

Sheila Bridges.



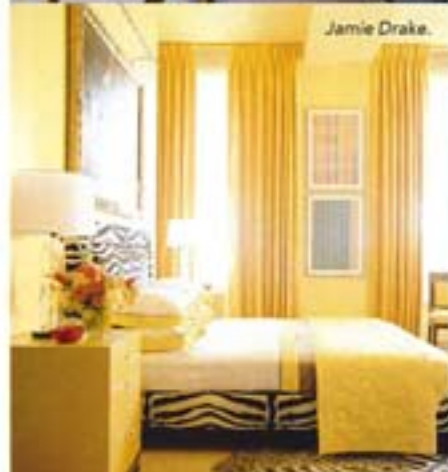
Alessandra Branca.



Jeffrey Alan Marks.



Jamie Drake.



Martyn Lawrence-Bullard.



THE 2011  
*A-LIST*  
25 TOP DESIGNERS  
plus  
5 TO WATCH

ONCE AGAIN, ELLE DECOR  
HAS COMPILED A LIST OF DESIGNERS  
WE LOVE, TALENTS  
WORKING AT THE TOP OF  
THEIR GAME.  
PLUS, WE'VE CHOSEN 5  
YOUNG DECORATORS WHOSE  
WORK WE FIND  
INTRIGUING AND FRESH

Suzanne Rheinstein.



Shelton, Mindel & Associates.



Timothy  
Whealon.



Yabu Pushelberg.



McAlpine Booth & Ferrier.







A suite in the James hotel in Los Angeles.

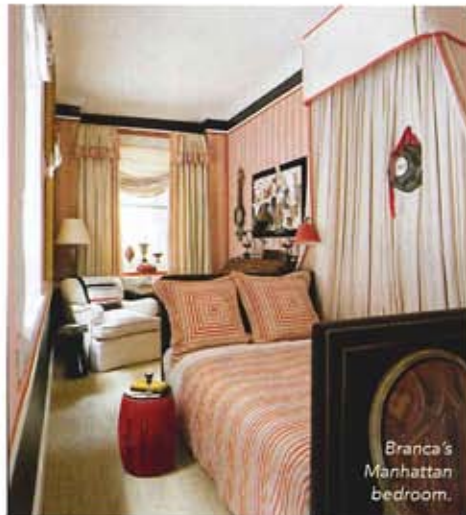
## BASSAM FELLOWS

Handcrafted, organic, and rooted in nature: Australian architect and designer Craig Bassam and Scott Fellows, a former creative director in fashion, describe their style as "Craftsman modern." A gorgeous wood grain is often all the ornament they need, whether they are designing spare interiors for the James hotel in Los

Angeles or renovating their own Philip Johnson house. Their furniture collection includes the Tractor Stool, carved out of a massive block of locally harvested walnut, ash, or teak, and inspired by a tractor seat Bassam found on the side of the road. [bassamfellows.com](http://bassamfellows.com)

## ALESSANDRA BRANCA

Call her a passionate neoclassicist. Born in Italy, Branca developed an aesthetic steeped in antiquity. Nonetheless, she's a woman of our times. She likes comfortable rooms and the color red—also stripes that recall vintage mattress ticking. Expect plush upholstery and fabrics, as well as shapes you'd find in a museum's Greco-Roman hall, accented with anything from Moroccan mirrors to Chinese foo dogs. Add to it all a dash of sprezzatura, which is the ability, the Chicago designer explains in her book *New Classic Interiors* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2009), to make the complex look easy. [branca.com](http://branca.com)



Branca's Manhattan bedroom.



A guest room in Bridges's Harlem apartment.

## SHEILA BRIDGES

This New York decorator is known for her savvy updates on traditional Americana—from her handsome design for Bill Clinton's Harlem offices to the spirited interiors of her own Colonial weekend home in New York's Hudson Valley. She has a fashionista's sense of pattern and color (yellow is a favorite) and an eye for the standout element—a Fornasetti rug, a Frank Gehry cardboard chair—that makes a room click. And she's got wit: Her Harlem Toile de Jouy features African Americans dressed up as Baroque nobles, while her new dinnerware collection is decorated with pictures of girls skipping rope or playing jacks. [sheilabridges.com](http://sheilabridges.com)

## MARK CUNNINGHAM

As you might expect from a Polo Ralph Lauren alumnus, this New York designer's rooms tend to be masculine, well tailored, and timeless—the interiors equivalent of a camel-hair topcoat gone modern. He likes his palette neutral, but the Florida-born designer isn't afraid of shades like light blue and royal purple either. He mixes crisply upholstered custom-made pieces, American antiques, and accessories ranging from Coromandel screens to rough-hewn doors set into pristine white walls, all resulting in a quietly invigorating look. [markcunninghaminc.com](http://markcunninghaminc.com)



Cunningham's living room in upstate New York.





A sitting room at Cooper Mansion in Tuxedo Park.

## ERNEST DE LA TORRE

Design backgrounds don't get much more interesting than this: De la Torre worked at Peter Marino Architects, studied at Sotheby's in London, teamed with Ian Schrager, and created furniture and lighting for Ralph Lauren Home. Now based in Manhattan, he specializes in projects created around art collections. Among his triumphs is the historic Cooper Mansion in Tuxedo Park, New York, a 1900 Jacobean Revival house that is now home to a Louis XIII wing chair and a polished-metal Paul Evans bed from the 1970s. De la Torre's rooms are luxurious, comfortable, and adventurous. [delatorredesign.com](http://delatorredesign.com)

Drake's Manhattan living room.



## JAMIE DRAKE

If Michael Bloomberg is a modern Medici, then Jamie Drake is his Michelangelo. Of course, this New York decorator with the famously fearless sense of color has also created a home for Madonna, but it's his 20-year working relationship with New York City's mayor that has helped define his design career. Mint and turquoise, purple and red, fuchsia

and black: Drake never met a color combination he didn't take for a whirl. Swank furnishings—including furniture for Lewis Mittman and rugs for Safavieh—round out his vibrant oeuvre. The author of *New American Glamour* (Bulfinch, 2005), Drake is working on a follow-up tome. [drakedesignassociates.com](http://drakedesignassociates.com)



The living area in Filicia's SoHo apartment.



## THOM FILICIA

Even before this affable decorator appeared on TV's *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* in 2003, he was a rising star in the design world. A graduate of Syracuse University's School of Art and Design, he cut his teeth working for Parish-Hadley, Robert Metzger, and Jeffrey Bilhuber. Filicia—a self-described “democratic design snob”—believes passionately in personal style. Everyone, he reckons, can have a great, unique home. As he explains in *Thom Filicia Style* (Atria Books, 2008), he loves the big mix, unconventional pairings, lots of red, and witty surprises—and clients from Jennifer Lopez to the W hotels love him right back. [thomfilicia.com](http://thomfilicia.com)



A Manhattan living room.

## ALEXA HAMPTON

She was just in her 20s when her father—the great American decorator Mark Hampton—passed away. Since then, this down-to-earth designer has proven her talent with elegant interiors that build on her father's legacy while demonstrating her own viewpoint. Sparkling chandeliers, silk draperies, tufted sofas—her work eschews trends and consistently wows us. She's prolific too, designing fabrics for Kravet, furniture for Hickory Chair, and carpets for Stark, and authoring *Alexa Hampton: The Language of Interior Design* (Clarkson Potter, 2010). [markhampton.com](http://markhampton.com)



Huniford's den in Bridgehampton.

## JAMES HUNIFORD

He starts with a neutral envelope, all the better to frame the perfect object—whether it's a Donald Judd desk, a Louis XVI chair, or a piece of rusted farm equipment that, in this powerhouse designer's hands, takes on the sublime form of sculpture. This is decorating at its most muscular and glamorous, whether Huniford is furnishing his own Hamptons beach house or a posh Park Avenue apartment. His urbane new furniture collection was inspired by some of his favorite things, from French modernism to 1930s Hollywood. [jameshuniford.com](http://jameshuniford.com)



A guest room in Ireland's home in France.

## KATHRYN M. IRELAND

This vivacious Brit—one of Bravo's Million-Dollar Decorators—is known for a relaxed, congenial approach that mixes classic English style with a taste for the exotic. Though based in Santa Monica, California, where her high-powered clients include actors such as Steve Martin, she also maintains a home in Provence where she loves to entertain, as she cheerfully documents in her brand-new book, *Summers in France* (Gibbs Smith, 2011). Her sunny fabric collection includes colorful Indian cottons and Javanese-influenced batik prints. [kathrynireland.com](http://kathrynireland.com)





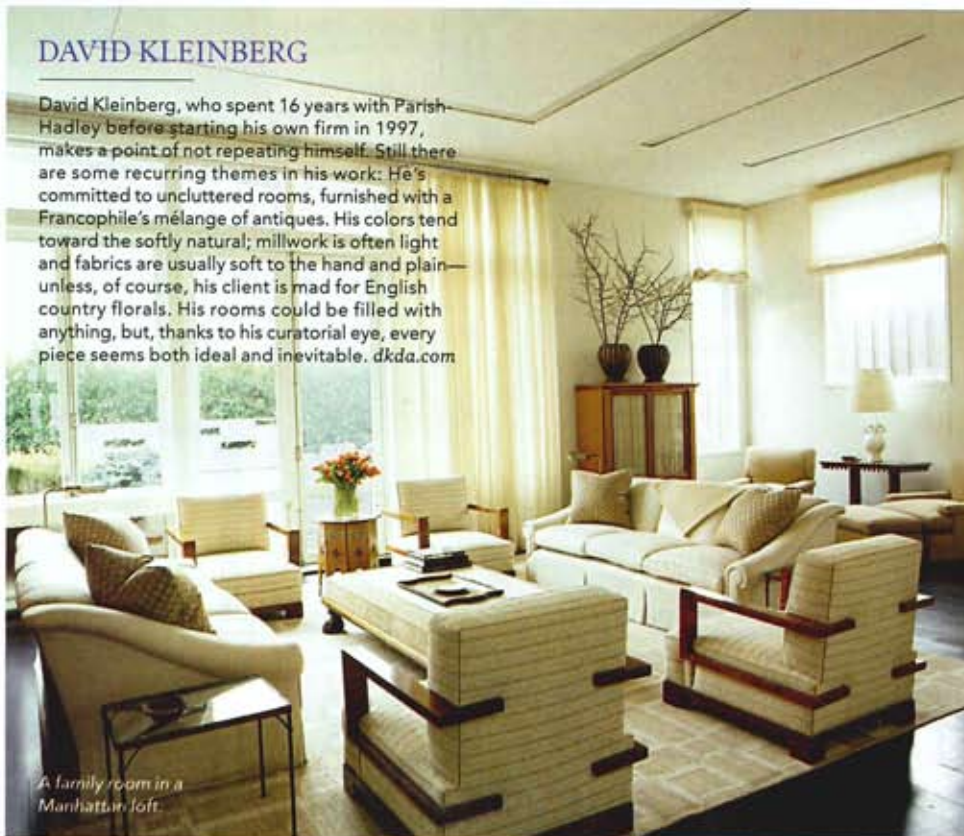
## JAY JEFFERS

Known for his playful, pattern-laden rooms, this decorator channels David Hicks for a West Coast clientele. He loves to create drama—a living room has coral walls, a mustard ceiling, and built-in bookcases with Mughal-inspired arches. Still, he knows when to pull back: At the 2010 ELLE DECOR Showhouse in San Francisco, his master bedroom was a neutral study in luxe, from the cashmere upholstery to a platform bed of his own design in gray tweed. [jeffersdesigngroup.com](http://jeffersdesigngroup.com)

Jeffers's bedroom at the ELLE DECOR 2010 Showhouse.

## DAVID KLEINBERG

David Kleinberg, who spent 16 years with Parish-Hadley before starting his own firm in 1997, makes a point of not repeating himself. Still there are some recurring themes in his work: He's committed to uncluttered rooms, furnished with a Francophile's mélange of antiques. His colors tend toward the softly natural; millwork is often light and fabrics are usually soft to the hand and plain—unless, of course, his client is mad for English country florals. His rooms could be filled with anything, but, thanks to his curatorial eye, every piece seems both ideal and inevitable. [dkda.com](http://dkda.com)



A family room in a Manhattan loft.

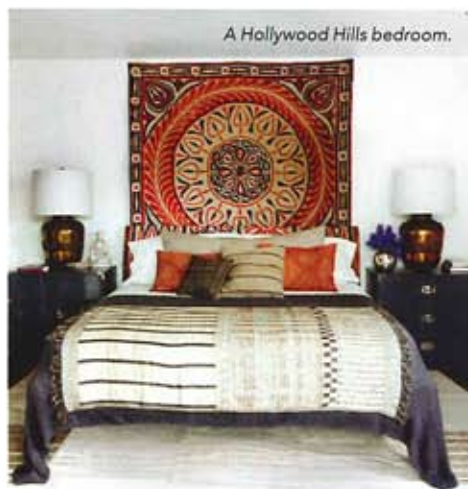
## A New Orleans library.



## RICHARD KEITH LANGHAM

A native Alabamian now based in New York, Langham calls himself old fashioned: His world is full of English-inspired rooms, sky-high curtains, and pedigreed antiques (he began his career as an apprentice to Mark Hampton and went on to work for Keith Irvine). Langham brings a breath of charming Southern air to classic decorating, tempering grandeur with an infusion of whimsy. Look for an inventive palette—shades like nectarine, tobacco, and mint sorbet. An old-school Anglophile with a 21st-century sense of proportion, Langham has worked his magic for clients like Jacqueline Onassis and Hilary Swank.





A Hollywood Hills bedroom.



Marks's bedroom in Santa Monica.



A salon in San Miguel de Allende.

## MARTYN LAWRENCE-BULLARD

If you're as big an icon as this matinee idol of design, your client list must really rock the charts—say, for example, Cher and Sir Elton John. Typically, a Lawrence-Bullard room is bold, colorful, and eclectic—a sleek take on the romantic and exotic. There's nothing shy about his choice of rarefied antiques, hand-crafted global treasures, and palettes that range from spice bazaar to the pastels of Bavarian porcelain. He combines the graphic and overscale with an attention to detail that creates a fantastical banquet for the eye. [martynlawrencebullard.com](http://martynlawrencebullard.com)

## JEFFREY ALAN MARKS

When you live in Santa Monica, it's hard not to be influenced by the Pacific, and there is a surfside vibe to many of Marks's interiors—he even suspended a rowboat from his whitewashed bedroom ceiling. His work conjures a reinvented country cottage style crossed with the sophisticated traditions of London, Paris, and Milan (where he has lived). Informed by the past, he embraces everything from Jacobean antiques and four-posters to a chesterfield paired with a midcentury lamp. His visual melody is clean, bright, and whimsical over a bass line of cozy. [jam-design.com](http://jam-design.com)

## McALPINE BOOTH & FERRIER

Alabama-born Bobby McAlpine has fashioned a Southern-inflected design universe with his two stellar firms—McAlpine Booth & Ferrier Interiors and McAlpine Tankersley Architecture—as well as his own furniture lines and best-selling book, *The Home Within Us* (Rizzoli, 2010). The McAlpine look combines elegance, restraint, and hospitality. Colors run to light hues and heathery pastels, and although you're more likely to find swagged curtains than midcentury tables, McAlpine finds grace in any piece that wears its age with dignity. [mc Alpineboothferrier.com](http://mc Alpineboothferrier.com)



An Upper East Side dining area.

## RICHARD MISHAAN

"I am both a modernist and a classicist," the Colombia-born designer declares in his 2009 book, *Modern Luxury* (Monacelli Press). A trained architect who apprenticed with Philip Johnson, Mishaan favors crisp lines. As a former fashion designer, he knows fabrics—although you'll find more solids and stripes than botanicals: Mishaan has no patience for "fussy ornamentation." He does, however, respect the past. He has a laserlike eye for refinement, and his rooms are glamorous as well as au courant. [homerdesign.com](http://homerdesign.com)





## JUAN MONTOYA

Montoya has presided over his acclaimed New York-based firm for more than three decades, crafting grand, refined interiors that play with neutral colors, scale, and texture. Don't be surprised to see a polished Louis XVI architect's desk in a room with rough plank floors or a Lalique vase on a bronze cocktail table. Art has pride of place in his rooms, as do sculptural accents and contemporary pieces by marquee design names. A selection of 37 projects appears in *Juan Montoya* (Monacelli Press, 2009). [juanmontoyadesign.com](http://juanmontoyadesign.com)



## SUZANNE RHEINSTEIN

You can tell a lot about a designer's true colors by her own home, and Rheinstein's Georgian Revival brick manse in L.A. bespeaks a user-friendly, understated elegance. She's romantic, but practical too. In fact, the subtitle of her book, *At Home* (Rizzoli, 2010), sums it up perfectly: "A Style for Today with Things from the Past." A Rheinstein room pairs pure neoclassical lines with an informal disposition of furnishings and a closely controlled tone-on-tone palette of soft and muted colors taken from the garden. These are the rooms Jane Austen might have inhabited—if she'd had money (and a time machine). [hollyhockinc.com](http://hollyhockinc.com)



## ROMAN AND WILLIAMS

For the Standard hotel in New York, they created a penny-tile floor made of real pennies. For Gwyneth Paltrow's living room, they hung a swing made from an antique Indian door. Robin Standerfer and Stephen Alesch—the married couple and former movie-set designers behind this red-hot firm—recycle the ephemera of yesterday into nostalgia-laden spaces that feel right for today. Next on their agenda: a furniture line for Design Within Reach, bath fixtures for Waterworks, and a book for Rizzoli. [romanandwilliams.com](http://romanandwilliams.com)





A Manhattan library.

## TODD ALEXANDER ROMANO

Something old, something new, something borrowed from every design vernacular on earth: That's Todd Romano. The native Texan apprenticed with Mario Buatta before striking out on his own with chic, well-turned-out rooms. In his updated traditional style, Romano plays with contrasts: velvet sofas and minimalist lithographs, Louis XVI bergères on geometric sisal. He favors clean lines and a grocery list of colors: olive, blueberry, and persimmon. With showrooms in New York and L.A., Romano is a growing national presence. [toddalexanderromano.com](http://toddalexanderromano.com)



An Upper East Side living room.

## DANIEL ROMUALDEZ

This architect-designer knows glamour. Romualdez grew up in a diplomatic family in the Philippines, and his clientele (young socialites and fashionistas like Tory Burch, Aerin Lauder, and Daphne Guinness) have made him a top-tier Manhattan favorite. He loves mirrors, glossy floors, lacquered walls. He's also committed to deep, saturated colors (like blood red) and a liberal application of gold and silver. He's equally expert at contemporary design and transforming the halls of a dowager prewar apartment into a trendsetting salon alive with art and antiques.



A sitting area in a Manhattan mansion.

## SHELTON, MINDEL & ASSOCIATES

Since Peter L. Shelton and Lee F. Mindel founded their firm in 1978, they've won international acclaim, prestigious clients (Sting, Ralph Lauren), and countless awards. Their clean-lined spaces—from lofts in Manhattan to beach houses in the Hamptons—blend stunning architectural craft with casual livability. Members of the Interior Design Hall of Fame, they think of themselves as taking an analytical approach to their work, but a real sensuality shines through too. They like lots of white and pale-blond woods, generous windows, and bursts of sassy color calculated to delight. [sheltonmindel.com](http://sheltonmindel.com)

Whealon's Southampton living room.



## TIMOTHY WHEALON

This former banker now creates rooms that are right on the money: classic but cool, worldly but rooted in the comforts of home. After a stint on Wall Street, Whealon worked at Sotheby's, specializing in the decorative arts, and this background served him well when he set up his interior design firm in 1994. A sense of connoisseurship underlies everything this New York designer does, but he has fun with it, mixing 18th-century antiques with '60s finds or tweaking a traditional interior with contemporary art. Fresh colors—from aqua to pale pink—tie it all together. [timothywhealon.com](http://timothywhealon.com)



Yabu and Pushelberg's living room in Toronto.



## YABU PUSHELBERG

Modernist but not minimalist, Canadians George Yabu and Glenn Pushelberg create spaces that combine high-style luxury with eye-catching theatrics. They are as adept at subtly transforming Tiffany & Co.'s flagship as they are at creating a surfer-chic getaway for Ian Schrager's Waikiki Edition hotel in Honolulu. Their residential work is equally dazzling. You can see their own white Manhattan aerie in *Yabu Pushelberg* (Architecture/Interiors Press, 2009). [yabupushelberg.com](http://yabupushelberg.com)

### THE 2010 A-LIST THE ORIGINAL LIST OF DESIGNERS WHO INSPIRE US

Jeffrey Bilhuber  
Muriel Brandolini  
Darryl Carter  
Eric Cohler  
Robert Couturier  
Waldo Fernandez  
Steven Gambrel  
Victoria Hagan  
Suzanne Kasler  
Charlotte Moss  
Joe Nahem  
Thomas O'Brien  
Alex Papachristidis  
Miles Redd

Katie Ridder  
Stephen Sills  
Michael S. Smith  
Matthew Patrick Smyth  
William Sofield  
Robert Stiller  
Madeline Stuart  
Steven Volpe  
Kelly Wearstler  
Bunny Williams  
Vicente Wolf

### 5 DESIGNERS TO WATCH 2010

Jesse Carrier  
Oliver M. Furth  
Grant K. Gibson  
Katie Lydon  
Marie Turner

### GRAND MASTERS OF DESIGN 9 DECORATORS WHO HAVE DEFINED AMERICAN STYLE

**Thomas Britt**  
Bold colors and grand gestures typify this designer's oeuvre.

**Mario Buatta**  
The celebrated Prince of Chintz aces traditional interiors.

**David Easton**  
A reverence for 18th-century neoclassicism infuses his architecture and gardens.

**Mica Ertegun**  
She's known for luxurious yet cerebral interiors that are as cosmopolitan as she is.

**Mariette Himes Gomez**  
Restful, monochromatic spaces are the designer's trademark.

**Albert Hadley**  
The dean of American interior design makes it look easy, with spaces that are smart and graphic.

**William Hodgins**  
The Canadian native decorates in the Anglo-American tradition.

**John Saladino**  
With a powerful but peaceful aesthetic, he mixes noble antiques and sleek furnishings.

**Rose Tarlow**  
A decorator's decorator, she imbues her rooms, whether classic or contemporary, with emotion.



## 5 DESIGNERS TO WATCH

THESE UP-AND-COMING TALENTS HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED SIGNATURE APPROACHES TO STYLE



A sitting area in a Park Avenue apartment.

## RAFAEL DE CÁRDENAS

A lavender apartment for the model Jessica Stam; a lime-and-fuchsia family home for makeup star Jeanine Lobell and her husband, actor Anthony Edwards: This New York architect is creating colorful backdrops for a young, fashionable crowd. A former menswear designer for Calvin Klein, De Cárdenas left fashion to

earn a master's degree in architecture (his first venture out of school was working on the redesign of the World Trade Center site). His tactile approach—he starts each project by assembling fabric boards, as though designing clothing—is clearly rooted in his fashion background. [architectureatlarge.com](http://architectureatlarge.com)



Gallet's Manhattan studio.

## AURÉLIEN GALLET

In his refined interiors, 18th-century antiques meld seamlessly with chic '30s designs. Trained in France as an art appraiser, Gallet moved to New York eight years ago and worked for two of the city's top interior designers, Robert Couturier and Juan Pablo Molyneux. That blue-chip background led to instant commissions when he started his own firm last year, from a downtown loft to an oceanfront house in the Caribbean. Coming soon: a line of limited-edition furniture and lighting. [aureliengallet.com](http://aureliengallet.com)



A Los Angeles dining room.

## NICKEY KEHOE

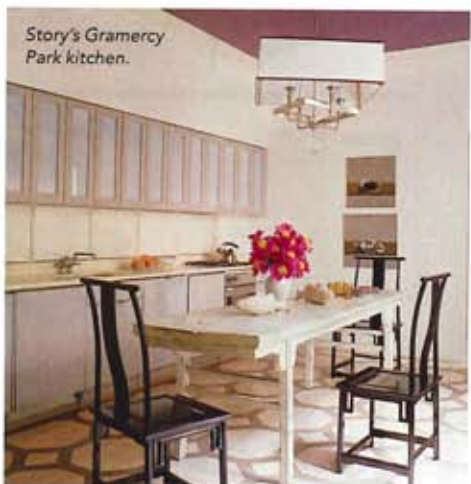
Funky interiors that mix burlap and velvet, French country with midcentury modern: L.A.-based decorator-shopkeepers Todd Nickey and Amy Kehoe have perfected a laid-back, artfully curated blend. Their style has struck a chord with a star-studded client list that includes Mark and Sunrise Ruffalo and Natalie Portman. Meanwhile, their store in Hollywood and their 1stdibs online shop are troves of affordable antique and vintage finds. Their own NK Collection of furniture is eye catching and well priced. [nickeykehoe.com](http://nickeykehoe.com)



A living room in Washington, D.C.

## BETH MARTIN

This San Francisco decorator creates charmingly functional settings for modern life. In the D.C. townhouse of actress Alexandra Wentworth and her husband, George Stephanopoulos, she created the "Godiva room," a chocolate-brown living space that multitasks as a study and Nintendo Wii play area for the couple's children. In this designer's hands, slate-color velvet sofas mix handily with pink leather poufs, and a stark Lucian Freud sketch looks just right beside an old-fashioned settee. [elizabethmartindesign.com](http://elizabethmartindesign.com)



Story's Gramercy Park kitchen.

## SARA STORY

As gifted with natural tones as she is with brighter hues, the native Texan—now based in New York—loves antiques, Asian lacquer, and cowhide chairs. Her soigné interiors, which owe a debt to the years she spent working with Victoria Hagan, deftly blend glamour with a sense of ease. This bold spirit (she competes on an international women's elephant-polo team) also has a wild side: Her study for the 2008 Kips Bay Decorator Show House incorporated a lion-skin rug—a family heirloom. [sarastorydesign.com](http://sarastorydesign.com)