



TEXAS

The dining room reveals the multicultural influence that interior designer Joseph Minton brings. Georgian silver on an English sideboard; Italian goblets and chairs; a chandelier, a mirror, and fabric from France—all coexist in harmony.

Sized TASTE

A FORT WORTH
COUPLE ENJOYS THE
PROCESS OF BUILDING
NEW HOMES WHERE
PERSONAL STYLE
SEEMS ALMOST
LARGER THAN LIFE.

by *SHELLEY STEWART* photographs by *EMILY MINTON-REDFIELD*

WE'VE DONE A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING WHEN IT COMES TO *entertaining.*



THIS PHOTO: In the dining room, hand-stenciled walls in shades of apricot and sage complement an antique Serapi rug. The chairs, which are more comfortable reproductions of 18th-century Italian chairs, are covered in French-needlework-tapestry fabric.



LEFT: Boston ivy accents the front of the Williamson home. TOP: The entry, edged with a balustrade railing, overlooks a gallery with a soaring ceiling. ABOVE: The painted commode in the entry is an 18th-century Italian piece that Minton found in Europe.

Years ago, Patricia and Donovan Williamson lived in a large Gothic home with history in every square foot. They brought up their family there, enjoying their neighborhood, until their three boys grew up and moved out. There came a day when the venerable home seemed too big and too empty—and the lot behind it was available.

That two-acre lot was filled with trees and even backed up to a pretty little stream. If they built a new home, they could design it with rooms configured for entertaining and have an up-to-the-minute kitchen. With no historical precedent, the two long-time collectors could furnish it in any style they liked. They could do away with the six bedrooms they weren't using and still have room for the grandchildren.

And they could participate in every step of the process—it sounded like fun.

That was 13 years ago. Now they live in an ivy-draped home that fits their lifestyle and has both elegance and modern amenities. Building was a good decision.

To design their classically Mediterranean home, the Williamsons called on their good friend, the late Bud Oglesby, an architect better known for his contemporary buildings. They explained the features they hoped to include. "We didn't know if he could design something traditional or not," Patricia, who likes to be called Pat, says. "I told him the main thing I wanted was to be able to see outside from anywhere in the house."



I ALWAYS TRY TO MIX *different cultures* IN THE HOUSES I DESIGN.

ABOVE: While the collection of African ceremonial masks in the living room is an exotic touch, it also looks strikingly contemporary. RIGHT: Iron grillwork adorns the open hallway overlooking the spacious living room. Hand-rubbed woodwork adds warmth and character to the architecture. OPPOSITE: Floor-to-ceiling windows and oversized doors allow abundant light to flood into the living room. High ceilings accommodate large-scale antique paintings. Upholstered furniture in a medley of palest gold fabrics offers comfortable seating for conversations.



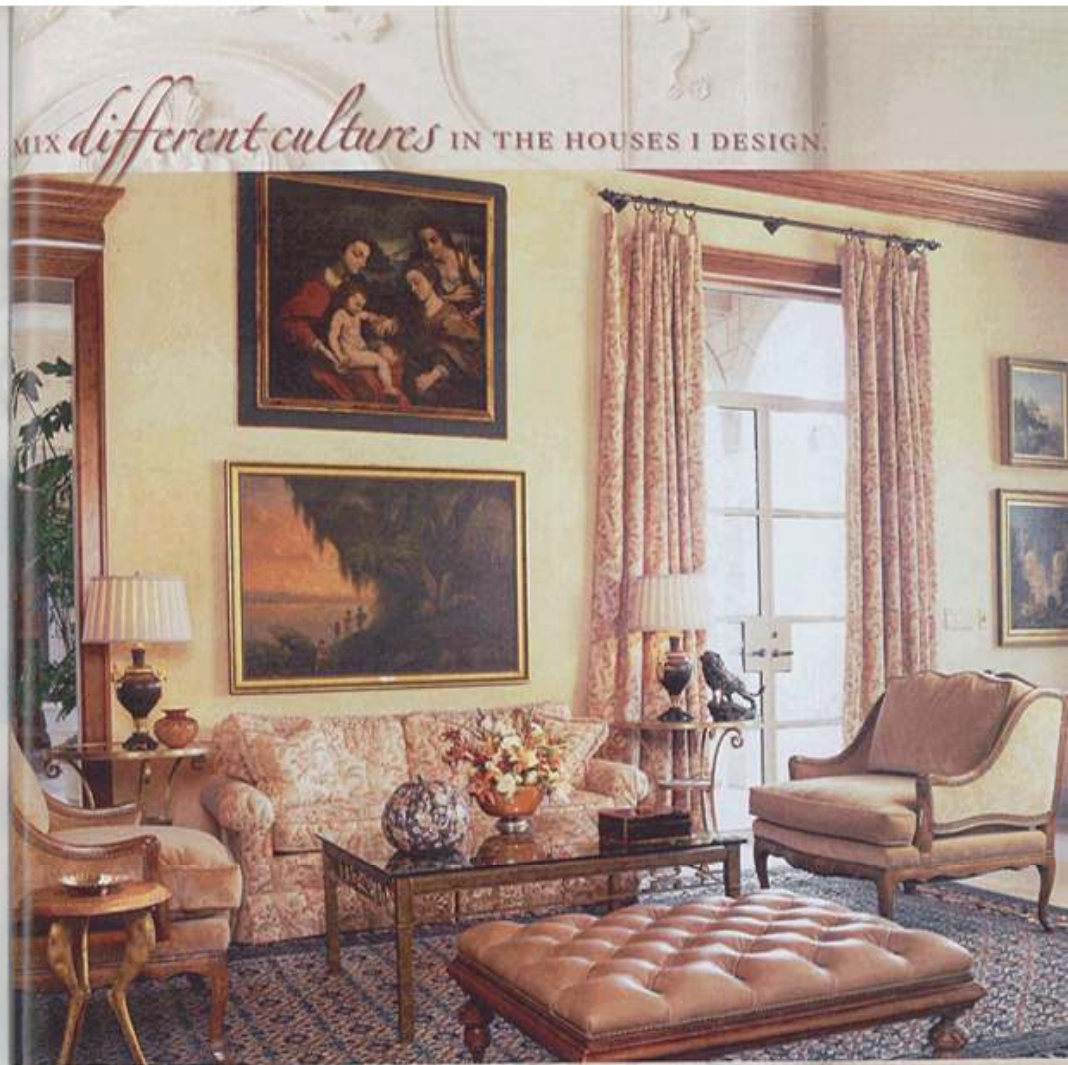
Oglesby, working with fellow architect Kraig Post, responded with a gracious design featuring hand-chiseled limestone, a slate roof, and arched windows. Intriguing surprises begin at the front door: The spacious entry has a balustrade railing overlooking a lower-level back entry that leads out to the pool. On the second floor, an open hallway with a wrought-iron railing connects the two ends of the home. The ceiling over the lower entry soars almost three stories high. Such openness makes the home seem even larger than it is, and the space cried out for embellishment.


Enter Joseph Minton, an interior designer who has known the Williamsons since before they were married. His taste for luxury matches their own, and his knowledge of sources

all over the world made him the perfect choice to help them. New room dimensions required new paintings, mirrors, rugs, and furniture—antique if possible. The quest was on.

Soon shipments started arriving at Minton's antiques shop: an 18th-century Italian commode destined for the entry; the English Georgian sideboard and Baccarat chandelier for the dining room; paintings from Paris; Persian rugs; and silver serving pieces from London. What Minton couldn't find, he designed: New chairs in the living room mimic antique French bergères but are scaled for today. "Our family loves collecting," Pat says. Minton is a true kindred spirit.

His design assistant for the Williamson home was Cecilia Berber-Thayer, whose husband, Russ, is a talented stone





Dividing the living room into intimate areas for conversation and other activities keeps the large space on a livable scale. Each golden-hued wall has a focal point: The hand-carved mantelpiece vies for attention with the antique deux-corps armoire and two oversized paintings on another wall.

Buying Fine Antiques

Interior designer Joseph Minton's work takes him to Paris, London, and Rome on a regular basis as he searches for treasures to adorn his clients' homes. Combining large antique shops and small, out-of-the-way market stalls, he makes an art of finding exactly the right piece. Here are some tips for buying fine antique furniture to add luxury and character to your home:

- ★ **Learn the terms so you can describe what you're seeking.** For example, a bergère is a French-style armchair with exposed wood. A deux-corps armoire has two pieces. Gaufrage velvete is embossed.
- ★ **Consider the scale of chairs.** It's not a comfortable seat height and depth for the average person, look for a quality reproduction, sized for today, instead.
- ★ **Choose style and condition over surface.** If the piece wobbles, find a furniture craftsman who can bring it back to a structurally sound condition. If there's a little paint flaking off, don't worry; it adds character to the room. Leave the original finish; touch up only the most obvious flaws.
- ★ **Re-cover upholstered furniture in quality fabric.** Use only material that has a good "hand" (this term refers to how a fabric feels to the touch). Choose sturdy but luxurious hand-printed linens, needlepoint-tapestry weaves, sumptuous velvets, wool, or antiqued leather. Add style with designer details such as pleats, nailhead trim, double weltting, braids, and covered buttons.
- ★ **Buy a few quality investments rather than several mediocre pieces.** Fine antiques with classic styling hold their value forever—as long as you take care of them.

I WANTED TO BE ABLE TO *look outside* FROM ANYWHERE IN THE HOUSE.



THIS PAGE: Furniture in the study came from the Williamses' former home. It includes antique French chairs upholstered in black wool and a mid-20th-century marble table designed by noted Italian architect Gae Aulenti.



LEFT and TOP: Antique furniture in the master bedroom is upholstered in new hand-printed linen that looks old and slightly faded. The bath has matching linen on the walls. ABOVE: Colorful handmade tiles add a playful note to the cream custom kitchen cabinets.

carver. Russ Thayer carved the fireplace, designed to echo a French trumeau mirror, by hand from Texas limestone. Avidly watching it progress, Minton finally installed the spectacular carving in the living room.

Limestone-slab floors are now softened by antique rugs. Most walls are painted and glazed in muted apricots and palest amber, the color of mottled parchment. These walls are the backdrop for choice European paintings, mirrors, and fine furnishings that once graced French chateaux, British manors, and Italian villas. "I always mix different cultures in any house I design," Minton says.

Windows have floor-to-high-ceiling draperies, and the antique chairs are newly upholstered. "I enjoy working

with fabrics," Minton says, in his refined Southern accent. "I used a French tapestry fabric on the dining room chairs and hand-printed English linen on the master bath walls."

"We used to meet with Joe every Tuesday to talk about the house," Pat says. Minton's touches created a home that has functioned well. "This house is good for entertaining; we've been able to do a little bit of everything here," Pat says.

Recently the urge to build came upon the Williamses again, and they constructed a weekend house on their ranch. They called on Minton because they've learned it's an ideal working relationship. The couple builds, Minton embellishes, and everyone appreciates the lovely results. ♣

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