



From top: Los Angeles designer Madeline Stuart at the Thomas Lavin showroom, with the Hamilton Sofa and Greek Key Ottoman from her new furniture collection. Stuart's Fielding Chest, The Dodsworth Lamp, The Rebecca Dining Chair and Thebes Stool. See Resources.

Star Quality

L.A. designer Madeline Stuart puts a fresh spin on traditional furnishings, to the delight of her Hollywood A-list clientele

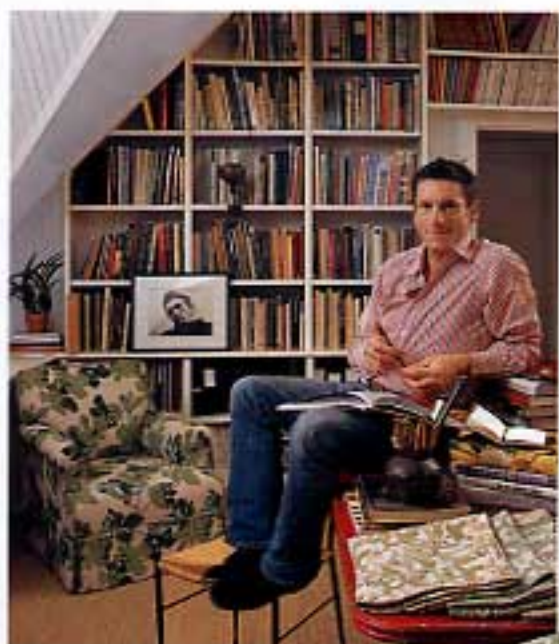


Madeline Stuart enjoys defying expectations. The Los Angeles-based decorator known for creating a heady mix in her interiors—whether outfitting a California hacienda with Brazilian and Japanese antiques or hanging pop art in a roomful of Louis XVI-style pieces—has incorporated this aesthetic into her new furniture line. “I start with traditional forms and reinterpret them in a modern way,” says Stuart. “And I end up with something that’s cleaner and closer to their true essence.”

It’s a formula that the designer, long a favorite of such Hollywood players as Lindsey Buckingham, Jason Alexander, and Gary Ross, has put to good use at her eponymous firm for a decade. And while she may have been raised in Beverly Hills (her father is a film and TV director, and her mother is an interior designer), Stuart knows that her roster of celebrity clients is due to more than hometown advantage: “People come to me because they don’t want high-handed decorating.”

“Her furniture is a bridge between contemporary and traditional,” adds Thomas Lavin, whose West Hollywood showroom features Stuart’s designs. “Contemporary can be cold and hard-edged, and traditional can be heavily carved and tired. Madeline’s collection is neither, yet it works in both worlds.” Prime examples are the Rebecca chair, her streamlined take on a classic Regency style, and the nailhead-studded Greek Key ottoman, which is unexpectedly upholstered in snappy pink leather. But whatever the design, one thing remains constant for Stuart—her insistence on top-of-the-line quality. “The cabinetmakers do such a beautiful job of finishing the furniture that they help make it something I believe in and am proud of.” **JAMIE DIAMOND**





From far left: A wall and tufted chair covered in Vintage Toile, a fabric from Los Angeles designer Peter Dunham's new collection. Dunham in his office; the chair upholstered in Fig Lee Fabrics, from top: Rajmata in green, red, and cream; Udapur; Eucalyptus. See Resources

Posh Prints

For his exotic new fabric collection, designer Peter Dunham finds inspiration the world over

"To co-opt Diana Vreeland," pronounces Los Angeles-based designer Peter Dunham, "beige is the navy blue of California. People here are nervous about using pattern and color. I'm always fighting that."

Dunham has battled L.A.'s beige blues for the past five years with an eclectic signature style derived from his love of the early '60s, Brigitte Bardot, and St.-Tropez, among other things. In other words, he keeps clients' cozy Californiana intact while infusing it with bright bursts of color from his travels to India, Morocco, and Spain. Now his latest conquest is a colorful textile collection featuring toiles, florals, and Indian block prints.

"Fabrics like these give a room rhythm," says Dunham. "I try to make patterns that can be used in all sorts of houses: contemporary, early 20th century, even 19th century." The softness and the vintage-looking quality of the prints meld his many inspirations—primitive art, Arts and Crafts, and the aforementioned exotic travels. The British-born designer was inspired, too, by his adopted state's lush landscape. "In California there's nothing better than the outdoors," adds the one-time Manhattan real-estate executive, who switched careers, and coasts, five years ago. "I'm always trying to magnify it. That's why a lot of my fabrics have green in them." The William Morris-esque Eucalyptus green-and-brown print, for instance, was informed by frequent walks along Runyon Canyon.

Comprising seven styles (soon to expand to ten, with patterns named Orlando, St.-Tropez, and Ikaat on the way), the line is available to the trade at the Thomas Lavin showroom in West Hollywood. "They're charming without being pompous," Dunham says slyly, "but modern enough not to remind people of their grannies." **MERLE GINSBERG**

