



Interiors: Minton-Corley, Fort Worth

Texture, light, pattern all mingled with art and antiques collected over the years. Deep ultramarine walls change with the light.

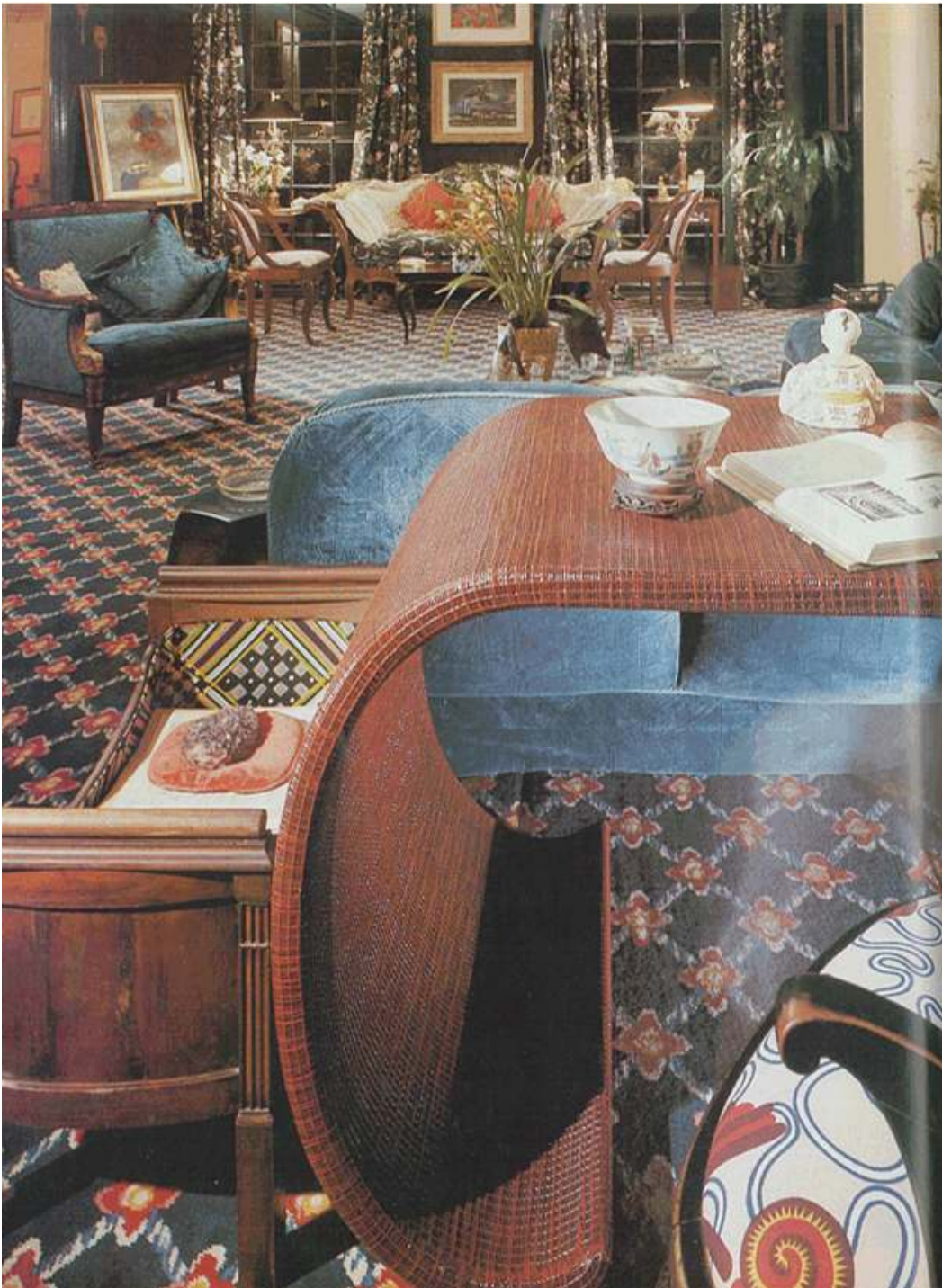
# Design collaborative

Vivid color, art, antiques  
by Mollie Pettigrew highlight a home  
photography by Rob Muir

**S**ue Pittman says it's hard to know where she stops and decorator/friend Joseph Minton begins. It's this sort of collaboration, with ideas and purchases intermingled, that results in such a fabulous melange you hardly know where to look next.

Actually this is Pittman's former home, and the house is a mixture of her ideas and renovations over the last 12 years and the efforts of friend and decorator Joseph Minton of Minton-Corley in Fort Worth.

The recent Minton redo all started when Pittman was visiting the Minton home in Fort Worth. Arriving back home, she called him and said, "You won't believe it, but I want the color in your living room." The strange part was that she doesn't like blue, and this



**Design collaborative (continued)**

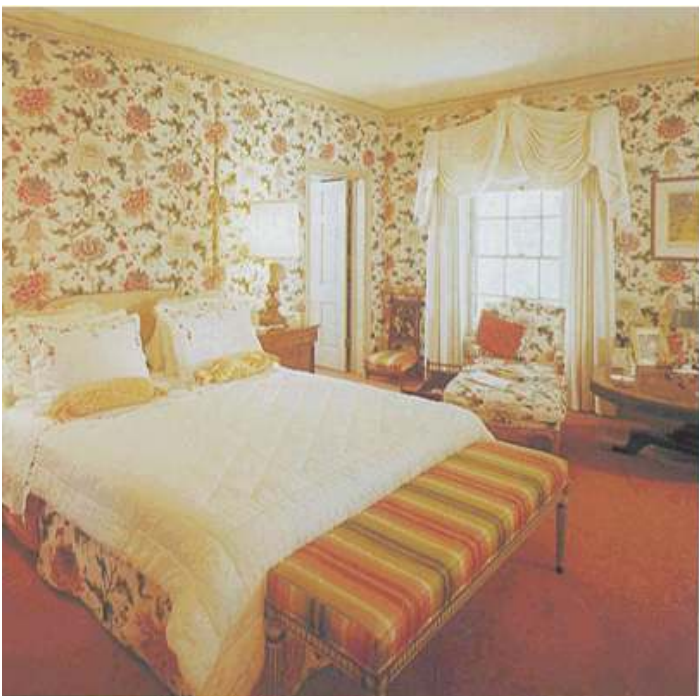
Above: Play of patterns in a living room filled with such treasures as Biedemeier chairs and camelback sofa.

Left: A lacquered wicker desk adds its own dramatic accent in the room.

Right: French wallpaper and subtly dotted carpet are background to dramatic entrance hall with library at the top of stairs. Painting is a Gordon Russell over an old square traveling piano of the type Mozart used to play upon.

Below: Such treasures as a Venetian chandelier and antique wall candelabra are at home in a brightly patterned reddish-orange dining room with padded fabric walls and smocked draperies.





Above: Batik fabric walls in downstairs bath full of owner's collectibles.  
 Left: Flowers abound in master bedroom with its fabric walls, embroidered sheets and custom bed.  
 Below: Comfortable garden room with its yellow brick walls and antiqued molding overlooks the pool and garden.



*The master bedroom is a feminine delight. "I guess I had to get liberated enough to finally allow myself a feminine bedroom".*

**Design collaborative (continued)**

living room is a deep, lacquered, ultramarine blue. But surrounded by it, it's easy to see why it won her over.

So Joe Minton went about interpreting the look of his room around her collections and antiques. The most obvious feature is the lacquered, ultramarine walls. Their deep shine came after sanding them down and refloating them to make them smooth, then adding layers of high gloss paint and a final coat of high gloss polyurethane.

Against this backdrop is Pittman's collection of German expressionists and bibelots that range from Empire lamps to Biedermeier chairs to an African mask. Mixed with all this is a wonderful interplay of patterns and textures. A deep blue Gros de Vence cut velvet by Clarence House covers banquettes and Empire chairs. Black chintz at windows and on the camelback sofa is joined by accent prints including a zany Zandra Rhodes print on a pillow pouf. All this sits on a patterned carpet, custom-colored for the room.

Minton added only a few pieces of Pittman's already eclectic mix, but they are outstanding in their own right. The glass coffee table and lacquered wicker desk are two examples.

"Even though the room is formal, it is very comfortable," says Pittman. And for all its drama, the room is very personal. The piano was given to her when she was 14. At the time she wanted a horse, but now cherishes that handsome grand piano. Much of the art collection she has amassed has been shown at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts in collectors' shows. This personal involvement is evident throughout the house.

The grand entrance was another Minton redo. French wallpaper and a small dot carpet provide backgrounds for an old square piano dated 1793 and a Gordon Russell painting bought in New York. Perhaps the most dramatic feature here is the library at the top of the stairs. Pittman designed this herself 12 years ago and worked with painting specialist Bob Rogers to get the deep lacquered color she wanted.

In the dining room Minton used a vivid reddish-orange and black Brunswick & Fils, Inc. fabric on all of the walls with matching smocked draperies, a Minton-Corley trademark.

During the redo, garden room sofas were recovered and new shag rugs were added here, but the rest remains as Pittman originally planned it. The brick walls are a mustard yellow with antiqued woodwork that is actually very practical.

"If the paint gets chipped or knocked, it just goes back to the stain, which was the first of many layers, and the woodwork just looks older," she explains. Built-in bookshelves and a desk in this room are other evidence of her wealth of storage ideas.

The master bedroom is a feminine delight. "I guess I had to get liberated enough to finally allow myself a feminine bedroom," she says. Walls are covered in Clarence House floral fabric as is bed skirt and chair. More flowers twine up a custom bed she had made in New York and edge the embroidered sheets.

She says she can sum up her design philosophy this way: "I can't stand cold rooms. I avoid them with lots of books, magazines and plants." ←