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# House Beautiful

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ideas  
for **DECORATING** in  
2011

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BIG ideas

→ 2011

*the new*  
PRETTY

*confident, liberated, and unabashedly feminine*

*Interior design by*  
WINDSOR SMITH

*Interview by* MIMI READ

*Photographs by*  
VICTORIA PEARSON



Hanes turned a negative into a fresh, beautiful positive: he broke up the long hallway leading to the master suite by adding a row of ethereal white portieres. Bedside tables are vintage John Dickinson. OPPOSITE: The bed and bench, both from Aubergine Home Collection, are covered in a Rogers & Goffigon wool, Bechamel. Bedding by Eileen Fisher for Garnet Hill.

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES







Glamour goes soft and low-key in a young family's Los Angeles house, where designer Windsor Smith dreamed up a dining room "the color of a reflecting pool." A Louis Philippe table is flanked by mixed seating, all from Windsor Smith Home Collection. OPPOSITE: For English charm, Smith covered walls in Bennison's Roses in Mono Grey/Oyster floral linen and used the same print on the armless chairs.









The scale of the living room is "more like a salon," Smith says. "It's a gorgeous silvery retreat in the middle of the house, where every living room should be—you might actually *live* in them if they were." The hand-painted de Gournay wallpaper suggests a misty garden. For contrast, the double door is painted Farrow & Ball's Pitch Blue. The chandelier from Charles Edwards was chosen for its unfussy elegance.











**MIMI READ: Why did you become a decorator?**

**WINDSOR SMITH:** I wasn't born to it. As a child, I lived in ordinary, unfancy houses, first in Salina, Kansas, then in Houston. From the wheat fields to the oil fields! But I've always been curious about the lyrical and the beautiful.

**Did your family think you were odd?**

They'd say, 'Where on earth does she get this taste?' I loved that an environment could transform how you live and feel.

**So you're a self-creation. What kinds of spaces excite you?**

The Hôtel du Cap in Antibes. Venice's Grand Canal as you approach the city. The great room of the Mitchell Cottage in Islesboro, Maine. A friend's boat from the 1940s. My style heroes are Elsie de Wolfe, Sophia Loren, and Ralph Lauren.

**Loren and Lauren! Of course! I can see the merger of feminine glamour and classic thoroughbred style in this house. Who else inspired it?**

My clients always inform my interiors. The houses emanate outward from their dreams. I merely spin them into gold.

**Or in this case, silver. Who lives here?**

A young family. The wife is an actress from South Africa. She has a beautiful way about her—she's the type of girl who would wear high-waisted shorts, a peasant blouse, and a huge hat in the garden. The husband is a businessman through and through, but he really enjoys the design process. They have two kids, some cats, rough-and-tumble dogs. But it's all very charming and under control.

**One thing that strikes me about the house is its low-key elegance.**

When there's nothing strongly drawing the eye, something great happens. That ebonized desk, or that painting from the Clignancourt flea market, or a beautiful small sculpture you bought on the King's Road—these things come to life. I wanted to create a soft family gallery so that my clients could fill it up with all the little treasures of their lives.

**Is silver your new thing?**

For a long time, my work has been about strong color. And it's true, I've been backing off from that lately, turning more toward matte metallic tones paired with whites and other neutrals. But my love affair with silver isn't new at all. I've loved it since I was given a tiny silver locket as a child. It's timeless and elusive. It soothes the eyes and the soul.

**Is that why you used so much of it in the dining room? Metallic therapy?**

I was really inspired by the garden off of it. It has soft, shabby pink David Austin roses climbing over gray stone. The roses hang in the windows! There's a little pond set into bluestone, and all the plants in pots have silvery leaves like lamb's ear. I brought these grays and silvers inside, using them for the tin ceiling, which almost looks like eyelet, and in the fabric on the walls and chairs. It's a new way of using floral, that square architectural pattern. Actually, I think of this room as having a new Victorian mood, like a good English movie.

**Putting a patterned chair or bed covering against the same patterned fabric on a wall—what does that accomplish?**

The effects here are absolutely English, and those are my favorite moments in the house. I love doing curtains, walls, and furnishings all in the same fabric. It brings calmness and joy. Sometimes I'll throw in something else to break it up, like the bit of green trim on the dining chairs. But I generally love it when things don't fight.

**There's something irresistibly ladylike about it—the equivalent of the belt and bag matching the shoes. So is the ruffle-skirted pink ottoman in the family room.**

That's a piece from Suzanne Rheinstein's furniture line. It has a debutante-in-the-country quality that I love. I use a lot of upholstered ottomans, because I'm a big advocate of curling up for catnaps and kicking one's shoes off at every opportunity! And this is a lazy, lounging sort of house.

**Will there be a new mood to rooms in 2011?**

There will be more blending of interiors with exteriors. Rooms will look more like the UN than one country—eclectic, traveled, and soulful. Definitely, it will be the year of the soul.

**Besides soulful houses, what makes you happy?**

My family—I love that they know and care nothing about gimp or blanc de Chine! My friends and my design team. I'd like to gather them all around my very long kitchen table for a lobster fête with Mediterranean music, crisp white napkins, and 40-layer biscuits. And, of course, baths and martinis. The first thing I do after work every day is draw a bath. If it was a particularly good day, I'll have a martini. And if it was a difficult day... I'll have a martini.

PRODUCED BY ROBERT RUFINO

The family room is Smith's "reinvention of the floral English drawing room. I wanted to make it more livable and contemporary, a real multipurpose space." She created a casual dining area with a banquette and an antique farm table. The brown grasscloth wallpaper—Palawan by Motif Designs—evokes utilitarian kraft paper.





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1. "This is a garden house—it seemed only natural to have Dutch doors where we could let nature in," Smith says. 2. A happy mix of pillows on the family room banquette. 3. Smith is all about promoting intimacy. Next to the kitchen fireplace, she made a window seat where someone can read while others eat or cook: "It makes for more togetherness—and corners are underrated." 4. Windsor chairs inspired the breakfast room's clean New England air. 5. The children love to play piano and put on plays, so Smith gave them a home theater with Gemini Silk Plaid stage curtains from Brunschwig & Fils. 6. A vintage *Vanity Fair* photograph from Svenska Möbler hangs over a bed with a silver duvet by Serena & Lily. Curtains are Bergamo's Sherazade. 7. Subtle and elegant, the master bedroom's silvery chairs are covered in Fabricut's Excelsior (left) and a John Saladino silk velvet. OPPOSITE: The 10-year-old daughter's bedroom is "young Indian princess meets modern preteen." Walls are covered in Peter Dunham's Samarkand. With the vintage iron bed's duvet and bedskirt in the same paisley print, the effect is lavishly girly.



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A cluster of pearls, dresser jars, and an antique silver tray glimmer in the master bathroom. OPPOSITE: "I love bathrooms that feel like rooms rather than just a place to bathe," Smith says. "They should inspire romance. This is an homage to the ceremonial bath, a place to relax and reflect and contemplate simple pleasures." Instead of a built-in vanity, she used a George III-style secretary bookcase from Robert & Robert. The freestanding Empire tub is by Waterworks.











Everyone gathers just before bed in the octagonal upstairs family room, which doubles as a home office. Smith provided a quiet background—Farrow & Ball's shadowy Cornforth White on the walls—to make furnishings and accessories stand out. The cane-back armchair is from Windsor Smith Home Collection. The Tabriz carpet is from Jamal's Rug Collection. Fireplace tiles are Walker Zanger's Cote d'Or in Noire. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES



More on Windsor Smith  
and her fast, affordable  
new design service





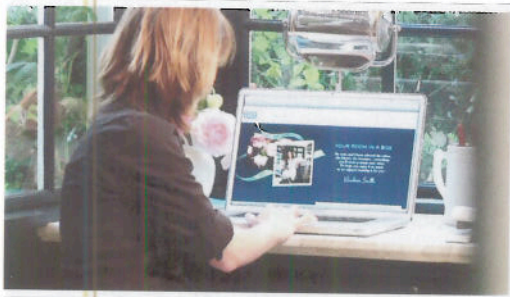
# ROOM IN A BOX

Windsor Smith's new online decorating service



We all want Windsor Smith's look, but she's really in demand—and besides, she lives in Los Angeles. Now, she's got a brilliant solution: a personalized online service called Room in a Box. It's particularly appealing for those of us with more dash than cash. The cost of a custom-designed room ranges from \$1,400 to \$4,800, a fraction of her usual fee. Here's the step-by-step process of how it works.

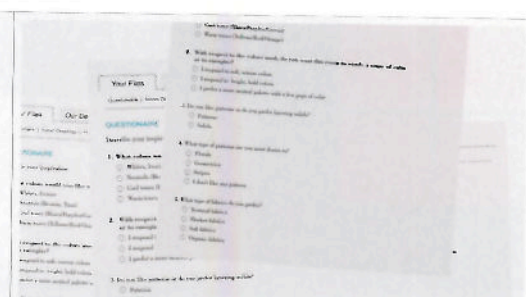




1. To get started, log on to [wshroominbox.com](http://wshroominbox.com).



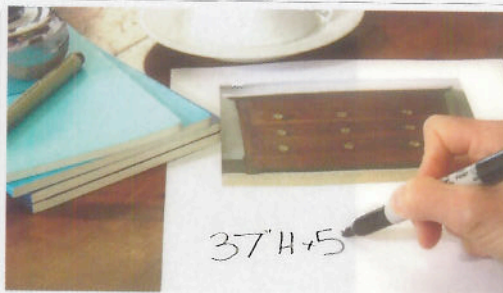
2. Choose the room you want to work on.



3. Fill out a questionnaire to define what you like—and what you don't!



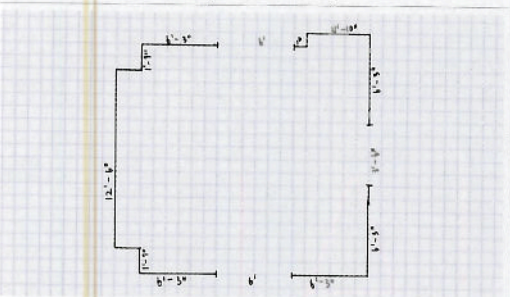
4. Take pictures of all four walls and what you want to keep.



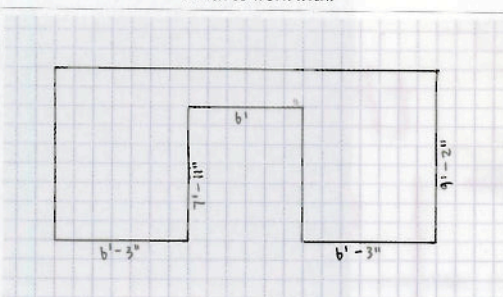
5. Measure the furniture you want Smith to work with.



6. Measure your rooms—there's a how-to guide on the site.



7. Draw a floor plan with the dimensions of your room.



8. Draw elevations of all four walls and add measurements.



9. Submit your inspiration photos.



10. Send everything to Smith by mail—or scan and e-mail.



11. Smith and her team work on your dream scheme.



12. You can track the progress of your project online.



13. In four to six weeks, a peacock blue box arrives at your house.



14. Inside: a scheme of furniture, fabric, finishes, and plans.



15. You do the shopping and complete your Windsor Smith–designed room.

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