

may / 2001

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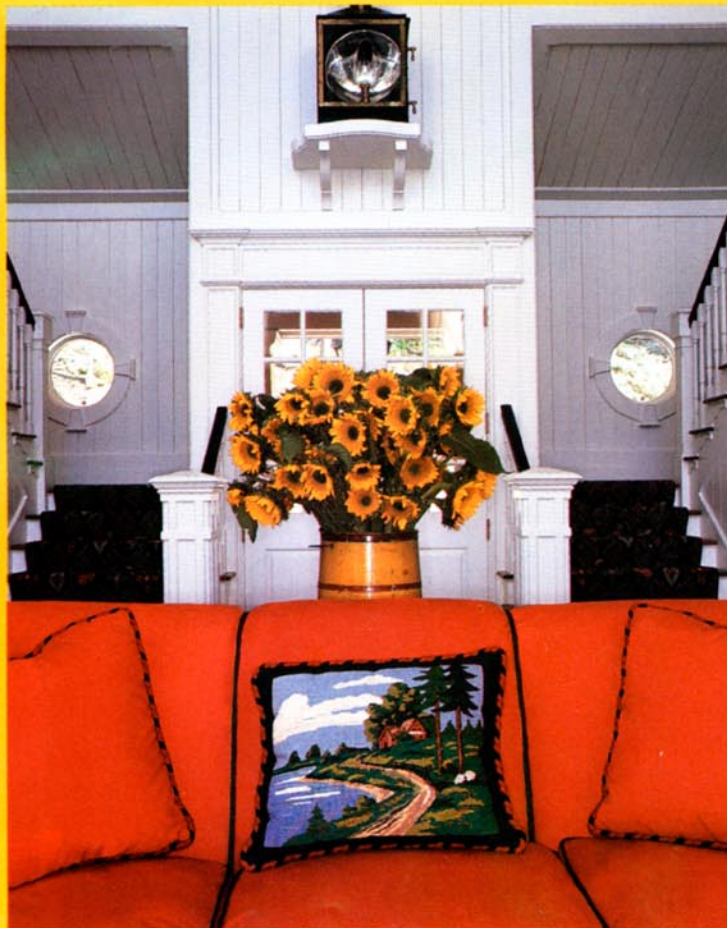
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Dynamic Duo

Even during the recent rage for beige, William Diamond and Anthony Baratta stuck to their double-barreled strengths: pulsating primaries, eye-popping patterns

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[this page]

For the staircases that flank the front door of a new shingle-style house, designers William Diamond and Anthony Baratta designed a carpet that looks like a 19th-century American runner; available through Stark Carpets.

[facing page]

In the master bedroom, an antique game board hangs above a paneled mantelpiece lined with shiny tiles from Country Floors. In rooms where red is not the dominant color, it appears as an accent: here, a thin broken stripe in the carpet.

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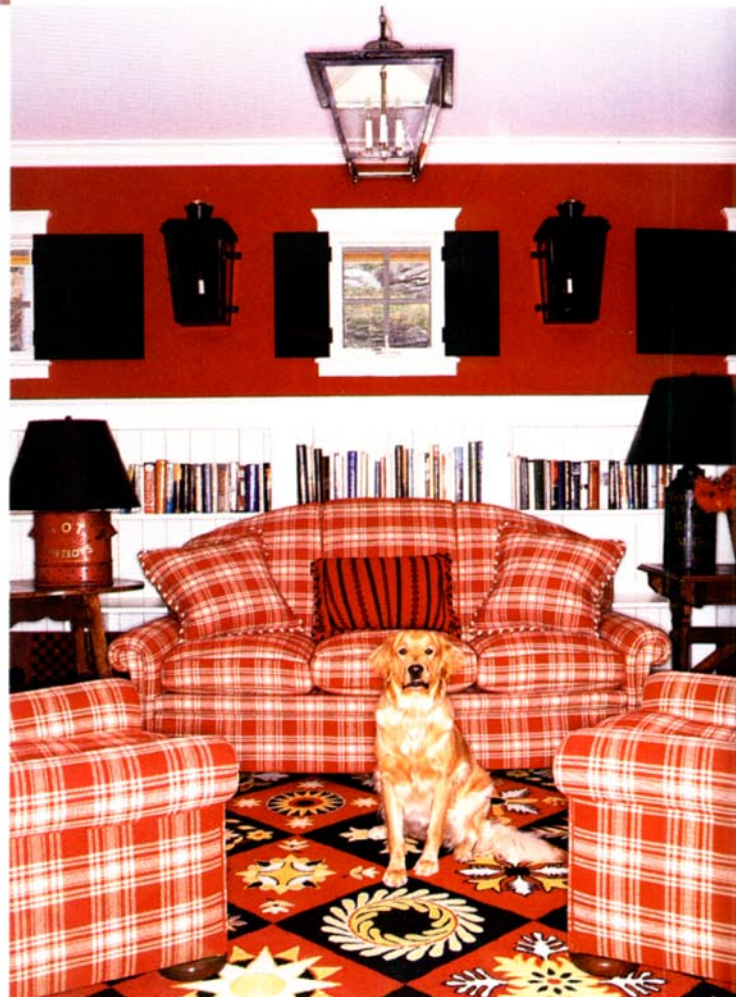
CAROLYN SOLLIS





STEPPING INTO THE LIVING ROOM OF THIS SHINGLE-STYLE house in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, might remind a first-time visitor of the moment in *The Wizard of Oz* when Technicolor wipes out black-and-white. Not that the magnificent Berkshire landscape—lush greens in summer, red barns against white snow in winter—ever looks gray or muted, but even nature cannot compete with the vibrant hues favored by interior designers William Diamond and Anthony Baratta.

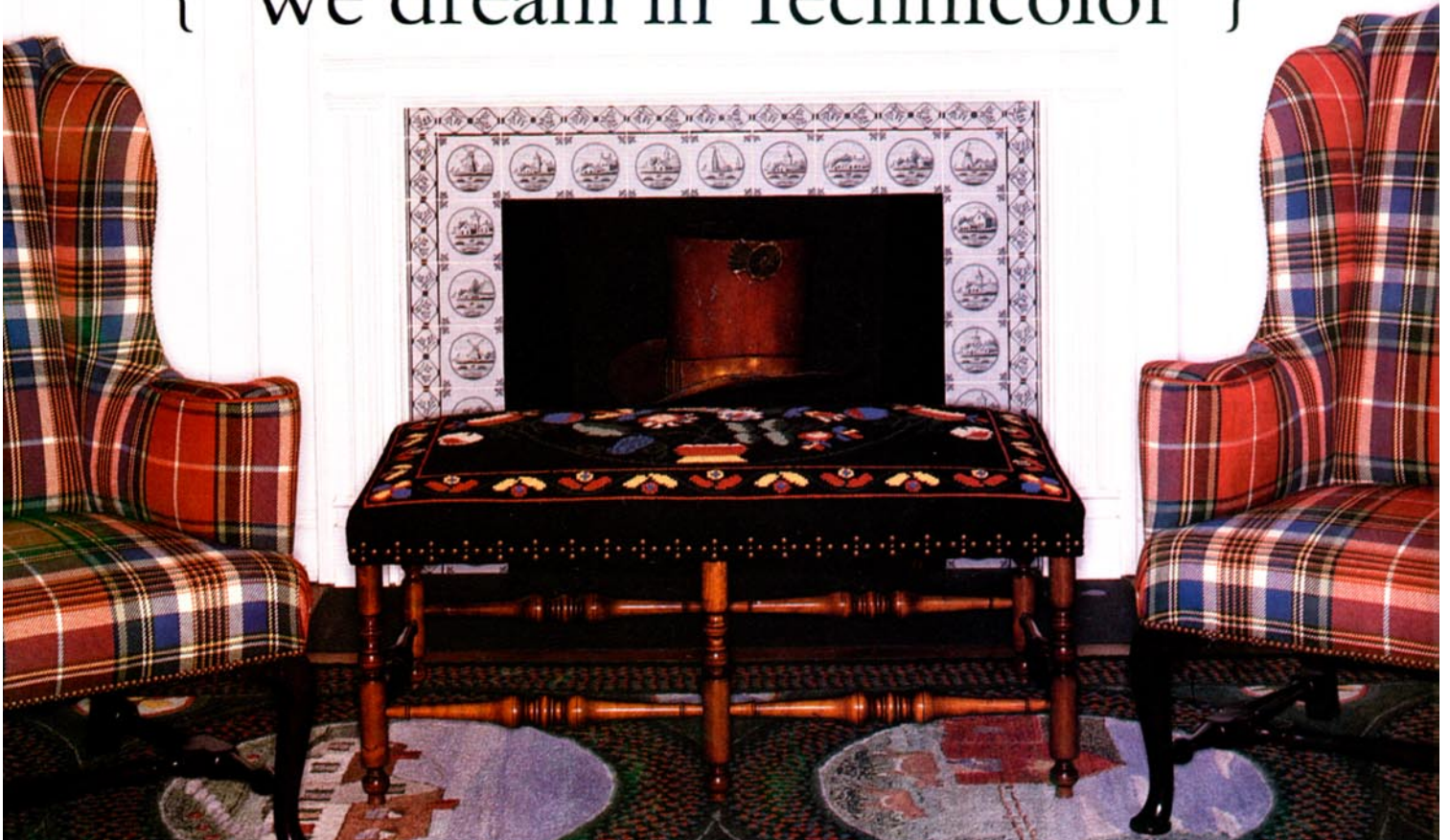
“Color and pattern have always been ‘in’ for us,” says Diamond, “even during the last half of the 90s when every magazine seemed to be showing only rooms decorated in the Armani–Calvin Klein aesthetic.” Just at the height of that minimalist era, the owner of this house, designed and built by Shope Reno Wharton of Greenwich, Connecticut, was looking for someone to decorate it. “I saw houses by several other designers,” she says, “but they were all so beige. Then a friend told me about Diamond and Baratta.” She called them immediately; they showed her some of their completed projects, and they got the job. Now she says, “Although I’m a perfectionist and can usually think of many ways to improve a house I’ve lived in for a while, here I wouldn’t change a thing.”





[facing page, clockwise from top left]
 Six antique lanterns from London hang in the red-and-white tiled kitchen because "they are big and gutsy." The front door leads directly into the living room. Red felt covers the walls of the master sitting room; miniature windows have inside shutters.
 [this page]
 A quilt from Marie Miller Antique Quilts hangs in the living room; tiles customized by Diamond and Baratta were made in Holland.

{ "We dream in Technicolor" }





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Even for Diamond and Baratta this scheme is extreme—pulsating red, electric yellow, deep spruce green, touches of bright sky blue. “We went to a new level of color saturation,” says Baratta, pointing out that the red running through all the rooms is the most intense they have ever used. “Usually we soften it bit,” he admits. But for this job they didn’t need to. With a client who was cheering them on, they could go all the way. “She gave us complete freedom,” says Diamond.

Diamond and Baratta cherish this kind of control because it means they can integrate everything in the project from start to finish. They designed plaids and prints and had them produced; designed their own rugs and carpets to be executed by their secret stable of craftspeople. They even customized tiles for the living room fireplace surround and had them made in Delft. “Creating our own fabrics and rugs means we don’t have to work with different dye lots,” explains Baratta. “The same red appears throughout, and the same green. If even one of the colors was slightly off, the scheme would fall apart.”

But it takes more than a willing client for colors this intense to work, to say nothing of the plaids and checkerboard patterns so graphic they make your eyes

pop. It takes the right house. Diamond and Baratta were blessed with the grand scale—the living room soars to 20 feet—that could absorb the bright primaries and, indeed, seemed to need them. And the glossy white vertical planks with which they finished the walls set everything off to perfection. Diamond and Baratta could have left the walls as unadorned as they found them, but they have an aversion to flat-white Sheetrock and also felt a wood surface would be more in keeping with the architecture of the house, inspired by shingle-style cottages built at the turn of the last century. “Tony studied many Massachusetts houses built at that time,” says Diamond, pointing out the raised-panel fireplace wall his partner designed for the master bedroom and his decorative ceiling beams in the living room and kitchen.

The scale of the rooms demanded artwork to match, so Diamond and Baratta hung old quilts and stacked game boards one above the other on the walls. The result is a house as graphic and brilliant as an art poster. Asked how they do it time after time—assemble elements that could so easily cause chaos but deliver harmony instead—Baratta replies, only half in jest, “We dream in Technicolor.” ●

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES

{Diamond and Baratta have an aversion to flat-white Sheetrock}

[facing page, from left]
A collection of antique quilts enriches the master bedroom. The son's bathroom has William Diamond-designed plaid wallpaper, which appears smaller in the mirror reflection.

[this page]
Yellow felt walls in the son's bedroom are punched up with a black-and-white bedcover of fabric from Randolph & Hein and red-and-white checked pillowcases from L. L. Bean. "We are avid believers in black and white," says Bill Diamond. "Black grounds all colors."

