

Contents



ON THE COVER:

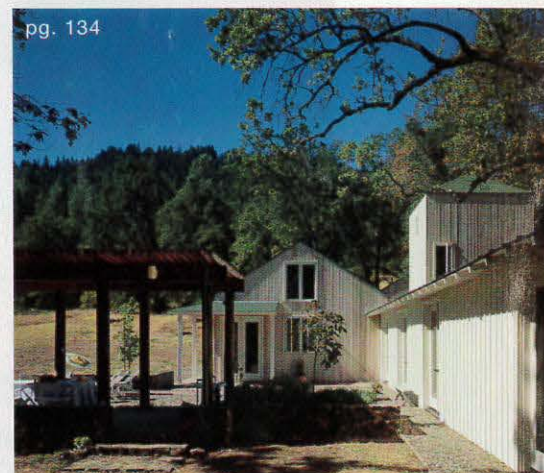
In an 18th-century house in the remote French countryside, a Parisian couple entertains luncheon guests on an impromptu plank table under an old linden tree. Visiting this *manoir* is a journey into an austere elegant past. See page 90. Photograph by Elizabeth Zeschin.

Volume 137,
Number 4
April 1995

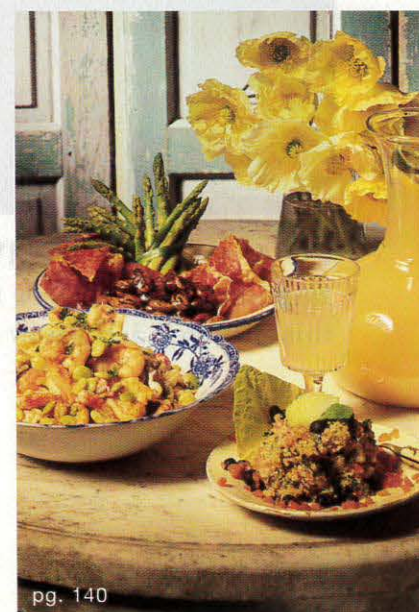
- 89 **Paris in the Snow** The editor's page
- 90 **Elegance in the Raw** Pursuing an otherworldly life in a romantic 18th-century French manor house. By Christopher Petkanas
- 100 **Urban Balm** Designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz creates a Manhattan oasis. By Dylan Landis
- 104 **A Burnished Survivor** A Charleston family lives with old family pieces and harmonious new ones. By Mimi Read
- 108 **Lauren Looks Downtown** A new young home furnishings line. By Jill Kirchner
- 112 **Lush to Begin With** Proof that you needn't wait a decade for a garden to come into its glory. By Elizabeth H. Hunter
- 118 **View from Nob Hill** Tranquillity, texture, and treasured antiques. By Tessa Souter
- 122 **The Joy of Red** Dallas designer Beverly Field lights up her rooms with plenty of her favorite color. By Mimi Read
- 128 **Velvet** Today's fabric market offers new velvets in rich colors, supple textures, and inventive patterns. By Elizabeth Mayhew
- 130 **French Class** New York's instructive French Designer Showhouse. By Elizabeth H. Hunter
- 134 **A House That Breathes** An airy compound in California. By Susan Zevon
- 140 **Going with the Grains** Humble barley, rice, and beans in starring roles. By Jane Ellis



pg. 108



pg. 134



pg. 140

A burnished survivor

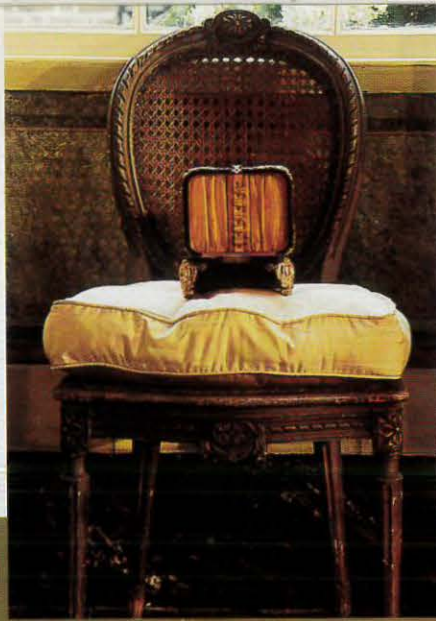
In an old Charleston neighborhood that rose and fell and rose again, a family lives with inherited pieces and harmonious new ones, plus works by the painter-in-residence



BY MIMI READ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LANGDON CLAY
PRODUCED BY DARA CAPONIGRO

In Charleston, South Carolina, old families are still the taproots of civilization. Charlestonians worship their ancestors, and by extension, their ancestors' houses. Sometimes those proud houses get into trouble. By the 1950s one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, Ansonborough, had fallen into profound disrepair. Its stately brick Greek Revival houses were falling apart and had become a skid row for "rum bums, harridans, drunken sailors, and houses of ill repute," according to Thomas Savage, curator of the Historic Charleston Foundation.

A Kat Hastie painted screen (ABOVE) hangs over a 1920s American collapsible bar. OPPOSITE PAGE: Hastie and daughter, Eugenia (TOP LEFT), at the piano. A caneback chair (TOP CENTER) displays a leather and ormolu box. TOP RIGHT: A long-waisted iron sculpture echoes Eugenia's pose in an old photograph. BELOW: In the living room, a lively play of textures makes up for an absence of pattern.





In 1959, with only \$100,000 in start-up money, the Historic Charleston Foundation bought seven Ansonborough houses, stabilized them, and sold them. The foundation put profits into a revolving fund and kept purchasing houses until the entire neighborhood was secure. "It was one of the great preservation triumphs of this century," Savage says. Houses that the foundation bought for \$6,000 are now selling for \$600,000, and Ansonborough is again one of Charleston's most beautiful neighborhoods.

In the late 1980s two Charlestonians named Kat and Drayton Hastie bought an 1840s double tenement in the heart of Ansonborough. (Although it has acquired pejorative connotations, the word tenement means property *(Continued on page 148)*)

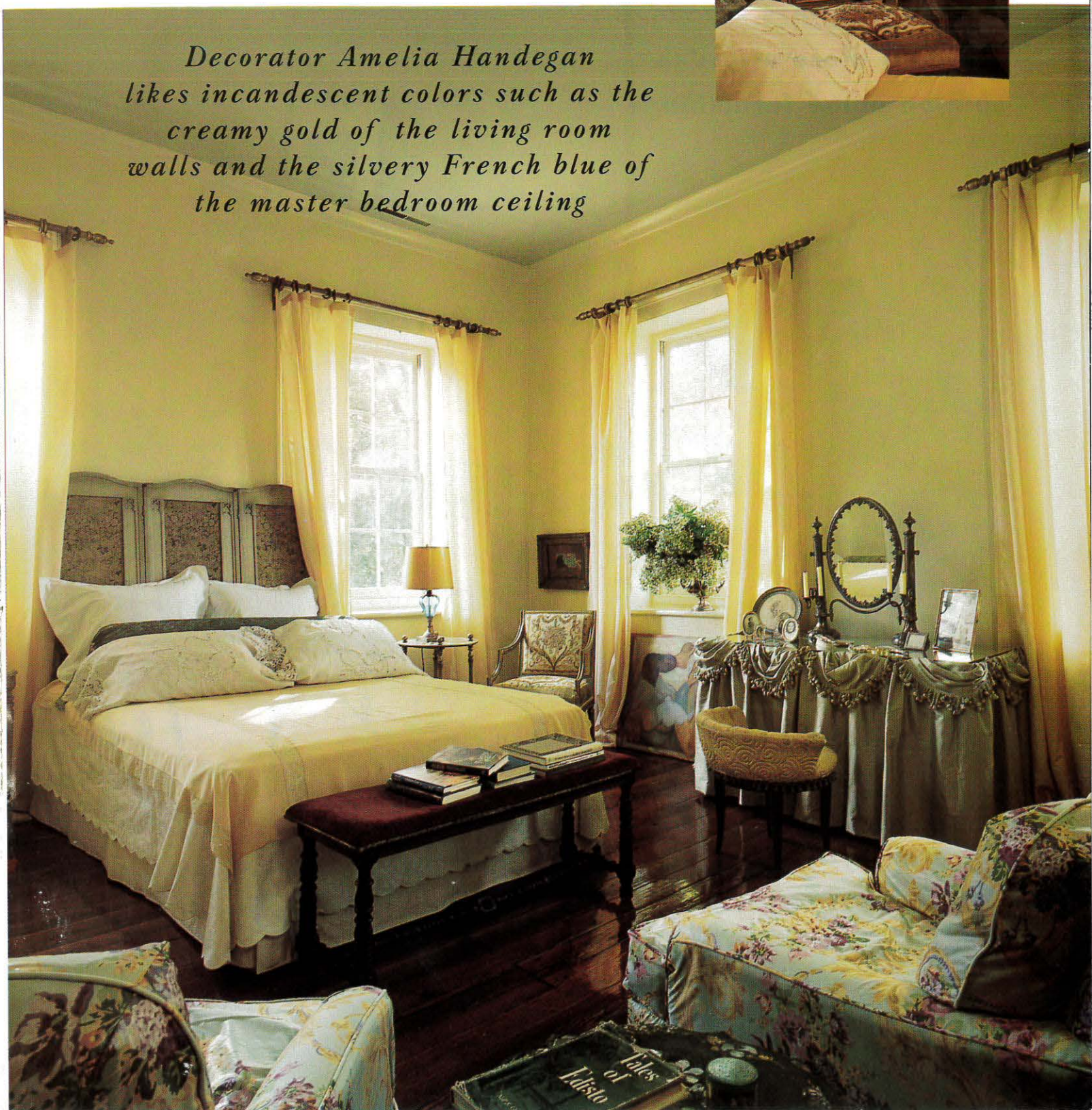


The Hasties found the circa 1840 pedestal table (OPPOSITE) in Savannah; a local sign painter gave it a black top and gold rim. Empire dining chairs were bought on King Street; Kat painted them black with gold crests on the splats. The black marble mantel is original. OPPOSITE INSET: Between dining room windows, a silver tea service. BELOW AND RIGHT: In the bedroom, a plain vanity table and mirror from Drayton Hastie's grandmother is festooned in antique fabric. Handegan covered a 1920s French chair in the corner with 18th-century needlework.

For more details, see Reader Information



*Decorator Amelia Handegan
likes incandescent colors such as the
creamy gold of the living room
walls and the silvery French blue of
the master bedroom ceiling*



reduce mixture by half over high heat. Remove pan from the heat and slowly fold in cooked beans. Set pan aside and keep warm.

Split each zucchini lengthwise in half. Brush with remaining oil, season with remaining salt and pepper, and lay on a baking sheet skin-side down. Bake in a preheated 450°F oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool.

Cut the halved zucchini crosswise into ¼-inch slices. On four serving plates layer the zucchini slices in a circle, 4 inches in diameter. Spoon a helping of the beans onto the middle of each zucchini circle and top each serving with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese. Serves 4.

SAFFRON PILAF WITH LAMB

For saffron pilaf:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 12 saffron threads
- 1 large yellow onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cardamom seeds, hulled and crushed
- 1 clove
- 1½ cups Basmati rice
- 2 cups hot chicken stock
- 1 cup dry white wine
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

For lamb:

- 1 pound lamb leg or shoulder meat, sinew and fat removed and discarded, meat finely shredded by a butcher
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic

- 1 tablespoon minced fresh basil leaves

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Prepare saffron pilaf: In a large heavy saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the saffron and sauté quickly for 1 minute, stirring constantly. As the saffron cooks it will color the oil a light yellow. Add the onion, garlic, bay leaf, cardamom, and clove to the pan and sauté for 2 minutes. Add rice to the pan and sauté for 2 additional minutes, stirring constantly. Add the stock and wine and bring to a boil. Cover and place in a preheated 375°F oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed. Remove from oven and keep warm. Makes 4½ cups.

Prepare lamb: Combine the lamb, garlic, basil, oil, salt and pepper in a bowl. Mix well and divide into four equal parts. Heat a large heavy nonstick 10-inch frying pan to just below smoking. Add one portion of lamb and press down into the pan as it cooks so that the meat forms a cake across the diameter of the pan. Sear for 1 minute until brown. Carefully turn with a spatula and sear on the other side. Remove and drain on paper towels. Repeat with the 3 other portions. Place cooked lamb patties on 4 plates and serve with saffron pilaf. Serves 4.

SWEET RISOTTO WITH GRILLED PINEAPPLE AND MANGO

- 2 mangoes
- ½ cup Arborio rice
- 2 cups whole milk
- ¼ cup sugar

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter (optional)
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 1 egg yolk (optional)
- 1 pineapple, peeled, cored and cut into ½-inch slices

To slice the mangoes, hold one in your hand with the thick base of the fruit on a cutting board. With a sharp knife, slice vertically down both sides of the fruit and remove the two elliptical discs of fruit on either side of the large seed inside the fruit. Holding a disc of fruit flat on a cutting board, make a series of criss-cross incisions into the meat so that a diamond pattern is cut, being careful not to cut all the way through the mango skin. Repeat with each mango disc and set aside.

Place the rice in a fine sieve and rinse under cold running water for 2 minutes. Drain.

In a heavy saucepan combine the milk, sugar, butter, and vanilla bean. Bring to a low boil, add the rice, and stir. Simmer gently, stirring with a wooden spoon continuously for about 15 minutes or until the rice is cooked. Remove from heat and wait 5 minutes before adding the egg yolk, if desired, to thicken and give risotto a creamier texture. Remove pan from heat, discard vanilla bean, and cover to keep warm.

Preheat grill until coals are white hot, or preheat broiler. Place pineapple slices on the grill until grill marks are definite, about 3 to 5 minutes per side. Remove slices and keep warm. Place mango slices on grill, flesh-side down, for 1 to 2 minutes.

To serve, place grilled fruit on a serving platter and risotto in a bowl. Serve immediately. Serves 4. ■

A BURNISHED SURVIVOR

Continued from page 106

built for rental, often for more than one family). Like so many of the houses in this unified, villagelike neighborhood, theirs is brick and Greek Revival, noble and simple. It had already been restored by the foundation. Kat, a painter, and Drayton, a lawyer, have five children between them, so they liked the fact that the house had two staircases and loads of bedrooms. They liked its history, too, and its windows streaming with greenish-gold garden light.

Kat Hastie hired Amelia Handegan, a Charleston decorator and antiques dealer, to create comfortable, elegant rooms with "not too much in them but not too little"—an opulent minimalism.

Handegan, who co-owns a shop called

A. Zola on Charleston's renowned King Street, is quite obsessed with the subtleties and oddnesses of color. "As a child my art teacher would say, 'Do you see the purple in the tree bark?' and I was able to say, 'Yes, I do.' Ever since then I've tried to look for the hidden color."

Handegan likes burnished, incandescent colors such as the creamy gold she chose for the living room walls and the silvery French blue she chose for the master bedroom ceiling—a color lifted from the dressing table's mirror. "I like to look in the least obvious place to pull color from."

As the scheme was germinating, Kat happened to be doing a lot of decorative painting in a vaguely Italianesque style.

Handegan decided to incorporate many of Kat's paintings, painted screens, painted furniture, and faux finishes into the decor. Handegan also worked in family furnishings that Drayton inherited from a beloved grandmother. The designer even fashioned pistachio-green Roman shades for the living room windows out of the grandmother's old curtains; then she painted the ceiling of the room the same muted color. In this way, the decor grew radially from a few central thoughts and shimmering reincarnations.

"It's southern in the fact that it's a combination of family pieces and newer, acquired pieces," Handegan says. "But even the newer pieces have a character that blends with the old." ■