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## TORY'S PERCH

The designer with her fourteen-year-old twins, Henry (NEAR RIGHT) and Nick (FAR RIGHT), and eleven-year-old son Sawyer. On Tory: Thom Browne shirt. Prabal Gurung floral pants. Tory Burch cuff.

Hair, Jessica Gillin for Marie Robinson Salon; makeup, Suzy Gerstein for Chanel Beauté. Details, see In This Issue.

Sittings Editor: Miranda Brooks.

# ESTATE OF GRACE

Tory Burch transformed a sprawling *Gatsby*-era Southampton manor into a convivial environment fit for family living. Hamish Bowles takes the grand tour. Interiors photographed by François Halard. Portraits by Norman Jean Roy.







It is the sort of house that Jay Gatsby might have built to bedazzle Daisy Buchanan and win her heart back again—a Jazz Age Southampton estate cooled by ocean breezes and set in stately isolation in its own carefully landscaped grounds. A setting fit for *The Philadelphia Story*'s antic antiheroine, Tracy Lord, who promises to drift down the sweeping Vogue Regency staircase at any moment and waft across the black-and-white marble checkerboard entrance hall in a flutter of organdy to the terraced gardens beyond. "What's this room? I've forgotten my compass," asks the journalist Liz Imbrie in the 1940 movie based on Philip Barry's rollicking play, awed by the scale of the Lords' home. "I'd say, south-by-southwest parlor-by-living-room," wisecracks her colleague Macaulay Connor.

There is certainly ample opportunity to lose oneself in Tory Burch's new manse, built in 1929 by an industrialist who presumably did not see his assets entirely wiped out in that year's Great Crash. He commissioned the traditionalist architects Hiss & Weekes to build a neo-Georgian house of antique redbrick under a gently rippling slate tile roof, and the duo conspired to produce a 25-room palazzo that stretches a dizzying 180 feet from end to end—and three separate buildings to accommodate more staff and a potential overspill of guests.

Burch wasn't even looking for a new house. Instead, following a flood, she was planning to drastically remodel her nearby home, a light-filled but architecturally undistinguished summer place on the water's edge. But when a friend took her to see this majestic home, she thrilled to its resonance with the Anglophile houses on Philadelphia's Main Line, where she had grown up among her parents' collections of all things antique and intriguing, from armor to Imari. The grounds, while much reduced from their 1929 amplitude, were nevertheless extensive enough to allow for considerable subdivision. A neighbor hoped to protect against such encroachments, and by ceding some of the land, Burch was able to come to an arrangement that made the house a feasible proposition for her to take on. "I just imagined my children growing up here, and then coming back with their families," she says.

Her three rambunctious sons—twins Henry and Nick, fourteen, and Sawyer, eleven—however, begged to differ. "They threw up their hands when they first saw the house," says their mother, laughing. "I think they were picturing a clean, modern glass house—I'm not sure why, knowing that I'm their mother!"

In short order Burch installed a sunken tennis court, a basketball court, and a new pool, served by an elegant trelliswork pavilion original to the house that she was keen to preserve. A skateboard ramp and an outdoor pizza oven are in the works. Now the boys love the house; their frenetic energy and the legion of stepsisters and friends who fill the place mitigate the formality of an establishment with its own ballroom, flower-arranging rooms, and an embarrassment of original linen closets (filled by Burch with an embarrassment of flower-sprigged D. Porthault)—a house that Burch's beau, the music executive Lyor Cohen, wryly suggests ought to come with a white-coated butler to open the door.

The house was originally decorated by the society decorator Elsie Sloan Farley, who transformed the interiors into a garden of overscale flowering chintz and needlepoint-covered English furniture. Farley might not be startled by the house in its twenty-first-century incarnation. Not wanting it to look shiny and new, Burch trawled the auction houses and local

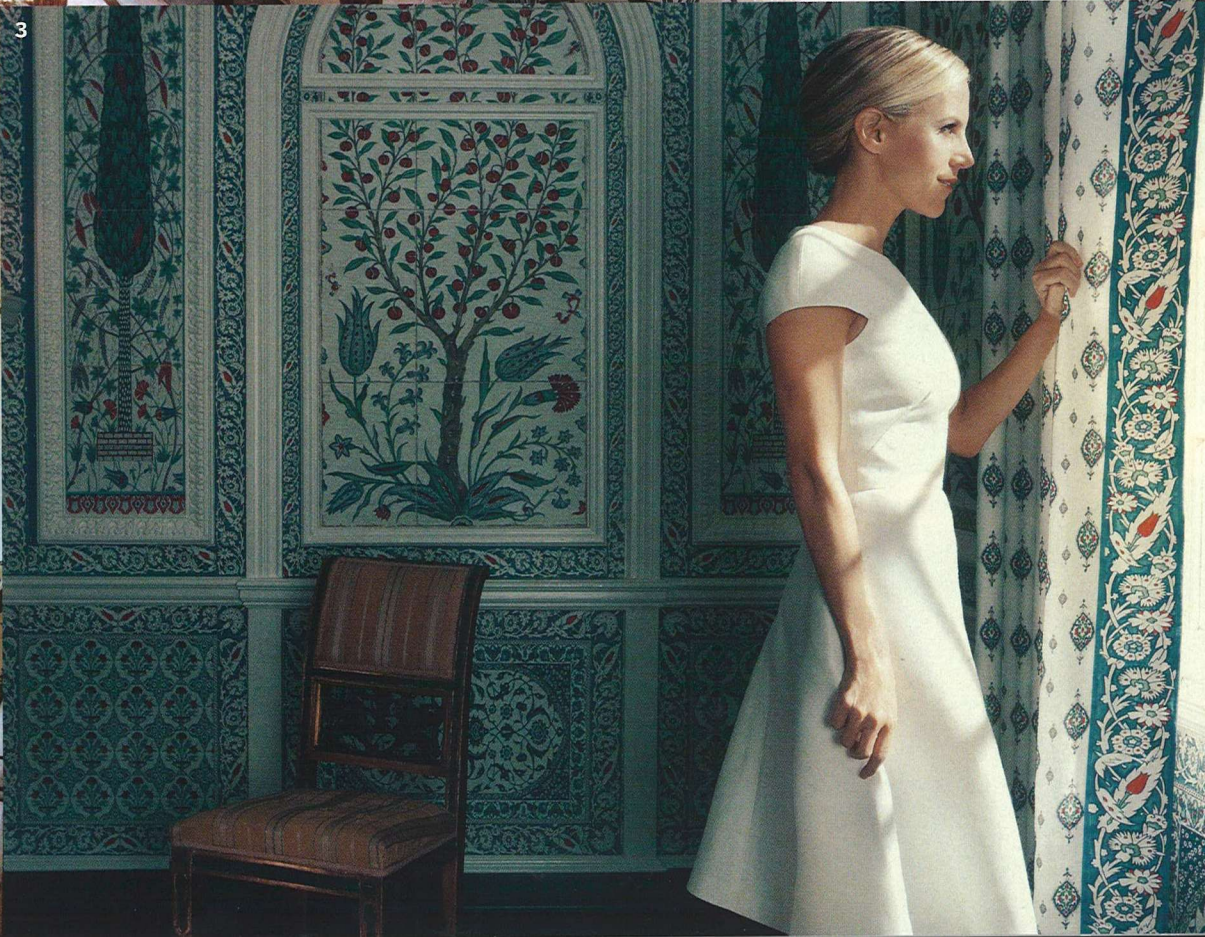






## EARTHLY DELIGHTS

**1** An avenue of sugar maples leading to the main entrance. **2** A table in the poolhouse dining rotunda is set with D. Porthault linens and Mottahedeh Tobacco Leaf china. **3** Burch, wearing Valentino, in her dining room, with its custom Iznik-inspired panels by Paris design company Iksel. **4** A bedroom features antique Imari ironstone and floral wall upholstery from Colefax and Fowler. **5** Quadrille linens, antique blue-and-white china, and woven chairs from John Himmel, found through antiques dealer John Rosselli, in the solarium. Details, see In This Issue.







**THIS SIDE OF  
PARADISE**

Burch restored an elegant trelliswork pool pavilion that was original to the house.



estate sales for antique furnishings, which she mixed with pieces from her Long Island and Pennsylvania houses and well-loved treasures from her parents.

Burch worked with two old friends to blend these elements harmoniously: her longtime collaborator, the architect and designer Daniel Romualdez, and decorator Eve Hood, whom she first met when Burch was studying art history at Penn and the two nineteen-year-olds ended up on a cruise ship with 500 other students for a Semester at Sea program, traveling the world for five months from Spain to Japan. "It changed my life on so many levels," says Burch. "It really showed me the world and different cultures—many of them developing—and gave me a love of philanthropy." (The Tory Burch Foundation, launched in 2009, supports microfinancing and mentoring to empower women entrepreneurs in the United States.) Hood remembers shopping adventures, too; the two came back laden with ethnic art and textiles, "which remain a huge influence on Tory's fashion and her interiors," says Hood. "It was important for her to bring in all the pieces from her travels to the house, to remind her of different trips with her family.

"Architecturally speaking, the house is set up in a formal way," adds Hood, "but Tory wanted it to be open and inviting, so we used warm colors and comfortable furnishings. Unlike her last house, nothing says 'seashore'—she didn't want a summerhouse but instead one that felt right at Thanksgiving and Christmas, a house that she could come to every weekend."

Romualdez, who worked on Burch's dashing apartment at the Pierre and her last Southampton home, has also collaborated with her on the majority of the 64 Tory Burch



#### FORMAL SETTING

ABOVE: Boxwood topiaries grace shelled alcoves in the black-and-white marble-tiled gallery, while two antique chairs that came with the house frame a view of the wood-paneled library. BELOW: A pair of Louis Seize needlepoint chairs found at Sotheby's, brass-and-crystal chandeliers found at Liz O'Brien, and hand-colored Japanese botanical prints enliven one end of the former ballroom. Flowers by Raúl Ávila.







stores around the world (another 20 are in the works this year—some in such far-flung outposts as Beirut, Brazil, and Singapore), each decorated to reflect their locality while evoking the stylishly convivial atmosphere of her homes.

"It was sort of intimidating," says Romualdez of his first visit to the house, "but Tory's not intimidating, so I felt we should make it as approachable as Tory is. I wanted it to feel the way she entertains; she's very inclusive." He suggested that Burch "camp out" for the first summer to establish how she wanted to live in it. "I wanted to embrace the house's grandeur but make it much more casual and relaxed and a little offbeat," says Burch, "and nothing off limits for my kids."

The hand-blocked Fortuny cottons, Colefax and Fowler and Madeleine Castaing chintzes, and overblown Robert Kime florals all might have found a place in Elsie Sloan Farley's original scheme, but the eclectic mix of seventies Karl Springer and John Dickinson pieces, contemporary Garrison Rousseau coffee tables, Indian cotton prints, and Pottery Barn straw rugs brings the house firmly into Burch's twenty-first-century world. The dining room was transformed by the Paris-based wallpaper designers Iksel, who created custom panels based on Persian Iznik tiles, an exotic complement to Burch's collection of Imari porcelain.

Meanwhile, the ambassadorial ballroom morphed into a welcoming living room with groupings of cloudy-pillowed sofas and contemporary pictures by friends including Elliott Puckette and Rachel Lee Hovnanian. In a Romualdez masterstroke, the windows were hung with grapefruit-pink taffeta curtains to warm the room's diamond light.

Burch followed the same principles outside, working with landscape architect Perry Guillot to follow the footprint laid by gardener Annette Hoyt Flanders in 1929, with its strong North-South and East-West axial paths. Flanders planted a stately allée of sugar maples leading to the front entrance. Guillot restored the arched pergolas of white trelliswork that form tunnels through the dark, towering greenery, and when creating new areas used "a simple, simple palette—echoing Flanders' original of yews, hollies, rhododendrons." The formal garden, however, had lost its form, so Guillot re-created it, using original photographs as a guide. The low box hedges were filled in with salvia to create a carpet of color for the Burch family's first summer at the house, but subsequently will be planted with blush-pink roses as a more romantic counterpoint to the greenery's strict geometry.

The relationship between Burch's environments and her fashion is symbiotic; her spring 2012 collection was also infused with the spirit of a Gatsby flapper. And the VIP rooms at her Romualdez-designed Madison Avenue flagship town house are hung with duck egg-blue taffeta curtains with Madeleine Castaing's green, ivory, and blue carpet underfoot—colors inspired by her family sitting room in Southampton.

Although Burch and her collaborators have achieved an atmosphere of a much-loved, layered family home, she still feels that the house is a work in progress. Future plans include commissioning an artist to produce a site-specific piece for the staircase walls. For the moment, however, her collecting is on hold—for the house, that is. "I'm such a fanatic about collecting," admits Burch with a twinkle. "Now I just collect for the stores!" □



## GOOD SPORTS

Low box hedges filled in with salvia line the formal garden, re-created by landscape architect Perry Guillot.

OPPOSITE: The boys, in front of the main entrance. Henry's and Nick's T-shirts by Deer Dana. Details, see In This Issue.





# INDEX

## STREETPOWER



**THE WHITE CITY**  
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