

DESIGN FOR THE WELL-LIVED LIFE

HOUSE & GARDEN



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PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK
PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON UPTON WRITTEN BY TRISTRAM HOLLAND



CONTINENTAL TOUCH

WORKING FOR HIMSELF FOR A CHANGE, DESIGNER PAOLO MOSCHINO TURNS AN OLD LONDON DORMITORY INTO AN AIRY APARTMENT WITH EUROPEAN FLAIR



TRADE SECRETS Moschino, with his boxer, Ty, opposite page, favored a bright Continental look for the drawing room. **FURNISHINGS** The low Trieste sofas, this page, are paired with 1930s oak French armchairs, all from Nicholas Haslam Ltd., London. The iron side tables and busts are 1920s French. **FABRICS** The sofas are in Eugene linen in Oyster, the chairs in Ecru, both through Nicholas Haslam. **ARTWORKS** Original drawings by Jean Cocteau.



Paolo Moschino bought his apartment partly, he says, because he wanted "a European look," but if you visit, you'd be hard-pressed to know in which part of the Continent his heart lies or which era is his favorite. Moving through his London home is a journey adumbrated with nostalgia for other places and times, but so stunning are the views, so smooth the gear changes, and so comfortable the ride that the diversity of effects is as satisfying as it is joyful.

Designing is "a new thing for me," says Moschino, who takes on "only about three or four jobs each year." While his clients may be a lucky few, his admirers are legion, and in 2003 his apartment won the Best Traditional Residential category in the prestigious Design and Decoration Awards. He had no formal training (he studied political science in his native Italy) but for six years worked with one of England's best-known designers, Nicholas Haslam, which could scarcely be bettered as an education. Eight years ago they divided the company. Moschino kept the retail side, Nicholas Haslam Ltd., marketing furniture, fabrics, antiques, and accessories; Haslam retained the design side.

Moschino's eclectic taste and the élan with which he put things together in the shop led customers to beg him to help them with their homes. Now he brings clients to his apartment for meetings because, he says, "it's quiet and the phone doesn't ring." Seeing the place and hearing the story of its resurrection from a run-down company dormitory must reinforce their confidence in him. (When

TRADE SECRETS

The double drawing room is cool, pale, and reminiscent of the 1940s at one end, this page, and cozy and lush at the other, opposite page. **FURNISHINGS** Two 19th-century French bergères and Empoli sofas surround a Como lacquered coffee table. French Régence consoles, ca. 18th century, topped with gilded urns, ca. 19th century, flank the doorway. The screens are English 19th-century chinoiserie. **FABRICS** Chairs in Amethyst linen, sofa in Caramel linen, both through Nicholas Haslam Ltd.





TRADE SECRETS FURNISHINGS In one end of the drawing room, this page, a mahogany English bookcase from Christie's London holds antiquarian books and sculptures. In the dining room, opposite page, Flemish-style chairs surround an Italian dining table. **TABLETOP** Marie Antoinette china, through Nicholas Haslam. English silver. **CHANDELIER** Northern Italian. All 19th-century.



he acquired the space, it was a rabbit warren of five bedrooms, but fortunately many of the circa 1870 architectural details, though hidden, remained.)

The first view stretches down one arm of the L-shaped corridor toward a Roman bust above a door. The second vista, down the other arm, elicits the first frisson of surprise; it leads to a door that stands open to reveal a theatrical tableau—a faux Baroque terra-cotta bust picked out by dramatic lighting in a black-painted lobby. The Victorian paneling he added in the corridors is unadorned, as is the flooring, leaving the classic Italian emphases on the architectural shell, focal points, and sculptural elements to speak for themselves.

But when visitors turn into the double drawing room they are transported into another world—or two worlds, for though Moschino made a wide opening between two rooms, each is a separate entity. One is near monochrome, pale, cool, and redolent of the legendary decorator Elsie de Wolfe with its shallow sofas, low table, and mirrored surfaces. Moschino says he deliberately created the room “with a 1940s feel,” for his collection of Cocteau drawings and mid-twentieth-century graphics. The other end of the room is dark, cozy, lushly textured, and full of references to eighteenth-century England, especially in the assembled antiques and in the style of the new waxed-pine paneling. Moschino relates how a friend, seeing the room for the first time, said, “My God, this is schizophrenic!” In fact, the effect is both intriguing and balanced. The two ends are soothing visual echoes of each other: each is furnished with two generous low sofas

TRADE SECRETS

FURNISHINGS In the soothing monochromatic master bedroom, a poster bed is paired with side tables (all designed by Moschino), a Louis XVI bench, and a French 19th-century side chair. **FABRICS** Bed curtains and headboard in Nivelles Oyster in Linen White, through Nicholas Haslam Ltd. Vintage linens cover the bed. **LAMPS** 1930s crystal columns. **ARTWORK** Piranesi architectural etchings on canvas.



MOSCHINO CHOSE A NARROW CREAMY PALETTE FOR THE MASTER BEDROOM. A HANDSOME SERIES OF PIRANESI ETCHINGS IS IDEALLY SUITED FOR THE CLEAN-LINED SPACE—A SHARP CONTRAST TO THE SOFT FABRICS AND A LOVELY REMINDER OF THE OWNER'S ITALIAN ORIGINS



and a pair of wood-framed period armchairs grouped around a central table. (Moschino never puts seating against the walls, because he believes it makes a room look smaller. Even if space is limited, he says, "I will put a narrow console table behind the sofa.") When he entertains—Moschino loves to cook—guests begin the evening in one end of the room and finish it in the other.

The dining room is a jewellike space suffused with a Swedish Gustavian flavor: celadon green walls with mirrored insets that reflect ornate gilt mirrors, a chandelier, and striped silk curtains. Moschino lined the room with painted paneling and gave it architectural symmetry by adding a fake door and window.

The guest room is also paneled, but any allusion to Sweden is banished by warm Chinese-red walls and curtains, dark furniture, and heavy embroidered drapes that fall from the corona above the bed (see Cover). One key to Moschino's success is the tight rein he keeps on his palette. Here he allows only red, taupe, black, and touches of gold, even in the pictures. The master bedroom is restricted to shades of white. Any starkness is erased by soft textures: velvety carpet, linen drapes, padded headboard, and plump footstool. The result is serene and inviting. For Moschino, that is the real point; his apartment may be unsurpassed as an advertisement for his talents, but it is, he says, "my home, so it must be comfortable." □

Tristram Holland is a London-based writer and editor.

TRADE SECRETS

FURNISHINGS In the kitchen, the table, buffet, and vitrine are all 19th-century French painted wood pieces. A pair of Louis XVI chairs and a pair of rustic wood and rush chairs surround the table. **ACCENTS** The gilded, carved wood shell is 18th-century Austrian. **TABLETOP** White Provençal china pieces are paired with rattan chargers from Nicholas Haslam. 1920s mercury glass candlesticks. **CABINETRY** Moschino designed the oak cabinets, with oak countertops. See Shopping, last pages.

THE KITCHEN HAS A PALE, FRENCH LOOK. IT'S ALSO PRACTICAL, WHICH IS ESSENTIAL FOR MOSCHINO, WHO LOVES TO COOK. HE GIVES INFORMAL DINNERS HERE, AND CAN PREPARE FOOD WITHOUT LEAVING HIS GUESTS OR SURRENDERING ANY ELEGANCE

