

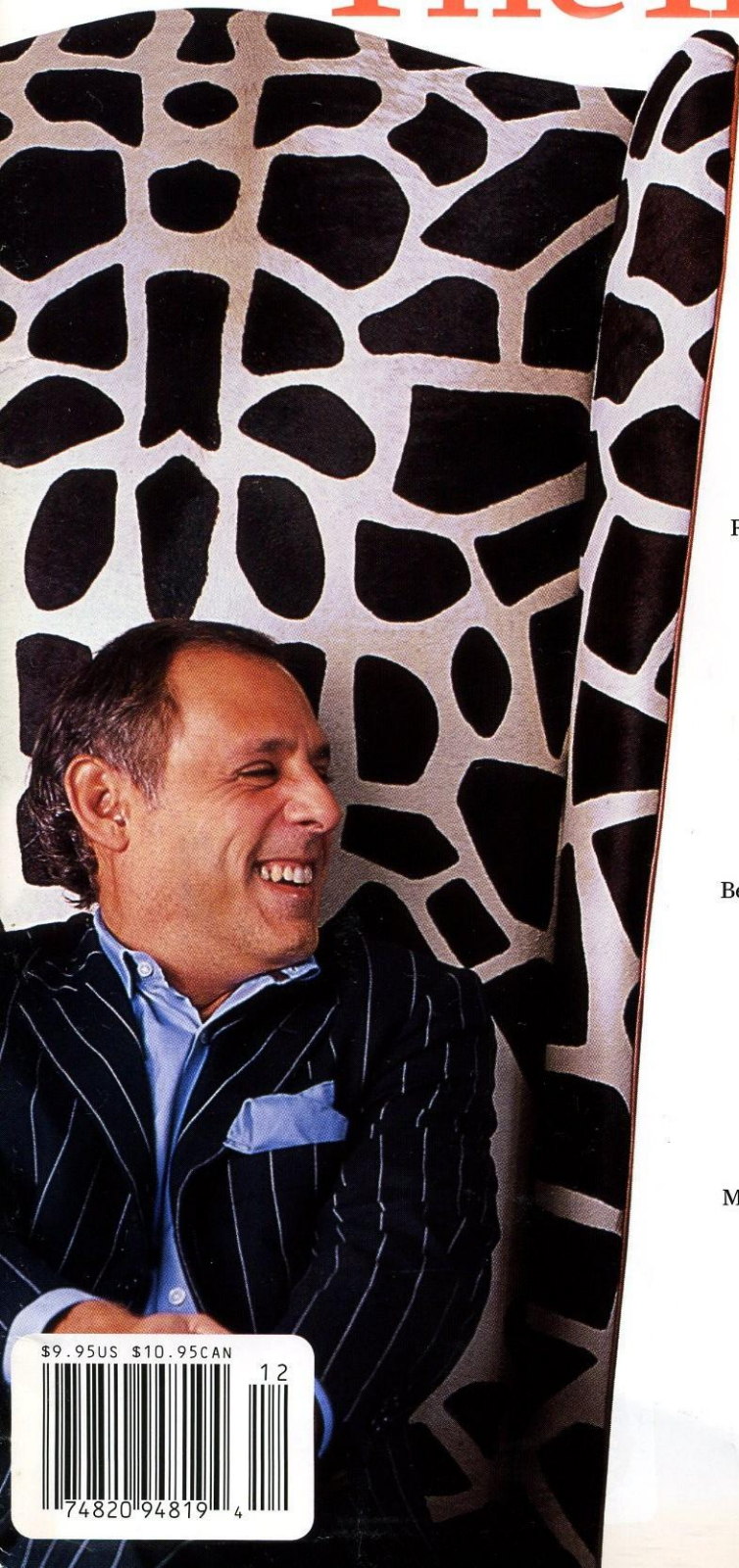
52 Leading Voices in American Interiors*

ELEMENTS *of* LIVING

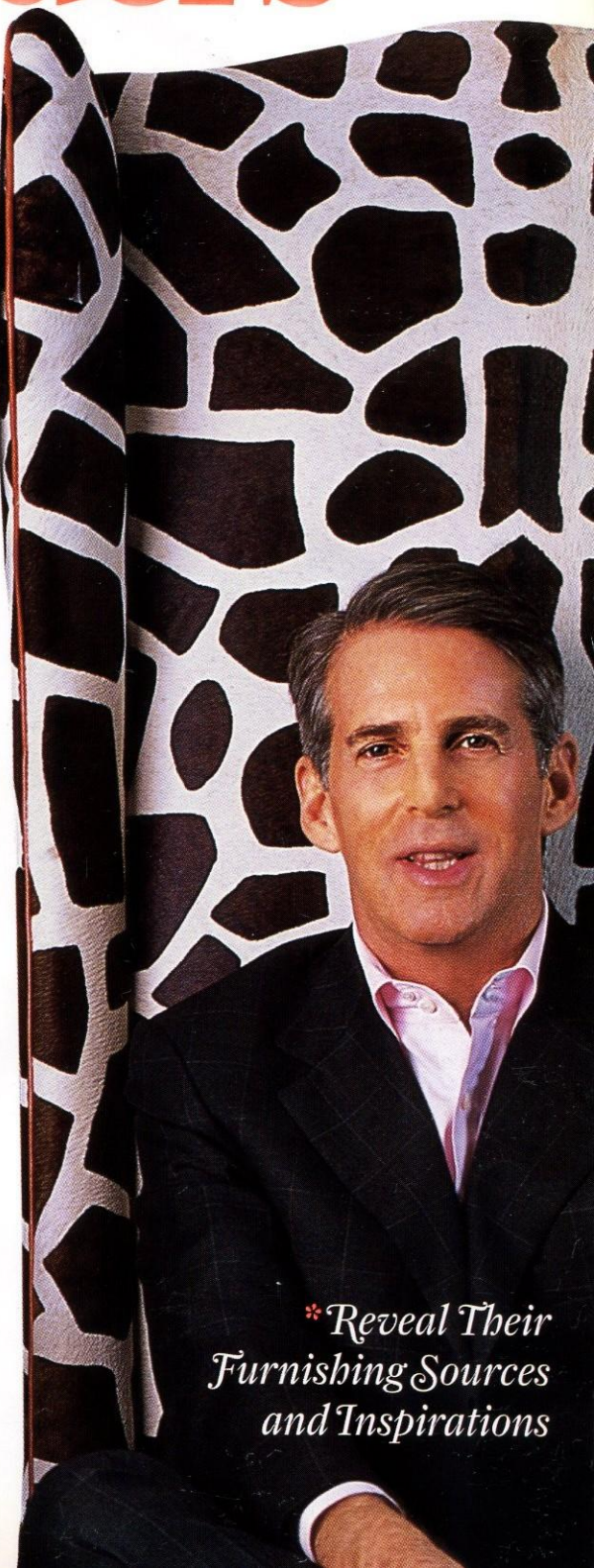
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The Insiders



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*Reveal Their
Furnishing Sources
and Inspirations

\$9.95US \$10.95CAN

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*From New York to
San Francisco,
Minneapolis to Austin,
these 52 voices in
American interiors are
changing the way
we live. Here's what
inspires and informs a
few of the best in
contemporary design.*

The. Insiders

Glenn Gissler

ACCORDING TO GLENN GISSLER, art is the single most important element of a room. Art, he says—along with friends—is what gives a home life. His clients, many of whom are art collectors and dealers, might argue that without Gissler's classical-yet-modern environments, their lives wouldn't be so comfortable, or the paintings and sculpture around them quite as magical.

As a child, Gissler studied with a painter friend of his mother's, who was also an interior designer. With fine arts and architecture degrees from Rhode Island School of Design, he worked on projects with designer Juan Montoya and architect Rafael Viñoly, then launched his own firm in 1987. His many projects since then include residences in the New York area and Florida as well as showrooms for Michael Kors and offices for prominent CEOs.

Gissler calls his work the result of lifelong interests in twentieth-century art, literature, historic preservation and architectural history. His interiors are invariably diverse and polished, without looking "decorated"; his palette is calm, and earth tones are favorites. Especially important to him is the proper integration of beautifully crafted elements such as woodwork, lighting and antiques with a "sculptural presence"—art is never far from his thoughts. —*Lis King*

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Tsao & McKown

IN AN INTERIOR BY Calvin Tsao and Zack McKown, every surface is carefully composed, exquisitely rendered and nearly always custom. But for Tsao and McKown, surfaces remain, well, superficial. It is space—its proportion, its volume, its sequence—that is their primary concern, and it is this empirical approach to design that distinguishes their work. In decorating a room, for instance, they start not by searching through paint decks but by spending an entire day in the space—observing the movement and intensity of light, registering sounds, studying how the room is used and how it relates to adjacent spaces. They admire the Maison de Verre less for Pierre Chareau's clever interior fittings than for the surprises you encounter en route to its front door, passing through an inside-outside-inside sequence of spaces until at last you penetrate a glass wall that fuses the building and its forecourt.

"Design is not a commodity," says Tsao. "It's a means to create a life, to make life more fulfilled." With that in mind, Tsao and McKown immerse themselves in a client's life but with care. "Our job is not to be style Svengalis. We hope that they, and we, can be strong in vision without being stuck in it. It's all about give and take and a willingness to go for a ride." —*Heather Smith MacIsaac*

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Eric Cohler

IN THE EARLY 1990S, Eric Cohler escaped the life of boy wonder at Saatchi & Saatchi to study at Columbia's School of Architecture, then went on to open his design firm. He points first to the 1880s Italianate Manhattan brownstone he grew up in as his strongest influence. "My mother decorated our home 'in consultation' with Billy Baldwin," he jokes, referring to the torn-out magazine pages she followed to fill the home with pale neutral colors, an eclectic mix of furnishings, and numerous 1950s abstract Italian and American paintings. It was in this environment that Cohler watched *I Love Lucy*, another big influence, tracking pieces by T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbons, John Widdicomb and Dunbar as they moved in and out of both Lucy and Ricky's and Fred and Ethel's apartments. (Look for Cohler's forthcoming book, *Learning From Lucy*, which follows the show's design through 16 episodes.)

Not that his sensibility is limited to his childhood TV room. "I'm an Anglophile, although I do like the classic Italians, too. But I like all of it twisted, the way Gertrude Stein would twist things," he says. Sir John Soane, David Hicks and the brothers Adam are favorite talents as well, but Cohler admits he always carries a little of his childhood home with him. "Now and then, I mentally check in on it. The scale and colors were perfectly balanced." —RBG and KH

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William Eubanks

WITH HIS DASHING, daguerreotype good looks and mastery of the details of 400 years of English and Continental antiques, William R. Eubanks carries himself with the assured demeanor of another era. His unabashed residential designs are replete with eye-popping ormolu and Aubusson, tapestries, statuary, porcelain, the occasional taxidermy, lavish draperies, French doors opening onto English gardens. Each interior, in its way, is an ecstatic, near-apotheosis of splendid southern living.

Born in Memphis, Eubanks was often taken out of school by his parents to go visiting, traveling hundreds of miles by road and rail for weeks on end to call on relatives and friends. Southerners tend to align

themselves with English design traditions, Eubanks points out, and in his estimation, every home visited informed his understanding of interior design as an expression of ideals of comfort and achievement.

Eubanks and Elvis had big plans for Graceland before the singer died in 1977, a year after Eubanks founded his firm. What did he tell Presley when asked how he liked what the King had done with the place so far? Eubanks, a born diplomat and genuinely kind, recalls, "I told him I'd never seen anything like it before in my life." If you're like most Americans, you'd likely say the same in one of Eubanks's Palm Beach dining rooms. Let's hope you get the chance. —JN

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Eve Robinson

IN RETROSPECT her career might seem to have been launched from her childhood bedroom in a stylish apartment in upper Manhattan, where at an

early age Eve Robinson demonstrated a decided interest in matters of fashion and design. From there, Robinson's family moved to a house in Riverdale—which she vacated for a dorm at Vassar to study art and art history. After graduation she took jobs in fashion (she'd been an intern at *Seventeen* while still in high school), at Estée Lauder and Ralph Lauren, which proved insufficiently challenging. Her mother, well acquainted with her daughter's discerning eye, suggested classes at the Parsons School of Design. That was the ticket.

Robinson's first design job was with Victoria Hagan, whose strong sense of proportion and even handed integration of styles had a profound impact on Robinson's own assured style. Among Robinson's signatures is a taste for pieces whose heritage is not obvious, "that raise questions about when and where they might have been made." Provenance and historical correctness are of little importance to her. "I could never do a period room," she says. "To achieve timelessness requires a mix of styles." —JN

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Eric Cohler, William Eubanks, Eve Robinson



Kitchen designed by Eve Robinson

"You need dining chairs a little deeper than normal and flower arrangements not too big to get in the way of conversation. After dinner is when the best conversation happens, so people need to feel very comfortable—otherwise they will want to leave the table."

NANCY BRAITHWAITE

EVERY DINING ROOM MUST HAVE:

A table that's round (Carter, Pheasant), good-sized (Braithwaite) and adaptable/expandable (Kemble) * A tabletop that doesn't make any noise when you put down the plates (Noriega-Ortiz) * A sideboard or serving table (Hadley, Whealon) * Soft seating (Williams) * A beautiful chandelier (Jeffers, McDonald, Sommers, Whealon) * Sumptuous color or something rich on the walls (Redd) * Something reflective—mirrors or silvered wallpaper (Ridder) * Intimacy (Williams)

"No glass cabinets in the kitchen! Not unless you're a display designer."

THOMAS PHEASANT

EVERY KITCHEN MUST HAVE:

Good work space (Braithwaite) and well-planned surfaces (Wolf) * A sink big enough to sit in (Noriega-Ortiz) * A deep, narrow, tall refrigerator (Redd) * Recessed lighting (Whealon) * Small table lamps for the counters (O'Brien) * An efficient and attractive kettle (Hadley) * Coffee in the freezer (McDonald)