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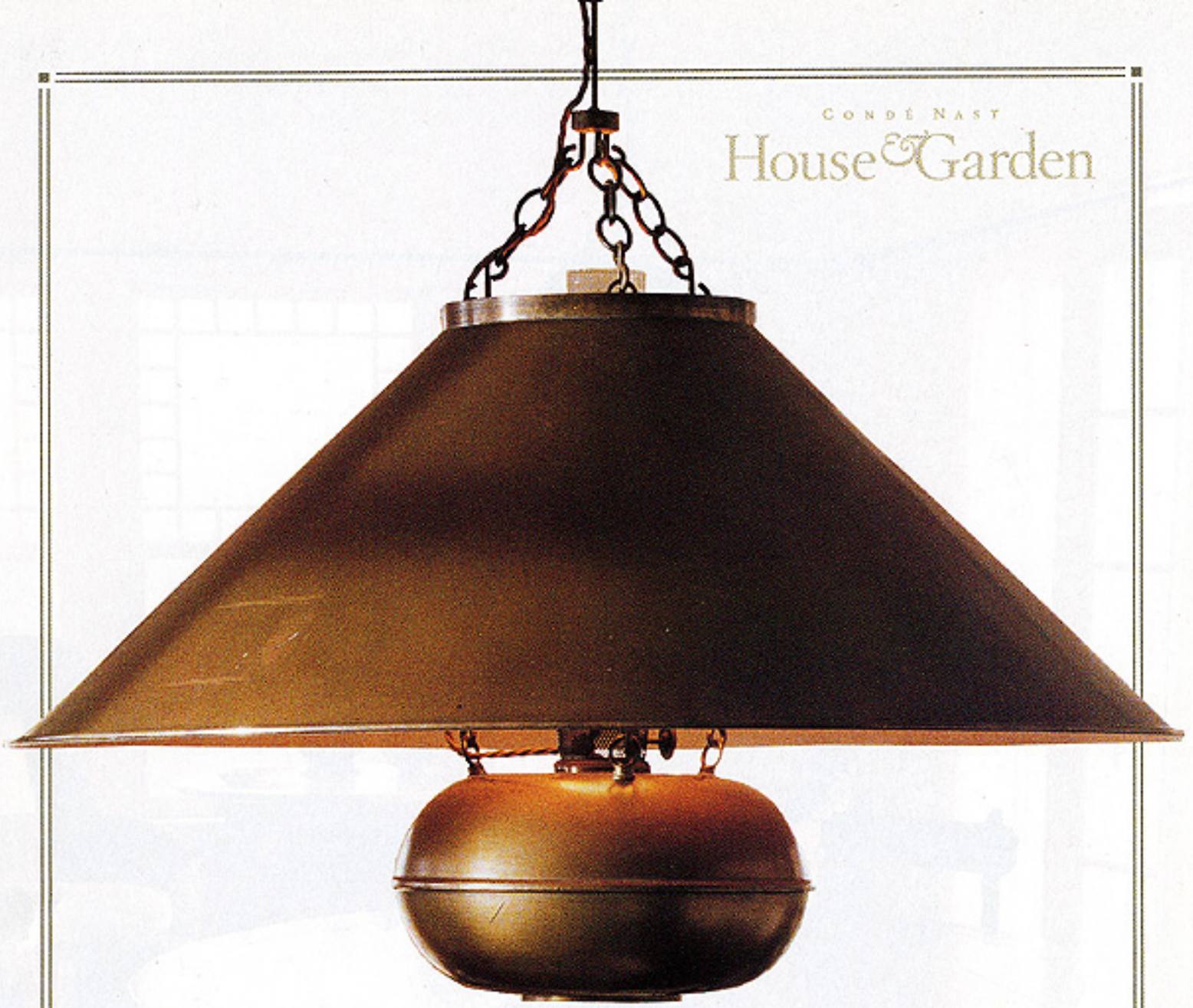

MISSION MIX

FIRST PRINCIPLE For some decades, interior decorators have drawn inspiration from the aesthetically rigorous values of the nineteenth-century English Arts and Crafts movement and its even more straightforward younger cousin, American Mission. These movements' attention to craft and careful use of detail are now being combined with something they lacked—a sense of luxury and ease. The addition of generously scaled, comfortable sofas and chairs, creamy-white walls, varied textiles, and eccentric period antiques are defining a contemporary, all-American style.

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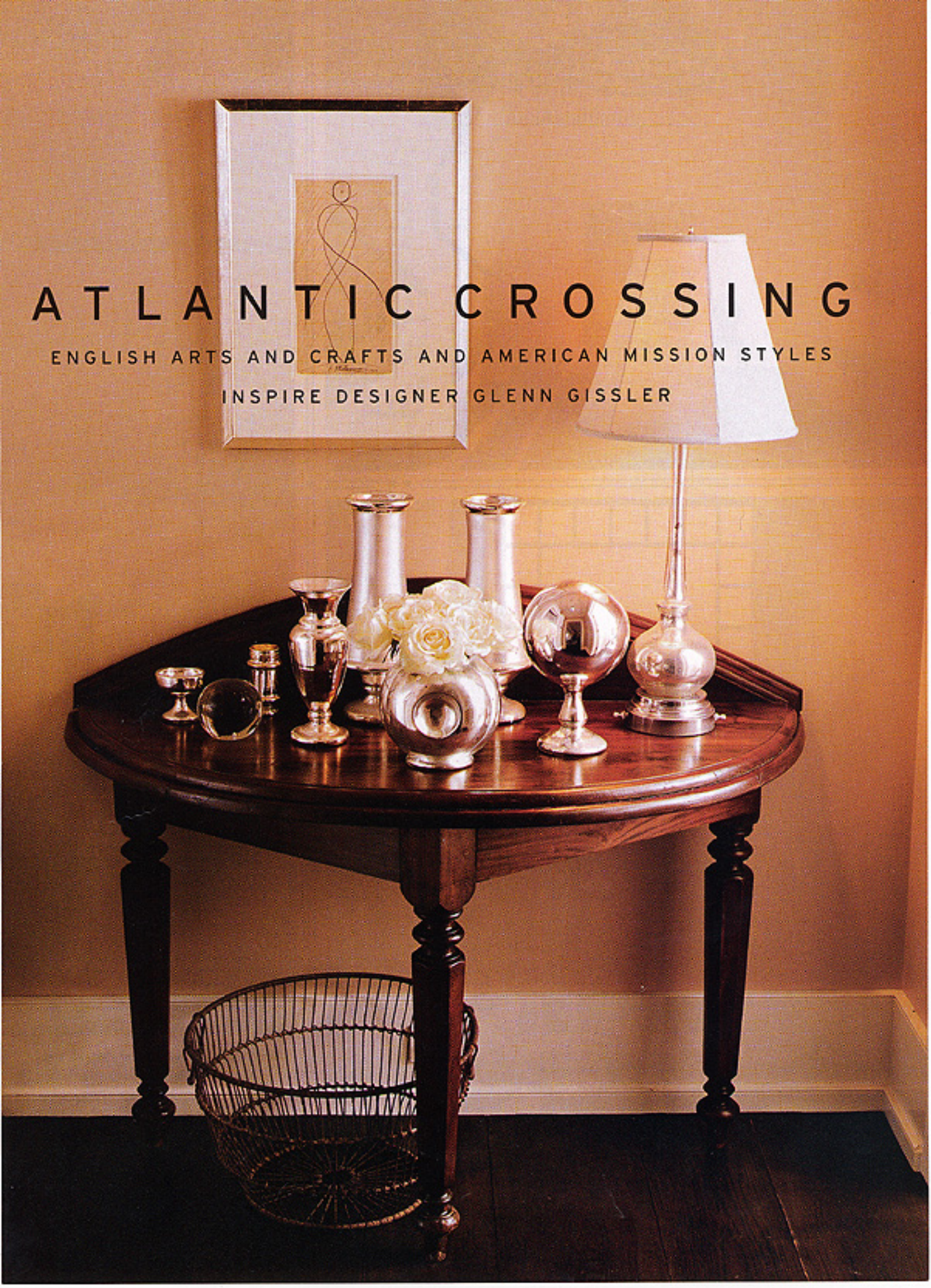
STYLED BY MICHAEL REYNOLDS



ATLANTIC CROSSING

ENGLISH ARTS AND CRAFTS AND AMERICAN MISSION STYLES INSPIRE DESIGNER GLENN GISSLER

In the kitchen, previous pages, left, an electrified oil lamp hangs above a trestle table. English chairs are from Newel Art Galleries. Mercury glass sits on a hall console, previous pages, right. A 1920s chandelier hangs in the foyer, above left, where banquettes overlook the view, left. The lights and table in the dining room, above, are by Gissler. The Arts and Crafts chairs are from Newel.

GLENN GISSLER is a man with a mission. The New York interior designer is determined to create contemporary rooms that are not cool or impersonal, rooms that make references to the past without looking like reproductions. In the case of a recently completed Shingle-style house—the sort of place influenced by huge turn-of-the-century structures coyly referred to as beach cottages—he set himself another goal as well.

"How do you furnish large rooms so that they look appealing year-round, can accommodate a houseful of demanding guests, and yet are still comfortable for two people spending the weekend alone?" the thirty-nine-year-old designer asks. In furnishing the 9,000-square-foot house, Gissler embarked on a three-and-a-half-year design odyssey reinterpreting the American Shingle style. "Although my work is sort of spare, I felt the house had to have a sense of fullness," he says. Working with Stephen McKay, the project director, Gissler took an approach he

In the living room, the sofa, covered in wool from Coraggio, and the armchairs, in a rayon-and-nylon fabric from Payne Fabrics, are from Jonas Upholstery. The Louis XIII chair is from Reymer-Jourdan. The Dutch Colonial low table, from Rene Antiques. The rug is from Safavieh Carpets.

Architect Francis Fleetwood designed the fireplace in the living room, left, which is faced with Craftsman ceramic tiles from Country Floors. The dining room's Scottish sideboard, below left, holds a pair of Oscar Bach lamps circa 1920. In the living room, opposite, a custom-made, high-backed sofa is covered in a Bergamo cotton velvet.

describes as one of reduction rather than addition, working to bring the large rooms down to what he calls a "comfortable" scale. "The look is not as simple or as rustic as the Mission or Arts and Crafts styles," he adds. "It's urbane but not fancy, and although it's not humble, it's not showy, either."

Set on an enviable five-acre eastern Long Island site overlooking both ocean and bay, the three-floor house is the work of Francis Fleetwood, an East Hampton–based architect who has built about a half-dozen Shingle-style houses a year for the past seventeen years. The client was Caroline Hirsch, founder and owner of Caroline's Comedy Club in New York City, a busy executive who wanted a weekend place where she and Andrew Fox, a lawyer, could relax in all seasons. Fox describes the place as being what Hirsch is all about—"understated and classy, detail-oriented and warm. Every room is comfortable, just like her." Hirsch's intent was to "make the house look as if it had been there always. We were going for a house that looked neither new nor modern, but that had slowly evolved over the years."

Hirsch chose Fleetwood and Gissler to carry out her wishes for the house. Both the architect and the interior designer were influenced by a variety of late-nineteenth-century sources—from the porches, facades, and trademark shingles to the wood paneling and neutral palette associated with many Arts and Crafts interiors. Yet the house is also successfully rooted in the late twentieth century.

A "romantic simplicity" is what Gissler had in mind for the overall feeling of the interior. Although a host of high-tech conveniences, including multi-zone air-conditioning, sophisticated stereo and television systems, lighting controls, and in-wall vacuuming, have been installed, the house was meant to feel reassuringly warm, welcoming, and subtly old-fashioned. Borrowing ideas from the Shaker and Mission styles, as well as incorporating antiques that once suited English, Scottish, and Irish rooms during the Arts and Crafts era, resulted in a look Gissler characterizes as "the nineteenth century and early twentieth century cleansed of all of its pattern." The designer adds: "I wanted to draw on what I felt was at the essence of the Arts and Crafts movement and emphasize the few things that defined the style." Gissler terms this essence "legibility." That's the element he says "got lost at the end of the nineteenth century, when Americans were flush with money and their rooms got filled up with stuff."

While Fleetwood achieved a feeling of openness and lightness by including plenty of windows in his design,

In the library, above, Dutch Colonial Indonesian chairs from the 1920's sit beside a 1910 Austrian walnut table. The French iron wall sconces are from Reymer-Jourdan Antiques. The painting, "Big World," is by Mark Innerst. A pedestal sink from Urban Archaeology, right, is the focus of the beadboard-wainscotted powder room. In the master bedroom, opposite, the dramatic mahogany bed, designed by Gissler, with paneled head- and footboard, is flanked by a pair of Colonial West Indian tables. The draperies were made by Maury Shor, Inc., with cotton taffeta fabric from Decorators Walk.

Gissler opted for a strong graphic statement for the interior. Because the house is big and gutsy, he explains, so is some of the furniture. The creamy-white walls—a custom-paint scheme that Gissler developed with Donald Kaufman—contrast with the wide-plank, dark oak floors and the tailored, oversealed, upholstered furniture. Many of these pieces—French, Anglo-Colonial, and English Arts and Crafts antiques—are intriguingly eccentric. "When you pull nineteenth-century furniture out of its original, *ongepatcht* environment, it suddenly has a sculptural quality," Gissler says. "And especially in a spare environment, many of the pieces look modern and don't have that dowdy look."

In spite of his client's original inclination to do a white-on-white scheme, Gissler wanted the house to be appealing not just during the hot, sunny months but when the weather turned cold and bleak. "On summer weekends, the house is nearly always full," he says. "In the winter we wanted to make sure you didn't get a where-is-everybody feeling, sort of like going into a mansion all by yourself." He also kept in mind one of his favorite mantras: "A big room is not necessarily a good room for furniture." Gissler says, "You have to understand how a room will function."

In a house built to receive guests, Gissler knew, it is important to consider how their rooms should be furnished. In many old, rambling houses, a guest room was often only a place to sleep. These days, he explains, it's a large, comfortable room for a guest to retreat to. "You need a bed, a dresser, bedside tables, good lighting, a place to set a suitcase down, and you definitely don't want to have to wonder, 'Where's the bathroom?' "

That sense of being right at home—even in someone else's house—seems to be the idea behind many of the seating areas that have a put-your-feet-up appeal to them. Especially inviting are the pillow-lined window seats that pop up here and there. Gissler calls them the "puppies" of interior decorating. "People get all gushy and ooh and aah when they see them," he says with a smile. "When we decorate, we always try to include as many cues like that as we possibly can."