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In the living room, carved ivory pagodas are on each end of the marble mantel, LEFT. The sofas and chairs in the sunroom, THIS PAGE, are covered in Brunschwig & Fils Le Lac Glazed Chintz in Cream. The red cashmere throw is from The Monogram Shop. The vintage lacquer coffee table was bought at auction.

What's the **good life**
today in the **land of**



Gatsby?

INTERIOR DESIGN BY MEG BRAFF
INTERVIEW BY CAROL PRISANT
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCES JANISCH

The family spends a lot of time in the sunroom, where they've put the TV and the computers. Poppies are arranged in a Calvin Klein vase on the red lacquer-look, leather-topped card table. The trellis-patterned rug is from Misha Carpet in New York. Simple white matchstick blinds hang behind the yellow-checked cotton curtains. Braff likes the simplicity of the blinds and the informality of the curtains. The ragged and glazed walls are painted what she calls "a very punchy" shade of custom-mixed green. The swing-arm floor lamp is from Visual Comfort.





CAROL PRISANT: *If the good life began anywhere, it has to have been on the North Shore of Long Island. Gatsby, Sabrina, it all happened here. You're a Southerner, but have you found that an influence?*

MEG BRAFF: It is. It is. Because there's a certain old-fashioned quality to that which I love. That old feeling of pantries, separate breakfast rooms, big rambling kitchens, walk-in safes, all that.

But there's a little Dixie here, too.

Absolutely. There's a certain warmth, a comfort level, and hopefully, there's a nice understated feel that's welcoming and not pretentious—certainly not intimidating.

I have to ask. There's a definite Regency thing going on, and tons of chinoiserie. Have you been to Brighton Pavilion?

No, but it's been very high on my list for years, because I love all things chinoiserie. I'm finally going in June!

Still, you've managed to create a genuinely Brighton Pavilion dining room. Where did you buy this wallpaper?

Actually, those stripes are painted. I wanted the walls to have a cleaner look than wallpaper—a kind of strié effect.

Well, that explains the wall vent up there. I couldn't imagine how you papered those louvers! Tell me about your color choice then: that minty green.

I bought green curtains at an auction, then chose a green for the painted stripe that had the same soft feeling, but with more impact. I buy almost everything at auction. I just love it, because I prefer to own things that have been loved, that have had "life experiences" and a little bit of age. I love this pagoda-shaped chandelier; these old bird pictures, too. They have more of that green.

And I see you've furnished mainly with antiques. In certain circles, they're a cornerstone of the good life.

I agree. That antique English table in the window with the big compute on it—it comes and goes to my basement—was a gift from my mother-in-law. The antique dining table is from France, although I did have the console made there.

Why no carpet?

Because this is really a "pass-through" room—more of a breakfast room, really, since it's not very big. I had ten people for dinner the other night and it was tight and cozy, but with friends, it seemed very warm.



Speaking of warm, your house has what must be the perfect sunroom.

We spend a lot of time in there. The TVs are in there. The computers are in there. The boys do their homework in there. That Brunswick fabric on the furniture has been around for ages. The curtains are cotton, and they give a nice feeling of informality. I like the simplicity of the matchstick blinds, too. The ragged and glazed walls are a very punchy shade of green.

And where did you find that seriously big coffee table?

That, and the little side tables, all came from Tepper Galleries, a small auction house in Manhattan. I sort of like the feeling of a little bit of rattan. And I love having a games table in there, because we play tons of Scrabble and games with the kids. This one came from a local antiques store, and I had it lacquered red by my local painter. He used several layers of high-gloss paint. But I've had clients who take things to their local car shop, you know, and had them coated with auto paint! The carpet is very light, but it's also very forgiving. There are spots here and there, but with a new dog, and four little boys, it's still held up pretty well.

I notice most of your fabrics are cotton. Because it's kidproof?

Yes, but I prefer it to silk anyway. I have some chairs here that are in silk taffeta, but I don't think I would do that again. It's not that good in terms of cleanability, for sure, and I don't even think it's all that comfortable to sit in. They're very slippery.

You have balloon shades in your youngest son's room.

To be honest, it was originally a guest room, which is why it looks a little like a girl's room. But he's only 2½, and it is blue!

PRODUCED BY SENGA MORTIMER



The dining room walls were painted in pale green and melon stripes by Roman Kujawa of Miro Art. Above an antique French table is an English Regency chandelier, a family heirloom. The console is a custom piece from the designer. OPPOSITE: An antique mahogany drop-leaf table displays a footed compote from Hinson & Co.



CP: *Your own bedroom furniture is feminine, but I'd never say "girly."*

MB: I wanted a bit of chintz in here, but not something that was overpowering, because it's not an enormous room and because my husband's not really a chintz person. How surprising is that?



The master bedroom's headboard, chaise, and Gosford bench—a Braff design—are covered in Pierre Frey's Fleurs de Mai chintz. For the curtains and the duvet Braff used a Cowtan & Tout silk taffeta check. OPPOSITE: The children's room is wrapped all over in Cowtan & Tout's Floral Toile in blue. Wall color, Ralph Lauren Bellflower Blue, with glaze.

I wanted it to have a nice tailored look, so there are simple silk taffeta curtains and the duvet (they've sort of faded a bit), and those English mahogany chests that make good bedside tables—because we really don't have a lot of storage space in this room. We really use that chaise, too, because the kids pile into our bed at night like a little bunny rabbit family, and I always find that some of us wind up over here, reading or watching TV. I like the fact that it has a tight seat—it looks a little cleaner. You'll notice little footstools and things around, too, because, you know, I like places to stack books. They're softer alternatives to tables.

Caned-back black gilt armchairs from Julian Chichester, London, flank an antique breakfast table. The French clock is from Global Views. The window seat is covered in a Fonthill paisley, and the pillows are decorated with Brunschwig & Fils crimson linen velvet and trim from Passementerie. OPPOSITE: The paneled library carpet is Autumn Leaves in blue and rust from Stark. Brass wall lamps from Nicholas Antiques, New York.





CP: *Knotty pine paneling in the library. I haven't seen that in years. Did you put it in?*

MB: No. Before we bought this house, it was decorated by Juan Pablo Molyneux, and he did the paneling and the carpet in here, which I just liked—especially this blue in the carpet, which I kind of pulled out and used for fabrics. I think patterned carpets are so incredibly forgiving, anyhow. And in this room, which is a little bit of an awkward space—with the window seat and all—you kind of have to have wall-to-wall.

CP: *You chose balloon shades here. Why?*

MB: I wanted a certain softness, plus a tailored look, and I thought they'd be dressier than Roman shades. This is the only window in the room, so I mounted the shades high. The windows don't go all the way to the top, and I needed as much light as possible coming in.