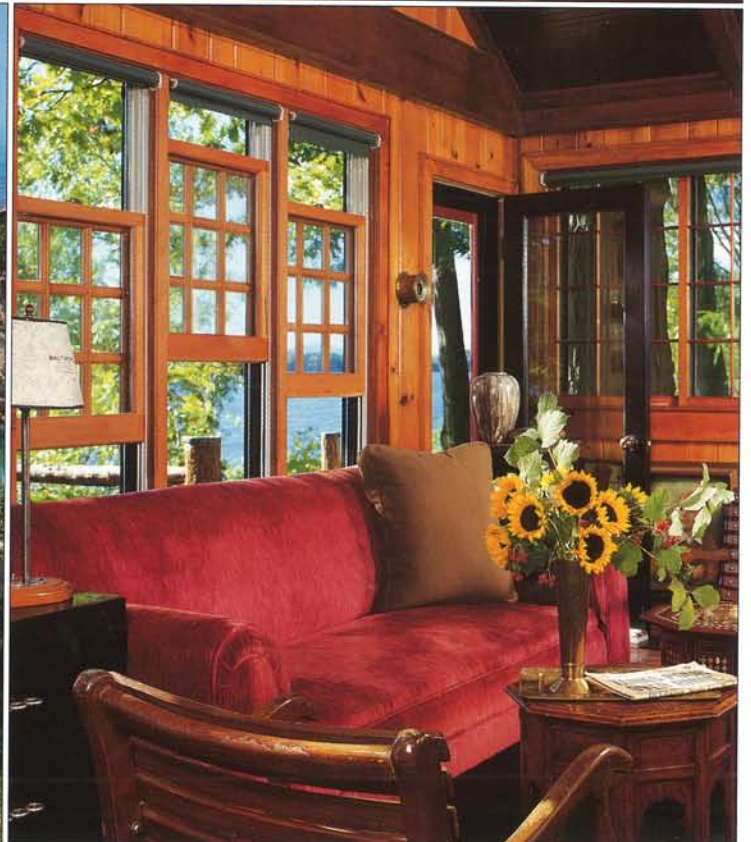
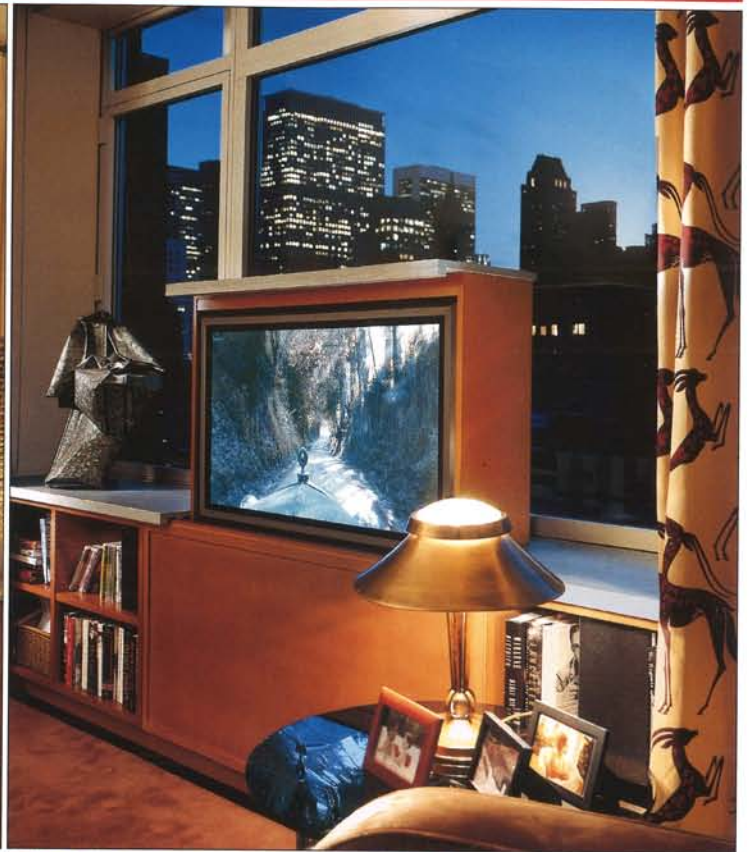


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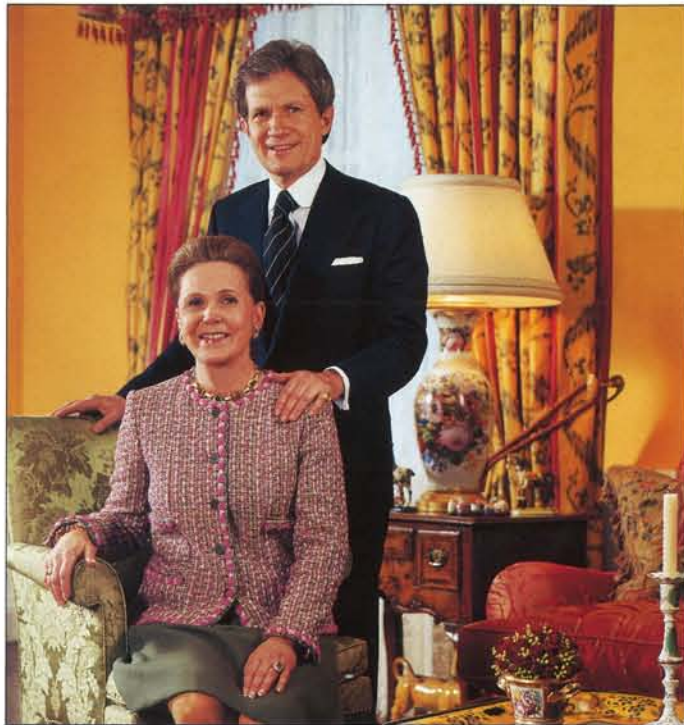
DESIGNERS' OWN HOMES



Bennett & Judie Weinstock

REWRITING A PHILADELPHIA
STORY WITH COLOR AND PATTERN

Text by Richard Conniff
Photography by Billy Cunningham



"We wanted to create a manor house in the sky," Judie Weinstock (top, with her husband, Bennett) says of their apartment in Philadelphia. ABOVE: "The entrance gallery sets the tone architecturally and colorwise for the rest of the place." Mirror from David Duncan Antiques.

"The rooms are now home to our collections of English furnishings, paintings and decorative arts." RIGHT: An 18th-century equestrian painting hangs above the living room mantel. George I secretary, George II armchairs and Chinese low table from Kentshire Galleries.





We are not beige people by any stretch of the imagination," says Judie Weinstock, a rare moment of understatement on a visit to the exuberant and orderly new apartment she and her husband, Bennett, share off Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square. "I think one rose is lovely, but 100 roses are even more beautiful."

It is, the Weinstocks happily admit, an unorthodox design principle and, at least at first glance, maybe a little hard to take. "Visitors are quite overwhelmed, whether this kind of thing appeals to them or not," says Judie Weinstock. "We usually take them through the apartment and come to the kitchen last, and by the time they get there, they fall down dead."

By "this kind of thing," what she means is not just the audacious mixing of color and pattern on every available surface but also the extraordinary collections of 18th- and 19th-century ce-

ramics on every table and shelf and the sporting prints and paintings on every wall. Whereas many opulent interiors cause visitors to wonder mainly which designer worked there, this one evokes a better question: What kind of people live here?

The first thing a visitor sees in the entrance gallery outside the apartment is a Regency console table with lion's-head

legs, which also happens to be the first thing Bennett Weinstock saw when he went to pick up Judie at her parents' house for their first date. "Did you notice it back then?" the visitor asks. "Oh, yes. I always noticed," he replies. "I could tell you what she was wearing."

Their marriage, now in its 39th year, was an unusually serendipitous pairing of styles and sensibilities. Both part-



ABOVE: A 19th-century New Hampshire apothecary cabinet filled with 18th- and 19th-century English pottery shares the breakfast area with English and Scottish paintings, an Austrian chandelier and a French marble pastry table. Seat cushion fabric from Schumacher.

LEFT: The dining table is centered by a Kangxi bowl on a George III silver stand. Lobmeyr stemware complements the Meissen china. **OPPOSITE:** "The Old World-style kitchen looks as if it had evolved over time." Wm Ohs cabinetry. La Cornue steel range and hood.



The result is that their apartment, which seems so formal at first, soon reveals itself to be brimming with life, a dazzling medley of things, a phantasmagoria.



ABOVE: English sporting and coaching paintings are arranged in the office/study. Regency chair at desk from Kentshire Galleries. Florian Papp table and chairs, foreground. Linen wallcovering and chair plaid at left, Old World Weavers. Scalamandré window treatment trim.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: The watercolors of a dog and a cat displayed in the master bedroom date to the 19th century. Bed plaid from Christopher Norman. Schumacher drapery fabric with Scalamandré trim and P. E. Guerin hardware. Bench silk from Old World Weavers. Stark carpet.

ners came from ceramics-collecting families (Wedgwood on his side, Meissen and Dresden on hers). Both displayed a precocious interest in color and pattern. With some heavy steering by their parents, both also at first missed their calling and wound up feeling like frustrated architects. Bennett became a lawyer; Judie became an advertising copywriter and raised their two children. Then, approaching middle age, they reclaimed their initial impulse and set up shop together as interior designers. The partnership encouraged the flow-

ering of traits—fastidiousness paired with flamboyance—which, in tandem, defy many of our stereotypes about human behavior.

“We’re very orderly people,” says Bennett Weinstock; so orderly that he always chooses his watchband to match his belt, and she irons the top sheet on their bed every morning. It follows that every juxtaposition in their apartment is the product of careful thought. They liken the mixing of patterns to a patchwork quilt: “The difference between something making it or missing,” says

Bennett, “is the way it’s done.” The arrangement of objects in tight little vignettes likewise suggests an unusual blend of delicacy and humor.

“Judie is the most artful arranger of things,” he says. “She agonizes over them.” “I play with them.”

“She plays with them for hours and hours to get them right.”

The paradoxical result is that their apartment, which seems so formal at first, soon reveals itself to be brimming with life, a dazzling medley of things, a phantasmagoria. In the living room, the visi-



tor’s eye ricochets from the intense floral pattern of the 1780 needlepoint carpet to the naive 1810–20 Obadiah Sherratt enamel-glazed figure, tucked under an end table, of a hapless British soldier being devoured by a tiger.

Before you have quite had a chance to take in the George I secretary, you find yourself entranced by the rows of little compartments inside. Instead of past-due bills, the compartments now contain fanciful enamel bonbon boxes, or bonbonnières, which were given as gifts in the 18th century. One row, for exam-

ple, consists of Turks’ heads glowering. If a visitor laughs out loud, or falls to his knees in delight, the Weinstocks could not be happier. It’s how they acquired these objects in the first place: “We see something and we say, ‘Oh, my God,’ and we have to have it,” explains Judie Weinstock. “It’s a thing in your heart.”

Indeed, the couple actually seem to enjoy it when a visitor reaches out to touch some precious object. Despite the museum quality of their collections,

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ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST DATEBOOK

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THE WEINSTOCKS

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they mean for things to be walked on, sat on, handled. "I wouldn't own anything I couldn't use," says Bennett Weinstock, who proceeds to tell a disarming story about one of the pillows on the sofa. They found it, he says, at a shabby antiques shop in London 20 years ago and fell in love with the needlepoint image of a spaniel. That night, back in their room at The Connaught, they woke to what sounded like rain. It was the plastic bag containing the pillow, from which a mouse soon emerged and bolted under a door into another guest's room. They said, "Oh, my God," considered the possibilities, then turned wide-eyed to go back to sleep.

By now, the apartment has made it abundantly clear that the couple are not, as Judie Weinstock puts it, "very conventional and uptight and stuffy," first impressions to the contrary. "There's a quirky side to us that comes through in our home, in our collections and in our friendships." One of the great pleasures of creating the new apartment, after 22 years in a nearby town house, was the chance to rediscover their collections in all their idiosyncratic splendor. "In the old house, as we acquired paintings, we hung them where we could," says Bennett Weinstock. But in the new apartment, with the help of architect Spence Kass, they were able to see things literally in a new light. When their son, who is an artist, came back to visit for the first time, he stopped in front of one group of paintings. "Are you sure you had these outside the kitchen?" he asked. "I saw these every day?"

When the tour finally ends in their new kitchen, the Weinstocks themselves are feeling the same sense of wonder. Their eyes roam to a row of 19th-century dairy pails and then to a pottery piece depicting "the wonderful Burds and beasts from most parts of the world." "Look at this face," says Judie Weinstock, holding up a coffee creamer in the shape of a cow and seeing it as if for the first time. "It's so dear." At home amid their collections, they can hardly suppress their innocent delight, and even for a visitor half slaughtered with visual stimulation, the feeling is highly contagious. □

MARCO ALDACO

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heat. A thermometer shows that the room is a comfortable 70 degrees while outside the temperature is 85 degrees. Aldaco links his disdain for sophisticated heating and air-conditioning equipment to a childhood spent in the deserts and mountains of Sonora, where his father was an itinerant dry-goods merchant. "I grew up in a culture of bare necessities and basic elements—drought, rain, heat, cold," he explains. "That's how I learned to build always conscious of natural elements and of the local environment."

A staircase connects the bedroom to two terraces: a large, open one to view the city and a smaller, shaded patio where Aldaco sculpts ceramic vases and animal figurines. He describes these terraces as extensions of his bedroom. "I think of inside and outside spaces as the same, just treated differently," says the architect, who notes that there is an almost exact balance between interior and exterior square footage in the house.

Aldaco also divides his time at home evenly between indoors and out. Mornings are spent in the courtyard or doodling with designs and concepts in the small first-floor office he shares with

Aldaco abhors rugs. He's even etched the steps with geometric pinprick designs that simulate a carpet rather than lay down the real thing.

two younger associates. The late afternoons are devoted to more conventional architectural work—poring over blueprints and making sketches for new residences. In between, at 1:45 p.m., is Aldaco's favorite moment of the day: the tequila ritual. Nibbling on radishes and cheese, he sips two shots of tequila while he ruminates on his current projects. "With the first shot, my imagination soars," says the architect. "The second one readies me for lunch and a siesta. By 4:30 I'm recharged for the tough part of the day." □