



domino

THE BOOK *of* DECORATING

a room-by-room guide to creating a home that makes you happy

by domino editors
Deborah Needleman
Sara Ruffin Costello
& Dara Caponigro

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for the lovely and talented staff of *domino*

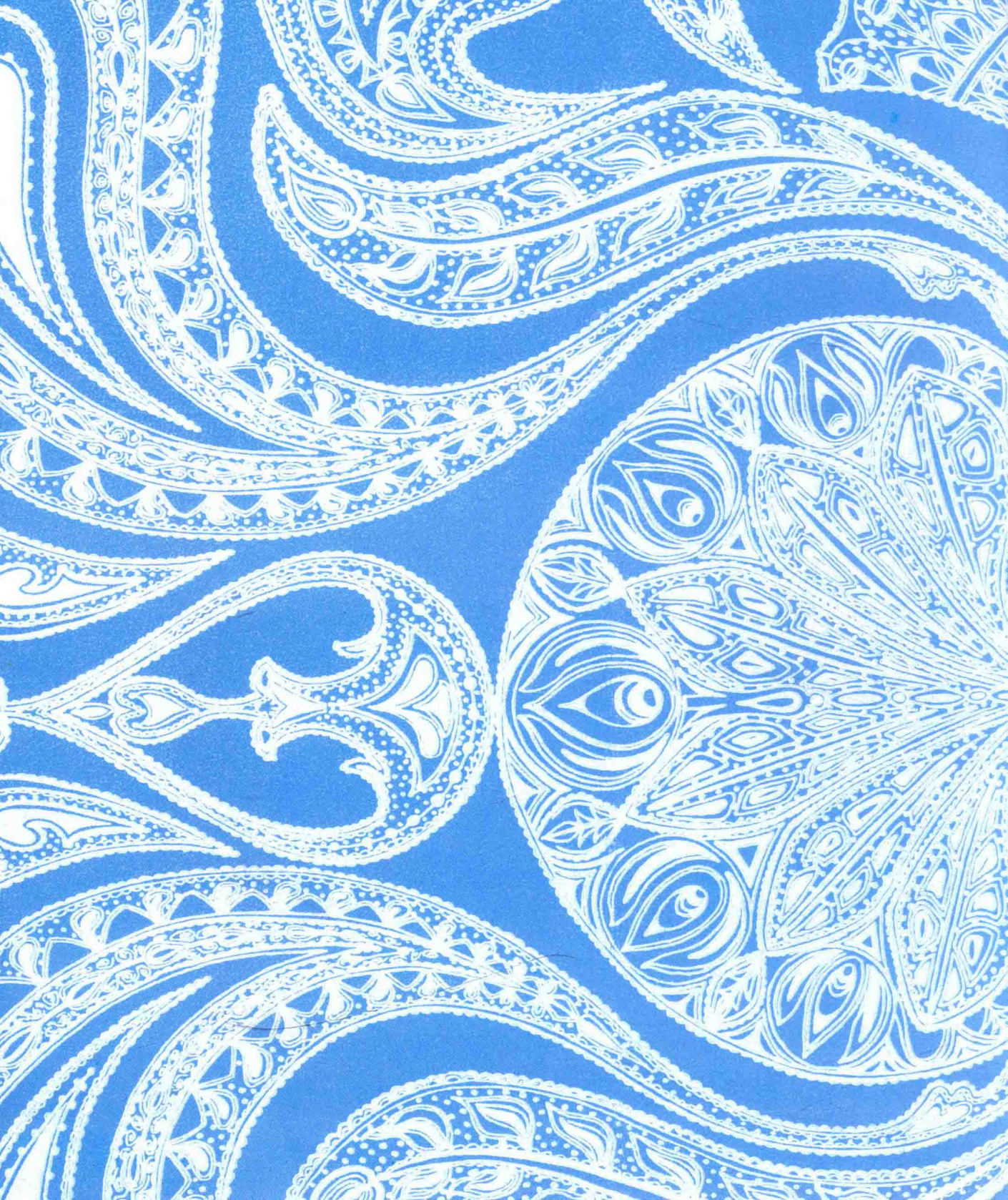


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introduction

When we started *domino* in 2005, my fellow editors and I began with a straightforward and somewhat naïve goal: to demystify and democratize decorating.

In my fleeting attempts to decorate the places in which my family lived—a series of Manhattan apartments and a ramshackle weekend house in the Hudson Valley—I’d encountered the obstacles familiar to many of our readers. Simply choosing which sofa to buy was complicated enough, and getting wallpaper nearly impossible. I couldn’t even gain entrance to the arcane temples known as design showrooms, which were open only “to the trade.” The familiar shelter magazines, including the one where I’d worked for several years, were filled with “aspirational” homes: strikingly beautiful fantasies, with little relation to the way I lived or anything resembling a budget I could afford. I wanted my home to make me happy. But the route there seemed designed to frustrate me.

We were convinced that decorating didn’t have to be a mystery, a burden or an additional source of anxiety in our busy lives. As I say, we were a bit naïve. We thought all we had to do was explain the decorating process, share secrets from the professionals we most admired and bust a few antiquated cartels. What we discovered along the way was that we had to do something more than gain direct access to the wallpaper supply. We had to create an alternative route for our readers, who faced the same decorating quandaries we did: How can you decorate without making unnecessary, costly and time-consuming mistakes? How can you produce a result that reflects who you are, how you live—and perhaps even the image you want to convey?

This book reflects everything my co-authors and I have learned about answering those questions. Connoisseurs say that looking, looking and more looking is the

key to learning about anything visual, whether it's great rooms, gardens, art or architecture. But over the years, I've found that I can understand a subject more readily and appreciate it more deeply when I have some context—a base of knowledge—on which to ground my thoughts while I look. So that's how we organized the book.

We decode pictures of spaces we love in order to show how to “read” a room (*Great Rooms and Why They Work*). We break rooms down into their components to illustrate how they can be “layered” piece by piece (*Building a Room*) and also arm you with the need-to-know facts we wish someone had given us. We share the insights we've garnered from the homes we've been lucky enough to visit (*Ideas to Steal*). And finally we reveal the stories behind how our own rooms came into being (*The Domino Effect*)—because, of course, real life is messier and less linear than any manual.

Just three years after we started, decorating is a lot more democratic than it used to be. If you consult the back of this book, you'll find that “civilians” have more access to resources and insider tricks than ever before. I'd like to think that our magazine has played a role in that transformation. But more than that, I hope this book reflects the spirit that has guided us—the joy of finding your own style and creating a home that is about the way you choose to live.

Happy decorating!

Deborah

Deborah Needleman



CHAPTER ONE

getting started

1. find inspiration

CAST A WIDE NET in looking for ideas. Magazines and books—decorating and otherwise—are natural starting points, but movies, art, fashion, nature and travel are also rich resources. Don't think about it too much—just grab what you love: Tear out or copy pages, save images from the Internet, gather photos and postcards (being sure to mark the specific attributes you love for future reference). Be literal—collect paint chips from the hardware store—and be populist: A matchbook in the right color can be every bit as useful as a photo of Jackie O's boudoir. Don't be shy about including fantasies: You might not get to replicate that palace ballroom, but a picture of it could supply a solution or help shape your aesthetic.

START A FILE of these favorite things. Depending on how you like to organize, you can use a basket, an accordion folder, a bulletin board or a binder, or you can save in an online file (like "My Deco File" on dominomag.com). It can be as high- or low-tech as you like: The best system is the one you'll actually use.

LOOK FOR THEMES in the images you've compiled. After you've spent some time amassing, take stock. Have you picked several things that feature the same yellow? Lots of gilding? African-esque patterns? Are you drawn to rooms filled with stuff or ones that are more spartan? Get a little ruthless now with your images and ask yourself: "Do I really love this? Does this merit keeping?"



