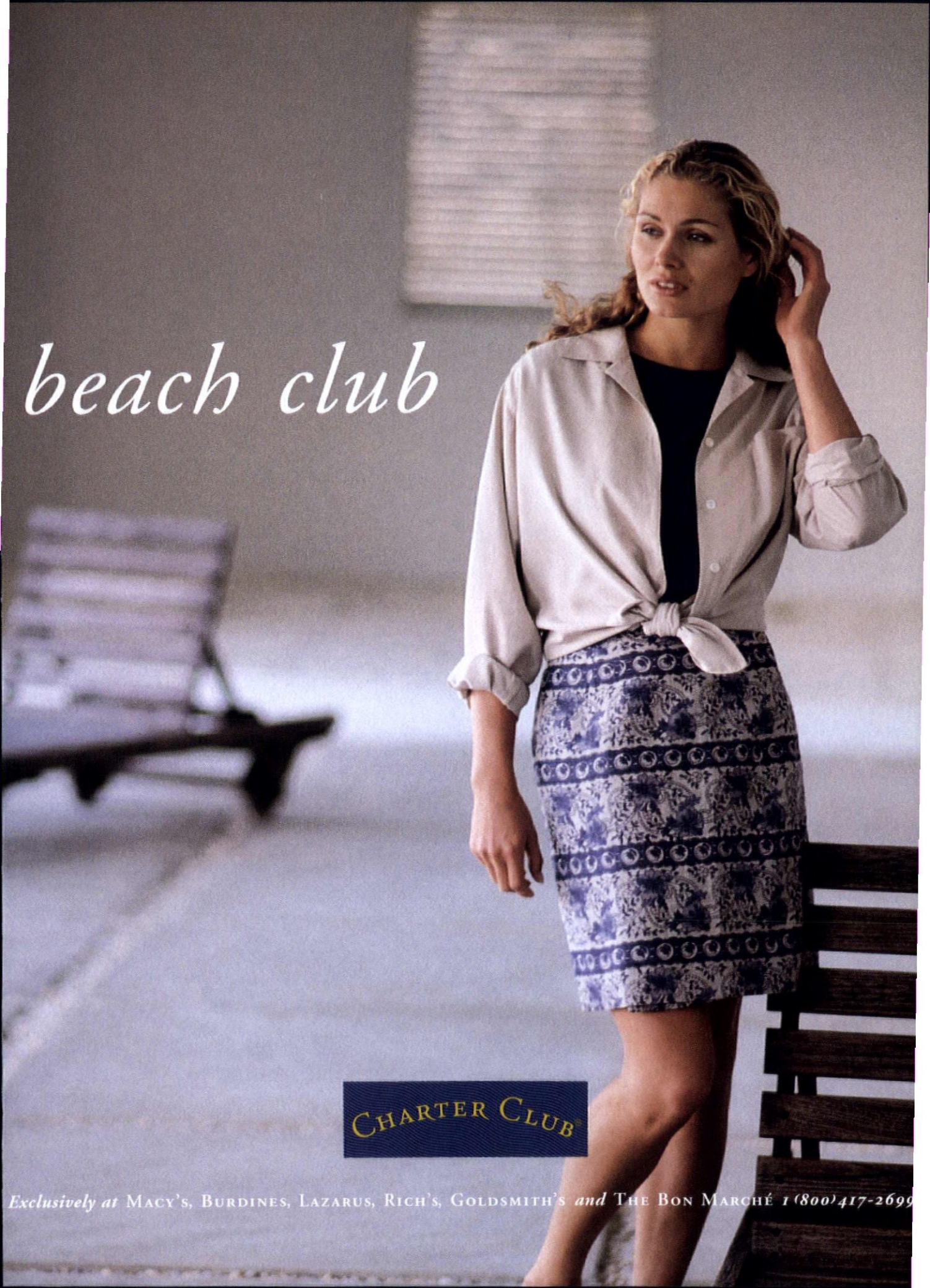
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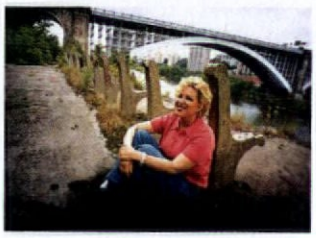

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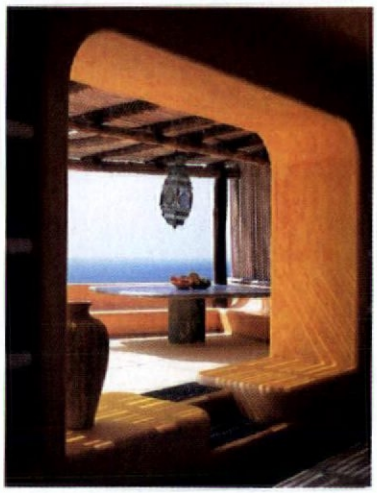

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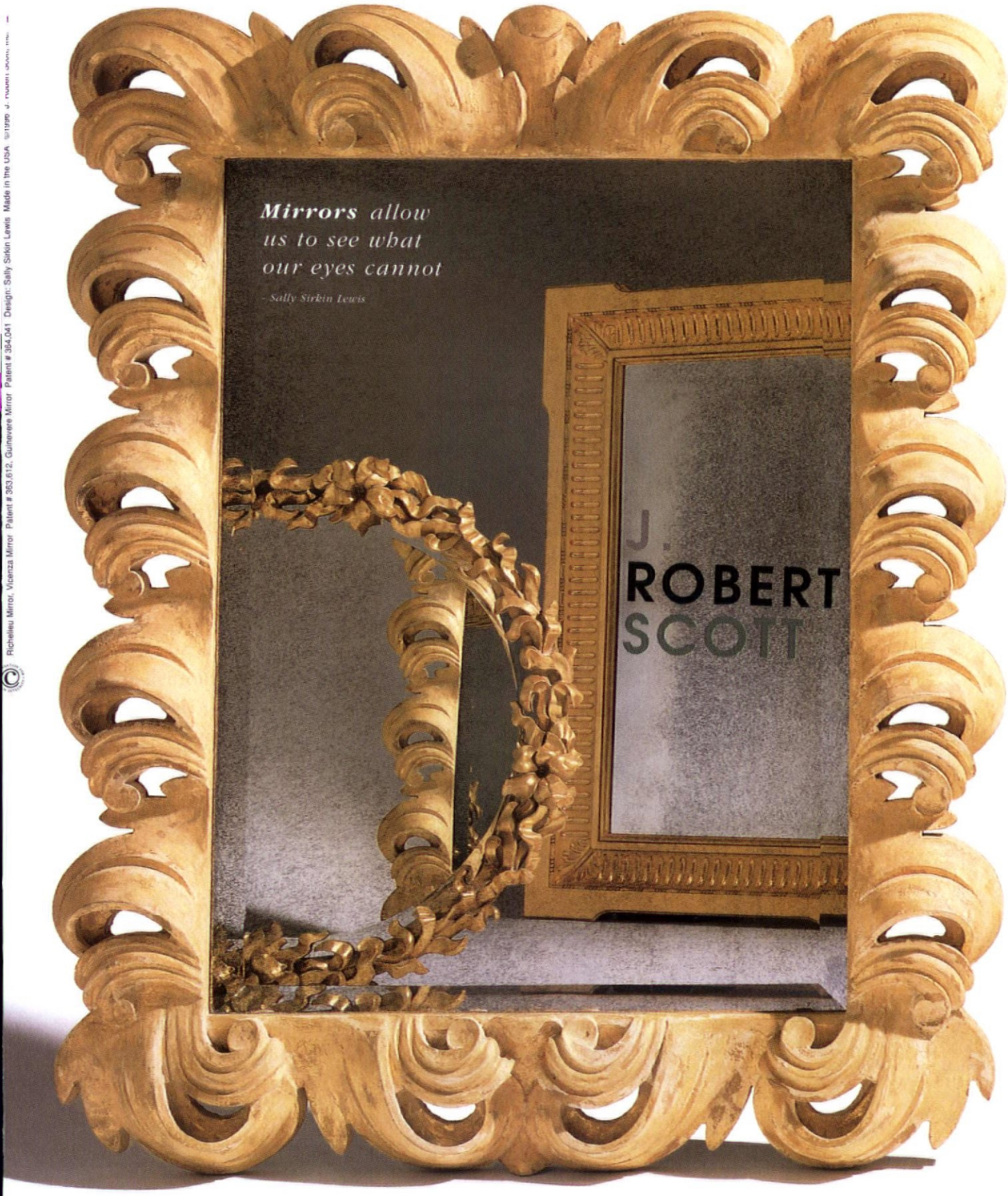

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Welcome

Built to Last

The first time I went to High Point I was amazed. Anyone who reads design magazines is vaguely aware that there is a furniture trade show a couple of times a year in a small town in North Carolina called High Point, and that this is where American manufacturers introduce pieces to the dealers who eventually bring them to us. But nothing could have prepared me for the volume of furniture being produced—or for the variety: stuff to suit every budget and taste. I went, of course, with an eye to finding things for the *House & Garden* reader, and on that score I was also astonished. That trip was the inspiration for this month's coverage of the furniture that will be available this spring. There's great merchandise out there. So why is it so hard to find?

The furniture industry is currently in a state of flux, with constant news of mergers, spin-offs, and reevaluations of business practices. But the consumer is also changing—radically. People in their thirties and forties who are furnishing their homes don't shop the way their parents did. For one thing, there are many fewer department stores with their vast floors of furnishings and well-trained salespeople. For plenty of shoppers, stores such as Crate & Barrel, Pottery Barn, and Domain have become a major source for furniture. Gratification is almost immediate, delivery is speedy, display is warm but straightforward, pricing is reliable. There aren't many manufacturers, like Ethan Allen, who control the display, distribution, and pricing of the very goods they are making, so that customers can develop a feel for the company behind what's being offered.

But in High Point—whether you're in the showroom of Baker, Henredon, Drexel Heritage, John Widdicomb, Hickory Chair, Century, or Bernhardt—you can get a vivid impression of the company, of the style, quality, and value of its merchandise. It's too bad that the consumer can't get to know a line of furniture in this way, because we all understand labels and brands. And we grow to trust companies the better we know them.

Retailers have become so focused on price that consumers are confused about quality. There seems always to be an Every Day Low Price of 50 percent off. But is this good? Have we lost sight of what makes for quality and value? Unless they should find themselves talking to the furniture makers—the people who know their product inside out—as I have, shoppers can't usually get the information they need about quality. Most of us are well aware that some furniture can be made and delivered speedily, that some construction and some materials are cheaper than others. We know that there is a vast difference between fine pieces made by our leading manufacturers, involving hours of hand-finishing, and furniture produced in volume by machine. What we don't have is enough direct experience with all the choices available to us.

I can decide for myself if I'm going to spend $1,000 or $10,000 on a sofa. Quite apart from my bank account, the decision has to do with how that sofa is going to be used—whether small people will be jumping on it, or whether I want it to last long enough to see my grandchildren bouncing on it sometime. I simply want to know what I'm getting for my money. A cherry dining table from Baker, or a Russian Empire reproduction desk from Widdicomb, for example, can be heirlooms for tomorrow. (And lest we slip into snootiness about reproductions, interpretations, and reissues, let's remember that some of the antiques we buy today were themselves reproductions a hundred or more years ago, from designs even older.)

We think our coverage of the furniture industry will help readers find out about things that are useful and beautiful. There's a lot to celebrate in the American furniture industry, strangely, more than meets most eyes. Its products are not as well known as they should be. We hope to help change that. The more we know about the choices we have, the truer we can be to our homing instincts.

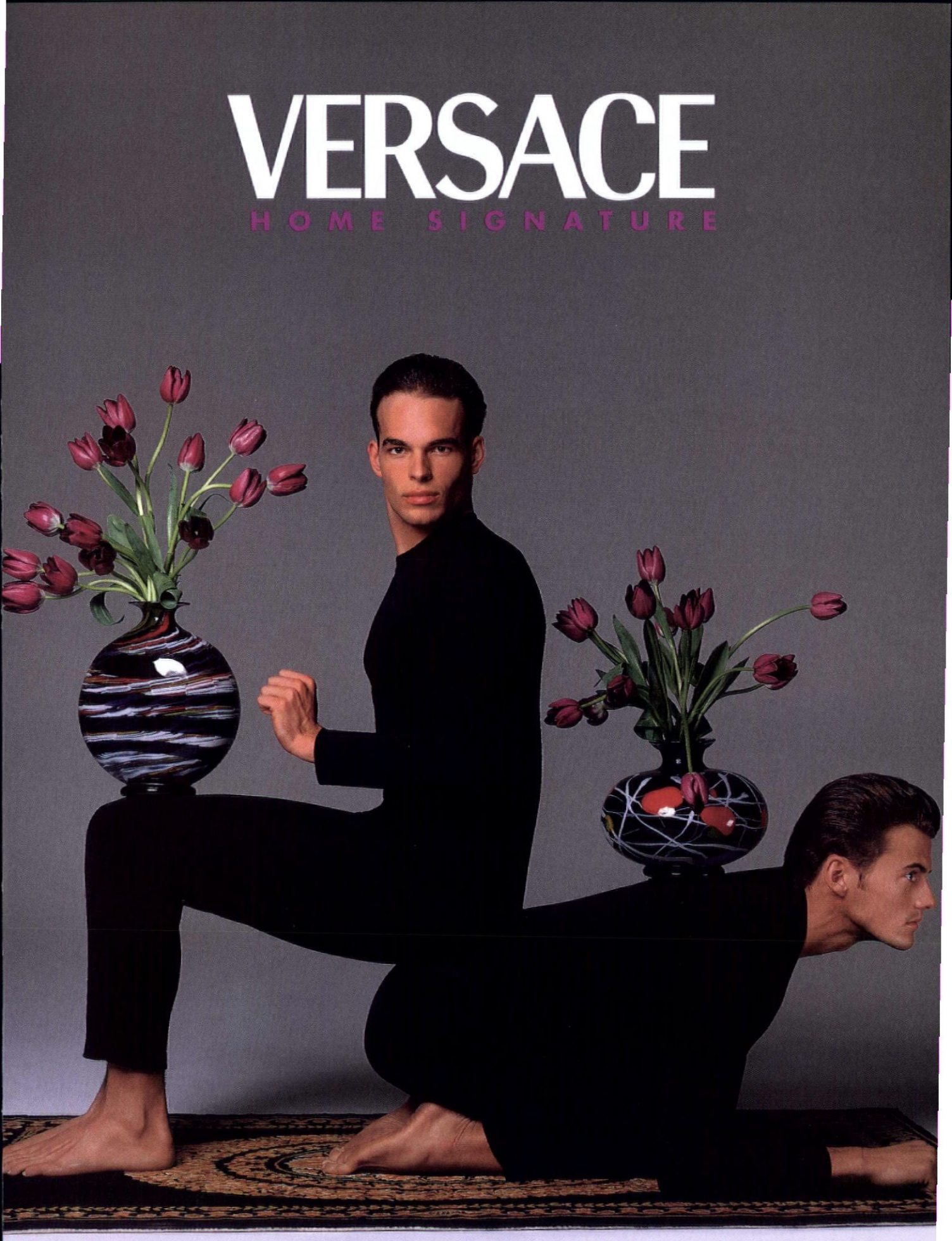
One last thing: We are used to the endless inventiveness of telephone technology, but it is fascinating to stop for a moment and consider how quickly it has changed our world ("Domestic Bliss," page 27). It was only forty-six years ago that the phone company introduced area codes so we could dial long distance calls. I was on a business trip recently when my father rang me up to chat. He was thrilled when he realized that he had reached me in a car. "Isn't technology marvelous?" he said. "Isn't it a miracle?" I was struck by how we take it all for granted; my father's generation has a properly appreciative perspective. We live in astonishing times.

A little while later, I call my children at home. My seven-year-old demands a back scratch. Immediately. He is quite sure I can deliver this over the phone. He gets very quiet, waiting. Astonished by his faith in technology, and stricken as well with guilt that I am not home for the nightly ritual, I say nothing. After a few moments he complains that he can't feel anything, can I try again. We try again. We listen to each other breathe for a while. "I still can't feel your nails, Mom." "Well," I ask, "what do you feel?" "Just your breath coming through on my cheek."

The real miracle of technology.

Dominique Browning, EDITOR

MARION ETTLINGER



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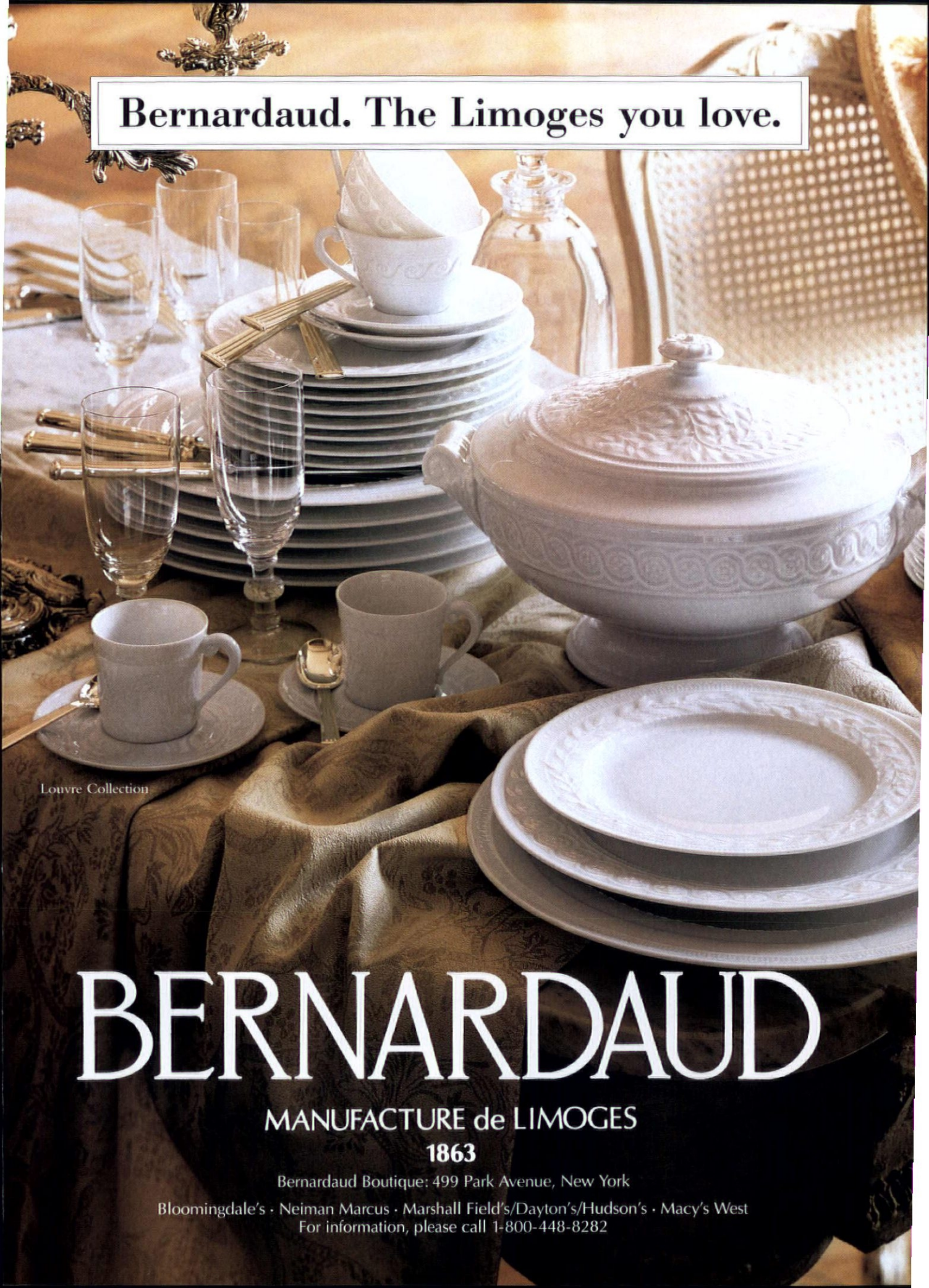
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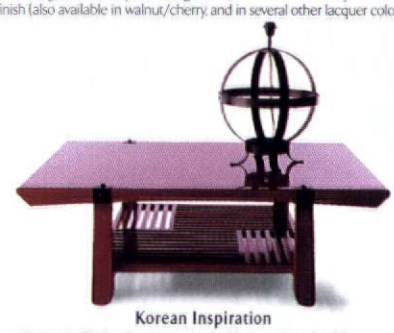

Korean Inspiration

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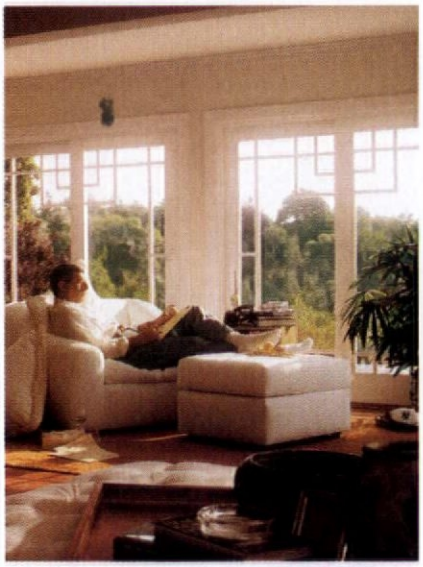

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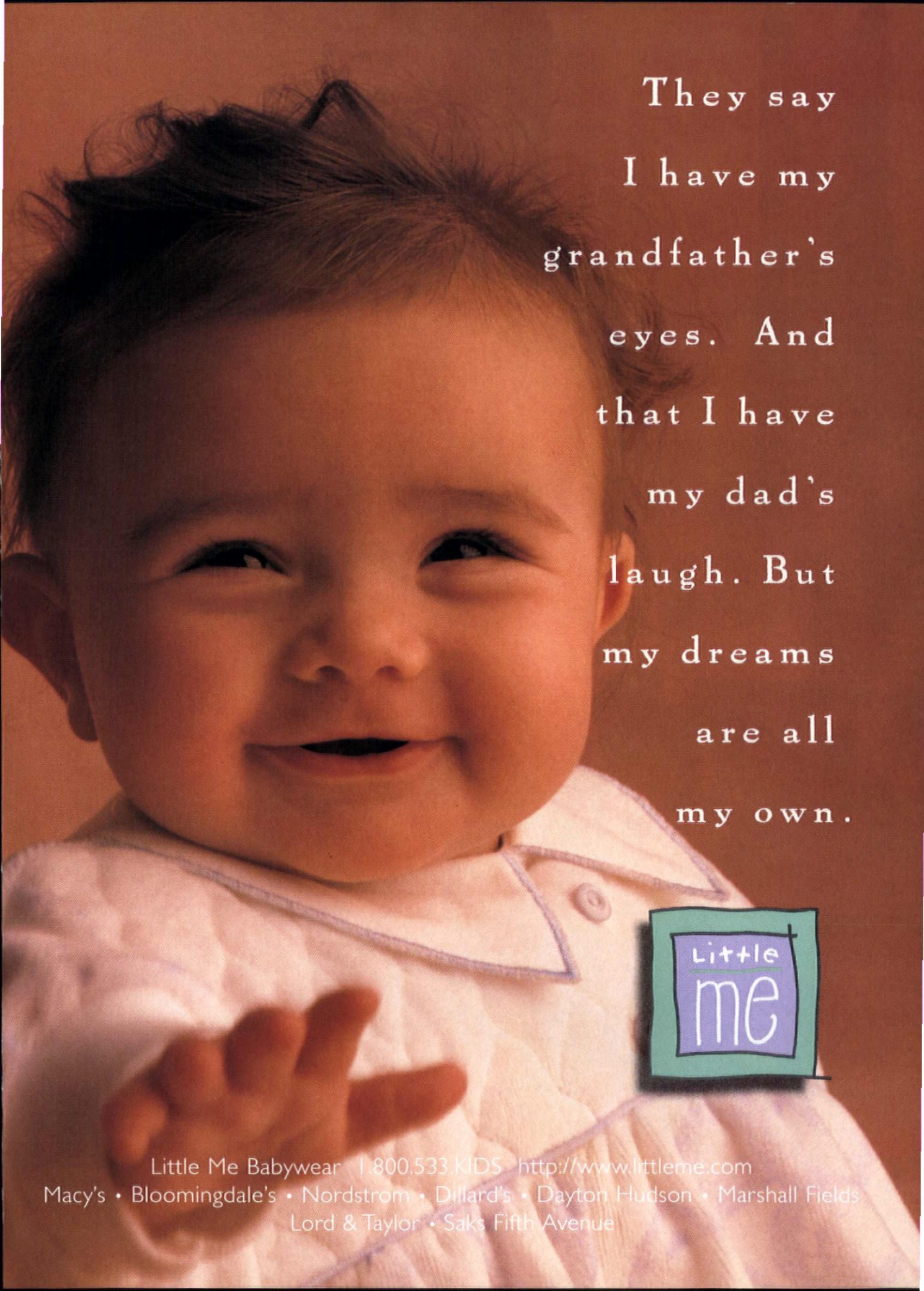
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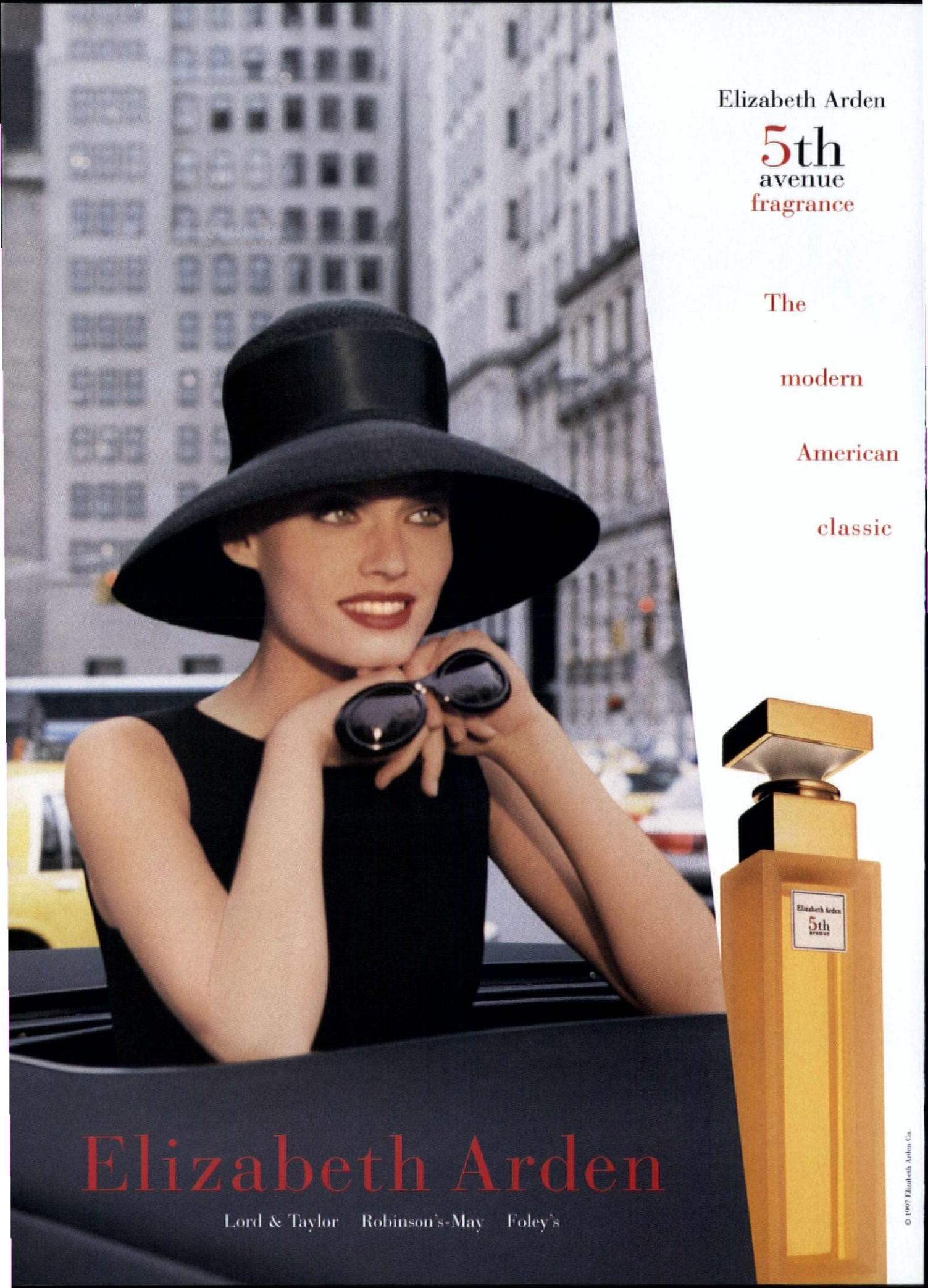
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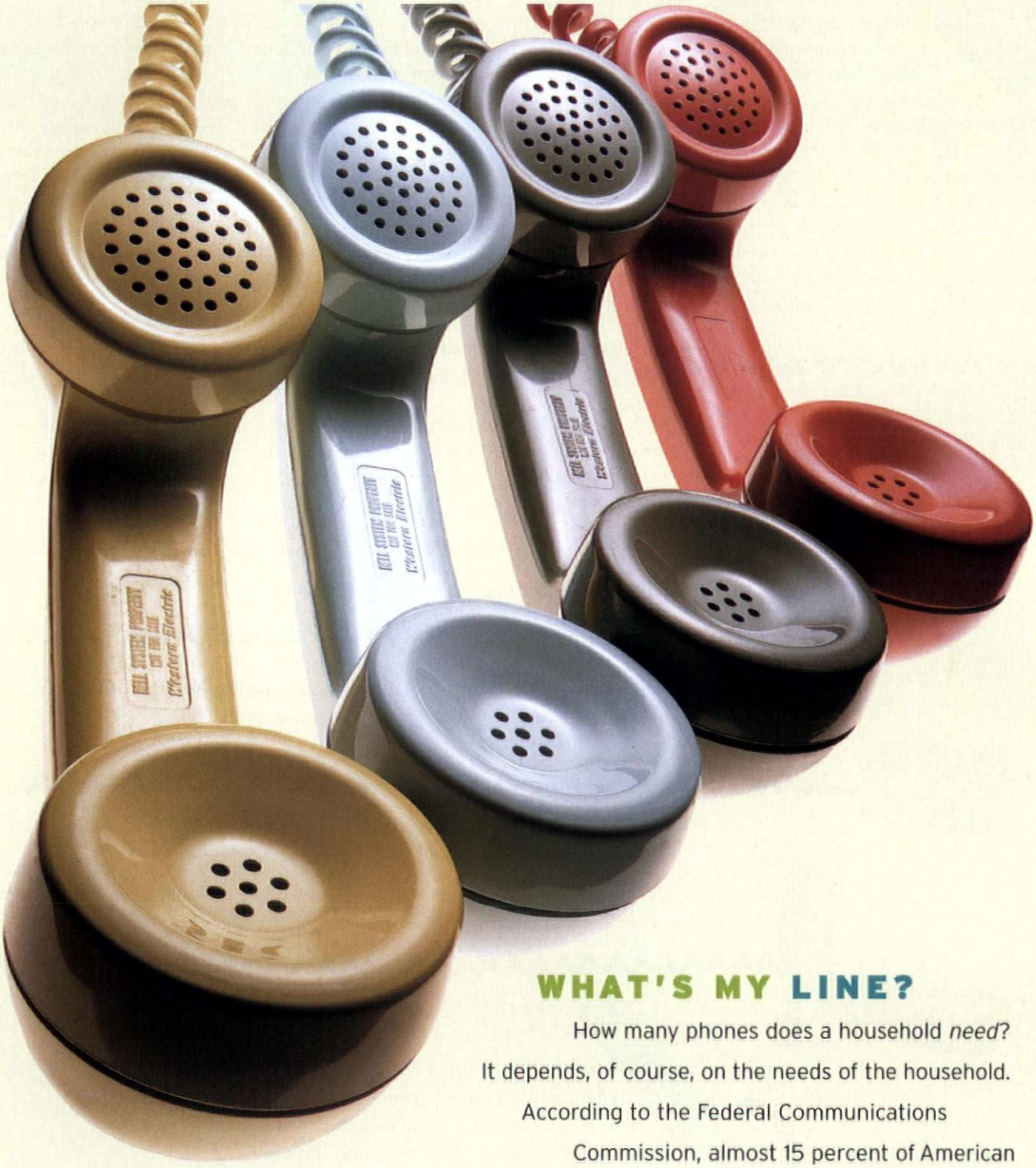
DEVOTED TO WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HOME BY DAN SHAW



STEPHEN LEWIS

WHAT'S MY LINE?

How many phones does a household *need*? It depends, of course, on the needs of the household. According to the Federal Communications Commission, almost 15 percent of American households now have at least two phone lines, a dramatic increase over 1988, when

Domestic Bliss

WHAT'S MY LINE?

fewer than 3 percent did. For many modern families, the two-line phone, like the two-car garage, is becoming obsolete.

"Most people have three lines, even young couples," says David H. Mitchell, an interior designer in Washington, D.C. "There are separate lines for their businesses, and then there seems to be a general house line."

These days, some decorators turn to telephone consultants like Robert Friedland, who runs Soundsight Technologies in Manhattan. "When someone is spending $500,000 on a renovation and the walls are open, it's a good time to spend $4,000 on a phone system," says Friedland, who often suggests a Panasonic console that can handle up to six lines and sixteen extensions. "The biggest advantage is that you can add lines without rewiring."

With five children and a rock star husband, Ann Dexter-Jones needs many phone lines. "We have one emergency family line used only for incoming calls, one line for the nanny, one for Mick's studio, and two for everyone's use," says Dexter-Jones, whose husband, Mick Jones, is the lead guitarist with Foreigner. At times she has installed separate lines for her various children, with disastrous results. "My oldest son, Mark, got his own line when he was sixteen, but when I heard him talking at 4:00 A.M., I took it out." Later, Mark and his twin sisters, Charlotte and Samantha, persuaded Dexter-Jones that they had to have their own number. "They said, 'Mummy, we'll even pay,'" she recalls. But after the first bill, they realized they couldn't afford to keep it.

The twins later discovered a jack under one of their beds, put in a phone on the sly, and talked secretly for months—until Mum caught on and removed it. When the girls were studying for their college entrance exams, Dexter-Jones believed she'd tamed them. "But soon I discovered Charlotte locked in the closet on the fax phone." Caveat emptor: Policing a multiline household may be just as burdensome as financing one.

TOTALLY WIRED

1878 First phone book compiled, in New Haven, CT.

1892 The multiline phone (with two lines) is marketed for commercial use.

1920s Rotary dialing begins, making local operators unnecessary for some calls.

◂**1921** *The Dial telephone* is manufactured, 25 years after its invention.

◂**1938** *The Key Set,* the first phone with a built-in hold button, arrives.

1951 Debut of area codes; direct long-distance dialing becomes available.

1953 AT&T leases answering machines for commercial use.

◂**1959** *The Princess telephone* appears, with an illuminated dial.

1963 Touch-Tone telephones are launched; call-waiting is introduced in Carnegie and Greensburg, PA.

1968 AT&T coins the phrase "Reach out and touch someone."

◂**1968** *The Trimline telephone* launches the 12-button keypad.

1984 AT&T offers voice mail for offices; GTE inaugurates Airfone service on commercial airliners.

1989 US WEST offers residential voice mail in Boise, ID.

1990 Candice Bergen becomes spokeswoman for Sprint.

1994 52 percent of American households have at least one cordless phone; 68 percent have an answering machine.

◂**1994** *The BeoCom 1600:* Bang & Olufsen introduces its high-style phone.

1995 17.3 million fax machines are in use in U.S., up from 735,000 in 1987.

For product information, see Sources, back of book

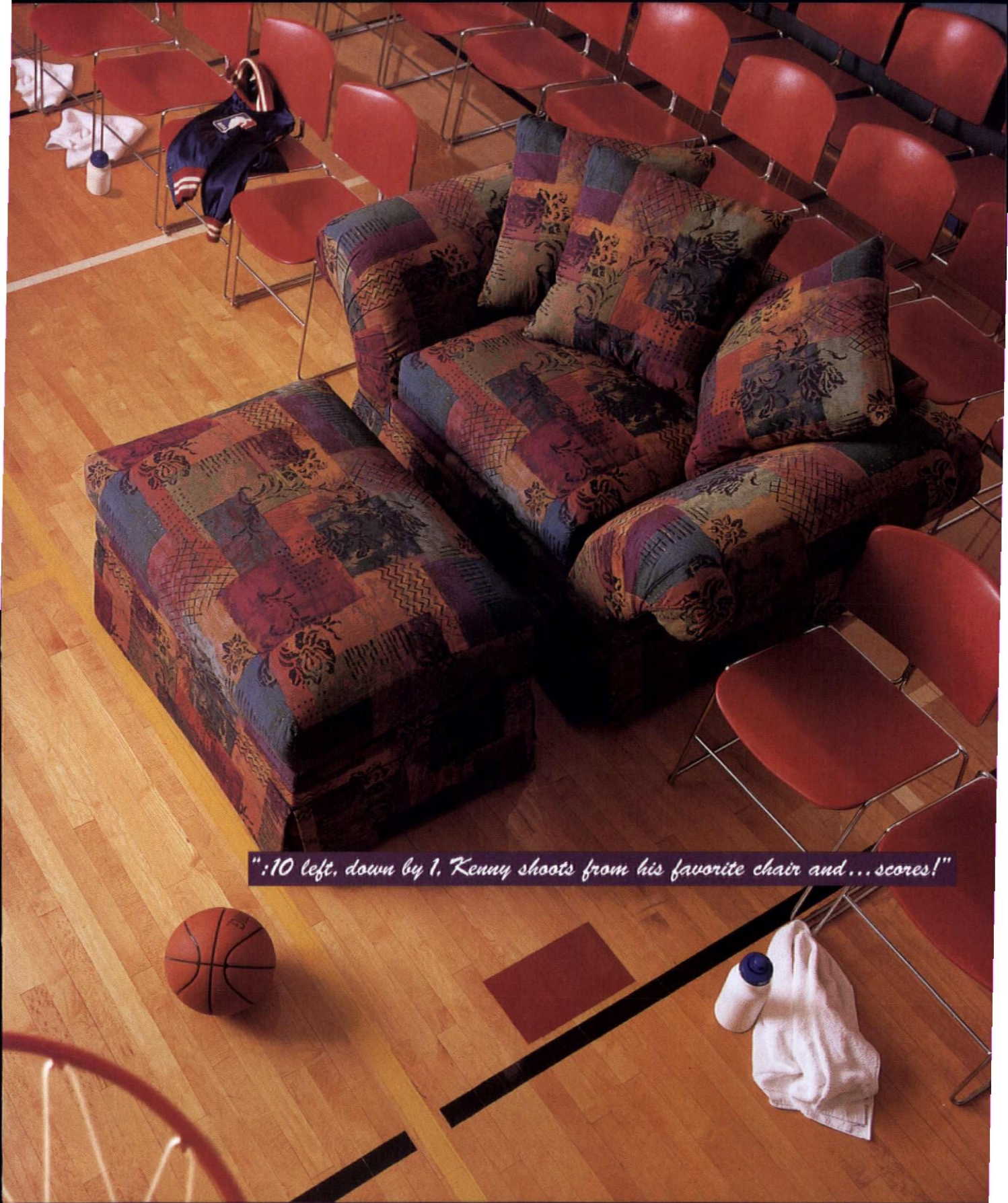


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TABLE TALK

Home for a Phone

LIKE ONE'S IMAGE of the ideal tree, one's conception of the perfect telephone table depends on sociocultural factors. For people who knew the Duchess of Windsor, a telephone table is a twenty-inch-high, two-tiered, rolling cart that can be tucked between a sofa and a coffee table or wheeled under a night-stand. (The Duchess herself had both modern and antique tables.) "They're tremendously chic," says decorator Mark Hampton, who orders new ones from Goralnick*Buchanan, which covers them in everything from fake fur to cobra skin. These haute monde tables have little to do with the taller, bourgeois ones that stand in hallways and often have pencil drawers. An exceptionally clever tall version is made by artist Gary Komarin: it's topped with a blackboard surface for messages and has a drawer that's perfect for storing telephone books and chalk.

HOLD ON Telephone tables, clockwise from top: In maple, by Ethan Allen; ash and faux alligator, by J. Jones at Goralnick*Buchanan; ebonized wood with goatskin inlays, by Lorin Marsh; and maple and cherry, by Gary Komarin for the Drawing Room Collection.

BLOWN AWAY

Dynamite Design

PHOTOGRAPHER Jan Staller first saw die-cast aluminum "explosion-proof" phones while shooting at a gas plant. Now he restores such phones, above, and sells them for $1,000 (to order, call 212-633-8370). Originally used in gaseous factories and mines, where the spark from an ordinary phone could trigger a disaster, the "e-p" instrument is sealed and can't emit sparks. "It's not that they survive explosions," says Staller. "They prevent them."

UNEXPECTED BLISS

Push-Button Power

THE JONESES ARE BEGINNING to live like the Jetsons.

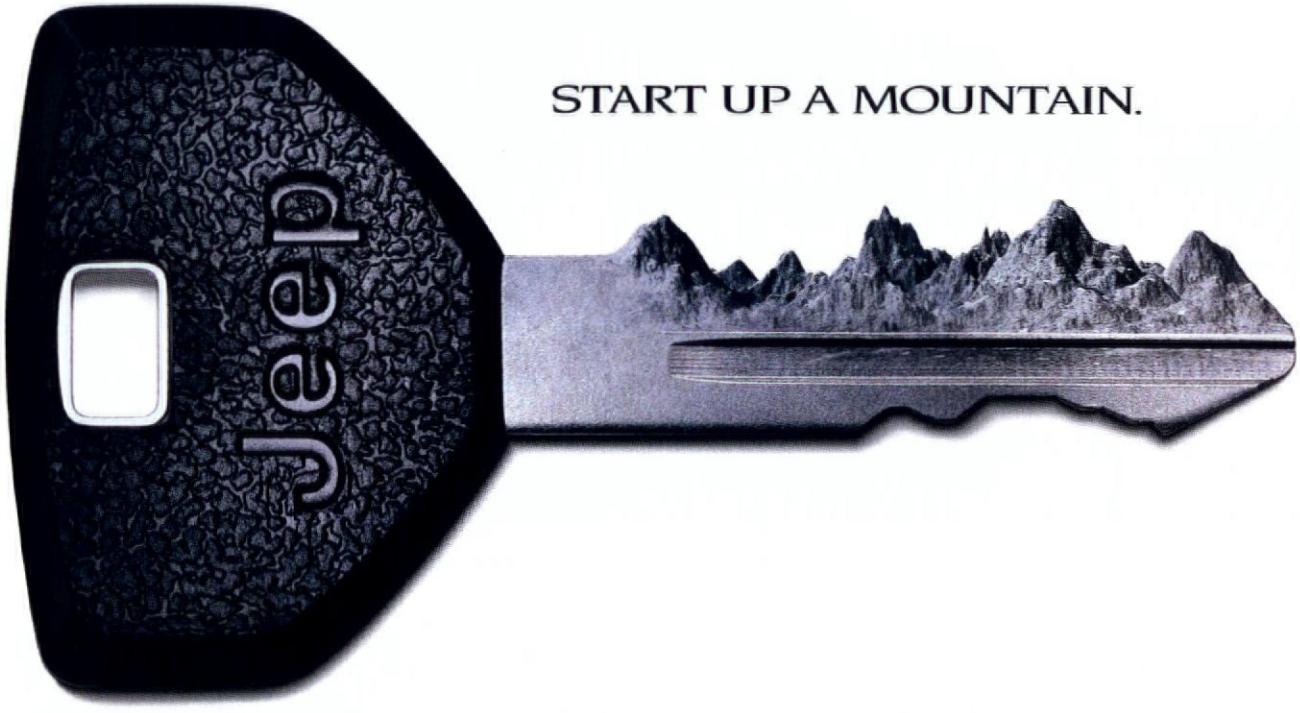
"You can do *anything* with your phone," says Charles McGrath, executive director of the Home Automation Association, a trade group in Washington, D.C. Heating and air-conditioning systems, for example, can be remote-controlled by phone—especially useful for owners of second homes. "You can call from the car and have your ski house or beach house at the right temperature when you arrive," says McGrath.

The association represents dozens of companies that manufacture and install devices, such as TeleLink, TeleMaster, and TeleCommand, that can be programmed to turn off your sprinklers when it rains and turn on the patio lights at dusk. "Your front door intercom can be linked to the phone, and you'll be called at your office or car when someone rings the doorbell," McGrath says. "You can talk to your child and let him in after school." There are also devices that will lower your stereo's volume whenever the phone rings.

While some of these contrivances are quite practical, others are purely hedonistic. One of the major selling points of home-automation systems seems to be the ability to phone ahead and have your hot tub on and ready to use the moment you walk in the door.

LEFT: JAN STALLER. RIGHT: SHU AKASHI

Always wear your seat belt. Jeep is a registered trademark of Chrysler Corporation.



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THE BUSINESS OF BLISS

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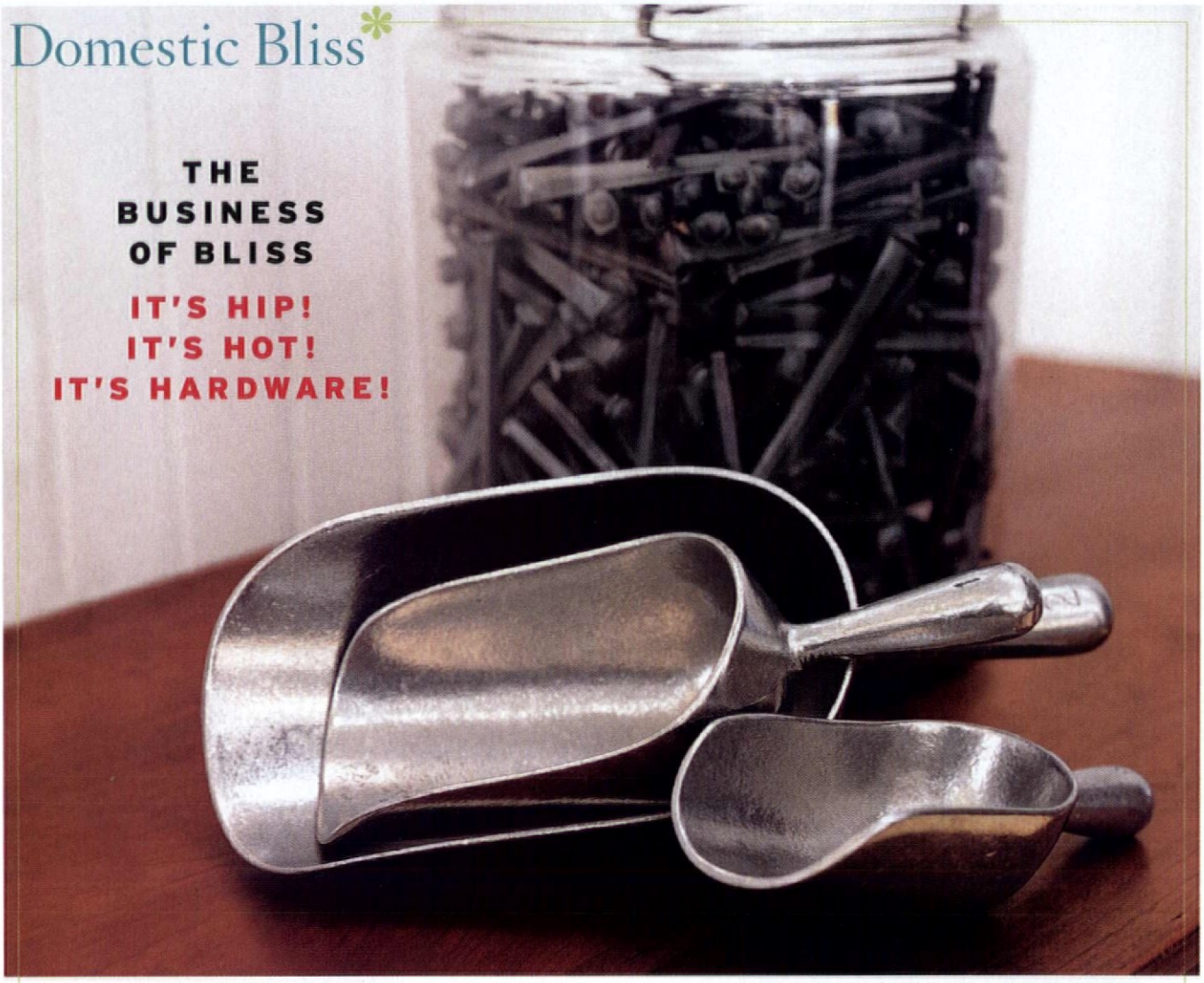
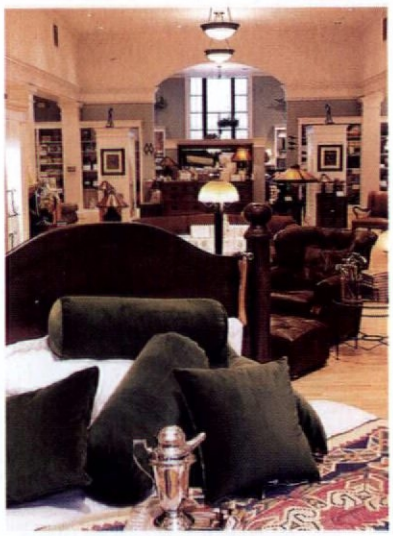


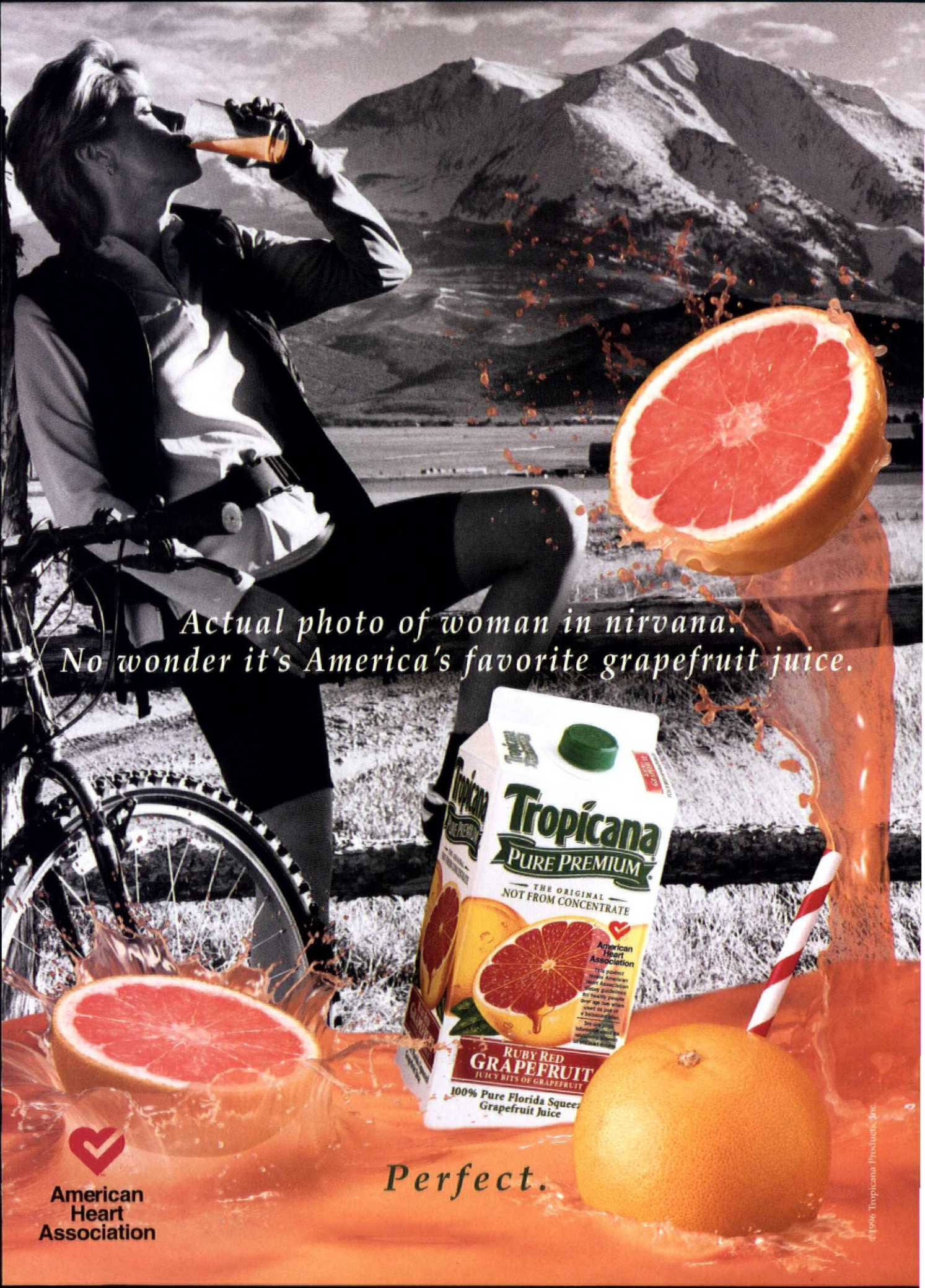


HARD CHOICES The distinction between decorative accessories and functional objects is blurred at a typical Restoration Hardware store, above. The Foundry scoops, top, are as handsome as they are practical.

AT THE RESTORATION HARDWARE store in Alexandria, Virginia, a window display features a $1,600 leather wing chair next to $6 bags of dog-biscuit mix and a glass jar filled with $12 janitor's key rings. "It's not unusual for us to cross-merchandise a $2,800 sofa and a $15 tape measure," says Stephen Gordon, Restoration Hardware's president and CEO. "That's what differentiates us from Pottery Barn and Crate & Barrel. We approach functional objects as decorative accessories."

Gordon opened his first store seventeen years ago, in northern California. Initially a source for renovators seeking period doorknobs and cabinet pulls, Restoration Hardware has evolved into more than a sophisticated hardware store, though its soul remains the guileless but remarkable merchandise: Oil Drillers Hand Lotion ($3), oversized aluminum dustpans ($15), nylon Hotel Shower Curtains ($18), chrome claw-footed bathtubs ($1,750).

Until recently, Gordon, forty-six, personally selected every product sold in the chain's ten West Coast stores. But when he decided to expand nationwide and open ten new stores in 1996 (in places like Skokie, Illinois, and Dallas, Texas) and twenty in 1997 (in towns like Greenwich, Connecticut, and Atlanta, Georgia), Gordon finally hired two buyers to work with him. He is still the sole copywriter and creates the clever cards posted on nearly every shelf that entertainingly explain an item's virtues. Without those cards, shoppers might not know that a mint-green tin of Bag Balm ($7.50), an antiseptic that Vermonters typically massage on cows' udders, is used by gardeners "as exceptionally effective in both thwarting dry, chapped hands and in healing windburned skin." The sign next to a stack of Terry Cloth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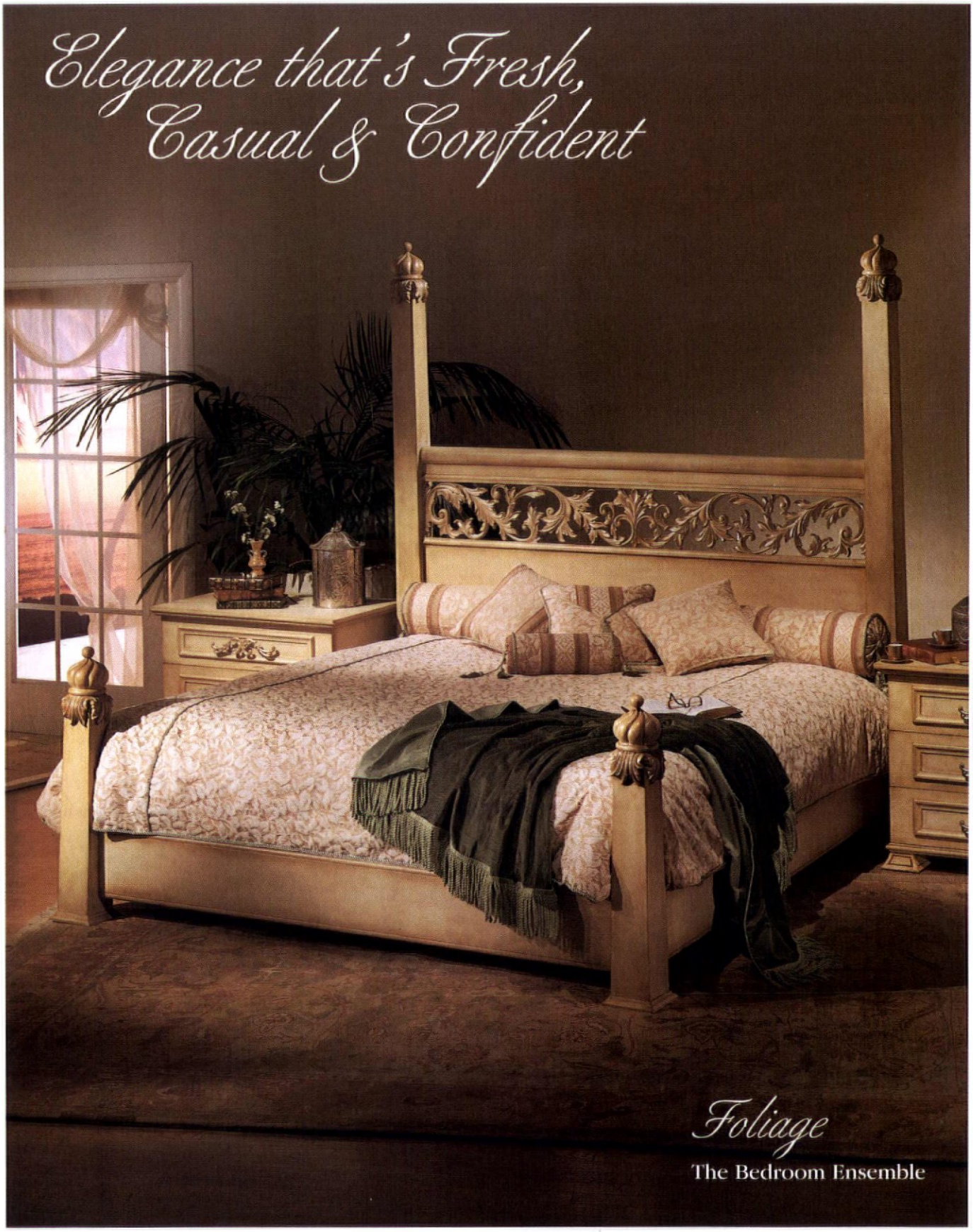

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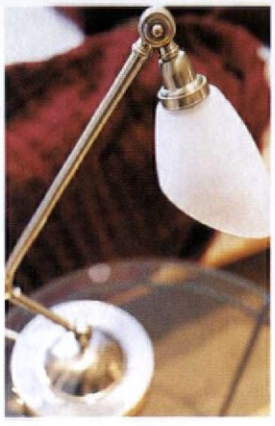


IT'S HIP! IT'S HOT! IT'S HARDWARE!

Shower Berets ($12) reads, "So practical, yet utterly absurd . . . the combination screams 'Yup, I love it!' "

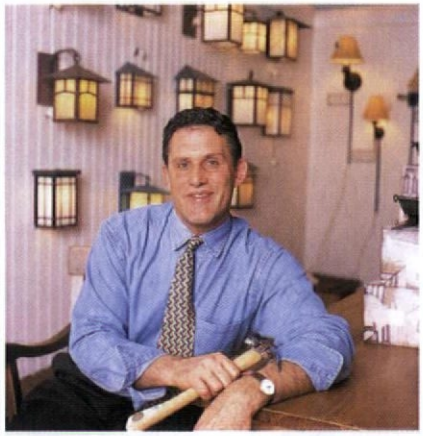
The folksy tone is not an affectation. Gordon has been able to preserve his gee-whiz perspective by maintaining his home base in Eureka, California, four hours north of San Francisco, where he lives with his wife, who is a school principal, and their three daughters. "I think it's an advantage for a retailer to live behind the iron curtain of the retail world," he says. "You don't see as many trends and you're not influenced by them, either negatively or positively."

Surely, a world-weary merchant could not even feign Gordon's enthusiasm for selling *A Little Book of Campfire Songs,* a $7.95 tome that is emblematic of the store's philosophy. "We've had good success with things that let people invent traditions or help them go back to doing things they used to do, or wish they used to do," he says, turning his attention to a pair of cut-glass saltcellars with tiny silver spoons ($12). Customers know he sells them because his mother (and mother-in-law) used cellars. "Buy these for your home," he writes in the catalogue. "It'll certainly gratify me that I'm helping to keep my mother's tradition." Gordon has learned that sentimentality sells. "You could call it manipulation," he says, "but it *is* of the heart."

Reliability and familiarity are also Restoration Hardware trademarks. Most items are stocked year-round, so you can buy fireplace tools in July and gardening gloves in January. While each store has a room called the library, which is stockpiled with books on architecture, design, woodworking, and gardening, there are also books in the sections devoted to the bedroom, the bathroom, the garden, and housecleaning. "Books add a sense of substance," says Gordon. "And for lack of a better term, they have become a decorative item. People do use them in that fashion."

Gordon's matter-of-fact attitude has allowed the stores to grow organically. "We started in furniture a few years ago because we needed something to use for display, and then people wanted to buy those pieces," he says. "It was that uncrafty of us."

Trusting his intuition, Gordon often buys products, like those little, hand-held mirrors ($3.50) that dentists use to examine molars, just because *he* likes them. "I always wanted one," he says. "I don't know why anyone else would want one, but they *do*." But then Gordon doesn't believe that shopkeeping is a science. As he says, "It's stupid, it's weird, it's retail."

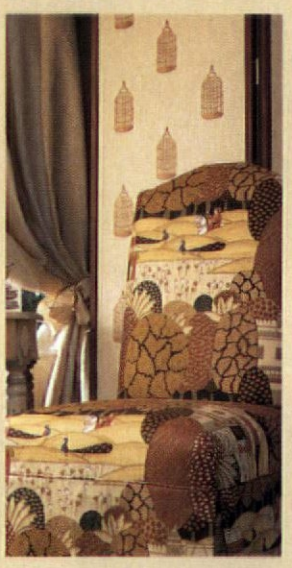


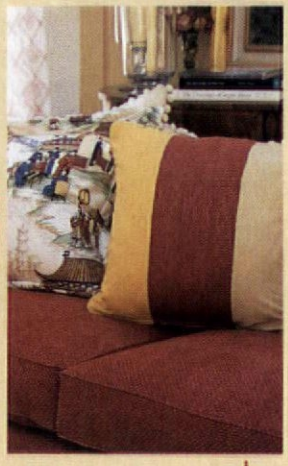
PERSONAL BEST Stephen Gordon, left, Restoration Hardware's CEO, personally approves every piece of merchandise that enters the store—from lamps to soap dishes. Items such as Dr. Benson's Plant Sprayer, top center, and the Tim Allen RRR Signature Hammer, above right, reflect Gordon's quirky sensibility. "We're not big on the hokeyness of celebrity endorsements," says Gordon of the hammer that is named for the *Home Improvement* TV star. "But it's a superb finish hammer, so we carry it."

TOP (4): DIEGO UCHITEL. BOTTOM: TOM WOLFF

JANE CHURCHILL

FABRICS AND WALLPAPERS *by Ann Grafton*





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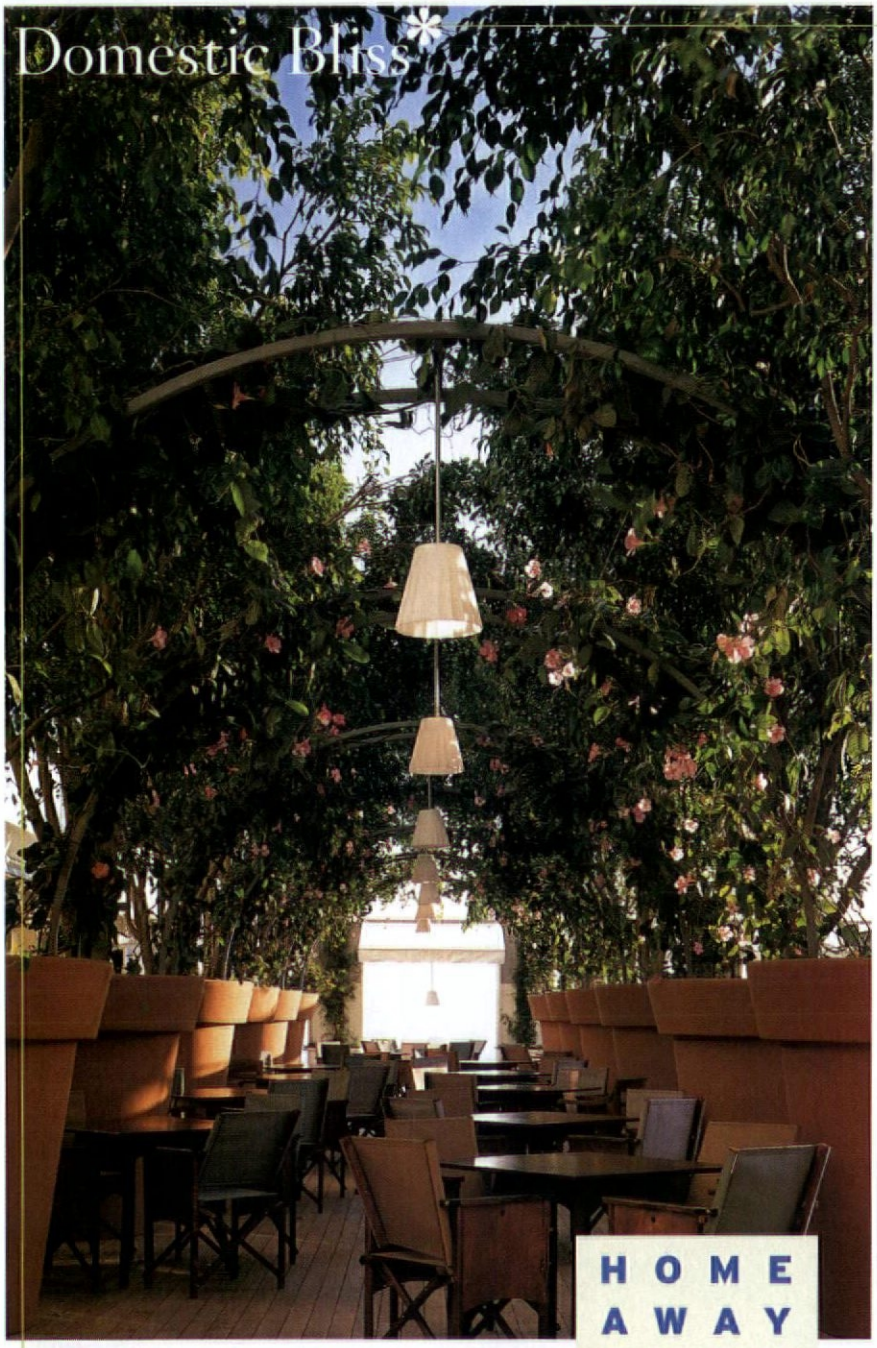

Schrager & Starck have done it again.

PHILIPPE STARCK, the designer, and Ian Schrager, the hotelier, have taken another lackluster hotel, Los Angeles's Mondrian, and transformed it into the quintessence of cool. Building on the success of their three previous collaborative hotel renovations–New York's Royalton (1988) and Paramount (1990), and Miami Beach's Delano (1995)–the duo has created a sybaritic resort on the congested Sunset Strip. Some S&S trademarks–all-white bedrooms, great lamps, a scene restaurant–will seem familiar to loyalists such as Calvin Klein, David Geffen, and Bianca Jagger. But even the most jaded travelers will be awed by the Mondrian's garden and its 19 Brobdingnagian terra-cotta pots, which are destined to become the must-have garden accessories for the summer of '97.

MOVABLE FEAST At L.A.'s new Mondrian Hotel, designed by Philippe Starck, above, guests can eat poolside, in the sleek dining room, or under an allée of ficus trees.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

TODD EBERLE

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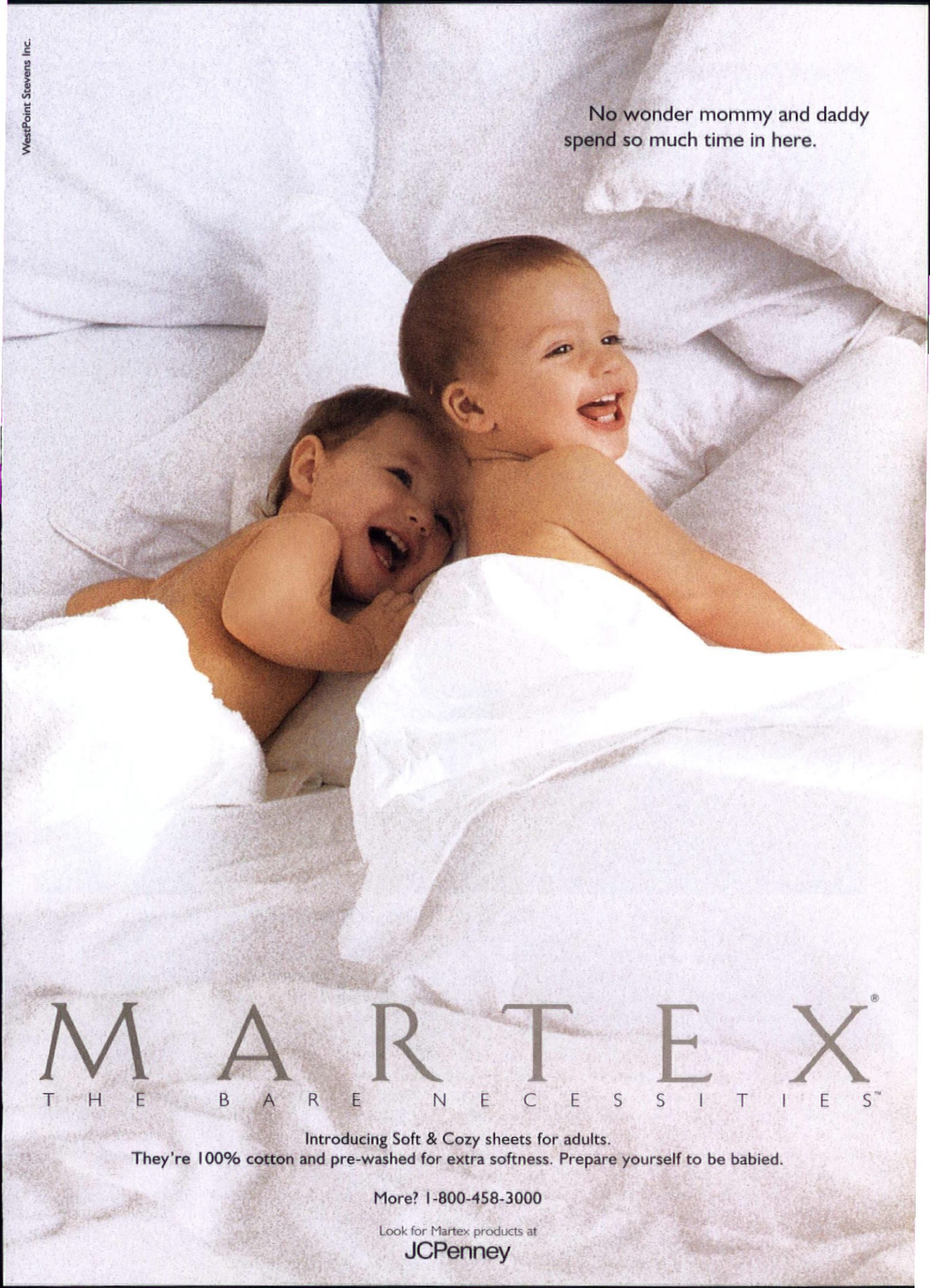

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PUBLIC WORKS

Divine Intervention

BY PETER HELLMAN

"IS THAT POISON IVY?" asks Bette Midler. It is, and lots of it, brushing at the famously tiny feet resting on an abandoned and overgrown stairway in Highbridge Park where it rises steeply over northern Manhattan's Harlem River Drive. Midler is wearing farmer's overalls, high-top shoes, and a tiny diamond at her neck. Before dusk comes, she wants to show a reporter a spectacular, yet forgotten, vista.

Poison ivy is a minor danger in this once elegant 119-acre park that is a draw for junkies, prostitutes, and car strippers. Next month, Midler will start a cleanup and restoration of this most rugged section of Highbridge Park, in partnership with New York's cash-strapped Parks Department. She'll do the work with her own money, her own crews, and her own hands, just as she has already done in several other bruised uptown parks. "We're here to fill in the blanks for the Parks Department," she explains. Since moving back to New York three years ago, Midler has become the most militant private defender of the city's besieged green zones.

Heading higher, she steps over the tattered bedding of a homeless person. In better days, the stairway's graceful iron railings would have steadied her ascent. Now they're bent, broken, jagged—but no matter. Midler, agile at age fifty-one, and not even puffing, keeps climbing. At last, she reaches her goal: a concrete ledge cantilevered over the Harlem River Valley. Here, the railings have been ripped away. So have the benches from which to admire the view. From a nearby bridge comes the thunder of heavy truck traffic. Even so, this unpeopled spot remains curiously calming. "Oh, it's beautiful here," says Midler. "Isn't it something?"

Her role in the Adopt-A-Highway program has been well

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PUBLIC WORKS

publicized: as local road signs proclaim, she sponsors stretches of busy parkways. But Midler doesn't advertise a far more personal and active instrument for environmental good works called the New York Restoration Project (NYRP). Her year-and-a-half-old creation is an offshoot of the California Environmental Project, which Midler supported for years. NYRP operates out of donated space at Wenner Media's midtown offices and at two uptown field sites. Under the direction of Joseph Pupello, a dancer and choreographer turned builder of community gardens, it employs a headquarters staff of four and a field crew of twenty-five. Midler foots most of the $500,000 annual bill. "I give a few times a year" is how she puts it. She never puts out a hand to the city, saying, "They'll give us the help we need so long as they know I'll never ask them for money."

Midler claims that urban greening wasn't on her agenda in 1965, when she arrived in New York from Hawaii. "I was too focused on my own ambition to notice anything else," she says. Eventually she moved west, but an almost twenty-year stint in Beverly Hills ended on the night in 1994 when the earthquake hit. That experience sent Midler, her husband, Martin von Haselberg, and daughter, Sophie, now nine, to New York, where they moved into a spacious downtown loft.

Midler was appalled at what she saw: litter everywhere. It was bad enough on the streets, worst of all in the parks. "I thought, *This is awful, this is horrible*. But, in terms of helping, I had no idea what the drill was." She sought out Parks Commissioner Henry Stern. "Lots of people come to me wanting to do something for the parks," he says. "Most of them are structure-minded. But Bette didn't want to build anything. She was focused on the landscape."

Midler made her energetic debut as Queen of Trash on a rainy Sunday in July 1995, under the George Washington Bridge in Fort Washington Park, a dumping ground for auto carcasses. A mountain of debris was removed that day. What Charles McKinney, Riverside Park administrator, remembers is that after most others had left, Midler continued to pick up litter for three hours. "So did I and my staff," says McKinney. "She led by example."

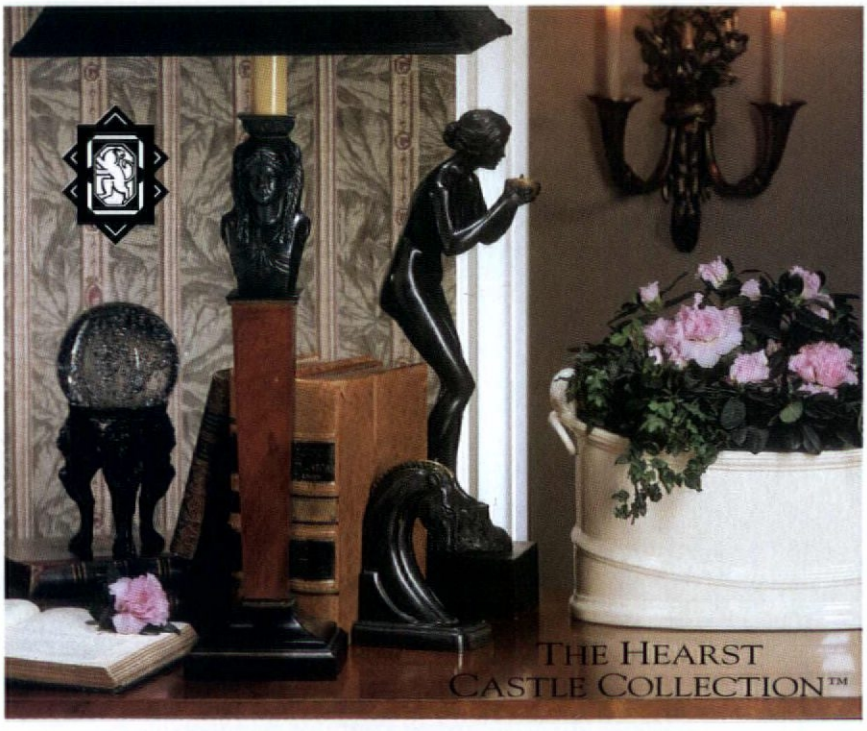
Seven days a week now, her antilitter patrol is at work. Its base, an old stone cottage uptown in Fort Tryon Park, is crammed with rakes, shovels, clippers, and piles of refuse bags. The restoration project closest to Midler's heart is a backwater of the Harlem River, Sherman Creek. Hidden behind an elementary school, it's not true parkland—just a patch of scrubby forest and glade leading down to the river. Pupello first took Midler to see it in 1995. "I got very excited," she says. "It was so wild, so beautiful . . . so trashed!" Masses of that trash—cans, bottles, a V8 engine—have been removed. A morass of rotting boats remains in the muck.

"We've been promised a barge and crane to remove all the old boats," says Midler. Turning to Pupello, she asks, "But when is it gonna get done? I feel like Lennie in that play. You know, *Of Mice and Men*. Tell me about the barge again, Joe. Tell me when it's gonna come. . . ."

When Sherman Creek is finally restored, it will be "a garden, a play center, even a beach," says Midler, with brassy confidence. Nature springs sneaky pleasures here: wild roses; a pair of cormorants perching on ancient pilings; a family of geese paddling silently by. Back at Fort Tryon Park, a magnolia tree has been planted. It's a gift from park personnel honoring Midler's late mother.

So intense is Midler's effort at greening the city that you have to wonder if it's cutting into her regular job as the Divine Miss M. "My husband says that if I keep up this way, I'm going to ruin my career," she says. Highly unlikely, but it's already bruited about that Midler could jump to a new career one day, as city parks commissioner. She could moonlight as a megastar.

Peter Hellman *is a contributing editor for* New York *magazine.*



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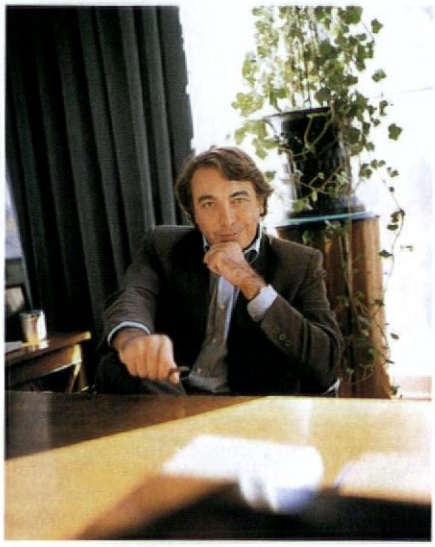
Sketches

The Boy from Brazil

Sig Bergamin isn't afraid of anything in decorating—except boredom

BY SUZANNE SLESIN



NORTHERN OPERATION Sig Bergamin, above, in his Madison Avenue office. The office's Murano glass chandelier and wood panel, left, are from Malmaison Antiques. The colorful fabrics, all from Le Décor Français, contrast with the sisal rug from Rosecore.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW HRANEK

ABUNDANCE SEEMS to be Sig Bergamin's theme—from the warm and generous manner with which he greets the world to the joy with which he approaches interior design. Bergamin, forty-two, who was born in Mirassol, near São Paolo, Brazil, was trained as an architect, and has been in business as an interior designer for twenty years. "In Brazil, I am very famous, very eclectic," says the ebullient Bergamin, who opened a Manhattan office five years ago. These days, he juggles apartment, restaurant, and nightclub projects in both North and South America. Bergamin's U.S. career took off when visitors to the 1993 Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club Decorator Show House in Manhattan were charmed by the dining room he designed, which had walls covered in a vibrant patchwork of floral fabrics. Two years later, his attic bedroom in the 1995 Rogers Memorial Library show house in Southampton, Long Island, drew wish-we-could-move-right-in comments from visitors to the rambling summer cottage.

Bergamin, who now lists Manhattan restaurants Mezze, Bar Anise, and Matthew's on his résumé, as well as apartments and houses in Connecticut and Florida, Paris and Madrid, approaches each job with the same unabashed enthusiasm. "All the time, I like a mix," he says. "I like Casablanca,

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Sketches

Anglo-Indian, the fifties, the forties, English and French country, flea markets, all styles." His dream is to have five houses, so that he can decorate each one differently. "Now I like Africa," he adds. "I travel, and I buy books, all the books, all the magazines. It's what I've been doing since I am sixteen years old."

His small suite of offices on Manhattan's Upper East Side is a miniature repository for his wide-ranging decorative interests: yellow-vinyl-upholstered Eames chairs, colorful Murano glass vases, a Noguchi table. "I'm not afraid of color, and I like to mix fabrics, of course," says Bergamin, who has his own rating system for such choices. "I don't like things in-between," he says. "In everything I do, I'm an eight or an eighty, never a forty."

GLASS AND CLASS Bergamin found the Charles Eames chair covered in yellow vinyl, left, one of a pair, in Miami. The lamp, with its pineapple-shaped base, is from Maimaison Antiques; the fringed ottoman beneath the table is from Le Décor Français. The brightly hued and unusually shaped Murano glass vases from the 1940s and 1950s represent years of collecting at flea markets and antique shows. "I have a lot, a lot of Muranos, everywhere," Bergamin says. A series of architectural prints Bergamin assembled during his many stays in Brazil, Italy, and the U.S. hangs on the wall.

RECEPTION LINES The reception area of the small office has walls covered in a Clarence House striped fabric, left and right. The Jansen embossed-velvet screen seen through the door at left is from Maimaison Antiques. The coffee table, found in Miami, is by Isamu Noguchi. Bergamin's assistant's chair, right, is a leather-and-chrome office chair designed by Charles Pollock, from Knoll. The white pedestal table by Eero Saarinen, a vintage Knoll design, was also found in Miami. The large painting is by Sergio Ferro, a Brazilian artist. Books are piled on a stool that Bergamin brought back from Morocco. Sources, see back of book.

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Blueprint

Last of the True Believers

With cosmic confidence and energy to match, Gian Franco Brignone has graced Mexico's Pacific Coast with "a miracle" BY JAMES REGINATO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANITA CALERO • PRODUCED BY BETSY FIFIELD

SOL DE ORIENTE One of two identical houses that were built by Brignone on a bay "as perfect as an angel's wing."

THE ADJECTIVE "QUIXOTIC" might fit Gian Franco Brignone like a glove—except that his seemingly impossible dream has in fact been realized. Costa Careyes, a private development by Brignone, rises along a wild and beautiful stretch of Mexico's Pacific Coast.

"C'è una storia del amore" is how he explains the genesis of the project. Born in Turin to a wealthy banking family, the septuagenarian describes himself as an "adventurer." With a mane of tousled silver hair and a gold-rimmed monocle, he appears both elegant and slightly wild. While there are a number of chapters to his early life, first in Italy and then in France, where he spent twenty years, he has for three decades now pursued his passion in Mexico. "And when you're in love, you give everything!" he continues. "All your energy, your mind, your youth. . . . This is the story of Careyes. *Un miràcolo!*"

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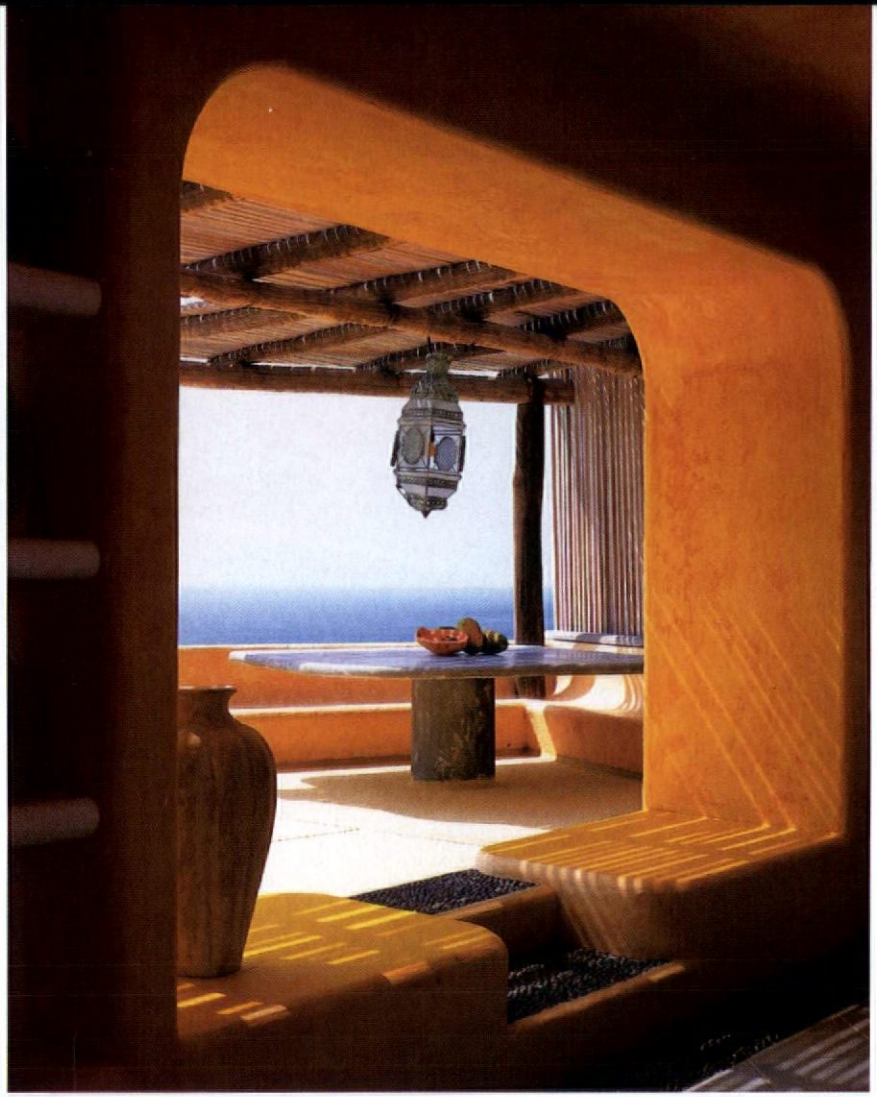


OPEN TO THE ELEMENTS Sol de Oriente takes advantage of the Mexican coast's climate: above, a loggia looks out to the Pacific; below left, the house, surrounded by its "floating" pool; below right, entry courtyard walls recall the work of Luis Barragán.

The tale begins on July 2, 1968. While flying over Mexico's Pacific Coast in a single-engine plane, Brignone beheld "the most beautiful place on earth"—a coastline dotted with hidden bays, one of which, he recalls clearly, "was as perfect as an angel's wing."

Returning to earth, Brignone set off on horseback to explore the terrain, which lies between Manzanillo and Puerto Vallarta. "There were no roads. I had to open the way with a machete," he boasts. Eventually, Brignone acquired 6,000 acres, a good portion of which he has turned into a nature reserve to protect the native turtle population (*careyes* is the Spanish word for turtles). He has also built a resort, a polo club, and a number of spectacular houses along the cliffs. Many of these have been sold to friends he has lured to the area. Friend or stranger, everybody is simpatico, he emphasizes. "The people who live here are the great travelers, the princes of the present and the future, artists and polyglots!"

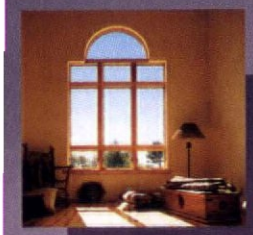
Brignone's latest feat is a pair of houses, the Casas del Sol, which face each other across a bay—the one as perfect as the angel's wing he glimpsed from the sky. With typical swagger, he predicts that the two dwellings will emerge as "the most significant houses of the entire century."

The first stone was laid on March 13, 1995, at exactly 4:45 P.M., when Brignone believed the moon and Mars were aligned. "Astrologers know that if you begin something at that moment, that thing will be fulfilled," he explains. As it happened, the skies darkened and poured rain during the groundbreaking, an exceptionally rare occurrence in Careyes. "The workers all knelt down and prayed," Brignone recalls solemnly.

Think what you will of Brignone's brand of mysticism, he did produce twin marvels. Collaborating with a French architect, Jean-Claude Galibert, and a team of local craftsmen who worked entirely by hand, Brignone blended the best of traditional Mexican architecture with modern technology. The roofs are thatched palapa. The towering support columns inside the open, soaring-height great rooms are concrete. Swimming pools wrap moatlike around the houses. Open to the elements, the dwellings take full advantage of the area's exceptional microclimate. Rain usually falls only about twenty days a year.

With its series of protected, unexpected courtyards and their linking corridors, the architecture clearly recalls the work of Luis Barragán, who made walls works of art. Here, unlike Barragán's stark planes, nearly every wall is curved. There are few right angles or hard edges. Immured within the Casas del Sol, one experiences a magical play of perspective.

Architecturally, the twin houses are identical. They differ in ornamentation, however. Sol de Oriente—which is pictured on these three pages—is an homage to the East, while Sol de Occidente pays tribute to the opposite hemisphere. Sol de Occidente "represents a culture of strength and sensitivity," Brignone says, while Sol de Oriente "symbolizes an intellectual, mystical civilization." In the latter, for example, the swirling Byzantine-style pattern of the entry courtyard was inspired by Venice's



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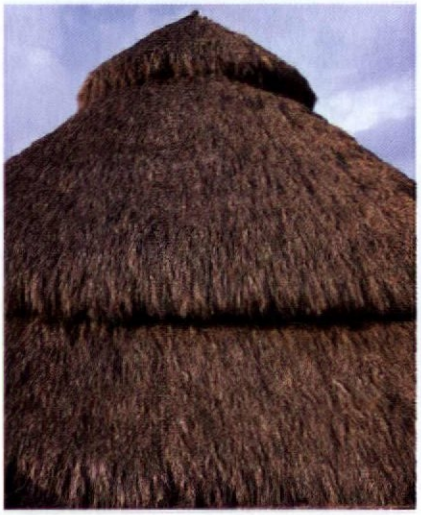
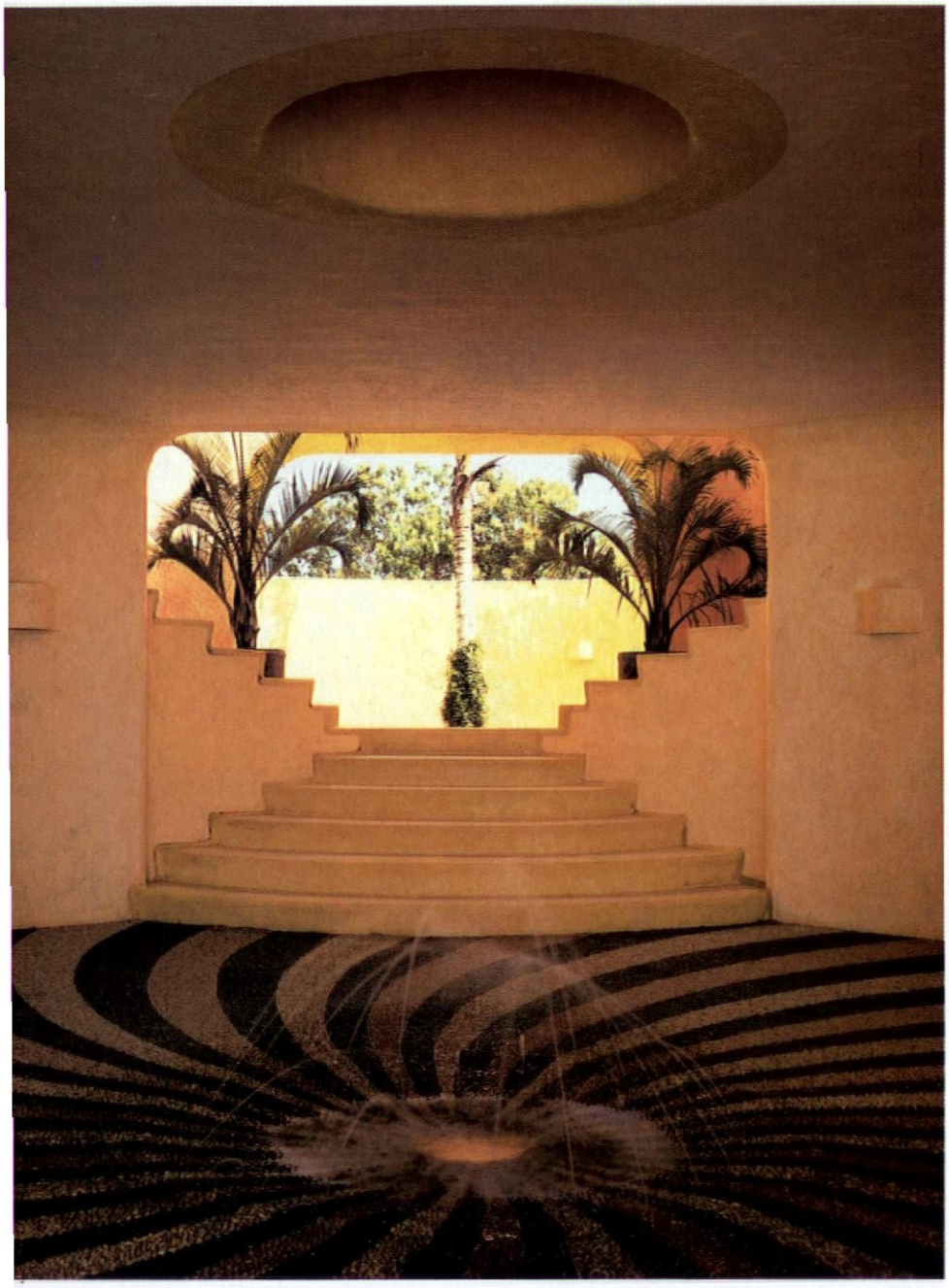
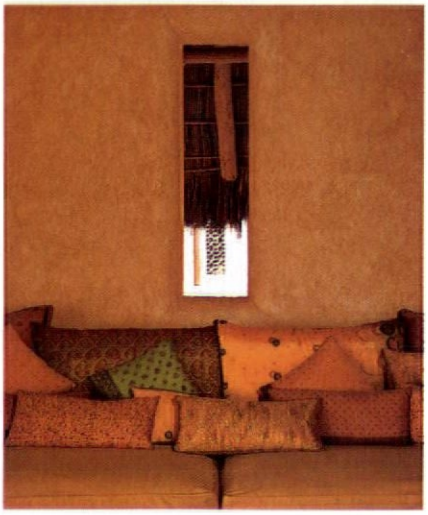
Basilica of San Marco, although the stones themselves come from the local beaches. "I wanted to give a message to the world—that these two great civilizations will one day unite in peace," Brignone opines.

Nearby, he has constructed a crenelated tower that houses a guest suite. He says, "It is like a stairway leading from heaven to earth."

Brignone has also taken the liberty of placing a meteor at a point in the bay exactly equidistant between the two houses.





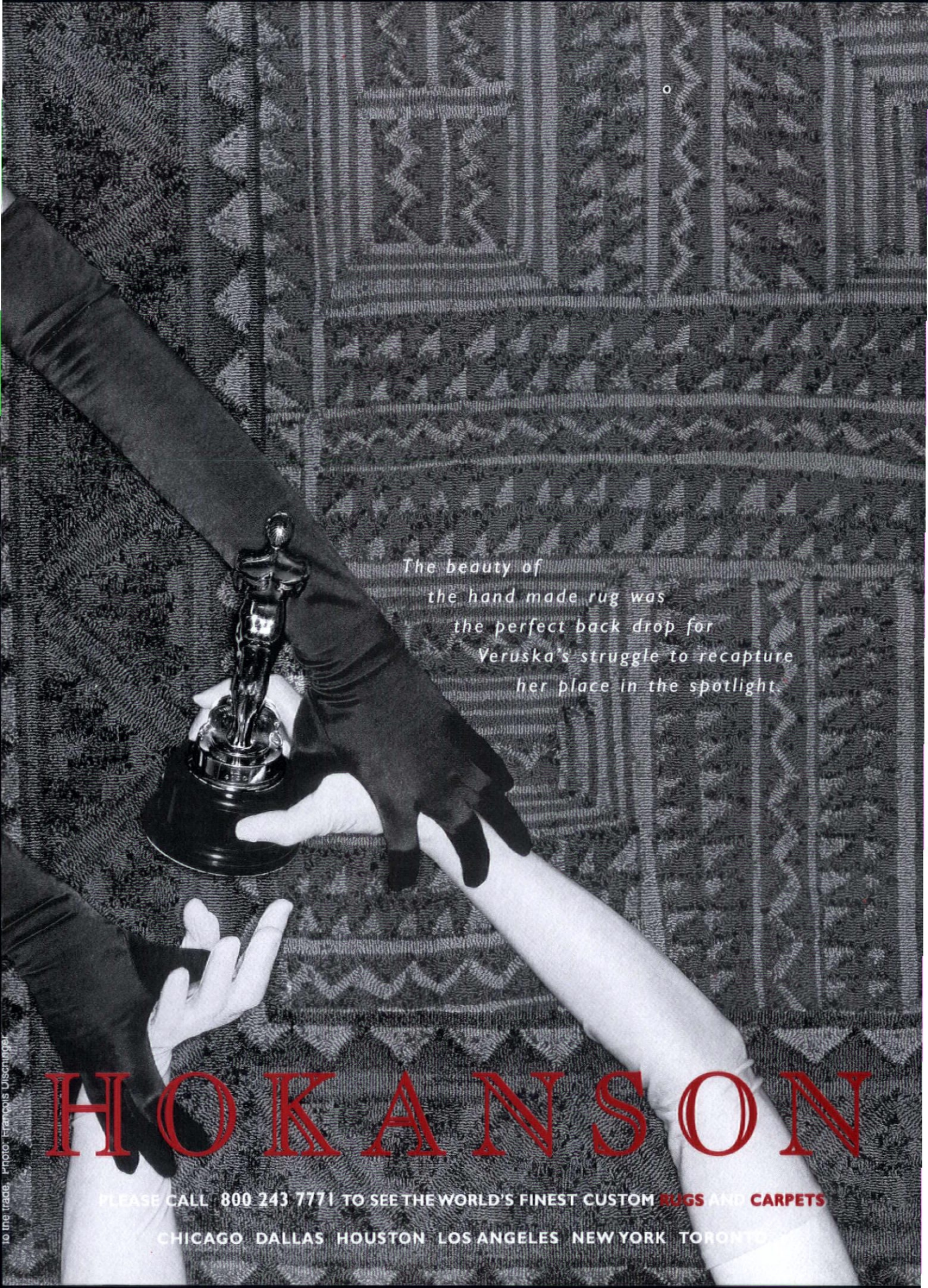


OLD WORLD IN THE NEW Clockwise from left: Sol de Oriente's courtyard, its swirling Byzantine-style pattern inspired by Venice's Basilica of San Marco but made of stone from local beaches; the thatched palapa roof, exterior and interior; and one of the bedrooms, the only enclosed spaces in both the dwellings.

For those in need of dialogue more worldly than spiritual, Brignone has installed a discreet state-of-the-art communications system throughout the Careyes development: with fiber-optic telephone lines, the place is completely on-line.

"I did something nobody else in the world has," exults Brignone about his creation of, as he sees it, paradise on earth. "And I continue to be in love. Otherwise I wouldn't do it. Careyes is an ongoing love story."

James Reginato *is an editor-at-large of this magazine.*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PHOTOGRAPHS BY GABRIELLA IMPERATORI PENN

Like Wynken,

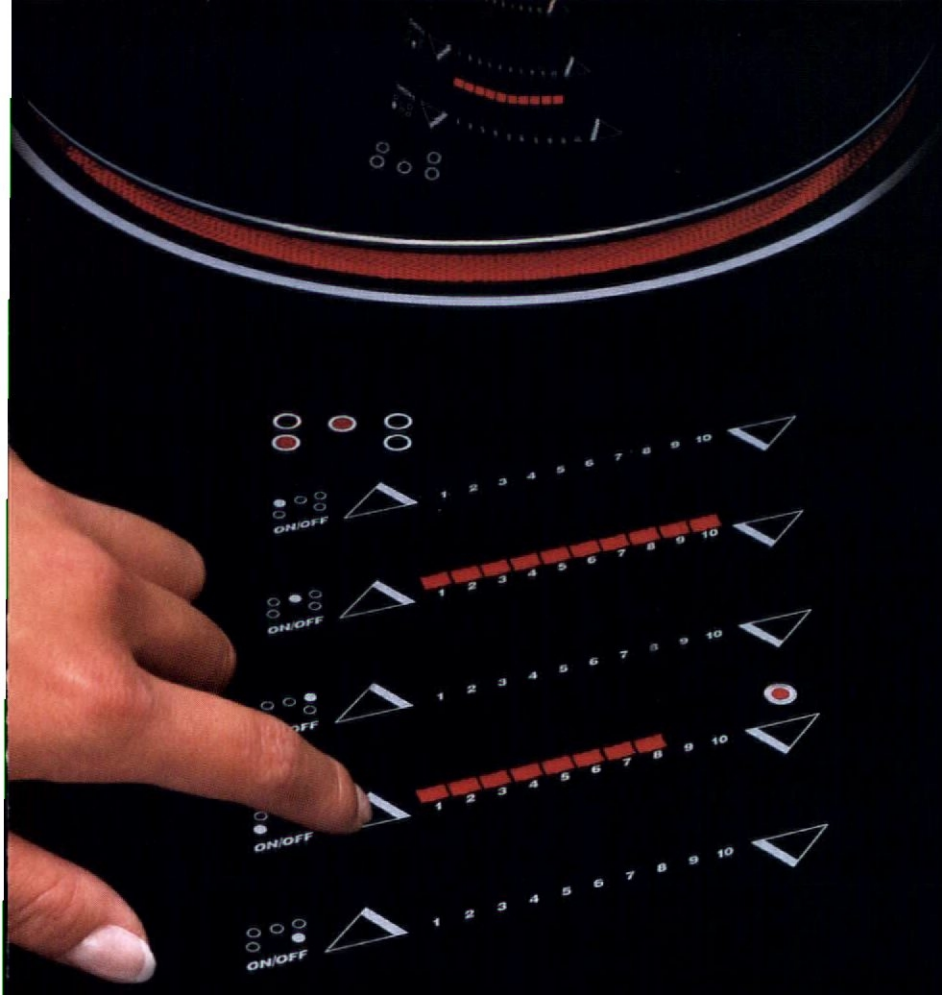
Blynken, and Nod, this menagerie ~ fish, a beaver, an elephant ~ sails off on a river of crystal light

Clockwise from bottom: Pâte de verre alligator and rhinoceros, $1,190 and $1,670, by Daum. Java elephant, $3,455, by Lalique, 800-993-2580.

From left: Standing and supine otters, $220/each, by Baccarat at Gump's, 800-766-7628. Ursus bear, $815, by Lalique. Beaver, $995, by Steuben, 800-424-4240. Sources, see back of book.

March Comes In Like a Lion...

THE MANE ATTRACTION Wake up a room with the roar of pattern. "Animal prints are the icing on the cake," says New York decorator Thomas Fleming. Wrap a pillow, drape an ottoman, or upholster a side chair with a member of the court shown above. Or make a throne of Scalamandré's Coeur de Lion and be the king of your indoor jungle. "But cover a wall with a lion print," Fleming warns, "and it gets redundant and loses its punch." The key is to focus on scale and the nature of the beast. "If you use a large lion on a sofa," advises Los Angeles decorator Maxine Smith, "keep the other patterns in the room small. The big pattern should always be in control." But as with a well-planned zoo, each animal should be put in the proper place. Brunschwig & Fils's whimsical El Re Leon, for instance, is playful in a child's bedroom; but in a dining room, calm the feeding frenzy with Fortuny's elegant blue and gold Richelieu print.



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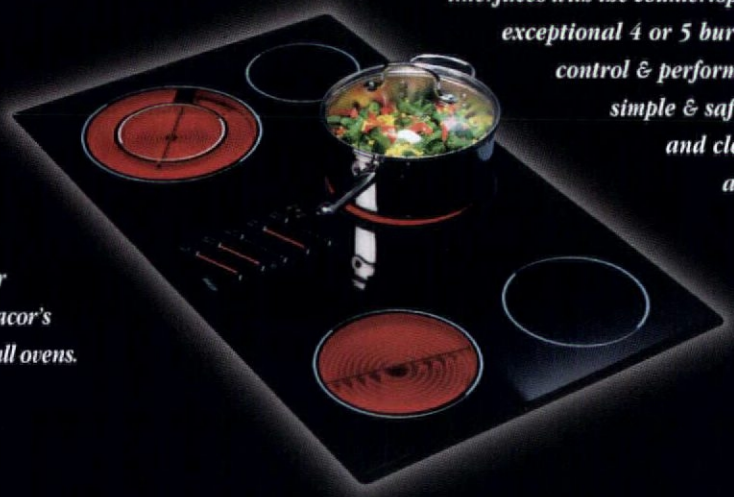

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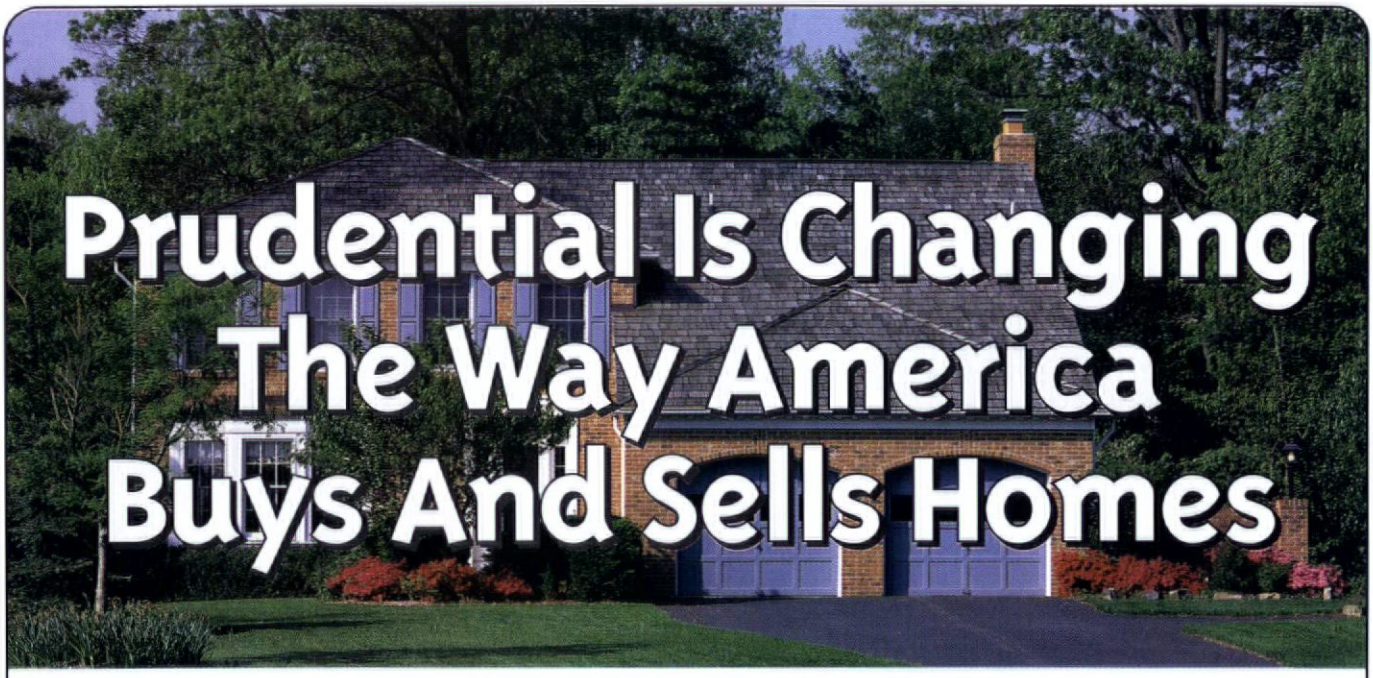
...And Goes Out Like Lamb's Wool

EWE BETTER BELIEVE IT Wool, no longer the province of winter, is brighter, lighter, and more versatile than ever. For John Barman, an interior decorator in New York, the charm is its texture. "I used a pink plaid to cover a sofa in a library dominated by a stone floor and fireplace," he says. "The wool really softened up the edges and gave the room warmth." Mary Douglas Drysdale, a Washington, D.C., interior designer, favors it for curtains: the tight weave muffles noise. In Chicago, interior decorator Alessandra Branca gives dining rooms an impression of depth by putting wool damasks on the wall. "It would be great to do a nursery in wool," Branca suggests. "It's a fabric a child can grow up with." The material is resilient, absorbent, and a good insulator—and not just practical. "There's an unmistakable luxury with wool," says Atlanta decorator Nancy Braithwaite, "and it takes color like nothing else." Don't be sheepish, give it a spin. —LYGEIA GRACE

SOURCES, SEE BACK OF BOOK



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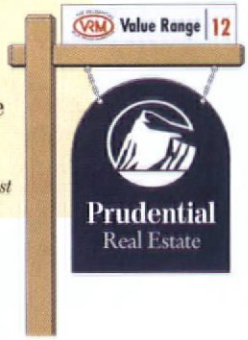

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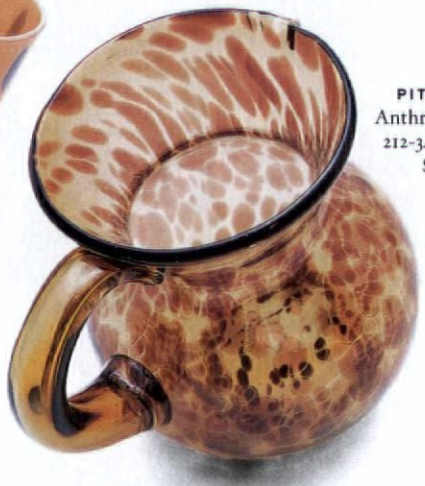

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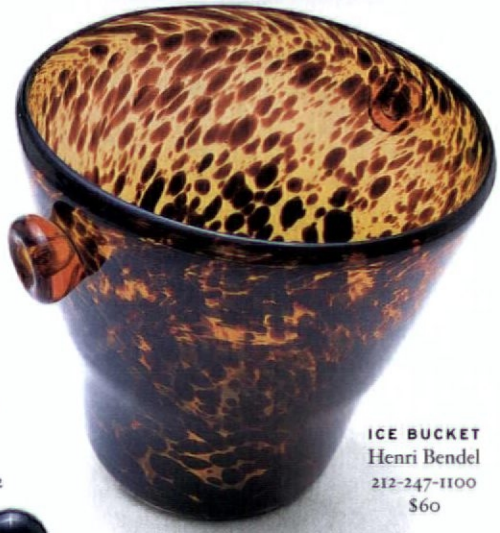

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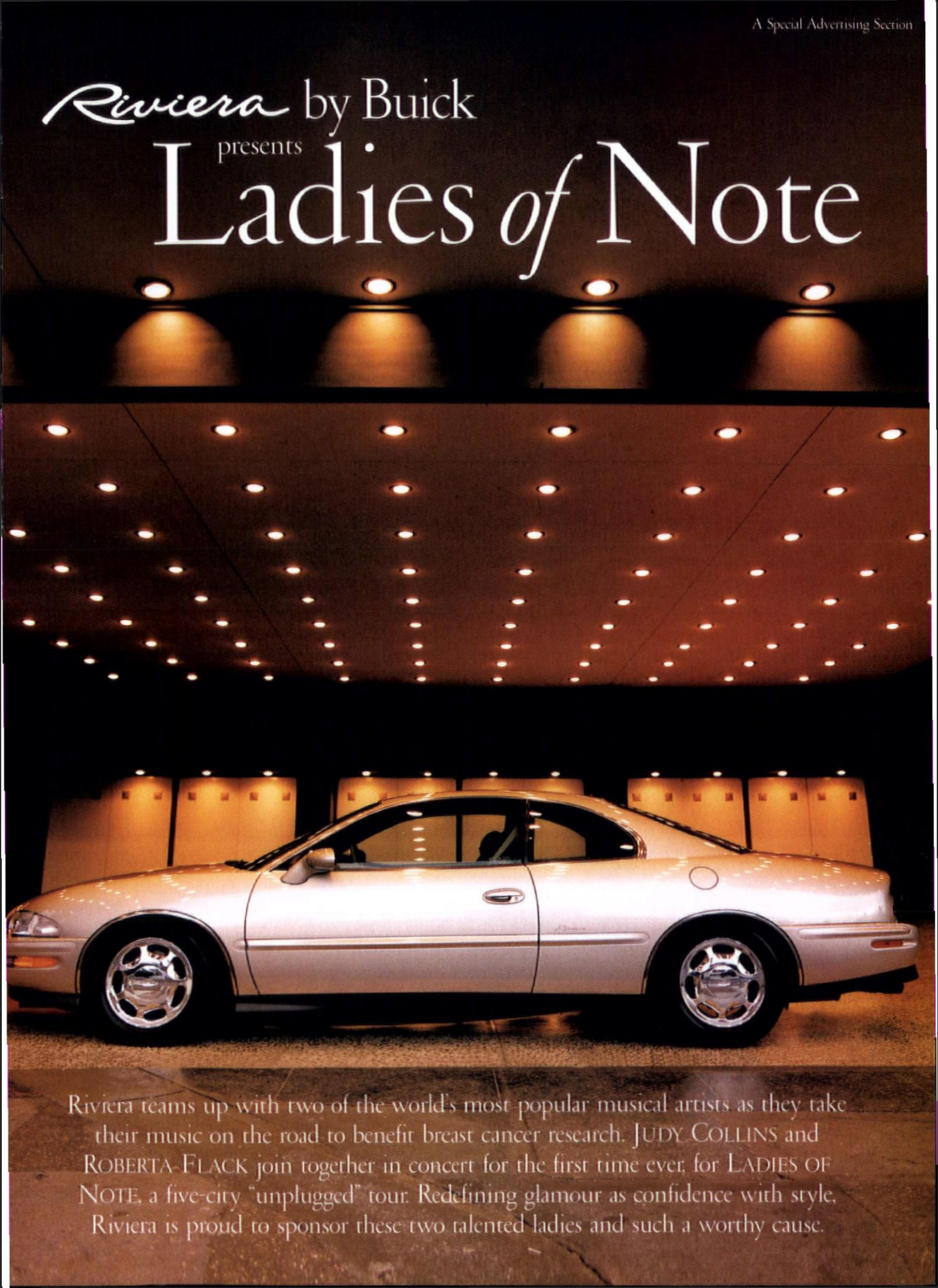
SHELL GAME Lately, we've been seeing spots. Although items made of real tortoiseshell—the mottled, yellow-and-brown plate covering the hawksbill turtle—cannot easily be brought into this country (the hawksbill is endangered), the material's popularity has spawned a number of imitations with the exotic, macho charm of the original. Sources, see back of book. —AMY CRAIN

Riviera by Buick presents Ladies of Note



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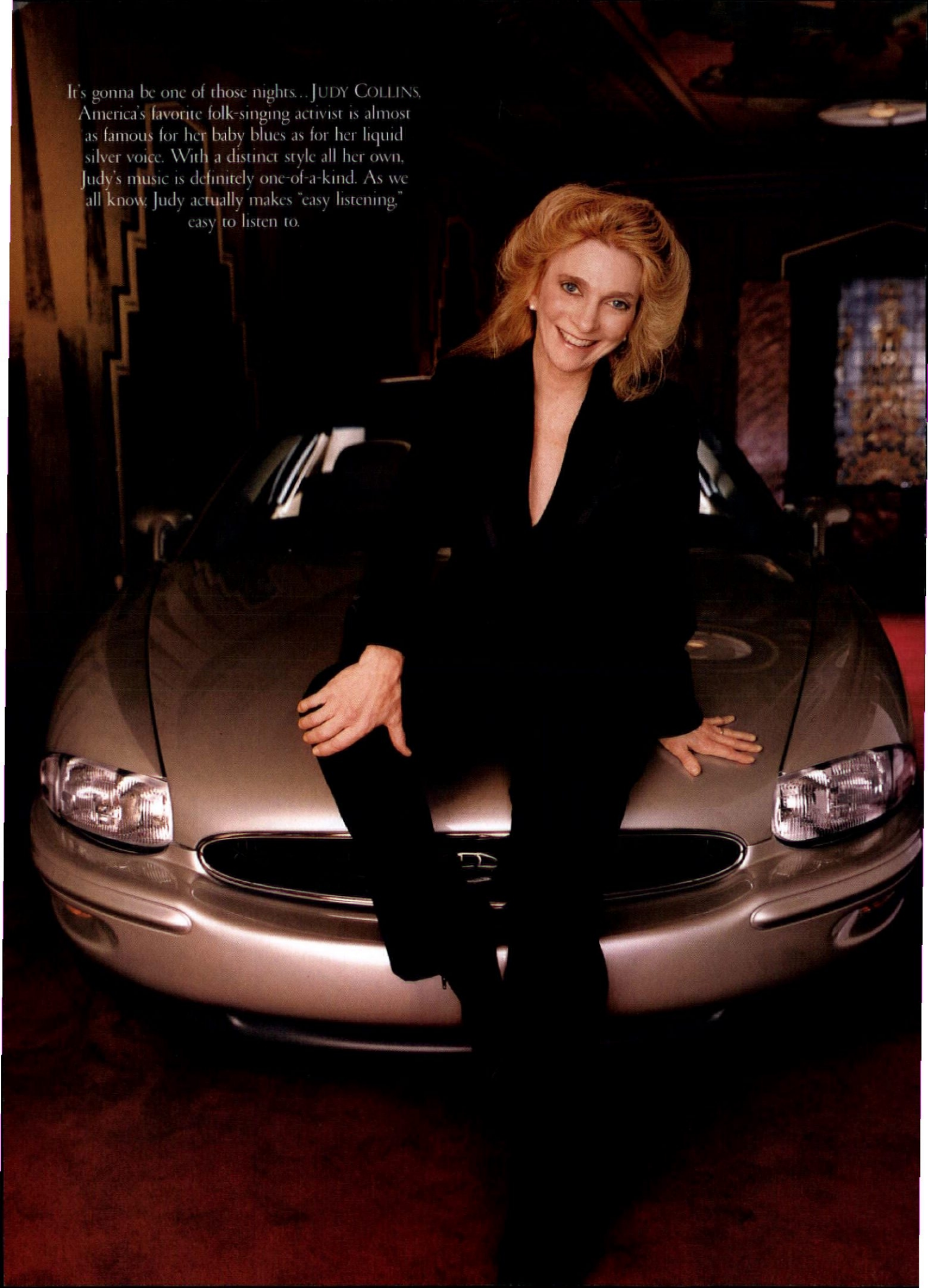
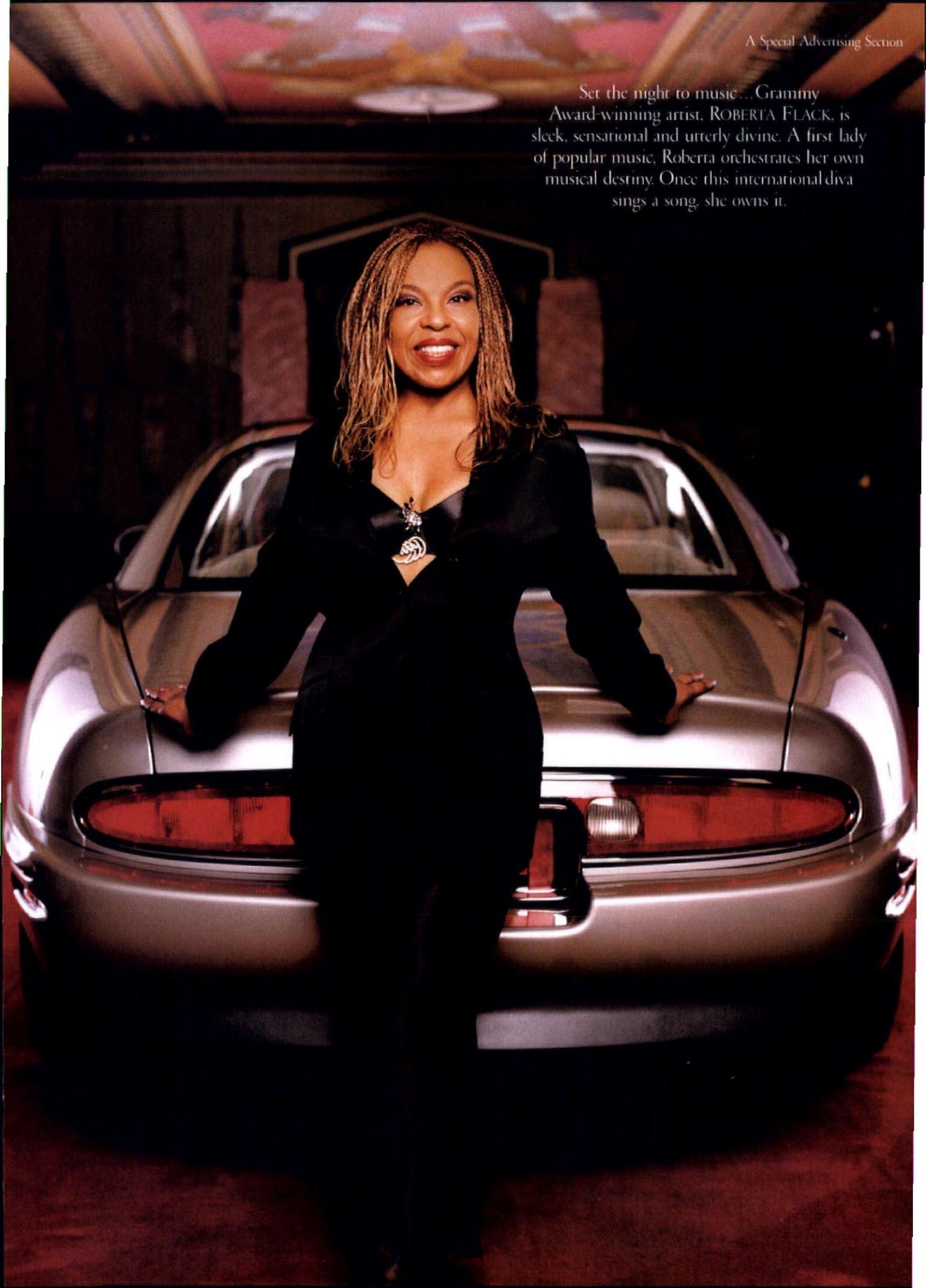


It's gonna be one of those nights... JUDY COLLINS, America's favorite folk-singing activist is almost as famous for her baby blues as for her liquid silver voice. With a distinct style all her own, Judy's music is definitely one-of-a-kind. As we all know, Judy actually makes "easy listening" easy to listen to.



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Riviera by Buick presents JUDY COLLINS and ROBERTA FLACK

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Dig It
Hedging His Bets

Marc De Winter has made the best of all possible gardens—green in summer, coppery in winter, mysterious to children, evocative to grown-ups **BY TOM CHRISTOPHER**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIJKE HENFF

LOCAL HISTORY Marc De Winter's sculpted beech hedges recall the traditional enclosures for farmland near his native Antwerp.

A LABYRINTH IS A PUZZLE, and Belgian garden architect Marc De Winter's carefully clipped garden on the outskirts of Antwerp is no exception. Assembled from diverse pieces, it is designed to be observed and enjoyed on several levels.

From a child's perspective (and De Winter is the father of three), the hedges rise up to become a maze in which blind turns lead through rooms filled with flowers or herbs, or into an expanse of boxwood topiaries set in sand: a sandbox in the grand style.

Adults stand taller, and what they see is an abstract composition in homage to contemporary Belgian and Dutch artists Camiel Van Breedam, Bram Bogart, and Anton Heyboer, whose paintings De Winter collects. But those who know the Flemish countryside will also find connections to its past here.

De Winter was born in the farmhouse on the property, and when he set about creating the garden, he framed it in the beech hedges that are the traditional enclosures for the local farmers' fields. Even the pleached arches over the entrances to each of the labyrinth's rooms—portals formed by bending and tying in flexible, young beech shoots—derive from a technique that Flemish peasants have used for centuries to

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patch gaps in their living fences.

De Winter teaches classes in design at his home, and for his students, the garden is a particularly ingenious demonstration of the use of color. The perennials are luminous in summer, the beech leaves turn a delicate copper in fall, and when the weather is clear, the family laundry is spread on the hedges to dry. De Winter so admires the effect of the clothing's haphazard, many-hued patches that sometimes he spreads a load specially before a visitor arrives.

BORDERLANDS Borrowing from an old rural tradition of pleaching, De Winter has formed his trees into living architecture, above. In addition to its stunning palette of copper and green, an abstract pattern of boxwood topiaries, left, betrays the gardener's other life as a collector of contemporary Belgian and Dutch art. The blue spires of delphinium, below, offer a cool contrast to the green foliage during the summer months.

PLANT IT YOURSELF

PLEACHED WORK—architecture formed of living trees—possesses a whimsical elegance no other garden feature can match. Yet it is also practical. Unlike a wooden or masonry arch, a pleached structure grows stronger with age. And once complete, the living arch requires only a few hours of care annually.

CHOOSING PLANTS Your patience should dictate your choice of plants. European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) or hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) make enduring arches but are slow-growing; buckthorn and privet are fast-growing and easy to pleach, but also short-lived. The best evergreens for this purpose are the upright yews (*Taxus*) and the more vigorous hollies (*Ilex*).

PLANTING Set the two trees that will form the arch at least six feet apart; if set too close, the trees will close the passage as they increase in girth. The taller the arch, the farther apart the trees should be set, as thicker walls give an appearance of stability to the taller structure.

CUTTING BACK Immediately after planting (in early spring), cut back the treetops by a third to encourage bushy growth. Erect a temporary frame of one-inch in diameter aluminum electrical conduit pipe to define the curve along which the trees must grow. Bend it to shape, and then anchor it by slipping the ends over steel rods driven deep into the ground.

TYING UP While the trees' new growth is still flexible, tie upward-reaching shoots to the frame with a soft, nonabrasive twine, such as jute.

TRAINING GROWTH Each spring cut back the previous year's growth by a third. Lightly trim the side growth again in early summer.

FUSING THE ARCH When the treetops meet at the arch's peak, score the bark of the topmost shoot of each tree lengthwise with a sharp knife. Then, twist the two shoots one full turn around each other, and wrap them with electrician's tape. Within a year, the shoots should have fused and the tape may be removed. As the living frame strengthens, remove the pipe frame.

Tom Christopher *is a writer and horticulturist, whose most recent book, with Marty Asher, is* The 20-Minute Gardener.

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Glass House Frontier

Michael and Frances Higgins are still turning out the handcrafted objects that made them pioneers in the studio-glass movement

BY MITCH TUCHMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW HRANEK

ONLY THE NIMBLEST OF CHAMPIONS run with their laurels instead of resting on them. At eighty-eight and eighty-four respectively, designer-craftsmen Michael and Frances Higgins are nimbly fusing colorful sheets of enameled glass into shimmering works of art, just as they have done for the past forty-seven years.

Bowls of varying capacities; chargers of varying diameters; ashtrays, relish trays, and trivets; vases, wall pockets, and covered boxes; pastel mobiles and brilliantly colored screens composed of the panes the Higginses call roundelays; jewelry and Christmas ornaments—their production is as vast as their technique is consistent. "Rather than elaborating on the medium, for forty-seven years we've worked at our particular version," Michael Higgins says. "That's fine with us. That's the way we want it."

Think of a piece of Higgins as an enamel sandwich on two slices of glass. From bins of panes, each silk-screened with enamel on one side in one of thirty colors, a single sheet is selected, cut to size, and decorated on the silk-screened surface. A second sheet, clear or enameled in another color, is laid, enamel-side down, on top of the first. This unbaked sandwich is placed in a clay or steel mold inside a kiln. The kiln's heat fuses the sheets of glass, and they "slump" into the mold, be it a shallow tray or deep vase.

Their modes of decoration are distinct. Frances's are mainly calligraphic, copied in liquid enamels from scores of filigreed patterns worked out years ago: tightly coiled spirals, arabesques, and complicated geometrics in black or in vivid colors, frequently overpainted more randomly in gold. They also include the shapes, in powdered enamels, of dried organisms. Michael's are entirely different: radiating compositions of glass scraps, they seem to grow ever more kaleidoscopic with the passing years.

COLOR FIELDS Forty-five square glass "roundelays" made by the Higginses form this brilliantly hued screen, measuring four feet wide by seven feet tall.

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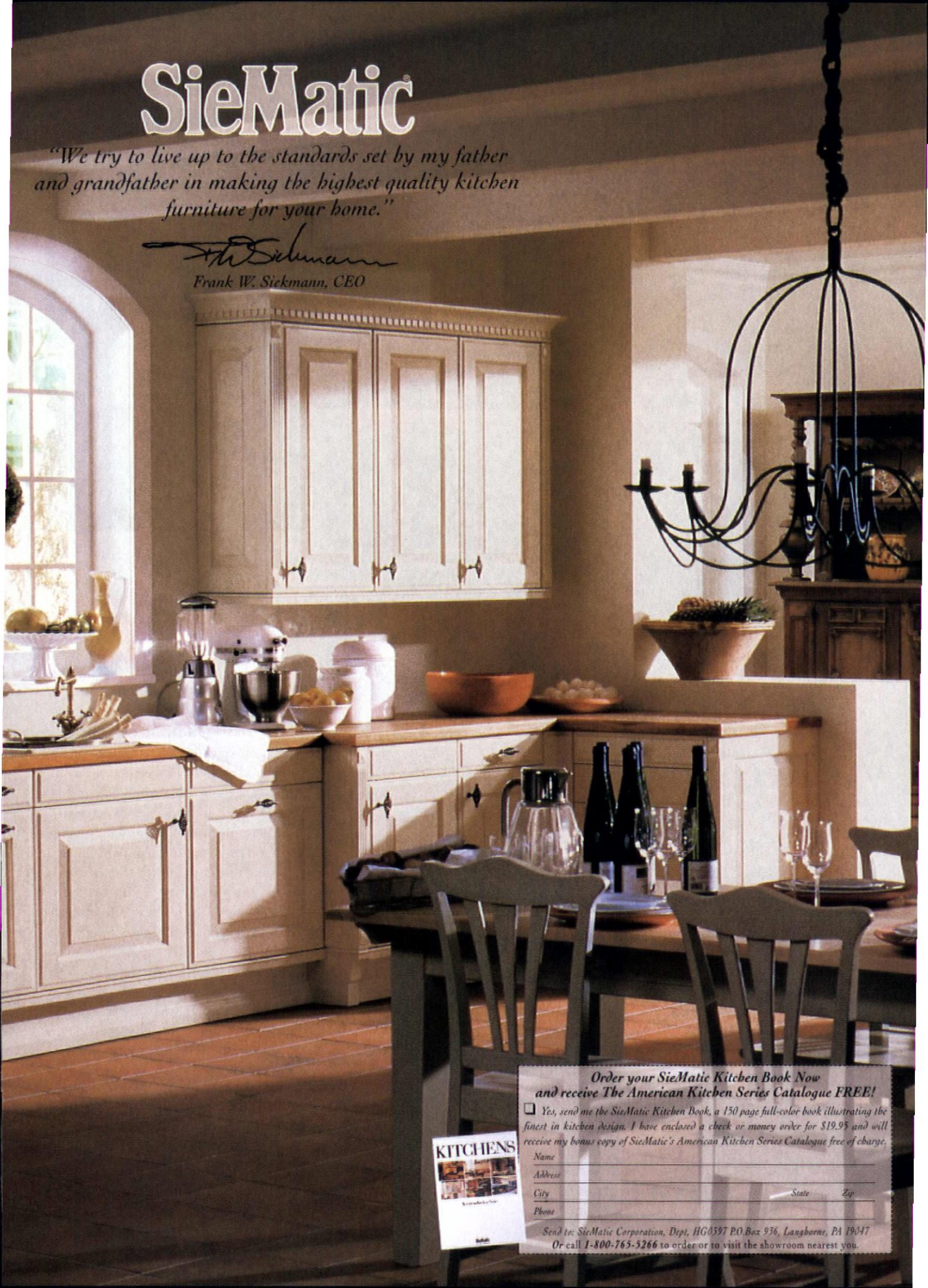

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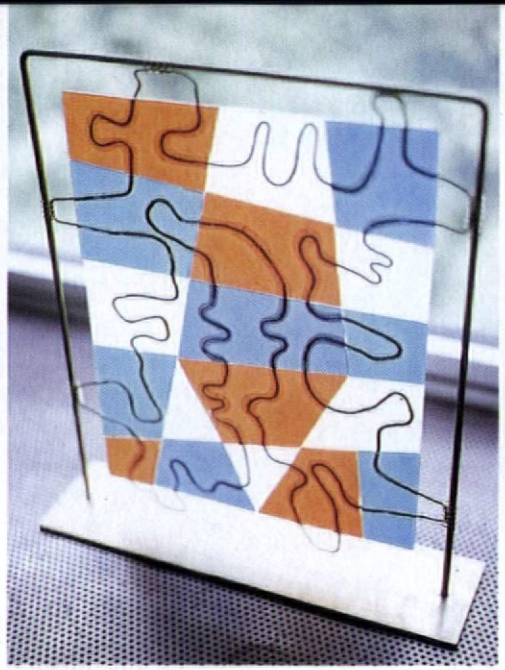
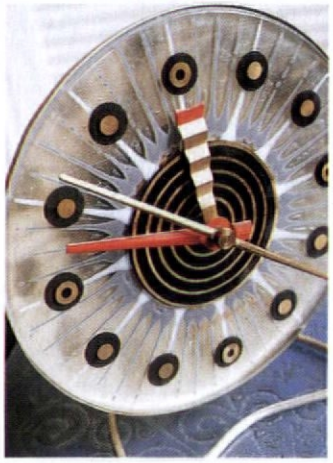




GLASS WORKS Clockwise from top left corner: Tabletop made for collector Dennis Carl Hopp (1991); sculpture, *Dances With Dogs* (ca. 1994); Frances and Michael Higgins; clock manufactured for General Electric (ca. 1954); jewelry made by Frances; decorative bowl. Sources, see back of book.

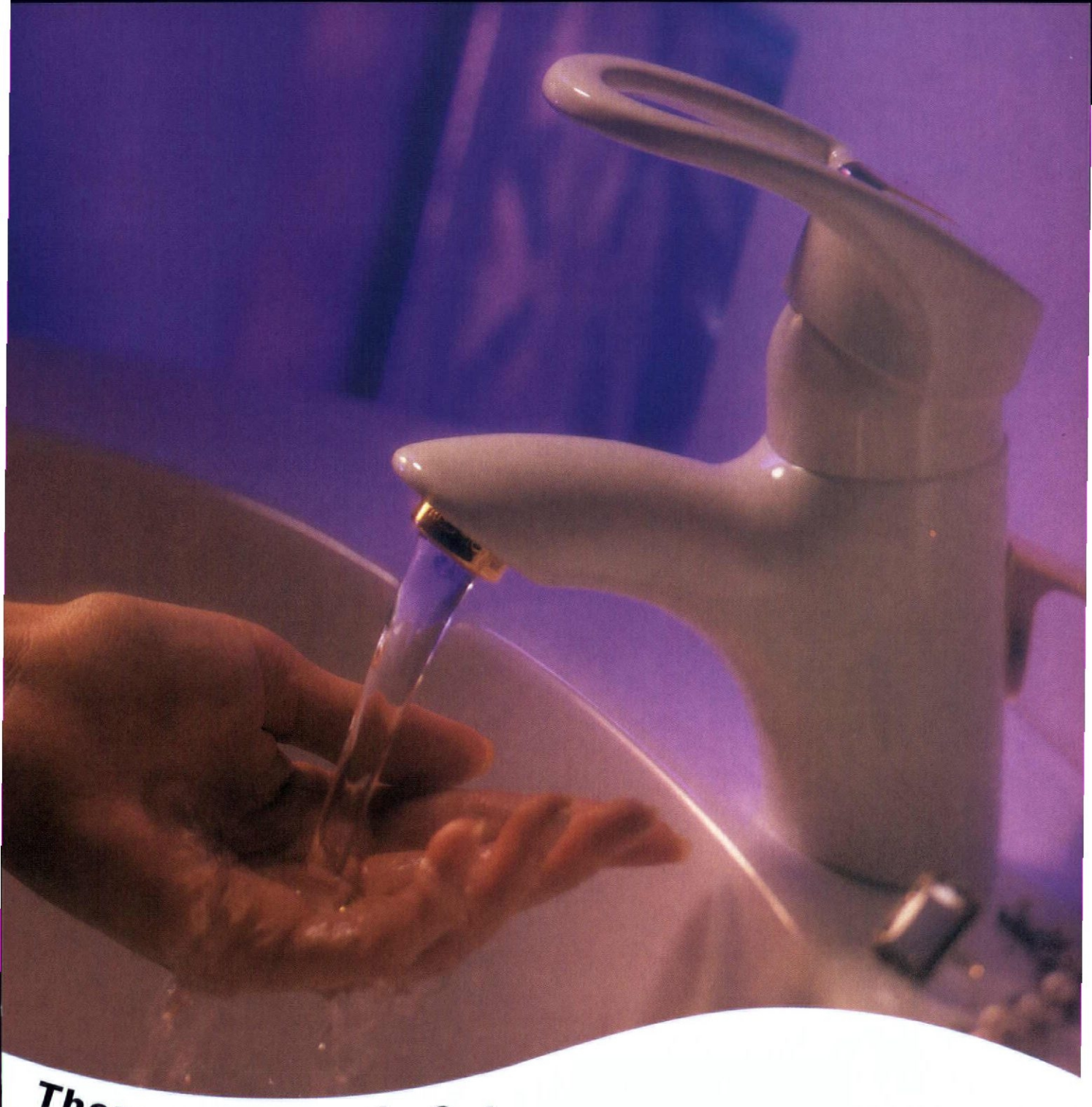
What were prices like?

"We made one piece—a little square ashtray—that sold for a dollar." What was involved in producing that ashtray? "Night-and-day work. We never did anything but work"

Collectors of Higgins glass are divided in their loyalties, gravitating toward Michael's work or Frances's, though virtually all the work is signed simply "Higgins." Dennis Carl Hopp, a Chicago dealer in twentieth-century antiques who, with 1,200 or more pieces, is considered the premier collector of Higgins, has items signed by Frances from as early as 1949 and as late as the 1960s. During a six-year period, from 1959 to 1965, when the couple maintained a studio within the former Dearborn Glass Co. factory in Chicago, thousands of pieces were manufactured with designs that were silk-screened instead of drawn, slumped in the heat of a kiln, and signed mainly in gold. (Signatures on items made before and after the Dearborn years are engraved; also, an in-mold mark of a little man modeled on a capital "H" appears dimly on pre-Dearborn pieces.)

The Higginses began fusing and molding glass in Chicago in 1949, during a period when Bauhaus faculty, exiled a decade earlier from Nazi Germany, were influencing technology, architecture, and the decorative arts. One such individual, László Moholy-Nagy, renowned before the war as an avant-garde photographer and industrial designer, became the director of a Chicago institution known successively as the New Bauhaus, the Chicago School of Design, and the Institute of Design (now part of the Illinois Institute of Technology). There, the integration of art, science, and technology was a given. Buckminster Fuller developed the prototype for his geodesic dome at the Institute. Michael Higgins was chairman of what was then known as the department of visual design. Frances Stewart, a University of Georgia professor of fine arts, who had worked in glass as early as 1942, came to the institute in 1946 to earn a master's degree. Michael and Frances met, married, and set out to make their livelihood as designer-craftsmen, a risky proposition in those days.

By 1951, Higgins glass was included



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Only Collect

in a Museum of Modern Art traveling exhibition entitled "Good Design." In an exhibition catalogue, Edgar J. Kaufmann, Jr., the former director of that museum, insisted that good design was modern design and "the methods used to make an object . . . should blend the expression of utility, materials, and process into a visually satisfactory whole." Such tenets were fully realized in the techniques developed at Higgins Glass Studio.

Frances and Michael Higgins cobbled together a living by selling through high-end retailers like Marshall Field's, Bullock's Wilshire, Gump's, and Georg Jensen, as well as directly to a small but loyal public at craft fairs. "People are daunted by going into a gallery," Frances explains, "but they'll go to art fairs. We sold most of our things in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which has a big summer fair." What were prices like? "We made one piece—a little square ashtray—that sold for a dollar." What was involved in producing that ashtray? "Night-and-day work. We never did anything but work."

The Dearborn pieces are controversial among collectors. Donald-Brian Johnson, co-author, with Leslie Piña, of the forthcoming *Higgins: Adventures in Glass* (Schiffer Publishing Ltd.), points out that during the Dearborn years, seventy patterns were created, some applied to as many as twenty-five different functional forms. While most collectors insist that these products should not be denigrated, Richard Wright, an expert in twentieth-century modern design for the Cincinnati-based Treadway Gallery, feels that "the sheer quantity of the Dearborn material has been a hindrance to ample recognition." Similarly, Chicago's Scott Vermillion maintains that "certain pieces will never appreciate, since they made so many of them. Such pieces as the arabesque spirals, marked $70 at a flea market, are worth $20."

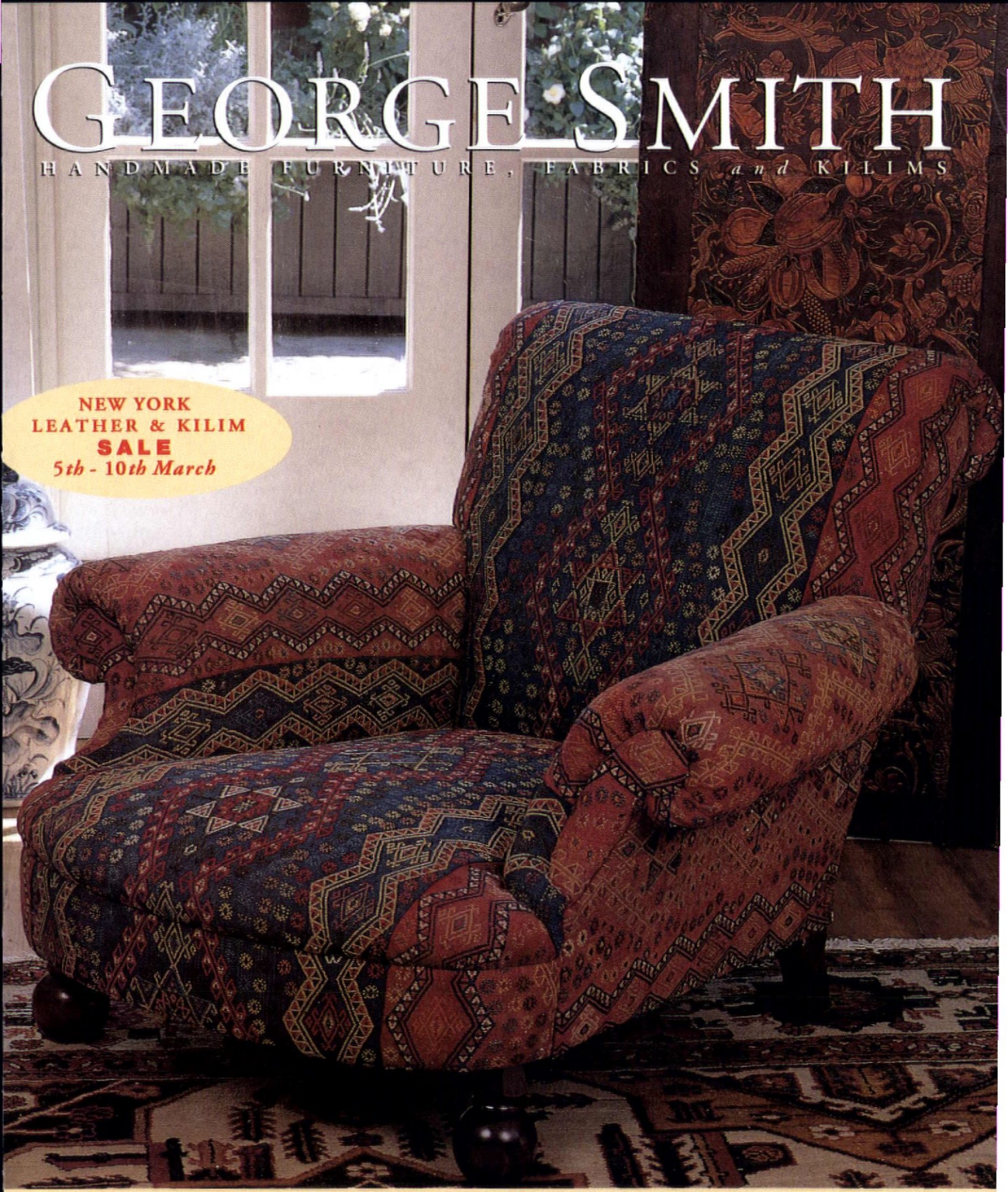
In today's collectibles market, $70 for almost anything that is well designed seems modest enough. Visitors to the Higgins Glass Studio, in Riverside, Illinois, are likely, therefore, to be floored by prices meant to appeal to a walk-in trade, not collectors. In Frances's frank words: "We tend to produce what sells: bowls, plates, jewelry, and roundelays. . . . We make a ton of Christmas ornaments because it brings in a lot of money."

At the studio Michael's extraordinary chargers can cost from $200 to approximately $600, while smaller dishes, bowls, and vases rarely top $60. Some jewelry is available for as little as $25; individual roundelays are $30 to $50; and Christmas ornaments are priced at tooth-fairy levels.

At auctions, however, "new pieces go for much more than store prices," notes Vermillion. "Most people don't realize that Michael and Frances are still alive and making this stuff."

But whether Higgins pieces are found at auction or studio, for collectors of glass and admirers of postwar design, there is no better value.

Mitch Tuchman *is the author of* Magnificent Obsessions: Twenty Remarkable Collectors in Pursuit of Their Dreams *and* Bauer: Classic American Pottery. "Only Collect" *is a regular column about antiques and collectibles.*



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Past Perfect

Lovebirds

With bridal registries to feather their nests and magazines to tell them how to live there, newlyweds were learning a new set of domestic rituals **BY VÉRONIQUE VIENNE**

HOUSE & GARDEN, MAY 1942 Wedlock has a way of turning into gridlock, and a lavish display of wedding presents can make even the most spirited newlyweds look slightly housebound—as witness this photograph of a young couple's first Sunday brunch at home.

By the 1940s, the custom of couples registering at stores with a list of desired wedding gifts had taken hold, and magazines had begun to advise them on the proper use of their newly acquired bounty and on much else besides: how to pile bath towels on frilly-edged shelves; how to perk up mayonnaise with a dash of curry, and soup with a spoonful of sherry; how to have brunch; whom to invite to tea. With a war on, the customs of the country, at least the part of it that summered in Maine, dined at the Pierre, and dwelt in apartments with views of the Manhattan skyline, were in flux. There is a sense here that it was *House & Garden*'s responsibility to see that the old standards and rituals were upheld and also updated.

Here, our lovebirds, like their feathered friends, are nicely cooped up; the magazine has laid all the materials suitable for their new life before them. (The only thing out of place is the young man himself, whose appearance at home in the spring of 1942 is a little mysterious.) Even with a war on, the message is clear: Home is the proper theater of operations for newlyweds. It is also their fortress.

A serving table, loaded with food and a coffee service, hems the couple in, or keeps them safe, depending on how you look at it. Even the dog, tied to the leg of a chair, seems to guard against access to the picture and the life. The brunch table is set with an eye to fitting modern tastes to traditional behavior: Franciscan Ware dishes, crystal from Jensen's, Heywood-Wakefield terrace furniture—everything is appropriate yet right up-to-the-minute for 1942 (and highly collectible in 1997).

The sense of safety is offset by a palpable air of anxiety that will soon resolve itself. In the next second or so, the couple will discover that hanging a birdcage over the table is not such a good idea. The birds will flutter their wings, and seeds, feathers, and worse will waft their way down to the table. The husband will have to get up and fetch a stepladder to hang the cage elsewhere. The wife may suggest that they rearrange the furniture instead. In the process, they will probably break something, maybe one of their Franciscan Ware butter plates. Married less than a week and already arguing, they may begin to rethink the comforts of home.

Every month, "Past Perfect" *examines a photo from the magazine's archives.*

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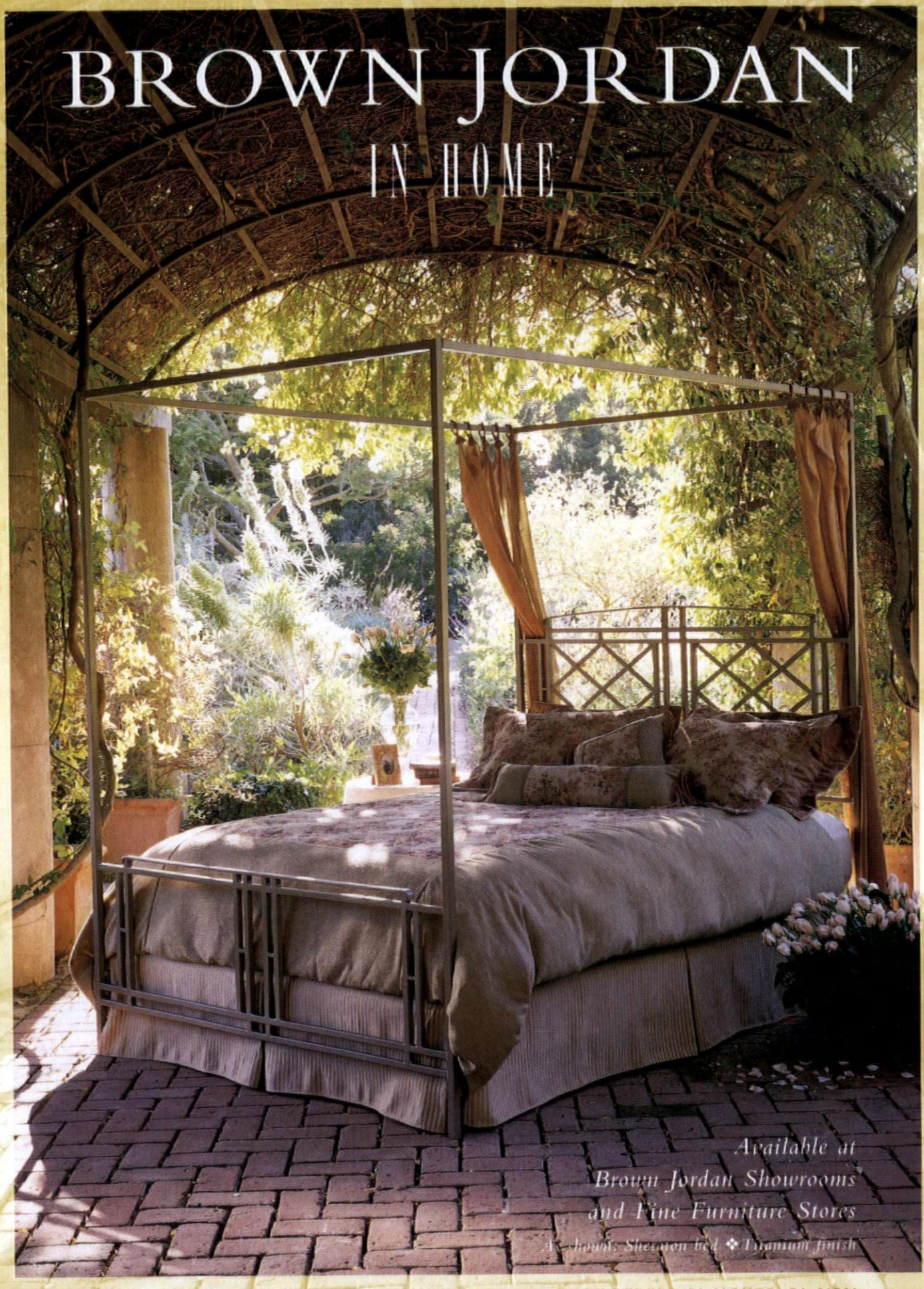
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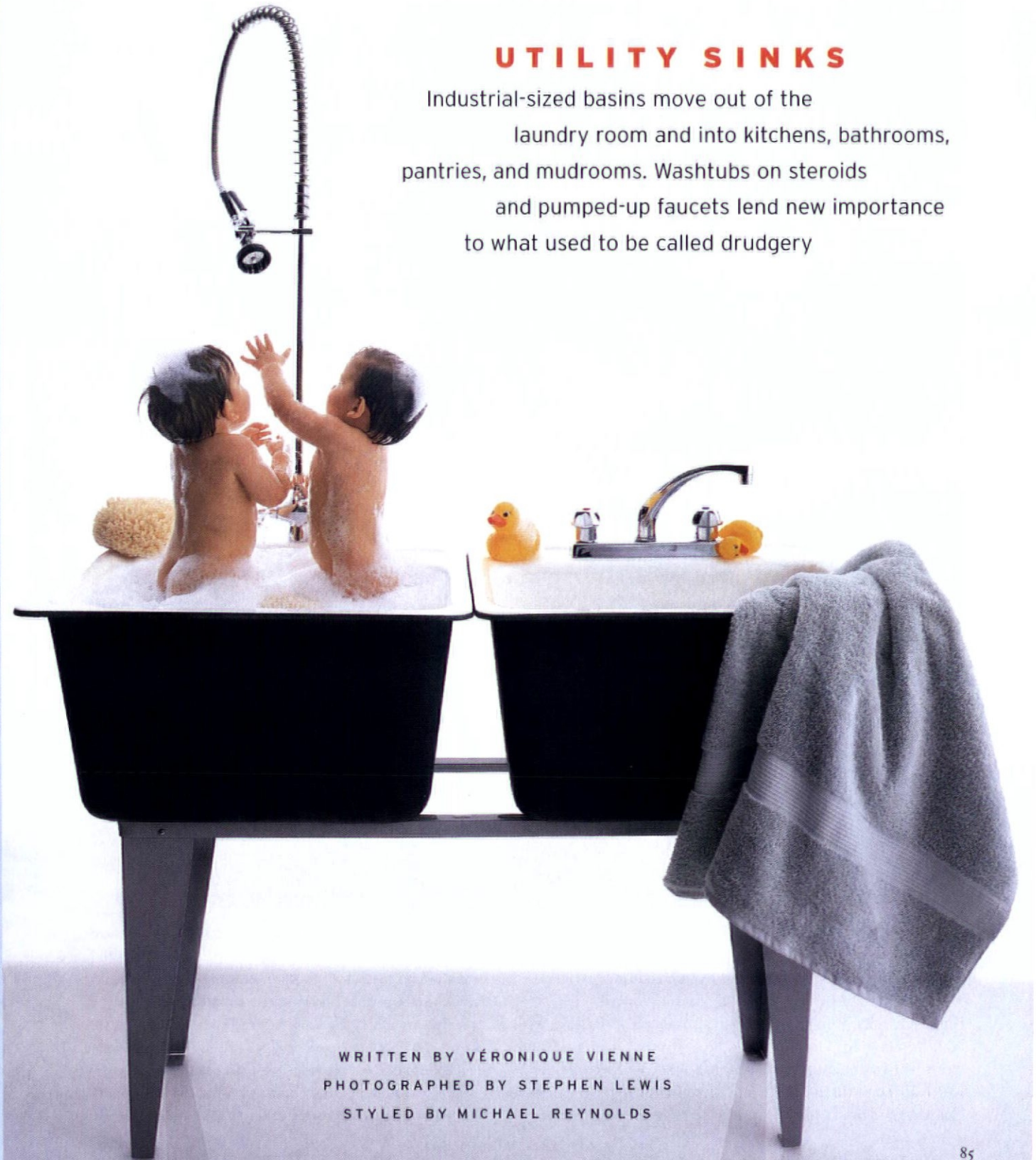

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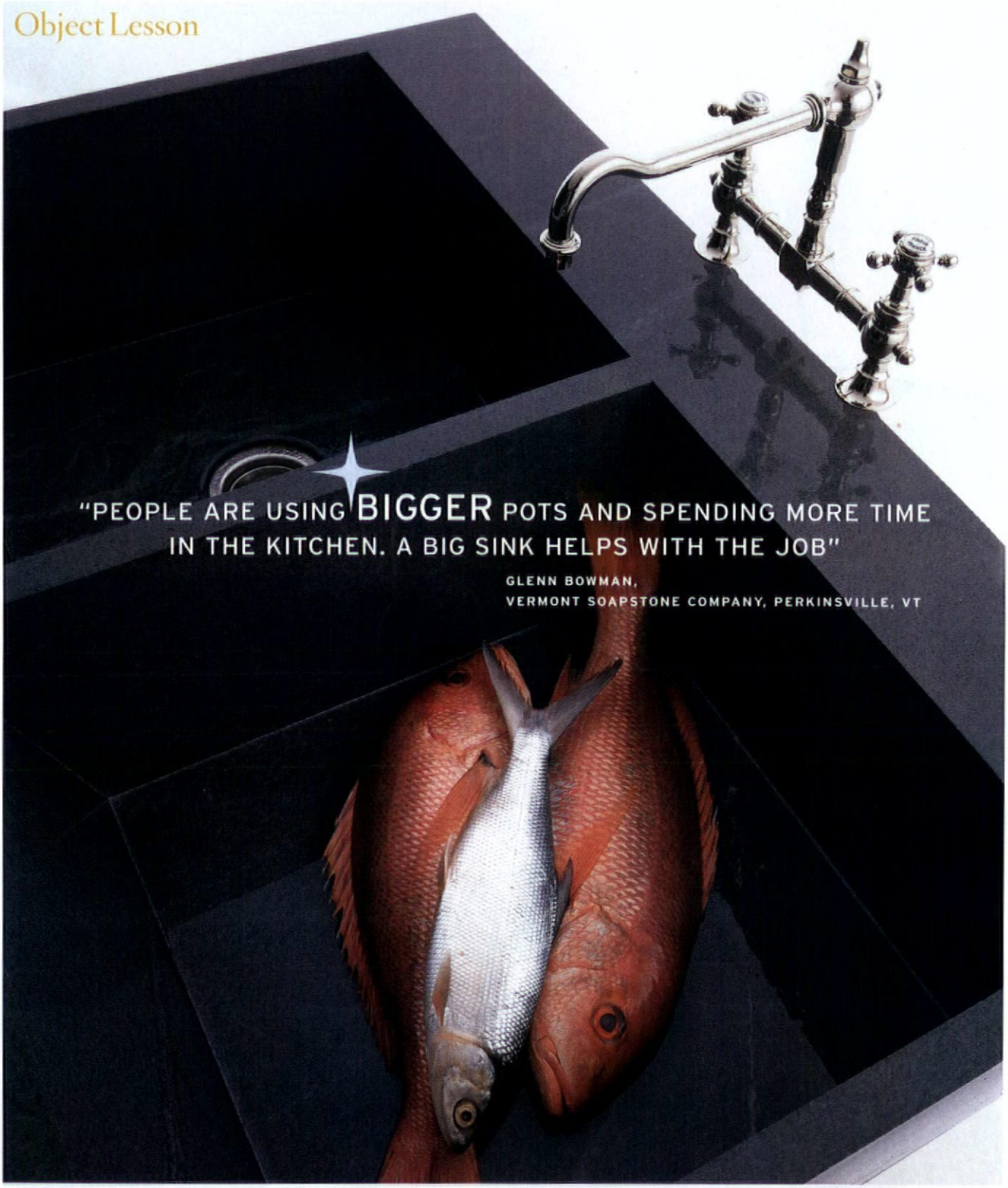
STYLED BY MICHAEL REYNOLDS



INDUSTRIAL-STRENGTH SOLUTIONS Since the average sink holds five gallons of water, why do you need one with a capacity for ten, fifteen, or even twenty gallons? + To resuscitate three dozen long-stemmed roses. + To soak thirty-six leeks. + To give your pup a shampoo. + To hose down your boots. + To clean a big griddle. + To soak a stained tablecloth. + To wet a mop or fill a large bucket. + To keep beer on ice. + To keep dirty dishes out of sight during a party. + To clean large planters and tall vases, and to repot big plants.

DOUBLE DUTY Twin tray Laundry Sink of cast iron/enamel ($826/with legs), previous page, and Ultima chrome-finished brass faucet ($122), from Eljer; chrome-finished brass faucet with pre-rinse spray on left sink ($314), by Chicago Faucets through Eigen Supply. Terry cloth bath towel ($25) is from Calvin Klein Home, and sea sponge is from Portico Bed & Bath. Custom-made double-bowl soapstone sink ($1,600), above, by Vermont Soapstone Co.; the faucet is a Julia kitchen mixer of nickel-plated brass ($725), from Waterworks.

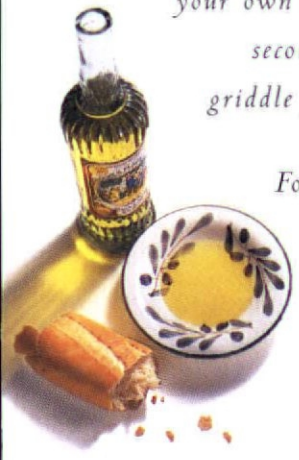
A Collection So Stylish It Stirs Thoughts of Paris, Milan and The New York Strip.

With its award-winning flush design and appealing features, the Jenn-Air Expressions® Collection is perfect for those who appreciate great style as well as great cooking.

Our new dual convection wall oven gives you a sleek, flush design and plenty of versatility. With just a push of a button, you can switch from roasting lamb one day to baking a soufflé the next. No wonder more homes have chosen Jenn-Air convection ovens over any other brand.

WW30430
30" Double Wall Oven

Next, take a look at our flush-to-the-counter cooktop. This downdraft cooktop system lets you design your own cooking surface in seconds – everything from a griddle for pancakes to a grill for steaks.



For more details on the Jenn-Air Expressions® Collection, call 1-800-Jenn-Air or see your local dealer. Because you don't have to go far to find a kitchen that'll never go out of style.

C2200
Double Electric Cooktop
(shown with halogen cartridge AH150)

JENN-AIR

THE SIGN OF A GREAT COOK™.

© 1995 Jenn-Air

ELBOWROOM While a standard kitchen sink is seven to eight inches deep, the depth of utility sinks is determined by their function:

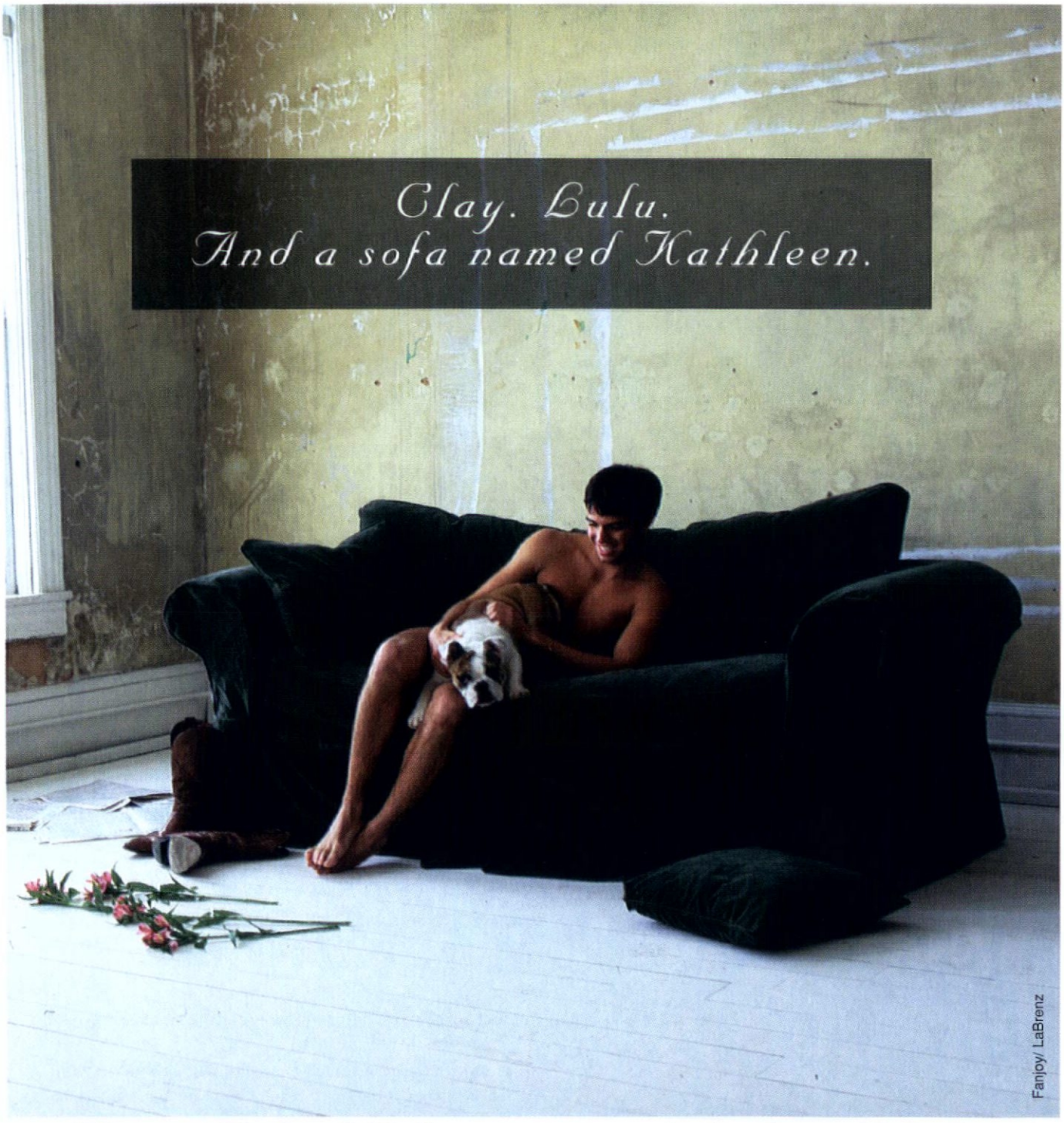
+ Eight to ten inches—Pantry sinks designed for tall glasses, large vases, long serving dishes, and cumbersome pots and pans. Often, a deep sink is paired with a shallow one—the first for soaking, the second for rinsing.

+ Up to thirteen inches—Service sinks scaled to accommodate big buckets and commercial pails with ringers. To provide access for filling receptacles, faucets are usually mounted out of the way—high on the backsplash or the wall.

+ Up to fourteen inches—Scullery sinks or restaurant-type sinks, perfect for heavy-duty food preparation and cleanup, give you room to wash vegetables, leave items to defrost, and soak or scrub greasy pots, oven racks, and cookie sheets.

+ Up to fifteen inches—Laundry sinks like the ones found in Laundromats are large enough to hold plenty of water for rinsing drapes, slipcovers, and bedding. They are also handy in garages, gardens, and mudrooms.

HARD-EDGED, YET FLEXIBLE Sturdibilt Scullery Sink of stainless steel ($1,683, with sideboard) by Elkay. The faucet of chrome-finished brass ($279/with optional double-jointed spout) is by Delta. Crystal Celemene vase ($6,800), from Baccarat, Inc.



The moment Clay brought Kathleen, his brand new truly washable slipcovered sofa,™ home to meet Lulu excitement was in the air.

While Clay admired the way Kathleen's elegant lines gave new meaning to his barren loft space, Lulu dove passionately into her sumptuously soft cushions and declared 'true and everlasting love.'

Will Clay and Lulu believe their eyes when Kathleen's slipcover comes back from the laundry looking as fresh as it does on this momentous occasion? O! To be sure.

MITCHELL GOLD

Incredible slipcovered furniture

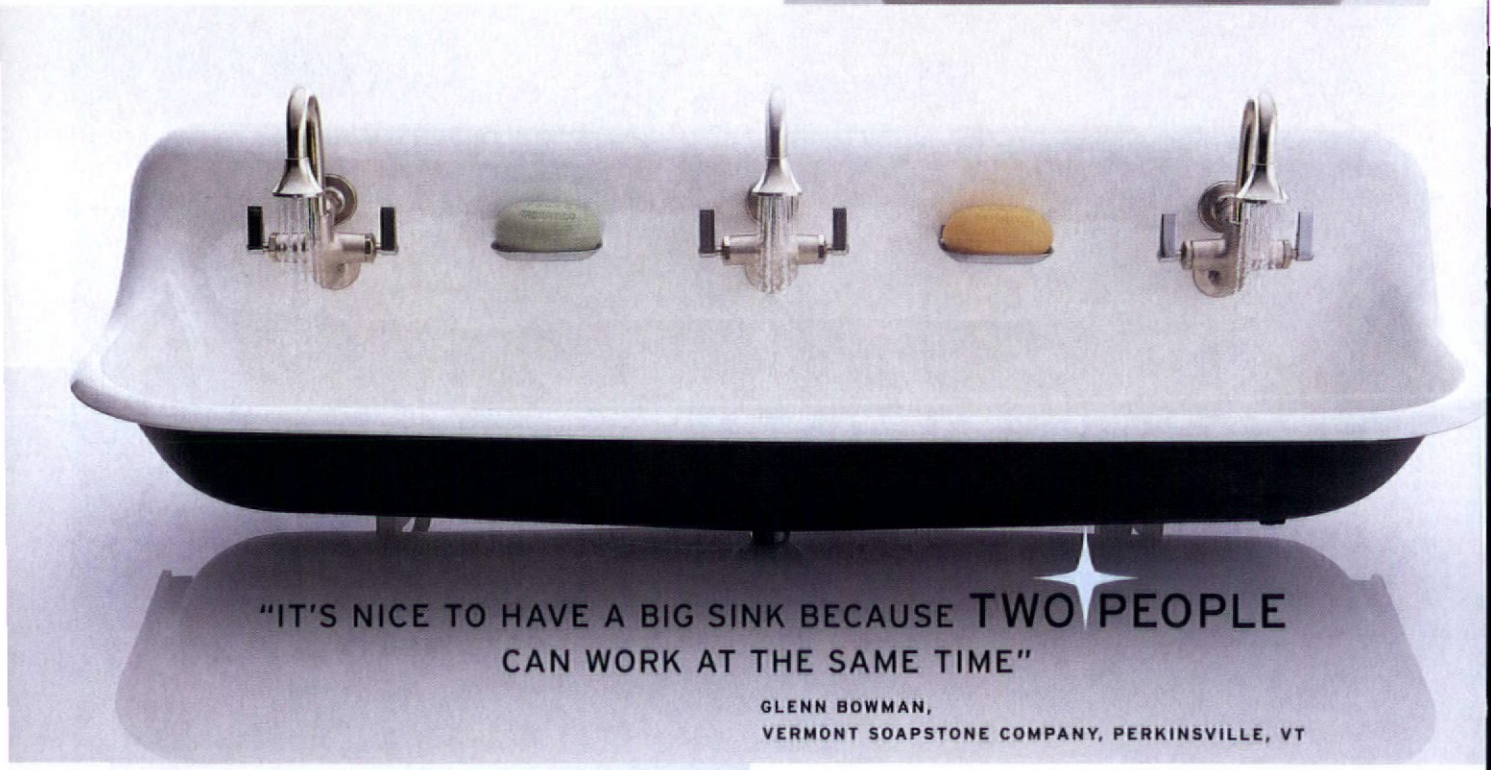
We also make already-broken-in leather sofas, chairs and more. Call 800.789.5401 or http://www.mitchellgold.com
S.R.1608, Taylorsville, NC 28601
Showroom in High Point, North Carolina

Object Lesson

TURN-ONS To select the right faucet, figure out the primary purpose of your sink.

+ For cooking, choose a faucet that lets you adjust the temperature from a single lever.
+ Catering to large groups? You may need a "rinse unit," a separate wall-mounted spray head on a flexible hose that lets you wash big pots.
+ Serious housecleaning? Choose a gooseneck spout for filling large containers.
+ Laundering by hand? A standard chrome faucet with traditional knobs and a small spout will do.

Regardless of the type of faucet you select, ask for quarter-turn ceramic valves. Avoid washers, and look instead for ceramic disk cartridges.



"IT'S NICE TO HAVE A BIG SINK BECAUSE TWO PEOPLE CAN WORK AT THE SAME TIME"

GLENN BOWMAN,
VERMONT SOAPSTONE COMPANY, PERKINSVILLE, VT

BIG AND BIGGER Porcelain Longridge Belfast sink ($1,245), top, by Shaws of Darwen through European Country Cooking Ltd.; clockwise from top left, wall-mounted gooseneck spout of chrome-finished brass ($128.75), by Grohe America, Inc.; large hospital faucet of satin chrome-finished brass ($749) by Dorf Design through International Tapware; Edwardian-style kitchen mixer faucet with brushed nickel finish ($795), by Czech & Speake of Jermyn Street through Waterworks; chrome-finished brass faucet with soap dish ($208), by American Standard. The long Brockway Wall-Mount sink, above, is cast iron/enamel ($1,287); Cannock wash-sink faucets in rough plate finish ($143/each); soap dishes($13.70/each); all by Kohler Co. Soaps, Ad Hoc Softwares. Park Falls Utility Sink of cast iron/enamel ($229), left, and Provence faucet of chrome-finished brass ($391), by Kohler Co. Leather garden gloves and amaryllis bulbs, from Smith & Hawken.

PERFECT BY NATURE

Model: Verona

Capture the essence of nature's beauty and elegance for your own kitchen. BECKER ZEYKO cabinetry is friendly to nature, manufactured with the highest environmentally conscious standards in the industry through the use of environmentally friendly materials, production techniques and bio-degradeable products where possible, right down to the recyclable packaging materials. BECKER ZEYKO offers the finest in custom-built cabinetry using the highest quality materials. We offer over 200 door styles; each handcrafted in the Black Forest of Germany.

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***US Headquarters:** SBK Pacific, Inc., 1030 Marina Village Pkwy., Alameda (San Francisco Bay Area), CA 94501, Phone: (510) 865-1616, Fax: (510) 865-1148*
Available Through Architects and Interior Designers.

"A LARGE SINK GIVES A ROOM A FOCUS AND A NEW PURPOSE"

ALEXANDER KASA,
INTERIOR ARCHITECT, BIRMINGHAM, MI

SUBSTANCE AND STYLE

+ Enamel-on-cast-iron sinks are durable and easy to clean, but they can also chip and can be difficult to repair.

+ Porcelain basins are made of molded clay, fired and glazed to a high gloss. The porcelain Belfast farm sinks, with their distinctive fluted or embossed aprons, have become popular here and are now being imported from England.

+ As their name suggests, stainless-steel sinks won't stain or rust, but they can be noisy. The thicker the steel (measured by gauge, with 18 gauge being the heaviest), the quieter the sink. Pads and sprayed-on insulation can also help reduce the din. Sinks with a satin finish are the easiest to clean, and scratches on them can be removed by rubbing the surface with scouring powder in the direction of the grain. Mirror-finish sinks scratch more easily and are better for low-traffic areas.

+ Composite sinks are made of a range of materials, including polyester and acrylic resins, and fiberglass, as well as natural materials such as quartz, granite, or stone. They are usually light and relatively inexpensive, but check their exact composition—some composites are not heat resistant and may scorch.

+ Soapstone sinks hold hot water well, but they are often custom-made and thus costly.

—PRODUCED BY CONSTANCE O'NEIL AND LYGEIA GRACE

A DILLY Mop Service Basin of plastic/stone fabrication ($235), by Platsky Company, Inc. Towel by Calvin Klein Home.

Object Lesson

SOURCES

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TWIN TRAY LAUNDRY SINK AND ULTIMA FAUCET, #222-2220/#712-0110, Eljer, 1712 Dallas Pkwy., Dallas, TX 75248. 972-407-2600. **FAUCET WITH PRE-RINSE SPRAY,** #919, Eigen Supply, 236 W. 17th St., NYC 10011. 212-255-1200. **TOWEL,** Calvin Klein Home, 800-294-7978. **SPONGE,** Portico Bed & Bath, 139 Spring St., NYC 10012. 212-941-7722.

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SOAPSTONE SINK, Vermont Soapstone Co., 800-284-5404. **FAUCET,** #HOKM12, Waterworks, 800-899-6757.

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STAINLESS-STEEL SINK, #SS-8124-2, Elkay, 630-572-3192. **FAUCET,** #060189A-76541, Delta, 800-345-DELTA. **VASE,** Baccarat, Inc., 800-777-0100. **RATCHET PRUNERS,** $32, Smith & Hawken, 800-776-3336. **FLOWERS,** Fischer & Page Ltd.

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BELFAST SINK, European Country Cooking Ltd., 800-882-5339; **FAUCETS,** #31-516, Grohe America, Inc., 241 Covington Dr., Bloomingdale, IL 60108. 630-582-7711; #8401-8715-8946.05, International Tapware, 800-634-3903; #CZKM10, Waterworks, 800-899-6757; #7295.152, American Standard, 800-752-6292. **PLASTIC TUB,** Crane Plumbing, 1235 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60202. 847-864-9777. **PARK FALLS FAUCET,** Kohler Co., 800-4-KOHLER. **WALL-MOUNT SINK, FAUCETS, AND SOAP DISHES,** #K-3203/#K-8892/#K-8880, Kohler Co., 800-4-KOHLER. **SOAPS,** Ad Hoc Softwares, 410 West Broadway, NYC 10012. 212-925-2652. **PARK FALLS UTILITY SINK AND PROVENCE FAUCET,** #K-6582/#K-14502, Kohler Co., 800-4-KOHLER. **GARDEN GLOVES,** leather, $24; **AMARYLLIS BULBS,** $11-$17/each, all from Smith & Hawken, 800-776-3336.

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SINK, #63 Platsky Company, Inc., 298 Montrose Rd., Westbury, NY 11590. 516-333-9292.

The average toilet.

Going to the bathroom just got a little bit nicer.

Zoë.

Convenient Remote Control.

Traditionally, toilet seats have been hard, cold and stark. Not to mention just plain uncomfortable. Thanks to great strides in technology, it no longer has to be that way. Hence, the inspiration behind Zoë. Imagine if you will, the natural and clean feeling of a soft, soothing, aerated stream of warm water, conveniently activated by the touch of a button. Now envision an automatic air deodorizer that quickly eliminates all toilet odor. There's even an optional warm seat feature for those cold mornings. And of course, the Zoë is easy to install. Who knows, the Zoë may just make the world a happier place. Well, at least the bathroom. For a brochure about Zoë and a dealer name near you call: 1-800-938-1541 ext. 503.

TOTO®

HIGH POINTS

The Best Spring Furniture

BAKER, PAGE 96

LA BARGE MIRROR FRAME, PAGE 110

RUSSIAN EMPIRE, PAGE 105

For **nine days** every spring and fall, the tiny town of High Point, North Carolina, is the **bustling center** of America's furniture industry. **House & Garden** puts the spotlight on the finest, **the freshest,** and the funkiest; the things that will change your rooms. Here's what should be going **home with you** in 1997 ▸

CHAIRS, PAGE 112

FRENCH '40s, PAGE 100

LEATHER, PAGE 106

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHEL ARNAUD

A Star Is Born

POINT OF FACT

7 million square feet of permanent showroom space—enough to enclose more than 121 football fields

GOING FOR THE GREEN

- Born: *Piedmont, California, 1952*
- Lives: *In a 1940s Paul Williams house in the Hollywood Hills*
- Kudo: Interiors *magazine's "Best in Residential Design" award, 1995*
- Other collections: *Rugs (Tufenkian), lamps (Boyd Lighting Co.), fabrics and furniture (HBF)*
- Hates: *Red.* Loves: *Green.* Favorite Color: *Pond-scum green*
- Influences: *Jean-Michel Frank, Albert Hadley, Piet Mondrian*

BAKER FURNITURE CASTS HOLLYWOOD DECORATOR **BARBARA BARRY** AS ITS NEW LEADING LADY

"What's really modern today is **mixing**. A room doesn't have to be any one thing. Furniture should be as **comfortable** as our clothes"

GOING PUBLIC

What the perfect pair of shoes does for your wardrobe, each piece from Barbara Barry's new line for Baker Furniture can do for a room—adding flair, making it feel fresh and alive.

For the past eleven years, Barry has been creating "spare but not bare" rooms for her star-studded clientele. With the Barbara Barry Collection for Baker, she has brought her signature style—pared-down elegance and a sophisticated palette of muted, natural tones—to a wider audience. Barry likens the collection to the chic wardrobe of someone with great personal style: it is made up not of "outfits" but of individual pieces, each with integrity. "What's really modern is mixing," she says. "A room doesn't have to be any one thing. We dress our rooms like we dress our bodies. Furniture should be as comfortable as our clothes."

Barry attemps to take the guesswork out of eclectic decorating by what she calls "building in the mix" and freeing the consumer from the restrictions of "suites" of furniture whose individual pieces cannot live alone.

The fine-arts-trained, self-taught designer often returns to the restrained luxury of design from the French '30s and '40s for inspiration. The

BARBARA'S HOME STYLE

In Baker's High Point showroom, Barry sits on her oval-backed chair, covered in a striped silk blend ($2,207), and rests her feet on a hand-painted "ottoman coffee table" ($5,286).

THE BAKER STORY

▶ 1890: *Baker Furniture Company founded in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by Dutch immigrant Seibe Baker.*

▶ 1893: *Baker makes its first piece, a bookcase.*

▶ 1986: *Baker bought by the Kohler Company, known for its plumbing products.*

▶ 1990: *Baker celebrates its centennial, donates an American Chippendale armchair to the Smithsonian.*

▶ Famous introductions: *Historic Charleston (1976), Williamsburg Reproduction (1991), Parish-Hadley Collection (1994), Archetype Collection by Michael Vanderbyl (1995), Barbara Barry Collection (1996).*

▶ *For information about where to find Baker furniture, call 616-361-7321.*

mahogany-and-nickel dining table in the Baker collection, for instance, echoes the pieces of Jules-Émile Leleu, and exemplifies the marriage of form and function that distinguished the French '40s. A bold center pedestal, laced with nickel "jewelry," supports a richly finished, hand-planed mahogany top. "Such attention to detail is the little extra something that makes a well-dressed room," says Barry, "like a strand of pearls with a good dress."

Barry's design universe is complex: contrasting forces help create harmony. "There's a tension between curves and geometry—a yin and yang," she says. "The counterpoint of something linear with something curvaceous is what I call 'fantasy corrected by geometry'."

Barry's signature is the distinctly modern, American style that she creates by "pulling from tradition without being sentimental." She is "beyond thrilled to be working with a truly American company. As an American designer, I love the freedom I have to draw from our collective memory of influences—the American amalgam—and create something both familiar and new." This, Barry's conceptual yin and yang, is what makes her designs *feel* so good. They just move right in and fit like a (designer) glove.

Barry is drawn to the restrained **luxury** of the furniture designed by the **masters** of the French '30s and '40s

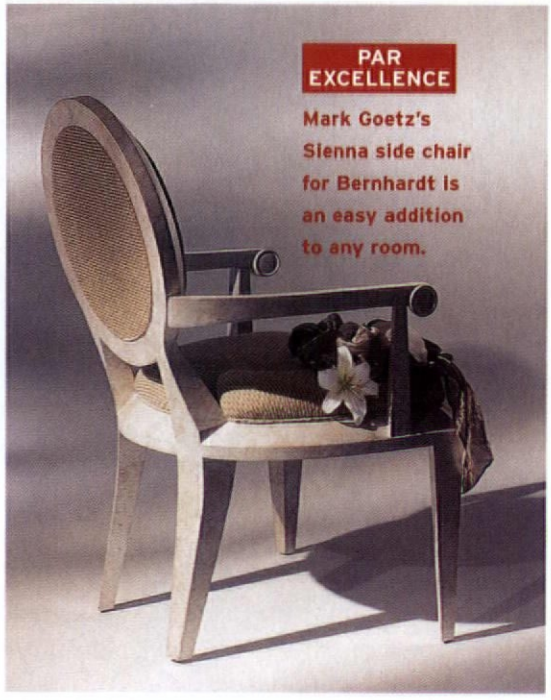
FOR ELEGANT DINING

The hand-painted armoire ($9,526), right, is versatile. In the dining room, far right, Art Deco-style lounge chairs ($2,984) frame a gold-leafed cabinet ($3,432) and "star" mirror ($1,311). Oval-backed dining chairs ($1,444) circle the Leleu-inspired mahogany dining table ($5,816). The hanging lamp is Barry's own.

A **Star** Is Born

Ooh-là là

THE **GLAMOROUS** FRENCH DESIGN OF THE '40s IS THE **NEW LOOK OF '97**



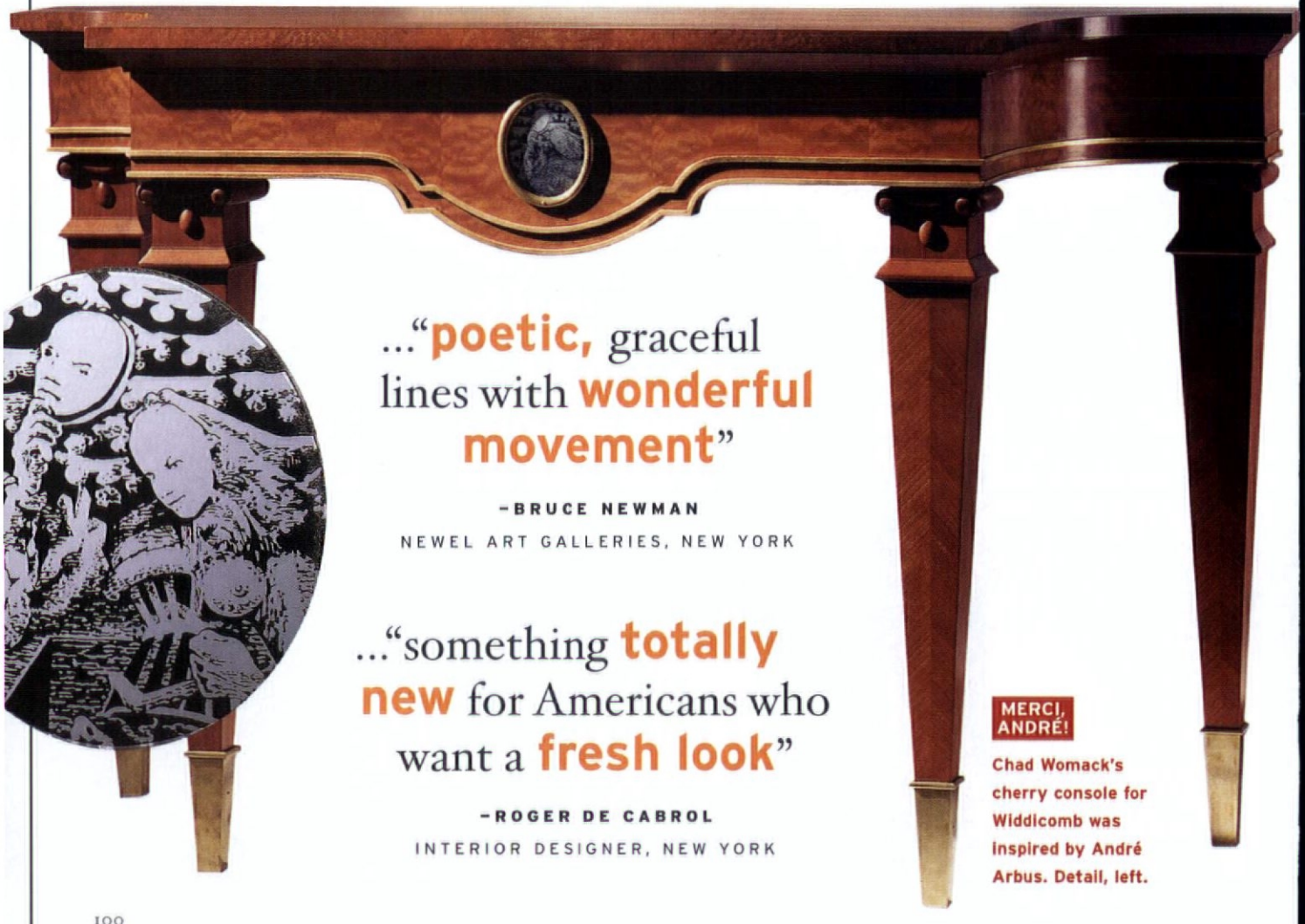
PAR EXCELLENCE

Mark Goetz's Sienna side chair for Bernhardt is an easy addition to any room.

Why French '40s?

Because it's . . .

▸ Elegant ▸ Leggy ▸ Sculptural ▸ Coy ▸ Versatile



..."**poetic,** graceful lines with **wonderful movement**"

–BRUCE NEWMAN

NEWEL ART GALLERIES, NEW YORK

..."something **totally new** for Americans who want a **fresh look**"

–ROGER DE CABROL

INTERIOR DESIGNER, NEW YORK

MERCI, ANDRÉ!

Chad Womack's cherry console for Widdicomb was inspired by André Arbus. Detail, left.

MAIS OUI! This wrought-iron console from Hickory Chair is proudly Poillerat.

...“**modern** without being off-putting. And **sexy!**”

–MICHAEL FORMICA

INTERIOR DESIGNER, NEW YORK

VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE Bexley Heath's Beba dressing table, above, mirrors the '40s. A Widdicomb chest, by Chad Womack, below, is as dashing and urbane as a leading man.

GRANDE DAME Thomas & Bairstow Inc.'s voluptuous Metallica chair is covered in Kravet's India silk (other fabric colors, right).

NAMES TO DROP

▶ **ANDRÉ ARBUS** (1903-1969) *Designer/architect; inspired by la Belle Époque*

▶ **JEAN-MICHEL FRANK** (1895-1941) *Pioneer in leather and lacquer, designed Guérlain salon* ▶ **JULES-ÉMILE LELEU** (1883-1961) *Designer of monumental decors* ▶ **GILBERT POILLERAT** (1902-1988) *Created chairs and tables in wrought iron* ▶ **JEAN PROUVÉ** (1901-1984) *Architect / designer; crazy for aluminum and plastics!* ▶ **JEAN ROYÈRE** (1902-1981) *Bronze tables and space-age chairs showed future vision* ▶ **EMILIO TERRY** (1890-1969) *Designed Surrealists' houses and furniture*

Rebels with a Cause

TWO ENTREPRENEURS DO BUSINESS THEIR WAY

A Lulu of a Deal

FILLING THE GAP

Mitchell Gold has more chutzpah than anyone else in High Point. Who else would name something the By George sofa (which is eerily similar to the classic English ones sold by George Smith for twice the price?) Who else would have a showroom espresso bar called Cafe Lulu (after his pet bulldog)? Who else would show a psychedelic fabric collection called LSD (for "Lively, Simple & Decidedly Cool")?

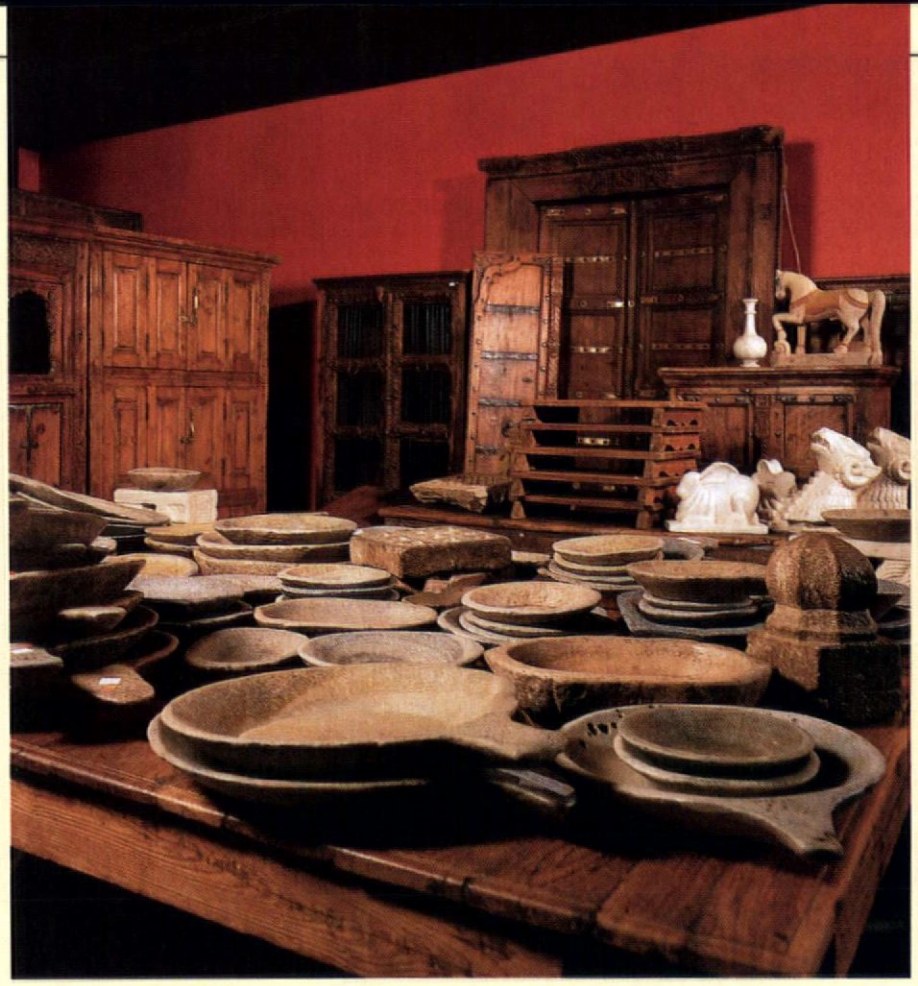
Since setting up shop in 1989, Gold has injected High Point with a dose of hipness. He supplies stores like Pottery Barn and Anthropologie, to which a new generation is turning when it needs comfy upholstery. "Our customer likes to decorate from flea markets, but it's hard to buy sofas at them," he says. Gold, a former Bloomingdale's buyer, has learned that shoppers always touch the arm of a sofa and check the price before sitting down, so he has put extra padding into the arms of his and kept prices in the $1,000 to $2,000 range. He also knows that people love to *lounge*. "We design our sofas for lying down," he says.

He has such a close bond with his fifty retail accounts (who are promised thirty-day delivery) that he can leave the following message on his voice mail: "If you're calling to badger me about our shipping, please don't! I cannot make another return telephone call to have somebody harangue me."

Who else in High Point would do that?

GOLD STANDARD

Mitchell Gold and his bulldog, Lulu, lounge on furniture covered in LSD fabric at his High Point showroom.



MAIN STREET MARKETPLACE **Retailers swarmed over the unique imports at homeBrand, an offspring of New York's ABC Carpet & Home. Buying Chinese lacquer and Indian marble at High Point was easier than trekking to Asia.**

It Takes a Village

IMPORT INVASION

Evan Cole is a modern-day carpetbagger. President of ABC Carpet & Home, the gargantuan New York City furniture store, Cole arrived in High Point with eight 48-foot-long trucks filled with antiques and artifacts from Asia. He rented a storefront showroom on South Main Street, and started selling everything from Chinese red-lacquered cabinets to Indian marble bread bowls on a cash-and-carry basis. In the heart of a made-in-America metropolis, he had the audacity to push imports.

"I've been going to High Point for years, and I knew what was missing," Cole says of his new wholesale concept. The opportunity to take fresh merchandise back to their stores (instead of having to wait four to six months for deliveries) drew throngs of retailers like Federated Department Stores, Marshall Field's, and Domain, and turned his showroom into High Point's hot spot.

While the hullabaloo was generated by the antiques and few-of-a-kind native crafts (which you wouldn't be surprised to find at a SoHo gallery, but which seemed especially exotic in North Carolina), 80 percent of homeBrand's merchandise is new and can be reordered. "Our image at High Point was just the opposite," admits Wendy Chaikin, chief operating officer of homeBrand. But even new items—antiqued porcelain pieces ("with cracks and rust stains," notes Chaikin); parchment ("also known as paper") flowers; teak birdcages; metal garden furniture—have the aura of being unique.

The company is also courting small, traditional American furniture stores that can't afford to send buyers to the Far East and whose customers have a yen for ethnic merchandise. "People now see their homes as shrines to their pasts and futures," says Cole, who hopes to capitalize on this attitudinal shift. "Decorating is nowhere as important as collecting."

Cole allows that homeBrand also functions as a way for ABC to rip itself off before others do. "So many retailers come to our store and get ideas," he says. "But the ideas behind what's in the store now were generated eighteen months ago. We're offering not just product but knowledge."

POINT OF FACT

Each market draws about **70,000 visitors**—almost as many as the Statue of Liberty gets in the same period

In a Classical Mode

TWO DESIGNERS **MINE GOLD** FROM A **TRADITIONAL VEIN**

A PATTERN EMERGES

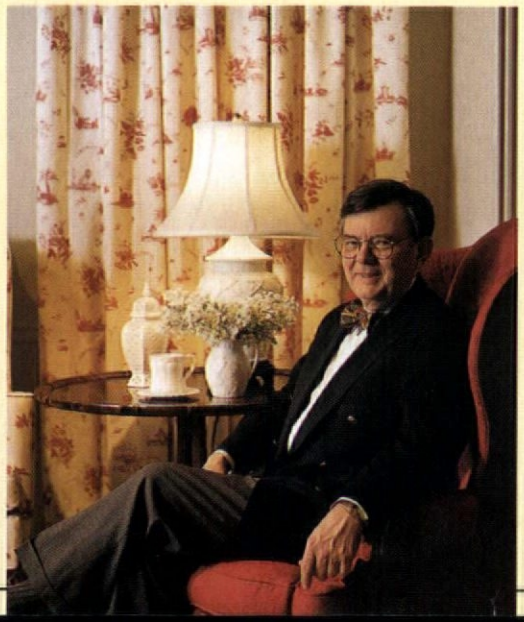
Hickory Chair's Mount Vernon Collection includes, from left, a side chair ($151), a bow-front chest ($2,023), a Mary Ball wing chair ($1,698), a piecrust table ($1,165), and a tea table ($1,013). All upholstery is Brunschwig & Fils's Chinoiserie à l'américaine. Design director Merrill, below, sits in a Philadelphia wing chair ($1,244).

Precision Toile

MOUNT VERNON, WITH A TWIST

To keep tradition alive, you must subtly recalibrate it. The best updating is sometimes backdating, as in the lively additions Hickory Chair has made to its Mount Vernon Collection. Among the most eye-catching pieces, ones that Martha Washington might have coveted, are a mahogany oxbow chest, a Nelly Custis footstool, and a slipcovered Mary Ball wing chair.

"We're known as traditional specialists, not jumping from one trend to another," says William Merrill, Hickory Chair's courtly director of design. What Mario Buatta did for chintz, Merrill may do for toile de Jouy: the Mount Vernon Collection is awash in Brunschwig & Fils's new Chinoiserie à l'américainé. "Classic 18th-century furniture designs are timeless," says Merrill, "but they take on a fresh look when combined with a documentary toile." This is match without mix, and it works a charm.



Russian Empire

CZAR POWER

The sun may have set on the Russian Empire, but not on its furniture. Chad Womack, design director at John Widdicomb Company, has been interested in it since before the collapse of the Soviet Union. At overseas auctions and flea markets, Womack discovered a "huge interest in Russian antiques." In 1987, "finding Russian-inspired design scarce in the United States, I dared to develop a collection." That dare paid off: the market for Russian Empire has flourished, and the Widdicomb line continues to expand.

The handsome pieces are not meticulous reproductions (the originals are circa 1770-1830), but what Womack calls interpretations. They're not knockoffs: made in small quantities, they are carved by hand and have individually selected veneers. "This is the closest thing to one-of-a-kind furniture you can get," says Womack. No wonder the prices are steep.

Like the furniture that inspired them, Widdicomb's pieces are distinguished by details—delicate inlays; brass feet on an occasional table; a brass lion's head ring pull on a chest; a raised-wood gallery on a console.

Fine reproductions have a noble history: some 19th-century copies are now prized antiques. In the 21st century, collectors may say the same about Womack's designs.

POINT OF FACT

$8.3 billion of upholstered furniture will be shipped this year. That's **double the space shuttle's '97 budget**

ATTENTION TO DETAILS

Womack, left, stands next to side chairs in Alexander I-style made of hand-carved cherry with gilt detailing ($2,575). The Gothic Revival-style console, below, has a faux marble top, raised overlays, and tapered, beaded legs with brass sockets ($6,950).

FANCY FOOTWORK

"There has always been a certain taste level for Russian furniture," says Phillips Hathaway, director of European furniture for Sotheby's New York. "Now there's a broader selection." Cherry tables, right, have faux marble tops ($2,550/each); left, cherry chest with brass details ($5,190).

In a Lather Over

TO DYE FOR

A classic sofa takes a racy turn when upholstered in fire-engine red leather. This Mount Vernon Camelback Love Seat ($2,900) by Hickory Chair is shown in the color Wardance and has a mahogany frame.

"**Red is the great clarifier**—bright, cleansing, and becoming bored with red—it would be like

Leather

PURSUING THE PERFECT SECOND SKIN

SEEK AND GO HIDE

revealing. It makes all other colors beautiful. I can't imagine becoming bored with **the person you love**" -DIANA VREELAND

In a Lather Over **Leather**

IN THE BUFF

"There is a movement toward living with natural materials," observes William Merrill, director of design at Hickory Chair Co. "Cotton and linen are big, and leather is very much part of this trend." Durability (leather can last four times longer than fabric) and rich tonal variations, coupled with technological advances that yield larger, suppler hides, have made people wild for leather upholstery. Here's the skinny:

■ Pure anilines are top-grain leathers dyed all the way through for depth and intensity of color. Valued for natural tonal irregularities, they can fade in sunlight. When a protective finish is applied, they're known as pull-up leathers, stretching over furniture without losing suppleness, sheen, or tone.

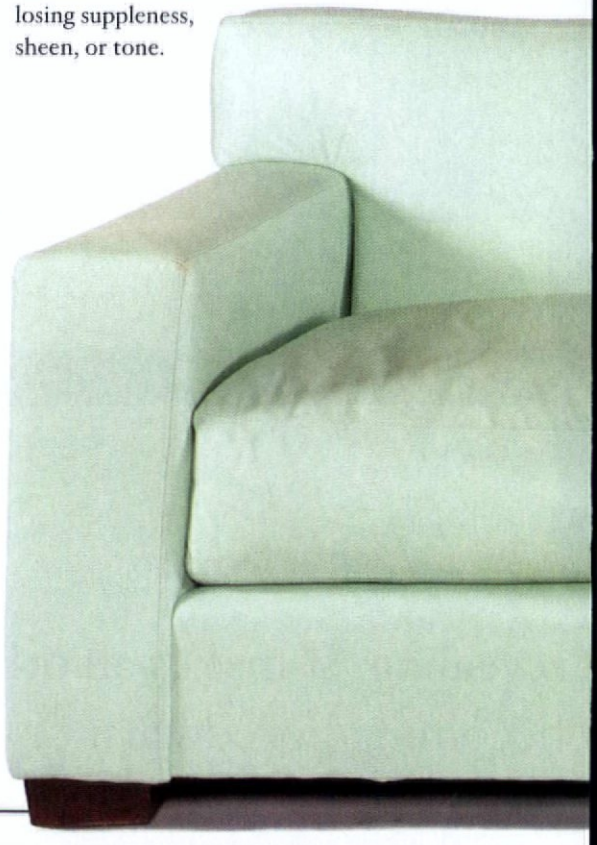
■ Nubuck is a pure aniline leather sanded down for a nappy, suede-like finish. Vulnerable to stains, it should be sealed at the factory.

■ Protected anilines, also known as semi-anilines, are made of splits—the layer remaining when the top grain is removed from a hide—or from top-grain leathers marred by scars and irregularities. These "corrected" leathers are dyed, touched up with buffers and pigment, and embossed to give the impression of a full grain. Protected aniline finishes offer good resistance to stains and scars, but can look flat and monochromatic.

■ The best protective treatments are soaked into the hide during the dyeing. Spray-on sealants applied after coloring can rub off.

MEMBERS OF THE CLUB

The Paris sofa ($5,862), above, from the Barbara Barry Collection for Baker Furniture, takes a more modern approach to seating by replacing old-fashioned tufting with channeled leather welts, tapered square legs, and oversized nailheads in silver. The leather wing chair ($4,293), left, from Century Furniture, combines leather and a 100 percent, cotton-plaid print.



OPPOSITE PAGE: TOP RIGHT, DAVIES + STARR

GIMME SOME SKIN

▶ *Unlike fabric, leather is sold by the square foot. It takes at least 45 square feet to cover a sofa, 30 for an ottoman.*

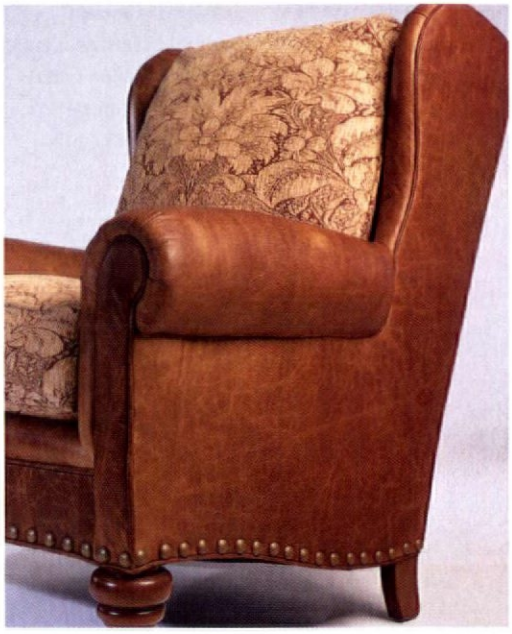
▶ *Because of its strength and large yield, cowhide is used for 90 percent of the upholstery leather in this country.*

▶ *To economize, some manufacturers use vinyl on the less visible parts of leather furniture. It's a bad idea: Leather and synthetics age differently.*

▶ *Use distilled bottled water and a clean white cloth to wipe down furniture. (Chlorine and residual minerals in tap water can discolor skins.)*

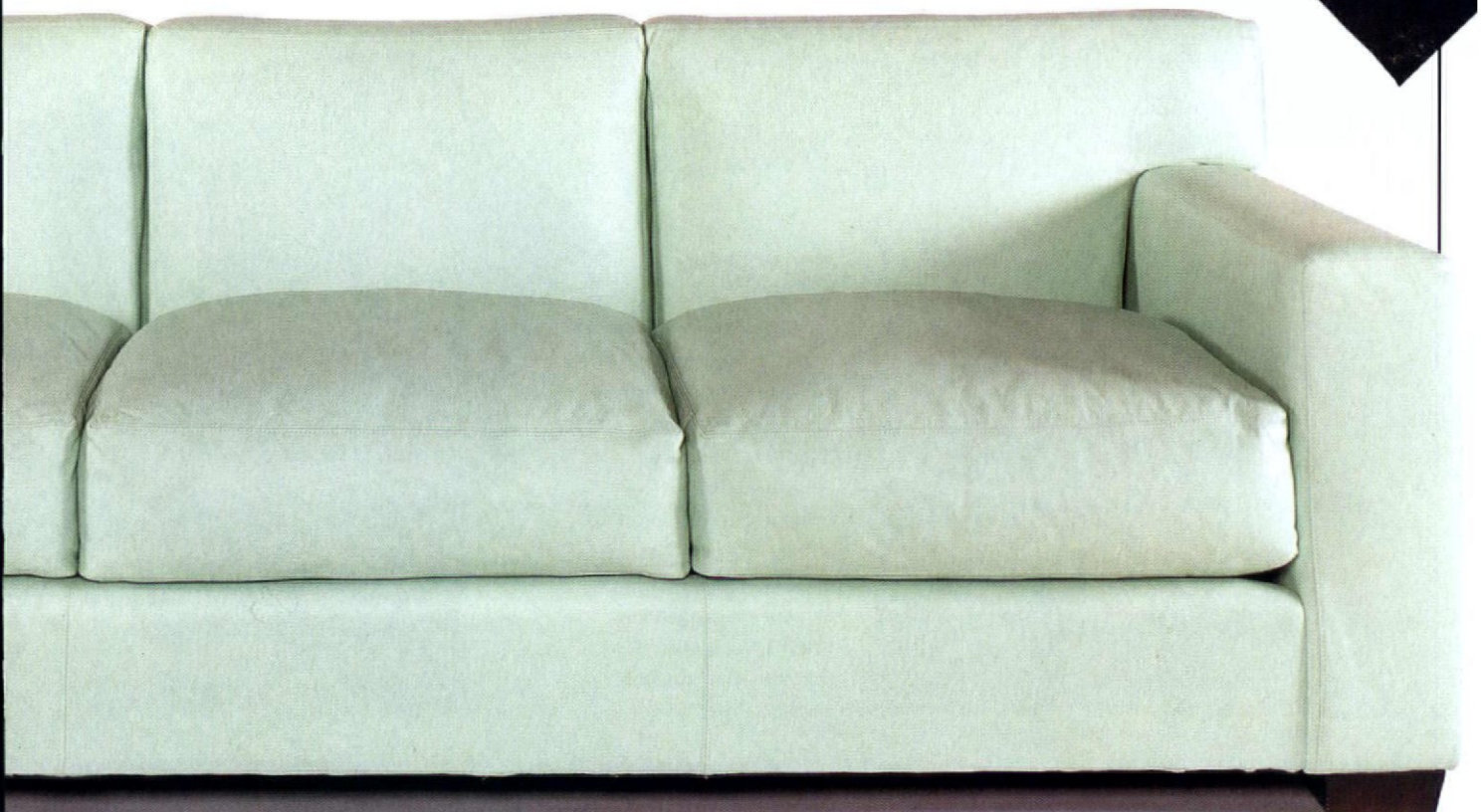
"It's easier to **decorate** with **leather**. You don't worry about patterns that will go out of **fashion**"

JOHN BLACK
DESIGN DIRECTOR, BAKER



LIKE BUTTAH

"I enjoy using exciting colors to give classic styles a new look," says Ralph Lauren of his Tuxedo sofa, below, sheathed in a special-order Palmetto leather ($7,100). Right: Other swatches from a master colorist, Ralph Lauren Home Collection. Stickley Fine Upholstery gives a wing chair, left, the soft touch by pairing chenille-covered cushions with the fine texture of a weathered leather frame ($2,750).



Market Forces

OF STUDS AND THE LOCKER ROOM

LIVING UP TO THE HYPE

< Bexley Heath, Ltd., had a stunning High Point debut. Combining modern design and old-world craftsmanship, the year-old company—founded by Jim DeVries, the energetic new chairman of John Widdicomb—showed pieces for bedroom and bath, such as TV cabinets and carts. The cherry-and-maple lockers ($3,500/each), left, are made in the historic furniture district of Grand Rapids, Michigan, which bodes well for the future of made-in-America cabinetry.

FRINGE ELEMENTS

∨ Many High Point visitors wondered why brush-fringe pillows—a decorator staple—were ubiquitous this market. "It's a trend that has trickled down from the design trade to the retail market," says Heirloom Furniture president J. David Simpson. But why *now*? "Fringe has become more affordable for us, so we can offer it to our customers at a fair price."

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

< "The goal now is how personal can you make your home," says Michael Delgaudio, creative director of Century Furniture, who put monogrammed pillows on the showroom's sofas—an easy, emphatic way to personalize one's home. "That's the status of the '90s. How custom can you get it?"

ALL SOURCES, SEE BACK OF BOOK. ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE.

ARMCHAIRS AND THE MAN

∨ In High Point, sales managers habitually refer to their typical customer as Mrs. Smith. *Mrs. Smith loves chenille! Mrs. Smith is tired of French Provincial!* Finally, last fall, Mr. Smith came to High Point.

Drexel Heritage introduced Gentlemen's Home, a collection for bachelors: the City Dweller, who'd covet the macho leather chair, below left; the Voyager, who'd buy eclectic pieces that would imply he's been to Montana and Madagascar; and the Shareholder, who'd want his home to look as buttoned-down as a branch of U.S. Trust.

"**Anything** sells if you put a brass nail on it. And the **bigger** the nail, the **better** they like it"

EMERSON GLENN IN *FURNITURE/TODAY*

SMALL TREND, BIG NEWS

↗ During market, *Furniture Style*'s cover featured a Henredon bed "embellished with this season's hottest detail, nailhead trim." Indeed, it was nearly impossible to find a showroom that didn't have some pieces detailed with nailheads.

REFLECTED GLORY

> Who's the fairest of them all? For mirrors, it's La Barge. The thirty-five-year-old Michigan company goes to Italy to produce its Signature Collection and travels to High Point to sell it. Adaptations of European antiques (from 15th-century Italian to 18th-century Georgian), some of these hand-carved mirrors are taller than six feet. In this case, more *is* more.

WAVE OF THE FUTURE

↗ Baker Furniture is reinventing the art of hand-planing. The company's technique—which involves attaching a thick, 1/8-inch veneer to wood and then hand-shaving, sanding, and finishing the entire surface—gives new wood the wavy feel of an antique. Baker has applied for a patent for the process.

Twelve Chairs and Counting...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, TAKE A SEAT

MUSICAL CHAIRS

The light, graceful chairs shown at High Point beg to be pushed around—not only *within* a room but *from* room to room. Here, some advice on choosing the best travelers.

"When I see big, huge people in little airline seats, it brings home the importance that the chair fit the body," says New York decorator Carleton Varney. He has his clients try out a chair out to see how it accommodates their legs, their girth, and their height.

Louis XVI and Directoire chairs *didn't* fit their original occupants, the overdressed ladies of the French aristocracy, very well. But Chicago decorator Alessandra Branca loves the chairs anyway, because, she says, "they're very sculptural and quite imaginative. You don't have wimpy chairs in the late 18th century." Branca admires chairs as sculpture so much that she sometimes hangs them on the wall.

Nowhere are chairs more prominent than in the dining room, and Carey Reid Kirk, a Washington, D.C. decorator, uses old and new styles around a table, and covers chairs in differing fabrics. Betty Sherrill, who heads McMillen Inc., the New York–based interior design firm, suggests painted chairs around a mahogany table. "I think they keep a room from being too woody-looking."

And please, don't push your chair in after you leave the table. "After I've gone to all the trouble to find a fabric that is perfect," says Kirk, "I insist that chairs be pulled maybe three quarters of the way from the table, so you can see the fabric."

POINT OF FACT

$21.2 billion in furniture sales are forecast for 1997. That's **five times the Gross National Product of Iceland**

"I'm a fool for **chairs**. A chest of drawers is a chest of drawers, but chairs have such **character**"

CAREY REID KIRK

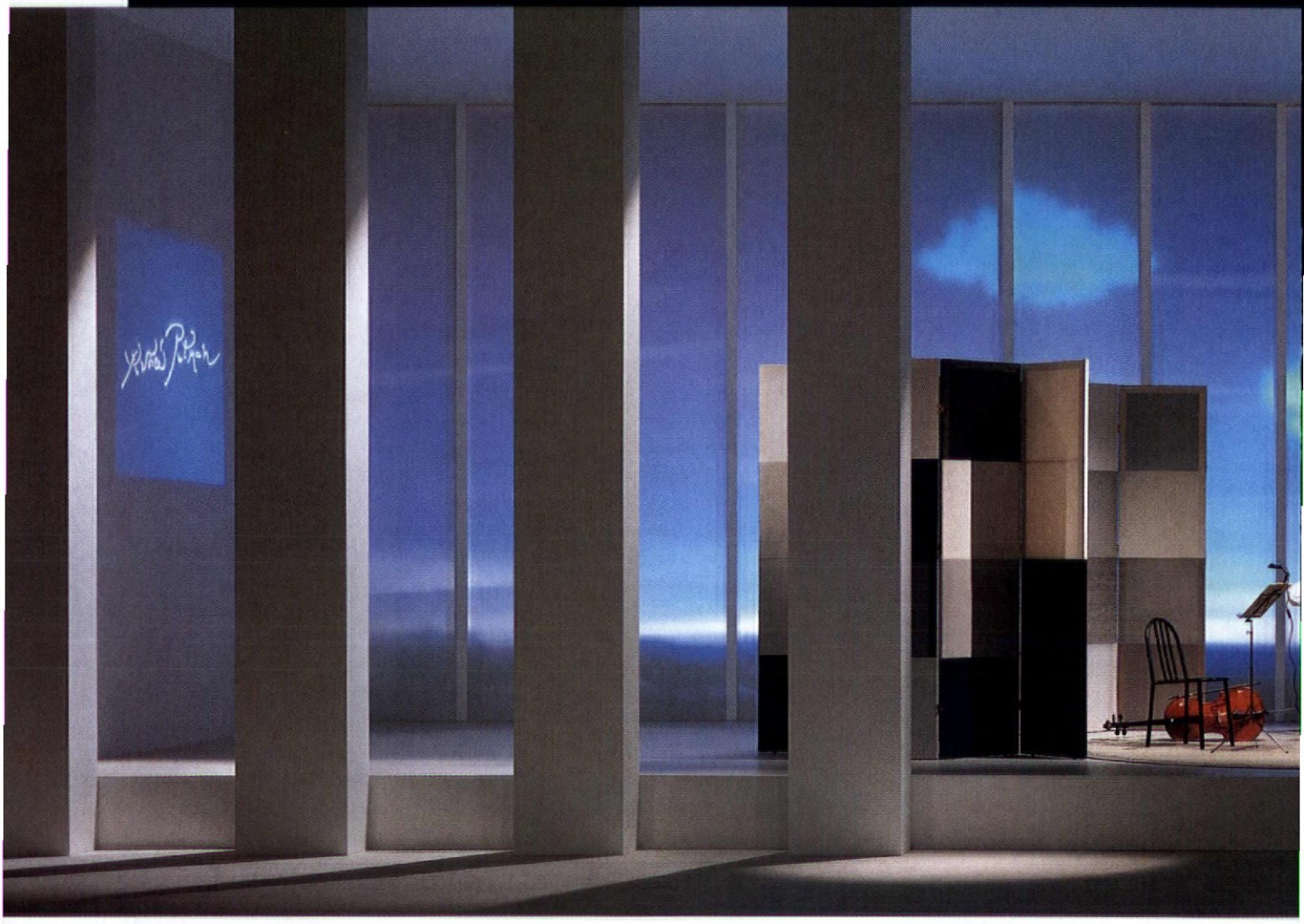
DESIGNER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE

1 Upholstered arm chair with ivory crackle finish ($1,499), by Pearson.
2 Tight-back chair ($1,380), by Lexington.
3 Side chair ($635), from Henredon's Registry Collection.
4 Side chair with ivory crackle finish ($799), by Pearson.
5 Milling Road chair in steel with a cane seat ($1,723), by Baker.
6 Federal period, Martha Washington lolling chair ($595), by Hickory Chair.
7 Russian Empire armchair, in mappa burl ($3,246), from the Stately Homes Collection by Baker.
8 Upholstered mahogany library chair ($1,245), adapted by Mark Hampton from his antique original, for Hickory Chair.
9 Regency armchair ($1,243), by Century.
10 Tassled dining chair ($715), by Lane.
11 Folding bistro chair in iron and wicker ($119), by Pulaski.
12 High-back wing chair ($2,400), by Henredon.
13 Beech side chair ($1,459), by Century.
14 Cane-back Regency chair ($750), in black lacquer with gold trim, by Hickory Chair.
15 Shield-back side chair in mahogany ($450), by Alexander Julian for Universal Furniture.
16 Rattan Trianon armchair ($1,350), from the Orlando Diaz-Azcuy Collection by McGuire.
17 Mahogany side chair from John Widdicomb's British India Collection ($2,000).

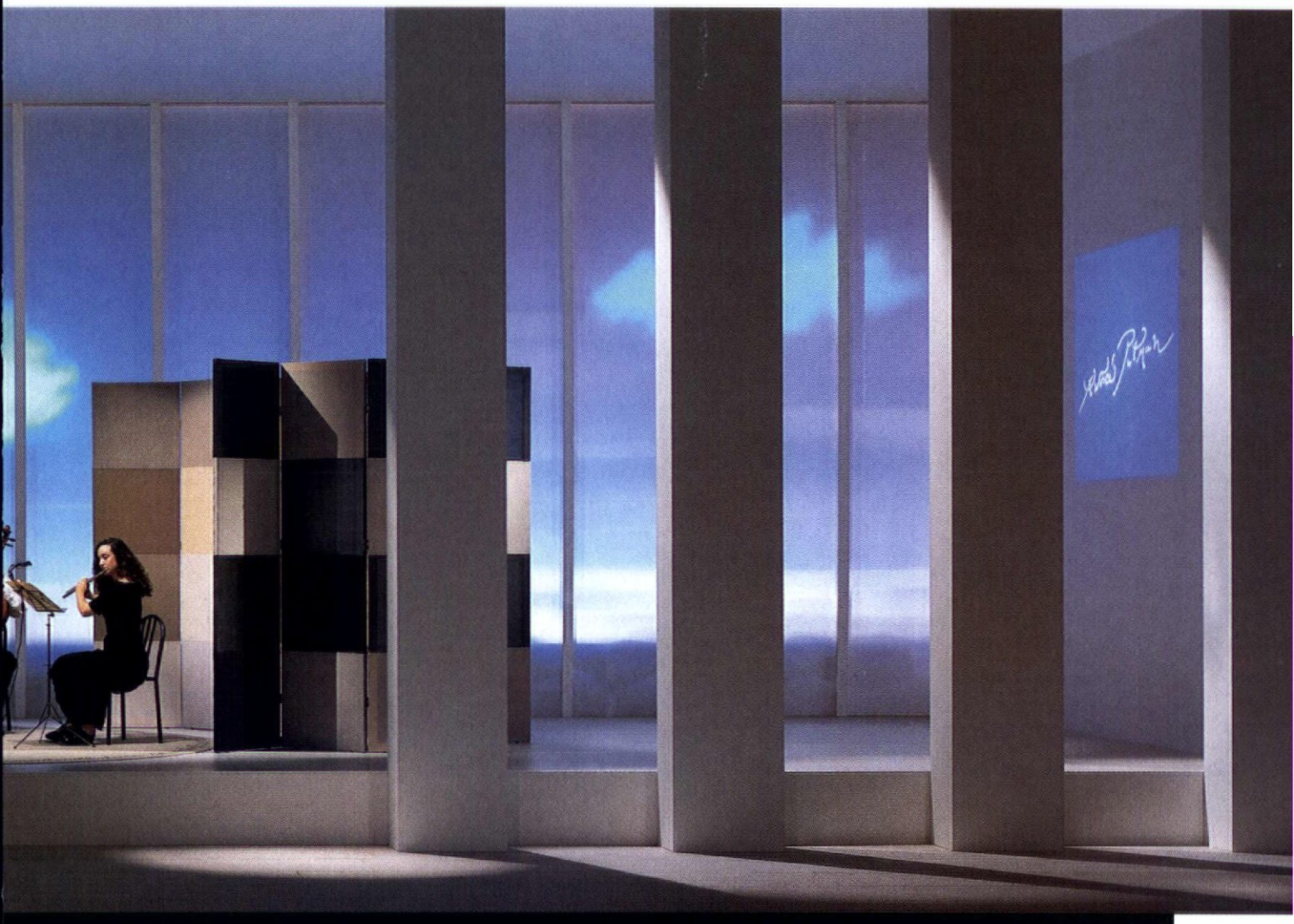
PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY
SUZANNE SLESIN, DAN SHAW, KATHRYN BROOKSHIRE, MARGOT NIGHTINGALE, PIERRE CANDRA, JENNIFER KOHNS, LYGEIA GRACE, JULIE GRAY, JOYCE BAUTISTA, LESLIE BRENNER, AND AMY CRAIN

AS YOU CAN SEE, THE RULES OF REASON SET NO LIMITS ON THE IMAGINATION.



"Le Salon de Musique"

Trevira



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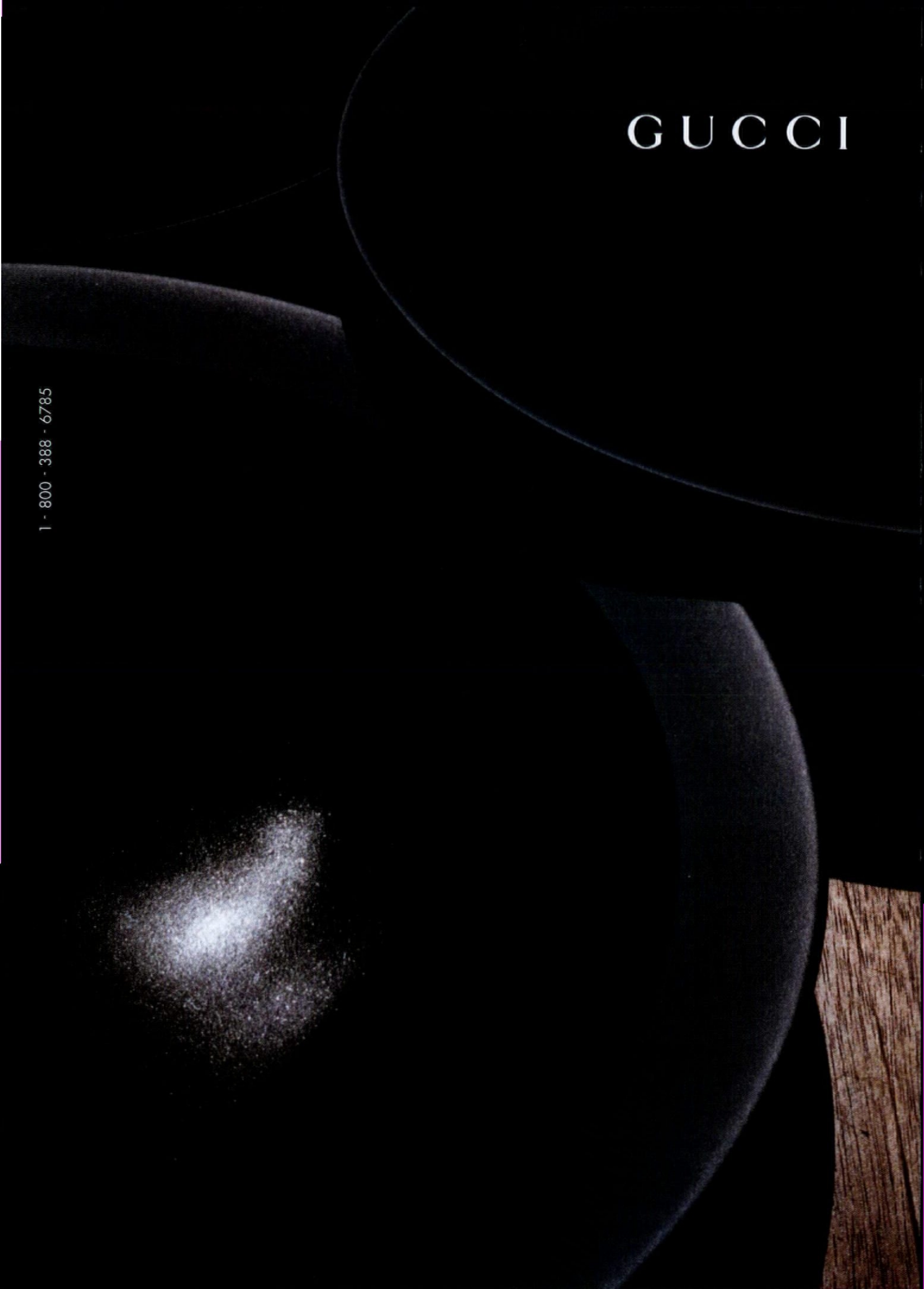
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CONDÉ NAST
House & Garden

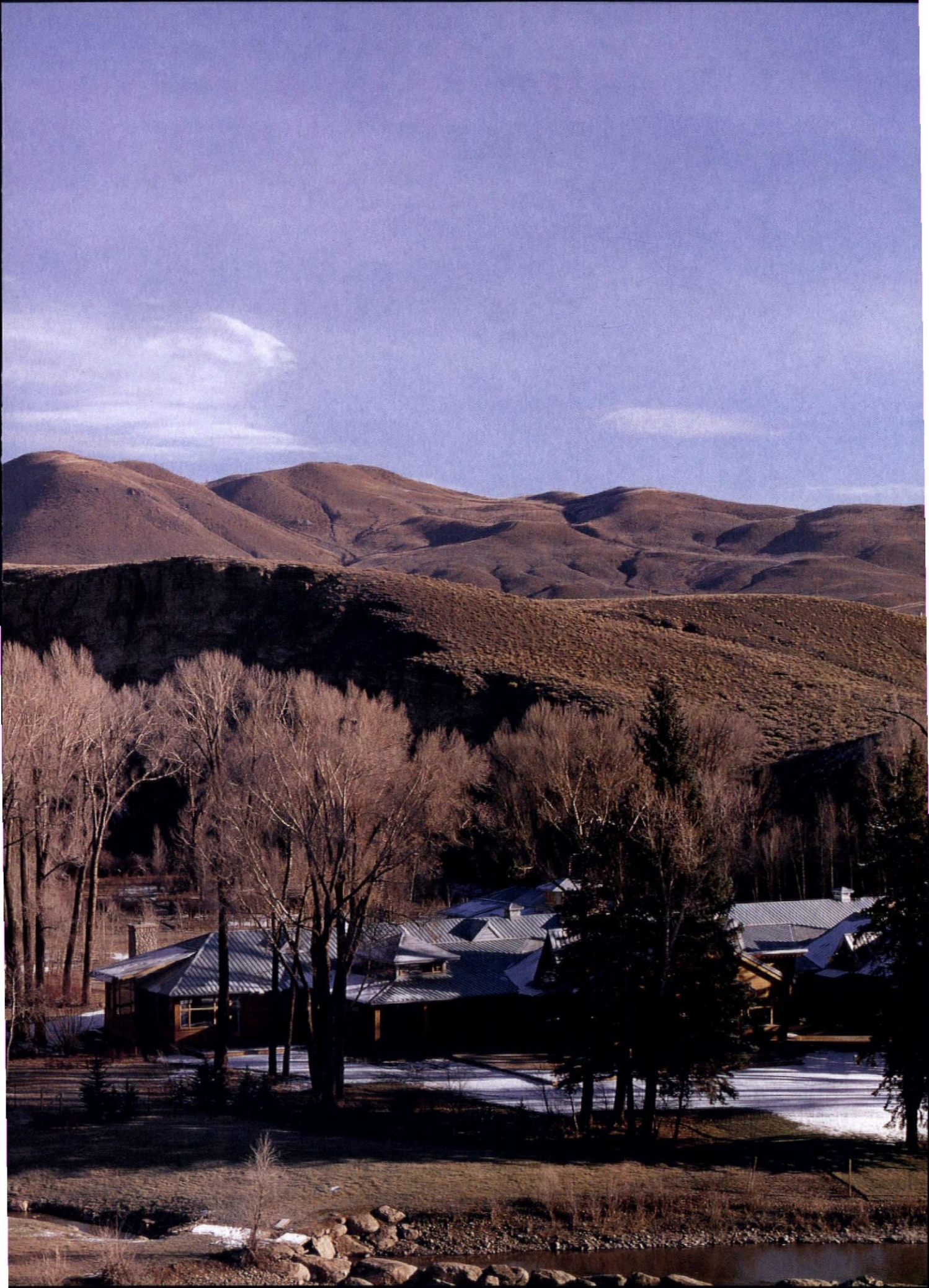
NEW WEST

FIRST PRINCIPLE Frontier style has always offered a nostalgic look that borders on kitsch. For the new pioneers of the great outdoors, the trick is to preserve a sense of western history without overdoing the corn. After all, pioneer life was rough by necessity, not choice, so why not introduce comforts unavailable to early ranchers? New York interior designer Mariette Himes Gomez, known for her sophistication and no-nonsense detailing, defines a New West look that is as bracing as the wide-open spaces. In so doing, she pays proper homage to how the West was won—and why.

Mariette Himes Gomez has designed a Colorado ranch for hunting, fishing, riding, and roping without roughing it

Best WESTERN

BY SUZANNE SLESIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHEL ARNAUD STYLED BY BARBARA KURGAN



FASHION DESIGNER

Ralph Lauren has one—complete with a tepee—but media entrepreneur Ted Turner has a handful. The latest status symbol for movie stars, financial wizards, and other moguls is the western ranch, outfitted by a big-name interior designer with horn chandeliers and buttery leather armchairs. The new pioneers—big-city folk with a predilection for wide-open spaces and lots of privacy (1.3 million acres' worth in Ted Turner's case)—are laying claim to such attractions of the great outdoors as glorious mountain views, secluded lakes, and rushing, well-stocked streams. They are also providing interior designers of these second, and sometimes third or fourth, homes with lots of virgin territory, also known as vacant square footage, to be decorated.

But please don't ask who these new pioneers are or exactly where their ranches are located. They want to hop on their private planes and get away from it all. "No one wants to be highly visible anymore," says Mariette Himes Gomez, a New York–based interior designer, who for the last twenty-five years has honed many long-term, multihouse relationships with clients she describes as people with means. "We work with individuals for twenty years, with all their moves and changes," she says.

A few months ago, and just in time for the winter season, Gomez—assisted by design manager Natalie Loggins—completed the interior of a low-lying, 14,000-square-foot ranch that sits on 16,000 acres in the Colorado Mountains, about two hours from Denver.

The 14,000-square-foot ranch house, previous pages, is nestled in the Colorado Mountains. The sofa, covered in a chenille from Henry Calvin, faces the stone fireplace in the large living room, left. The mica-and-copper hanging lanterns came from Kelter-Malcé Antiques. Wing chairs are upholstered in a Kravet cotton. The wool carpet is from Rosecore. The antlers were picked up on the property.

"IT'S ABOUT FRESH AIR AND OPEN SKIES, ABOUT GETTING AWAY FROM A FRENETIC ENVIRONMENT"

The unusual, Adirondack-style bookcase, with birch bark and twig trim, opposite page, is from the Newel Art Galleries. The 1920s rag runner is from Kelter-Malcé. In the living room, this page above, two French Art Deco leather chairs, from Ellen Ward Ltd., sit on a vintage Navajo rug from Kelter-Malcé. The sofa is upholstered in a chenille from Brunschwig & Fils. The Penobscot canoe was found in London.

The wood-frame house, with soaring, exposed-beam ceilings, maple and Brazilian cherry floors, and chunky stone fireplaces, was designed by John Diamond, of the Babcock Design Group, an architectural firm in Salt Lake City. The ranch is situated in a picture-postcard setting with all the requisite wildlife, including deer, elk, bear, badgers, buffalo, and golden and bald eagles. And yes, a river runs through it, stocked with trout, of course. "It sounds corny, but they like it," says Gomez.

"It's all about fresh air and open skies, about getting away from a frenetic environment part of the year," adds Gomez, who fell under the spell of the ranch on her many trips there. "One night when I was there," she recalls, "I took a ride and saw so many little, furry things. It was magical."

The evening foray was probably Gomez's only time off in the West, as she had to furnish the ten-bedroom house in six months, from start to finish, so that the clients could just arrive and feel completely at home. Drawing on Hollywood images of the Wild West—Hopalong Cassidy, the Lone Ranger and Tonto—Gomez infused the interior with lots of bold yet inviting allusions to the pleasures of frontier life. While the clients use their ranch only for long weekends and family vacations, they are generous about lending it to friends. Their hospitality and the place's isolation mean that the interior had to be comfortable enough to feel more like a real home than a well-appointed hotel. But

MONTPELLIER

In the master bedroom, this page above, the bedspread is a Bennison Fabrics print with a Lee Jofa plaid. Pendleton blankets from Laura Fisher Antiques line the headboards in the guest room, below. The cabinet, opposite page, is from Mah-Kee-Nac Trading Company, Lenox, MA. The chairs are from a flea market. The coffee table is from Claiborne Gallery, Santa Fe, NM. Rag rug by Elizabeth Eakins, NYC. Lamp from The Quiet Moose, Breckenridge, CO. Sources, see back of book.

it's quite a feat to achieve a well-lived-in look almost overnight.

Gomez, who has worked for years with clients who collect Early American folk art, came up with a sophisticated interpretation of the regional style that is affectionate without being conventional. Steering clear of what she calls "rustic and more rustic," she describes the style as "a cleaner, clearer look, with not too many accessories; just the right ones." Don't think of this return to nature as any kind of camping out. The ranch is luxurious. It is equipped with a separate guest wing; living and dining rooms of baronial proportions; a high-tech, stainless-steel kitchen (a cook rustles up meals for up to twenty-four people, three times a day); and ten bedrooms, the beds outfitted with headboards upholstered in vintage Pendleton blankets. "We started from zero," says Gomez, "but the idea was that the house should feel as if it had been there forever, without looking so much the part that it was kitsch."

Happy trails to you.

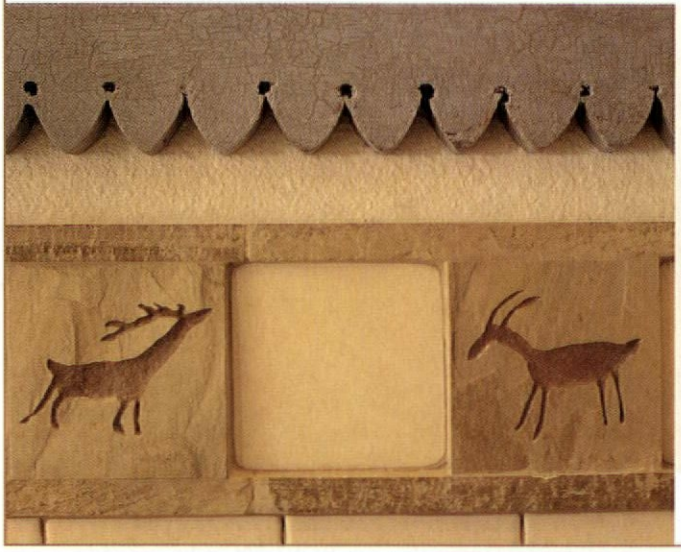
OPENING PAGE: HANDLETTERING BY DAVID COULSON

First Principle

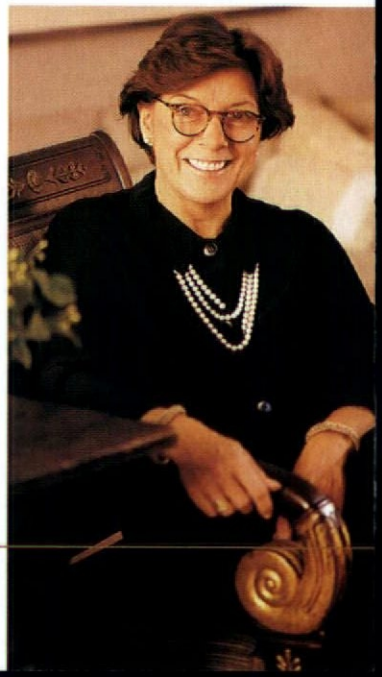
HOME ON THE RANGE

ALTHOUGH NEW YORK interior designer Mariette Himes Gomez insists that she's "from the school that takes away, rather than adds," she points out that her work "has nothing at all to do with minimalism." Instead, her trailblazing approach is to highlight every detail and lavish attention on each of them. Westward ho!

^ STAG PARTY The chandelier is made from antlers that caribou, elk, moose, and mule deer shed in early spring. Wall sconces and chandeliers are $300 to $5,000 at the Canyon Trading Post in Sante Fe, New Mexico, 505-988-5012.



< HANDMADE Denver artisan Sharon Shuster Anhorn (303-860-7531) crafted the copper medallions depicting buffalo, above left, on the fireplace. They cost $2,500 a pair. Images from petroglyphs (rock inscriptions by Native Americans from 1750 B.C. to 1400 A.D.) inspired the slate tiles, left, in the bathrooms. A four-inch-square tile is about $14 from Alpine Tile & Supply Inc., 801-467-6575.



MARIETTE HIMES GOMEZ >

< STRIPES ARE THE STAR The antique 1920s chest came from Ann Madonia Antiques. The club chair is from the Shapes Galerie Inc. The braided wool rug is from Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges.

> THE CHUCK WAGON The sleek professional kitchen was designed to turn out food three times a day for the large numbers of guests, who come to enjoy hunting and fishing weekends. Planned by the Babcock Design Group, it has stainless-steel counters, a commercial, six-burner Wolf range, a Traulsen refrigerator and freezer, and a wine cooler.

V WE'RE HOOKED Vintage rugs add homespun charm to the bedrooms. This one, from Judith and James Milne, Inc., in New York (212-472-0107), is similar in color and pattern to the Pendleton blankets, on the headboards. These rugs are $500 to $800.

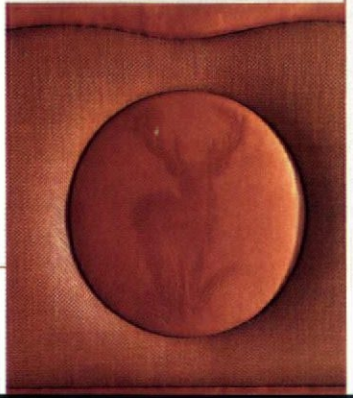
"IN THE WEST TODAY, IT'S NOT JUST A RANCH, BUT A NEW BREED OF HOUSE THAT'S BEEN COMPLETELY OUTFITTED"

–Mariette Himes Gomez

V DREAM ON In the guest bedrooms, the headboards are covered in vintage Pendleton wool blankets, from Laura Fisher Antiques in New York, 212-838-2596; $350 and up for a full-sized blanket.

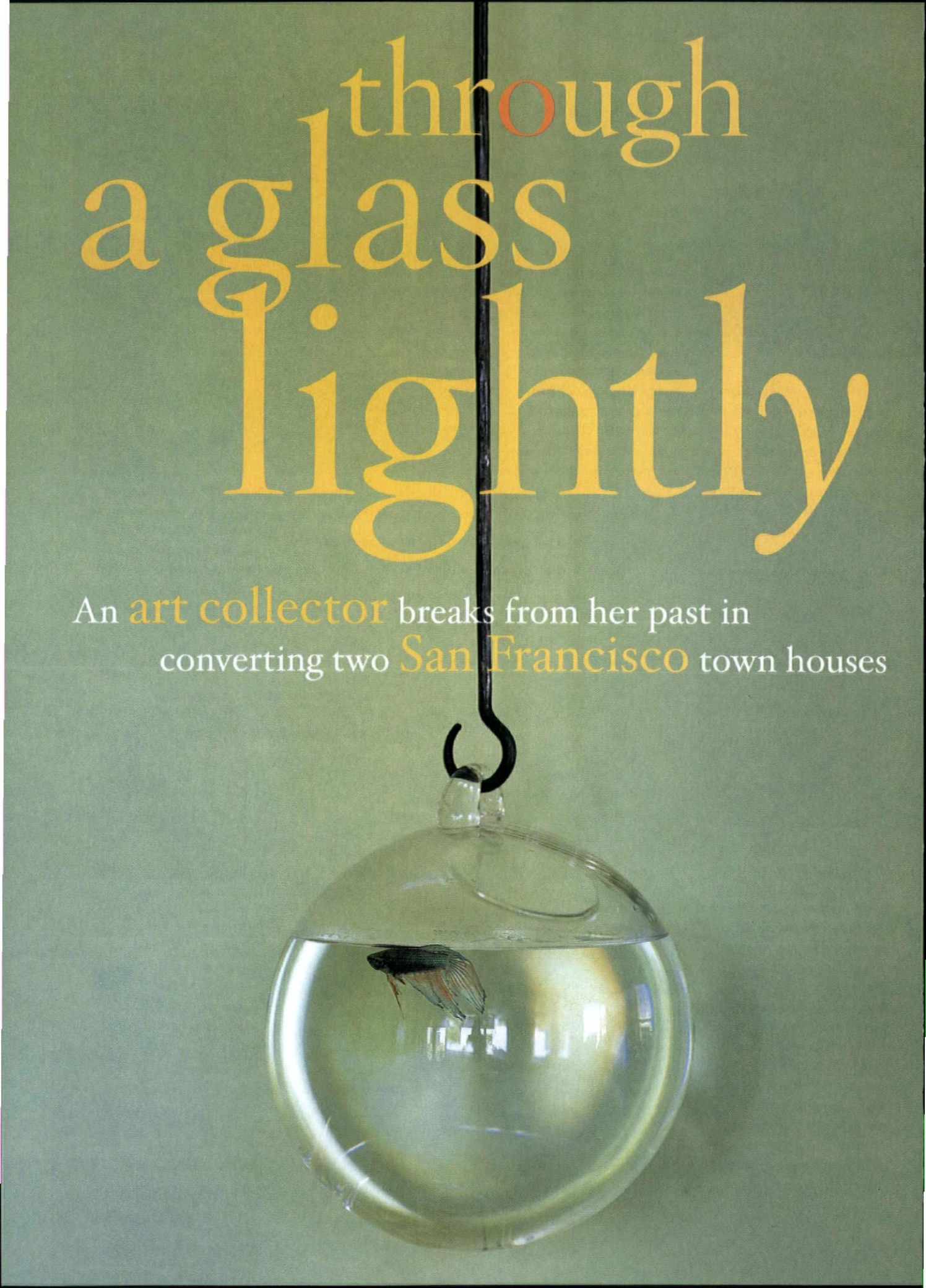
> CHIEFTAIN'S CHAIR The clients liked this cotton twill from Kravet, with its pattern of a Native American chieftain, but they were unsure about how to use it–they wanted to put it on a chair, but did not want to sit on the pattern. The solution was to put it on the backs of two wing chairs (one is an English antique, the other a reproduction by upholsterer Maury Shor, Inc.). The rest of the chair is covered in a moss-colored velvet, also from Kravet.

V LASTING IMPRESSION An image of a stag was embossed on the master bedroom's headboard, using an etching created by New York artisans at Costello Studio, Inc., 212-410-2083. Sources, see back of book.



through a glass lightly

An art collector breaks from her past in converting two San Francisco town houses



The Siamese fighting fish, in a bowl designed by Federico de Vera, opposite page, is named Julius; the owner's bird, this page, answers to Buddha. The kitchen, designed by Stanley Saitowitz, has as its centerpiece a stainless-steel table designed by de Vera.

WRITTEN BY ZAHID SARDAR PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANITA CALERO

Judging by the portrait at the top of the stairway leading to Ann Hatch's sunny San Francisco living room, her mother was a brooding woman, while Hatch, who was just twelve when Salvador Dalí painted the pair, was already breaking free of the family gloom.

Although she comes from a long line of art collectors (her great-grandfather T. B. Walker founded the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis), Hatch chose not to build a formal art collection, but to concentrate instead on creating the Capp Street Project, a gallery and resource for emerging installation artists. In the same breakaway spirit, she bought two adjacent Edwardian houses on Telegraph Hill, and asked architect Stanley Saitowitz and interior designer Federico de Vera to convert them into sleek, modern, light-filled spaces.

Saitowitz, noted for a Modernist style of building, and de Vera, owner of two San Francisco stores specializing in avant-garde art objects, approached the joining and remodeling of Hatch's houses as they would an art installation: Both the internal staircase and the ground floor double as galleries, while vitrines, glass-topped tables, and other glass, wood, and steel items were made to serve as display cases elsewhere in the house.

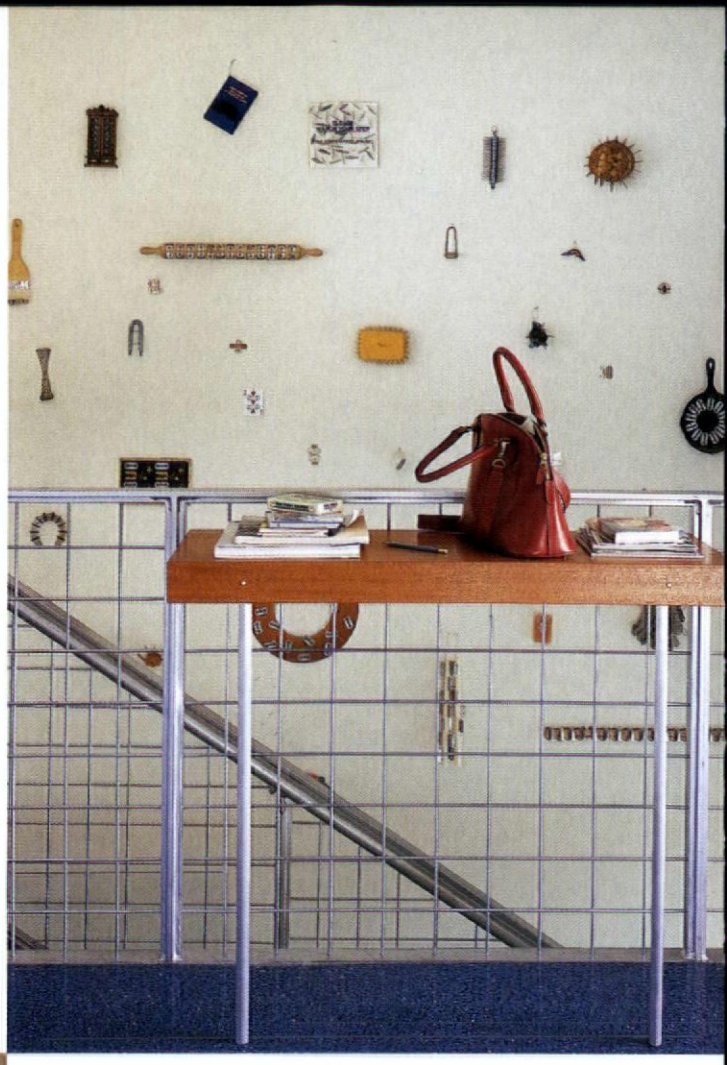
Since Hatch was determined to save the original facades, a new awning and metal gates are the only clues to the changes within. Just inside the entryway, however, industrial steps, in an open grid-work pattern, have replaced the old staircase.

Hatch's enthusiasm for vivid color proved invaluable to the architect in resolving the inconsistencies in floor and ceiling heights between the buildings. "The spaces had to be interwoven and we did it with color," Saitowitz says. On the third-floor landing you can see—like points on a compass—green in Hatch's bedroom, a deep-blue wall just past her son, Tim's, bedroom, and Pompeiian red walls in her office. The dining room, with its huge, retractable skylights, is painted a light-absorbing greenish blue; and where the ceilings of the two living rooms meet awkwardly,

In the dining room, above and right, family heirlooms such as the dining table, chairs, candelabra, and china are set off by contemporary pieces. The shelving unit and credenza were designed by de Vera. The artwork on the wall is by Isamu Noguchi.

In one part of the living room, below, a coffee table of glass, steel, aluminum, and Douglas fir designed by de Vera displays objects on its top and within its glass window. The painting is by Raphael Soyer. The red armchair is by Poltrona Frau, through Limn. In another part of the living room, at right, the painting is by Tom Marioni and the sculpture of stacked logs, by Paul Discoe.

DALI



Saitowitz used a wall of lemon yellow to separate them.

When de Vera became involved, midway through the reconstruction, he was faced with a palette of disparate colors, and an eccentric collection of French antiques, modern art, and mementos from previous homes. He started by diverting some things to storage, but he also found inspiration in many of Hatch's treasures. The Asian motifs in the dining room rug he designed are a nod to her heirloom Chinese porcelains. To complement a Raphael Soyer canvas of nudes that had belonged to her mother, de Vera bid at auction for a similar Soyer of clothed figures, which now hangs in the bedroom.

"Ann's furniture wasn't exactly my style," de Vera admits. To unify Louis XVI, Biedermeier, and his own creations—such as occasional tables of glass and anodized aluminum tubing—de Vera relied on a color strategy similar to Saitowitz's. Chairs from different periods were recovered in bright colors, and in the dining room, blue velvet seats cleverly harmonize the mismatched chairs Hatch had

Empire-style backgammon table and chairs, top left, are from the family collection; aluminum, steel and glass case by de Vera; orange vase by Ben Edols and Kathy Elliot. Wall installation, top right, is by Donald Lipski; in front of it is a table of Philippine mahogany and aluminum. A 1960 painting, left, by Salvador Dalí of Ann Hatch and her mother. In the bedroom, opposite page, the bed and glass-and-steel table were designed by de Vera.

accumulated over the years. The shade of blue was determined when de Vera unpacked a set of antique blue-and-gold china from Hatch's maiden aunt.

De Vera's skill at juxtaposing diverse objects is evident in the living room as well. In a long wood-and-glass case set on slender steel legs of anodized tubing, a vase by Picasso is harmoniously displayed next to valuable jades and plastic mementos. Even a coffee table of metal and glass is a display case. Through its transparent top you can see works by Gay Outlaw, a book by William Saroyan, and even a paper fan showing a topless drag queen.

Perhaps the most serendipitous decision was de Vera's insistence on converting the first floor into a game room and a gallery, where such mementos as Tim's baby shoes and a dog bone in honor of Hatch's pet, Elmo, sit beside more exalted items. "We didn't want people to think us too precious," Hatch says, and laughs. "It's a fun house. I've lived here since last March, and it is only just revealing itself."

Zahid Sardar *writes for the* San Francisco Examiner Magazine.

The sink top, opposite page, is by Saitowitz. One patio, this page above, has an aluminum-and-glass table with dyed-nylon-rope chairs by de Vera. Above right, Hatch is perched next to a chaise longue modeled after a design by Warren Macarthur. De Vera poses on the top level. The garden, with a mural of shellfish, and a granite bowl, right, was designed by Topher Delaney.

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE
Magritte
STOPPING TIME

White Tie and Tails

David Kleinberg, of Parish-Hadley, and architectural designer Richard Rosen take classic high style for a chic spin

THE FOYER IS ANCHORED BY a mid-19th-century French cabinet, above. The Bert Stern photograph is from the James Danziger Gallery; the bouquets of magnolia leaves are by David Madison. The dining room, left, has an English Regency table that expands to seat ten. The Regency cabinets are from Ciancimino Ltd. in London; the rug, from Sam Kasten in Stockbridge, MA.

WRITTEN BY SUZANNE SLESIN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MATT HRANEK
STYLED BY SUZANNE SHAKER

He was not the first designer called in by a successful and urbane young couple to decorate their light-filled, 3,500-square-foot apartment in Manhattan. But David Kleinberg, the forty-two-year-old executive vice president of the prestigious New York firm of Parish-Hadley Associates, did not stand on ceremony. "I presented them with a plan in three color schemes," he says. "One was very white, one tawny beige, and one deeper hues. They picked the first scheme, and we never went back."

Perfectly eclectic, suitably tailored, yet supremely detailed rooms have always been the bill of fare at Parish-Hadley. Kleinberg, who joined the firm sixteen years ago and honed his craft while working with the late, legendary Sister Parish and her partner, Albert Hadley, one of the century's preeminent decorators, continues the tradition.

While the Upper East Side apartment is intentionally not a "put-your-feet-up kind of place," it manages to look calm and unfussy. "It's formal-looking because it's so pristine," explains Kleinberg, who worked with architectural designer Richard Rosen, to refashion the high-ceilinged rooms. "I see it as a grown-up place, not done for anyone's pleasure except that of the people who live there," says Kleinberg. That's just as well, as the couple now have two young children. "When a two-year-old runs around, there can't be too many things on the table. It's a user-friendly place."

It is also a compellingly updated version of traditional decorating. "What makes it today is editing, but not taking shortcuts," says Kleinberg. "It's important to make a coherent statement that runs from the front door to the back hall."

Kleinberg arranges furniture in a tried-and-true classical way, dark antiques contrasting with the lightness and ethereality of the background. "There are off-whites and many levels of white," says Kleinberg, who enjoys the minute variations of hue and value that give the rooms their rigorous yet luxurious look. The furniture—eighteenth-century Georgian, French '40s, and French Directoire pieces—contrasts with the impressive collection of twentieth-century, black-and-white photographs.

Pale saddle-leather chairs, celadon suede pillows, the golden depth of a library sheathed in bird's-eye maple. "These are contrasting textures that interest me," he says.

But what's next, after this emphatically monochromatic and no-turning-back redefinition of the traditional decor?

"Who knows?" asks Kleinberg. "I'm stumped."

History suggests otherwise.

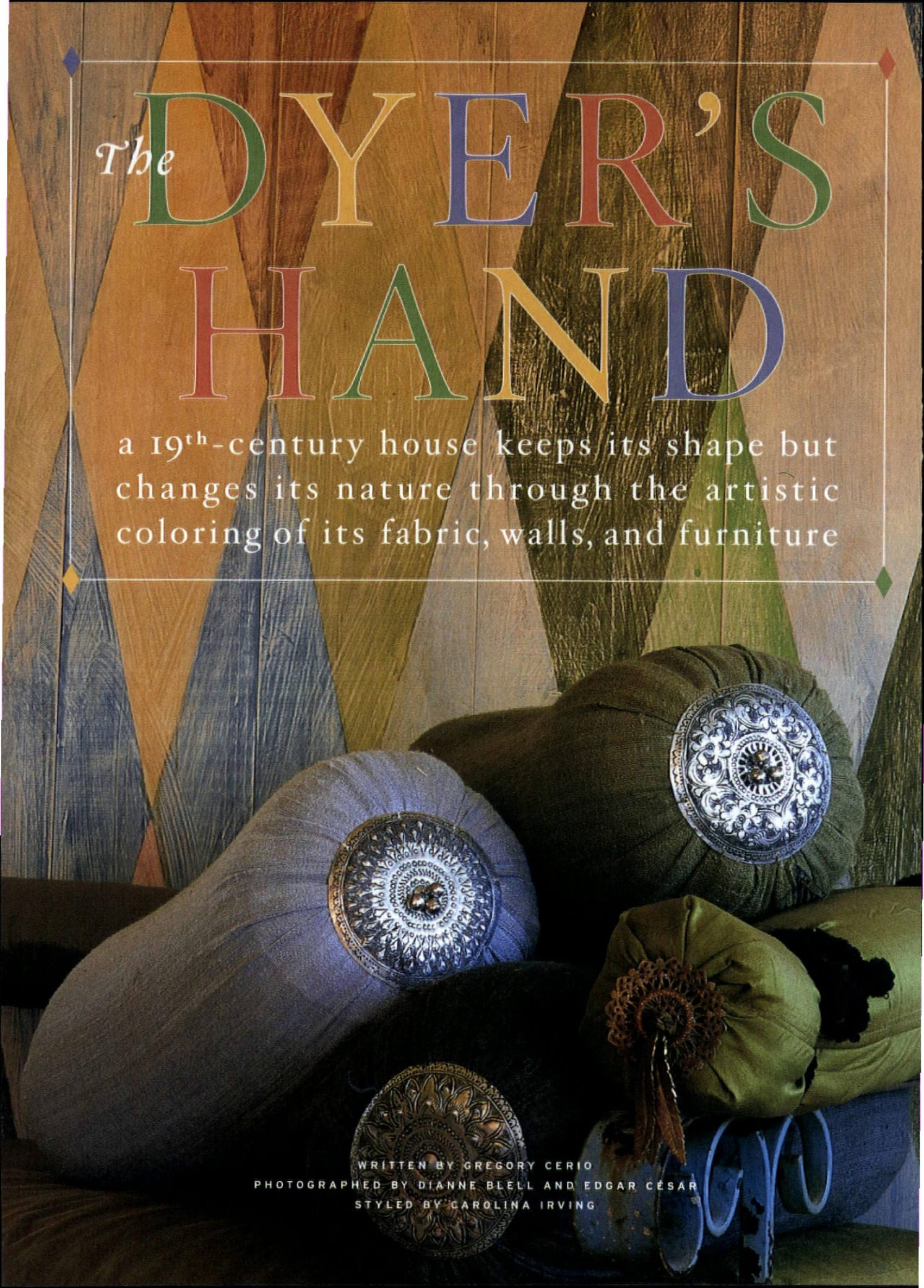
THE STUDY OFF THE MASTER BEDROOM, **above and opposite page, is, says Kleinberg, "more masculine." Putty and gray hues dominate. The photographs above the sofa (covered in a Manuel Canovas wool) are by Ansel Adams. The rug is from Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges. The French limestone mantelpiece came from A & R Asta; the graphic Gio Ponti chairs were found at Full House.**

"What makes it today is editing, but not taking shortcuts"

THE LIVING ROOM IS FURNISHED with sofas covered in a Coraggio woven silk. The antique English cockpen chairs are from Jeremy in London, the Khotan rugs from Lee Calicchio, the Roman shades from Grey Watkins, and the linen draperies from Nancy Corzine.

"It's a very grown-up place,
not done for anyone's pleasure except
that of the people who live there"

RICHARD ROSEN DESIGNED the library, this page right, with its walls lined in bird's-eye maple. The slipper chair is upholstered with a camel-hair fabric from Rogers & Goffigon, and the cotton carpet is from Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges. The king-sized mahogany bed in the master bedroom, above, is by Parish-Hadley. "I wanted a piece of furniture rather than a sea of fabric," Kleinberg says. The box spring, covered in horsehair from Decorators Walk, is layered with Pratesi sheets and a cashmere blanket from Schweitzer Linens. The wall-mounted lamps are from John Boone, the carpet from Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges. The master bathroom, opposite page, is also by Rosen, and is tiled with custom-made Italian mosaics. The bathtub is from Kohler; the fixtures are from Czech & Speake of Jermyn Street; and the Japanese pottery from William Lipton Ltd. Sources, see back of book.



The DYER'S HAND

a 19th-century house keeps its shape but changes its nature through the artistic coloring of its fabric, walls, and furniture

WRITTEN BY GREGORY CERIO
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DIANNE BLELL AND EDGAR CÉSAR
STYLED BY CAROLINA IRVING

In the summer of 1992, Dianne Blell began to feel there was something missing in her life. She had established herself during the '80s as an artist and a photographer in New York. Her artwork—mise-en-scènes of dreamy landscapes populated by nymphs and cherubs—was shown at a prominent SoHo gallery. Her dramatic photos of the wildlife and peoples of sub-Saharan Africa had appeared in *National Geographic* and other magazines. But then a domestic urge seized Blell. She wanted something to nurture. In short, she wanted real estate. "Some women have a biological clock for a child," she explains. "I had one for a house."

That summer, Blell found her heart's desire in a three-bedroom farmhouse in the town of Bridgehampton, on eastern Long Island. "It was this simple, sweet, little thing, just waiting for me," Blell says. From the outside, her home looks much like the unprepossessing, brown-shingled affair Blell first saw. On the inside, however, she has fashioned an environment that seems a perfect reflection of her life and art: unvarnished wooden walls and floors, rough as the paths she had walked in Africa, share space with furnishings as vivid and opulent as her neoclassical tableaux. "I love the combination of the mundane and the mythic," Blell says.

Like all myths, this one begins in the far recesses of time. The turn-of-the-century structure had been through several incarnations by the time Blell purchased it. In the interests of economy, it had been built with low, eight-foot ceilings, giving the rooms a squat feeling that Blell found oppressive. She solved the problem by knocking out the walls that boxed in the central stairway and those that divided the kitchen and

Thai silk pillows from Sarajo, opposite page, echo the palette of the Harlequin Room. In the living room, this page above, sections of a five-piece sofa from Gotham Galleries, upholstered in silk from B&J Fabrics, face stools from Anglo-Raj Antiques.

the living room. She then removed a second-floor closet that sat above the stairs and put a window in its place—changes that simultaneously created a sense of height and brought a flood of light into the rooms below.

A few final renovations answered to Blell's taste for romance. She added a fireplace—"a big one, with presence," she notes—and, with the help of an architect friend, Frederick Fisher, designed an octagonal tower. The first floor of the tower serves as the dining room; the top floor, which adjoins the master bedroom, is Blell's take on a Victorian sleeping porch. Last, Blell transformed the small barn into a studio, adding a facade with French doors, as well as a washroom, mudroom, and darkroom. Each addition has its own roofline, Blell explains, "to give the sense of accumulation over time, like a shanty."

Rawness made way for romance when Blell moved on to the finer points of decorating. On the first floor, she says, she wanted "to calm the abrasiveness of the raw walls with something formal." Inspired by the pastoral scenes on a set of Turkish sideplates that she owns, she had a friend, artist Ricky Clifton, decorate the living room with a pencil-point, juniper motif, using water-based craft paints that do not hide the grain of the wallboards. Mindful of Blell's taste for motley elegance, Clifton hit upon a pastel-shaded harlequin pattern for the sitting room. "It's like something out of the Renaissance," Blell remarks. "It has a magical air."

Indeed, Blell has pulled off something very much like a conjuring trick. The broad contrasts of color and texture extend to the furniture—mainly thrift-store finds. There

In the Harlequin Room, this page above, French antique chairs bask in the late-day sun. The daybed, pink armchairs, and bench were found at auctions. The room was painted by the artist Ricky Clifton. In the kitchen, opposite page, the light fixture and table were also bought on the block.

are odd juxtapositions in the living room, where sleek '50s sofas stand next to humble wooden Buddhist temple stools from Ceylon; in the dining room, an iron daybed has been covered in a lush, gold silk.

Despite such variations, Blell's home has a sprightly, almost otherworldly, harmony. She says that almost without thinking, she has made of her house what she seeks in her art: a separate reality. "I believe in making fantasias, places with their own rules and dimensions," she says. "Here, I feel like I'm living in a dream—except I can invite other people to share it."

Gregory Cerio *is a senior writer for* People *magazine.*

The antique Portuguese beds, this page above, are from Cobweb Antiques. A textile from Sarajo sits on a chair in the entry hall, left. The chairs in the studio, opposite page, are upholstered in linen from B&J Fabrics. Blell's photographs and a kilim from Kea Kilim are framed by French doors draped with muslin.

It's a Jungle
ON MAUI, A POET

Out There
RECLAIMS RAVAGED LAND AND WONDERS WHAT A GARDEN REALLY IS
WRITTEN BY W.S MERWIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY LEN JENSHEL AND DIANE COOK

THE GARDEN WAITS FOR THE RAIN, RESPONDS TO IT AT

The GARDEN, OR WHAT my wife and I have come to call the garden, follows a small winding valley on the north coast of the Hawaiian island of Maui. Half a mile or so beyond our property line on the seaward side the streambed that is the keel of the valley cuts through a series of shelves to the rocky shore.

In times of heavy downpours the streambed roars and the muddy torrent can be dangerous, but most of the time there is no water in the channel at all. This part of the coast is a series of deep sinuous valleys. Some of these valleys still have their water, or a remnant of it, and the relation of the watercourses to their water is the central thread of the history of this whole area since it was first settled. The flow of water in the channel of massive boulders at the bottom of our garden was certainly more constant before the first irrigation ditches and tunnels were carved out of the mountainside above here over a hundred years ago, and before the serpentine coast road was cut through to Hana after the First World War. The rural life of the Hawaiians had always assumed an unfailing supply of pure water, and when the water in these valleys was cut off or severely reduced the people who lived here, people whose forebears had planted the ancestors of the huge mango trees that still shade the streambed, were forced to leave.

I have become increasingly aware of this region as a testament of water, the origin and guide of its contours and gradients and of all the lives that evolved here. That was always here to be seen, of course, and the recognition has forced itself, in one form or another, upon people in every part of the world who have been directly involved with the growing of living things. The gardener who ignores it is soon left with no garden. When Alexander Pope, that happily obsessed gardener, urged his reader to "Consult the Genius of the place in all," the primary office of that Genius as he conceived of it was to tell "the Waters or to rise, or fall." The role of water is inseparable from the character of a garden, and even its absence in a garden can take many forms. Muso Soseki, the great thirteenth-century garden designer and poet, was a master of creating the suggestion of nonexistent water with bare stones or steep shapes of rock, or foliage or shadows or sand. In a haunting recent book, *Transitory Gardens, Uprooted Lives,* by Diana Balmori and Margaret Morton about the urban gardens of the homeless, a photograph of Jimmy's garden on the Lower East Side of New York shows the fish pond that Jimmy dug in a vacant lot and filled with water that he carried by hand through a hole in the fence, from the fire hydrant. Beyond the pool, against the brick wall of a building, were the vegetables that he grew in front of his tent, and beside the pond a section of low white wooden fence, an arrangement of tires, a packing skid, and an armchair with Jimmy in it, enjoying the place, showed what a garden could be. Jimmy kept the pond stocked with goldfish until the lot was bulldozed a few days after the picture was taken, and Jimmy disappeared.

When I first saw this valley and these ridges, the water I was

ONCE, OPENS TO IT, HOLDS IT, TAKES IT UP, AND SHINES WITH IT

Various species of palms, previous pages, predominate in this part of the Merwin garden, near the sea. The house, above, near Haiku, sits within the garden created by the writer over the past nineteen years. A visitor coming down the path makes his way between lush greenery, including red ginger flowers, at left, and, at right, *Crinum augustum*–flowers commonly called Queen Emma lilies–closer to the dwelling's entrance. Beyond the rooftop: The tops of mango trees–the only garden inhabitants not planted by the Merwins.

most conscious of was the sea. Seen from the house and the garden now, over the leaves of heliconias and through the fronds of palms, it is the background, for this island is a mountain—indeed, two mountains—that rose from the sea and is returning to it. As long as the trades are blowing from the north and east it is above the sea that the vast ranges of clouds build up, bringing to this coast the rain that formed the valleys, made possible the forests all along the mountain, and allowed particular species of plants and insects, snails and birds to evolve for each variation in the terrain. In the poetry of the Hawaiians, rain almost always is the rain of a particular place, with a specific character and an allusion to an erotic element of some story draped with names. The garden waits for the rain, responds to it at once, opens to it, holds it, takes it up, and shines with it. The sound and touch and smell of the rain, the manner of its arrival, its temper and passage are like a sensuous visitation to the garden.

LETTERING BY STEPHEN KELEMEN

A GARDEN HAS AN INTRICATE, WILLFUL,

A red-leafed *Heliconia indica* mixes with shell-ginger flowers.

But what I saw on the dry afternoon when I first picked my way toward the promontory here was the bare ridge thinly covered with long parched grass and scrub guavas thrashing in the trades, and the dust blowing. The rising notes of plovers just back from Alaska for the winter flew in the wind. There were almost no trees on the upper slopes. I did not know that the whole coast had been a forest until some time in the last century, its principal trees the great Hawaiian *Acacia koa,* and the *'ōhi'a* sacred to the fire goddess Pele, the maker of the islands, and the pandanus, and the Hawaiian fan palm, the *loulu,* of the genus *Pritchardia*, which still grows in small stands in the rain forest to the east. All of this area was deforested by enterprising Caucasians, first for grazing imported cattle, then for planting sugar. After the road was hacked out above the coast, a group of deluded speculators undertook to transform

these slopes into a pineapple plantation. They plowed the sides of the valley vertically so that whatever topsoil had remained until then was washed away in a few years. I walked down the slope through the scrub and came to the dark-green clouds of the mango trees, and under them, in the shade, caught a glimpse of another world.

Even choked, as it was then, with thickets of rampant introduced weed growth, it was the shadowy streambed with its rocks under the huge trees that made me want to stay and have a garden in this valley. But also the thought of having a chance to take a piece of abused land and restore it to some capacity of which I had only a vague idea was part of the appeal, and the day I signed the escrow papers for the land, I planted, up along the ridge, the first trees of a windbreak.

I knew it would be an arduous undertaking but it was also far more complex than I could have imagined. I did manage

human conventions and convenience, and the human pursuit of that elusive, indefinable harmony that we call beauty. It has a life of its own, an intricate, willful, secret life, as any gardener knows. It is only the humans in it who think of it as a garden. A garden is a relation, which is one of the countless reasons why it is never finished.

What I aspire to, and want to have around our lives now, is a sense of the forest. It must be an illusion of forest, clearly, for this is a garden and so a kind of fiction. But the places in the garden

A GARDEN IS A RELATION, WHICH IS ONE OF THE COUNTLESS REASONS WHY IT

to find and establish a number of indigenous kinds of trees and plants, and I think that when I began I still supposed that humans could "reforest," when in fact all we can do is plant this or that and hope that what we are doing turns out to be appropriate. Plainly I had been making my way toward such an intimation, and toward the present garden, since I was a small child in Union City, New Jersey, drawn by an inexplicable cluster of feelings to tufts of grass appearing between cracks in the stone slabs of the sidewalk.

In Europe, and in Mexico, wherever I lived, I tended gardens with no particular skill, and loved them, but most of my questions to do with them had been practical ones, for most of them were in places that had been thought of as gardens by other people, for a long time. It was here on a tropical island, on ground impoverished by human use and ravaged by a destructive history that I found a garden that raised questions of a different kind—including what a garden really was, after all, and what I thought I was doing in it.

Obviously a garden is not the wilderness but an assembly of shapes, most of them living, that owes some share of its composition, its appearance, to human design and effort, where I find myself lingering and staring with unsoundable pleasure are those where it looks to me as though—with the shafts of light reaching and dividing through the trees—it might be deep in the forest. Years ago I read of gardens around Taoist monasteries in the mountains of China, gardens that seemed to be the forest itself into which the mountain paths wound and the traveler discovered that the forest at every turn looked more beautiful, and then it became apparent that the mossed stones of the path had been arranged there, and a turn brought glimpses of a bit of monastery roof, appearing like a shoulder of the hillside. Behind my own fiction is the fond belief that something of the kind can exist.

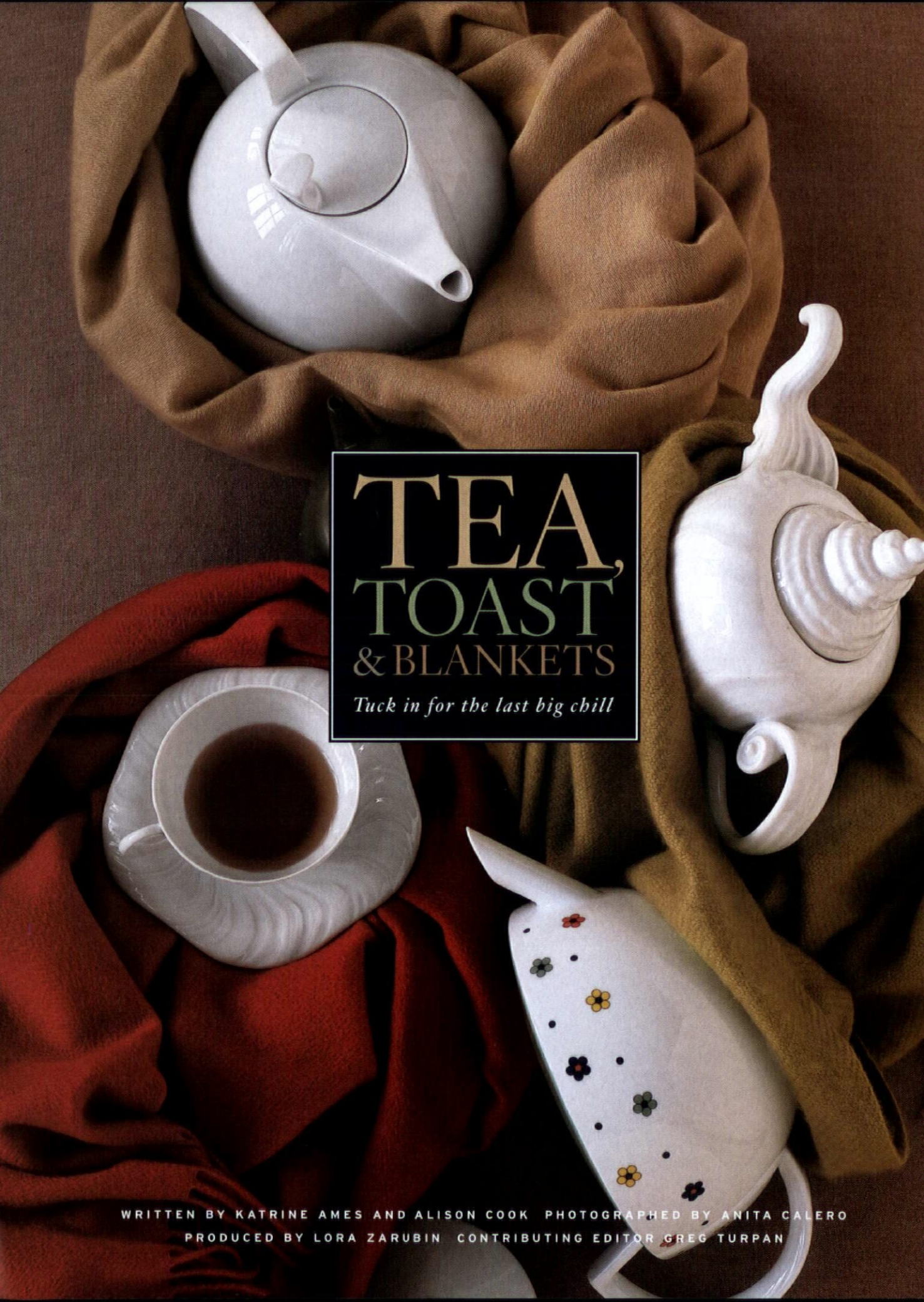
When we have reached a point where our own kind is steadily destroying the rest of life on earth, and some of us are anxious not to do that, our relation with the earth begins to be that of a gardener to a garden.

I believe that gardening, the deliberate influencing of particular plants in the forest, existed for millennia before there was agriculture, and I am convinced that there was a measure of joy and magic in that relation from the beginning, something that probably sobered up considerably when it started to fall into line and become agriculture.

Such considerations turn up around me as I try to find out what this garden may be. I want a garden that is an evolving habitat in which a balance is constantly being sought and found between the green world and provisional control. But I certainly do not want to suggest that the garden is an earnest duty. If I hear the word yardwork I avoid the subject. For the person who has arrived at gardening, it is an enchantment, from the daydreaming to the digging, the heaving, the weeding and watching and watering, the heat, and the *(continued on page 175)*

NEVER FINISHED

A Formosan koa, or *Acacia confusa*, this page, stars in the emerald scene in the lower garden, which runs along the streambed. Like a velvet decoration a flat-leafed philodendron grows up the tree's trunk. Among the other plantings: several kinds of small palms, including *Pinanga*. Opposite page: William and Paula Merwin, top; steps flanked by Queen Emma lilies lead to the house, below.

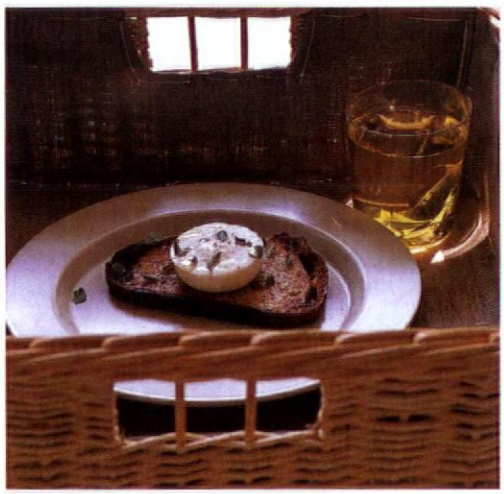


WRITTEN BY KATRINE AMES AND ALISON COOK PHOTOGRAPHED BY ANITA CALERO
PRODUCED BY LORA ZARUBIN CONTRIBUTING EDITOR GREG TURPAN

TEACEREMONY

Mastering the perfect infusion

While music may be the universal language, tea may be a universal word: *thé, tee, té, cha, chai;* even the old British slang, *char.* How odd that a short, sharp syllable defines something so comforting. You can jump-start a morning with coffee, but when you're in need of serious coddling, tea's the answer. Who's ever heard of a coffee cozy? While tea is increasingly popular in America, if you want a really good cup, stay home. What passes for tea in most restaurants—even many fine ones—is swill. Very few match what you can do, with ease, in your own kitchen.



Before you start, bag the bag, along with those tea balls. Loose tea is messy, but its flavor is released during what is known as "the agony of the leaves," when the tea swirls deliriously, unrestrainedly, in boiling water. Fill the kettle with fresh, cold water: it's full of the oxygen that helps give tea its taste. While the kettle's heating, warm the teapot (with water, in the oven, or on a sunny windowsill), then add loose tea. The *instant* the water comes to a boil, pour it over the leaves. Experience and your taste buds will tell you how long the tea should steep (probably at least three minutes). Taste buds alone should also determine what kind of tea you buy. ("Goodness is a decision for the mouth to make," said Lu Yu, an eighth-century Chinese scholar who wrote the first book on tea, *Ch'a Ching.*) There are countless varieties available, from the wildly popular Earl Grey—a blend of black teas flavored with the citrus fruit bergamot—to the elegant, Himalayan-grown, first-blush Darjeelings that can cost hundreds of dollars a pound. A grade-A tea leaf, Lu Yu wrote, should "curl like the dewlaps of a bull, crease like the leather boots of a Tartar horseman, unfold like mist rising over a ravine, and soften as gently as fine earth swept by rain." Unlike bull dewlaps or Tartar boots, tea is fragile. It won't stand up to a freezer, has a short (six months) shelf life, and counts among its mortal enemies damp, heat, and light. Tea should be stored in an opaque, watertight, airtight container. High-quality tins can be acceptable, but, warns Helen Gustafson, tea buyer for Chez Panisse, and author of a wonderfully funny, informative new book, *The Agony of the Leaves: The Ecstasy of My Life With Tea,* "never use one of those cute little decorative ones that candy comes in." Ceramic containers with a mason-jar clamp are best, she says. "You know how a leaf at the beginning of fall is gorgeous, but at the end it has lost its zip?" That's what happens to tea in an inadequate container: "It makes it dry and old. You must keep it in the prime of life."

Since you can buy loose leaves in small quantities, it's easy to experiment; some tea stores may even let you sample a brew from a spoon. If there's no tea store near you, you can order by mail from several well-stocked firms that dish out expertise as well as tea. Be bold and try making your own blend (my favorite: two-thirds smoky Lapsang Souchong and one-third Earl Grey, steeped for four minutes). Legend has it that George V's butler accidentally created the now famous Duke's Mixture when he knocked several kinds of tea on the floor, swept it all up, and served it to a delighted king. Keep your floor clean, and you might be equally serendipitous.

Opposite page, blankets: Pale-green cashmere ($595, Portico Home); mint-jelly cashmere ($495, ABC Carpet & Home); tomato cashmere ($1,200, the Aspen Collection); from top, Gropius teapot ($299, Rosenthal USA Ltd.); Triton teapot ($275), cup and saucer ($60, all from Royal Copenhagen through Georg Jensen); Margarita teapot ($165, Richard-Ginori). This page: Basket ($180-$260, Interieurs); Naturalware plate ($35, Calvin Klein Home); Henry Dean glass ($10, Takashimaya).

This page: Cashmere throw ($1,200, Calvin Klein Home); teapot ($32, Shi); plate ($55) and cup and saucer ($95, all from Gump's); oak bench ($3,876, Holly Hunt New York); leather-rattan tray ($575, Hermès); mat ($400, Troy). Opposite page: The nearly infinite variety of breads and spreads available by mail.

MADEFOREACHOTHER

Breads kissed by fire meet the ideal sweet or savory

WINTER'S CHILLY MOMENTS demand the primal domestic comforts of warming tea and toast, the very staff of life retextured and transformed by the power of fire. Producers around the country are turning out brave new handcrafted breads, and butters, cheeses, and preserves, that can be shipped overnight. On your doorstep, the remedy for a bout of seasonal affective disorder appears in the form of a loaf shot through with figs and anise, a radiant, hand-cut Meyer-lemon marmalade that promises the return of the sun.

Blankets, above, clockwise from left: Tomato cashmere, the Aspen Collection; block-plaid wool ($150, Ad Hoc); olive mohair ($260) and mint-jelly cashmere, both from ABC Carpet & Home; multistripe wool ($150, Ad Hoc). For sourcing information on the blankets on the opposite page, see "Order It Yourself," next pages.

COCOONING

Warm envelopes for a cold snap

WINTER HAS A WAY OF WORMING ITSELF into your bones, your brain, your soul. Stay inside. Unfurl your most cherished blanket. Use it as a shawl or total cover. It may be woven of the cashmere or silk of adulthood rather than the pilled and dingy flannel of infancy—refinements that cannot diminish the blanket's force as protection from the season, as the ultimate totem of security. Then prepare a cup of tea and buttered toast. Grab the cat. Kindle a fire. And wrap yourself in the consolations of home.

BRAVE NEW TOASTERS

Many gadgets have been hailed as the best thing since sliced bread, but only the toaster deserves the distinction, for where would one be without the other? Still, ever since electric toasting coils were invented, there have been problems: bread too wide or too tall for the slots; bread too easily scorched or not crisp enough; bread too short to be removed. ❧ But now, the best thing since the best thing since sliced bread: toasters with adjustable slots; toasters that reheat without burning; toasters with "high lift," defrost mechanisms, and cancel buttons. Best of all, some models look like the vintage numbers that used to burn and mangle your bread.

Clockwise from top left: Cuisinart Classic Style CPT-70; Morphy Richards Deluxe Lidded 2-slice 44220; Morphy Richards Deluxe Lidded 4-slice 44810; Morphy Richards Classic Chrome 44760; Krups Sensotoast Deluxe 287; Sunbeam Toast Logic 3802; Cuisinart Heat Surround CPT-30; Sunbeam Chrome Toast Logic 3806.

ORDERITYOURSELF

Sources for winter solace

TEAPOTS

ROSENTHAL USA
355 Michele Pl.
Carlstadt, NJ 07072
201-804-8000
Gropius teapot

ROYAL COPENHAGEN THROUGH GEORG JENSEN
800-546-5253
Triton porcelain pot

SHÌ
233 Elizabeth St.
NY, NY 10012
212-334-4330
Glass teapot

BLANKETS

Page 160, from top

PORTICO BED & BATH
139 Spring St.
NY, NY 10012
212-941-7722
Pashmina

ABC CARPET & HOME
888 Broadway
NY, NY 10003
212-473-3000

MEG COHEN THROUGH METROPOLITAN DESIGN GROUP AT THE ASPEN COLLECTION
800-342-0119

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CALVIN KLEIN HOME
800-294-7978
Hampton plaid, cashmere

Page 164

1. AD HOC
410 W. Broadway
NY, NY 10012
212-925-2652
Lattice
$250

2. AD HOC
Basketweave, silk and wool
$125

3. MEG COHEN THROUGH METROPOLITAN DESIGN GROUP AT THE ASPEN COLLECTION
Cashmere, $1,200

4. ASPREY
800-883-2777
Reversible, wool
$325

5. PRATESI
829 Madison Ave.
NY, NY 10021
212-288-2315
Mussola appliqué, cashmere
$5,500

6. AD HOC
Tapestry, cotton/rayon
$90

7. INTERIEURS
114 Wooster St.
NY, NY 10012
212-343-0800
Compass, wool
$290

8. AD HOC
Block plaid, wool
$150

9. INTERIEURS
Compass, wool
$290

10. AGNONA THROUGH SUE FISHER KING
3067 Sacramento St.
San Francisco, CA 94115
415-922-7276
Basketweave knit, cashmere
$1,350

11. HERMÈS
800-441-4488
Cashmere
$1,370

12. AGNONA THROUGH ABC CARPET & HOME
888 Broadway
NY, NY 10003
212-473-3000
Double-faced jersey, cashmere
$1,335

13. INTERIEURS
Chenille, rayon/cotton
$555

14. THE KOKO COMPANY INC.
35 West 36th St.
NY, NY 10018
212-279-1110
Linea line, wool/cotton
$130

15. ABC CARPET & HOME
Four-ply cashmere
$495

16. CALVIN KLEIN HOME
Speckled stripe, lamb's wool
$190

17. HERMÈS
Cashmere
$1,370

18. HERMÈS
Jacquard Cheval, cashmere
$1,475

19. AGNONA THROUGH BERGDORF GOODMAN
800-218-4918
Cashmere, wool/angora
$445

20. TSE
800-522-2276
String and caviar, cashmere
$1,445

21. AD HOC
Multistripe, wool
$150

22. ASPREY
Jacquard, cashmere
$1,100

23. AD HOC
Melange gold, wool
$195

24. LORO PIANA
46 East 61st St.
NY, NY 10021
212-980-7961
Suede trim, cashmere
$1,485

25. LORO PIANA AT BERGDORF GOODMAN
Cashmere
$985

26. DOSA AT SCANDIA DOWN
365 North Beverly Dr.
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
310-274-6925
Patchwork, polar fleece
$345

27. PRATESI
Chain, cashmere
$4,600

page 165, clockwise from top left

MEG COHEN THROUGH METROPOLITAN DESIGN GROUP AT THE ASPEN COLLECTION

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ABC CARPET & HOME

AD HOC

TEA

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IMPERIAL TEA COURT
1411 Powell St.
San Francisco, CA 94133
415-788-6080

HARNEY & SONS
Village Green
P.O. Box 638
Salisbury, CT 06068
800-TEATIME

GRACE TEA COMPANY LTD.
50 West 17th St.
NY, NY 10011
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206-525-0051

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Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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510-524-1021
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Pain au Kullich

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215-348-0828
Olive Bread
Irish Soda Bread

DEBORAH'S COUNTRY FRENCH BREAD
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Chicago, IL 60607
312-633-4004
800-952-1400
Poilâne
Country Bread

GRAND CENTRAL BAKERY
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Portland, OR 97214
503-232-0575
Solemio Bread

LA BREA BAKERY
624 South La Brea
Los Angeles, CA 90036
213-939-6813
Sourdough Baguette
Brioche
Pain de Mie

STONE HOUSE BREAD
407 South Main St.
Leland, MI 49654
616-256-2577
North Country Bread

THE TOPPINGS

AMERICAN SPOON FOODS
1668 Clarion Ave.
Petoskey, MI 49770
800-222-5886
Pumpkin Butter
Jalapeno Pepper Jelly
Blueberry Butter

BOONY DOON FARM
600 Martin Rd.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
408-459-0967
Organic Lavender Honey
Big Sur Wild Honey

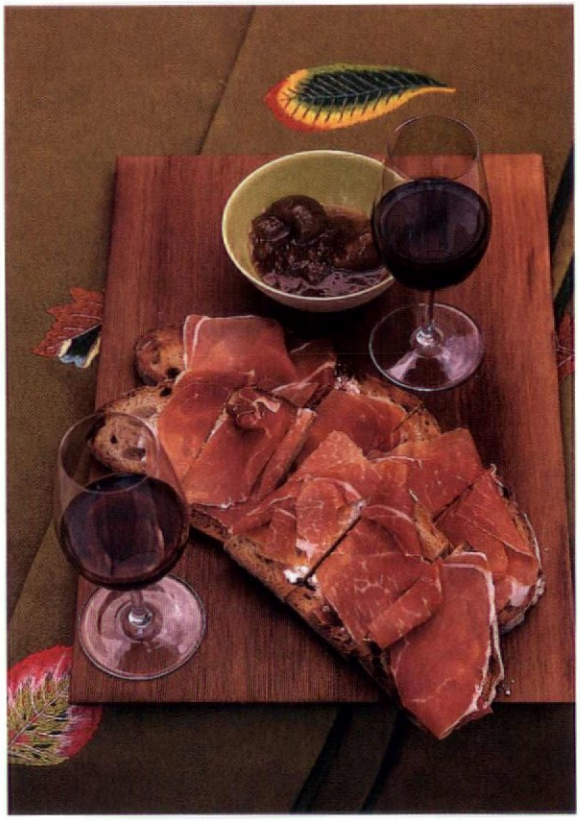
CHUKAR CHERRY COMPANY
320 Wine Country Rd.
Prosser, WA 99350
800-624-9544
Columbia River Tart Cherry Preserves

EGG FARM DAIRY
2 John Walsh Blvd.
Peekskill, NY 10566
914-734-7343
Cultured Butter
Muscoot Cheese
Amran Cheese
Mascarpone Cheese

SULLIVAN HARBOR FARM
P.O.Box 96
U.S. Rte. 1
Sullivan Harbor, ME 04664
207-422-3735
Smoked Salmon
Gravlox

JUNE TAYLOR BAKING COMPANY
424 62nd St.
Oakland, CA 94609
510-653-2796
Hand-cut Marmalades:
Meyer-Lemon Marmalade
Thickcut Orange

Embroidered cashmere blanket from Hermès ($3,585). Cedar tray ($60) and ceramic bowl ($24) from the Gardener. Port glasses from Riedel Crystal of America ($52.50). For more sources, see back of book.



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PORT IN A STORM

Tawny, ruby, vintage or non, port is the classic cold-weather libation

BY JAY McINERNEY

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANITA CALERO

LIKE THE ENGLISH NOVEL, vintage port seemed destined for extinction after the Second World War. In fact, it was hard to imagine the former without the latter—Fieldingesque, fox-hunting squires in their drafty dining halls getting stupider on the stuff, all those literary, country-house dinner parties ending with drawing-room purdah for the women, cigars and port in the library for the men. Happily, Brit lit and vintage port are thriving again, and the enjoyment of port no longer entails forgoing the company of the opposite sex. The annoying new popularity of cigars in this country can only increase the interest in this sublime after-dinner diversion.

Though it hails from Portugal, port as we know it was invented by swashbuckling English wine shippers who were forced to look beyond Bordeaux during the late-seventeenth-century trade wars between England and France. Legend has it that the wines they discovered in the hot, arid Douro valley were first fortified with one-quarter-part brandy in order to preserve them on the long, hot ocean voyage to the north. Adding the brandy during fermentation, before the grape sugar had fully converted to alcohol, left residual sugar, resulting in the sweet red wine we know today.

The added brandy contributes to port's incredible longevity—good ports from major years can easily improve for fifty years and last for a hundred; I recently enjoyed a lovely 1908 Cockburn in London. (Actually, the label had fallen off long ago—Sotheby's had thoughtfully affixed a new label, which read, "1908 presumed Cockburn.") On the downside, the brandy and the residual sugar contribute mightily to your hangover. Not to mention the fact that you have inevitably thrown back a few glasses of the dry red stuff and perhaps the odd cocktail before you get to the port. The alcohol level of most ports is around 20 percent—as opposed to a rough average of 12 percent for dry red wines—but the next day you may have a hard time believing that it's not even higher. This may be the place to say that it's never a good idea to pour a third glass of port, no matter how excellent the plan seems at the time. And even the second should not be undertaken lightly, particularly by those who hope to get lucky, or to drive home, like patriotic Americans, on the right-hand side of the road.

I was recently asked what a good port should taste like. The obvious answer is that nothing else tastes like a great vintage port. As with all great wines, each year and maker possess their unique nuances. But on reflection, I am willing

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to propose a kind of faux port experience for the uninitiated. Take a Smith Brothers sour cherry cough drop and affix it to a Callard & Bowser butterscotch with melted Godiva dark chocolate. Insert in mouth. Suck. On the other hand, there's also a good case to be made for the Raisinets analogy.

What goes with port? The classic British accompaniment of Stilton is hard to argue with, unless you don't like Stilton. Despite the English tradition of dry red wine and cheese, port is one of the few reds that will stand up to big, aged cheeses. Port can be the perfect accompaniment to chocolate. Figs are also a classic accompaniment. However, when faced with a brilliant and mature vintage port, it's probably best to treat it as a dessert in itself. It's not as if you're not going to get your sugar fix.

Some of the encrusted rituals of port drinking, like sexual segregation and passing it to the left, are strictly optional. However, decanting is a pretty good idea. Vintage ports throw off a lot of sediment, which can be disturbed in pouring, and which will definitely foul your wine if it ends up in the glass. Port should be stored on its side and stood upright a day before pouring. Decanting slowly is a good idea. Cheesecloth or a swatch of discarded panty hose can help catch the sediment. A common misconception: Port will keep indefinitely in a stoppered decanter. Younger vintage ports with lots of stuffing will last longer than unfortified wines, but seldom more than a few days after opening.

*The **enjoyment of port** no longer entails forgoing the company of the **opposite sex***

Ninety-eight percent of port production goes into relatively inexpensive, undated wine. Vintage port is only bottled in those years that are judged to be superior by the individual houses. Sometimes there is a general agreement about the year. The great years of recent times are 1963, 1970, 1977, 1983, and 1985. Some houses declared 1991 a vintage year, others 1992. The 1994s are reputed to be excellent and are already selling for high prices. I suspect this is the start of a new surge in prices.

For a variety of reasons, including the collapse of the London port market during the British recession in the early nineties, port prices for certain recent vintages have remained moderate in comparison with bordeaux prices. The magnificent 1963s are now heady in price, though still reasonable compared to the 1961 bordeaux; the 1977s, which generally still need time, are approaching or surpassing a hundred dollars a bottle. The wise buyer, it seems to me, would stock up on 1977 or the great, undervalued 1985 vintage, which is approaching drinkability even as it promises to last well into the millennium. Prices for most 1985s remain close to the prices at which they were released, in distinction to, say, the 1985 bordeaux, which have more or less quadrupled. And they are in some cases less expensive than the 1994s, which won't be fit to drink until *Cats* stops running on Broadway or my children graduate from college, whichever comes second.

THE OENO FILE

85 CROFT. Raisinets, anyone? This one is ready to go. Smooth and delicious, with faintly pruney fruit and chocolate highlights. $29.95

85 SANDEMAN. Soft and elegant, ready to drink, but still well built for the long haul. Great with chocolate. $29.95

85 FONSECA. My current favorite. A gorgeous ruby color combined with a rich, velvety texture. Sublimely sweet. Fonseca always seems to have brains *and* beauty. $39.95

85 TAYLOR. This is a monster. Traditionally, Taylor is the Schwarzenegger of the port world. Rich and smoky; tannic and alcoholic. Save it if you can. $39.95

85 GRAHAM. Also heavily muscled. Deep, brooding fruit. Give it time, or smooth out the rough edges with a piece of Stilton. $49.95

(All prices approximate)

Jay McInerney's *wine column is a regular feature of the magazine.*

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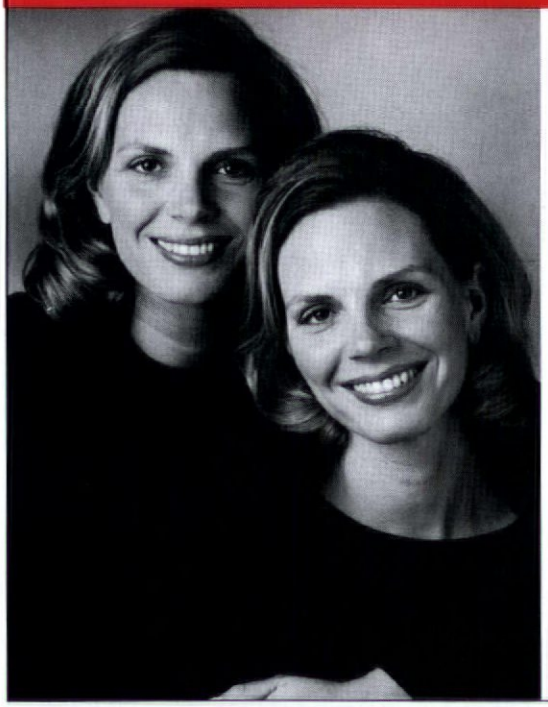

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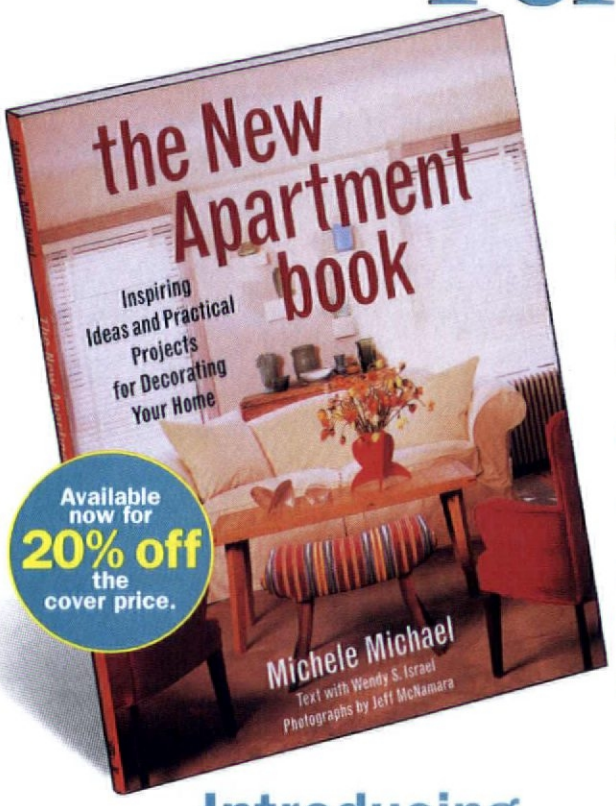

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page 62

SOURCES
WHERE TO BUY IT

OBJECT LESSON
pages 85-92

COVER See page 117.

THRESHOLD PAGE 12 **Plastic tub,** Crane Plumbing, 1235 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60202. 847-864-9777. **Park falls faucet,** Kohler Co., 800-4-KOHLER.

DOMESTIC BLISS PAGES 27-42 **page 30, Telephone tables,** from top: **Maple,** $189, American Dimensions through Ethan Allen, 800-228-9229. **Telephone,** $69, Pottery Barn, 800-922-5507. **Maple,** $189, American Dimensions $2,200, The Drawing Room, #6 Kevin Dr., Flanders, NJ 07836. 201-927-1646. **Black and natural,** $2,245, Lorin Marsh, 212-759-8700. **Faux alligator,** $2,070, Goralnick*Buchanan, 212-644-0334. **pages 32-36,** Restoration Hardware, 800-762-1005. **page 38,** Mondrian, 800-525-8029.

SKETCHES PAGES 44-46 Sig Bergamin Interiors, Inc., 20 E. 69th St., #3C, NYC 10021. 212-861-4515. Malmaison Antiques, 253 E. 74th St., NYC 10021. 212-288-7569. **Tapestry,** John Rosselli International, 212-772-2137. **Fabrics,** Le Décor Français, 1006 Lexington Ave., NYC 10021. 212-734-0032. **Sisal carpet,** Rosecore Carpet Co., Inc., 212-421-7272. **Lamp,** Malmaison Antiques. **Wallcovering,** Clarence House, 212-752-2890. **Chair and table,** Knoll, 800-445-5045.

BLUEPRINT PAGES 48-52 Costa Careyes, 52-335-10320; 103503.1061@compuserve.com.

ANIMAL KINGDOM PAGES 55-57 Daum New York, 694 Madison Ave., NYC 10021.

MATERIAL WORLD PAGES 58-60 Available through architects and designers. Brunschwig & Fils, 212-838-7878. Cowtan & Tout, 212-753-4488. Bergamo, 212-888-3333. Fortuny, 212-753-7153. Scalamandré, 212-980-3888. Nina Campbell and Designers Guild through Osborne & Little, 212-751-3333. Clarence House, 212-752-2890. Rogers & Goffigon Ltd, 212-888-3242. Manuel Canovas, 212-752-9588.

CAN'T GET ENOUGH PAGE 62 William-Wayne & Co., 846 Lexington Ave., NYC 10021. Niedermaier, 120 Wooster St., NYC 10012. Henri Bendel, 712 Fifth Ave., NYC 10019. Boyd's Madison Avenue, 655 Madison Ave., NYC 10021. Mxyplyzyk, 125 Greenwich Ave., NYC 10014. Ad Hoc, 410 W. Broadway, NYC 10012. H2O+, 650 Madison Ave., NYC 10022. Anthropologie, 375 W. Broadway, NYC 10012.

ANATOMY LESSON PAGE 69 **India and Ulander,** 51% bone ash for both, $38 and $176.50 for teacup only, Wedgwood, 908-938-5800. **Spode,** 51% bone ash, $80/5-piece setting, 800-257-7189. **Minton,** 50% bone ash, $990/teacup and saucer; **Royal Crown Derby,** 50% bone ash, $119/teacup and saucer; **Aynsley,** 51% bone ash, $142/teacup and saucer, all through Cardel, 800-826-6685. **Bone,** $69, Evolution Natural History, 120 Spring St., NYC 10012. 212-343-1114.

ONLY COLLECT PAGES 76-80 Higgins Glass Studio, 33 E. Quincey St., Riverside, IL 60546. 708-447-2787.

HIGH POINTS PAGES 94-113 Hair and makeup by Nancy Schall using Make Up Forever. **page 94, Mirror frame,** #1894B, $1,313, La Barge Inc., 800-253-3870. **Oval-back chair,** #471, #17-279-GL22 (fabric), in polyester/silk, $2,207, from the Barbara Barry Collection for Baker Furniture, 1661 Monroe Ave., NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49505. 616-361-7321. **pages 96-99,** All from the Barbara Barry Collection for Baker Furniture. **Sofa,** #821-06, #80-140-GR14 (fabric), in cotton/rayon, $6,365. **Fluted table,** #3465, $2,107. **Armoire,** #3406. **Lounge chair,** #460, #17-279 (fabric), in polyester/silk, $2,984. **Decanter,** $645; tumblers, $260/each, all from Lalique, 800-993-2580. **Candlesticks,** $60-$75, Calvin Klein Home, 800-294-7978. **Osage oranges,** Zona. **Bias T-shirt,** silk, $319, Gabrielle Carlson & Co., 251 E. 10th St., NYC 10009. 212-995-8063. **pages 100-101, Armchair,** The Unforgettable Collection, maple upholstered in cotton, $1,425, Flair/Bernhardt, 800-990-9857. **Console,** $6,410, The French 40s Collection from John Widdicomb Company, 800-845-9472. **Console,** iron/marble, Collector's Mix Collection $1,460, Hickory Chair, PO Box 2147, Hickory, NC 28603. 704-328-1801. **Side chair,** $510, Thomas & Bairstow, Inc., 1063 Peachtree Battle Ave., Atlanta, GA 30327. 404-355-1142. **Writing/dressing table,** Beba Collection, $2,500, Bexley Heath Ltd., 800-954-7776. **Drawer chest,** #4210, cherry solids, $7,250, The French 40s Collection from John Widdicomb Company. **Scarf,** $90, Gabrielle Carlson & Co. **Perfume bottle,** Saint Louis, 800-238-5522. **Clear bottles,** Koh I Noor, $1,800/set of four, Baccarat, 800-777-0100. **page 102,** All of cotton/polyester/rayon by Mitchell Gold, 800-789-5401. By George Sofa in multicolored stripe, $1,995. **Ottoman,** Large Marge Comfy Cocktail Table, $550. **Armchairs,** Paloma, $900. By George in wide stripe, $1,200. **page 103,** All from homeBrand, 37 E. 18th St., NYC 10003. 212-995-2121. Clockwise from top left, **Cupboards with windowed doors,** $1,295. **Three-tier shop cupboard,** $1,595. **Cupboard with iron-grill doors,** $995. **Set of doors and frames,** $1,795. **Small cupboard,** $650. **Marble dishes,** from $30. **Marble animals,** $295-$895. **Red lacquer cabinets,** $695-$1,495. **Red lacquer rectangular stools,** $225. **Red lacquer serving trays,** $195. **Red lacquer round storage boxes,** $195. **Doors and frames,** $1,395. **Assorted wooden boxes,** $70/small and $1,195/large. **Vanity with mirror,** $995. **Cupboards of wooden doors,** $795-$1,595. **Animal toys,** $40-$80. **Takhat tables of antique beds,** $795-$2,395. **Black lacquer altar table,** $2,695. **page 104,** All of mahogany and from the Mount Vernon Collection by Hickory Chair. **Hepplewhite sofa,** $2,064. **Mirror,** French Louis XVI, $1,022. **Small square stool,** $309. **Back stool,** $657. **page 105,** All from the Russian Collection from John Widdicomb Company. **Side chair,** #5573. **Console table,** #5522. **Chest,** #5552. **Round occasional table,** #5567. **pages 106-109, Love seat,** Hickory Chair. **Eyeglasses,** Calvin Klein, 800-294-7978. **Dark-brown sofa,** mahogany, Baker Furniture. **Chair,** #3526-401, #502-88L23 (fabric), Century Furniture, 800-852-5552. **Green sofa,** Ralph Lauren Home Collection, 800-468-3399. **Club chair,** #96-9362, rayon, Stickley Fine Upholstery, PO Box 480, Manlius, NY 13104. 315-682-5500. **Swatches,** from top, #143-83, #155-83, #121-50, #153-30, #143-60, #143-50, Ralph Lauren Home Collection. **pages 110-111, Locker,** Bexley Heath Ltd. **Pool towels,** $40, Calvin Klein Home. **Bottles,** $3.50/each, Takashimaya, 800-753-2038. **Monogrammed pillows,** FCI-20, 7348-36/CD175-35 (fabric and cording), silk, $243, Century Furniture. **Solid pillows,** 90028C85, FR 187-36 (fabric and fringe), cotton/acrylic, $168, Century Furniture. **Plaid pillows,** #541-06/#824-33 (fabric/fringe), and #540-21/#872-58 (fabric/fringe), $75, Lexington Furniture, 800-LEX-INFO. **Armchair,** GL8265-CH, $2,760, Drexel Heritage Furnishings, Inc., 800-916-1986. **Red car,** $325, Takashimaya. **Mirror,** LM0377, silver-finished pine, $1,988, La Barge Inc. **pages 112-113, 1,** #1446, #8735-16 (fabric), beech upholstered in cotton, Pearson Co., 1420 Progress St., High Point, NC 27261. 910-882-8135. **2,** #1602-11, #617-05/#885-06 (fabric/fringe), beech upholstered in cotton. **3,** #E987, cotton, Henredon Furniture Industries, 800-444-3682. **4,** #1441, #7697-56 (fabric), cotton/polyester. **5,** #15-479-1, #5-725-44 (fabric), iron upholstered in cotton. **6,** #8004-11, #591-10024 (fabric), mahogany upholstered in cotton. **7,** #5115, #17-277 (fabric), in polyester/silk. **8,** #5012-51, #487-54 (fabric), upholstered in cotton. **9,** #3629-45, #7348-36 (fabric), upholstered in silk. **10,** #00936-40, 07487-011 (fabric), in polyester blend, Lane Upholstery, PO Box 849, Conover, NC 28613. 704-328-2271. **11,** #44270, Pulaski Furniture Corporation, PO Box 1371, Pulaski, VA 24301. 540-980-7330. **12,** #H9661, #24-3840-77/#30-4544-778 (outside fabric/inside fabric), rayon/cotton and cotton/polyester. **13,** #3652S-68, #70137-34/#7162L11 (fabric/welt), beech upholstered in silk. **14,** #1738-11, #427-28 (fabric), cherry upholstered in rayon. **15,** #793-632, in cotton blend, $450, Universal Furniture, 800-776-7986. **16,** McGuire Furniture, 151 Vermont St., San Francisco, CA 94013. 415-986-0812. **17,** #7572, British India Collection.

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THROUGH A GLASS LIGHTLY PAGES 128-137 Interior design, Federico de Vera, 334 Gough St.; 384 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94102. 415-558-8865; 415-861-8480. **Architect,** Stanley Saitowitz Office, 1022 Natoma, #3, San Francisco, CA 94103. 415-626-8970. **Contractor,** Oliver & Co., 1300 S. 51st St., Richmond, CA 94804. 510-412-9090. Upholstery, Hye Quality USA, 510-843-2596. Fabrics from Joseph Noble at Sloan & Miyasato, 800-783-1398. Furniture designed by de Vera made by Paul Smith Workshop through de Vera. **page 129, Range and hood,** General Electric, 800-626-2000. **page 130, Tromp l'oeil,** Jim Wells through de Vera. **page 132, Red chair,** Limn Co., Inc., 290 Townsend St., San Francisco, CA 94107. 415-543-5466. **page 135, Bed linens,** Sue Fisher King, 3067 Sacramento St., San Francisco, CA 94115. 415-922-7276. **page 137, Bathroom fixtures,** Kohler, 800-4-KOHLER.

WHITE TIE AND TAILS PAGES 138-145 Interior design, Parish-Hadley Associates Inc., 305 E. 63rd St., NYC 10021. 212-888-7979. Richard Rosen Interior Design, 61 E 11th St., NYC 10003. 212-260-0670. **pages 144-145,** Sam Kasten Handweaver, PO Box 950 Stockbridge, MA 01262. 413-298-5502. **Desk,** John Hobbs, 44-171-730-8369. **Chests,** Ciancimino, 44-171-730-9950. James Danziger Gallery, 130 Prince St., NYC 10012, 212-226-0056. **Flowers,** David Madison Horticultural Design, 219 E. 60th St., NYC 10022. 212-421-8110. **Chest,** Michael Luther, 44-171-371-8492. **pages 146-147,** Henry Calvin at Donghia, 212-935-3713. **Armchair fabric,** Marco Tweed, J. Robert Scott, 800-322-4910. **Library curtains,** Nancy Corzine, 305 E. 63rd St., NYC 10021, 212-758-4240. **Coffee table,** stone/iron, Holly Hunt New York, 212-755-6555. Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges, 212-688-7700. A & R Asta Ltd., 1152 2nd Ave., NYC 10021. 212-750-3364. Full House, 133 Wooster St., NYC 10012. 212-529-2298. **pages 148-149, Armchair fabric,** Caprice Plaid, Nancy Corzine. **Wool rug,** Sam Kasten Handweaver. Grey Watkins, 212-371-2333. **Round table,** mahogany, Malmaison Antiques, 253 E. 74th St., NYC 10021. 212-288-7569. **Square side table,** Christopher Hodsoll Ltd., 44-171-730-3370. Lee Calicchio, Ltd., 134 E. 70th St., NYC 10021. 212-717-4417. Jeremy Ltd., London, England. 44-171-823-2923. **Library carpet,** Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges. **Camel-hair fabric,** Rogers & Goffigon Ltd., 212-888-3242. **pages 150-151, Bathroom fittings/heated towel bar,** Czech & Speake of Jermyn Street, through Waterworks, 800-899-6757. **Shower glass,** Nippon Electric Glass Ltd., 800-733-9559. William Lipton Ltd., 27 E. 61st St., NYC 10022. 212-751-8131. Peter Schneider's Sons & Co., Inc., through Decorators Walk, 212-319-7100. Schweitzer Linens, 1132 Lexington Ave., NYC 10028. 212-249-8361. Pratesi, 829 Madison Ave., NYC 10021. 212-288-2315.

DYER'S HAND PAGES 146-151 Architect, Frederick Fisher & Partners, Architects, 12248 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025. 310-820-6680. Builder, Rich Reinhardt, PO Box 603, Laurel, NY 11948. 516-298-5837. Dianne Blell represented by Leo Castelli Gallery, 420 W. Broadway, NYC 10012. 212-431-5160. Walls, painted by Ricky Clifton, 216 E. 17th St., NYC 10003. 212-677-5320. Upholstery, Cece Nie, 718-397-5601. **pages 138-139, Pillows,** Sarajo, 98 Prince St., NYC 10012. 212-966-6156. **Bench fabric,** B&J Fabrics, 263 W. 40th St., NYC 10018. 212-354-8150. **Sectional,** Gotham Galleries, 800-371-5404. **Stools,** Anglo-Raj Antiques, 212-689-3437. By appointment only. **Bases,** Sarajo. **Mirror,** John Rosselli International, 212-772-2137. **pages 140-141, Coffee table,** Battle Iron & Bronze, 112 Maple Ln., PO Box 1572, Bridgehampton, NY 11932. 516-537-2193. **Armless chairs,** Cobweb, 116 W. Houston St., NYC 10012. 212-505-1558. **Light fixtures,** Bowery Lighting, 132 Bowery, NYC 10013. 212-941-8244. **Chairs,** Stone Road, 328 Montauk Highway, Wainscott, NY 11975. 516-537-5656. **pages 142-143,** Kea Kilim, 718-636-9205. By appointment only.

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& ANOTHER THING PAGE 176 **Lead dog,** $1,800, Treillage, 418 E. 75th St., NYC 10021. 212-535-2288.

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(continued from page 158) stirrings at the edges of the days.

Some gardens, of course, are communal activities, but much gardening is quiet work, and done alone. My wife, Paula, and I work in our garden together. Part of the time on the same thing, much of the time on our own. Some of the things growing here now were already in the ground before we met, but it was only after it was clear that Paula wanted to live here, too, that what is around us began to be not simply an assembly of plants laboriously set into soil but a garden. She was born in Argentina, grew up in the tropics, and had always wanted a garden. She had not been here for more than a day or two before she was out on the slope, dragging long grass from around young plantings and helping to clear space for others.

Different parts of the garden have different forms. There is the food garden, a number of raised beds and a curving screen of banana trees. But I am afraid that gets less than its share of attention regularly as a result of the allurements of growing other things. Above all, palms. The inaugural ambition to proliferate native species has endowed us with several kinds of native hibiscus, Hawaiian artemisia, various indigenous trees, but it has come to focus on Hawaiian palms, some of them highly endangered (one, in its native place, on the island of Moloka'i, is reduced to a single tree). Several species of Hawaiian palms now exist in the garden, and growing them from seed led to a fascination with palms from elsewhere, and with cycads and other flora of the world's increasingly menaced tropics, and an attempt to make a situation where they might be able to live as though they belonged together.

A visitor to a garden sees the successes, usually. The gardener remembers mistakes and losses, and imagines the garden in a year, and in an unimaginable future. The days go by too fast, and we wish for rain and the sound of water among the rocks.

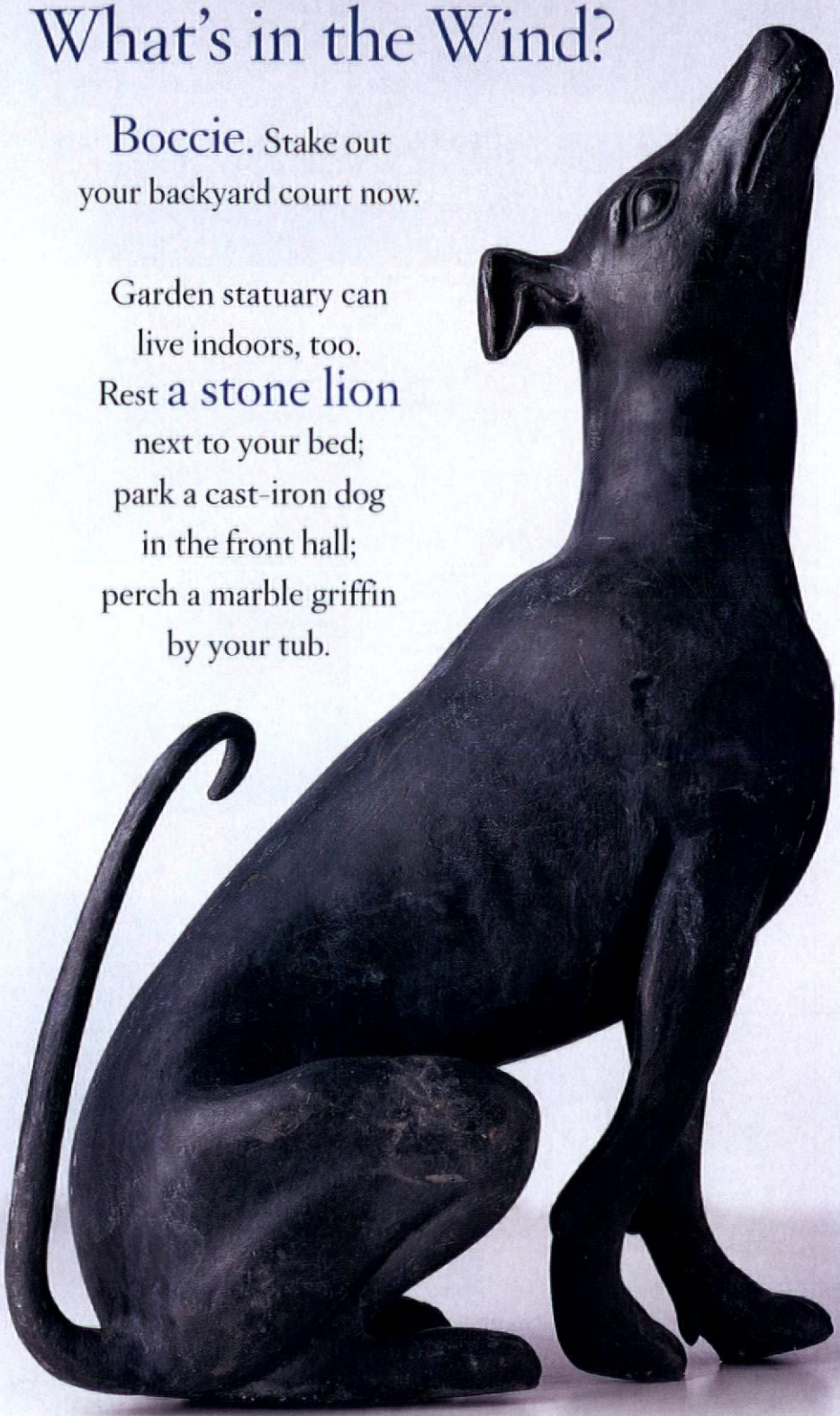
W. S. Merwin *won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1970. His most recent book,* The Vixen *(Knopf), was published last year.*

& another thing...

What's in the Wind?

Boccie. Stake out your backyard court now.

Garden statuary can live indoors, too. Rest **a stone lion** next to your bed; park a cast-iron dog in the front hall; perch a marble griffin by your tub.



Follow the lead of our four-legged friends. Lie on the ground and **sniff** the earth coming back to life.

Use that old silver toast rack to hold all the postcards from **vacations** you're not on.

Put on the dog.

Every month has its ides. Beware the ides of March? Not us. We say, **celebrate!** Spring is on the way. If you can't wait, paint your dining room jonquil yellow. It's sunny but neutral, so everything looks good with it.

DAVIES & STARR