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CHRISTMAS 1984
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but the scent tells you you're in a garden
where cypress and wild flowers grow,
look for the flame of the candle by Rigaud.

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On Christmas Eve you will always find our family among the throngs at The Riverside Church in New York City for the traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols there. Its chancel filled with clusters of tall bare evergreens and banks of bright red poinsettias, its long aisles lit by candles, friends of long standing among the many gathered in its immense nave, it is part of our celebration of the mystery and magic of Christmas.

Mystery and magic permeate the pages of this December issue, and helping us with our Christmas tidings are the angels that adorn The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s tall blue spruce every year. Those angels have now been lovingly recorded in a new book, The Angel Tree, with photographs by Elliott Erwitt and text by Linn Howard, who supervises the assembly of the intricate display that amazes and delights thousands of visitors to the Met each Christmas season, and Mary Jane Pool, a former editor-in-chief of House & Garden. Our excerpt from it begins on page 84, while figures from another Neapolitan crèche add to the magic here and on page 98.

Two earthbound angels are Helen Hayes and Sir John Gielgud, whose stage presences have enriched the lives of countless theatergoers over the years. We think you’ll find as much magic onstage as off when you see our photographs of Pretty Penny, the house on the Hudson that has been home to the first lady of the American stage for more than fifty years, page 160; and then visit with us the country estate of Sir John Gielgud, page 178. Molly Keane’s piece on Sir John set me to reading her novel Good Behaviour once again.

That all the world’s a stage is more than amply illustrated by two special stories in this issue: one is John Richardson’s piece on The Mongiardino Style, page 104, with photographs of the distinguished designer’s Milan apartment by Oberto Gili; and Martin Filler’s story, Quinn Essential, page 152, on collectors Joan and Jack Quinn, with photographs by Henry Bowles and portraits by Helmut Newton and Antonio.

Richard Meier was this year’s winner of the prestigious Pritzker Prize for Architecture. House & Garden over the years has published work by all of the winners in the six years of its existence—Philip Johnson, Luis Barragán, James Stirling, Kevin Roche, I. M. Pei, and Meier—and we are pleased to include these photographs by Ezra Stoller of Meier’s most recent house, page 142. A handsome design, it demonstrates once again why this architect remains at the top of his profession.

Originated during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s state visit here in 1982, The Festival of India 1985–86 will celebrate Indian culture in the United States. The festival’s principal organizer is Pupul Jayakar, whose restored Lutyens bungalow, page 170, provides a preview of the kind of choice Indian art and artifacts we will be seeing in the months to come. Adding to the interest in things Indian will be the forthcoming television series The Jewel in the Crown in mid December on Masterpiece Theatre and A Passage to India, the David Lean-directed film based on E. M. Forster’s classic novel by the same name, which will be released in mid December.

And so angels and their miracles, earthlings and their fantasies abound in the pages of this issue, put together in the hope that from a variety of rich traditions you will find a measure of the awe of this particular season. Last year a magical gift for me was a poem written by Helen V. Boucek, the mother of a friend. Tucked inside her Christmas card, entitled The Tree, it read:

‘Gray is all theory
Green and Gold
The flaming Tree of Life . . .’

Before it settles to its winter sleeping
Blazes to our sight
Proclaiming deathlessness
In transformations too marvelous to imagine:

Grubs to butterflies
Snakes to angels
Men to gods
And God to Man again.

This miracle happens in the dead of winter.

A Neapolitan angel from the collection of La Fundacion Bartolome March Servera in Palma de Mallorca, photographed by Jacques Dirand.
DISCOVER THE SENSE OF Rémy
Wishing you a warm and wonderful Holiday Season

Ralph Lauren
ALL ABOUT STYLE

By Nancy Richardson

- CANDELABRA MANIA On a Proust-inspired dinner table in New York last spring: a forest of late-nineteenth-century eight-light gilded candelabra made a dazzling structural framework for big bouquets of old-fashioned flowers. In September at Vaux-le-Vicomte, the French palace that is the direct design antecedent for Versailles, the mood came straight from Le Nôtre: another long party table, this time with four baroque candelabra in silver and a dense underplanting of miniature faux orange trees in silver pots. Moral: Rent candelabra if you don’t own a whole forest or try a fantasy in a candelabra shape like Ronaldo Maia’s fantasy in moss, birch twigs, and orchids, right.

- WHAT’S IN A FRAME Recently museum curators, decorators, and dealers have been making the point that the frame is an important part of the message in any work of art. And sometimes, a frame is the point altogether. In the Lehman Wing at the Metropolitan Museum, empty or damask-lined Renaissance frames hang on the wall to be admired for themselves. In the André Meyer Galleries, the elaborate gold frames of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century pictures are thought of as blinders that intensify the viewer’s response to the picture. Nevertheless, few recent paintings by serious artists get more than minimal framing. So much more outstanding, then, are the handsome gold moldings that complete Francis Bacon’s Triptych ’83. Together with the vivid and lyrical pomegranate red, against which his typically demanding imagery floats, the framing gives this work startling elegance as—heretical thought—decoration. At Marlborough Gallery, London.

- BOULLE IN REVERSE Especially in the seventeenth century, the most advanced decoration was carried out in small rich rooms that were meant to provide a more intimate setting than the huge reception rooms they opened into. In a tiny white...
Italian set designs

Needlework gone fuzzy-wuzzy

room in the Paris apartment of Louis XIV’s brother the duc d’Orléans, the walls were covered with white watered-silk hangings bordered in gold and silver. There were ten green-stained chairs upholstered in green brocade with gold flowers, as well as ebony-and-silver cabinets. The most beautiful thing in the room, however, was a small ivory cabinet enriched with a floral marquetry made by the king’s cabinetmaker, Pierre Golle, the predecessor of André-Charles Boulle. The cabinet has just been bought by the Victoria & Albert Museum in London where it is already on display. The V & A’s deputy keeper of furniture, Simon Jervis, delights in this delicate evidence that in the age of Louis XIV not all taste was dour and magnificent.

STYLISH EXHIBITIONS

Architectural drawings, watercolors of interiors, designs for furniture, schemes for ceilings and carpets have fascinated the art market for the last five years. Now dealers are seeking out new categories. This year Gavin Henderson of the Clarendon Gallery, London, is exhibiting eighteenth-century inn signs at the Thomas Galdy Gallery, New York, until December 1. Wheelock Whitney is offering a group of nineteenth-century Italian set designs from the period when the Italians influenced all Europe in such matters. These appealing works by professional set designers for specific productions are skilled but not pedantic, take your breath away for a moment and demand no more. The ones I like best are those where the artist’s imagination completely outweighs his education and travels. The exhibition consists of sixty examples ranging from the high classical tradition to a picturesque style favored at a more romantic moment a hundred years later. Each frame is painted to resemble a different stone like marble, porphyry, or granite. 123 East 62nd St., NYC, until Dec. 15.

WRITING RECOGNIZED

In 1972 the Metropolitan Museum bought an entire house in Wayzata, Minnesota, on the eve of its scheduled demolition. Built in 1912–14 by Frank Lloyd Wright for his friends and patrons the Francis W. Littles, it is one of the largest of Wright’s Prairie houses. The museum installed the main living room of the house in its American Wing in the spring of 1983 thereby becoming the first major museum to install a twentieth-century period room. Now the Met has consigned a six-panel bay window ($60,000–$80,000) and two skylight panels ($4,000–$6,000) from the Little house to a sale of American Decorative Arts at Christie’s, Friday, Dec. 14. If the windows make their estimate, they will equal prices paid for seminal eighteenth-century architectural elements and mark the market’s recognition of Wright as America’s leading architect.

PLUSH PUPPIES UNDER GLASS

As it gets harder to
The spirit of Marlboro in a low tar cigarette.
find animal paintings at nursery picture prices, alert collectors have turned to nineteenth-century framed amateur needlework of children and animals. The two on page 16 are a combination of a flat gros point and Berlin work which stands out in relief and gives animals a stuffed toy look. A Trevor Potts.

- GET IT You couldn't possibly imitate the successes of Mario Praz's survey of the history of decoration or his sensibility, but with some very special credentials you might, oddly enough, make some improvements. And so enter a book a professional lifetime in the making and several years in the works—done in his spare time—by the Keeper of Furniture and Woodwork at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Authentic Decor (Viking) by Peter Thornton (just appointed Keeper of the Soane Museum in London) is a hundred-dollar, four-hundred-page survey of the four hundred years that make up the modern period. It is dense, literate, not without humor, and has the advantage and goal of being comprehensive but never exhausting.

The book is divided into fifty-year segments, each one divided into four sections: an overview of the era—its mood, the major houses, clients, professionals, characteristics—e.g., an emphasis on ceilings or upholstery; the planning and arrangement of rooms; the architectural shell; loose furnishings.

At the end of each section comes a bank of as many as fifty illustrations, many from the V & A's outstanding archive. They are for the most part presented in color—conversation pieces, genre paintings, designs for chimney pieces, watercolors of artists' rooms, proposals for ceilings and walls done by everybody from Adam to Zuber, plates from fashion journals and a bathroom painted on a fan.

Many writers on decoration and design reveal their likes and dislikes by the emphasis they give certain periods. To his credit, it's hard to tell where Peter Thornton's taste lies. He is neither obviously Anglophile or Francophile about the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, when the leadership in fashionable taste was passing back and forth from France to England. He also discusses what went on in Holland, Germany, America, and the Scandinavian countries, commenting at one
oint that the Dutch version of French
taste was often more to the rest of Eu-
rope's liking than the French original.

Following Thornton's linear treat-
ment of the evolution of taste and be-
ing satisfied with his ample explana-
tions, I still longed for more, for topics
that didn't fit the organization of the book. Thornton glances off a tantaliz-
ing subject when he allows, in an aside,
that the Chinese drawing room at Carl-
ton House and much of the Brighton
avilion marked the last flowering of
Chinese taste in Europe until 1930. Oh
to have a chart of the development of
that taste—a chapter's worth—or a
chapter on the recurring interest in
Gothic architecture and motifs, or the
Greco-Roman-Renaissance-Pom-
peian/Etruscan-Neoclassical progres-
ton for that matter. But if certain
themes don't fit the book's develop-
ment and the introduction leaves one
anging in its thesis that it is the density
of material that differentiates the look
of interiors from one period to the next,
the top man at the top museum rewards
atient reading with bits of hilarity:
"In Paris (late eighteenth century)
people of a particularly amorous dis-
sion sometimes had a plate of mir-
ror-glass set into the domes of their
beds but this practice was less eagerly
docted after Calonne, the Minister of
inance, was nearly cut in half when
the glass fell out of the tester of his bed.
he precise circumstances do not seem
o be recorded..." And if as you laugh
ou wonder if it's not possible to get
the gist of decoration in the last four
undred years in a simpler way, I have
recommendation. It is the work of an-
other Englishman. Osbert Lancaster
rote and illustrated Homes Sweet
omes (John Murray, London) in
939. He uses not a single date,
arts—one page and one satirical
rawing to a period—with Norman,
nd ends up subdividing the twentieth
century into categories such as: Ordi-
ary Cottage, Cultured Cottage,
stockbrokers Tudor, Functional, Even
ore Functional. Seventy-nine pages
nd as many laughs. 
}
THE DEALER'S EYE

HEALTHY DECADENCE

Barry Friedman has a fine eye for the best of the bizarre

By Michael Boodro

Behind an imposing façade on 82nd Street, half a block from the Metropolitan Museum, beyond a heavy mahogany door and up a shadowy, darkened stair several black doors confront the visitor, none clearly identified as the entrance. Once inside, all is hushed under high white ceilings. Draped French windows shield against the light and elaborate plaster moldings weave around wall panels containing small canvases, pastels, and watercolors. On ornate tables rest large bronze figures and carved stone bas reliefs. The gallery assistant is elegantly dressed and accommodating with a slight, untraceable accent.

It's an atmosphere appropriate to the artworks and exhibitions that have earned Barry Friedman Ltd. its reputation during the past five years. The gallery specializes in the refined, mysterious, slightly decadent, and even morbid art of fin-de-siècle artists, the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists and their far-flung contemporaries such as Hodler and Knopff, as well as the sinuous, convoluted, and often dark decorative arts of the same period.

In fact, the only incongruous element in this rarefied retreat is the owner himself, Barry Friedman, who bursts forth from a back office, wearing a faded olive mechanic's jump suit, grinning widely, his hair and beard neatly trimmed. He seems almost to relish the fact that his presence is so unexpected, almost disconcerting, as he launches into the story of how such a young man has become a fixture in a rather small, rather precious field of the art market and how and why he is expanding beyond the area that has made his reputation. In October, for example, he opened an exhibition of fifty years of chair design. Breaking into new territory is, it turns out, a pattern Friedman has been following since his college days.

He grew up in Manhattan, where, he says, "My mother was a dealer, basically in general antiques. She did a lot in souvenir spoons. But I hated antiques stores. Whenever we'd go to one, either upstate or in New Jersey, I started screaming. I wouldn't go in. I'd wait in the car. But then I was something of a juvenile delinquent. I was even in a street gang," he states proudly, knowing full well how absurd it sounds now as he sits in an elegant twenties chair. "I was quite a hippie in college. I went to Pace. I started the S.D.S. chapter on campus while I avoided the draft. I was in college a long time. I stayed there to get a deferment. I took twelve credits, the minimum you could get away with. I had hair down to my waist and a beard almost as long. But I was always a middle-class kid, so I kept it neat. I wore it in a ponytail."

And it was while in college that Friedman took the step that would lead to his present career. "I bought something," as he succinctly puts it. "It was an iridescent glass vase in the style of Loetz and cost $8. I loved it." While attending college Friedman also managed to...
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THE DEALER'S EYE:

work full-time as a rather bohemian C.P.A. for a Greenwich Village boutique/restaurant. "They called me Joe for Jesus Christ, because of my hair and beard." Friedman feels this early business training was a great help in his own career, but more importantly, gave him enough disposable income to buy a bit more period glass. "I remember distinctly once," he recalls, "I found four vases by Loetz himself in London; I could have all four for $80. But I didn't have the money. I had to pay it over time. I also sold one or two vases I had bought before. I remember on one occasion I made a profit of about $5." That, too, was a harbinger of the future.

"You have to understand," he continues, "these vases were a very big part of my life. I played with them every night. I handled them a lot. On weekends I would go up to Massachusetts looking for more things. Then I started working as a runner, buying and selling to other dealers. I got into that initially by putting an ad in The Times.

"I only did it to finance my collection," he says. "I remember very well when I bought my first piece of Tiffany, from Helen Eisenberg. It cost $80. Of course, I only had $20." Friedman remains impressed by the generosity and helpfulness of the dealers he was involved with at the time. "I remember once I found a piece of Loetz for about a hundred some odd dollars. This was in October and I really couldn't afford it until the following April, when I got my tax return. I gave them a $20 deposit, but they let me take the piece. I was shocked. They didn't even know me."

In 1968, he decided to chuck his job. "I started business as a dealer, running back and forth. If I wrote out a check for a hundred dollars to buy something, I had to immediately run out and sell something to cover the check. That went on for about a year." At this time Friedman quite shrewdly began expanding into small Art Deco objects and jewelry, several years before the market took off.

In 1969 he opened his first shop, a booth in an antiques center. It cost $275 a month, with electricity. I didn't know where I'd get the money. Fortunately, Art Deco started catching on. In May 1970 he opened Primavera Gallery on Madison Avenue and 68th Street, with his then wife Audra. Friedman, specializing in Deco, tur
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Wolfe Lucite-and-leopard-skin chair, a Magistretti chair, and Bugatti's original dining-room set, which rests upon a Léger carpet. An original Mackintosh chair jostles a George Nelson desk. A Joe Colombo chair of 1963 stands near an Ico and Luisa Parisi sideboard from the fifties, over which hangs a Ferdinand Hodler painting. All share space with a large thirties futuristic robot and an original Wurlitzer jukebox. "I enjoy good kitsch," Friedman says simply.

The exhibition of chair designs from 1900 to 1950 that opened in October (with accompanying scholarly catalogue) seems another departure for the gallery, except that Friedman personally has a collection of more than four hundred chairs. "I have two storerooms full," he says matter-of-factly. "You open a door and chairs fall out. I'm planning to open an annex nearby to sell good fifties pieces and Bauhaus originals by appointment. I also have an enormous fifties glass collection. Eventually, as with everything else, I may have to start selling some of those pieces as well."

Chairs hold a particular appeal, Friedman believes, "because they sum up the design of a period. It's like one word, one object, that says it all. Chairs are a good size." The exhibition will consist of fifty or sixty examples, including originals by Guimard, Van de Velde, Mackintosh, Breuer, Chareau, Hoffmann, and Aalto, as well as several lesser-known but fascinating designers. Never one to do something by half-measures, Friedman is planning a complete revamping of the gallery space to accommodate the complex installation. "You won’t recognize the place," he says.

As he prepares to change into a suit for lunch with a German client in a neighborhood restaurant, Friedman pauses to contemplate his own energy and the unorthodox methods that have kept him ahead of several markets and have upset more than a few old-school professionals.

"I've always made a good collection," he says, smiling. "First it was four-leaf clovers when I was a kid, then baseball cards, and stamps and Indian-head pennies. And I did it on a quarter-a-week allowance. I collected records from the fifties and old jazz. I still have my Beatles lunch box. I collected fifties clothes when I went through my brief punk stage. I took after my mother. But as my collections change, I change, too. I was into neon clocks. I just sold my big collection of plastic radios. I collected Lempicka years ago, and Cassandre posters."

At the moment he is considering tackling contemporary art as well, with an exhibition contemplated for next spring. He is expanding his involvement in Bauhaus design. "Just say I'm interested in good design of the twentieth century." While not strictly accurate, anything else might prove too limiting to apply to the ever-changing Barry Friedman.

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ph. M. NERONI - ROMA
Although I have known very few men of letters intimately, excluding my husbands, of course, Angelo Pellegrini is the only one I have ever shared a spit-bucket with.

Perhaps the nearest I ever came to this was one noontime in a heat-spell in New York, in about 1944, when I waited a long time for Somerset Maugham to get up from his luncheon rendezvous with a handsome blonde and then sat as soon as possible on his chair. It was warmer than the weather, almost hot from his plump old bottom, and I felt it voluptuously through my whole being, like fine tea or perhaps a noble Chambertin sat upon and in, rather than drunk as common mortals would absorb it.

And sharing a bucket at the Pomona County Fairgrounds with Angelo Pellegrini, in about 1946, was even headier, . . or perhaps I should say soul-shaking. He detested me. It was at the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona. To please an old good family friend, Harold Richardson, I had agreed to be one of his crew in the first serious public wine-judging south of Sacramento, from whence had come all our official vinous nods until then. Of course we were frowned on, by anyone south of Santa Barbara, for stepping on hallowed tradition, but Harold felt that the time was right, and he asked a mixed lot to meet with him at the Fair Grounds “down south.” I was the only female there, and in fact the first of my sex ever to be on a California wine panel, as far as I know.

Of course it was very hot in September, and I dressed for coolness and changed my usual personal habits only by cutting out all soap and toothpaste and lotions for two weeks; I did not smoke anyway, but I stopped any tea-coffee-wine-booze for five days before the judging. In other words, I was a Good Girl, a white Anglo-Saxon nonChristian.

The equipment for judging was very primitive then. For one thing, we were supposed to “do” about 180 bottled products in three days. For another, the “judges” were seated two by two at a long table with of course the bottles on-hand and the sparse glasses in front of each one and then a bucket, a plain old five-gallon bucket, between each pair. No dentist-office neat installations!

The first day we judged white wines. The second we whipped through reds. The third and final day we did fruit wines in the morning and brandies after lunch, and toward the end of that day we swallowed quite a bit, instead of spitting it hopefully toward our partners and fairly deftly into our shared buckets.

I had a hard time spitting in public at first. I knew I would have to when I accepted Harold’s invitation, because I had watched wine men do it nonchalantly in Burgundy and Switzerland. But they were always men. I had never seen a woman do it, probably because they had never gone into the court-yards outside their husbands’ wineries when anyone was there. I did not count there as a woman, being a foreigner and by nature invisible anyway. But in Pomona, when I had to spit like a man facing my companion across the bucket and trying to guess what he thought of the wine we had just let swirl and unfold in our separate mouths, I was at first almost appalled at myself. I was nearing forty, and I had never done such a thing as spit, except in a closed private space, and alone.

My partner was Angelo Pellegrini. At least, that was what was marked on our cards and announced in the sheet Harold had sent to each judge. I admired Angelo very much, and felt awed that I would actually meet him at Harold’s little gatherings. I reread The Unprejudiced Palate, and felt more strongly than ever that it was the first true statement I had yet read about living as it can and should be in the west.
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ern coastal America that I love. It did not occur to me that I would have to spit in front of this Pan-like man. And for a while it looked as if I wouldn’t.

I sat alone at my slot and pretended to taste a few white wines, and watched how my neighbors acted, and even learned how to eject the juices without dribbling, before Harold hurried in from his office with a short dark furious man fuming alongside. Introduction were impossible as Harold’s replacement put us through our paces and we gradually got into our own rhythms of tasting, marking, moving along through the rows of unmarked bottles. Beside me Angelo inhaled and swirled and swished noisily, and spat contemptuously almost everywhere but into our bucket, our private shared spitoon.

He was plainly in a gigantic rage.

And at noon, after one of the most miserable mornings of my life, Harold told me that Angelo had roared into his office a few minutes before the judging and had said that he would never consent to have a woman present at a wine-tasting, much less sit next to him. He swore in two or three languages and was noisy in every possible way. He was, in other words, an insulted Italian, than which...

Harold, in his own more decorous way, was furious at having his actions called whatever Angelo called them, and finally he assumed all his legal sternness and said put up or shut up, and Angelo agreed to sit by me for one day.

But after lunch he stormed into Harold’s office again and said that he could not go on. He was leaving for Seattle this afternoon.

Harold, by now smooth and silky and in general the successful criminal lawyer trying his most important case, had no need to counter-question his client to discover that not only was the person appointed as his fellow wine judge a female, but that she smelled.

She smelled of perfume. She was plainly unfit to sit next to a highly qualified and respected wine man—author-bon vivant, a true American but also a living example of good Italian sensitivity and general machismo. “She must go,” he said, “Or... I go. She stinks.”

Of course all these painful stormings were a painful interruption to Harold’s plans to direct and cosset and teach...
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ever I had to lean toward him so that I would not pollute his pristine taste-buds with my stench. I prayed for patience to get through the fruit wines, through the raw brandies, and away.

When we went into the plain bleak room, the glasses and first bottles and buckets were set out, and we placed ourselves, but Harold and Angelo were not there. In about ten minutes they hurried out and almost ran toward me, so that I stood up anxiously: was it bad news about my little girls, my ailing mother? Angelo, flashing a beautiful boyish gidgity smile, bowed low over my hand, and kissed it passionately. Harold almost danced around us.

Probably all the other judges, middle-aged respected medicos and tycoons and physicists, looked on with bemused patience, ignorant of our little drama, as Angelo begged me to forgive him for his cruel actions and Harold explained patchily but almost as passionately that Angelo's motel soap smelled, and therefore he smelled, and especially his hands smelled. I did not.

The rest is obvious. Years fell from my shoulders, and I was young, beautiful, desirable. Angelo was alive beside me, as only a healthy Italian can be. We spat in unison into the suddenly attractive puddle of fruit juice and water we shared, and a newspaper paparazzo from Los Angeles shot our jets in mid-air meeting just above the bucket. And halfway through the long last afternoon tasting of brandies we all began to swallow, and ignored most of the other rules, so that before we all parted after a fine meal of heavily spiced delicacies and plenty of our best bottles from the first two days, I was carissima forever, to the Pan of the Pacific coast, Angelo Pellegrini.

I still am, with the full consent of his wife, and the tacit agreement of scores of other fellow females in every direction from Seattle. Now and then Angelo remembers me, and sends me a clipping of something he has written, or a picture of his prize pumpkin, or a blurred snapshot of a new grandchild, all askew but eminently handsome and healthy because they came from Angelo Pellegrini: from him, the great god Pan of this Western world.
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At Harry’s on Christmas Eve the white-coated bartender, lit from above like a principal actor, places two perfect ice cubes in a gleaming water glass which he fills from a glass pitcher, holds the glass of ice water for an instant to the light, cocks his quattrocento head at his workmanship and places the glass on the bar, then turns to another customer, a smile of inquiry having replaced the concentrated gaze of the previous moment. Outside, the calle is nearly empty, its square paving stones wet from the cold fog off the canal, glistening in the light that spills from Missoni’s window a few steps away where the sweaters and scarves tempt the eye downward to the mesmerizing rows of zeros printed on the discreet easels beneath them.

The Piazza San Marco is also deserted. The light from the Procuratie Nuove and from Caffè Florian barely penetrates the chill mist and to see the shadowy domes of the Cathedral one must walk half the length of the square. Between the Cathedral and the clock tower a solitary Christmas tree twinkles in the milky darkness. Except for the poinsettias in the lobby of the Gritti Palace Hotel, where the guests are mostly Americans, there are no other seasonal decorations. Christmas in Venice is a domestic holiday, and even the churches are somnolent. The great winter celebration here is Carnevale two months away, and during Christmas week the windows of the mask makers’ shops are already full of Pulcinelllos, Harlequins, and Pantaloons. The pagan heart beneath Venice’s Christian vestments prefers the lean days at the end of winter when the season of the new lambs is at hand and barely acknowledges the northerner’s delight in the rekindling of the sun after the long midwinter night.

In the warmth of Harry’s Bar as the small downstairs room fills up for the evening, the animation both soothes and exhilarates. Harry’s father, a Veronese who had been a waiter at the Grand Hotel, opened the place in 1930, named it for his backer, Harry Pickering, an American playboy, and then named his son Arrigo after the playboy or both. It is this son who now runs the place, spruce in his blue suit and red tie, alert as a sparrow to the minutiae of his surroundings.

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afford their own plots, stay in their little marble drawers on the cemetery island of San Michele for only a dozen or so years before their bones are taken to an ossuary farther out in the lagoon. Yet so harmoniously are the buildings, the canals, and the pedestrian areas sublimated to sky and water that the tight Venetian spaces manage to seem generous. Especially in winter Venice is like a cozy ship at sea. Nowhere in Venice is this illusion of roominess within a confined space more ingeniously contrived than at Harry’s, where under a low ceiling the tables and chairs are a quarter less than the normal size, the waiters spin and pivot as they carry their dishes amid the crowds waiting for tables at the end of the bar and prance on their heels like Spanish dancers as they bound with their trays down the nearly vertical gangway from the upstairs kitchens. A young waiter deposits a wedge of cake before a diner; an older hand, troubled by a failure of symmetry, takes a second to interrupt his own errand and points the cake directly at the diner’s chest. Like Venice itself, Harry’s is a triumph of precise gestures, as practiced as the turn of a gondolier’s wrist as he spins his prow 45 degrees to make the inconceivably tight maneuver from one narrow canal into the next.

During the Christmas holiday when the busloads from the north who crowd the city in summertime are back at their jobs and the tourists come singly or in pairs or in snug little Japanese or American families, Harry’s is nonetheless crowded and not simply with tourists. Arrigo offers a discount to favored local customers whose presence, like that of the miniaturized furniture, reduces the center of gravity, domesticates the place, makes one feel at home—what Henry James meant by “That queer air of sociability, of cousinship, of family life which makes up half the experience of Venice.”

The other half is quite another matter for though Venice is surely “an immense collective apartment... where voices sound as in the corridor of a house, where the human step circulates as if it skirted the angles of furniture and shoes never wear out,” it is also a university whose curriculum is itself. Venice is best studied in winter-time when the towering Caneletto skies over the Lido alternate with days so thick with fog that the façade of Santa Maria della Salute cannot be seen from the Piazzetta across the canal; the vaparetti, their radars spinning, feel their way from landing to landing and the unlit galleries at the Accademia are dark by noon. On such days as these Venice becomes its own essence, for not only have the miasmas of tourists lifted but the more robust Venetians have closed their shops and restaurants and departed for Cortina and Barbados, leaving the city to its more characteristically sedentary occupants.

TRAVEL

The least erotic of cities in season, Venice out of season is chastity itself, as if the reproductive impulse had long since subsided along with the city’s commerce. Four centuries ago, the Serene Republic taxed the earnings of 11,654 registered prostitutes and required this source of revenue to show its ankles and bosoms to the trade so that the bridge over the canal where they worked was called Ponte delle Tette. But now even the spicy pasta made with olives, capers, anchovies, and red pepper known throughout Italy as puttanesca is called Andalusia in Venice. The ambience that seduced Casanova, Byron, and poor von Aschenbach has gone. The young assert themselves in more promising places, at their jobs on Terra Firma or at school in Padua. In winter especially the city belongs to connoisseurs of lost empires gently dissolving. “They are easily moved and often affectionate,” Lawrence said of these Venetians, “but they rarely have any abiding passion of any sort,” and that was sixty years ago. Today one wonders about Lawrence’s “rarely.”

This sobriety would be grim if Venice were simply another resort out of season, undressed and past its prime. But the sexlessness in fact clarifies and sharpens the senses as when a musical
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passage will now and then seem to disengage itself from the business of the concert hall and the exertions of the performers and autonomously thrill the ear. On Christmas morning the Frari is all but empty except for some tourists huddled by an animated crèche at the entrance, listening to recorded carols. But there is no sign of the sacristy and in the stillness Bellini's triptych rises from its aesthetic and even its doctrinal setting and, serenely indifferent to the viewer's own interests, conveys an almost Asiatic confidence in the certainty of its baffling assumptions. The effect is awesome, humbling, and momentarily illuminating, as if the intervening centuries had fallen away and one were no longer surrounded by the domesticity Henry James described but by quattrocento Venice in all its proud power, "la plus triumphante cité que jamais j'aye vue," according to a French visitor who described the city a decade after Bellini completed his altarpiece.

This clarity persists throughout the winter afternoon dimmed only briefly by a lunch of porcini and a bottle of Tokay at Montin's on the San Barnabas Canal behind the Accademia where Venetian families seated in parallel rows at long tables eat their Christmas salmon. Later that day as the fading light in the Campo Morosini shades the Gothic doorway of the church of Saint Stefano, the eye catches the terrified features of a small child standing alone, stuffed into a quilted snowsuit so that his arms project almost perpendicular. In an instant the flushed and quivering face collapses from dread into misery and incredulity and then into a worse terror while at the child's feet a flock of pigeons, oily as rats against the paving stones, circles and darts for crumbs. Separated from her besieged child by these birds and oblivious to the hideous drama from which a life-time of mistrust seems likely to follow, an American mother calls robustly, "Come on, Phil. Come with me."

Prospective Christmas visitors should know that winters are often mild in Venice, like the one just past, but they can turn bitter for days at a time, so that ice sparkles on the lagoon, and on cold mornings from a window on the Grand Canal one may see blocks of ice drifting by. Depending on the vagaries of the moon, Venice can also flood in winter for a day or two at a time, as it did just before this past Christmas when the Piazza was twelve feet under water on December 22. At such times gondolas may float to the doors of the Cathedral, though the more usual transit is by way of temporary catwalks called passerelle that are stored between floods on the pedestrian ways like bare banquet tables or lifeboats. But the fleeting inconvenience of the acqua alta is trivial compared to the invigorating tranquility of a Venetian Christmas when one's main excitement is craning the neck and narrowing the eyes to make out a Tintoretto in the fading light or climbing to the portico above the Cathedral's great doors to see the bronze horses, now safe from the corrosive air in a small room under the northernmost dome.

With the theaters closed for the season, evenings are over by the time one finishes dinner. The holiday parties to which visitors are likely to be invited tend to be joyless and stiff. The rich have gone elsewhere. Vespers at the Cathedral provides the main, perhaps the only, New Year festivity. A cheerful priest, not young but with the face of a boy, keeps time with two erect fingers like matched metronome as he sings the service, waggling his head in time to the music as a quartet of ancients, barely ambulatory in their sumptuous robes, chant in the choir behind him under the great gold and jeweled altar screen. The listeners are transients, their origin betrayed by their guidebooks—Venedig, Venise, Venezia.

In summertime, one can spend most of a day on Torcello, the all but desert island at the northern edge of the lagoon where the first settlers of Venice established themselves a thousand years ago, driven to their watery refuge by invaders from the north. But in winter Torcello's ninth-century basilica is likely to close or be dark by noon, and visitors will be disappointed in their desire to see the great God-bearing Madonna with the eyes of Byzantine eyes at the Doomsday mosaic across the nave with its snake and ancient eyes, barely ambulatory in their sumptuous robes, chant in the choir behind him under the great gold and jeweled altar screen. The listeners are transients, their origin betrayed by their guidebooks—Venedig, Venise, Venezia.
to be exploring the lagoon, one goes for lunch instead to Burano, the island of lacemakers and fishermen, with its painted houses of red and yellow, orange and blue. Burano is only a short ride by boat from Torcello and in summer its restaurants—among the best in Venice—are likely to be overlooked in favor of Torcello’s more glamorous arrangements. Though Burano is hardly more than a village, its inhabitants are said to speak in five distinct accents—the remnant of a polyglot past. The women sell lace to tourists from their shops on the Piazza Galuppi, dropping the remnant of a polyglot past. The restaurants, on the other hand, have no trouble attracting customers for their grilled fish fresh from the lagoon, their pasta laden with squid or mussels, their sardines and eels and their version of tiramisù, the ubiquitous Venetian custard dessert, probably a relic of Austro-Hungarian hegemony, for its fussiness seems out of keeping with the simplicity of the Venetian menu.

The vivid, almost Caribbean look of Burano softens in the early winter sunset and the painted houses along the narrow canals convey a poignant domesticity that is positively enveloping. Through a lace curtain, caught by the breeze at an open window at street level, a young man can be seen, leaning back in his chair before a music stand, practicing complex scales on his clarinet as the magenta sky reflected in the canal turns dark.

In summertime, 150,000 tourists a day cross the jammed causeway that connects Venice to the mainland, but in wintertime the traffic is light and the swift passage by car to Terra Firma is like awakening in a strange room. By car it is only an hour or so to Padua on the old road along the Brenta Canal, where Palladio built his summer palaces for rich Venetians; and from Padua the trip to Verona, with its promise of truffle tart at the Twelve Apostles, is only a half hour on the autostrada. In Padua, Giotto’s Scrovegni Chapel is empty except for a dozen or so English tourists whose sententious leader describes the frescoes as if he had memorized the passage in Hugh Honour’s guide to Venice and the Veneto. “Early in the fourteenth century Scrovegni commissioned the chapel and ordered the frescoes to atone for his father’s having been a moneylender,” the Englishman recites, pointing to the panel over the entrance where the usurers are tied to bags of money. “You see how vivid these human figures are for the fourteenth century: how dramatic—how human—their expressions are; how three-dimensional. It would take Venice a century and a half to learn these humanistic techniques,” he goes on. Giotto was anticipating the Renaissance, as Dante would also do, while the Venetian painters with their flat Byzantine icons were still in the Middle Ages, still tied to the East where individual lives didn’t count for much. “By the beginning of the fourteenth century,” he continues, departing now from Honour’s text, “history had begun to move westward and would soon leave Venice behind just as the New York painters after the war left Paris behind.”

How presumptuous of him, I thought, to believe that history moves like the sun from east to west, shining now on this city and then on the one beyond. But he had a point. On the eve of its farthest imperial reach Venice had already spawned its successors to the west and was probably bound even then to end up a Disneyland for romantic valetudinarians, who would one day subside along with their treasured city into the lagoon.

A few days later I was reminded of this Englishman’s brutal theory of history’s westward progress as Arrigo Cipriani, the proprietor of Harry’s Bar, showed me the school he is building in Venice to train cadres of pastry chefs and establish them across Italy all the way to Milan and perhaps beyond in little cafés spun off from Harry’s itself. His idea, probably as old as Venice itself, was, like the Englishman’s, that the future belongs to the West, but if this is true, then the converse—that history belongs to the East—is perhaps also true, which may be why Henry James, among so many others of his kind, thought of Venice as a domestic place, as home.
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CHINTZ CHARMING

From Mrs. Pepys to Mrs. Parish, smart decorators have known there’s no better way to brighten a room than with cotton prints

By Mark Hampton

The other day, I was discussing some schemes for the redecoration of a room with an English acquaintance and she hit me with one of those remarks calculated to put you immediately on the defensive. “Only Americans use chintz in grand houses,” she said. “In England, chintz is strictly for cottages.” My Anglophilia and its attendant affectations are a constant source of annoyance to my family; my children cringe when I say “loo” or “drawing room.” Nevertheless, I am a compleat Anglophile, and it is understandable that I bridled at the chintz accusation. It was like being caught eating my salad with the fish fork, and it is really wounding when the accusation is simply wrong.

Chintz is a word of many odd connotations, some of which are negative—need one point out the epithet “chintzy”? The word itself originally meant a sort of printed Indian cotton. It is, in fact, derived from the Hindu word chint. In the seventeenth century, Mrs. Pepys had a study lined with it. In the eighteenth century, clothes as well as furnishings were made of chintz. By the early nineteenth century, it had gained enough status to be used in the so-called best rooms of the house. Still, to a large number of people today, chintz is a material that should be confined to bedrooms or small sitting rooms or, to people like my English friend, to cottages. Cottages, indeed! All you have to do is look at any number of great English houses to see that they are full of rooms with chintz curtains and chintz-covered furniture.

There is, for instance, a marvelous sitting room at Penshurst Place that typifies the sort of room we all mean when we talk about the “English Country House Style.” The manor itself is fourteenth century. The room in question was gothicized in the early nineteenth century by Biagio Rebecca, and the decoration seems to have been going on ever since. The ceiling is mock Tudor. The chandelier is Louis XV, the paintings are Dutch and Italian. There is an enormous George I red-and-gold églomisé mirror, and the sofas are covered in, of all things, chintz. Castle Howard and Chatsworth are full of ravishing rooms with tremendous chintz curtains and furniture, some from the Regency period and some decorated in this century. Desmond Guinness’s Leixlip Castle near Dublin has yards of chintz in practically every room. In short, chintz has been around for a long time. If it was used originally as a poor substitute for finer materials, that was long, long ago. For many years, it has been used for its own special appeal.

Part of the charm of using cotton chintz in a grand room is treating it as though it were a material of great value, trimming curtains, for example, with fringe and rosettes and cording that one would more often reserve for far richer materials. The effect, although appropriate to the scale and ornamentation of important rooms, is a great deal less serious than what you would achieve by using damasks and velvets and brocades, and avoiding too much seriousness is a means of arriving at what to many of us is a desirable quality of informality and coziness, especially when we are decorating on a large scale. As Geoffrey Bennison said to me recently, “Why not be cozy?” State Rooms, for the most part, are not terribly cozy or terribly useful. The very fact that they were not used much accounts for their having survived as often as they have through history. The really interesting rooms, and the really comfortable rooms, are the ones that are lived in, and those are the rooms that wear out and are lost to us.

The London firm of Colefax and Denning & Fourcade used one chintz for the lower walls, another for seating.
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In everything, you want to understate; don’t do everything to the last detail. Let other people’s imagination work. Many rooms have been spoiled because people don’t know when to stop.”

The luxury of Mrs. Lancaster’s rooms may not look understated to our eyes, but in fact they exude a sense of comfort and fresh color that belies their true grandeur. They are incredibly inviting, and they are understated, given their context. Chintz, of course, is one of the means used to achieve this understatement. It is very pretty, it is not intimidating, and it has colorfulness that is always refreshing.

Understatement can be a euphemi-ism for simply not having enough of whatever it takes to make a thing look finished or as good as it should. But properly handled, the elusive technique of understatement in decorating enhances the offhand mood that makes a room welcoming. As a friend of mine once said, “I hate a room where the only mistake in it is me.”

American decorators, like their English counterparts, have leaned on the use of chintz to accomplish a welcoming atmosphere for many decades. The stories of Elsie de Wolfe and all the chintz she used at the old Colony Club are by now legendary. Rose Cumming, whose memory still lives on in the shop that bears her name, is also remembered for the delicious hand-blocked chintzes that she recolored and carried in her shops on Madison Avenue and Park Avenue. Her house on West 53rd Street had the prettiest chintz bedroom in the world, filled with giant hol-hocks in shades of blue and mauve.

Dorothy Draper made cabbage roses printed on chintz her trademark. In Ben Sonnenberg’s house on Gramercy Park—a house that was an unparallel-lest feast for the eyes—Mrs. Draper created a screening room/party room with red flocked stripes on the walls and rose-covered chintz chairs by the dozen that made you never want to go home. Ruby Ross Wood, Marian Hall, Eleanor Brown—they all used chintz wherever and whenever they felt like it.

More recently, Sister Parish has been the torchbearer for the sort of decoration that is so deeply rooted in the traditions of grand English houses. Mrs. Parish, whose friendship with Mrs. Lancaster and Mr. Fowler goes back over forty years, was even, for a brief time after the Second World War, affiliated with the London firm. Her rooms with their lavish use of chintzes have had an enormous effect on an entire generation of American decorators, who have been inspired to return to the English sources for further instruction and inspiration. One of the many lessons to be learned from Mrs. Parish’s rooms is that by using chintz in place of richer, more ponder-ous materials, you are able to use more elaborate pieces of furniture without sacrificing the desired effect of inviting warmth. Gilded furniture, which symbolizes stifling formality to many people, takes on an entirely different mood when combined with chintz. If not humble, it at least assumes a degree of modesty that makes it seem appropri-ate in everyday spaces.

In a funny way, the English Country House style is all a game of addition and subtraction. In a really grand room, you have to subtract in order to make it comfortable. In rooms with less important architecture, you have to add in order to arrive at that pleasant degree of richness. Whether you are
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toning down overly formidable architecture with simple furniture, or bolstering prosaic architecture with fancy furniture, the perfect leavening agent is chintz. Antique carpets, whether needlepoint or any of the large category of loomed rugs, seem fresher when there is some light-hearted chintz nearby. And, of course, the possibilities of mixing in spots of color are limitless given the broad palette that makes up most chintz colorings. Still, there are no set formulas. You can always experiment.

We have all seen rooms with one chintz slipcover in the midst of furniture covered in more sober materials and that one casual touch breaks the seriousness of the whole scheme. In other rooms, a few such casual pieces of furniture and some pillows may be all that is required. Elsewhere, chintz can be confined to the windows, surrounding the room with a uniform pattern. Finally, the entire room can be covered in it, including the walls. Leaf through any book of room designs from the Regency period and you will find the most extreme and enchanting proposals for tented rooms or draped rooms or any number of extravagant plans for the use of chintz—not by the yard but by the mile.

In the showrooms of Brunschwig & Fils, Clarence House, Cowtan & Tout, Rose Cumming, and Lee Jofa, to name only five companies known for dealing in chintz, there are some 900 different versions, not counting colorways. It would be fun to know the grand total of all chintzes available. Within the genre, there are types and colorways to suit every mood and every need. Some are large-scale and imposing and clearly date back to loftier eras of decoration. Some are small-scale and can be used for less demanding roles, including lining curtains or covering backs of pillows or small chairs. There are designs that are eighteenth-century rococo and Neoclassical. Victorian chintzes, typical of that endless span of time, can be Gothic, or bucolic with dogs and wild boars, or geometric, or saccharine with moss roses—the works. The influence of Chinese silks and wallpapers is constant in every period. Occasionally, detailed brocade patterns are translated into chintz designs down to the last leaf and tendril. I cannot think of a single period of decoration that has not provided us with its corresponding chintzes. There are even Art Deco patterns that remind one of Clarice Cliff ceramics.

On top of this mountainous supply, there are additional ways to achieve certain effects. If the glaze is stiff, a criticism I sometimes hear, any place that does preshrinking can simply wash it off. This is particularly helpful if you are trying to redo part of an existing room but not all of it and do not want the new piece or pieces to stand out. Also, if the background color is too light or too sharp, a good dyer can correct that with a tea-colored dye. This, of course, also washes off the glaze. I suppose some people are still intrepid enough to do the dipping in tea themselves, if the yardage is small.

Then there is always the question of quilting, a practice I avoid. I am reminded of those Connecticut farmhouses in forties movies (Connecticut was, of course, on the back lot at MGM), with their huge bow windows, fieldstone chimneys, and white, shaggy carpets. I believe the living room was always sunken, and there were double doors everywhere with Loretta Young or Joan Crawford floating through them. Anyway, the furniture in those rooms was always puffy, quilted chintz. Perhaps for that reason, I always associate quilting with rooms that belong in make-believe country houses. (Does the Duchess of Devonshire quilt her chintz? I don’t think so.) Quilted materials certainly become more bulky and less flexible.

One of the original reasons for the popularity of chintz must be the fact that it was once so economical. The prices of today’s versions of chintz prevent me from characterizing it as a particularly thrifty substitute for something else. But that is the whole point. It is not a substitute. It is a wonderful, durable, beautiful material. It can be used anywhere. It can be bought anywhere. If the name bothers you, call it glazed printed cotton. But never accuse it of being out of place.
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BIG AND GLOSSY

Some highly visible new books in the field of art history
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JACOPO BELLINI: THE LOUVRE ALBUM
OF DRAWINGS
Introduction by Bernhard Degenhart and
Annegret Schmitt
George Braziller, 148 pp., $80

THE GOLDEN AGE—DUTCH PAINTERS
OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
by Bob Haak
Harry N. Abrams, 536 pp., $65

VICTORIAN PAINTERS
by Jeremy Maas
Abbeville Press, 272 pp., $49.95

AMERICAN IMPRESSIONISM
by William H. Gerdts
Abbeville Press, 336 pp., $85

MATISSE
by Pierre Schneider; translated by Michael
Taylor and Bridget Stevens Romer
Rizzoli International, 752 pp., $95

The two splendid albums of drawings—now in London and Paris—compiled in the middle years of the fifteenth century by the Venetian artist Jacopo Bellini are among the most mysterious works that have come down to us from the Italian Renaissance, for they fulfill no discernible function. They are not related to any known paintings by Jacopo Bellini himself or by his greater sons Giovanni and Gentile; nor do they provide records of architectural details, animals, and so on to serve as models for other artists: for this reason the title of “sketchbook” which is often given to them is entirely misleading. Most of the drawings are complete compositions of secular or religious subjects, arranged in no very obvious sequence, but they often contain the most inexplicable and haunting features. It is now generally (but not wholly persuasively) believed that the volumes were intended to constitute finished works of art in their own right. Be that as it may, the present facsimile edition of the Paris album—which because of its fragile condition is inaccessible to all but a very restricted number of scholars—makes a book of quite extraordinary appeal, as well as usefulness—and the usefulness is enhanced by a learned, if somewhat austere, presentation by the two leading authorities in the field.

Those peasants carousing in taverns or women going to market, though easily accessible in art galleries throughout the world, are (we now know) also much more mysterious than we used to think, and Bob Haak’s very richly illustrated survey of seventeenth-century Dutch painting is probably the first general account to make known to a potentially wide public the substance of many heated controversies that have recently been enlivening scholarship in this once-placid field. These concern the degree to which exaggerated emphasis has been placed on that “home-
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ly, bourgeois realism’ which has always enthralled lovers of Dutch art. In the first place, it has been argued, there was far more (and far better) grand historical, allegorical, and mythological painting than has usually been acknowledged; and, in the second place, what has seemed like realism for its own sake (as in the nineteenth-century concept of the term) was usually intended to be a form of half-disguised moralizing (warnings against lechery, greed, drunkenness, and so on), whose imagery was often drawn from arcane emblem books, popular literature, punning, and other sources with which the ordinary art lover is hardly very familiar. Haak takes a balanced line on both issues, and although his comments on individual pictures are not very exciting the extraordinary riches to be found in his book (which has an extensive bibliography) make it both useful and attractive.

To make a very convincing case for the merits of English and American nineteenth-century art (even when not judging them by the standards of the Italian Renaissance and the Dutch Seventeenth Century) is not easy, except as regards a very few, very familiar names. Jeremy Maas’s book was first published in England a few years ago and cannot therefore take into account the huge mass of material that has appeared since then (some of the most interesting is due to his own subsequent researches). His well-illustrated book nonetheless includes many attractive (and many more bizarre) pictures by minor artists, often in private collections; and the arrangement by themes (fairy painters, the effects of photography, and so on) enables him to break away from the more conventional and boring type of art history and to provide observations which will intrigue social-, psycho-, and other historians.

The quality of the best American Impressionist painters is far superior to almost all equivalent English painting of the period, but it would surely be difficult to deny that, apart from local piety, one of the main satisfactions to be derived from Professor Gerdts’s very full and well-illustrated discussion of their work comes from observing the varying degrees of intelligence, imagination, and success with which they absorbed French examples. Much of the English painting to be found in Maas’s book is so exceedingly “provincial” that it has acquired the distinction of eccentricity. American painters showed themselves far more receptive to the best European art, but—with only a few outstanding exceptions—their own paintings constantly recall the superior models from whom they sought their inspiration.

With Matisse we return to Paris itself. Pierre Schneider’s very long book devoted to him is neither a strict biography nor an orthodox monograph, though it contains a vast amount of material about both his life and works. Much of it consists of meditation—sometimes of a very personal kind—on the nature of his paintings. Thus of La Danse and La Musique he comments (of course among much else) that “it is in my own response that I must try to find the key to them. They grip me, they lift me off my feet. I am dazzled by these two paintings, almost blinded.” On occasions this approach serves the valuable purpose (so often ignored by art historians) of reminding us that paintings should indeed grip the viewer. There are times, however, when the attempt to understand (and to explain) the nature of Matisse’s art leads to a statement such as the following, which is surely much more confusing than helpful: “Thus, in elaborating a picture, Matisse called on not one but two principles: the law of contradiction and the law of repetition. A picture is not read as A/B, C/D, E/F, etc., but as A/B, A'/B', A''/B'', and so on.” Fortunately the 880 illustrations, of which 230 are in color, allow us (if we choose or have the capacity) to judge the value of such statements for ourselves, and this—combined with Schneider’s wide and deep knowledge of this greatest of twentieth-century painters—makes the book a genuinely desirable one.

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For the gardener with a love of the past or an appetite for the unusual there is nothing more satisfying, more absorbing than collecting antique flowers. These survivors from another age share many of the virtues of other types of antiques; like a Chippendale chair or a Ming vase they are an expression of an aesthetic very different from our own, and their distinctive beauty and grace make them truly irreplaceable. They also provide an immediate, living link with the past. Those who plant an Autumn Damask Rose (Rosa damascena bifera) in their garden, for instance, can savor the same perfumed pink blossoms that delighted the Roman poet Vergil almost two thousand years ago, while a bed of the original Sweet Williams will still display the simple charm that it did in the day of their admirer and namesake, William Shakespeare. As with any antiques, however, locating these old-fashioned flowers may require extraordinary persistence and luck, and establishing the authenticity of your finds can involve a degree of connoisseurship worthy of a Berenson or Duveen.

Having chosen a period or a type of flower that intrigues you the first step will be to familiarize yourself with all the available literature. This pursuit may well lead you into unexpected paths; my own work in restoring a turn-of-the-century estate, for example, led to long hours of poring over dusty, faded nursery catalogues in the attempt to discover just what flowers the architect had at his disposal, and I have since found these colorful relics to be a useful standby in my plant-collecting activities. Léonie Bell, an accomplished plant illustrator and garden writer who is also an expert on the subject of antique roses, has found it necessary in the course of her work to become thoroughly conversant with nineteenth-century rose growing manuals. Prince’s Manual of Roses, for example, which was first published in 1846, is an invaluable source since William Prince, a famous New York nurseryman, was able to describe some nine hundred varieties from personal experience, and his descriptions have helped in the identification of many an old rose. Nor is the conscientious collector satisfied with a single source of information, no matter how instructive. Peter Hatch, the horticulturist who is restoring Thomas Jefferson’s garden at Monticello, has had the rare good fortune to have at his disposal a detailed journal which the founding father kept of his activities in the garden. Nevertheless he is still supplementing this with material gleaned from other sources such as Curtis’s Botanical Magazine, an illustrated plant journal of that era.

Sometimes the would-be plant-collector may find the documentary evidence very difficult to interpret. Frank Anderson, a specialist on the garden plants of the Middle Ages, has found the illustrated herbals of that period to be a rich mine of information, but to understand them he had to teach himself to read medieval Latin and to decipher the hieroglyphic-like scripts of the medieval copyists. Of course, to someone with a scholarly turn of mind the research can prove as rewarding as the plants. Mr. Anderson, for instance,
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Clary sage in the garden at The Cloisters in New York City.

became so fascinated by the early her- bals that he has since written a number of books about them.

The art of the period can also pro- vide vital clues about the garden flowers of remote ages. Peter Hatch knew from reading an account of a visit to Jefferson's White House that the President was an enthusiastic grower of ger- aniums, but the horticulturist was not certain just which types were available in the United States at that early date. Hatch found the beginning of an an- swer, though, in a painting that dated to 1801: Rembrandt Peale's portrait of his brother Rubens posed with a ger- anium. The painting is very realistic, so carefully observed, in fact, that it is possible to determine that Rubens's plant was a specimen of *Pelargonium inquinans*. Accordingly, this flower was awarded a spot in the Monticello garden. An even more dramatic exam- ple of the use of art is to be found in the garden that horticulturist Susan Leach has created at The Cloisters, New York's museum of medieval art. To a great extent she has let the collection of the museum itself dictate her choice of plants. Floral motifs from architectural ornamentation, illuminated manu- scripts, paintings, even tapestries have been painstakingly analyzed and have yielded a rich harvest of information about the flowers that would have been found around the castles, churches,
That magical visitor would surely know the children had been good for goodness' sake. For they had left him a most special gift — a sampling of Godiva® chocolates. Tender morsels all filled with dreams, each resplendent in its golden Belgian heritage. It's no wonder every luxurious gift of Godiva chocolates is indeed a tribute to the fantasy of Christmas.
Forgeries, unfortunately, are just as common among the old-fashioned flowers as they are among any other class of antiques and monasteries of medieval Europe.

Having finally determined the exact species and varieties he wants to add to his collection, the antique-plant enthusiast is immediately presented with a new and equally challenging problem: locating a source of this superannuated nursery stock. Unfortunately, commercial nurseries exist to earn a profit, and as soon as a particular plant falls from fashion it is most often summarily dismissed from their catalogues. There are, however, a few delightful exceptions. Old-fashioned roses, in particular, have attracted a fervent band of partisans whose support has led to the creation of a number of small, specialized family-owned nurseries. Very often botanical gardens and horticultural societies preserve stocks of rare and unfashionable plants and sometimes the seeds of antique varieties can be obtained from them. Occasionally, though, collectors must go to extreme lengths to secure a particularly prized specimen. Deborah Peterson, a New York City garden designer, wanted a frankincense tree for a Biblical garden that she was creating at a synagogue, but to her dismay she found that no nursery in this country stocked them. Even worse, it developed that all the countries to which frankincense is native are hostile to the United States. Eventually, however, she was able to persuade a German friend, a soap manufacturer, to secure a supply of frankincense trees on the pretense that he needed them to produce perfumes for his soaps and relay them to her.

Without a doubt the most enjoyable way to acquire antique flowers is to collect them yourself. Just as the devotee of antique furniture can never pass a barn without wondering what forgotten treasures it contains, so do I thrill at the sight of an abandoned garden. I found my favorite old rose, a beautiful carmine-pink rugosa, struggling up through the weeds around an old Vermont farmhouse. I took half-a-dozen cuttings, only one of which took root, but this is now a thriving, sturdy bush, the pride of my garden. I never have been sure, though, whether I love this rose so much for its intrinsic beauty or for the memories it revives of that fresh spring morning in Vermont.

Forgeries, unfortunately, are just as common among the old-fashioned flowers as they are among any other class of antiques. These floral forgeries are not usually deliberate deceptions; more often they are just the result of the nurseryman's lack of familiarity with these uncommon plants. Nevertheless, this lack of malice does not make the deception any less annoying, especially since nurserymen generally resist correction. In the course of her search for the Musk Rose, a deliciously fragrant flower which has delighted gardeners since ancient times, Léonie Bell discovered the shrub advertised by English growers as the Musk Rose was not, in fact, the original type. What they were selling was an improved variety differing in many respects from the genuine article. She was able to prove this conclusively by references to the descriptions of two famous seventeenth-century plantsmen, John Gerard and John Parkinson. Yet despite all the evidence she was able to muster, it was a full eight years before her view was accepted and the original was reinstated in its rightful place.

Given these difficulties, why do collectors persist? In part, because they enjoy the challenge. "The quest," as Peter Hatch terms it, the search for these rarities, can become addictive. The patient assembly of evidence, piece by piece, is as fascinating as a detective story and the thrill that greets success is unique. Collectors also persist because the rescue of these plants is worth any amount of trouble. These floral antiques are indeed priceless. They are our living horticultural heritage.
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The Angel Tree by Linn Howard and Mary Jane Pool documents Loretta Hines Howard’s lifelong passion for eighteenth-century Neapolitan Nativity figures.

According to Saint Luke, it was an angel who told Mary she would give birth to the Infant King. At The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the joy of that Nativity is celebrated each year with a special exhibit of the eighteenth-century Neapolitan crèche figures that make up the Loretta Hines Howard Collection—a giant blue spruce encrusted with man’s earthly image of angels and encircled with colorful figures enacting the wondrous events at the manger.

The small crèche figures (the tallest reaches no more than twenty inches) number nearly two hundred. Each one is a treasured work of art. Their flexible bodies are made of hemp, tow, and wire, their arms and legs of beautifully carved wood. Their heads, exquisitely sculpted of terra cotta, are polychromed, in celestial hues or the colors of all the peoples of the earth. They pose and gesture in expectation and adoration. All turn toward the Babe in a setting of columns probably inspired by those of the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Roman forum—a surprising placement, meant to dramatize the triumph of Christianity over paganism.

To see the crèche and tree in the Metropolitan’s Medieval Sculpture Hall, in front of the Spanish Choir Screen from the Cathedral of Valladolid, is to experience all the fantasy and realism, mysticism and earthiness, grandeur and intimacy that the Christmas season inspires.

Re-creating the happenings at the crib, or presepio, as it is called in Naples, is one of the most tender and enduring Christmas traditions. There are many accounts of early re-creations of the Nativity in crèche form in church
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writings and the publications of art historians. And there is a language to be learned. The expression “rocking the child” describes a religious practice in the Middle Ages of rocking a wooden infant in a cradle. The term “Bethlehem” refers to a group of stationary figures presented in a framed case. “Crèche,” now a universal term, is a French word from the low Latin *cripia*, which means crib. In German crèche is *Krippe*, in Spanish, *pesebre*. In Italian a three-dimensional, realistic depiction of the scene at the manger is a *presepio*. An intimate grouping of the Holy Family is often called a *mistero*.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, constructing and displaying Christmas creches was an important devotional practice of the Jesuits, which they took with them to the far corners of the world. Jesuit missionaries in Canada wrote in 1642 that their Christmas crèches were a great success with the American Indians. By the eighteenth century, the passion for *presepi* had spread from the churches into houses and palaces. Nesta de Robeck, in *The Christmas Presepio in Italy* (Florence, 1934), paints a lively picture of presepio fervor in Naples at this time: “... It is said that four hundred Neapolitan churches annually set up their Presepio and many private houses too had their own ‘Bethlehem’ on which the owners spent vast sums of money, encouraged to do so by a famous preacher, Padre Rocco, who made the Presepio his particular object of devotion. His influence was enormous... Advent was spent in a frenzy of preparation and Christmas became a social event with people rushing from house to house, church to church, visiting, admiring, criticising each other’s Bethlehem. Often the Presepio occupied the whole floor of a house, sometimes even the whole house, different scenes being represented in different rooms and concerts of appropriate Nativity music held in honour of our distinguished guest.”

It was the great beauty and inspirational quality of eighteenth-century Neapolitan crèche figures that led Loretta
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Howard to start her collection. Her eye for antiques and her interest in religious art began early, on family trips to museums and churches in Europe. In 1924, just before her marriage to Howell Howard, her mother found a small eighteenth-century Neapolitan crèche at Marshall Field's in Chicago and gave it to the bride for her new home in Dayton, Ohio. During her European honeymoon she looked for figures to add to the crèche and began the collecting that would become an important and continuing focus of her life.

Through the years Loretta Howard searched for crèches to add to her collection and to give to family and friends. In 1949 she gave a noble crèche of eighty figures with architectural background to the Benedictine monastery of Regina Laudis, in Connecticut. The crèche had been made for Victor Amadeus, the King of Sardinia, and was presented to him in 1720, the year of his coronation. In 1962 Mrs. Howard was invited by President and Mrs. Kennedy to arrange a crèche at the White House, and she continued to work with the White House throughout several administrations. In 1972 she gave a particularly splendid crèche to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, in memory of her friend Helen Northrup Knox.

A highlight of Loretta Howard's collection, a crèche called "The Adoration of Angels," was exhibited in Paris in 1952 and brought to her attention by Francis Henry Taylor, who was then director of the Metropolitan Museum. The owner of the "Adoration" was Eugenio Catello, a noted collector in Naples with whom Mrs. Howard had already been corresponding for several years, after having been introduced by the noted art historian Dr. Rudolf Berliner. This crèche contained figures of the finest quality—thirty angels of exceptional beauty made it very desirable. Following three years of letters back and forth, the sale of the "Adoration," which represented three generations of Catello family collecting, was arranged.

Through their correspondence Loretta Howard had become very attached to Eugenio Catello, and she arranged a visit to Naples just to see him. She wrote: "I was met by an interpreter as I spoke no Italian. He took me to Mr. Catello's house where I was..."
It is said that four hundred Neapolitan churches annually set up their Presepio
greeted by two very serious young men and a lovely young woman, all in deep mourning. They told me they were Mr. Catello's children and that he had just died. I was very shocked and quite spontaneously asked what had caused his death. They told me, 'joy!' I thought there must be some misunderstanding in the language, so I asked how that could be, and they told me this tale. Some years before, Mr. Catello's father had sold a magnificent creche to the artist Sert. Mr. Catello heard that Sert was dead so he wrote to his widow in Paris to see if he could buy back the creche. He never heard from her and then found out that she, too, had died. He was determined to locate the creche. With the greatest difficulty, he finally found it and discovered it was in perfect condition as it had never been unpacked. He was so overcome with joy, he died. Many of the figures added to the Metropolitan creche are from this collection.

When the "Adoration" arrived from Italy in 1955 without a traditional architectural background, Loretta Howard devised a way to put the figures into the family Christmas tree with angels swirling up to the top star. The effect was spectacular and was greatly admired. Robert Hale, her teacher at the Art Students League and a curator at the Metropolitan Museum, suggested to James Rorimer, the director, that he ask Loretta Howard to re-create her angel tree at the Museum. And so she did, in 1957 and 1958. After similar exhibitions at the Albright Gallery in Buffalo in 1962 and 1963, and at the Detroit Institute of Art in 1964, she gave the "Adoration" to the Metropolitan for its permanent collection. In 1965 she assembled the first glorious display, which has delighted and inspired millions of visitors. It is the way in which Loretta Howard combined the Neapolitan Nativity with the Northern European Christmas tree—towering tree and encircling figures, glowing lights and joyous music—that makes it a work of art pleasing to the spirit and the senses.

In an article about the collection published shortly thereafter, Olga Raggio, Chairman of the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan, says: "Stylistic comparisons with many signed figures in the collections of Naples and in a documented creche in the Bavarian National Museum in Munich suggest that about half of the Howard angels should be credited to the best late-eighteenth-century masters: Giuseppe Sammartino (1720–1793), well-known for his monumental sculptures in marble and in stucco, his pupils Salvatore di Franco, Giuseppe Gori, and Angelo Viva, and Lorenzo Mosca (d. 1789), who was employed at the Royal Porcelain Factory at Capodimonte and as stage director of the Royal Christmas Crib.

"A sure theatrical instinct presided over the creation of a Neapolitan Christmas creche. The world of the exotic was counterbalanced by the more homely world of humble shepherds and simple folk, who act out their emotions and speak the language of the heart. We see some of the shepherds, clad in rough sheepskin clothes, awakened from their sleep by the Angel of the Lord, dazzled by the light that suddenly breaks through the night or bemused by the celestial music that fills the heavens, their faces reflecting their feelings with pulsating vitality and truth. Nothing is conventional here, and the eighteenth century has hardly left us more lively and natural portraits than these. Academically trained artists, sometimes well-known as porcelaine modelers—like Francesco Celebrano, to whom, among others, figures like these are often attributed—have abandoned here the formulas of the 'great art' in an effort to achieve that natural expression that was much sought after in Christmas crib figures. The magic of the theater and the warmth of simple, sincere emotions are still today the most endearing qualities of a Neapolitan crèche."
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A GIFT TO A GARDEN

"At Christmas I
no more desire a rose
Than wish a snow in
May's newfangled mirth;
But like of each thing that
in season grows...."

Since before Shakespeare's
time a classical Italian
garden has been in season
all year long. At
Villa Gamberaia near
Florence, nature exposes
the garden's clipped
green beauty with a rare
ornamental snow

PHOTOGRAPH BY BALTHAZAR KORAB
One winter evening in the reign of Louis XV... "The palace was illuminated inside and out... time went on and still no sign of the King. At last... a very curious procession lurched blindly into the ballroom... yew trees, clipped like those in the garden outside... the King... for once... would be unrecognizable..."
Many years after topiary guests attended the famous Ball of the Clipped Yew Trees, an owl, a rabbit, and a deer stepped from their American garden to a quieter affair....
Fruit, garlands, and flowers by José Vilela; topiaries executed by 16th Century Topiaries, Newport; ballroom designed by Sir Charles Allom was redesigned by Arnold Copper for Beechwood at Scarborough, New York. Savonnerie carpet, Dildarian; 17th-century table, l'Antiquaire & The Connoisseur; Régence armchairs, Didier Aaron; wooden columns with bronze urns, Price Glover; William and Mary dining chairs, French & Co.; American portraits, Hirschl & Adler; 18th-century English consoles, commodes, and Russian silver, Schlesch & Garza; 18th-century knife urns, Stair & Co.; Georgian silver candlesticks, goblets, wine coasters, decanters, and vermeil cutlery, James Robinson. Tea table: 18th-century silver beaker, bell, and Victorian cake stand, Vito Giallo Antiques.
A CELEBRATION OF MYSTERY
In an extraordinary crèche on the island of Mallorca, man’s everyday activities meld with the Child’s glorious birth

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACQUES DIRAND
Extolling the miracle with a crèche meant, abov
expressing profound devotion to life itself
Like all the great eighteenth-century Neapolitan crèches, this one belonging to La Fundación Bartolomé March Servera in Palma de Mallorca joyously represents the gathering together of the world itself. Biblical shepherds walk among clearly Neapolitan buyers and sellers of minute produce; pink-cheeked butchers and bakers tend sausages and sweets; Turkish, Moorish, and African Kings ride on elephants, camels, and richly caparisoned horses; and the angel orchestra and choir are augmented by the local bagpiper.
THE MONGIARDINO STYLE

In his own Milan apartment, the master illusionist exploits and celebrates the arts and crafts of decoration

BY JOHN RICHARDSON  PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI
"I'm not a decorator," says Mongiardino, "I'm a creator of ambience, a scene designer, an architect, but not a decorator." Coming as it does from the begetter of some of today's most ornate interiors, this claim might well puzzle people who have not had the good fortune to visit Mongiardino's magical Milanese apartment. For its deliberately délabré patina and nostalgic air would suggest that nothing has changed since the end of the last century. Who indeed could blame a casual visitor for assuming that the present incumbent had inherited the apartment—lock, stock, and barrel—not from his parents but from his grandparents and that a visit from a decorator was, if anything, overdue?

In fact Mongiardino bought the apartment as recently as twenty years ago, whereupon he gutted and, in his capacity as an architect, totally remodeled it. Except for a few modest heirlooms, virtually everything is fake—contrived by the owner. But so cunningly has it all been done that the eye no less than the mind is fooled into perceiving the apartment as a miraculous ottocento survival—cultivated rooms that evoke the period of the Macchiaioli painters. In the circumstances, Mongiardino is quite right to describe himself as "a creator of ambience." Therein lies his artistry.

By way of explanation Mongiardino says that he wanted to re-create the atmosphere of his parents' handsome palazzo. He has certainly succeeded in manipulating the time warp, wafting the visitor back, in imagination, to the illustrious circle of Manzoni, Boito, and Verdi. Mongiardino himself enhances this illusion: with his abundant whiskers he actually resembles Verdi in middle years; he has the same blend of authority and geniality and a grand manner that is all the more attractive for being without artistic pretensions or fashionable airs. No wonder one merchant prince after another—Agnelli, Heinz, Niarchos, Rothschild, Thyssen, to name but a few—has put himself and his treasures into these gifted hands. No wonder Mongiardino is the most sought-after (and least available) exponent of the High Style today.

Deceit is Mongiardino's secret weapon. In this respect his work puts me in mind of Degas's astute observation: "a picture is something that requires as much cunning, trickery, and deceit as the perpetration of a crime." One feels that Mongiardino would rather paint wood to look like wood than have to contend with real appearances. A case in point is the set of large bookcases in the main salon: the kind of Neoclassical furniture favored by early-nineteenth-century cognoscenti. What could be more
A corner of the salon, above, with an Edwardian leather armchair; two Gothic chairs (one authentic, one a copy by Mongiardino) flank one of a set of painted doors (circa 1800) from a house in Brescia. Opposite: Dominating the same end of the salon, a Gothic mirror hangs over a faux marbre fireplace designed by Mongiardino, surrounded by reliquaries.

authentic looking? But—trust (or should one say don’t trust?) Mongiardino—these bookcases turn out to have been conjured out of deal which assistants have stained and painted and patinated. Thanks to Mongiardino’s instinctive understanding of scale and texture and the minutiae of style, his pastiches look more real than the real thing. The same goes for the “eighteenth-century” busts which adorn these “antiques”; they turn out to have been executed twenty rather than two hundred years ago. Don’t, however, attribute this passion for illusion to some kind of hang-up but rather to a preoccupation with the overall aesthetic effect, at the expense (so far as his own apartment is concerned) of museum standards of authenticity or quality!

Working as he does for some of the world’s most prestigious collectors, Mongiardino has become a past master at displaying his clients’ treasures, a past master, above all, at exorcising the museum taint. But for his own surroundings he evidently prefers furniture that evokes a mood or enhances an ensemble to signed pieces that smack of period pedantry. Take, for instance, the set of well-worn leather furniture that surrounds the fireplace in the big room—furniture that Mongiardino’s parents bought in London shortly before the First World War. Hardly the sort of thing one would find in the window of Mallet’s or Aveline, but how perfectly its faded Edwardian swagger—shades of Lutyens and Elgar—harmonizes with the faded Italian swagger that characterizes Mongiardino’s settings for himself. And how characteristic of a man who admits to preferring things that are the worse for wear, to complete this ensemble with a pouf contrived out of matching reddish leather—leather that has been distressed in the same degree and then appliqued with a facsimile of the rusty patchwork that we find in the cur-
In the front hall, this page and opposite, objects mix with empire stool in architectural setting of stucco masonry and trompe-l'oeil coffered ceiling. Obelisk designed by Mongiardino in variety of simulated materials in front of a 17th-century painting from the Genoa palazzo where he grew up.
In Mongiardino’s bedroom, vibrant blue damask wallpaper found in Genoa sets off a 19th-century Genoese portrait of children over bed draped in red velvet. Gouaches of interiors over the bedside table are by Lila de Nobili and bookcase to the left was designed by Mongiardino.
tain (authentically old ones: from a grandmother). And again how characteristic of Mongiardino not to smarten up his parental chairs with a barrage of cushions that "make a statement." Far from gilding the lily, as he did to such good effect at the Rothschilds' Hôtel Lambert, the maestro has been at pains in his own quarters to play things down. Hence all the contrivance that has been lavished on making things look the reverse of contrived.

Whereas most decorators with a fashionable following endeavor to keep the not-so-raw materials of their trade from contaminating their private apartments, Mongiardino makes no bones about wallowing in his work. Evidence of this is everywhere. Samples of stuffs are as likely to be found by a drink tray or on a bedside table as by a drawing board. By the same token the big room has not been devised as a salon for entertaining so much as a study in which to discuss projects and pore over albums and portfolios. Stacks of these cover the surface of the vast table which takes up more than half the area of this vast room—a room that evokes the eighteenth-century rationalism of a cabinet d'amateur while also hinting at the nineteenth-century fantasy of Spalanzani's gallery in the Tales of Hoffman.

One of the most attractive—and incidentally most revealing—features of Mongiardino's rooms is the way he uses the samples, swatches, and sketches involved in his work as decorative elements. The walls of his studio constitute a lexicon of the materials and effects available to him: racks of every kind of tile, silvered panels of lac à la Mecque, fragments of verre églomisé, bits of marble, engravings of nineteenth-century upholstery and furniture, treatments of interiors by his two closest collaborators, Lila de Nobili (a childhood friend) and Emilio Carcano, and much else besides. The various sections are divided from one another by lengths of gilded molding ("made of plastic," says Mongiardino, who enjoys "reinventing old skills in terms of modern technology").

When questioned about the pride he takes in his métier, Mongiardino's enthusiasm never fails him. He sees art in terms of craft, the past in terms of the present, and declares that his dream is to live in a large house where he and his colleagues can work together on all manner of decorative projects, on the revival of dead or dying crafts as well as on the development of new techniques. "Like a medieval guild," says Mongiardino, who regards everything he does, even his own apartment, as "a joint effort for which all must share the credit." This idealism, this lack of worldliness or egotism is closer in spirit to William Morris's Kelmscott than to the Decorators' Building. "Luxe, calme et fantaisie"—to misquote Baudelaire—would seem to be the keynote of Mongiardino's work. If in his apartment the emphasis is more on the calme than the luxe, this can be attributed to the maestro's dislike of self-promotion or pampering. He has aimed at devising a far from luxurious décor that matches his reclusive-poetic temperament rather than one that would advertise his skills or serve as a vitrine for his wares. This high-minded approach is evident in the master bedroom, which is fastidious without being precious—what Berenson called "life-enhancing" without being eye-catching. Note the bold use of a damask-patterned wallpaper of an intense gentian blue. This blue—so difficult to use that cautious designers traditionally fight shy of it—holds the disparate elements of the room together besides engendering a celestial, Ingresque light.

And how touching the guest room is in its simplicity and, that rare quality, family piety. Unlike so many contemporary decorators—not to speak of their clients—who seek at all costs to dissociate themselves from their parents' style (or lack of it), Mongiardino has been at pains to commemorate the joys of his upper-class Genoese childhood. Presided over by a bravura portrait of the maestro's beautiful mother is the suite of 1880s-ish furniture that graced his parents' bedroom. Although big (and, by today's standards, ugly) for the space into which it has been squeezed, this suite "goes" wonderfully well, thanks largely to the way walls, beds, and chairs are covered with the same nineteenth-century floral linen made by Rubelli—a busy little pattern such as Vuillard loved to paint. Bath after bath of tea has given this stuff a look that I can only describe as Jamesian—a look that Visconti might have evoked if he had ever filmed The Portrait of a Lady.

Theatrical? Not really. The fact that Mongiardino has executed some marvellous stage settings (including a memorable Tosca for Covent Garden) manifests itself in his more dramatic interiors. But Mongiardino's theatricality is more a matter of improvisation and above all illusionism. How he delights in metamorphosis for its own sake! Just as a theatrical designer can conjure an ocean out of light projected onto lengths of scrim, Mongiardino transforms Lincrusta into cuir de Cordoue, plastic into porphyry and, for all I know, dross into gold. Most imaginative of all is the set of curtains that he devised for Marie-Hélène de Rothschild's bedroom in the Hôtel Lambert in imitation of a seventeenth-century Herat carpet. These amazingly sumptuous hangings were fabricated out of humble materials like jute and terry cloth, dyed and shaved and appliquéd and subjected to heaven knows what other arcane forms of distressing.

His theatrical sense likewise enables Mongiardino to evoke a wealth of atmos— (Text continued on page 218)
In the salon Mongiardino designed the bookcases and moldings around ceiling. According to Mongiardino, all the furnishings and decorative elements are pastiches made to his design, except for the patchwork curtains from his grandmother’s house.
A portfolio of views in great gardens and along country roads taken this May, a few weeks before his ninetieth birthday, by the great French photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue.

Wisteria, Burford House at Iffley, above, Yew Walk, Sissinghurst Castle, Kent, opposite.
Along the moat, Sissinghurst
How does one travel with a myth? The answer is simple. With Wellington boots, shooting sticks, maxi umbrellas, and an electric heating pad.

When I was told that I was going to have the job of being Jacques Lartigue’s “nanny” during his discovery of English Gardens, I was understandably and suitably thrilled. This ninety-year-old master, who after years of capturing on celluloid changing aspects of French life, the elegant Parisienne, the great artists of the last decades, enchanting children gamboling through the Tuileries, was at last about to open a new leaf in his unending collection of mesmerizing photograph albums: gardens. As I later came to understand his vision a utopian acre of herbaceous border, planted by a fictitious team of Capability Brown, Russell Page, Roberto Burle-Marx, and Gertrude Jekyll, weeded over ten years by invisible hands and then left abandoned to become a riotous galaxy of color, smells, texture, and glory. A secret haven waiting to be discovered by his probing lens.

But first let me describe my traveling companions. Allow me to start with Florette Lartigue: physically a cross between a Memling and Toulouse-Lautrec’s Goulue, the most devoted and loving wife anyone could dream of. Always a thought ahead of her husband, thinking only of his comfort, health, and well-being, his business manager, his muse, interpreter, and public-relations counselor. Next our hero himself: Jacques-Henri Lartigue, one week away from his ninetieth birthday, endowed with a marvelous thatch of snow-white hair, the brightest twinkling blue eyes, the mischievous face of a benign yet enquiring hobbit, a brain like a steel trap, and dressed in the most glorious series of swinging clothes such as Oxford-
 Clematis montana and white lilacs on a Cotswold cottage

shire, Gloucester, and Wiltshire had never seen before. Dapper, that's the word I need. Canary-yellow jeans to match the glorious fields of flowering rape stretching out to the horizon. Five different colors of rainbow-hued jogging shoes. Sweaters knitted and reembroidered by some of his many "admirers" with shooting stars and constellations. The whole image adorned by a camouflage canvas pudding hat, which for some mysterious reason seemed to make him feel he was blending into the countryside and quite invisible.

To aid and abet us, a charming English photographic assistant, Martin Hill, who although he started the trip without a word of French, and was quite rightly in awe of working with Mr. Lartigue, ended up fluent in that language, but I am afraid convinced forever that all the French are mad.

The plotting of this expedition had been quite carefully timed to coincide with riotous beds of peonies, rampant walls of wisteria and clematis, tunnels of laburnum, and all that the glorious English countryside reveals in early June to the admiring botanist. Alas, this was not to be our lot. Easter having passed in the midst of an epic heat wave, Siberia had its revenge and for the next six weeks it was a moot point whether to turn up the central heating, or to prepare for Noah's immediate arrival in view of the drastic rainfall.

All dressed in ski clothes and gun boots but buoyed up by the weatherman's promise of blazing sun to come we splashed our way down to Sissinghurst, thrilling J.L. with enchanting tales of Vita Sackville-West; the charm and elegance of the lovely white garden he was about to see; the perfection of the world-famed herb garden he was
Field of rape between Broadway and Moreton-in-Marsh
A tunnel of trained limes, Hidcote Manor, *above*. The garden known as Delos, Sissinghurst, *below*. 
A rhododendron walk, Bowood, *above.* View to the pillar garden, Hidcote, *below.*
Hosta, wild bluebells, yellow azaleas at Sissinghurst,

above, Opposite. In the Nuttery at Sissinghurst,
sweet woodruff, Helleborus orientalis, Euphorbia robbiae,
and azaleas under the trees.

about to admire. With ankle-deep mud and a permanent battle to "keep the lens dry" we tottered through Kent, Wiltshire, Gloucester, Worcestershire, and Oxfordshire, eternal hope springing in our hearts each evening as we valiantly listened with unending optimism to the weather reports on anticyclones, mass build-ups, and imminent glorious sunshine only to have our hopes dashed again the next day by sopping cotton-wool clouds one could almost touch.

Everyone was so kind and helpful. The Earl of Shelburne let us drive right through the fifty acres that form Bowood's amazing azalea and rhododendron park. From there we drove through a countryside of breath-taking beauty. White flowering hedgerows of hawthorn eight to ten feet high bordered the roads. Late-flowering fruit trees dripped in their sodden orchards, and the wind whistled. A glorious spectacle to behold. When the elements overcame the tripod's strength, Florette was to be seen, a human tripod, clutching her husband around the waist, her cheek laid lovingly against his back, a stalwart buffer that allowed him to stand up in a gale.

And gale there was. Hidcote Manor, gardening's Mecca, was lovely, but alas a glorious green mess, not a flower in sight, one month late because of the weather. We were still searching for the riotous profusion of blooms that Jacques had imagined in his mind. Mr. Treasure's famous clematis were shivering on a sodden wall and Lydney Parte's woodland paths squelched under a booted foot. Sezincote's Oriental water garden longed for an Indian sun and in the Priory at Kemerton the herbaceous border remained stubbornly green.

But myths come through. Dear Jacques rushed toward every ray of timid sun, unthwarted by the worst the elements could offer, and having produced a portrait of an English spring—not as he envisioned it but not untypical—returned to France to celebrate his ninetieth birthday in a galaxy of parties. P.S. He has asked if he can try again in July next year. Bliss. □ By Sheila de Rochambeau
Ancient beech tree in a bluebell wood, Bowood
FRENCH AND IRREVERENT

Tony and Susan Victoria’s apartment in New York benefits from a family passion for whimsical and stylish French eighteenth-century furniture first collected by Tony’s father Frederick Victoria, and now given new life and youth to suit a young family.

BY NANCY RICHARDSON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI

Detail of carved wood curtains, right, that were inspired by an 18th-century theater prop. Next to the curtains is a mirror with its cornice removed and an 18th-century dressed picture. Above: French chinoiserie elements—a polychrome terra-cotta stove flanked by a pair of Venetian chinoiserie figures also in terra cotta—dominate one end of Tony and Susan Victoria’s living room.
Large Regence and Louis XV furniture, sculptural chinoiserie figures, an eclectic mixture of chairs, and an important collection of clocks furnish the salon with grace.
Certain rooms in the Victoria apartment achieve their effect from the quantities of charming and curious objects they contain as well as from a talent Tony Victoria has for treating most furniture as if it too were an art object. Other rooms such as the hall, right and opposite, rely on a cool, simple arrangement. A panel from a Louis XVI boiserie and the cellist's chair below it are the first things you see when you come in the front door. Below: A Regence chair with a miniature chair sitting in it. The little chair was probably a test done by a journeyman about to become a master craftsman.

The old saying goes that it takes the bones of a garden thirty years to mature, and the same thing seems to be true of certain types of living quarters. This is certainly the case with Tony and Susan Victoria, who have just enlarged and rethought a New York apartment that takes its unusual character from a collection of French furniture, clocks, architectural elements, European porcelain and faience, and chinoiserie decorations. The collection was started by Tony's father, Frederick P. Victoria, who before World War II established an antiques business in New York.

Fred Victoria responded to French furniture and objects with an intensity that affected the very nature of his business. It has always been a rule that dealers should not compete with their clients by becoming collectors themselves. But Fred was past worrying about such distinctions. He fell in love with his acquisitions, sometimes bringing them straight home, sometimes taking them into the shop. When things sold he kept track of their whereabouts and bought them back several times over a period of forty years. What attracted him was the decorative and unexpected rather than high-ticket masterpiece. He developed this taste in a little-explored area that formed a link between the two well-established avenues for collectors of French decorative arts: French palace furniture and the friendly rustic pieces known as French Provincial. He called his sort of thing château furniture, which included, besides oversized armoires and stylish but not fancy desks, big architectural bookcases and
A view of the living room and a smaller sitting room beyond, above. To either side of the door between the rooms are a pair of Sicilian 18th-century overdoor panels. They were bought years ago by Fred and Tony Victoria, who enjoyed tracing the various manifestations of the craze for Oriental motifs that fascinated Europeans in the 18th century.

Under the right overdoor is a Sicilian mechanical figure in carved painted wood. Its head, cap, and arms move and its eyes roll with the help of small levers inside the trunk of the figure. Under the other Sicilian panel a miniature table stands on a full-sized one. Against the back of the desk in the foreground is a corner settee with an undulating back probably designed to go with the boiserie of a specific room. A buffet à deux corps, a two-part cabinet, gives an architectural feeling to the smaller room. Above it to the left, a Louis XIV bronze chimerical mask is hung up high so as not to frighten the children.
Tony Victoria likes the voluptuous, curvilinear lines of furniture from the first half of the 18th century such as the Régence bas d’armoire, below. On it Susan Victoria has arranged a still life in which two miniature chairs are objects as much as the faience, clock, and urns. A clock and barometer exemplify what has always delighted the Victorias about French clocks. They are first decorative elements and secondly time pieces. The chinoiserie picture may be German from a pavilion of Augustus Rex. Fred Victoria bought it years ago, sold it to a client, and Tony recently bought it back at a house sale in upstate New York.
The bedroom, left, is filled with both chinoiserie and real Oriental elements placed against walls covered with Bailey Rose, a chintz available through Cowtan & Tout. The commode is black lacquer of an unusual silhouette made in China in the 18th century for the Dutch market. Below: A large trompe-l'oeil painting of a still life in a cupboard is by a Jesuit missionary, Giuseppe Castiglione, who worked in China and is credited with introducing perspective to the K'ang Hsi court.

Opposite: The dining room, with Ashley Victoria sitting on top of a dining table her father had made from two huge sections of parquet de Versailles mounted on the legs from an old billiard table. Next to her is a crystal-and-bronze candelabrum made by Thomire for Catherine the Great's winter palace. Her brother, Freddy, sits in a miniature French chair.

overdoors that had once been part of a boiserie of a country château. He used the overdoors as if they were paintings. He also specialized in faience and porcelain fruit and vegetables where the design was whimsical from its very inception and in the most exotic forms of chinoiserie. He was crazy about curious chairs, and his interest in clocks was practically obsessive. Though the eighteenth century is well known for comfort, Fred's arrangement of his own rooms was done purely for visual pleasure. Model chairs or miniature chairs where often placed in the seats of rare armchairs not only for the delight of that juxtaposition but also to prevent anyone from sitting down.

Tony Victoria grew up in an atmosphere where the obviously precious and the charming find were both treated as treasures. He, too, grew to love clocks, chinoiserie, porcelain vegetables, and chairs of all sorts. When Fred Victoria died a few years ago Tony was already well-established in the business. And recently he has set about reinterpreting his father's taste for a younger generation. At home that meant moving into his father's apartment from his own smaller one in the same landmark building. In the last years of his life, Fred's apartment had become a small museum to which a few friends were invited virtually one at a time. The apartment had almost an antiquarian quality, and it seemed charmingly far from the present. Tony and Susan wanted to open it up. In the big sitting room that meant changing the color of the walls from a

(Text continued on page 218)
FACETS OF PERFECTION

Richard Meier's latest house demonstrates why its architect remains the undisputed master of modern architectural form.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER

Tucked away on a tiny plot surrounded by towering trees in a venerable residential section of Pittsburgh, the Giovannitti house is Richard Meier's latest exploration of the Purist architectural vocabulary that has been the basis of his designs for the past two decades.
Richard Meier has always remained true to the stylistic principles that guided his career at its outset over twenty years ago. Unlike other international architects of the first rank such as James Stirling, Arata Isozaki, or Michael Graves, he has not gone off in radically new directions but rather has continued to mine the classic Modernist vocabulary, finding in it a degree of inspiration and expressiveness that has led to his peerless mastery of the Modernist mode. No one on the current scene can match his flawless proportional sense, but equally impressive is the way in which he continues to refine the economy of his means even as he develops an architecture of greater complexity and richness. Richard Meier never repeats himself, and he continues to discover new and eloquent ways of using a formal language that some say has become defunct.

Meier's originality is crystal clear in his Giovannitti house in Pittsburgh, a small jewel that reflects the brilliant afterglow of his triumphant High Museum of Art in Atlanta (arguably the most important public building completed in America in this decade). The preferential place traditionally granted large and official structures in the estimation of critics might tend to obscure the merits of this much smaller private project; historians are unlikely to accord it as significant a rank as Meier's landmark houses of the late sixties or his more recent large-scale projects. Still, it offers irrefutable evidence that his development as an artist is strong and steady, and that the magnitude of his commissions is no accurate index of their excellence.

This is a work of exceptionally high quality, and though at first sight it might appear to be more reiteration than origination (in that it is well within Meier's familiar Purist range), a closer look shows just how great this extraordinary architect's capacity for variations on a theme can be. He is the Mozart of late Modernism, working within a rigid formal system that nonetheless seems for him the perfect stimulus to invention.

Frank Giovannitti, a Pittsburgh businessman, bought a deep, narrow plot in an old estate section of the city, a property closely hemmed in on either side by large houses in traditional Colonial adaptations. Unusually well informed about contemporary architecture, he considered both James Stirling and Arthur Erickson as potential designers for his new house before finally settling on Meier, whose work he had admired for years in design publications.

Unfortunately, in order to raise money for the project (which proceeded in fits and starts with the fluctuation of the client's finances) Mr. Giovannitti sold the rear portion of the already small site, (Text continued on page 214)
The only bedroom, above, opens onto a balcony at left, which overlooks the living room on the floor below. Cabinetry is covered in plastic laminate so finely detailed that it resembles lacquer. Opposite: Though quite small, the house seems much larger as a result of Meier’s graduated grid system, using modules of two, four, and eight feet as its basic compositional units.
The living room, opposite and above, seems larger than its relatively modest dimensions because of its double-height ceiling and views out toward tall trees. It is sparsely furnished with a Le Corbusier sofa and armchairs, a frequent Meier choice. On a built-in sideboard (above) is Christofle's reproduction of the S.S. Normandie tea service. The study on the balcony (opposite) is centered by Meier's handsome desk, right, designed for this house.
In the upstairs dining room, Josef Hoffmann’s Tolemer chairs underscore the influence of turn-of-the-century Viennese design on Mies’s recent work.
QUINN ESSENTIAL

In their California house, collectors Joan and Jack Quinn subscribe to the theory that — when it comes to art — there's never too much of a good thing.

BY MARTIN FILLER

PORTRAITS BY HELMUT NEWTON

Joan Quinn, left, surveys her dense domestic landscape; at her feet recline her 17-year-old twins, Amanda (in bunny slippers) and Jennifer. Behind Mrs. Quinn, who is wearing a dress by her friend Zandra Rhodes, are three of the more than twenty portraits of her throughout the house. On the mantel and table at left are several examples from the Quinns' large collection of Victorian ornithological specimens. Above, Joan Quinn's forearm bedecked with nine of her vintage Cartier back-wind watches, which she wears en masse.
On the exterior, their house looks much like the other unostentatious Spanish-style structures in one of the older sections of Los Angeles. There is no indication whatsoever that behind the beige stucco walls lurks one of the most astonishing interiors in Southern California, a region of our country not exactly unprepared for unusual concepts in domestic design. Similes somehow fail one here: Ali Baba's Cave seems rather too minimal, Schatzkammer not quite abundant enough, Cabinet of Curiosities too run-of-the-mill. What Jack and Joan Quinn have built is an environment that, like some rain forest of the fine and decorative arts, seems to have an atmosphere all its own, an aesthetic ecosystem in which the taste of its owners has attained a kind of elemental authority.

First, there is the art. As Jack Quinn accurately describes it, "Our collection—to put it immodestly—is one of the most definitive historical surveys of Southern California art that's ever been assembled anywhere, including museums. Billy Al Bengston, Ed Moses, Ed Ruscha, Joe Goode, Robert Graham, Ken Price—from the fifties, through the sixties and seventies, and right up to the eighties, you can walk through this house and within five minutes understand the development of those artists from their earliest work to their latest." That is, if you're not seriously sidetracked by the decorative treasures that surround those paintings and sculptures like thick encrustations of marine life on a coral reef. Refulgent Tiffany tiles crowd Victorian repoussé silver soap caddies here, cut crystal perfume vials there. A sofa is heaped with brocade pillows discovered by the Quinns in the Peking Opera's warehouse, and in the corner is a lifesize painted balsa-wood banana tree that they brought back from Bali. Bizarre stuffed birds in bell jars stare at the trophies of bourgeois taste at its most secure: Steuben glass bowls, fine Oriental rugs, and lush, heavy fabrics that have been part of this house—built by Oliver Hardy of Laurel and Hardy fame—since long before the Quinns bought it in 1967.

Solidity and sensation, quality and a quantum leap of aesthetic faith give this remarkable house a sense of continuity not to be taken for granted in Los Angeles. As Jack Quinn explains, "The only way to live with the things you love is to continue to keep them around even when you run out of wall space, or as has happened here, floor space. When we bring something new into the house, nine times out of ten the first place we set it down is where it ends up."

Thus the Quinn house lacks the trendily edited feeling of many of today's art collectors' rooms, which can seem like market reports of what's in and what's out. The Quinns own works by artists whose reputations have peaked, by others who will never be esteemed by the art establishment as highly...
In the richly cluttered living room, a collection of Victorian soap caddies and birds in bell jars; on the far wall, an untitled canvas by Ed Moses, 1972-73, under the shadow cast by Bryan Hunt's 1976 Queen Crest. Opposite: Fiberglass bustier by Issey Miyake and paint can by Joe Fay top a corrugated cardboard Rough Edges table by Frank Gehry, 1982. On table behind it, a Laddie John Dill sculpture (front left); a 1984 rock-mounted bronze by Antony Donaldson (top left).
The dining room, right, remains much as it was when the house belonged to comedian Oliver Hardy. Among the original features are the wrought-iron gates, Hepplewhite-style dining table, chairs, and sideboard, beige broadloom carpet, and the mirror surrounded by and reflecting painted wall decorations signed Robbie. Curtain fabric by Angelo Donghia is hung from Peking glass bracelets. Sideboard holds a row of Steuben glass bowls. On top of stuffed pheasants under glass, a lineup of ceramic works by Kenneth Price, 1959–80. At the center of the table is Robert Graham's 1978 Line Painted, next to his 1979 Torso Fragment. To the left and right are wood maquettes by Woods Davy. Beneath the table, a Seredebn rug. Above: Another Graham sculpture: his 1973–76 bronze, Mirror Figure.
For more than fifty years, Pretty Penny in Nyack has been home to the first lady of the American stage

BY JUDITH THURMAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDGAR DE EVIA

The Hudson River is broad at the level of the town of Nyack, and green on both banks. This is the river of the great nineteenth-century landscapists: of Cole, Cropsey, and Church; and at the end of summer it lies motionless under the haze as under a light coat of varnish.

Helen Hayes speaks of the Hudson as “my” river and takes a deep maternal interest in its well-being. On her desk is a photograph of children swimming in water that only a few years ago was dangerously polluted; she will “brag shamelessly” about the return of the striped bass and the Atlantic sturgeon. The life of the river has run parallel to her own for the past 52 years, a symbol of both continuity and freedom.
You look down to the river through the windows of Helen Hayes's big double drawing room. Her garden, beyond, slopes toward the water in cultivated stages. There is a porch, comfortably furnished, where the visitor is offered tea; then a swath of lawn shaded by an enormous maple and a very rare willow oak, whose crown has grown like a great coxcomb. A little below is a broad terrace of roses, unexpectedly formal—a sort of miniature villa garden. Most of the bushes are now "resting," says Helen Hayes, "gathering their forces for one last great effort." But her namesake rose, with its voluptuous peach and yellow flower, is wide awake. "It's the first to bloom, and it's somehow always still bearing when the others are giving out. Did you notice that it has no thorns?"

Helen Hayes smiles a little wryly at this fact, as if she regretted her rose's thornless state. There was a moment in her own life, during the twenties, when she felt the absence of a thorn or two as a deprivation. She was already a successful actress, but "I was nevertheless an over-protected, mother-smothered young thing. When my contemporaries were kicking up their heels and indulging in what was the longest celebration in history, I remained on my strict regimen of work and physical fitness." It was not until the age of 27, when she married the playwright Charles MacArthur and moved, four years later, to Nyack, that she had what she calls "my first blooming. In Nyack, I could feel a little racy."

Nyack was the MacArthurs' "courting ground." They sailed west across the Hudson every weekend on the old Tarrytown ferry, which thoughtfully provided a trio of Italian musicians to serenade them. Disembarking, they would head for their favorite ice-cream parlor, and thus fueled, prowl the hilly streets looking for their "dream house." After a few disappointments and a little "trespassing," they found it, and Helen Hayes has lived in Pretty Penny ever since. "The pine tree has tripled in stature. My dogwoods are dying. The trees and I have grown old together. Rather melancholy, isn't it?" She says this with utter cheerfulness.

The spirited and ambitious young Helen Hayes, who felt stifled by her own goodness, might have played the heroine of Edith Wharton's 1929 novel, Hudson River Bracketed. Miss Hayes knew the book when she moved to Pretty Penny. What she didn't know was that she owned a fine example of a bracketed house. It was a foreigner—the English designer Rex Whistler—who enlightened her. Whistler had done the sets and costumes for one of
Among family pictures and awards, opposite, in the basement room Helen Hayes refers to as "Charlie's Domain," after her husband Charles MacArthur, is lithograph of actress Mrs. Fiske, whom she admired.

Above: Part of garden planned fifty years ago by Mary Deputy Lamson, with Helen Hayes's favorite roses including one named after her.

Below: Helen Hayes engaged in the chore of weeding.
In the light-filled living room, Hudson River landscapes hang on either side of the fireplace. The valances and mirror were in the house when Helen Hayes bought it; the flowered chintz is Bouquet from Kent-Bragaline.
In a corner of the bedroom, opposite, an American Empire table holds collection of blue opaline glass; chaise covered in Deborah Logan cotton from Brunschwig sits against bookshelves full of family pictures. Above: A photograph of Helen Hayes's daughter, Mary, sits on the window sill in the dressing room.

Miss Hayes’s greatest theatrical successes, Victoria Regina, and was a connoisseur of the period’s architectural whimsies. “Can you find me a Hudson River bracketed if I come to visit you?” he had asked Miss Hayes in London. “Of course,” she replied, without knowing if or how she could comply. Whistler thought it exquisitely polite that she had arranged to live in one.

From their earliest days in the house, the MacArthurs set out to acquire the appropriate period furnishings for it. They bought several small paintings by artists of the Hudson River School, and a large number of engravings. Their collection of Victoriana was eventually so choice that they often loaned it to museums. “It was my husband who really knew Victoriana,” said Miss Hayes. “He saw its charm even in the thirties, when really smart young couples were throwing out their parents’ furniture and doing over their rooms in silver and white, à la Syrie Maugham.” Perhaps his fondness for it also had something to do with the need for a counterweight—a rich, solid ballast of domestic happiness for a fast life lived in the public eye. “Charlie had a passion for authenticity...” Helen Hayes pauses a moment. “I’ve never been very good at decorating, but I know what makes me happy. A wonderful character in one of Sam Behrman’s plays describes a room that has ‘the mellowness of anachronism.’ I like that.”

Mellowness is not a static relation to the past, and when Miss Hayes felt it was time for some changes in her décor, she turned to an old friend, the designer Laura Mako. Ms. Mako used lavish Victorian materials: gilt mirrors and plush carpets; lace curtains to the floor; old brocade wall coverings and an exuberance of floral chintz. She gave the rooms a richness of texture without, however, turning them into stage sets. There is a disarray of books and letters in the little green study that Helen Hayes calls “my torture room”—torture because her correspondance is so demanding. Mantels are laden with family photographs; (Text continued on page 202)
A portrait of Helen Hayes by Andrew Wyeth's sister, Henriette Wyeth, hangs in the upstairs hallway, *this page*.

*Opposite:* Framing the door outside the basement room are Comedy and Tragedy reliefs purchased from the demolition site of the old Fifth Avenue Theatre.
PURE SPACE IN NEW DELHI

Pupul Jayakar’s restored Lutyens bungalow

BY RASIK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES

Lutyens must have sweated under a pith helmet as he pondered on the planting of Jamun, Neem, and Peepul tree seedlings on an arid plain. Today, the romantically designed avenues of New Delhi—his magnum opus—converging on remnant monuments of a bygone era are flanked with a luxuriant growth of Indian trees. The English architect’s memory of Constable’s country and county homes, coupled with smattering impressions of the architectural ingenuity of the Mughals in coping with India’s harsh climatic variation, resulted in the creation of a hybrid style: structures that could shelter an elegant and somewhat strategically distant “bungalow culture.”

In this area of Delhi, set amid tree-lined avenues, nestled a few select residents destined to govern, sprawling lawns for pretty garden parties, and spacious bungalows for temporary residence. The bungalows themselves were therefore made as single units with distinct modular sizes and shapes allowing for very few extensions, other than an annex.

Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, daughter of a senior Indian civil servant, had grown up in an environment where the finer-
Contemporary furniture inspired by the work of Lazarus is placed in the other half of the sitting room. Traditional satin-textured straw matting provides comfort for bare feet. On lacquered table rest a 5th-century female terra-cotta head and a 13th-century Buddha's hand poised in benediction.
Over the takhat or sleeping platform in the bedroom hang two rubbings, the larger of Bodhidharma, the Indian teacher who took Buddhism to China.
dining room, 15th-century carved brackets support shelf holding images of Adi Shakti, the first woman, and a Kolam, a magical white drawing
ies of the “bungalow culture” were quite naturally blended with the urge to remain essentially “Indian.” Without pondering on the issues of convergence and nationalities, her life style today reflects a total need to do more with less. And do this she does, with such grace and finely honed senses that its very survival is a tribute to the manner in which she executes her responsibilities. Widely regarded as a mother of the revival of Indian handcrafts and handlooms—the appropriate usage of these skills became for Mrs. Jayakar a deeply personal statement.

Whether she sits in conversation with famous or aspiring scientists and philosophers or is holding a meeting with the numerous functionaries of the Festival of India in the U.S. (of which she is the chairperson and moving force), her house is her work space and her office. Her study can become a family room—even a place to eat and sleep. The large sitting room doubles as a conference chamber, room for intimate parties or a public discourse or even a dance recital.

Mobility of function, an agile sense of renewing the old and redefining space, mark the prerequisites for the interior plan. (Text continued on page 204)
The very civilized country life of Sir John Gielgud

BY MOLLY KEANE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY CLARKE

This page: The main drawing room’s high windows allow continual variations of light at all times of day. The room is dominated by a late-19th-century brass-and-cut-glass chandelier and is furnished with a cross section of 18th-century antiques—including Georges II and III and Louis XV and XVI.
Sir John oversaw the restoration of the gardens at the South Pavilion at Wotton Underwood, which were originally designed by George London in the late 17th century; left, the center parterre combines variegated privets and shrubs.

Above: Moldings around the staircase and throughout the drawing room are painted in glittery gold and silver. The floor and stairs leading to the library/gallery were hand-painted by an artist friend. George III mahogany side chairs flank door leading to television room; Regency rosewood library table in foreground.

A careful look at the fireplace, above, shows the different shades of gray panels as well as a pair of Italian school still lifes, Solomon and Sheba from the school of Hendrik van Balen and five putti masks observing it all.
I find it impossible to disassociate John Gielgud the actor from John, the happy householder, for no one loves and cares for his house with more devotion and discrimination. So let me first write a little about the two houses where I have known him best—homes which do much to explain the man behind the actor.

Houses have always been a great importance to John. They are a part of his pleasure in living. And they are his retreats. Sixteen Cowley Street, Westminster, where he lived for many years, was an enchanting eighteenth-century house. It seemed to me to contain and express everything that was John. The small house was full of movement. One went up and down stairs, in and out, from room to different room, discovering treasure big or little. From the entrance hall, half dining room with its long table, by day bereft of dining panoply, a short stair led up to the drawing room, a room to live in, not a shadowed London drawing room. I think of yellow brocade and sunlight and a light-handed arrangement of precious things; his likings explicit in the small Dufy, a statue in a French square, a picture holding an entirety of light and air in its small space. Up another staircase—they are tall small houses on Cowley Street—to John’s bedroom, a quiet, unemphasized place—a good place for sleeping. John is a good sleeper. Perhaps that is why he looks, at eighty, so agelessly calm.

Cowley Street, which seemed destined to be forever John’s appropriate dwelling, is a ghost of other years—a happy, not a restless ghost as loved houses can be—because he left it willingly and adventurously when he found this wonderful South Pavilion of Wotton House, many miles from London in the heart of the countryside.

One might have thought Wotton rather a preposterous choice for a never-idle star actor of John’s years. I think the long drives, early to London and the theater, and late to home, are welcome resting times, and furnish a necessary leisure. His South Pavilion (of which much more in this backwards vision which only grabs at memories) is a wing of one of the classical great houses belonging to the years when grateful countries built for their Marlboroughs. Then they added annexes for domestic offices in proportion and splendor—at least in their façades—equal to

The faces of homely children surround the door leading to the dining room, right.

Left to right: two children with flowers attributed to Maria Verelst; 17th-century-style wall light with carved winged masks; and two children, the younger on a green cushion, attributed to George Knapton. In the foreground, Chinese sculpture of a woman riding a horse. Tucked under the small table is a marble bust of Napoleon in Roman dress, circa 1800. Above: The South Pavilion through the chestnut trees.
their splendid mansions. It is from such a grandiose background that John has originated a spacious simplicity. His house is warm as well as beautiful—though one dreads to imagine the oil bill. But, before I describe the present background, to which his happy age belongs, I want to tell as much as I can perceive about the John Gielgud I have known for fifty years—some trivial memories of the man within one of the greatest and most acclaimed actors of our time. I have neither the knowledge nor the words to write of his career in the theater with any proper degree of critical discernment.

I accept, although I cannot dissect, his genius. The genius which he has is a quality apart—we are ignorant of its genesis. In any case, genius is, nearly always, a misapplied word, a word presupposing a disembodied flight to Achievement while it is more of a twinge in the mind suggesting something unnamed, something no more than a trembling in outer air to be perceived and captured, held like a bird between the hands before it is worked over, in physical stress of mind and bodily exhaustion, until transmitted and presented in such a way that others may acknowledge and feel in touch with the finished creation, and think in our serious complacency: yes, of course we have always known that was Benedick or Hamlet, Prospero or Spooner.

This gift and achievement is John's. The result would be there even if deprived of the dangerous magic of his voice, magic he discounts with typical carelessness: "I'm just lucky to..." (Text continued on page 188)
Herbaceous borders surround the parterre, right. Beyond the pillars, informal plantings and the yew walk. Above: Sir John’s bathroom is filled with accolades and theatrical paraphernalia including his 1981 best supporting actor Academy Award for Arthur, vintage posters, and Evening Standard Drama Awards. On the top shelf, a portrait of the actor as Hamlet in the late thirties. Below: A Chippendale-style settee in the book-lined gallery of the drawing room.
His self-appraisal goes far beyond words, irreverent and wonderfully enthusiastic, but without any small, spiteful modesty, because it is so very funny — himself has a fearless and agile use of comment to twist in a possible wound.

In the same way that he is an attentive listener he can consider a script, finding the meaning in the lines, concentrating on the punctuations, and the thought in my silly young mind: if only one of my Irish friends had written, with my great friend John Perry, a play. It was a little comedy on how the fox-hunting Irish live in their old, cold houses — and John had committed himself to reading it. I shudder now at my embarrassing insistence on sitting with him — avid for his opinion—while he read. I can still feel my soaring relief at his laughter and then the exciting flash of his quick criticism and constructive suggestion.

"Couldn't you give the old aunt something naughty to do? Perhaps she's keen on racing?" That was the spark which lighted the way toward Margaret Rutherford's wonderful performance as my own dotty Aunt Bijou in a successful little play called Spring Meeting in which nobody except John and its authors had very much faith before it opened.

I have a distinct memory of his direction of Margaret Rutherford in Spring Meeting. It was her first long comedy part — years before the wonderful Madame Arcati and Miss Marple qualities grew into her great reputation. In her first playing of Miss Bijou she was a little inclined to lean toward the madness and sadness in the character. I saw John lift her performance by a word, a suggestion until it became airborne — there was something from the wild a tinge of terror conveyed in the naughty-child-found-out and the Grand Dame making a dignified way through her faintly disreputable eccentricities.

His perception of true quality such as hers is immense, a flight of mind. Once he said of Fred Astaire: "Oh he's such a good actor. He could play Hamlet." That he should have so complete an understanding of the fun and the pathos in an Irish life entirely foreign to himself is not really strange when one remembers that he once spoke of acting Chekhov as "being part of a novel, a family, something very intimate." The warmth and industrious insight in his direction of that great author is equally employed in his direction of the work of lesser writers.

When discussing my work with him I have never felt impotent to set my meaning free, his response is so rapid, although it may be in contradiction to my view of the character or situation in question — all angles are there to be construed, accepted, set aside, rejected: "Wouldn't it be funnier (or sadder, or more menacing) like this? We'll try it anyway."

I can well remember — though it is a trivial incident in a nonserious little play — a day when rehearsals were not ending too happily, when I was faced with the numbing demand: "Could we have a funny line here tomorrow morning?" A merciless finger on the script.

An evening of tortuous mental obstruction for me followed until, at last, I found it. Very good I thought it was, too, as I produced it with smug confidence the next morning and waited for his laugh and commendation.

"Is this the funny line?" A pause while he read it. A further pause, then: "Not very funny, is it, darling?" Unnecessarily unkind, I thought then. Right, I know now. His mind was with the play, not with my susceptibilities.

A writer's mind reaches a static block. His play becomes to him not
According to the THEORY OF EVOLUTION, men evolved with fat, stubby fingers and women evolved with long, slim fingers. Therefore, according to the THEORY OF LOGIC, women should smoke the long, slim cigarette designed just for them. And that's the THEORY OF SLIMNESS.


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perfect, but changeless. It is in John's sometimes ruthless direction, or perhaps in his supposition that his own perception of the facets of a situation or the shades of a character can be immediately shared with others (the ordinary, who are without his fecundity of imagination), that he can be in difficulty and the actor or writer, left in painful, if respectful, puzzlement.

Perhaps it is his nonacceptance of the black and white in life or in the theater that lets in a new light on ob-scurities—through his direction relationships fall apart, to come together on a fresh footing and understanding—like morning in a woodland, distances are newly apparent. Characters walk and talk through the distances he has seen. They breathe freely in the new air of life he has given to the written word. This, as a writer, is my experience of working with him.

When John talks about the theater, its past is as clear and living to him (and to us) as its present. He can speak about his great-aunt Ellen Terry as realistically as though she were still alive, and waiting to read a rave or a disparagement notice the next morning. Some of his evocations of her performances are very close to his own charismatic work. He writes of her: "She moved with extraordinary spontaneity—you really believed she was walking on the flag-stones of Venice or the fields of Windsor." I find the same quality in his own physical movements as they wine in his direction and the actor or writer, left in pain and the actor or writer, left in pain.

He must be the least self-centered and most observant actor living. He talks marvelously about other players. His memory is totally accurate, and his descriptions dispasionate and wildly funny. A life style is conveyed in a very few words. For instance, speaking of the private life of a successful actress, "...when not acting she preferred to stay at home and play bridge with her servants." He has the right word in which to praise in greater or lesser measure.

He has talked and written copiously about the great actors he has known and worked with, or the lesser actors who have interested him, but there is far too little about himself. Listening to him, or reading his books, one is cheated when his greatest successes are passed over, almost as accidents, while he gives unhesitant condemnation to some of his own performances or productions: "...it was a Great Failure." Full stop. Disaster, if it happens, is accepted as his entire responsibility. If any wish concerning the future of his own career is evident, perhaps it is the hope that a film should be made of The Tempest, and in it he should play his truest Prospero.

John's home, the South Pavilion, was once the coach and carriage house, part of the stable wing of Wotton. It still contains the quietness of those days of sheathed carriages and broughams and phaetons. When one comes into the vast drawing room one's first impression is of light and flowers, dogs and a big fire, before the beauty of the room dawns through its comforts, and one realizes it is the proper, almost poetic environment for him. Beauty belongs to the room's stature, to its color and right arrangement. There is nothing arrogantly splendid or anything of great ostentatious value; John parted with many of his priceless antiques and pictures when he left Cowley Street. At its far end the room is shortened for a space taken by a little gallery lined by bookshelves, crammed with books. Underneath the gallery there is a comfortable cove: a place for dog's baskets, telephone, the newspapers, the television—all the day-after-day commitments of life.

Although the great saloon and the dining room are both on the grand scale there is nothing of the palazzo about them. A warmth possesses and envelops the possible stateliness of the air; pictures are subdued in it, they share in what goes on. Any grandeur is dissolved into woodlands and long meadows. Walking through this house and out into its garden one is filled with the happy thought that here Prospero has found his absolute and proper dwelling place; not a cloud-capped tower, or any gorgeous extravaganza of foreign palaces, but an English house. Wotton has withstood time and carried its qualities of beauty and usefulness into our present. There is nothing common here, or mean. John fits very well indeed into the picture.

Editor: Babs Simpson
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TIPPING THE SCALES

Frank Gehry: Unique Lamps, Metro Pictures, New York, through Dec. 22.

In the eighteen months since the first Fish Lamp was unveiled by the Formica Corporation to promote its ColorCore plastic laminate, architect Frank Gehry's translucent sculptures have quickly become something of an avant-garde status symbol, avidly snapped up by collectors from Philip Johnson to Michael Jackson. Now the manufacture of these effigies (carried out in the New City Editions "Fish Factory" in Venice, Calif.) has expanded to include reptilians as well, with "scales" of ColorCore, chipped by hand used as the basic surface unit. An architect who most closely parallels the interests of the artists with whom he often collaborates (he and Claes Oldenburg worked on a project for this year's Venice Biennale), Gehry in these pieces goes far beyond the decorative designs of his architectural colleagues. His fish and snakes have a life of their own. Martin Filler

BORIS GOOD ENOUGH


The names Diaghilev and Bakst recall an intensely creative period for Russia's prerevolutionary avant-garde. Other artists active in a group led by Diaghilev, Mir Iskusstva (World of Art), are less known—Boris Anisfeld (1879–1973) among them.

Besides designing sets for theatrical productions, including many for the Theatre Ballet Russe, he painted works such as Bathers, Evening on the River Dvina (1905), right, filled with vibrant planes of color overlaid with almost overpowering natural motifs. Most of Anisfeld's early work hasn't been seen since an exhibition tour in 1918 when he immigrated to the U.S. Now fifty of these canvases offer stunning testimony to his skills. Anne Rieselbach

PRINTS OF THE CITY

Building Portraits, Manhattan Borough President's Office, Municipal Building, New York, through Dec. 31.

Getting a fresh take on New York City is no easy matter for a photographer in the wake of the finest talents of our time, virtually all of whom have essayed that quintessential urban subject. Andrew Garn's approach, as is borne out in the twenty exceptional photos in this one-man show, was deceptively simple. Using a one-dollar Diana plastic camera with a one-element focusing lens, he confronted many of the familiar (and several less-well-known) monuments of New York with the technical innocence of an amateur and the visual sophistication of a born professional. It is a winning combination. M.F.
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DECEMBER 1984
(Continued from page 155) as they are by Jack and Joan, and still more by those whom they backed well before they rose to the prominence they now enjoy. Ultimately, it matters little to the Quinns into which of those categories their artworks fall.

That attitude, of course, has been bred by the confidence that comes from having done so well on the whole. For so much of what the Quinns own is of such seminal importance that it would be impossible to think of retrospectives of their most extensively represented artists without major loans from their trailblazing collection. The Quinns are thus a source of envy and bafflement to many aspiring collectors in the Los Angeles area, where Jack and Joan command an almost magnetic field of influence. But as Mrs. Quinn recounts it, the process of amassing their collection wasn't all that difficult. "We usually bought things that other people didn't want," she says matter-of-factly. "In most cases, we knew it was good because we've been able to see a different kind of beauty in things. We've always pushed ourselves to go beyond the ordinary, to be in the avant-garde, and most important, not to be afraid of things that might rub some people the wrong way."

Certainly their timing was right. The years just after their marriage in 1961 were a time of immense creativity for the visual arts in Southern California, with John Altoon, Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Ron Davis, Joe Goode, Robert Graham, Ed Moses, Ken Price, and Ed Ruscha, among others, challenging the hegemony that the New York School had maintained for the preceding twenty years. Taken by the free, open spirit of that new work, the Quinns became collectors, then patrons, and finally confidantes of many of those artists. With their genuine gift for friendship and open admiration for the creative temperament, Joan and Jack soon became very special participants in the emerging avant-garde art world of L.A.

Joan Agajanian Quinn's mother had an intentional oil portrait of her daughter painted when she graduated from high school, and that obscure artist is likely to be remembered after because his was the first of some 25 portraits of Joan that now form one of the most recurrent themes of the collection. By California artists as various in their styles as Mel Ramos and Don Bachardy, those portraits as a group seem uncommonly communicative, no doubt because the painters and the sitters have generally known each other so well. The large number of likenesses that she has had made of herself is not necessarily to be seen as a sign of vanity: the more one knows Joan Quinn the more one recognizes that this serial approach is the only way likely to approximate the diverse aspects of her vivid personality.

Joan's physical presentation is of a piece with her artistic philosophy. She has devised an image for herself that simultaneously maximizes her great personal warmth and sets her apart as a supremely self-assured woman not at all concerned with conformity or the expected. In addition to her commitment to the arts (she is a member of the California Arts Council, a founder of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, and a sometime exhibition curator) she is also passionate about fashion (on which she has frequently lectured).

Joan Quinn is most often dressed in designs by her friends Zandra Rhodes and Issey Miyake. Occasionally, she will wear pieces by both in quite startling conjunctions of hand-painted, pearl-embroidered chiffon and rough Japanese homespun. Her hair streaked with peacock blue or kelly green, her fingers, forearms, and full bosom aglitter with multiple selections from her large collection of jewelry both serious and fake, Joan Quinn standardly attracts stares for her freewheeling abandon. But make no mistake: Joan Quinn is no mere clotheshorse; a serious student of the couturier's craft, it was she who brought Miyake's stunning "Bodyworks" show to the U.S. last year. And it should also be noted that her clothes enjoy the longevity of her art and objects. She will wear a favorite design for years, and is no more likely to deaccession a dress than a painting. ("We've never bought for investment, trade, or resale," insists Jack Quinn. "We have never, ever, in the past 25 years sold anything we've collected.")

Though the charismatic—even theatrical—persona Joan has invented for herself tends to dominate the surface of proceedings in which both she and her husband take part, there is no question that his complementary constancy and practicality make them one of the most impressively matched teams in art collecting on either coast. Jack Quinn, an attorney who was the youngest president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (and who represents almost all of the artists whose work he collects), looks upon his supporting role with an admixture of pride and conspiratorial glee. "Joan has a marvelous eye and incredible taste. When you walk into an artist's studio with her, she'll immediately say, 'I like this, this, and this.' Then the artist will ask me, 'Which one did Joan like?' and when I tell him he'll say, 'Oh, no, she always does this to me.'"

However, those artists have the satisfaction of knowing that those pieces will be joining the most distinguished previous examples of their own work, for long ago the Quinns opted for depth rather than breadth. When they first started out, the big California collecting money was still going for the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauves that have been popular among the movie moguls since the thirties. Today, some L.A. collectors still shun their leading local lights as being too "provincial," favoring New York-based artists instead. But Jack and Joan have never changed their tune. Their
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Precious Victoriana, and for this purpose he built a "barroom" in his basement. At the entrance are two carved panels rescued from the demolition site of the Fifth Avenue Theatre: comedy and tragedy. They are fitting brackets for a room that has the feel of a rather seedy pub frequented by hardbitten newspapermen. There is an elaborate mahogany bar; wicker chairs covered in the MacArthur tartan; an enormous dinosaur of a console television; and a row of red plush seats—numbers 112–114—from the Helen Hayes Theatre, torn down amid howls of community protest to make room for the Marriott Marquis Hotel. On the walls are the photographs of "a few friends"; the Lunts, John Gielgud, Noel Coward, Harpo Marx, Fred Astaire, Ruth Gordon, Katharine Hepburn, Lillian Gish, John Drew, and several dozen other great figures in modern theater. "A funny collection of oddballs," says Helen Hayes.

Her Nyack neighbors thought so. Nyack before the Second World War was a rich, sedate, and terribly "small-minded" town that "hated" the arrival of these boisterous and no doubt wick- ed theater people. When the MacArthurs began to dig a swimming pool at the foot of their garden, the postman commented—his awe mixed with great unease—that "Hollywood had come to the Hudson." Miss Hayes couldn't have been more delighted. It gave her that "racy" feeling. "What wonderful bodies have flung themselves into that pool!" Katharine Hepburn liked to practice her jackknife in a brassiere and shorts, and John Barrymore once chilled the water with a truckload of ice to cure a particularly savage hangover. "I felt," he told his hostess, "just like the fly in a highball."

Throughout her career, Helen Hayes would always drive home to Nyack from Manhattan after her performances, and during the war years, when gas was rationed, she took the bus. Having to catch it gave her an "alibi" for declining late-night revels. She managed to keep a high-powered career in balance with an unusually happy domestic life: her marriage and her two children—Mary and James, who both became actors. But in 1949, Mary, who was then nineteen, died of polio; her father, who never fully recovered from that loss, died seven years later.

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WHAT A DELICIOUS GIFT IDEA.
years later. At that point, Helen Hayes decided to move into the city—into an apartment—ceding, in part, to the pressure of well-meaning friends. "Leave the past behind you," they told me—as if one ever can." But she listened to them, put her furnishings up for auction, and arranged to sell Pretty Penny to old friends: Herbert Ross and Nora Kaye. "It was very fortunate," Miss Hayes continues, "that Nora panicked at the last minute. She had never lived in anything bigger than a trunk and the size of the house scared her. How providential that was for me. What would I have done in the city—meet friends for lunch? Window-shop? This house has always given me so much—and so much to do."

In 1972, Helen Hayes retired from theater. She had literally become allergic to it—the dust in its boards and its back-stages. She had also been "in a harness" since the age of five, and "I quite simply had begun to run amok!" Liberated from the inexorable routine of and commitment to eight performances a week, Helen Hayes has "jumped aboard a horse and run off in all directions." At the age of 84, she has become an insatiable traveler; she remains actively engaged in raising funds for and directing a number of charities—as vice-president of The Actors' Fund, co-chairman along with Lady Bird Johnson of the National Wildflower Research Center, and as a member of the board of the Helen Hayes Hospital in Haverstraw.

It is, by now, a cliché to remark how gracefully Helen Hayes wears her age, how vital and involved with the world she is. As a spokesperson for her generation, she has just published a book, Our Best Years, based on Mutual of Omaha's radio program of the same name. Her secret, I suspect, is that she doesn't think of herself as particularly noble or heroic for growing old—for "somehow still bearing when the others have given out." She puts it simply: "I'm just greedy." □ Editor: Jacqueline Gonnet

(Continued from page 176) Fresh flower pots four feet high, brought inside from the garden one day; an object loaned to a museum or shifted, or even sent out, literally, on the lawns to breathe. All this necessitates the use of the barest of immobile or heavy structures. Like a high priest in a Hindu temple who bathes, anoints, and clothes his deities, relocating their position as if they were his children or aged parents, making seasonal offerings of flowers, fruits, and backdrops, Mrs. Jayakar too is constantly conducting her little "play" with her self-taught sense of design. Although she has pioneered the cause of formal design training and has been instrumental in the setting up of major institutional frameworks to support the growth of design awareness, her designer friends would consider that she herself remains the most important university to transfer with.

With the task of change in living space within the aging walls of the bungalow came her in 1981 by the government, Mrs. Jayakar teaming up with a few friends who were as eager as she to see a "way to breathe," to be precise, is an undelineated way, where one goes along, beauty close-
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It was a white Christmas in Paris...

Some years ago, a couple we know were in Paris over the holidays. They celebrated Christmas dinner in a bistro off St. Michel. The husband, inspired by love and champagne, told the waiter to add the wine bucket to the bill. The waiter drew himself up and replied, in both French and English, that it was not for sale.

The same bucket, with various labels attached, kept showing up in restaurant after restaurant, as if to remind the husband that he could not give his wife the world.

Imagine our friend’s delight when, recently, he happened to spot the selfsame bucket in a Pier 1 window. He took it home and proved himself a hero at last.

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The wineglasses are from the Royal Leerdam Glassworks in Holland, where the local sand produces glass of exceptional clarity.

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ly follows function. This means putting aside notions of all standard norms on forms. Fixtures, objects, furniture, textures, styles would coalesce in their common pursuance of excellence. And, therefore, a virile terra-cotta horse, made on the humble wheel of a tribal potter in Orissa, can converse on the same platform with one made ornately in Rajasthan to pull a temple chariot. A tussah-upholstered very easy chair (salvaged from a Maharajah's junkyard) can rest on tightly woven grass mats that run from wall to wall across the floors.

Lazarus, a turn-of-the-century European furniture manufacturer working from Indian inspirations, created furniture that could look only Indian, yet allow for Western-style comfort. Unlike Bugatti's opulent celebration of Middle Eastern skills—this furniture was not too concerned with ornamentation and eccentric form and could hence easily be placed as a little accent in the sitting room with otherwise anonymous walls and floors. Highlights in the choicest art objects Mrs. Jayakar has collected reveal her involvement with the arts over fifty years.

Whether it be the fifth-century head of the Buddha bought with a one-dollar birthday allowance when she was eleven, or the Thai hand of the sage spotted and picked up from a pile at a Cost Plus store in San Francisco, all of Mrs. Jayakar's acquisitions immediately strike a silent rapport with her. "If you really love an object, it grows and grows in its beauty. And this feeling for age... as say in the song of a bard or the curve of a pot... time could never diminish this depth"—she continues. "I have never been able to replicate, imitate, or try to capture the essence of another age."

The qualities of energy and of compassion are the two themes that attract her the most. Like two arms that guide her reach, she chooses on one hand images of the mother goddesses, the sun in a silver ring, the elliptical stone lingas—potent with premordial energy—while on the other a hand in vitarka mudra announces the presence of smiling stucco and terra-cotta heads of Maitriya and Bodhisatva, a classic stone sculpture of agile deer listening to the sermon of the sage.

A beautiful three-masted schooner gracefully cuts the sea under full sail. Etched in brass, painted in Rembrandt Oils, this piece comes from the finest Dutch Master Tradition. Remarkably, this work of art is painted on the dial of another masterpiece. A Seth Thomas original.

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Come see the Seth Thomas Vandenberg Collection at fine furniture, clock and department stores. And with your purchase you'll get this magnificent frame free.
From the glow of the tapers on the 4-foot candelabra to the 100-year-old pastel panels of a royal court in amorous play, Leona Helmsley ensures the grandeur as a promise that each function held in the elegant oval-shaped Versailles Ballroom is one to remember.

What better way to lavish her royal family You, Her guests.

The bungalows of Lutyens were designed with high-roofed chambers and vaulted ceilings that would allow hot air to rise and pass through little windows near the roof—roshandans (literally—the containers of light). Fresh air would be drawn in through the doors and windows, opening on latticed verandas that often circumambulate the house as a much-needed buffer between the inside and the outside. Mrs. Jayakar’s bungalow, however, had unfortunately been lived in many times before by people who did not think twice before converting verandas into cramped rooms with false ceilings and who cherished an odd passion for partitions and colored walls. Stone- and-brick fireplaces had been painted with enamel and covered with layers of whitewash, a bit like what quite a few of us seem to be doing to ourselves!

For today, when plastic-covered couches, velvet curtains, and carpeted floors are hallmarks of status, Mrs. Jayakar’s self-imposed constraint on cost makes for an alternative that is more than aesthetic.

Contemporary Indian architecture, making forced statements with concrete, is covered with bougainvillea. Landscapists in doubt put a plant here and a pot there to use up the space. Mrs. Jayakar, instead, plants to walk into clusters for a healing bath. “I plant to converse with the flower and the sap as it rises to the leaf heals me.”

The lawn surrounding the house is divided and treated as adjunct to the rooms opening directly on it. The sitting room opens on a patio, with cane chairs and a boundary defined by grass slopes merging with bushes that form the end of the compound. On one end, oleanders, jasmines, and frangipani in a dense and random planting are intended to soon cover the ground with billowing foliage, cascading one on the top of another as in the hill-painting miniatures of India.

The ground wherever it opens will become the pathways through this foliage and will lead to flower beds and votive terra cottas under trees.

Already, birds and squirrels come as close to the house as do the plants; and when the trees grow higher, the sun will probably filter through their unregimented canopy in a way that would have perhaps made Lutyens sweat less!

Editor: Babs Simpson
Gold and platinum basins! Well, isn't water equally precious?

Since it is freely acknowledged that Sherle Wagner faucets make water flow like champagne, shouldn't his bowls be worthy of this magic? Hence, these basins of gold and platinum... each available in both shapes. Should you care to express your respect for the miracle of water with less glamor, they are also offered in black and white.

© 1983 Sherle Wagner Corp.
"Nemuru" by Jay Yang. Coordinates include sheets/pillowcases/comforter/unquilted sham/reversible bedspread/quilted sham/rod pocket drapery/box pleated bed skirt/decorative pillows/towel. In an easy-care percale blend of 65% Kodel® polyester, 35% combed cotton.
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On the middle level, one enters a vestibule that leads into the double-height living room, a dramatic space that looks out onto the magnificent large trees that almost completely obscure the adjacent structures. A staircase upward goes to a bedroom and a study, both of which open onto balconies overlooking the living room, which in turn has a balcony opening onto the dining room on the story below (which also has a kitchen and a small sitting room).

That is all, but it is more than enough. With less than 2,400 square feet (including the garage), the Giovannitti house is considerably smaller than residences customarily designed by high-style architects well into their careers, since the small private house is most often the province of the younger architect and the less-than-plutocratic client. This scheme, however, is a welcome demonstration of a first-rate talent applied to a commission in which the power of concentration—both in the sense of thoughtfulness as well as reduction—is revealed as it rarely is in contemporary architecture. It seems to be the nature of architects to want to build as largely and lavishly as possible, but the Giovannitti house is convincing proof that considering the opposite might be equally rewarding.

Although the Giovannitti house has a very attractive modesty, it is so exquisitely executed (under the supervision of Meier’s project architect, Michael Palladino) that one wouldn’t guess that it cost its owner, who also acted as general contractor, a figure so low that it borders on the unbelievable. But that factor diverts our attention from what is really distinguished about this house: its strong sculptural presence, which has all the economy, inevitability, and strength of a mineral formation. Meier describes it as “an eroded cube,” in which segments and even whole quadrants have been pulled away from the core and shifted up or down.

The architect’s rhythmic handling of the glazed surfaces of the house—windows in modular variations of two, four, and eight feet square, as well as infill of glass block—is echoed in the square porcelain-steel paneling that has become one of his favorite cladding materials. Other portions of the exterior are covered in stucco or handsome matte-gray tile; Meier’s judicious use of each allows us to pick up his formal interrelationships with ease that makes us appreciate the clarity of his thinking.

Still, as cerebral an exercise as this seems in the faceted perfection of its surfaces, here is a building that will hold our attention long after the houses of Meier’s imitators come to look like vacuous approximations of the real thing. There is not an extraneous gesture nor a wasted movement in the Giovannitti house, and though it is small in size, it is large in its significance as the latest documentation of one of our most valuable architectural talents. By Martin Filler. Editor: Elizabeth Sverbeyeff Byron
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(Continued from page 140) sophisticated greenish-yellow which owed a lot of its appeal to a patina of accumulated city dirt to an architectural terra-cotta pink shade. The new color is meant to flatter people as well as furniture and gilt bronze.

A pair of bold Venetian chinoiserie figures on high pedestals with a chinoiserie stove between them remain where Fred had always had them down in front of two immense windows. Equally essential were some flamboyant but somehow also subtle carved-wood curtains that suited the family fascination with trompe l'oeil. Equally imaginative is the arrangement of the furniture. Knowing full well how actual eighteenth-century rooms look, Tony takes the view that once the elements have been removed from their original context they should be treated as sculpture of objects. The big sitting room has practically no pairs of chairs but not with friends, and certain things have been done to accommodate them—such as hanging a handsome but fierce-looking bronze baroque mask high on a wall well out of their view, or putting fragile porcelains on mantels and high cupboards out of reach.

Trompe-l'oeil paintings of all sorts—Oriental and European from the seventeenth century to the present—live together on chintz-covered walls in Tony and Susan's bedroom, where an enormous Chinese trompe- l'oeil panel makes an unorthodox headboard for their bed. In the dining room Tony made a table from two big pieces of parquet de Versailles which he mounted on old legs, a fantasy that he enjoyed concocting like the curtains in the salon. At the moment the table is surrounded by chairs, each back of a different height, material, and period from 1680 to 1980.

Other parts of the apartment are in various stages of experimentation. Should gray flannel go on the walls of a guest room where the bed is an early Empire camp bed made in steel? Should a bedroom commode stay in the front hall where it can really be seen? Neither Tony nor Susan particularly likes table lamps to light a room, but what will the purists think of all those ormolu-mounted porcelain illuminated by track lighting?

The Victorias relish the process of charting new ground and like most collectors would never be happy with rooms that are completely furnished, finished, and final. Certainly few young couples have such fine things to experiment with.

THE MONGIARDINO STYLE

(Continued from page 114) where. Just as a stage designer immerses himself in the atmosphere of a play, Mongiardino says that he immerses himself not just in the architectural nature of the house or apartment he has been commissioned to embellish but in the personality of the clients and the atmosphere they generate around them. In each case the atmosphere is of course very different; hence the variety that is such a feature of Mongiardino's work. As for his own apartment, the Stimmung that Mongiardino has evoked is so attractive, so palpable that one is tempted to export slabs of it to this side of the Atlantic where it might humanize some of our bleaker "Bauhausers."

Apropos the international movement, I couldn't resist asking Mongiardino about his rapport with Milan's uncompromisingly contemporary designers. "They used to criticize me," he wryly admitted, "for the solecism of using columns. But now the Post-Modernists are using columns themselves, so they can no longer take that line. And so I may be obliged to move onto something else." What an irony that his traditionalism and nostalgia should have put Mongiardino ahead of the game. [Editor: Mary-Sargent Ladd]