

OCTOBER 2007

House Beautiful

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Traditional
with a twist

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BLUES

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Interior design by NANCY BOSZARDT
Interview by CAROL PRISANT
Photographs by JOHN KERNICK


TRADITIONAL
WITH A
twist

Where's *the* Chintz?

HERRINGBONE, CREWEL, KILIM, PLAIDS, PAISLEYS, SCROLLS—
THERE'S NOTHING FORMULAIC ABOUT PATTERN NOW

The living room sofas are covered in the Nobilis fabric Celeste, warmed by a Calvin Klein throw. The durable Kilim ottoman from Birmingham & Co. is a punchy little pull-up that's both footstool and seating. A handsome square oak cocktail table and the paintings of overscale lilies were found at Amy Perlin Antiques. The sporty checked area rug is from Patterson, Flynn & Martin.



A Persian-style banquette with a patterned fabric featuring various animals and plants. The fabric is white with brown and grey illustrations of a stork, a bird, a snail, a butterfly, a deer, a rabbit, and a swan, among others. The banquette is set against a dark wood staircase railing.

HERE'S THE
twist

Nancy Boszhardt shakes it up: A Persian-style banquette in the main entry hall is upholstered in a large-scale Brunswick & Pils pattern that's almost folk art. Called *Animal Farm Crewel*, the rich brown of its bugs and birds is echoed in the old-fashioned striped runner from Patterson, Flynn & Martin—which, in turn, plays off the chocolate herringbone pattern (opposite) painted on the floor. Don't miss all the patterned rugs in the house... and turn to page 130 to see more traditional rugs with a twist.



CAROL PRISANT: Doesn't this house date from the era when Saratoga Springs was a popular spa?

NANCY BOSZARDT: It does. It was built in 1905, close to the center of the town, and though the architectural style is quite formal, with lots of columns on the exterior, the rooms inside were small and dark.

Tell me how you've managed to make them look so spacious.

Well, let's start with the living room. My first thought was to cover both sofas in the identical neutral fabric, and then do the curtains in a neutral, too, to keep the walls from looking too chopped up. But neutrals can be really dull, you know, and because the family uses the house year-round, and not just for the August racing season—and especially because the weather in Saratoga Springs is often so gray—they asked if I could make it feel happy here. And that's why I added the red table lamp, the red throw, and the hassock, to punch things up. Then I found those four paintings—which I love—and I was so excited. They're actually studies for a wallpaper pattern that are painted on canvas, and they're a little playful because they have touches of gold in them that catch the light. To keep them from looking at all serious, I didn't frame them.

And you've done something pretty unique with the furniture placement, haven't you?

Well, there were so many windows in this house that in the living room, I had to put both sofas in front of them. And for the same reason—plus the fact that the windows are of various sizes—I did that elsewhere, too. The furniture placement in the master bedroom was especially tricky. But I was lucky enough to find a really beautiful antique metal bed that seemed to want to be shown off by being placed right in front of the window!

You've made some clever furniture choices for several of the rooms.

The family *really* didn't want things to feel rigid, and they particularly wanted the house to be comfortable for their grandchildren, so for the entrance hall, I found a crazy Persian-style bench and put that very scaled-up crewel on it. I knew that little kids would love being able to pick out all the birds and animals in the pattern, not to mention the fact that it also cut the seriousness of the newly painted herringbone floor. I always think there should be an easy juxtaposition between taking yourself too seriously and having a little formality.

What made you decide to paint a pattern on the floor?

The wood floors on the ground floor of the house are really nasty—they're maple. I over-painted some of them completely, mostly in brown, but I'd seen and liked this type of decorative herringbone treatment (usually in two woods, though, not in paint) in other turn-of-the-century houses.

I understand the family is involved with the Saratoga racing community. Was it a struggle not to do too many horsey things?

It was something I tried to be really careful about, because I was aware of what a cliché that would be. So while I didn't do

the obvious things—like putting horse-print fabrics on the furniture—I did do a *little* bit. The woven tops of the French bistro stools in the kitchen are the family racing colors, for instance, and that's pretty subtle. But then there's the lantern in the main stair hall. The space needed something antique, but something also light and playful. The scale had to be right, too. Then I came across that bronze and glass Italian hall lantern. Not only was it exactly the right size, it had tiny horse's heads on it. I couldn't believe my luck! Well, hey, we *are* in the Adirondacks; though again, I tried to keep it to a minimum. I used horn handles on the backs of the wing chairs in the dining room, for instance, and there's the handsome horn hat rack in the entry hall that I found at auction. In the carriage house "bunk" room, I just decided that we *had* to do those log beds with their Hudson Bay blankets.

I love what you've done with the box springs—upholstering them! That's traditional with a real twist.

Even though the house is vintage, I didn't think bed skirts were right, so I exposed the box springs on every bed in every room and upholstered each one in an eye-catching pattern.

And I'm really curious about that ceiling in the kitchen, too. It looks old, but is it?

This family likes coziness, and although the kitchen isn't big, it has a 10-foot-tall ceiling. I thought it would be cozier if I gave it a *strong* ceiling, one that would minimize its verticality. Because I didn't want to use the bead board that's in the rest of the house, I left the boards open in between, so you could tell it was wood. Finally, I added those old-fashioned fixtures.

I have to say, I've seldom seen a dining room that looked so much like a men's club.

There's no question that with one woman and six men—young and old—this house is sort of oriented toward the guys. But it may also be because of the bookshelves and the wing chairs—and probably the

window seat. I love those wing chairs. I put a coarse linen print on them in a large-scale pattern because they seemed to me to need a really strong fabric. Then I added the small horn handles to the backs so the men could pull them away from the table.

The master bedroom, with its flowery headboard and sprigged wallpaper, seems just a little frillier.

Just a little, since this was the wife's moment! But that room was a problem, because the windows were all different sizes. I finally got around it by adding a high wainscot to bring the room together. The colors may be muted, but the room has a lovely light feeling.

I've noticed that you like to do unexpected things with scale—that giant print on the armchair in the attic guest room, the broad stripe on the bed, the smallish chair at the desk on the side porch.

You know, most clients are afraid of scale, preferring to overload their rooms with lots of little things. I don't know why—but I hope that's why they need decorators!

PRODUCED BY SENG MORTIMER





1. Boszhardt put horn handles on the dining room wing chairs so that they could be pulled out easily. 2. The antique mahogany table is set for lunch. 3. A corner of the dining room, made for reading. 4. A portico connects the new screened porch to the new carriage house. 5. The zinc top of the trestle table, from Avant Garden, is actually the reverse of an old advertising sign. 6. The portico leads to a garage on the ground floor of the carriage house. 7. In a corner of the living room, a wing chair cozies up to bookshelves. The owners wanted the room to be relaxed, but still formal enough for entertaining. 8. The main stair hall features a delicate lantern from Amy Perlin. OPPOSITE: With its 1930s hanging fixtures from Remains Lighting, the kitchen looks older than it is. A Shaw's Original Apron sink and Rohl faucets add to the effect, as does a "vintage" toaster from Williams-Sonoma.





1. In a guest room, a painted provincial chair from Vidal's Antiques. 2. An oil portrait between windows in the master bedroom. 3. For the carriage house, log pole pine beds were crafted by Wilde Wood Furniture in Wyoming. 4. The antique concrete and marble desk on the glassed and screened side porch is all-weather. 5. A "baby" wing chair in the hall outside the attic bathroom. 6. A vintage horseshoe-shaped mirror. 7. In an attic bedroom, captain's beds help solve storage problems. 8. A 1950s Mercedes Benz parked in the carriage house, where stamped concrete panels look like cobblestones. OPPOSITE: The centerpiece of the master bedroom is the spectacular 1920s Italian wrought-iron headboard. Wallpaper is Willowherb in Leaf Green by Cowtan & Tout. Coverlet is Angelina embroidered paisley in Wheat by Donghia. Bench upholstered in Moriyama in Cognac by Lee Jofa's Groundworks.







On the side porch, a highly creative upholstery combination for the owner's desk chair. Bronze sculpture from The Indisputable Collector. OPPOSITE: In the carriage house guest room, a Zoffany wallpaper plays off a handwoven rug from Marc Phillips. Bed covered in a Holland & Sherry stripe. The print-and-needlepoint chair fabric is Tamarin by Travers. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES.

