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House Beautiful

All About

GREEN

It's the neutral that goes with everything!

10 ROOMS THAT MAKE US GREEN WITH ENVY

+50 FABULOUS FINDS

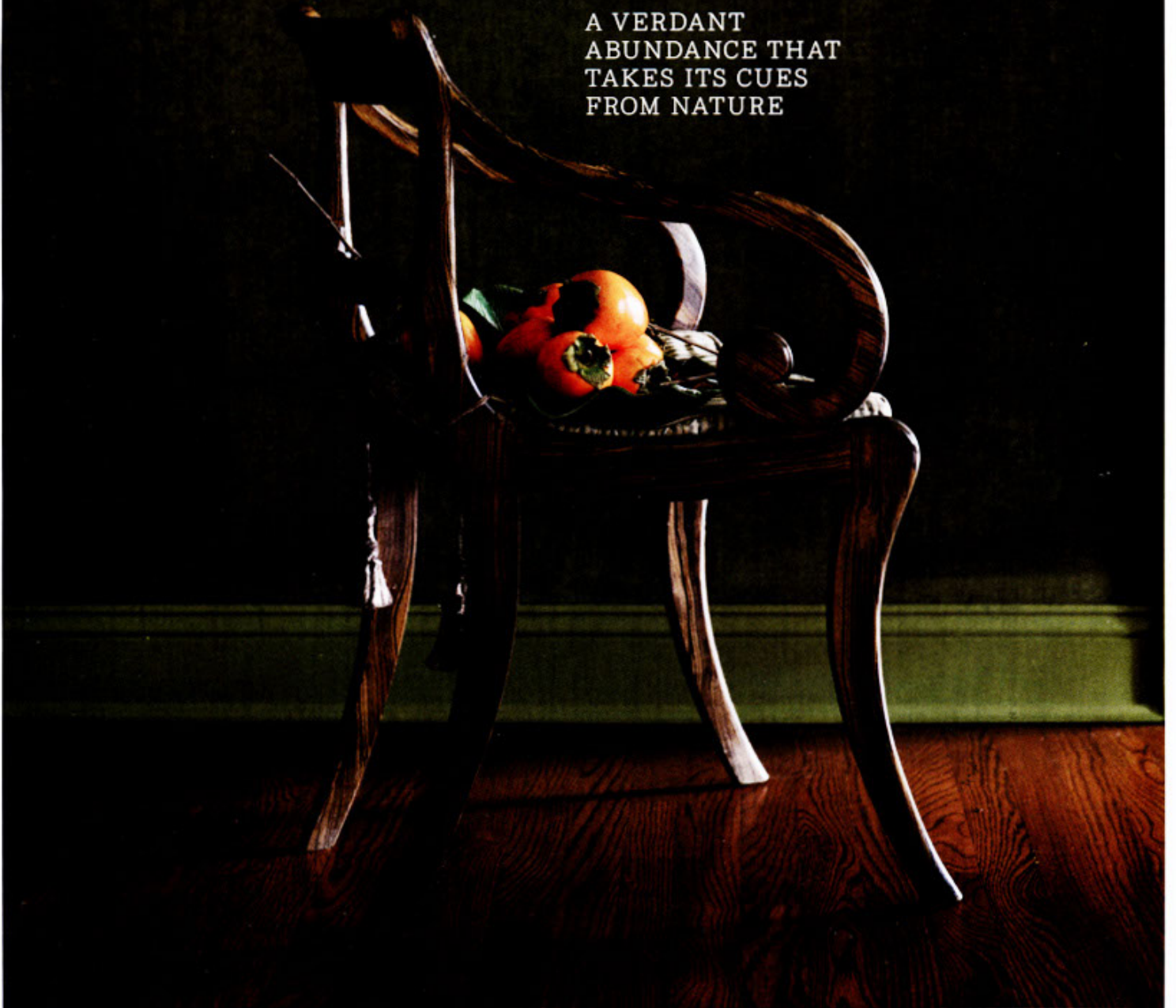
SPRING
COLOR
ISSUE



A MIX OF GREENS IS

LUSH AND NATURAL

A VERDANT
ABUNDANCE THAT
TAKES ITS CUES
FROM NATURE



Interior design by MEG BRAFF Interview by LISA CREGAN Photographs by JAMES MERRELL

The butler's pantry of a Colonial Revival house in Lattintown, New York, is "a little green jewel box," designer Meg Braff says. Mahogany counters and unlacquered brass hardware gleam on cabinets painted Forest Moss by Benjamin Moore. Sage wallpaper, Brompton by Peter Fasano, adds textural interest. **OPPOSITE:** "The dining room walls are covered in a gorgeous green velvet," Braff says. "Everything looks amazing in here"—even persimmons on an antique chair.







LISA CREGAN:

You've
really got
a thing
for green.

MEG BRAFF: I'm wild about green. It's very inviting. Here, it welcomes you at the door and invites you out back to the kitchen for a glass of iced tea.

Then invites you into every other room. Green was our thread. I try to move a color around in a house, giving it a big dose in some rooms and touching upon it in others. Green is actually a color I use as a neutral—it integrates so well with other colors. It's like a garden where green is the backdrop—all the colors of the flowers look good against it. I especially love the way we used it in the dining room. Flowers, porcelain, *everything* looks good in there.

Those walls are as verdant as a forest. They're covered in velvet. I wanted them to have more depth than paint could give me. There's a bit of luster to this velvet, so in candlelight it glows. It makes you look, then look again, and say, 'Oh, that's velvet!' We had it paper-backed by the wallpaper hanger—upholstered walls can get a little puffy, and that look feels dated, kind of '80s. This is a much cleaner look, and less expensive.

Is there a green you like best?

I love every shade of green. >>

LEFT: Walls covered in Grasshopper velvet from Duralee are a rich backdrop for entertaining in the formal, antiques-filled dining room. "And velvet is wonderful for absorbing sound," Braff says. The moldings and doors are painted Forest Moss by Benjamin Moore—the same color as the adjoining pantry, creating a smooth transition.

I believe you. You've got quite a spectrum here.

I love mixing greens. There's nothing prettier than mixing a little chartreuse with a mossy green. That adds fun, a little zip. But I didn't use any greens that are too acidic, because that would feel too modern. This is a traditional house, old-fashioned in a very good way. There's something welcoming and approachable about traditional decorating—it feels more like home.

Were there any other greens you consciously stayed away from?

Palm Beach green—too tropical. I always try to keep in mind a sense of place. My style is driven more by place and architecture than anything else. We needed to be consistent with the location of the house, its style and age, and the type of things my clients collect. This is a 1954 Colonial Revival on the North Shore of Long Island, and it's filled with old things—Oriental rugs, English antiques, heirlooms. It's more of a sentimental house than a snappy house, although the whole atmosphere is one of youthful elegance. They're young, in their late thirties.

I'd say you made a classic color combination—blue and green—feel awfully snappy.

I'm crazy about blue and green together. They're colors of nature. Green grass and blue sky—what better color combination to live with?

What are your favorite colors to mix with green?

I like chartreuse and aqua mixed with crisp white. But the combination I'm most drawn to, if I had to pick a favorite, would be the combination you see in the den: chartreuse, coral, and chocolate brown. You can bring so many other colors into that combination.

You also took the green paint in the pantry up over the moldings.

The ceilings in the house are only eight feet high, and when you paint the trim the same color as the walls, it brings your eye up. It's like wearing a black skirt, black stockings, and black high heels. It makes you look taller—that's my trick, anyway. That green pantry is a jewel box. It really draws you in. We painted the space because the doors from the dining room are always open—it's a pass-through to the kitchen—and we wanted a continuous color to ease the transition. That green brings to mind vegetables and fresh greens from the farmers' market. We did it in a Benjamin Moore Satin Impervo enamel to give it a luster. When you're standing at the sink, you feel enveloped in warmth.

How did you come up with the equally lustrous, warm

color for the living room walls?

The living room is all about lots of warm gold, and that color is so complementary with the deep green walls in the dining room. Both colors have a certain richness, so they work well together. I like to use different textures on walls of adjacent rooms. I'd never do wallpaper in a room that's next to a wallpapered room. Thinking about wallpaper versus paint is just as important as thinking about the palette. It's important to balance the interest from room to room. In a house where all the rugs are colorful patterns, you might never look up.

Brass hardware isn't something I see much of these days. It looks great against the green.

The brass hardware just continues the traditional old-house feel. It's unlacquered brass, and it will eventually weather to look a little green itself. Unlacquered brass has an old-world feel. It's timeless, brass is. I know brass has already had its moment, but I still like it for the same reason I like gold—the warmth.

Any favorite green moments here?

One of them would have to be the painted chest in the two little girls' room. I think of this green as a spring green—it's the color of lilies of the valley. I didn't want it to look super-decorated in here, so the green on the painted lamps doesn't exactly match, although the chair fabric is matched to the bureau. I love the charm of painted lampshades, and these happened to work even though they aren't a dead-on match. They have a very sweet, youthful feel. These greens are little-girly but sophisticated enough to grow up with.

What color green do you use the most?

That pretty mossy green that's on the checked sofa in the bedroom's sitting room. It's so easy to use. I can mix anything with it. Mossy greens are more elegant in a traditional setting like this. Brighter greens are more edgy.

Is there a green that's not easy to use?

Army green, that camouflage color. Murky, muddy greens don't play nicely with other greens. I prefer the fresher greens with life to them.

Where do you draw your color inspiration from?

I find so much inspiration from vintage textiles—I love going to estate sales and looking at the upholstery. You could take a favorite fabric and base an entire room on its colors, even if you don't use that fabric anywhere in the room. The big fabric houses had full-time colorists who spent their lives studying what mixes well with what. There's a lot to be learned from old fabrics. And they often have a lot of green!

PRODUCED BY OLGA NAIMAN

RIGHT: Antiques and a mellow palette lend "an old-world charm" to the living room, Braff says. All the room's colors were drawn from Pierre Frey's *Papillons Exotiques* on the French armchairs. Walls lacquered in a custom gold shade bounce light all over the room, and the starburst mirror gives it a shot of youth. Vintage coffee table from Hiden Galleries.









To add weight to the bright green guest room, Braff covered the headboard and sofa in *Starry Night*, a large-scale deep blue chinoiserie toile from Schumacher. Walls are in Benjamin Moore's *Lemon Freeze*. Rug and chair from Meg Braff Antiques & Decorations. **OPPOSITE:** The cozy upstairs library was formerly a bedroom, "and we wanted to give it a sense of purpose," Braff says. The sofa fabric is Laura Ashley's *Springfield 22*, through Kravet.



Braff oriented the seating area in the den around the fireplace. "When there's a fireplace in a room, you want to be around it," she says. "You can imagine a fire even if there isn't one." A large-scale coffee table from Meg Braff Antiques & Decorations anchors the sofa and chairs. A vintage "offbeat" chartreuse leather wing chair adds snap. Walls are covered in a taupe grasscloth from Hinson. Braff loves "all types of chinoiserie, and I love mixing it in," so she covered armchairs in Cowtan & Tout's Hurlingham. "It's so cheerful—it lifts the room up."





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1. "Greens don't have to match to look good together," Braff says. 2. The greens and blues in the master bedroom are "restful and easy on the eye." 3. A black lacquer chinoiserie top is a surprise on the living room's gold-leaf coffee table. 4. Sister Parish Design's Kelly green Chou Chou wallpaper animates the bathroom shared by two preschool girls. 5. "A little bar tucked away in the corner of a living room is such a welcoming gesture." 6. Large coffee tables "don't feel so massive when you layer on a tray. It breaks up the surface." 7. Braff fell in love with the combination of colors on the living room armchairs. 8. In the dining room, a pale gray console is an elegant partner to the deep green walls. **OPPOSITE:** The inspiration for the girls' room was their green chest. The chair is covered in Scalamandr 's Watermark. Curtain fabric, Sister Parish Design's Dolly; Elys e tassel fringe, Samuel & Sons. John Robshaw throw. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



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