

AT HOME

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FRANCES SCHULTZ: This is a house that is perhaps most felicitously described as "pretty," and very traditional. Yet it has an unself-conscious freshness that speaks of today.

JASON BELL: I love this traditional stuff. I'm from Mobile-you have to love it. It's also my training.







Jevine & Fleming for seven years. Amazing, But the traditional thing can get heavy. I began filtering away from that. There's also a part of my heart that is modern. My wife is a modernist architect....

So how did you approach the job with this client?

I didn't want the house to be super-traditional, but some of it was undefeatable. The architecture was very Georgian, and she has incredibly traditional furniture. And she's, like, I don't want to spend a million dollars. Can we work with this stuff?

There must have been a lot of it, which is a good thing, since this house seems to go on forever.

It's huge. And yes, a lot, and we used it all. They'd had a larger city apartment and a country house. She sent me to a warehouse, and I swear it was stacked to the roof.

There's a very strong color sense here. Did the client ask for a red and green house?

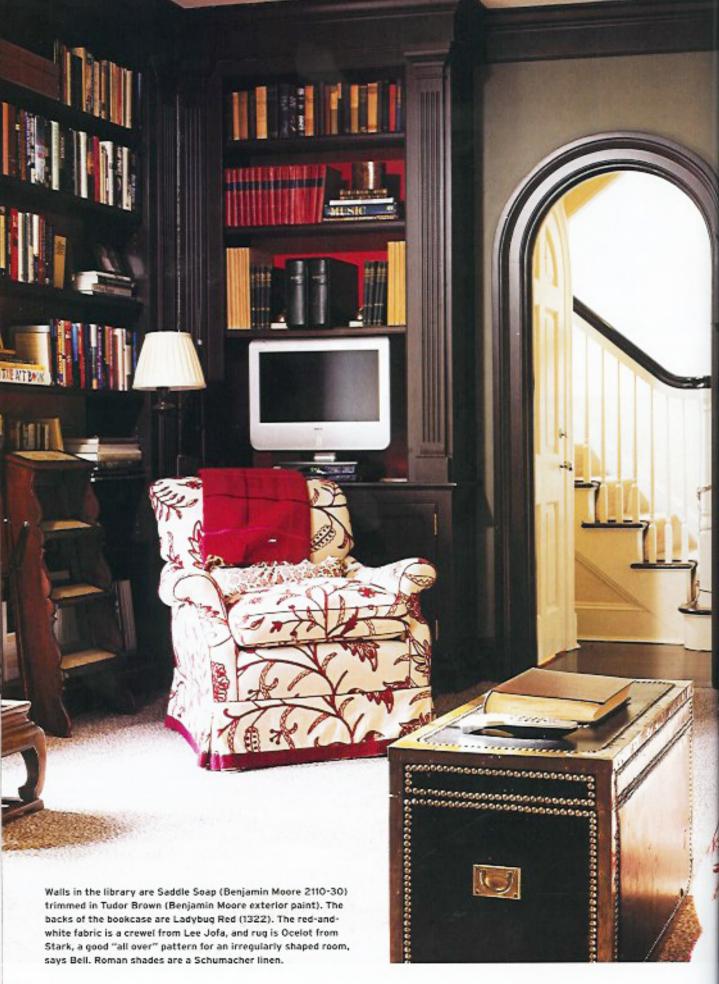
No, but what she did not want was a house with the yellow living room and the red this and the green that—the English country look. She's had that. I told her, why don't we do a calm entrance hall and bright colors off it so that each of the rooms will pull you in a direction.

The beiges used in the passages allow the eye to rest before being excited again by the next room. Like that green living room—wow. Isn't green difficult?

No. It's a Brunschwig & Fils strié paper. I picked the color from a sofa she already had. Why spend three thousand dollars re-covering something when I'd much rather put it into something she doesn't already have?

I love that back-to-back leopard chair thing. Does anybody actually sit in it?

That thing is a Greg Jordan original design. I might call it a "sociable," but I think those have four parts. And people love sitting in it. It's very comfortable.





There's a lot of red in the house. Red's a bold color in decorating, used by bold personalities, don't you think?

Well she's not not-bold. I think red is a very exciting color, and honestly it was kind of the signature color of Irvine & Fleming, so I really grew a fondness for it.

Your curtains, it seems, are kinda "played down," too. What is your philosophy about curtains, because I can tell you have one.

You know what? Enough with the fluff. I mean, simple's good. People like light, so why block it out?

Because it's a good way to run up the bill? Which is not my philosophy.

The library color is so interesting. What is it?

It was a great debate. The husband wanted a rich, woodpaneled room, and I said, do you know how awful new wood looks? Let's paint it and we'll make it look amazing. So we painted the backs of the bookcases blood red, and the walls are a Benjamin Moore color called Saddle Soap.

It looks like a very comfortable house, but where does the family really live?

They do quite a bit of hanging out in the family room, but really they live all over the house. That was her specific request. She said, I do not want this house to feel over-the-top. I want to feel like I can go in and curl up and use every room.

Is a comfortable house more about what you do, or what you don't do?

Hmmm. I think you have to mix furniture. Have a skirted table and a mirrored table—and throw in some plastic. So that no one thing screams "precious."

Doesn't that also make a house more "real," and isn't that a factor of comfort?

Yes. Reality is the bachelor who comes in with all his modern stuff, and she's got her family's mahogany—it can work. I think to throw things out is a shame because it's like losing a portion of someone's life. Produced by Senga Mortimer





