

welcome

Not Another List?

I dislike lists. I find them annoying, especially the ones that tell you what you were supposed to do that day, if only you had remembered to look at the damn list in the first place. Then there are the directories of names and numbers of people who would be useful to call in the event that your chandelier needed dusting, or your copper pots relining. But by the time you get around to those chores, anyone on the list you've been saving has been out of business for years.

And then there are the lists that bloom annually in the pages of this kind of magazine, lists of decorators and architects who are deemed worthy of consideration when you get around to overhauling your château. But, really, who engages designers by name only? Of course, as in all things, there are exceptions to the rule. I, for one, would reach for the telephone to order an immediate overhaul of my garden if I found a name like Capability Brown on a list. That is the sort of name that commands unswerving confidence. But for someone who wants to see and feel a person's work, lists of names usually mean nothing. I cannot remember names anyway—but I never forget a room. So rather than give you a list of today's tastemakers, *House & Garden* is presenting a veritable portrait gallery. A "tastemaker," according to the Random House dictionary, is "a person or thing that establishes or strongly influences what is considered to be stylish, acceptable, or worthwhile in a given sphere of interest"; it's a word that has been popular since the mid-'50s, when America began her obsessive search for people who could shed light on that mysterious and evanescent thing called taste. With this issue, you can see the strength, quality, vision, and influence of our designers' work.

Designers, at least the ones we like, have a lot going for them. They've got the nerve to want to change the way the world looks, the panache to catch people's attention, and the training, talent, and discipline to deliver the goods. What they don't have is advertising budgets.

That's where *House & Garden* comes in. We are, if you will, the evangelists of the design world. When we see something we love, we want to spread the good news, convert everyone to the cause: Design matters! Design alters your life! Design is fun and gorgeous and sexy! Let us show you how! Since conversion always involves some measure of seduction leavened with education, we lavish attention and resources and inventiveness on our photo shoots and on all the writing of our stories. When

House & Garden shows you a designer's work, we want you to walk into the rooms, or feel the weight of an object or the texture of a fabric. And we want you to understand why you are there in the first place.

This is why, over and over again, architects and decorators and product designers tell us about big new commissions they have gotten as a result of stories we have run. Businesses have flourished; careers have been nourished. Designers whose work has never been seen in the United States suddenly have a burgeoning American client list. We are thrilled—and honored—to sell readers on the power of great design. We are always getting phone calls from people wondering whom they should hire to build a new home, or design a new line of fabric, or consult about the installation of an art or antiques collection. Some people want a designer with an established reputation and many years' worth of projects to show. Others want a newer name, someone whose talent and eye are evident, but not so renowned as to make them inaccessible to most. These are designers who not only change the way the world looks; they change the way we see the world. They enlarge our vision; they enhance our receptivity. I cannot tell you how many times I have seen something that I thought at first was simply ugly, and then, over time, have felt my sense of what is tasteful, or interesting, or beautiful, being coaxed out of its safe corner. Soon, I'm feeling the joyous bounce of aesthetic derring-do.

Our New Tastemakers aren't household names, but they aren't neophytes either. After all, when you are a client with enough money to make a rather big mistake, you want to trust the person you hire. Our tastemakers, who have generally been in business on their own for five to ten years, have trained with the masters of the design world, with people like Peter Marino, Thierry Despont, Rose Tarlow, Richard Meier, Jeffrey Bilhuber, Bunny Williams. They are at different points in their careers, some more established than others. Some work in teams: husband and wife, mother and daughter. They are all designers who have the innocence to believe that what they do will change people's lives. And it will. Any one of these designers will inspire you to believe that a well-designed world is a happier place to live.




Dominique Browning, EDITOR