

TOTAL COMFORT

House Beautiful

MARCH 2006

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MORE
AT HOME**

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A MAN
COMFORTABLE?
OR A WOMAN?
IT'S THE
LITTLE THINGS!**

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WHICH WHITE
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A portrait of the client's grandmother hangs above the living room fireplace (this page). Brunswick & Fils strié wallpaper works with Rose Cumming chintz. **OPPOSITE ABOVE:** Batman mirror over sofa by Greg Jordan. Coral damask also by Brunswick. **OPPOSITE BELOW:** In the entrance hall, doors were added on the advice of a feng shui master.

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.

Which was ...



Irvine & 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 Brunswick & 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.





Walls in the library are Saddle Soap (Benjamin Moore 2110-30) trimmed in Tudor Brown (Benjamin Moore exterior paint). The backs of the bookcase are Ladybug Red (1322). The red-and-white fabric is a crewel from Lee Jofa, and rug is Ocelot from Stark, a good "all over" pattern for an irregularly shaped room, says Bell. Roman shades are a Schumacher linen.



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, wood-paneled 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*







The bed, covered and canopied in Brunschwig & Fils, was brought from a previous residence, and Bell designed the room around it. The Travers toile on the club chair, he says, pulls it all together. Reading lamps from Hansen with custom shades. Walls are Caribbean Mist (Benjamin Moore 2061-70). Carpet from Stark.