

TOWN & COUNTRY

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THOMAS JAYNE STUDIO, INC.

Town & Country asked us to
decorate their first showhouse.

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Oscar de la Renta and
stepdaughter Eliza Reed Bolen

Town & Country was cordially invited to decorate a freshly built house, with a designer of our choice, at the Ford Plantation—a new type of development on the outskirts of Savannah.

We couldn't resist this opportunity to create our own **HOUSE OF DREAMS**

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY SARAH MEDFORD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAURA MCEVOY

STYLED BY MIGUEL FLORES-VIANNA





WHEN MID-AUGUST ARRIVES in Georgia, the only natives you're likely to see out and about are alligators and tree frogs, and even they come to a torpid standstill at midday. So there could be only one explanation for the presence this past August of a New York decorator, two members of his staff, a photographer, an editor, and several truckloads of furniture on the outskirts of Savannah: a designer showhouse was in progress. As the Spanish moss seemed to melt right off the trees, the extremely talented and awfully unflappable Thomas Jayne performed his own sleight of hand inside a 6,000-square-foot neo-Georgian house that was essentially still under construction.

The locals were probably watching from their centrally cooled living rooms, wondering, Didn't he know what he was getting himself into?

He did. In fact, so did *Town & Country*, because we were the ones who'd put him up to it.

THE SETTING It all started a year ago, when the magazine received an interesting offer. The developers behind the Ford Plantation, a new second-home community just getting under way near Savannah, were about to break ground on their first two houses. They invited us to decorate one at their expense, as long as we agreed to three conditions: that we'd stay within their budget, observe an aggressive deadline, and exercise the supreme good taste their reading of the magazine had led them to believe we possessed. Intrigued, we went down to check out the site.

Developments always sound great on paper, but real life usually intrudes about fifteen years down the line, when the neighbors are squabbling over one another's hedge heights and the only available tee times are 5:30 and 6 A.M. Or maybe not. The Ford Plantation hopes to avoid these ruts, and may well do so, thanks to the combined wisdom of its three lead partners, Peter Pollak, Chip Dolan and Steve Schram. Together



they've had more than a little luck in the fields of investment banking, real estate sales, and resort turnaround and management (at nearby Bray's Island).

At the Ford Plantation, they're lucky to be starting with land that is superb and full of history. The 1,800-acre waterfront property, twenty miles south of Savannah, is an unusual combination of grassy low-country wilds and plantation-style manicuring, with nesting blue herons on the one hand and avenues of antebellum live oaks on the other. Part of a rice-growing estate in the 18th century, the property eventually became the winter home of automotive tycoon Henry Ford and his wife Clara from 1925 until Clara's death in 1950. After several subsequent private ownerships—one resulting in the creation of an 18-hole golf course designed by Pete Dye, for a man who didn't even play golf—a

The classical style and Georgia waterfront setting of the Town & Country showhouse (preceding pages) inspired decorator Thomas Jayne (top left) to scheme the décor in an easygoing traditional vein, one not without his trademark sense of fun. The first thing chosen was the striped wallpaper by Cole & Son in the entry hall (top right); it went on to become the leitmotif for the entire house.

OPPOSITE: Chuck Hettinger and George Wittman painted the library with faux boiserie bookshelves to mimic cypress, an indigenous Georgia wood. The 19th-century Scandinavian kilim is from Doris Leslie Blau, Ltd.; fabrics on sofa, chair and table are from Brunschwig & Fils. The antique copper urn is from William Lipton Ltd. For additional product information, see page 281.



group of investors acquired it. They've wisely held on to more than just Henry Ford's name: they've also got his favorite tractor, his hunting cabin, his deepwater marina on the Ogeechee River, and other talismans of the good life that may just seduce the children of the information age to rise up from their screens for a few hours and enjoy the outdoors. The partners are trying hard to avoid becoming a golf ghetto, and they have undertaken to build a diverse sporting colony for active families, with a fitness center and spa, riding, tennis and squash, fishing and kayaking, sporting clays and nature trails—in short, a setup any summer camp could love.

So, too, the partners hope, will the sultans of the cell-phone generation, family-minded achievers in mid-career who are looking for another home in a place with a sense of tradition, a full roster of diversions and an airport less than thirty minutes away. For those who can afford it—two- to fifteen-acre building lots are priced between \$275,000 and \$1.5 million—the place is extremely ap-

“Color is nothing to be afraid of,” believes Thomas Jayne, a man blessed with a painter’s instinctual eye. Case in point: the master bedroom, where silk-covered walls, hand-painted by Lucretia Moroni, bring the room alive (right). The bed and bedside commodes are from Florian Papp; custom linens are by E. Braun. Jonas Upholstery concocted the peacock-blue armchair. In a detail (top), the ruching, tufting and welting that make it an exceptional piece of upholstery emerge.



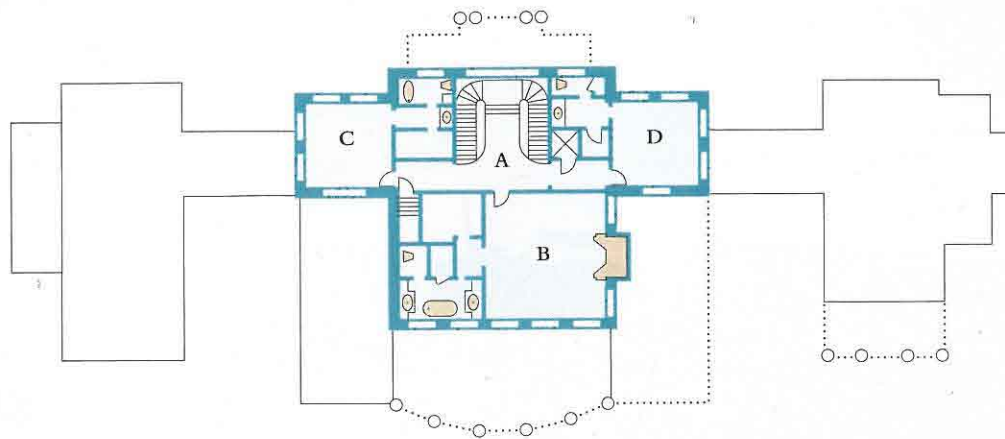
In just eight months, the Ford Plantation and Sterling Construction Management built the first of an eventual 400 houses planned for Ford's 1,800-acre property south of Savannah. Town & Country, working in conjunction with decorator Thomas Jayne, installed the final pieces of furniture as the contractors were still finishing up the bathrooms. "That's normal these days," says Jayne. "People no longer want a house decorated in two or three years—they want it in six months."

TOP LEFT: Georgia architect Jim Strickland took various bits of the classical vocabulary and recomposed them into a rambling and functional contemporary house. His team included Phil Windsor, Terry Pylant, Dave Bryant, Zhi Feng, Aaron Daily and Sandy Guritz. Ford Plantation partner Steve Schram's 1955 MG is parked in front on a walkway laid of reclaimed 18th-century brick.

TOP RIGHT: Our project team, from left: Town & Country's Sarah Medford, decorator Thomas Jayne, project managers Alison Nash and Eric Smith (from Jayne's office), and construction manager Peer Rinde-Thorsen.

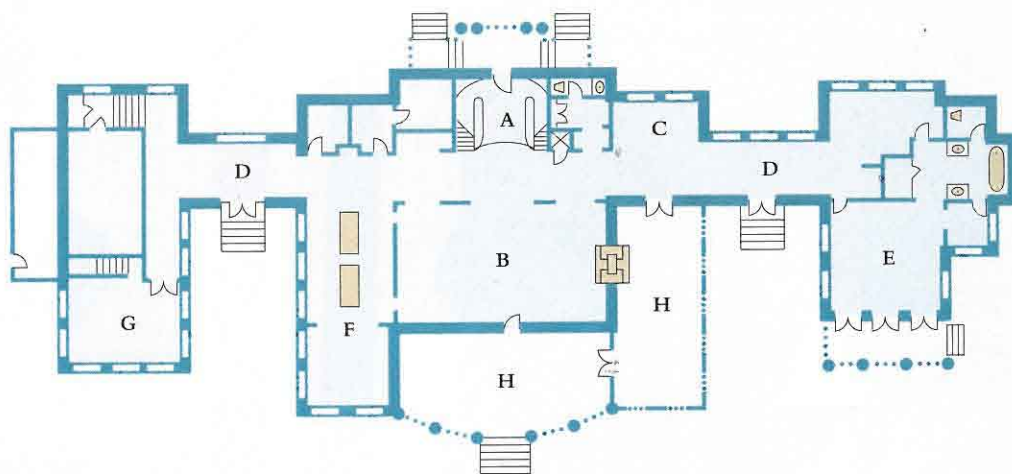
BOTTOM: The screened porch, with two exposures and a lake view, is a comfortable living area nine or ten months a year. Jayne put as much thought into the space as he would have an inside room, with comfortable seating, places to rest drinks, and lighting to extend its usefulness into the evening. Behind the door on the right is an outdoor fireplace. In the foreground are McGuire's "Gothic" rattan sofa and chairs on an Elizabeth Eakins cotton carpet; the coffee table is from John Boone. In the background, McGuire's teak dining table is surrounded by reproduction Windsor chairs from Barton-Sharpe, Ltd.





SECOND FLOOR

A. Second Floor Landing B. Guest Suite C. Girl's Bedroom D. Boy's Bedroom



FIRST FLOOR

A. Entry B. Living/Dining Room C. Library D. Breezeways
E. Master Bedroom Suite F. Kitchen/Breakfast Room G. Studio H. Porches



The showhouse is a four-bedroom, 6,000-square-foot neo-Georgian designed in the southern vernacular. It's meant to look as though it's been added on to once or twice, with breezeways (bottom plan) leading to single-story wings. **TOP LEFT:** A detail of the guest bedroom highlights ethereal curtains by Lakewood Interiors, made of F. Schumacher & Co.'s "Madras Sheer" cotton. The wallcovering is Donghia "Hemp." English satinwood occasional table from Kentshire Galleries; bust from Robert M. Hicklin Jr.; Syrie Maugham-style chairs from Jonas Upholstery. **MIDDLE LEFT:** One of the two breezeways, with its painted floor and windows on two sides, has the attitude

of a porch—and the sophistication of a living room, thanks to a Doris Leslie Blau, Ltd. Caucasian carpet, a Barton-Sharpe, Ltd. demilune table and an abstract work on paper by James Nares. The Chinese pagoda lantern was bought at the Whitney estate sale at Sotheby's last spring. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The boy's bedroom is painted a sophisticated khaki from Benjamin Moore. Wrought-iron bed from Charles P. Rogers; Finn Juhl chair from Baker Furniture; carpet from Patterson, Flynn & Martin; lamps from Flos U.S.A.; tasseled Chinese hats from William Lipton Ltd.; photos by Peter Beard; drawings by Karen Blixen, Kamante and Kivoi.





the magazine has had a long record of reporting on houses, their decoration and their occupants, but we'd never designed one from scratch, and the chance to do so proved irresistible. We imagined a house that would be comfortable, tasteful, extremely well made without being precious, and full of personal style—in this case, the style we imagined that a family drawn to the Ford philosophy might possess.

And so *Town & Country* made a deal with the Ford Plantation. We decided to work with a single decorator in a collaborative spirit, and to open the completed house to the public this November to benefit charity. The decoration budget was set at \$400,000, a fairly moderate sum, considering the house's size and eventual price tag of \$4 million. We agreed to a completion deadline of August 15, 1999—which sounded innocent enough, even though our "house" at that point was still a hole in the ground.

THE HOUSE Plans for the house, which is set on a point of land overlooking a lake, had been drawn up for the Ford Plantation prior to our involvement by respected architect Jim Strickland of the Georgia-based firm Historical Concepts, Inc. In keeping with the traditions of southern classicism, Strickland had taken various bits of the classical vocabulary—columned porches, breezeways, a pedimented Georgian facade—and recomposed them ▶272

homeowners are being encouraged to think about breaking up their allowed square footage into a smaller house with an outbuilding or two—a garage or guest cottage—rather than putting up a single dwelling.

Town & Country admired the Ford Plantation's appeal to active, community-minded families. Not to mention that we were also charged up at the prospect of taking on a decorating project. In its 153-year history,

peeling. Only 400 families will buy in, most of whom will probably spend less than three months a year in residence.

Technically, the Ford Plantation is a second-home community that also maintains a private club. In order to use the sporting facilities, homeowners must be admitted to the club (the initiation fee is currently \$85,000), which a managing body, not the homeowners, controls. "We're looking for residents who will be good citizens of the community and good stewards of the land," says partner Steve Schram. "Yes, we've turned a few people down at this point for club membership, though it's had nothing to do with nationality, race or relative wealth. We just want this to be a place for responsible, civic-minded people."

No question the partners are targeting an audience with traditional tastes. Buyers must submit the credentials of their chosen architect, who must agree to follow a set of building guidelines based on classical models (written up for Ford by Donald Rattner, of Ferguson Shamamian & Rattner Architects, LLP). And final plans must be approved by an architectural review board. Such restrictions will have their rightful detractors—after all, plenty of tasteful, civic-minded communities in this country have moved beyond classical building principles, from Sea Ranch, in northern California, to New Canaan, Connecticut. But one of Ford's rules does seem particularly inspired: a house may not exceed 6,000 square feet, excluding porch areas. That's not exactly small, but neither is it ungainly, considering the lot sizes. And



Whimsy has its day in the studio (above), where an alternative living room becomes home to a collection of Chinese kites. Old and new furnishings share the space: an 1820s American sofa and camphor-wood trunk set off Summit Furniture's square table, a rattan lounge chair from the Ralph Lauren Home Collection, and Keith Haring's child's chair.

OPPOSITE: *In the guest bedroom, a deceptively neutral palette plays against bursts of yellow, blue and shocking pink. The bed fittings, of F. Schumacher & Co. printed cotton, are by Gina Bianco; E. Braun linens and coverlet. The Turkish Giordes carpet is from Doris Leslie Blau, Ltd., the armchairs by Jonas Upholstery. Over the mantel is a portrait by Alison Nash, one of the decorator's project managers.*



Thomas Jayne's budget for the show-house was \$400,000. He spent in the most visible places and scrimped on elements that would play quieter, supporting roles. In the combined living and dining room (opposite), the splurge was on globe-pleated apple-green curtains of Clarence House fabric, embroidered in an Indian-inspired pattern by Penn & Fletcher (detail, this page). A major style statement, they unify the dual-purpose room and bring a note of indulgence to an otherwise pared-down scheme. "We got a lot for our decorating dollar," says Jayne.

OPPOSITE TOP: The living room half of the total space has the most frankly traditional décor in the house. Two things it deliberately doesn't have: an Oriental carpet and many antiques (only the side tables by the window, the andirons and the paintings predate 1999). The message? Traditional rooms can be stylish as well as practical for a modern family and a second home. Furniture by Jonas Upholstery is covered in fabrics from Cowtan & Tout (sofa) and Pierre Frey (armchairs); the three-legged table is from Baker Furniture, the round occasional tables from McGuire Furniture.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: In the dining area, Jayne blends a go-for-broke antique in the form of a Boston classical sideboard from G.K.S. Bush Antiques with compatible contemporary pieces. The Prouvé-style table was made by Greg Gurfein, the chairs by McGuire. The painting, *Shanty by a River*, is by John Adams Spelman.



Architect Jim Strickland designed the kitchen to look as though it had been an addition, as many kitchens are in updated antebellum houses. Clapboard walls and a paneled ceiling effect the look of a one-time screened porch; Thomas Jayne drove the point home by keeping walls white to match the showhouse exterior and treating the floor to gray porch paint. High-performance SieMatic cabinetry and granite countertops meld right in.

OPPOSITE: The adjoining breakfast room is a tour-de-force mix of styles that sums up the lighthearted traditional spirit of the house. Dining chairs from Hickory Chair Co., slipcovered in China Seas chintz from Quadrille, encircle a marble-topped Eero Saarinen table from Knoll. The area rug is by Elizabeth Eakins Cotton, the mobile from the Guggenheim Museum Shop.



Ford Plantation

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into a rambling and functional contemporary house. He even developed a story line that had the “19th-century” core of the building relocated to the site in the 1930s, when the porches, kitchen and breezeways were tacked on.

Inside, the four-bedroom house has a symmetrical orientation around a central entry hall. A combined living and dining room comes directly off the hall, with a kitchen adjacent; breezeways lead to a master bedroom suite on one side and a studio and office on the other. Upstairs are three bedrooms, two for the children and one for guests.

Who might buy such a house? We imagined a family from Boston or Chicago, two cities with uncharitable winters and direct flights into Savannah. They might be in their mid-forties, with a boy and a girl in grade school, in search of a place where the kids could have their independence and soak up some southern history (perhaps unconsciously). Dad could get back on a horse after twenty years, Mom could learn to play golf, and the kids could mess around with some boats, at least until the tennis lessons began.

Such a family would want an easy-going house, we decided, one nice enough for entertaining or putting up the occasional guest but not so fancy that they'd worry about leaving it empty most of the year. It might also be fun to give it a historical inflection and see how their taste, considered somewhat flamboyant back home, would translate to a more traditional context.

THE DECORATOR If anyone could take that script and run with it, it was Thomas Jayne, whose oddly paired attributes—erudition in decorative-arts history and an almost loopy sense of fun—made him the obvious choice for our endeavor. *Town & Country* recruited him in January.

“What attracted me to this project was that it was about the process of making a beautiful house,” says Jayne, 43, a graduate of the Winterthur Museum Program in American architecture

COMPOSING A ROOM

1. Consider the room's architecture. Are there features to play up—a wall of French doors, a beautiful floor—or flaws to hide?
2. Consider the room's function. Is a king-size bed essential or excessive? Do you really need to seat twelve in the dining room?
3. Sketch out a basic furniture and lighting plan that takes into account the previous two elements—architecture and function.
4. Choose a key piece of décor that you love and make it the inspiration for the room. It might be a carpet, a wallpaper or a commanding antique. Carpets often come first in important rooms, except for the dining room, where it's often the chairs.
5. Choose furniture and fabrics for upholstery and curtains that complement your key element without needless repetition. Create subtle foils that will play up its strong points: in the showhouse master bedroom, for instance, Thomas Jayne juxtaposed simple linen curtains against hand-painted silk walls.
6. Remember comfort. Before committing to your seating choices, for example, make sure you try them out for at least ten minutes and ask how they've been constructed. Have the springs been hand-tied? In how many directions? (Four is good; eight is even better.)
7. Analyze the results. Does the room seem balanced in terms of color, pattern, texture, scale? Do all these elements come together in harmony? Is there so much harmony that it's boring? Edit, reconsider.
8. Think about the room in context of the entire house. Do a “scheme check” to make sure all the rooms work together—that means laying out swatches sequentially on the floor.
9. Review the installed décor. Some elements may not click; hopefully the sofa is the right size and the curtains fall properly, since these are two of the most expensive corrections to make.
10. Tune up the room with your possessions. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it must look like yours.

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and decorative arts; Christie's; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Parish Hadley. With his scholarly vocabulary, gentle-giant posture (at 6'7", he can wire a chandelier without a stepladder) and habit of wearing quiet bow ties, he comes off more like a tenure-track professor than a streetwise, whip-cracking decorator. But we knew otherwise.

Working long-distance and straight from plans, as *T&C* was about to do, takes the guidance of a professional with know-how, imagination and guts, as well as virtual blood ties to the craftsmen and workrooms who will carry out his orders. Thomas Jayne wears his acumen lightly. So lightly, in fact, that his patrician interiors usually contain subtle forms of irony, whimsy, even kitsch, in keeping with his personality. (As our installation skated within hours of its deadline, Jayne hoisted a chair over his head at one point, yelling, "This could be a metaphor for the project!" It was Keith Haring's seat in the shape of a child, red arms outstretched in rage.)

An appropriate response to the architecture of our house, Jayne felt, would be what he calls a "bridge interior"—one that is both historically appropriate and extremely comfortable. It's an approach he draws on a lot, and one that comes right off his own business card: "Decoration, Ancient and Modern."

"I like old things," he says with gentlemanly understatement. "But I want them to look fresh—and that often comes from looking again at the old source and rethinking it, in color, shape or juxtaposition."

Though Jayne's work has rarely been cited as trendy, we felt that this was precisely the right moment to sign him up. Coming into vogue with the speed of a bullet train are several of his longtime decorating preoccupations: color, in all its strength and allusiveness; patterned walls, whether papered or painted; and eclecticism, the pairing of old and new to make a room that's timeless and comfortable (rather than "curated," which, as any flea-marketer will tell you, is much

easier to do). The showhouse became a place for us to elaborate on these trends.

THE INTERIOR On a trip five years ago to Cole & Son in England, makers of fine hand-blocked wallpapers, Jayne had picked up some 1930s sample sheets for his files. At our first design meeting in February, he thought back to those papers as soon as he saw Jim Strickland's double-helix staircase plan for the entry hall. In short order, he pulled out a bold stripe that would stand up to the chest-thumping architecture with a great deal of style. After tuning up the color slightly, he deemed it perfect—and it went on to become the leitmotif for the entire house.

"Papers with geometric patterns were traditionally used in the South, and this one has a scale that balances the delicate stair and the robust doorway," explains Jayne, whose infectious joy in decorating made us feel a bit like college students in the grip of a bow-tied professor, after all. "It's an early-19th-century-style English pattern, but one reproduced by hand in the 1930s, with that looser, modern sensibility in the drawing—so it was a spirited copy influenced by the fashions of the time." Not unlike the house, he might have added.

From that point on, Jayne and his design team were constantly holding swatches up to the wallpaper sample, which they dubbed their Rosetta stone. Not that everything had to match it, especially a fabric that would be five rooms away. But there had to be a relationship. Says Jayne: "Ideally you should be able to take a chair from the living room, put it in the bedroom, and still have it look good. That means the house is a harmonious essay. You don't want to repeat a pattern, or do too much with one color—you steal thunder from your own work in another room. But it all has to relate."

This way of thinking about decoration, as a unified whole flowing out of a single inspirational element, not only makes great sense, it's also liberating, since the major design themes are estab-

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lished right from the start. In the showhouse, the front hall paper gave us a foundation that could be built upon in three areas: its color palette, a watery blue-gray, melon and verdigris green; its handmade quality; and its references to the early 19th century and the 1930s. We ended up using them all.

Custom work also plays an essential role throughout the house, and intentionally so. *Town & Country* has always considered houses most reflective of their residents to be the most interesting; a *T&C* showhouse, we reasoned, should convey its uniqueness, even though the residents are purely fictional. For Thomas Jayne, custom work serves a second purpose: in this era of click-and-ship commerce, the techniques of the past are intrinsic to achieving his historically layered effects.

In the master bedroom, designer Lucretia Moroni collaborated with the decorator on hand-painted silk walls that are a perfect case in point. The idea, according to Jayne, came from the South's historic appreciation for decorated walls and also from an old photo he'd saved of a lady's dressing room, its walls painted with drifts of billowy, Bloomsbury-ish flowers on silk. Moroni showed him a kimono she'd just found at a flea market, and from it the two extrapolated a watery, slightly Asiatic motif of chrysanthemums. Writ large on four walls, the effect is a little old-world Savannah, a little Bloomsbury—and a little *The King and I*.

In the combined living and dining room, the custom touch was a set of apple-green curtains, fabricated by Lakewood Interiors in Dallas and embroidered with a floral crewelwork border by Penn & Fletcher in New York City. The strong presence of the curtains helped overcome the awkwardness inherent in the room: it was a hybrid, a formal space with dentil moldings and French doors, but with a dual purpose, which made a formal dining room impossible. The challenge was to honor its traditional aspects while maintaining its modern function. We'd begun with a

powerful 19th-century Turkish carpet from the camphor-scented warehouse of Doris Leslie Blau, Ltd. in New York. But once the rest of the room came together, simple sisal matting seemed a fresher choice. For the living room area, Steven Jonas of Jonas Upholstery in New York made a timeless suite of raspberry-colored armchairs and a gently curving blue sofa; in the dining area, a simple table in the style of French modernist Jean Prouvé was built by Greg Gurfein, a New York furnituremaker, and surrounded by eight casual contemporary chairs from McGuire Furniture.

As we began thinking about the second-floor bedrooms, Jayne developed more subtle themes drawn from the iconic striped entry-hall paper. In the guest room, for instance, the décor dips back again into the slightly louche mood of the 1930s, with roll-armed chairs covered in quilted silk in the style of Syrie Maugham and a canopy bed that practically begs for a turbaned Edith Sitwell to emerge from its depths. "A bed with hangings is such a big part of the southern tradition," Jayne riffs. "I wanted to do an elaborate bed that would put a spin on that whole tradition, and so the silhouette is a hybrid of Georgian style, like the house, and the Renaissance, which I love. But the inexpensive Schumacher cotton we chose [\$69 per yard] has a loose, 1930s quality to it, and I was inspired by that artistic license. There's never been a bed like this in a southern house." Or anywhere, for that matter: the fittings were custom-made by Gina Bianco, a Manhattan-based specialist in costume conservation better known for her skill in reinventing antique wedding dresses—and the feathers are from Jayne's 1999 Mardi Gras costume (see what we mean by loopy?).

All this custom work, ordered by necessity early on in the project, obviously didn't come cheap (the wallpaper was \$16,500, the embroidered curtains \$25,000). But our decorator had a plan. On this project, as in the work he does

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for many private clients, Jayne selected a few high-ticket items and effects that would get big play, then used them to set the tone for the entire house. It's a variation on a classic decorating trick: mixing modern and reproduction pieces with one or two great antiques. "The key is to not be stagy about it," Jayne observes. In the studio, for instance, wood and rattan pieces from Summit and the Ralph Lauren Home Collection make great sense on a painted floor, effecting the mood of an enclosed porch. The two antiques in the room are a well-traveled trunk and an 1820s-era painted sofa, a piece from Jayne's inventory that he brought out because it looked "passed down, reupholstered a few times, and painted over."

In the breakfast room, the decorator achieved the same kind of synergy without using antiques at all. He started with four reproduction Martha Washington chairs from Hickory Chair Co., a form popular in the 18th century. When shrouded in Colonial-style slipcovers, the leggy, tall-backed chairs perfectly complement an Eero Saarinen marble-topped pedestal dining table. The final fillip: a Guggenheim Museum Shop mobile picked up for \$375. "It's reasonable to say that the rooms couldn't have been more beautiful with a more expensive combination of elements," Jayne contends. "Decorating is about many things, but one is knowing how to use your resources wisely and economically. There's a financial and a visual economy at work here."

By April, we'd chosen the schemes for the major rooms. The house itself was framed and roofed. Though we tried not to feel we were racing the contractors, comparisons were unavoidable. Dan Paquette, president of local Sterling Construction Management LLC, always seemed to be one step ahead of us, waiting on our choices for hardware (Butler), bath fixtures (Kohler) and kitchen cabinetry (SieMatic).

As spring wore on and the house began to look more like itself, at least

on the drawing board, a few more collaborators signed on. Chuck Hettinger and George Wittman, decorative painters from Manhattan, agreed to come down and create a cypress-paneled library in faux boiserie, and Robert M. Hicklin Jr., a Charleston dealer in southern paintings, offered to lend us whatever we needed. His contributions of oil portraits and still lifes by area artists were indispensable. We also borrowed some student work from the Savannah College of Art and Design, a wonderful local resource.

A southern house has to have some southern content, and we relied on art a good deal, since antique furniture made in the South tends to be both expensive and hard to find. (The climate has never been conducive to preservation, and a lot of furniture was imported to start with.) As a compromise, we borrowed antiques from Guy Bush in Washington, D.C., and two New York City dealers, Kentshire Galleries and Florian Papp, that were made in the Mid-Atlantic, or in England, and that might have been used in the South.

Eight weeks before the deadline, we were in great shape—better than the contractor, who had run into weather delays and was still waiting for shipments of marble and granite for countertops. (When the final shipment arrived broken, no one seemed terribly surprised.)

With his schemes all chosen and the workrooms taking calls from his office almost daily, Jayne and his team began shopping in earnest for the ephemera that would pull the project together. Every time one of them returned from an out-of-town job site, a lamp or an odd piece of porcelain would pop from a carry-on bag.

"You have to think globally when you decorate," observes Jayne's project manager Eric Smith, a man who knows his way around a customs form. "If you want a house to have some dimension, you really need to travel. We bought things not only in New York, but also in L.A., New Orleans, Georgia, Charleston, the Hamp-

Ford Plantation

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tons, Connecticut, London and Paris.”

All of which makes the house sound much fancier than it is. Holding aside its nods to the current trends, historical references and custom effects, it's still a comfortable place where kids' kites hang in the studio and the Windsor chairs on the porch can afford to get rained on. They're copies, after all.

Feeling a little cocky after installing the last sticks of furniture on schedule, we decided to spend a night in the showhouse—to give it a test drive, so to speak. Would it function as well as it looked? (The showers were still being tiled, so our expectations in that area were nil.) As we drove back to the darkened house after dinner, Jayne likened the stunt to his camping out in the backyard as a kid, and the moonless sky reinforced his point.

But once inside, we thought again. A chorus of lights came on with subtle precision. The SubZero refrigerators—there were two, one for each of us—were stocked with junk food left behind by the construction crew. The rocking chairs on the porch were comfortable and not yet old enough to squeak, so we glided quietly along, reviewing the success of the project we had begun eight months before, as the house cast an apron of light out onto the lawn. We tossed a coin for the silk-lined bedroom; Jayne won, as well he should have.

The next morning, over PowerBars at the Saarinen table in the breakfast room, with our gift-shop mobile circling above, we compared notes and agreed: the house was a success. The decoration was sublime. And no cub scout had ever come close to having it this good.

The Town & Country Showhouse at the Ford Plantation will be open to the public November 5–26, 1999. The admission fee of about \$50 will benefit the Georgia chapters of the American Diabetes Association. For more information, please contact the Ford Plantation, P.O. Box 2879, Richmond Hill, GA 31324; (912) 756-5666. ❖

Ford Credit and Shopping Information

Town & Country thanks all the manufacturers, retailers, artisans and artists who participated in this project. Photographed at the Ford Plantation, Richmond Hill, Georgia, (912) 756-5666. Interior design by Thomas Jayne Studio, (212) 838-9080. NOTE: Items similar to the one-of-a-kind art and antiques in the showhouse are available through the vendors listed below. Art and antiques not identified are from Thomas Jayne Studio.

LIBRARY, page 226: Faux boiserie paneling painted by Hettinger and Wittman, (212) 614-9848. Antique Scandinavian kilim carpet from Doris Leslie Blau, Ltd., (212) 586-5511. “Charles of London” sofa custom to the trade at Jonas Upholstery, (212) 691-2777. Upholstered with “Morgan Woven Texture” in Amarillo #82134.00/376, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils, (212) 838-7878.

Throw pillows: “Dogwood” flower pillow custom-made to the trade at Gina Bianco, (212) 924-1685 and Thomas Jayne Studio, (212) 838-9080; terracotta-colored pillow of “Chandigarh” cotton-and-linen print fabric in Topaz #51023.01, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils, (212) 838-7878. 1940s coffee table in stone and metal (\$2,700) from Robert Altman, (212) 832-3490. **Draped table** custom from Thomas Jayne Studio, (212) 838-9080. **Fabric** is “Constable Flannel” in Bayleaf #89332.02/456, to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils, (212) 838-7878. **Embroidery** custom to the trade at Penn & Fletcher, (212) 239-6868. **On draped table: lamp** from Thomas Jayne Studio, (212) 838-9080; “Wren on Lock” bronze bird by Grainger McKoy, courtesy of Robert M. Hicklin Jr., Inc., and the Charleston Renaissance Gallery, (843) 723-0025.

“Bobbin” chair custom to the trade at Jonas Upholstery, (212) 691-2777. Upholstered with “Nemsi Woven” cotton in stone blue #82118.01/228 with “Linen Moiré” welting in pink #10088.00/69, both to the trade at Brunschwig & Fils, (212) 838-7878. Antique copper urn on window sill from William Lipton Ltd., (212) 751-8131. **Art:** Oysters, by Andrew John Henry Way, and General Oglethorpe,

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