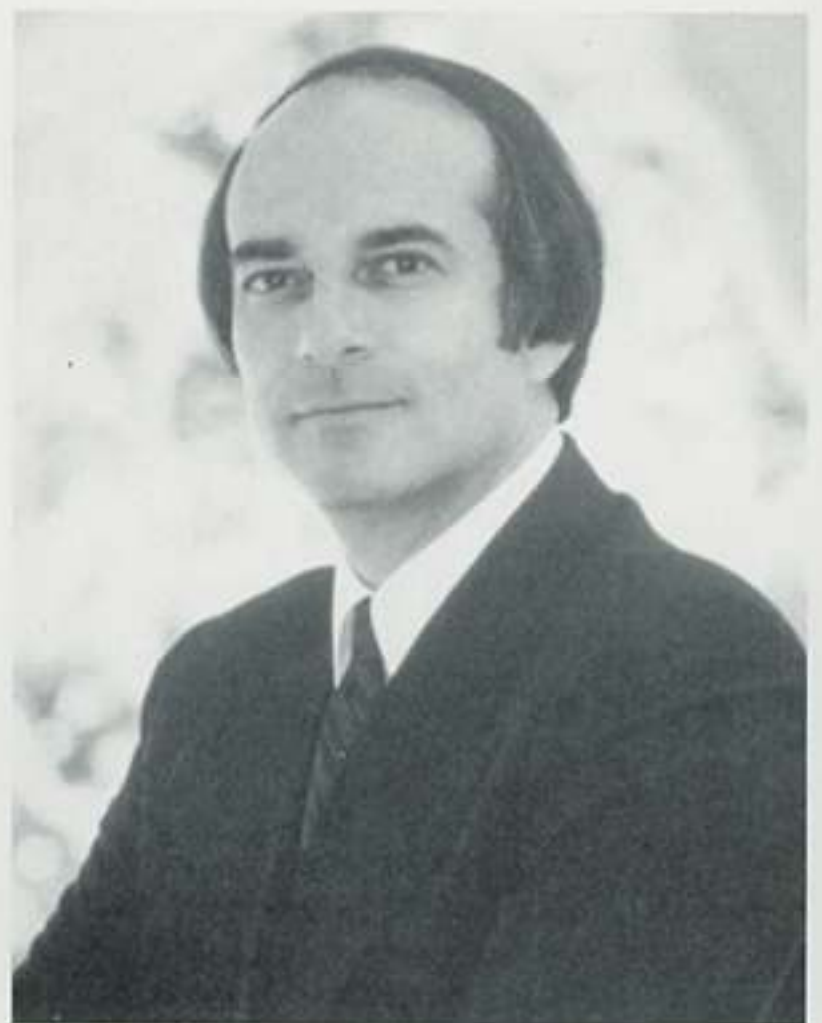


Joe Minton

David Corley

Joseph Minton

David Corley



“When we work on a project, we can’t really separate ideas and point out what each of us contributed individually. Often we think of the very same thing.”

After fifteen years in business together, interior designers Joseph Minton and David Corley of Fort Worth, Texas, consider their tastes almost identical. "We work so well together," says Mr. Minton, "that we need very little conversation. David can answer a question before I've even finished asking it, because he knows what I'm going to say."

This smooth teamwork has been the characteristic of the firm of Minton-Corley since 1969, although the designers have known each other since college days. At first, however, each pursued a separate career, David Corley entering the field of interior design, Joseph Minton becoming a lawyer and later vice-president of a bank. Coincidentally, when the bank decided to redecorate its executive offices and make a number of changes in its lobby, Mr. Minton was the staff member assigned to work with the Corley design firm on the project. Their ideas meshed happily, and they decided to join forces.

They do not feel that they have one particular style, and they enjoy working with the décor of any period, whether traditional or contemporary. This versatility of interest is essential, in fact, since the range of their projects includes Texas ranch houses as well as apartments in Paris.

Perhaps the design element they emphasize most is lighting. "As a matter of fact, we've been known to tear out the entire ceiling of a two-story house when it wasn't possible to install the proper lighting from above," says Mr. Corley. "And remember that you can't sit in your office during the day and design room lighting on paper. You have to be there in the room itself after dark to work on it—the entire character of a room changes at night." They stress the importance of "letting a room glow" and of keeping the light source hidden. For this reason they prefer lights recessed in the ceiling or uplighting behind plants.

Although their tastes are strikingly similar, it is interesting to find that their approach to the décor of their own residences was far from identical—in spite of the fact that they collaborated

on one another's homes. "Naturally, we like many of the same decorative elements," says Mr. Corley; "but of course, there are different things each of us prefers to live with." In Mr. Minton's former home, for example, there were many Oriental pieces, including a collection of porcelain vases. Contrastingly, the Corleys have gathered together more primitive art objects—Apache baskets and a ceremonial costume from New Guinea. They also have examples of Greek and Roman pottery.

Mr. Minton lived in his former home for something more than nine years. The designer recalls that he wanted to buy it from the moment he set eyes on the eleven-foot ceilings. Over the years, of course, much work was done on the house. Some of the paneling was replaced, and the library/sitting room was redesigned to complement the adjacent master bedroom. On the other side of the bedroom was a handsome and comfortable dressing suite separated into two sections by a plant-filled atrium with skylights.

Other renovations were necessary as well, many of them required by the fact that Joseph Minton does a great deal of entertaining. "In the beginning," he explains, "I used the library as the sitting room, but I found that since I much preferred it to the living room, I ended up doing a good deal of entertaining there. It really wasn't large enough, so I decided to change the living room to an area reserved more or less exclusively for parties. It definitely seemed that it would be a 'night' room at first, but it was just as effective during the day; so I found myself using the new living room even when I didn't have guests." One of the most handsome pieces of furniture in the room was a sixteenth-century Dutch cabinet, which David Corley found many years ago at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer auction in California.

Mr. Corley's own home is on a hill overlooking the Trinity River valley, surrounded by trees and with a lovely view enhanced by more than two hundred azalea bushes. The location of the house dictated some immediate changes when

“No matter how beautiful a room is during the day, it won’t be effective at night without the correct lighting.”

the Corleys first moved in about ten years ago. Many of the windows were enlarged to take advantage of the view, and special shades were devised to cut down on the glare. The family’s size demanded a functional interior, and the den—filled with casual Italian wicker furniture—was set aside primarily for use by the children.

The house is comfortable and efficient for a large family, a fact that can be seen particularly in the dining room and in the kitchen. The dining room table has a massive glass top supported by sections of two large tree trunks. The designer redid the kitchen entirely. A raised ceiling and skylights make the room seem even larger.

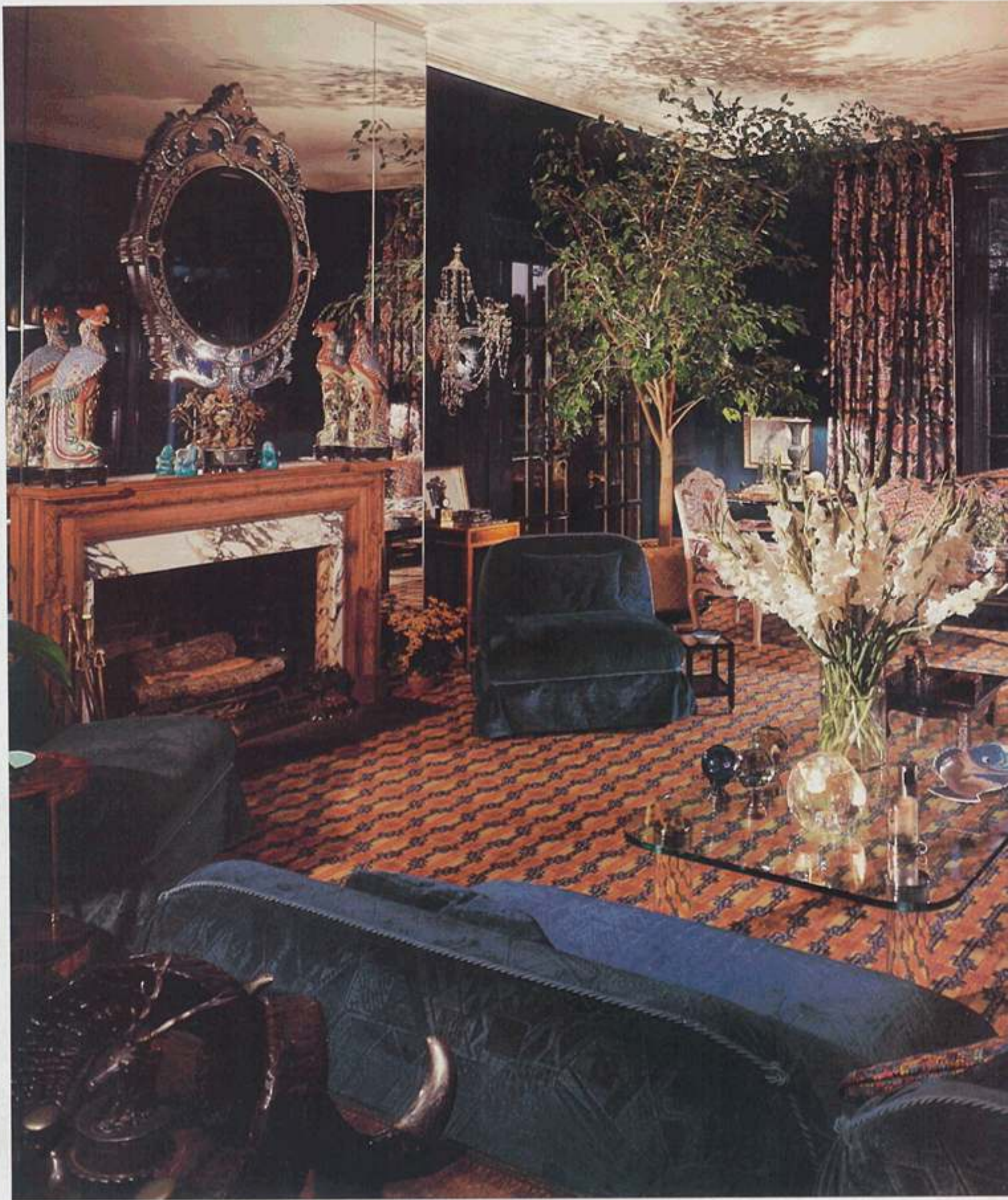
Both Joseph Minton’s former home and David Corley’s present home suggest an intriguing paradox. While the same basic design elements were used in each home, the results were quite as different as they were similar, each being suited to the needs of the particular designer. Considered side by side, the similarities and differences suggest at once the versatility and the individuality of the men who head the firm of Minton-Corley. The houses were far from identical although both interiors could have been designed by the same hand. And in a curious way, they were.



The Minton Residence

ABOVE: An intriguing collection of ivory animals is displayed on an English Georgian tilt-top table.

OPPOSITE: In the living room, deft lighting, deep tones and a geometric-patterned carpet create drama. The mirror is Venetian; the crystal sconces date from the 18th century. French crystal pieces cluster on the tabletop.



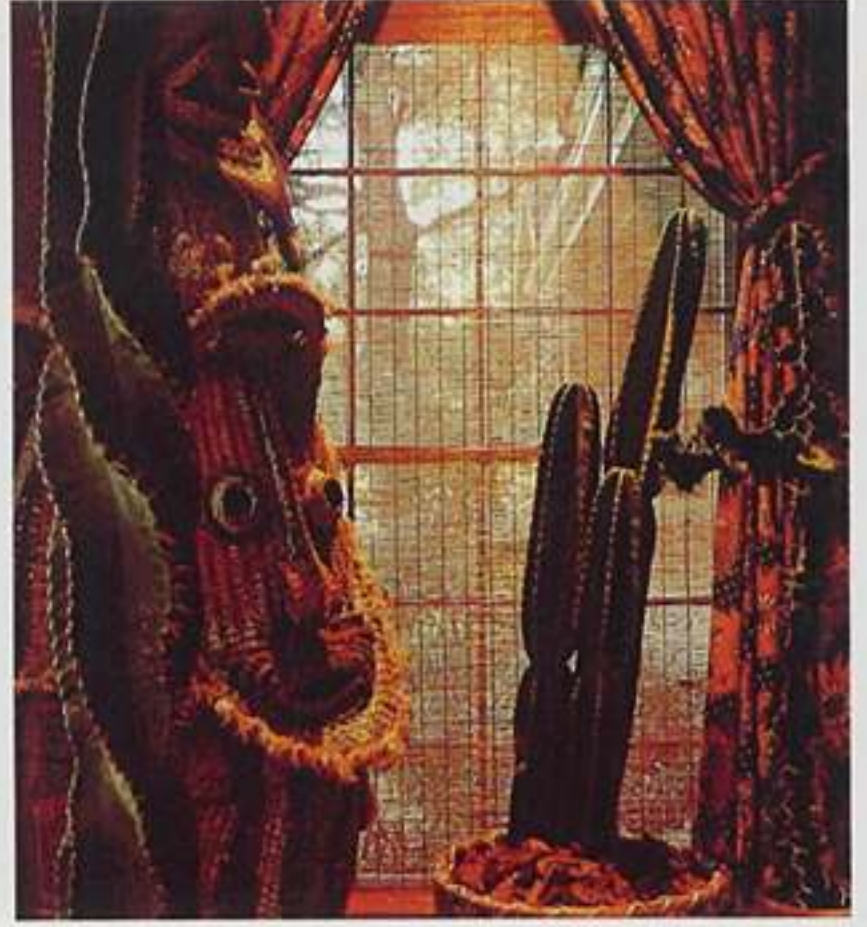
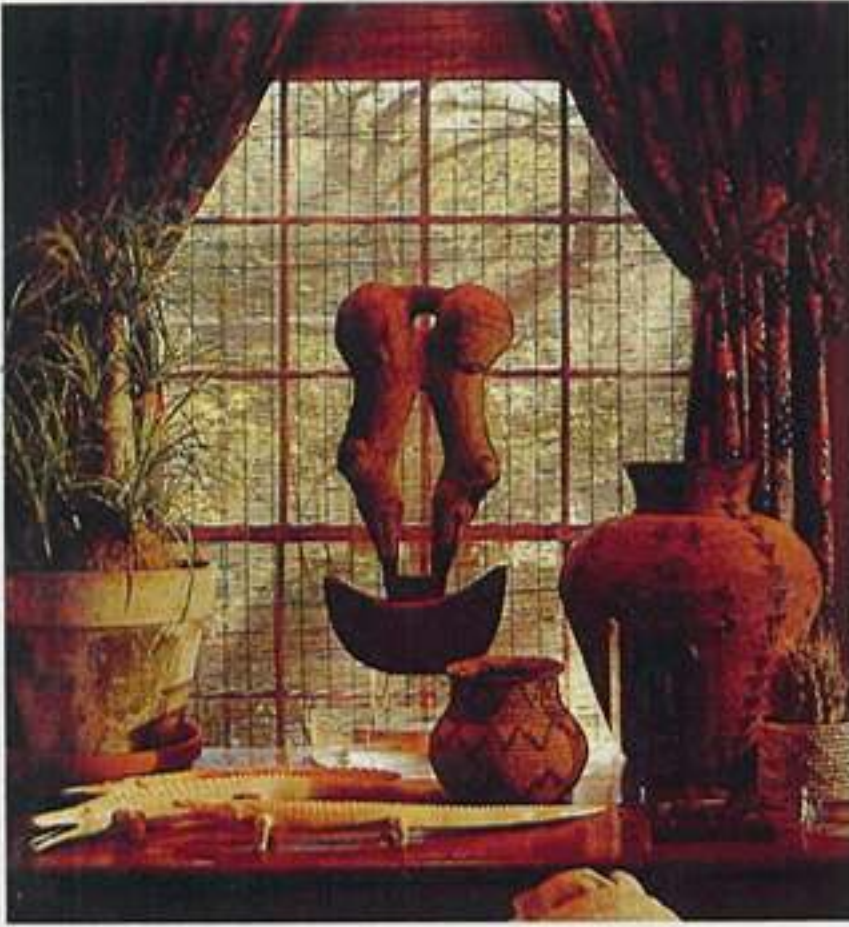




The Corley Residence

OPPOSITE: A skylighted atrium separates dressing areas in the Minton master bedroom suite.

ABOVE: An original and exotic flavor pervades David Corley's living room. Palms and cacti punctuate the warm-toned space, which is enlivened by diverse patterns. The painting is by James R. Blake.



ABOVE LEFT AND ABOVE RIGHT: Lending mystery to the living room are such primitive objects as a suspension hook and woven dance costume from New Guinea; Apache baskets, and an Ashanti wooden doll.

OPPOSITE: The sunroom leads to a spacious terrace.

