

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF INTERIOR DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

MAY 2000

IN THIS ISSUE!

ELTON JOHN

IN OLD WINDSOR,
LONDON, ATLANTA
AND FRANCE

NORMAN LEAR

IN LOS ANGELES

CARLO BENETTON

IN ARGENTINA

SUE GRAFTON

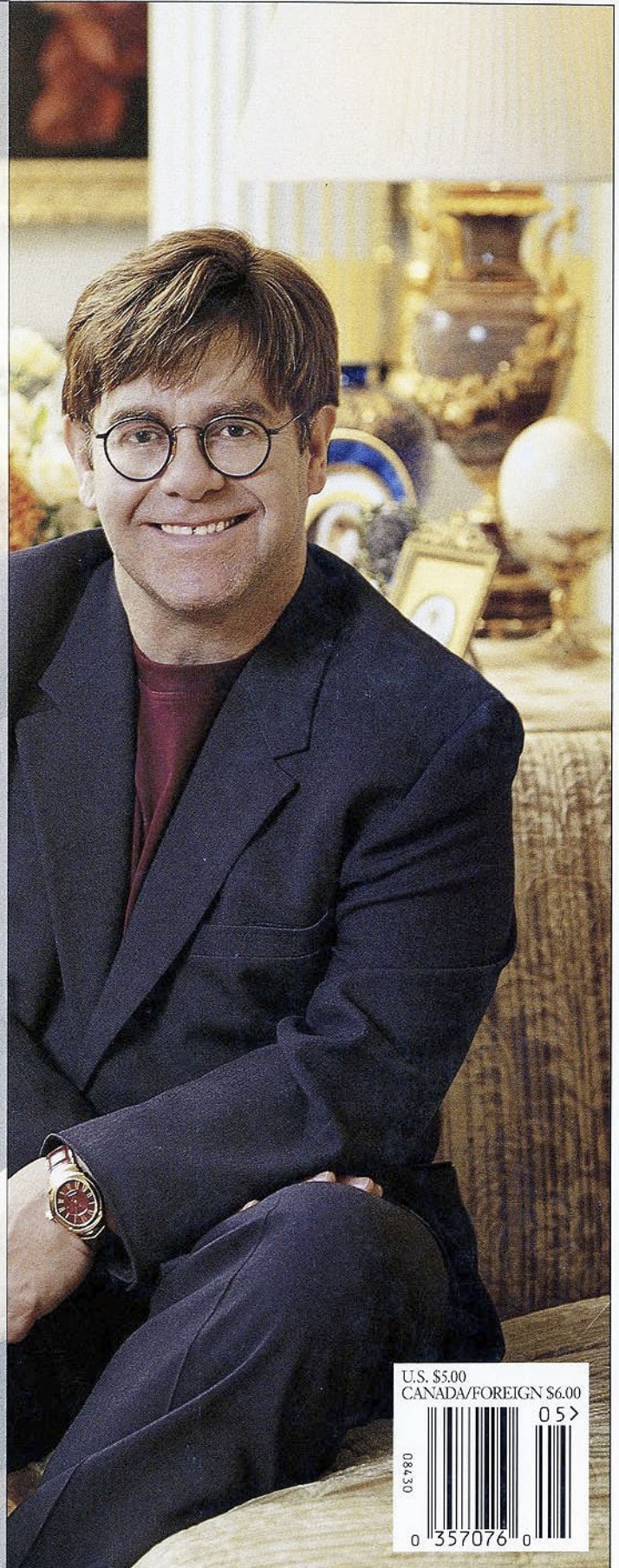
IN MONTECITO

Plus

SHOPPING
ON NANTUCKET

and

**PHILIP
JOHNSON'S**
ARCHITECTURAL
TOUR OF GERMANY



U.S. \$5.00
CANADA/FOREIGN \$6.00



0893-0

0 357076 0

Interior Design by Jack Lionel Warner, AIA
Text by Irene Berger
Photography by Mary E. Nichols

"M" IS FOR MONTECITO

BEST-SELLING MYSTERY WRITER
SUE GRAFTON IN CALIFORNIA



I was doing a book signing in Iowa," mystery novelist Sue Grafton recalls. "It must have been *'I Is for Innocent*. And a lady standing in line said, 'Hi, a friend in Santa Barbara and I went by your house and looked through the hedges at your new lap pool.' I thought, 'I'm out of here,' and flew back and told our real estate agent, 'We need some land.'"

Grafton and her husband, philosophy professor Steven Humphrey, began looking in

"We wanted a designer who would give us some drama," says mystery novelist Sue Grafton (above), whose latest book is *"O" Is for Outlaw*. She and her husband, Steven Humphrey, turned to architect and designer Jack Lionel Warner to decorate their new house in Montecito, California.

RIGHT: "The living room is the light space between two dark rooms," says Warner, who used a procession of light and dark throughout the house. "I chose large-scale pieces for the spacious room to keep it from looking out of proportion." Hokanson carpet.





Montecito, known as Montebello in her mysteries. It's "a section of town," she wrote in *"A Is for Alibi"*, "where there are rumored to be more millionaires per square mile than in any other part of the country. Most of the houses are not even visible from the road. Occasionally you can catch a glimpse of a tiled roof hidden away in tangles of olive trees and live oak."

Three years later, with

property, that's where she is."

Kinsey, of course, is Kinsey Millhone, the spunky private eye around whom Grafton's fifteen "alphabet" novels have centered. As her millions of fans know, Kinsey happily lives in a fifteen-by-fifteen-foot bachelorette pad and doesn't share her "cubbyhole" with anyone. (But she does share Grafton's love of accuracy and order, as well as her



ABOVE: The library showcases Humphrey's collection of antique scientific instruments. "Up until the 1800s, such objects were made to be beautiful," notes Grafton. The fabrics on the upholstered and wood-framed chairs are from Lee Jofa. Sofa chenille, Brunschwig & Fils.

Grafton up to *L* in the alphabet, the couple acquired four and a half acres, bisected by a creek Humphrey calls "the coyote highway." On the property was a low-slung Mediterranean-style house, surrounded by oaks and multiple outbuildings, including an old cottage, a poolhouse and a pint-size cabin in the woods. "It's tiny," Grafton says of the cabin. "If Kinsey lives anywhere on the

Web site: suegraffton.com.)

"I love tiny houses," Grafton says. "In one of my books I had a gal who designed them—I forget whether it was the murder victim or her sister. But someone asked me once, 'What does money buy you?' And the truth is, it's space, and light, and privacy, which is what *this* house is about."

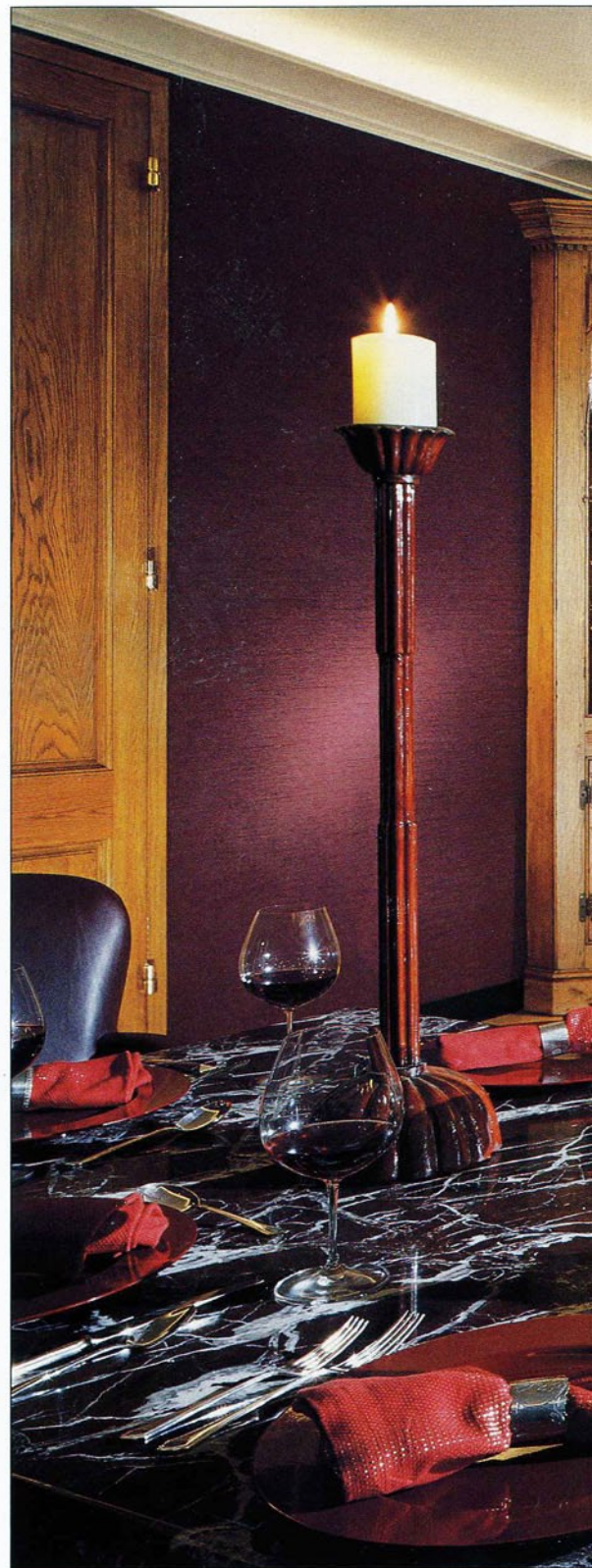
For over three years Grafton and Humphrey kept the same set of furniture they already had, moving it from room to room. "We wanted to see how we used the space," Grafton explains. "We're control freaks, but on the other hand we're completely ignorant about scale and color." "Cowards, too,"

Humphrey says with a laugh.

Despite her disclaimer, Grafton's books abound with household descriptions used as sharp cultural signifiers. "I do think people are very carefully reflected in what they choose and what kind of space they elect to live in,"

she says. "When I'm writing, I think of that as a form of characterization."

Witness the difference in the couple's offices, carved out of the cottage near the main house. Steeped in the "poetry of murder," and at her desk by 9:00 A.M., Graf-





ton—whose latest book is *“O” Is for Outlaw*—wanted clean lines and “white-on-white serenity.” “Writing,” she observes, “is often like hanging yourself.”

Outfitted with the same carpentry and a nicked variation of the hardware in Graf-

ton’s office, Humphrey’s has mica sconces—and drama. Though he insists that “for guys there are six colors: red, green, black, brown, yellow and orange. Mauve? Ecu? Fuchsia? Are you kidding?” his palette includes bronze, terra-cotta and pumpkin.

During those initial three years the couple constructed a putting green, replaced a sand volleyball court with a croquet lawn (“My fancy is that people will come to play dressed in white,” Grafton says), refurbished the cabin in the woods and turned the

“The trick was to make the wine-colored dining table and the floor, a former ceiling from a palace in Europe, work together,” says Warner. “We echoed their hues in the woods and the wallcovering.” The dining chairs are upholstered in Edelman leather. Wallcovering, Beacon Hill.



GRAFTON'S BOOKS ABOUT WITH HOUSEHOLD DESCRIPTIONS USED AS SHARP CULTURAL SIGNIFIERS.

poolhouse into a swaggering gym that Grafton calls "my Jill." Emboldened, they began to consider reviving the main house.

As encouragement, their friend architect and designer Jack Lionel Warner offered to design one room. "But you know, you can't do one room—everything connects," says Grafton. "It's like the structure for a novel. You can't change one piece of it without everything else being affected."

"We finally said, 'Let's just do the whole thing,'" Humphrey remembers.

Drawing on Grafton's propensity for stripped-down clarity and Humphrey's delight in historical and well-made objects, Warner and his associate, Jessica Helgeron, composed a mix of ultraclean corners and crown molding, southern California luminosity and the wintry Europe of another century. Like a novel in a series, each room echoes with difference and continuity. As in a murder mystery, one moves between darkness and light. Rose-colored living room sofas deepen into wine-toned leather dining room chairs. The black-and-white-check-

A little-used patio was enclosed with folding doors to create the smoking room for Humphrey. On the table is a working hibachi, circa 1880. Marble Art urns are used as planters. The salmon Ultrasuede on the pillows is from Beacon Hill. Rattan chairs, Mimi London.

BELOW: "The repeating black-and-white patterns in one of the guest bedrooms give it movement and energy," says Warner. "It has a sunny feeling." The writer (bottom, with Humphrey) dedicated her 13th Kinsey Millhone book, "M" Is for Malice, to Warner.

ered floor in the hall reappears softened in a guest bedroom rug. The bittersweet chenille walls in the library turn to milk chocolate upholstery in the room Grafton and Humphrey refer to as the Cave. "There's always one room where you put on

Sherlock Holmesian chamber is the library, with its Louis XV fireplace and museum-quality collection of scientific instruments and maps dating back to the seventeenth century. There is a polished-brass-and-wood chronometer, English me-



your comfies and slippers," Grafton says. "The other main-floor rooms are the ones we entertain in, but when it's Steven and me and the cats, we're in the Cave hanging out."

Even though Grafton has been known to lead guests through an outdoor corridor called the "burglar walk," to point out the apple tree with "vicious killer bees" and to take apart doorknobs while investigating whether "somebody could be shot through the eyehole," there are no secret compartments, trapdoors or mazes anywhere. The most

chanical models of the solar system called orreries and rare French examples of Ptolemaic and Copernican devices known as armillary spheres, all representations of Humphrey's passion for the history of scientific ideas.

In contrast with the library's English men's club
continued on page 277

RIGHT: "The property was really underutilized before," landscape architect John Montgomery says of the more than four-acre site. He planted palm trees and added a wall, a fountain and new steps up to the house, "creating a better indoor-outdoor relationship."





"M" IS FOR MONTECITO

continued from page 264

atmosphere, the adjoining living room is bright and white and spare. "That's more my style," Grafton says. "We get possessive about different qualities in the house. The smoking room, for instance, belongs to Steve." It was formerly a covered patio with large intrusive columns, but "Jack got his hands on it and turned it into something remarkable," says Humphrey. After installing extruded-aluminum folding doors and opening the room to the gardens, Warner painted the walls salmon and added an old Japanese hibachi, plumbed with gas for aesthetics and warmth.

European artistry reasserts itself in the dining room, with its intricate floor fashioned from nineteen types of wood, including ebony and several kinds of maple. Originally a ceiling from a German winter palace, it was brought to California sometime in the 1920s, when the house was built. The vaulted mid-nineteenth-century corner cabinet came from an English hotel, while the Rosso Levanto marble table is from the couple's own collection.

The open kitchen, once four separate rooms including an aviary, is another sun-filled space, with two pantries

Steeped in the "poetry of murder," and at her desk by 9:00 A.M., Grafton wanted clean lines and white-on-white serenity.

and an old pine table that easily seats twelve. Warner went on to design a glamorous guest bath to adjoin a family-size guest suite. "All in all, we have seven guest rooms, almost enough for my taste," says Grafton. "I'm totally solitary during the day, but once I've done my pages, I say, 'Let's do it.' We love to have house-guests and give dinner parties.

"With other houses we've lived in, we were always looking at our watches," Sue Grafton remarks. "But this property suits us so beautifully, I suspect we're here for life." □

F U L F I L L



A N



I N N E R



C I T Y



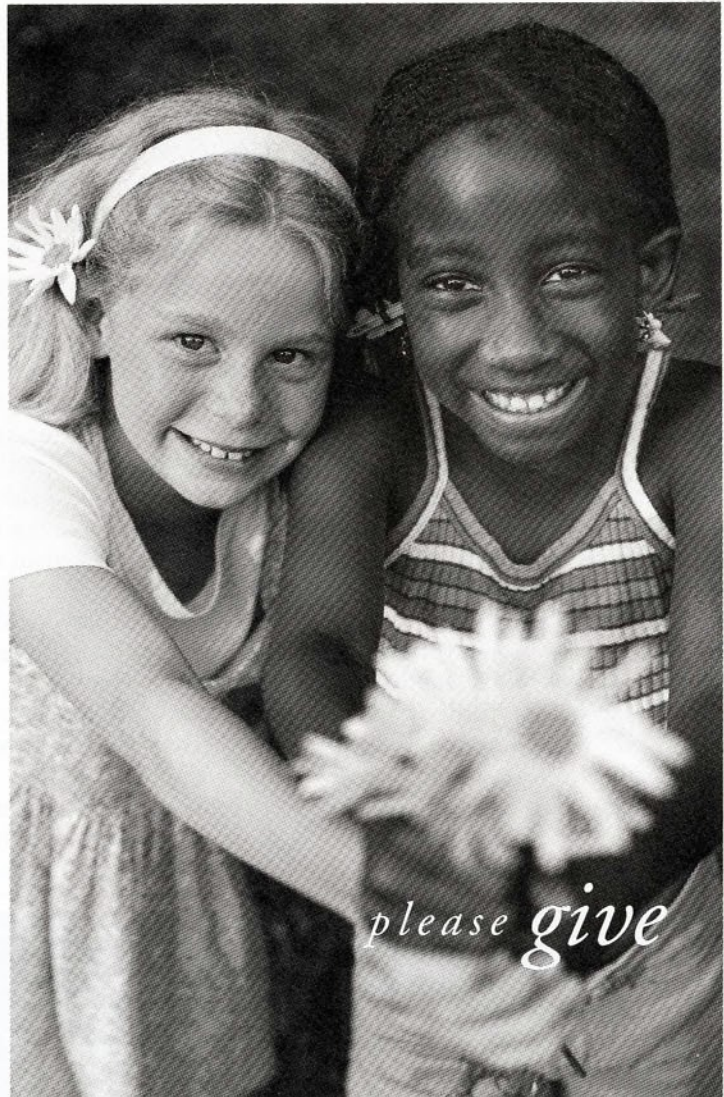
C H I L D ' S



W I L D E S T



D R E A M S .



You can make a real difference in a child's life by supporting

The Fresh Air Fund. The Fund sends thousands of inner-city

children to the country to visit volunteer host families or

experience life at camp. You can help. For only \$490 you can

send a child to the country for two weeks. Give a child

the priceless gift of summertime fun and hope.

The Fresh Air Fund

1 . 8 0 0 . 3 6 7 . 0 0 0 3

The Fresh Air Fund, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10018

Visit us at www.freshair.org to find out more.

A COPY OF OUR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE FRESH AIR FUND, 1040 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS, NEW YORK, NY 10018 (212-897-8900), OR THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LAW, CHARITIES BUREAU, 120 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10271.

© 2000 The Fresh Air Fund