

JUNE 2009

# House Beautiful

everybody's **FAVORITE** everything

**DESIGNER SECRETS**

*The best  
little touches for  
every room*



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"Black is dramatic and daring. It has that forbidden quality, which is irresistible. I think of sexy black negligees and fast black cars."

INTERIOR DESIGNER NANCY BOSZARDT, COLOR: SEXYL, PAGE 16

June 2009

Cover Photograph by  
JOSÉ PICAYO



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June 2009

## Everybody's Favorite Everything

"I love playing with ceilings. At dinner, if you're in a boring conversation, at least you have something to look at!"

INTERIOR DESIGNER JEAN-LOUIS DENIOT, IT'S A FAVORITE BECAUSE IT'S SO CHIC, PAGE 58



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EVERYBODY'S  
FAVORITE  
EVERYTHING  
**HOUSE  
BEAUTIFUL**  
*June 2009*

IT'S A FAVORITE BECAUSE IT'S...  
**Classic**

A lighter, fresher, more contemporary look for a venerable Manhattan apartment

Stenciled wall paintings based on 18th-century wallpaper in Sweden's Drottningholm Palace Theater bring fresh air and drama into the foyer of a New York apartment. Designer Timothy Whealon extended the alfresco theme with a green lacquer David Hick's garden seat and lattice-motif Madeline Weinrib Brooke rug in Chocolate. Chairs are covered in Claudine in Chocolate by Les Indiennes.

Interior design by TIMOTHY WHEALON Interview by DOUGLAS BRENNER Photographs by THIBAUT JEANSON



In the living room, a banquette makes great use of what in most rooms would be a dead corner. Bridgewater chairs in Lee Jofa's bold Herbert's Carnation Weave flank a Chinese daybed-turned-coffee table and 1930s campaign stools. A Louis XVI armchair's fine-grid fabric echoes the muted diamond weave of an abaca rug as well as the large-scale geometry of the dining room.



**DOUGLAS BRENNER:** Here we are in a windowless entry hall in the middle of Manhattan and—presto—it feels like a sunny garden. What's the story behind the magic trick?

**TIMOTHY WHEALON:** Barbara Walters owned this apartment before my clients—a stylish couple in their early thirties—bought it. It had beautiful prewar bones, but it was a little dark when you walked in. I wanted to do something light and airy, but with a certain sophistication. I'd seen foyers everywhere with Chinese scenic wallpaper, and I was sick of it. But I kept thinking, 'How can I create that kind of old-world feel, and make it fresh?' Then I came across an amazing design on an 18th-century Swedish wallpaper. I loved the big bold pattern, the movement. I adapted it for the artist who painted it onto these walls. You have the rhythmic repetition of those vines rising into the air, so it gives you a bit of an ethereal feeling. And then the brown carpet grounds everything.

**Coming through the front door, you know right away that you've arrived somewhere special.**

This hall may be my favorite moment in the apartment. It brings the outside in, and the greens, the ivories, and the earth tones coordinate with the colors in the living room, dining room, and library. All three rooms connect, forming an enfilade. You go right into the living room, which opens into the library, and when you're sitting on the library sofa, you look straight through to that painting in the dining room. So there's a flow, a continuity.

**Along with the colors that carry you through from room to room, the patterns do, too. All the variations on the trellis or grid. But it's not coordinated in a shoes-dyed-to-match-the-handbag kind of way.**

Making it not feel static—or pretentious—was really important. My clients were moving from a loft downtown, and the wife talked about all the fun times, the fun dinners—it was casual and simple. I tried to find a balance, to give them something classic yet comfortable, that meshed the worlds of

downtown/uptown, low/high. They didn't have a lot of stuff to work with, so we were really starting afresh.

**Was it hard convincing them that a completely decorated place wouldn't cramp their style?**

I don't personally believe in having things totally 'decorated,' as if everything has been



done at once. I love layering things from different periods and cultures, mixing the pristine and the patinated. There are rich velvets and embroideries juxtaposed with linens, Swedish painted furniture with Chinese hardwoods, Louis XVI with midcentury American. It's like they're all having a conversation. Everything's harmonious—and then you slip in one thing that's not, and that gives the room added interest.

**Like the ebonized chair in the middle of the living room that seems to be waiting for a dance partner?**

Exactly. Or pops of orange amid the greens

and browns and blues. Getting it right takes patience. You need to grow into a space. Before the clients bought that huge Hurvin Anderson painting, the dining room really bothered me because it didn't feel finished until it had a piece of artwork there. It was still a beautiful room without something on that wall, but once that piece came in, it kind of brought everything together.

**So they chose the painting?**

Yeah, it's funny, because I have a lot of his early work, but they found this independently. Pure serendipity. I couldn't be more thrilled with it. It brings their personalities into the mix. And their Lucian Freud etching looks like one of their two dogs, who are very happy here. Their two-year-old son is, too. Just because rooms are lived-in doesn't mean they can't be beautiful—or subtle. A lot of work went into things people don't notice at first, like hand-embroidered curtain edges or the Venetian plaster walls. The painter made them too light, so I had him go back. I needed a deeper ocher to make the pretty moldings stand out. Then we waxed the walls, for a soft sheen. The combed plaster in the dining room has a drier, chalky texture that absorbs light, and its grooves speak to the grain of the library's pine paneling.

**There's a mink-lined-raincoat finesse to subtleties like that. Did the wife's past career in fashion influence you?**

When I would meet with her, I was always looking, trying to get her essence. I'd watch how she dresses. Inside her closet I'd see her Jimmy Choos and Manolos. So later, when I found some 1940s or '50s Italian sconces for the dining room—simple, but with mirrors that bring a bit of glamour—they instantly reminded me of her. I knew she'd love them.

**Speaking of personal reminders, I've got to ask: Was there anything left behind by Barbara Walters when you started here?**

It's all pretty cloudy to me now, but I have a vague recollection of stars on the front hallway ceiling.

PRODUCED BY DORETTA SPERDUOTO

**ABOVE:** Vintage Eames chairs from the owners' former loft are pulled up to a Saarinen table in a family dining area off the kitchen. Wallpaper is Chant in Blue from Lulu DK. **OPPOSITE:** The library is "well-lived-in," says Whealon. Curtains in Lee Jofa's floral-embroidered L'Arbre de Vie soften the lines of the reclaimed-pine paneling. The sofa is covered in Velvet Mogador in Foret from Old World Weavers; the armchair is in Lee Jofa's Cambridge Stripe in Camel.



"The dining room is all about texture," says Whealon, referring to effects like combed-plaster walls and chairs in subtly contrasting fabrics. The Bijar carpet seems to riff on the grille motif of a painting by British artist Hurvin Anderson from his Welcome series. Over the reproduction Jupe table, a Belgian chandelier introduces "a chunky bit of baroque whimsy."



Canopy beds are a favorite Whealon form, "as long as they're not too dressed. I like air and space. This is a cozy, clean, modern bedroom with classical lines." A graphic China Seas print, Fez Background in Brown on Tan Linen, unites canopy, skirt, chairs, and Roman shade in a serene ensemble. Farrow & Ball's Parma Gray on the walls plays up the greens of the pillows and bench and the turquoise of the 1960s lamps. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES.



*(our) favorites*

- PAINTED VINES IN THE FOYER
- CORNER BANQUETTE IN THE LIVING ROOM
- THE MIX OF GREENS IN THE BEDROOM
- THE FOUR-POSTER WITH A MODERN SPIRIT
- A GENIUS USE OF PATTERNS