

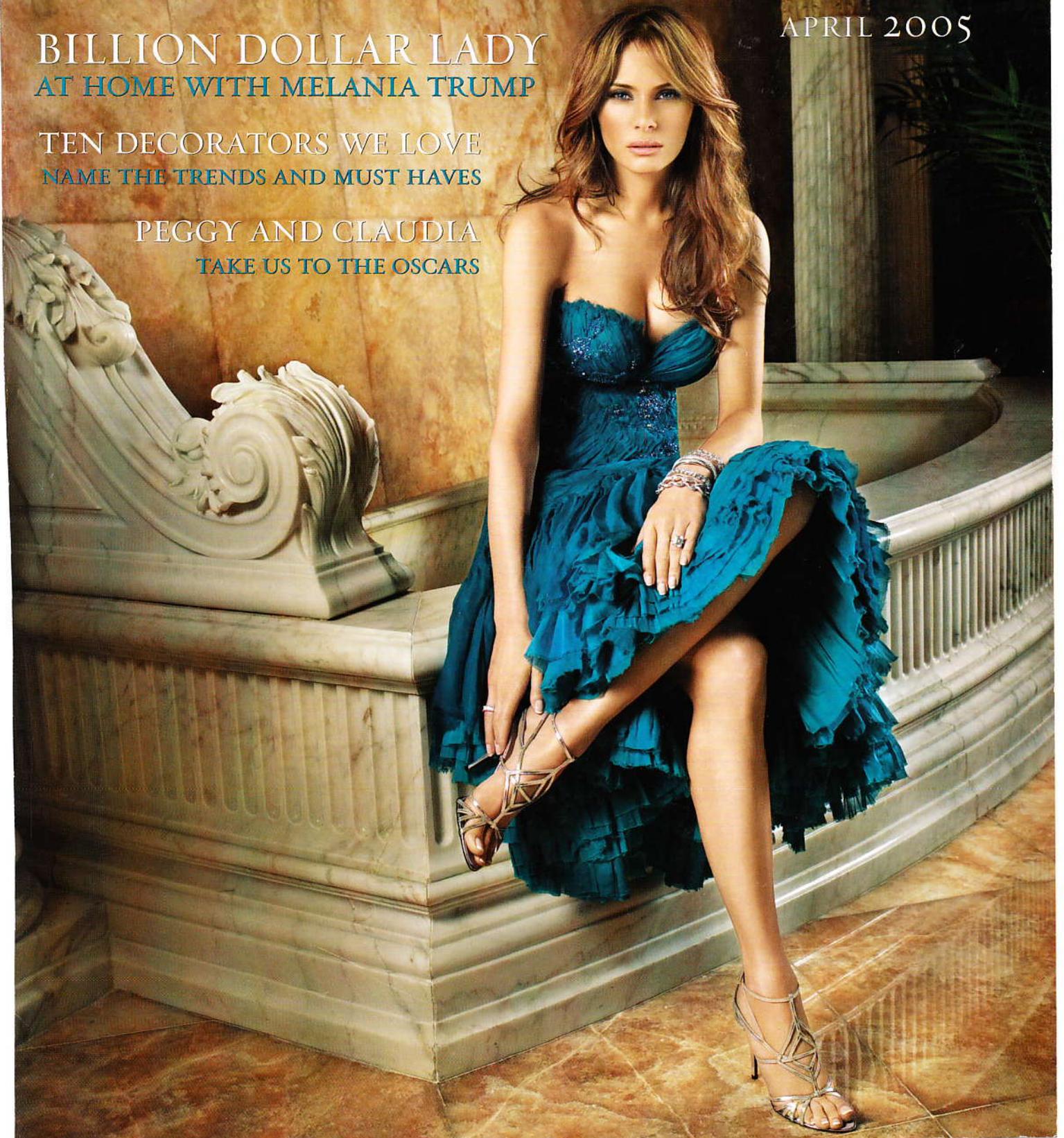
AVENUE

APRIL 2005

BILLION DOLLAR LADY
AT HOME WITH MELANIA TRUMP

TEN DECORATORS WE LOVE
NAME THE TRENDS AND MUST HAVES

PEGGY AND CLAUDIA
TAKE US TO THE OSCARS





art & artists

Artistic Design

EXPERT INSIGHTS ON USING ART TO CREATE THE PERFECT HOME SETTING

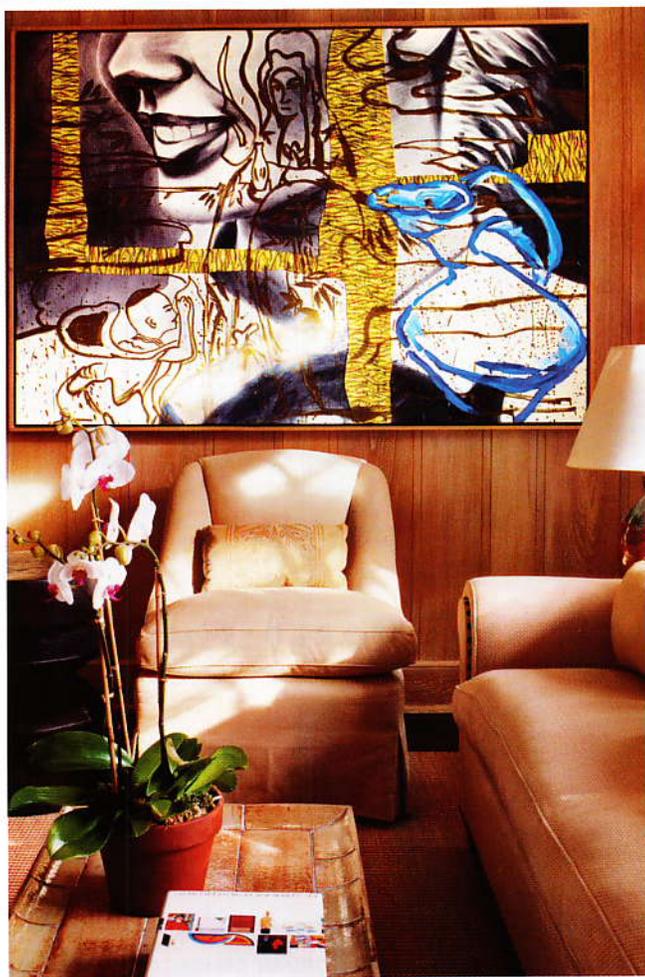
BY LORINDA ASH EZERSKY

THE ADDITION OF ART CHANGES ANY HOME INTO A PERSONAL SPACE THAT REFLECTS THE TASTE, BUDGET AND STYLE OF THE RESIDENTS. BUT IT CAN ALSO PRESENT A BIT OF A DESIGN CHALLENGE. MOST OF US HAVE STRONGLY-HELD VIEWS ABOUT WHAT WE DO

and don't like when it comes to artwork. But selecting an especially attractive work of art, or indeed building even a modest art collection, is only half the battle for most homeowners. The all-important next step—deciding how to display one's art and how to best integrate it into the overall décor of one's living space—is where many art lovers run into trouble.

The breach that exists between the collection of art and the artistic display of those pieces is where some of New York's top designers can make a real impact.

Take, for instance, David Kleinberg, who runs his own interior design business on the Upper East Side. Kleinberg began his career working for Parish-Hadley, a firm noted for their traditional and stately interiors, but his own style has evolved into one admired for its calm, clean lines and a preference for neutral, muted colors. Kleinberg finds himself



Designer David Kleinberg has become known for the innovative use of art in his interiors. Here, Kleinberg uses a David Salle painting to add color and flair to an East Hampton home.

working quite often with clients who collect art, and he takes great care to properly showcase their favorite pieces.

“My interiors are team players,” he notes, “and work with any kind of fine or decorative art collection. Almost all of my clients have an interest in art. It runs the gamut from people who have serious collections of 20th century art and design to people who have an interest in young emerging artists. And the furniture has ranged from mid-18th century European to mid-20th century.”

Kleinberg is surprised by how many people ask him to effect a complete change in the style of their home. These clients don't want to use what they've accumulated in the past, they want to shift away from possessions—furniture and art—that reflected an earlier taste level, or perhaps a different financial or personal position. So they discard the bachelor furniture and the art

picked out by the prior spouse and begin again with a clean slate. "It's more fun to start with someone who's beginning again," Kleinberg notes. "I like to go on the journey with them, as it expands my interests as well." While he prefers contemporary art, his background and skill enable him to work with even the most conservative and traditional clients.

He notes that many homeowners run into difficulty when attempting to include art in their decorating schemes because the task of making all elements of a room or home fit together can be daunting. According to Kleinberg, choosing furnishings at the same time that a client is acquiring art can help to address this issue by allowing for an overall cohesion in the interior.

While it may ultimately be more satisfying, building an entire collection and decorating a home at the same time is a monumental task that can take years to complete. From a practical standpoint, it is somewhat easier for designers to work around a pre-existing collection. "People who have a definite point of view or a previously formed collection can be easy clients to satisfy," Kleinberg says. "We've surveyed, catalogued and made a floor plan to highlight clients' art. It can be very clear and efficient when you have the right lighting, shelves, walls and spaces to house their collections."

Like Kleinberg, Anthony Ingrao notes that many clients come to him with blank slates.

"They like us because we try to make their personalities come through in the décor," he says. "They may think



Ingrao is not afraid to use art prominently in his work, as evidenced in this room he designed in a Park Avenue apartment.

they have no idea what they want, but after they start looking at things they realize they have big opinions because they have objects and fabrics and colors to react to."

Ingrao is an interior designer who has come to specialize in working with art. He has a reputation for his distinctive taste, bold use of color, eye for detail and knowledge of a broad spectrum of European antiques. That said, for his own home, he favors black and white, which sets off his own art collection.

A year ago, Ingrao and his partner Randolph Kemper created a stunning, three-story white marble gallery in a townhouse at 17 East 64th Street to show 18th to 20th century antiques alongside contemporary artwork.

"The gallery is a forum for dialogue between modernity and classicism," says Ingrao. "Creating an inspirational context for viewing antiques enables me to explore the sheer joy of collecting." In the gallery, they exhibit rare furniture as if it was sculpture, and they view their furniture as art, the same as the paintings on the walls.

Ingrao recently completed an 8,000-square-foot penthouse that was designed to showcase a collection of pop art being amassed as construction was happening. A dramatic background of black and white was used to highlight the strong primary colors favored by the artists in the collection. The clients and designer created a total environment where the art and furnishings are of a single mind, and the effect is quite stunning.

To Ingrao, art simply presents more opportunity to be creative when designing a room or a home. "What I like is to create some sort

of juxtaposition between the art and furniture," he says. "If things go together you don't really notice anything. Contrast is one of the big keys to my work."

Whether it's contemporary art with traditional furnishings or antiques with more austere mid-century furnishings, projects succeed when client and decorator create a unique and personal backdrop that reflects the client's interests. Without art, the most tastefully decorated home can feel like an anonymous hotel lobby. The goal is for the design and the art to balance and reinforce each other, and for collector and designer to have fun making the mix. With experts like Kleinberg and Ingrao, a successful outcome is almost inevitable. ♦