

Eras mingle in the great room of a 1980s country home in Suffern, New York, where designer Thomas Jayne and his firm's senior designer, William Cullum, paired custom sofas with Italian Baroque stools and 1920s German Expressionist-style lanterns. The rug's digitally printed pattern came from an 18th-century Indian chintz.



TAKING IT TO THE TOP

With
côlor
reaching to
the rafters, a
storied country
home hits new
heights of style.

2018—FALL COLOR ISSUE

Interior Design THOMAS JAYNE AND WILLIAM CULLUM Interview KATHLEEN RENDA
Photography FRANCESCO LAGNESE Producer DORETTA SPERDUTO



The great room's eclectic furnishings include a custom overmantel mirror in a streamlined gilt frame, a pair of sofas in a Rogers & Goffigon linen and a Les Indiennes print, and a Soane Britain leather ottoman. The combination "doesn't look jumpy," Jayne notes, "but I can't explain why. This is decorating that's intuitive, not intellectual." Walls, Farrow & Ball Green Blue. Window treatments, Rogers & Goffigon's Porcini linen.

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What a rock-star reputation this house has! Tell me about its fame and acclaim.

THOMAS JAYNE: From the moment designer David Easton built it in the 1980s as his pastoral retreat, it was extremely celebrated and widely photographed. It's in upstate New York, adjacent to a historic garden and a cottage from the early part of the 20th century, and it's really one big, fantastic room. There are bedrooms and a small kitchen, but all the action happens in the large pavilion-like space. The architecture is vaguely French provincial, with rustic terra-cotta tile floors and exposed beams.

WILLIAM CULLUM: David is one of the masters of traditional design, and this home was one of his showcases. There's a grandness to it, with ceilings soaring up to 25 feet high, and it was decorated in a sort of European-country-estate aesthetic. He called it Balderbrae, and it deserves to have its own name. Coming down the driveway, you're met with all this greenery, and as you enter through the loggias, you're in another place and another world.

TJ: Like Brigadoon.

KATHLEEN RENDA: Did you feel obliged to preserve the home's legacy?

TJ: Of course I wanted to be respectful, but not slavish. This isn't a museum re-creation. What made it easier was the distance—David sold the house and auctioned off the contents years ago, and there have been two other owners since then. The interiors needed to be updated for the 21st century and tailored to the clients. They have children and grandchildren, and they come here on the weekends to read, paint, garden, and cook. The goal was a traditional country home with eccentricities and a modern bent.

The duck egg-blue walls in the main room are unexpected!

TJ: Bringing in that color was probably the biggest change we made to the home. It's surprising, and it freshened everything. I'm not afraid to use color, and this particular shade of mercurial blue-green is mesmerizing. To me, color is so powerful, it can take on an almost physical presence, which is why for a room this size, there's much less furniture than you would expect. There's a draped table in the middle of the room, a late-19th-century teak dining table and chairs near the kitchen, and a pair of custom sofas by the library—

RIGHT: In the kitchen, the custom Mosaic House Moroccan tiles have a pattern in an Egyptian Revival style, complete with a frieze of papyrus plants based on a tomb painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The walls are in Farrow & Ball Clunch; the door is in Green Blue. Cooktop, Wolf.



ABOVE: The bespoke glass-scarab tiebacks in the hallway outside the master bedroom were inspired by the beetle pattern on the Jennifer Shorto Emeralds wallpaper. **BELOW:** Jayne retained the hallway's original light fixture, which was installed by David Easton. "I was mindful of the home's history," he says. Woodwork in Benjamin Moore Parsley Snips; ceiling in Baja Dunes.

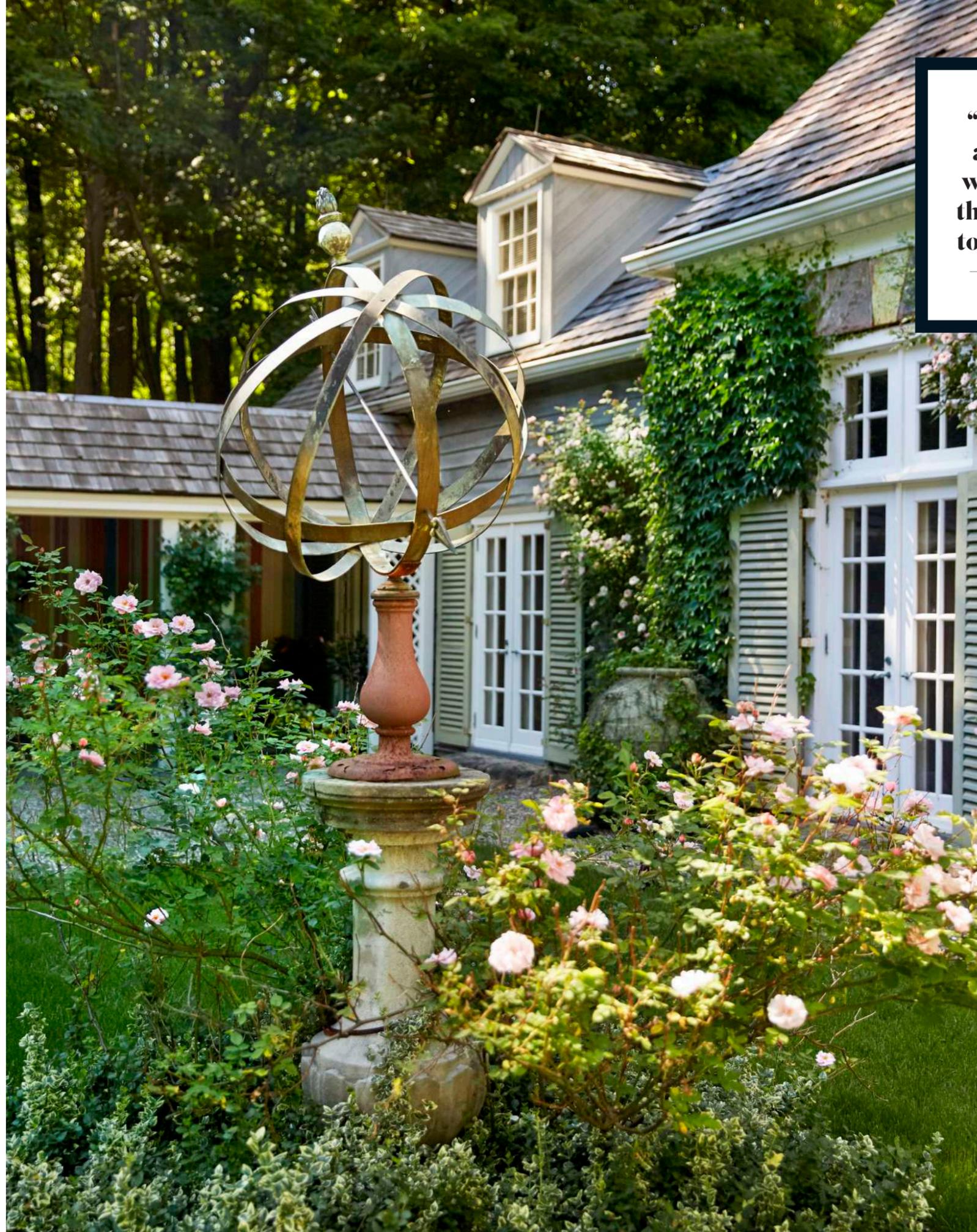




LEFT: Since this loggia needed oomph when the flowers weren't blooming—"the roses blossom for about four weeks, and then everything is green"—Jayne painted the beadboard with asymmetric stripes in eight colors: Benjamin Moore Bronze Tone, Calypso Blue, Eye of the Tiger, Lehigh Green, Pale Oats, Saybrook Sage, Soft Cranberry, and Van Courtland Blue. Drawn from hues seen outdoors and inside, the variegated lines "create a bridge between the interior rooms and the garden."



ABOVE: A Room & Board steel canopy bed is a modern addition to the traditional master bedroom. The wall behind the bed is in Benjamin Moore Palladian Blue. **BELOW:** Jayne bought the “beautiful, bizarre” table lamp in 2007 when Easton auctioned off the contents of Balderbrae. “It’s finally returned home,” he says. **RIGHT:** Roses surround an armillary sphere in the gardens of the six-acre property. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



**“This house was about knowing when to preserve the past and when to move forward.”
—Thomas Jayne**

that’s actually the same floor plan David had. Paring it down made it contemporary.

The sculptural window treatments are very old-school.

TJ: Swags and jabots aren’t in style, but they’re still on my playlist. At Jayne Design Studio, nothing is out of fashion—it’s just done in an updated way. Rather than an expected silk for the curtains, the fabric is a sheer linen. It’s an unusual but timeless choice: William saw similar drapery in a 19th-century watercolor from the archives of the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, and that was the spark. Creativity is really important if you’re a traditionalist. Like the tiebacks we commissioned for the hallway outside the master bedroom: Gilt-bronze tiebacks would have been historical, but not nearly as magical as Tiffany-style glass scarabs.

Wait . . . scarabs?

TJ: The wallpaper there has a beetle print, and the tiebacks repeat the insect motif. It’s a small hallway, but we saw it as an opportunity for more color and more pattern. The woodwork is a saturated green, and the walls are papered with these chic bugs. They’re also inspired by the wife, who is a classicist, an Egypto-phile, and an artist who paints mythological subjects. It really helps to have a client with interests.

wc: Her love of ancient references was the jumping-off point for the Moroccan-tile hearth surround in the kitchen. It’s a custom mosaic frieze with stylized papyrus that’s based on an Egyptian antiquity at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The kitchen needed an object of focus. It had weird doors and cabinets with a black hole of a hearth in the middle of the wall, and the tile mitigated all of that.

The master bedroom is chockablock with patterns and boho quirks and then—boom!—there’s a sleek bed.

TJ: In a bedroom with soaring ceilings, you need a sense of enclosure. I wanted a four-poster, but a stripped-back version. Something clean next to the vintage Moroccan rug, the 1740s carved-pine mirror, the Pakistani quilt, and the antique Chinese brocade pillow. This steel bed is a classical form reduced to its essentials—it’s like a metaphor, and the room sums up our philosophy. Rather than being confining, we see traditional as liberating, a springboard for adventure. Its strength is how it embraces modern and makes it more livable, and it’s why our clients ended up with an utterly original home. And it portends what’s to come, because the midcentury-modern idiom has been played out. Our eyes are hungry for decoration. It’s time for swags and jabots!