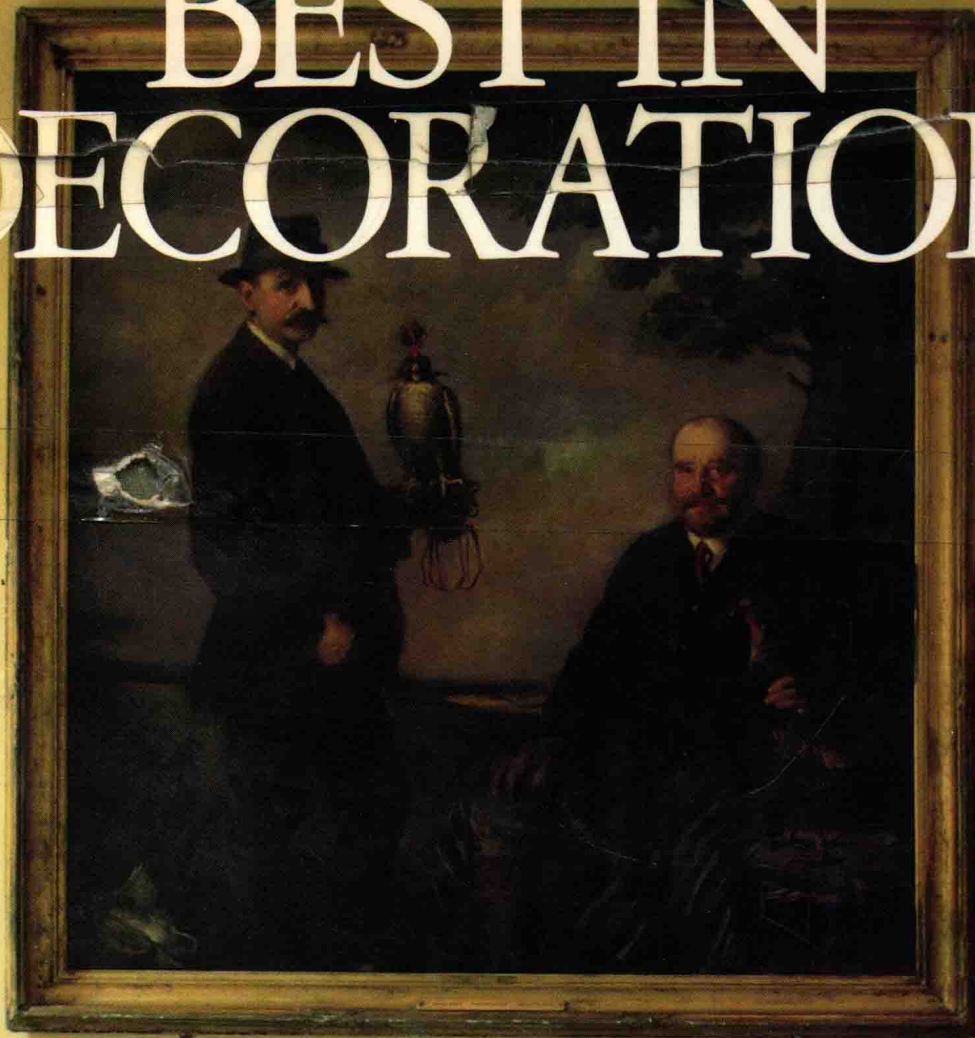


# HOUSE & GARDEN'S BEST IN DECORATION



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HOUSE & GARDEN'S  
**BEST IN  
DECORATION**

*By the Editors of House & Garden*

Condé Nast Books  
Random House  
New York

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Published in the United States  
by Random House, Inc., New York,  
and simultaneously in Canada  
by Random House of Canada, Limited, Toronto.

Library of Congress  
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

House & Garden's Best In Decoration

1. Interior decoration—History—20th century.

I. House & Garden. II. House and Garden's Best In Decoration.

NK1980.H63 1987 747.2'049 87-42643

ISBN 0-394-56426-X

Frontispiece: John Saladino's New York apartment.  
Opposite: Detail of Carolyn Farb's house in Houston,  
decorated by McMillen.

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Special thanks is made  
to the following individuals at *House & Garden Magazine*:

*Senior Editors*, Elaine Greene, Babs Simpson

*Decorating Editors*, Jacqueline Gonnet,

Karen Parker Gray, and Carolyn Sollis

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*Picture Editor*, Thomas H. McWilliam Jr.

*Assistant to the Editor-in-Chief*, Jill Citron

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# Introduction

**A**t *House & Garden* we take decoration very seriously. So seriously, in fact, that in the early 1980s we literally recreated the magazine, then over eighty years old, to better tell decoration's story. Observing important developments in our society—more equality between the sexes, more specialized education and technology, more affluence, and more pluralism—we came to the conclusion that our own special audience was ready for a magazine of new depth and intelligence, daring and creativity, a journal to promote an even fuller understanding of decoration and design, art and architecture, and how they pertain to our rapidly changing lives.

We decided to take on this assignment with a single-minded emphasis on quality: materially, through the paper and ink we used; editorially, through our subject matter and its presentation; intellectually, through new approaches to photography, a commitment to literary content, and a closer study of our culture. To live a life of quality today is not easy, if it ever was; good and bad live in close proximity, colliding in the sometimes ambivalent lives of each of us. To empower our audience for creative living in all its many aspects became the magazine's larger goal. In moving toward that objective we have criticized false comfort, but more often we find ourselves celebrating the things that bring us closer to the good life we all want to live. *House & Garden's Best in Decoration* is about our celebrations.

This selection of interiors deals with the signs and symbols of movement toward the good life as they are reflected in the highly creative world of decoration. Always about things, decoration is now more than ever about people too—both the people who create rooms and the people who live in them. Many of the decorators and clients in this book live life on the fast track, creating and absorbing

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overnight the kind of influences that used to be years in the forming. They send us the “high style” of European capitals and usher in a new American appreciation for richness of color, pattern, and texture; at the same time, they look to areas, like Japan, that for too long have been ignored by the West and they find entirely new connotations of serenity and elegance in the play of white on white. By embracing such opposites, professionals and patrons suggest the largest possible range of decorating for everyone.

With so much variety in the world of decoration, there cannot be a *House & Garden* “look” for people to copy. The last thing we want to offer you is a formula for successful decorating. Instead, we want to open up possibilities, create options, trigger ideas, and inspire individual choice—including the choice of looking at these pages not with intentions of emulation or ownership but with simple pleasure at their beauty and information.

*House & Garden’s Best in Decoration* is not only about what decoration has to say about life today but about the life that can be found in today’s decoration. We think it bears witness most powerfully to the fact that taste and style are certainly not static, and that the enormous energy and insight available to us makes room for every kind of expression. This book was created with the conviction that its readers are like its creators: curious, passionately interested in the arts, concerned about the quality of life, desirous of living with beauty, appreciative of the best the world has to offer, and always ready to enhance a special world of their own.

Louis Oliver Gropp  
*Editor-in-Chief, House & Garden*

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# Part I

## Designers and Clients

**W**hat is it exactly that gives interior decorators the ability to show other people how to live? There is the elusive “taste,” of course, and, in different measure, a love of rooms and how they function; a fascination with objects and why people have them; an appreciation of composition, color, shape, line, texture, proportion, pattern, light, shadow, and how they can effect a mood or attitude; a sense of history and an idea of the future. This first part of *House & Garden’s Best in Decoration* celebrates the designer’s spirit of investigation, that which finds a way to turn intangible “home” into reality within four walls.

Exploring the work of top international designers helps reveal how a client’s varying needs and desires generate a decorator’s creativity. The simple preferences in color and materials that the jewelry designer Elsa Peretti gave to Renzo Mongiardino—“master of ambience”—signified to him a “patchwork of antiquity” that would reflect her native city of Rome. The publishing executive Christopher Whittle’s decision to move from a two-room log cabin in Tennessee to a historic apartment building “representing everything Manhattan

had to offer” inspired Peter Marino to recast Whittle’s rooms in the Dakota with their original, staggering turn-of-the-century opulence. Former Ambassador Anne Cox Chambers’s utter trust and admiration of the easy way her scholarly friend Roderick Cameron “conjugated knowledge with the business of living” led her to ask him for the kind of remarkable rooms he would have made for himself.

Remarkable decorators know how to follow the lead of remarkable architecture. Under the supervision of Piero Pinto, the fifteenth-century castle that the fashion designer Laura Biagiotti fell in love with became “a tangible testimony to art and history.” San Franciscan Harry Hunt’s lucky purchase of one of the city’s important modern buildings meant that the French designer Andrée Putman could in her clean-lined decoration pay tribute to the very reasons modernism came about. On the other hand, because the architecture in Bill Blass’s apartment was *not* remarkable, Mac II gave the rooms “good bones” before dressing them in the crisp aesthetic that defines the designer’s classic clothes.

Career or calling will often figure in the way a designer approaches decorating for a particular client. Oscar de la Renta, whose romantic dresses are designed for the kind of parties he hosts himself, was given by Denning & Fourcade romantic rooms where “lights form mysterious constellations” and walls offset “jeweled women in jewel-colored dresses.” Mario Buatta’s “English-casual-relaxed” environment for Taki Theodoracopulos’s American brownstone provided all the coziness and peacefulness the writer required. Ashton Hawkins, the general counsel to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, wanted to be able to leave his work at “the office” but still enjoy a personal art collection at home. Mark Hampton’s subtle backdrop allowed Hawkins’s art to be “the real furnishings of the apartment,” thus creating an intimate gallery for living.

Art was also behind Geoffrey Bennison’s splendid sets for the theatrical elements of *le style Rothschild*, Antony Childs’s graceful melding of residence and baroque-art gallery for the dealer Ramon Osuna in Washington, and Bruce Gregga’s boldly colored scheme for Betsy and Andrew Rosenfield, collectors of contemporary painting and sculpture and early-modern furniture. But it was actually the deaccessioning of an important art collection that made Enid Annenberg Haupt, a veteran tastemaker, hire a decorator for the very first time. When Mrs. Haupt brought in the incomparable Sister Parish to reappoint her New York penthouse apartment, she discovered what we hope the following pages will reaffirm for you: that decoration is an art one can live with very well.



