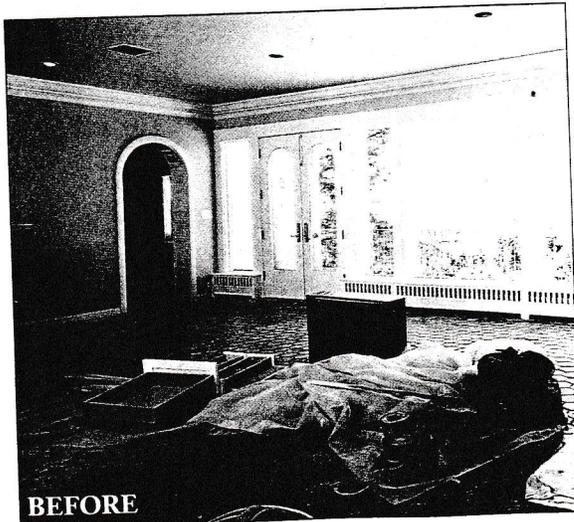


SANTA FE TRAILBLAZING

EUROPEAN FLAVOR FOR A JOHN GAW MEEM HOUSE

*Interior Design by Ronald F. Bradshaw/Text by Hunter Drohojowska Philp
Before Photography by Mary Elkins/After Photography by Robert Reck*

This is the story of newlyweds, though not youngsters, in their first home together. She holds a doctorate in the history of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain; he manages investments. She grew up in Michigan and New York City; he is a fourth-generation Texan. Although their primary residence is in Texas, they thought that Santa Fe would offer a promising blend of southwestern climate and sophisticated cultural life. Shortly after their marriage they purchased a hilltop house built in 1949 by architect John Gaw Meem, known for iconic New Mexican structures such as La Fonda hotel on the Santa Fe Plaza.

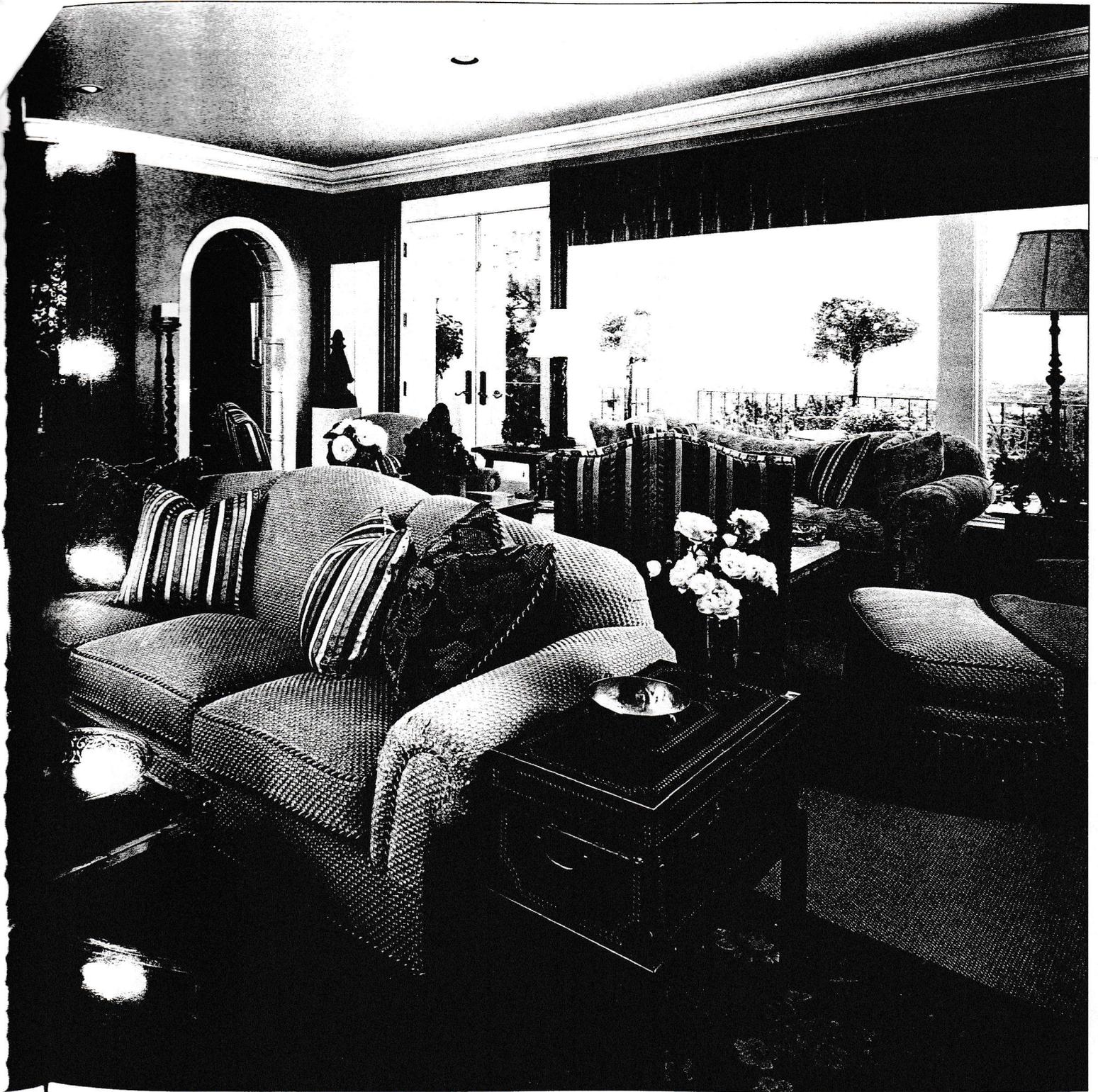


BEFORE



AFTER

"We wanted to update the residence without doing extensive renovations," says interior designer Ron Bradshaw of his clients' Territorial-style Santa Fe house, built by architect John Gaw Meem in 1949. ABOVE LEFT: Original ironwork accents the entrance, which is planted with native birches and evergreens.



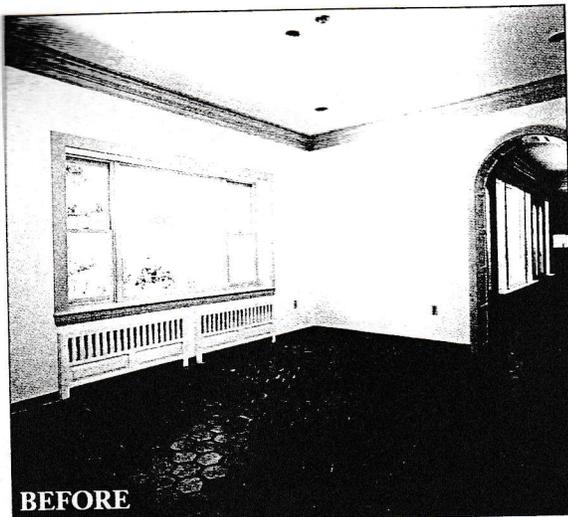
Then came the question of renovation and interior design, since the previous owners had adhered to a regional style. She was prone to wearing Charley boots rather than cowboy boots and to collecting leather-bound volumes by Carlyle and Shakespeare. "Obviously, we had to salute the fact that we lived here, but I didn't want the typical Santa Fe look," she says. "I couldn't deal with

skulls on the walls." They chose New York designer Ron Bradshaw to aid in their quest to meld East with Southwest.

Bradshaw, best recognized for his lavish Manhattan apartments, saw an opportunity to invent something fresh. "I tried to take the spirit of Santa Fe, its earthiness, and translate that into an ordered, disciplined and European feeling," he explains.

The Territorial-style house was de-

OPPOSITE: The arched French doors in the living room were squared off and the windows readied for valances. ABOVE: "We created two main seating areas." Italian candlesticks and 17th-century Dutch screen from Sotheby's. Pillow needlepoint from ABC Carpet. Aubusson carpet from Christie's.



BEFORE

LEFT: "The dining room had a dark, dated tile floor." BELOW: Crimson walls lend richness to the space. Sotheby's candlesticks and needle-point rug. Marvin Alexander chandelier. Oak table from Manheim Galleries. Osborne & Little drapery and wall damask. Valance fabric, Quadrille. Edelman chair leather.

doors drew attention to the off-center perspective rather than the view. Bradshaw replaced them with simple painted moldings and French doors. Now the view is straight out to the mountains and sky, not to the architectural irregularity.

A few minor changes in the living room simplified a complicated space. Bradshaw cleaned up an end wall by moving the door to a coat closet to the entrance hall. The paneling around the wet bar was bleached, and unsightly glass shelves were eliminated. To lend height to the space, soffits were removed, and the arched French door frames were squared. In this and other rooms, Bradshaw mounted valances with



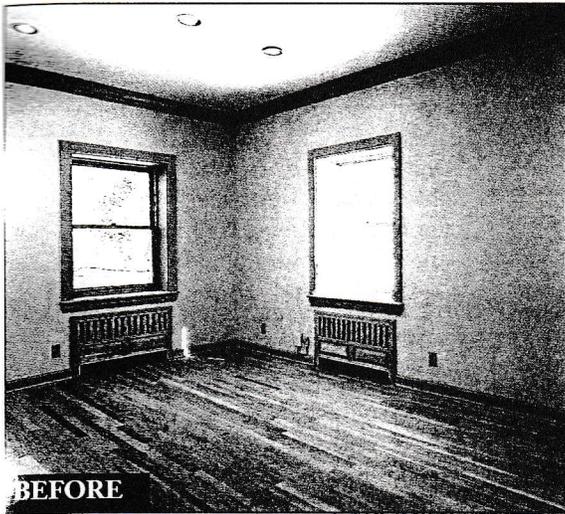
AFTER

signed with two stories, but from the street it looks as if it has only one. Owners in the sixties reworked the lower level. The incremental modernization and heavy remodeling caused the John Gaw Meem Society to withdraw its certification of the property, although the bones of the original house are apparent.

As a result of these alterations, the interiors posed some problems, the most significant of which the designer and clients had to remedy with an optical illusion. The entrance hall was slightly askew from the staircase, which led to enormous double-height windows. Dark wood moldings and heavy carved oak

Roman shades on the windows to underscore the impression of higher ceilings.

Bradshaw spent the first eight months refinishing the walls, using a combination of techniques such as combing and hand-troweling plaster, in hues that range from pale cream to apple green to chocolate. "When I see the colors out there, I



BEFORE

LEFT: The husband's office. BELOW: "He asked for a red study that would incorporate his collection of Native American and Middle Eastern rugs," says Bradshaw. Brunschwig & Fils paisley and Scalamandré trim on club chair and ottoman. Edelman chair leather. Valance fabric and trim, Boussac.

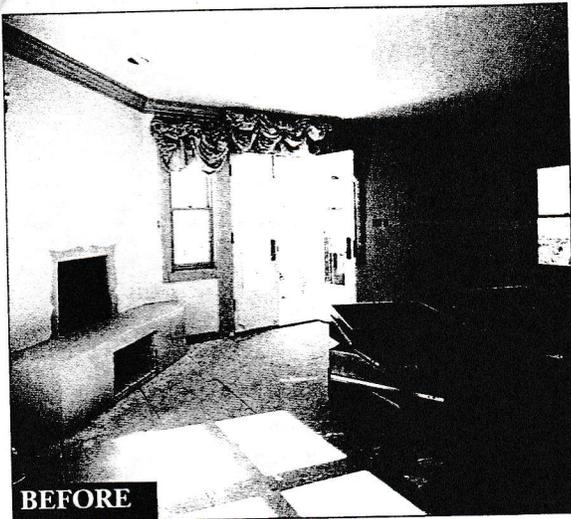
think of natural materials," he says. "I thought it was better to put the ground colors, like sand and sage, in the house and leave the sunset colors outside."

The designer and his clients imagined that the house had been occupied by prosperous European settlers during the nineteenth century. They had a vision of modern comfort, with richly textured fabrics and antique furniture from Spain, England or the Netherlands. "I wanted to use period pieces that were more in keeping with old Spanish colonial locations," explains Bradshaw.

The large living room is effectively divided between nature and culture, with a magnificent view on one side and the



AFTER

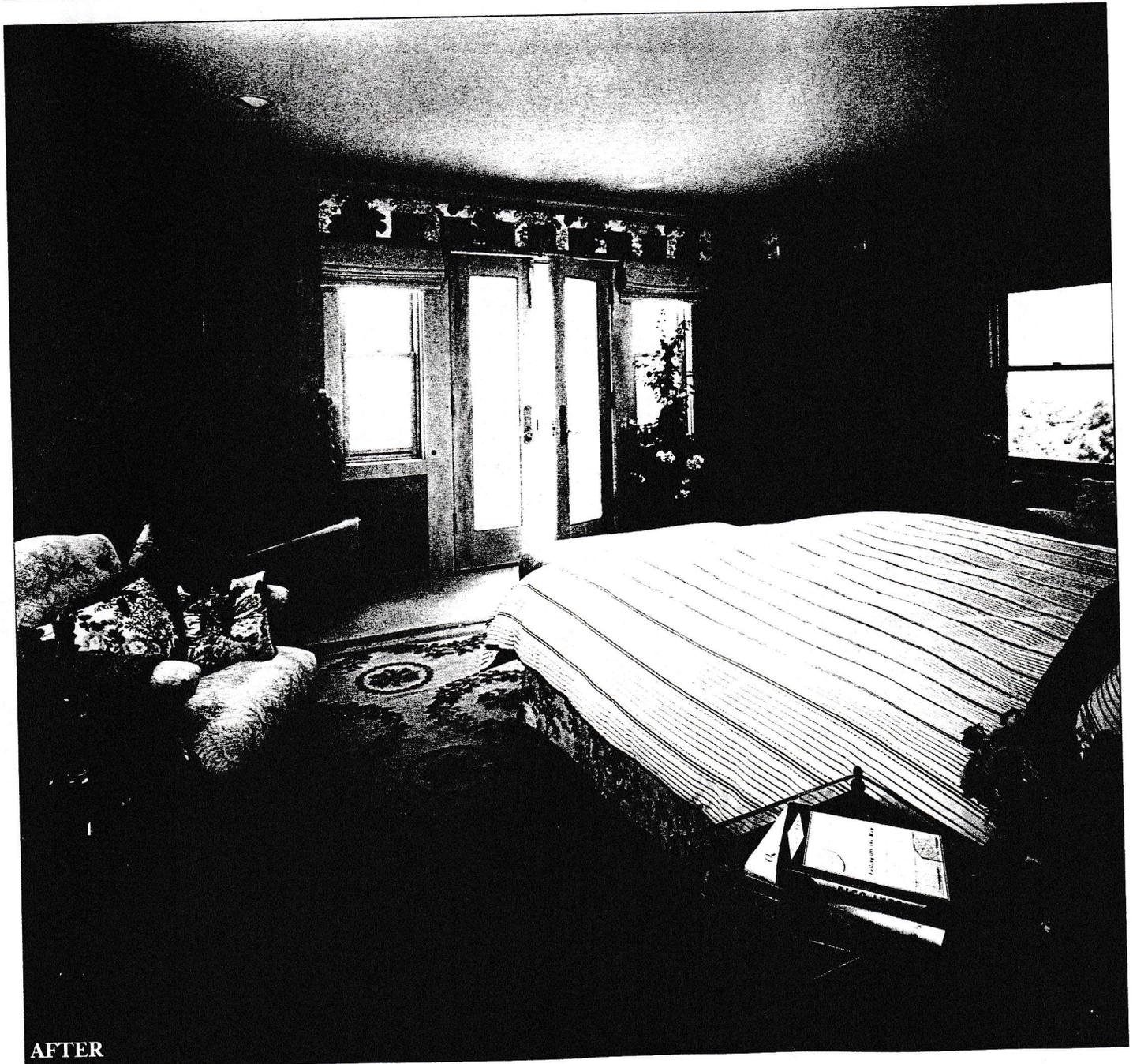


BEFORE

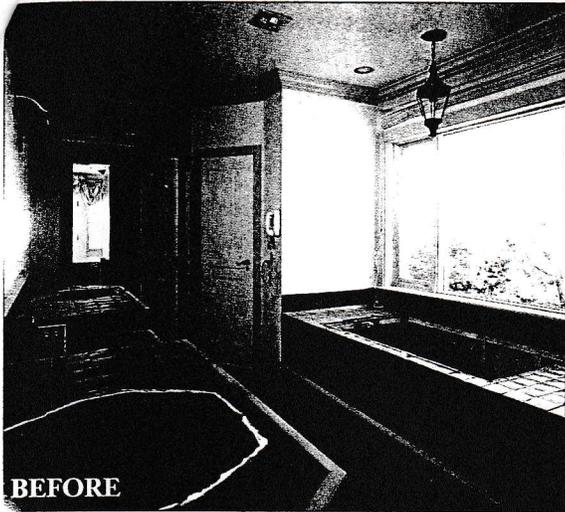
LEFT: "The master bedroom was rearranged to offer maximum enjoyment of the spectacular view."
BELOW: "The room is now calm and neutral." Lee Jofa chintz. Clarence House striped fabric on bed. Christopher Norman taupe pillow silk. Aubusson rug, Patterson, Flynn, Martin & Manges. Rosecore carpet.

fireplace and rare books on the other. Two sofas were positioned for conversation areas. A grand piano, a Dutch tall case clock and a somber oil by contemporary artist Joe Andoe add weight and drama to one side of the room. At the opposite side, arched doorways leading to the kitchen and dining room bookend a seventeenth-century Dutch leather screen.

The husband's office, which has windows looking out to the front lawn, was glazed in deep claret. The room was outfitted with tufted leather chairs, an antique desk, Middle Eastern and Native American rugs and his collection of Aaron Siskind photographs and paintings by southwestern artists.

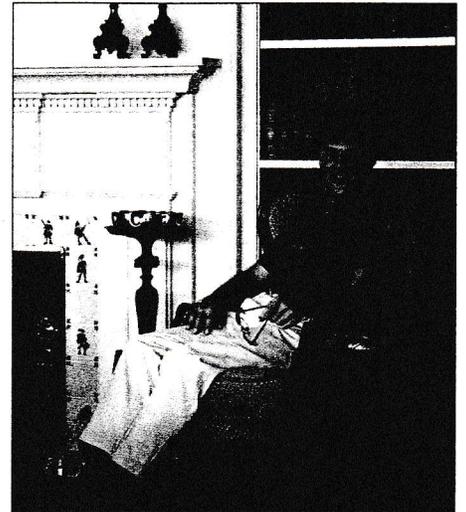


AFTER



BEFORE

LEFT: "We kept the layout of the master bath but put in new finishes," says Ron Bradshaw (right). BELOW: "The marble refines the area." Antique standing mirror, Christie's. Marvin Alexander chandelier. Wall sconces and plaid taffeta. Christopher Norman. Lee Jofa chintz. Fixtures, Kohler. Boussac wallcoverings.



AFTER

In the master suite upstairs, the bed was repositioned to take maximum advantage of the view. Bradshaw had the fireplace wall decorated in pale greens, ochre, corals and creams. The walls of the bedroom were troweled and rubbed with beeswax for a lustrous surface. A George III armoire and a Charles II chest

bring a sense of scale to the room. The wife had initially preferred fine-boned English Neoclassical antiques. "The mistakes you make on your own are usually about scale," she says. "That's why it's important to have a designer, someone who's trained and has an eye for that."

"Without doing major structural reno-

vements, we softened the architectural details, replacing the then trendy sixties tiles and other finishes with ones in keeping with the area and the clients' furniture," says Ron Bradshaw. "We updated the house without giving it a 'time stamp.' The new materials and finishes will be as appropriate thirty years from now." □