

HOME **RULE**
OPEN HOUSE

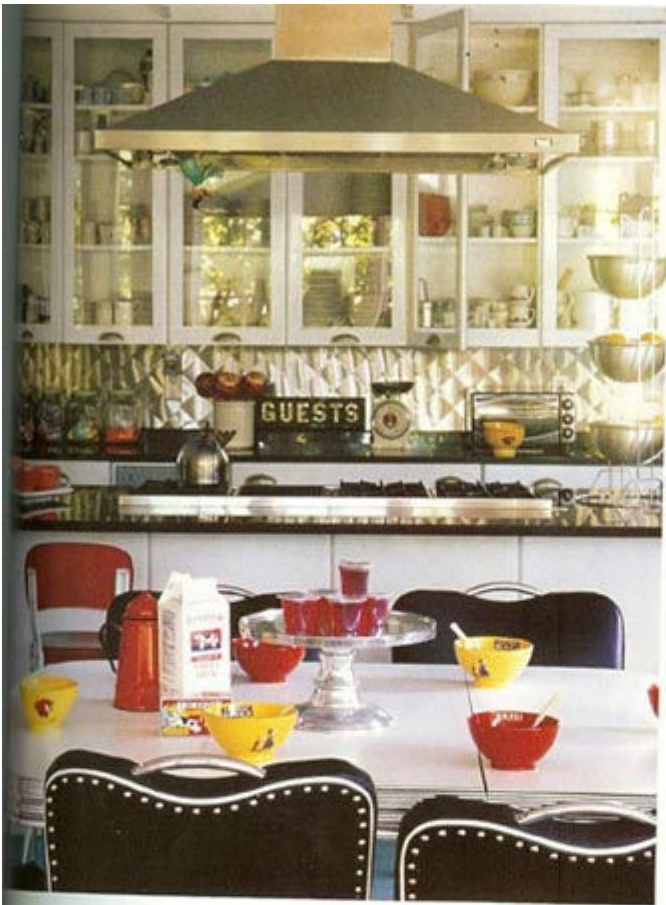


light
BRIGHT

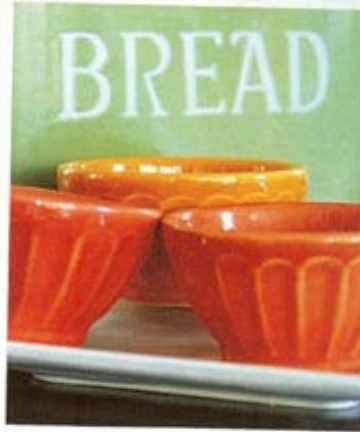
Always one for reinvention, fashion forecaster Deborah Waterman Jones uses vivid hues and her own whimsical fancy to create a vibrant family home. **By Corinne Bensahel**
Photographs by Antoine Schneck







The kitchen, in pure 1950s style, teems with whimsical detail and plays on the contrast of black and white. Covering the couches, large throw pillows embroidered with symbols representing the legendary byways of America, Craie and Barrel. Small dwarf tables, Philippe Starck for Kartell. On the counter, salad bowls, the Conran Shop. Atop the white wooden cupboards, an impressive array of old coffee pots, 1950s-era stools reissued by Williams-Sonoma.



Welcome to Deb's house—Deborah Waterman Johns, that is. After 10 years at *Elle* magazine as fabric and color editor, Deb settled in Washington, where she set up her own businesses, *Get Dressed* and *Fig*. She jets off to Europe twice annually to shop for her private fashion clients, and imports specialty clothing and home and gift items from London, Milan, and Paris. An excellent fashion forecaster and expert wardrobe/home consultant, she has counseled J.Crew, Ralph Lauren, and Loed and Taylor among her clients.

Deb is a style magician—with a few flicks of the wrist, she'll extract older clothes from your wardrobe and, an alteration or two later, completely transform your look. But because all roads lead to housewares, she moves quickly from your closet to your living room. A word of warning: once she starts, Deb's going to shake things up.

Isn't one's own back yard the best place to start? Purchased in 1996, the Georgetown home was a painful stage. After revamping the cramped second floor, Deb allowed her fancy free rein, adding the spacious rooms downstairs with pure, vivid color in the style of British decorator John Gail. From the cobalt-blue dining room to the apple-green living room, the eye is continuously courted by the accumulation of details that set the scene. Here, neither carpet nor curtain crowd the space, despite the stylist's affection for pretty fabrics. "It's a lot simpler to maintain what you've got," she explains. But if there is one room to which Deb has devoted special attention, it's the kitchen. Enlarged into a real family room, it accommodates the day-to-day needs of the table. No accessory is missing here, from the multicolor collection of coffee pots topping the cabinets to the chrome diner-style stools, which hint at Deb's 1950s aesthetic.





In the sun-speckled living room, tropical prints recall the Hawaii of another era. Antique cane pieces were purchased from Good Eye in Washington, a dealer specializing in 1950s and 1960s furniture. Floral and leopard-print fabrics, Rubenstein of New York. Lamp, ABC Carpet of New York. On the walls, works of art created by Deb's four children.

In the immense garden, site of barbecues and other festive gatherings, the pool beckons, conjuring up a mini-vacation in the heart of the city. Built by the Johns, the pool house reveals the New England style of which they're particularly fond, all scrubbed white wood and beachy freshness. From the jukebox to the old posters of towering ice cream sundaes, every element evokes summer holidays in Cape Cod or Nantucket. The shelves are piled with brightly colored dials and little dolls that are the pride of the owner. Nothing is precious, but every detail is carefully studied, chosen with an acute sense of setting infused with humor.

"I am a devotee of flea markets—that's where I score all my lucky finds," Deb says. From Saint-Ouen in France to the Portobello Road in London, she discovers marvels that she buys without a moment's hesitation, knowing that she'll always find a place for them in her continually evolving universe. And if the new piece looks like an intruder? Deb will find a friend or client to repurchase her find. Just another part of the job! ★



Lilac walls set off black-and-white family photos in a corridor.



The bed in the guestroom was painted and inspired by the Italian brand Forzieri.