

# Decorating Lesson

DECORATORS MARKHAM ROBERTS AND MICHAEL SIMON

**W**hen philanthropist and etiquette guide author Charlotte Ford decided to redesign the bedroom in her Southampton home, she turned to decorator Markham Roberts. "The room had last been done many years before and needed to be updated," Ford says. "Since I've worked with Markham for a long time, and he knows my tastes and living habits so well, I was happy to let him come up with a new scheme." Roberts took to the task with gusto, creating a jaw-dropping retreat of boldly patterned fabrics in vivid lavender, purple, and white—a mix that looks wonderful in the sunlight pouring through the room's six windows. "I wanted to give Charlotte a pretty bedroom with everything she needed," he says, "but one that is appropriate for the countryside."

**THE WALL COVERING** "When you use a pattern like this all over the walls, problems disappear," says Roberts. What troubled him was the poor architecture. The master suite had been built as an addition, and to his eye it was an awkward union of structures. His solution was to hide the flaws with an exuberant floral French-Indian fabric, Bracieux by Le Décor Français, in a colorway suggested by the violet and white faience mantel already in the room. The effect is bright and garden fresh. And Roberts pulled off a neat trompe l'oeil in the dressing room: disguising drawers built into the wall (left).



**THE BED** "A sleigh bed is luxurious if you have the space," advises Roberts. "All the fabric adds softness to the room." The custom-made Syrie Maugham-style sleigh bed is upholstered in a tufted Indian-inspired indigo sari fabric by Raoul Textiles, available from A.M. Collections. "I love

the sleigh bed Markham made," says Ford. "I had never had that type of bed before. It looks beautiful, and is wonderful to sleep in."

**THE LIGHTING** "Big lamps are good for light but bad for reading in bed," says Roberts. "A swing-arm reading lamp is more considerate of the other person." He mounted an adjustable brass light from James Sansum behind the headboard. A Christopher Spitzmiller glazed ceramic lamp from Mecox Gardens, with a custom-made parchment lampshade, sits on a white lacquered night table designed by Roberts.



PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIC BOMAN

DOMESTIC BLISS CITIZEN

EXPLAIN HOW THEY PUT TOGETHER TWO BREATHTAKING BEDROOMS

## THE SEATING

"The big, deep window seat cushions are a great place for Charlotte's grandkids to curl up and play," says Roberts. The bedroom is very spacious, so Roberts took advantage and added plenty of seating. He upholstered a late-18th-century Louis XVI white-painted beech wood bench and bergère that Ford owned in the same fabric as on the sleigh bed. For a bit of contrast, he added a white beech wood 18th-century French Directoire fauteuil from James Sansum, and upholstered it in Donghia's Henry Calvin white linen fabric. "It's nice to mix antique framed chairs with a contemporary space."

## THE ACCENTS

"A mirror over a mantel is always pretty, and it looks great against a patterned wall," Roberts says of the bonnet-shaped, shell-encrusted mirror he found at Ruzzetti & Gow. For the floors he wanted "a very plain, soft carpet," again as a contrast to the riotous color on the walls. He selected a wool carpet, Iscara, in a bamboo color from Stark. For the window treatments, Roberts says, he picked "plain ivory-colored linen curtains, just to be crisp and fresh and bright, with matchstick blinds behind. I love that natural color, and they let the light come in very nicely." —DAN RUBINSTEIN