

01/09/04

House & Garden USA

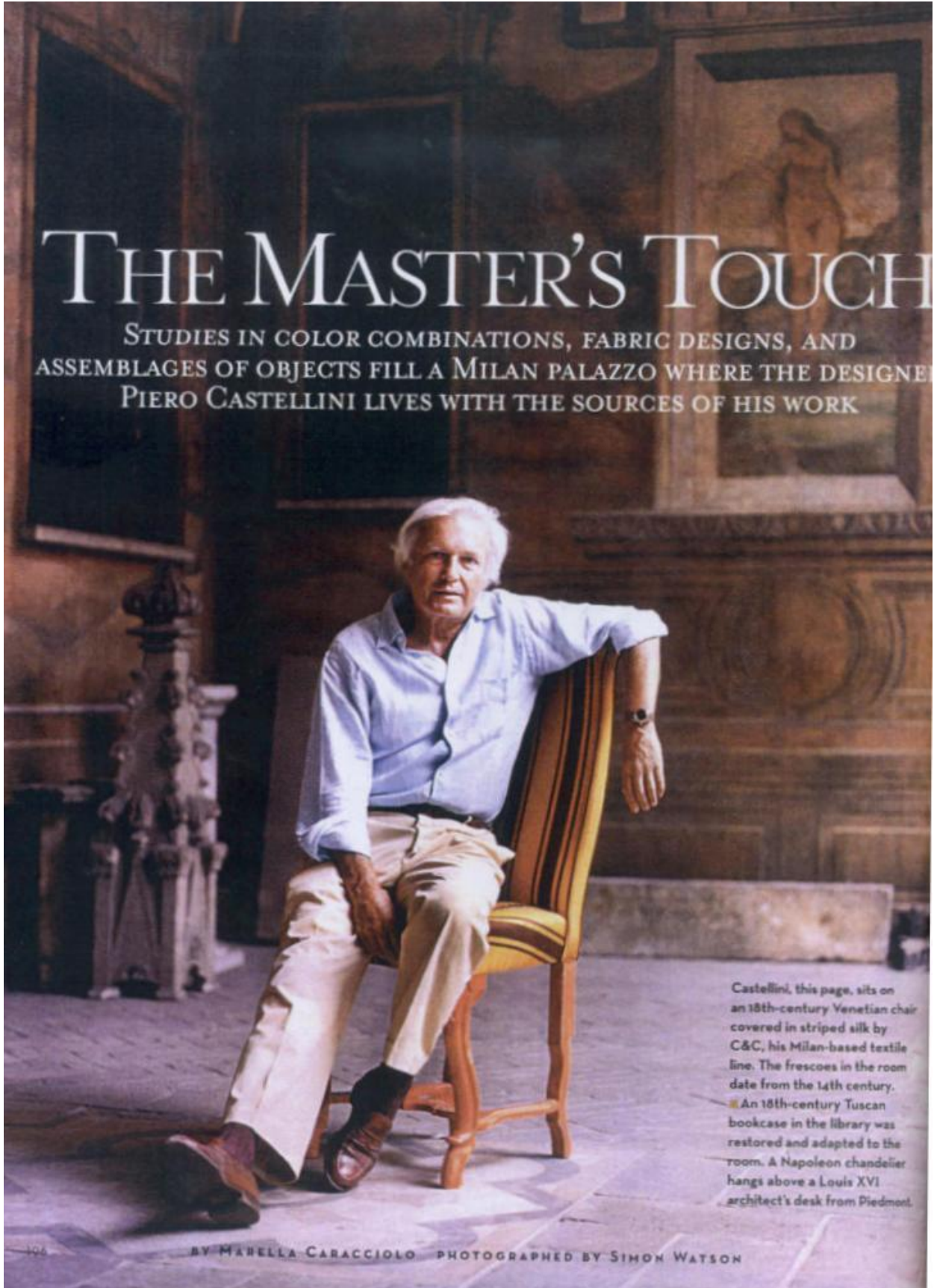
N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.196

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico



# THE MASTER'S TOUCH

STUDIES IN COLOR COMBINATIONS, FABRIC DESIGNS, AND ASSEMBLAGES OF OBJECTS FILL A MILAN PALAZZO WHERE THE DESIGNER PIERO CASTELLINI LIVES WITH THE SOURCES OF HIS WORK

Castellini, this page, sits on an 18th-century Venetian chair covered in striped silk by C&C, his Milan-based textile line. The frescoes in the room date from the 14th century. ■ An 18th-century Tuscan bookcase in the library was restored and adapted to the room. A Napoleon chandelier hangs above a Louis XVI architect's desk from Piedmont.

196

BY MARELLA CARACCILO PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON WATSON



THE TURQUOISE STRIPES ON THE WALL FORM  
A PERFECT BACKDROP FOR THE BLUE SKIES  
AND SEAS IN CASTELLINI'S COLLECTION  
OF 18TH-CENTURY NEAPOLITAN GOUACHES

#### TRADE SECRETS

**ACCENTS** In a cabinet, opposite page: Castellini's prized collection of 1,600 pieces of marble excavated from the ruins of ancient Rome. **FABRICS** In the family room, a custom chaise longue is covered in red silk velvet, striking a bold contrast to green-on-green wallpaper by Tessuti Mimma Gini.





### TRADE SECRETS

**FURNISHINGS** In the main entrance to the palace, which Castellini calls the winter garden, Piero Portaluppi designed the marble flooring; one of his pupils painted the walls with botanical studies. **ACCENTS** An 18th-century chandelier from a church in Genoa is overhead. The bronze greyhound, opposite page, was once owned by Maria Callas; the dog statues, this page, are 18th-century French. The clock is 19th-century French. The Piedmont bust in Carrara marble, opposite page, is 18th century. See Shopping, last pages.

moved on to other things, but eventually Castellini and his cousin Emanuele Castellini decided to go back to their roots. Together they created C&C, a line of home textiles and ready-made linens, with a showroom and a shop in Milan. "Our aim," Castellini says, "is to serve a sophisticated clientele who appreciate the discreet charm of being surrounded by pleasant and elegant materials." C&C has recently started a fruitful partnership with Vittorio

But color, more than crocodiles or tiger skins (of which there are plenty elsewhere in the house), is what really gets Castellini going. Take the dining room overlooking the garden. The golden hues of the ballooning silk curtains, with their ocher and green stripes, and the wine and ocher striped silk on the fire red lacquered chairs are set off by cool mint green walls. In the bedroom, on the other hand, the glowing fabric on the bed and around the windows is set off by the acid lemon, ocher, and turquoise stripes on the walls. All this lusciousness is the perfect backdrop for the bright blue skies and turquoise seas in Castellini's collection of eighteenth-century Neapolitan gouaches.

Castellini's long interest in fabric has its roots in family history. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Castellinis were well known as manufacturers of fine linens. In time the family

Solbiati, the linen mogul, who counts among his clients Giorgio Armani and Ralph Lauren. "This partnership," says Castellini, "allows us a more hands-on approach and a greater versatility in the making of linens."

**F**abrics for the home are not the only thing occupying Castellini's time at the moment. Together with a few friends he has embarked on a new adventure, Laboratorio Italiano, an exclusive line of tailor-made men's suits and a line of ready-made knitwear and accessories. "We wanted to create a line of clothes that embodied our style—elegant and relaxed." Elegant? Always. But relaxed? Everywhere except in the charged atmosphere of Piero Castellini's Milan home. □

01/09/04

# House & Garden USA

N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.207

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico



01/09/04

# House & Garden USA

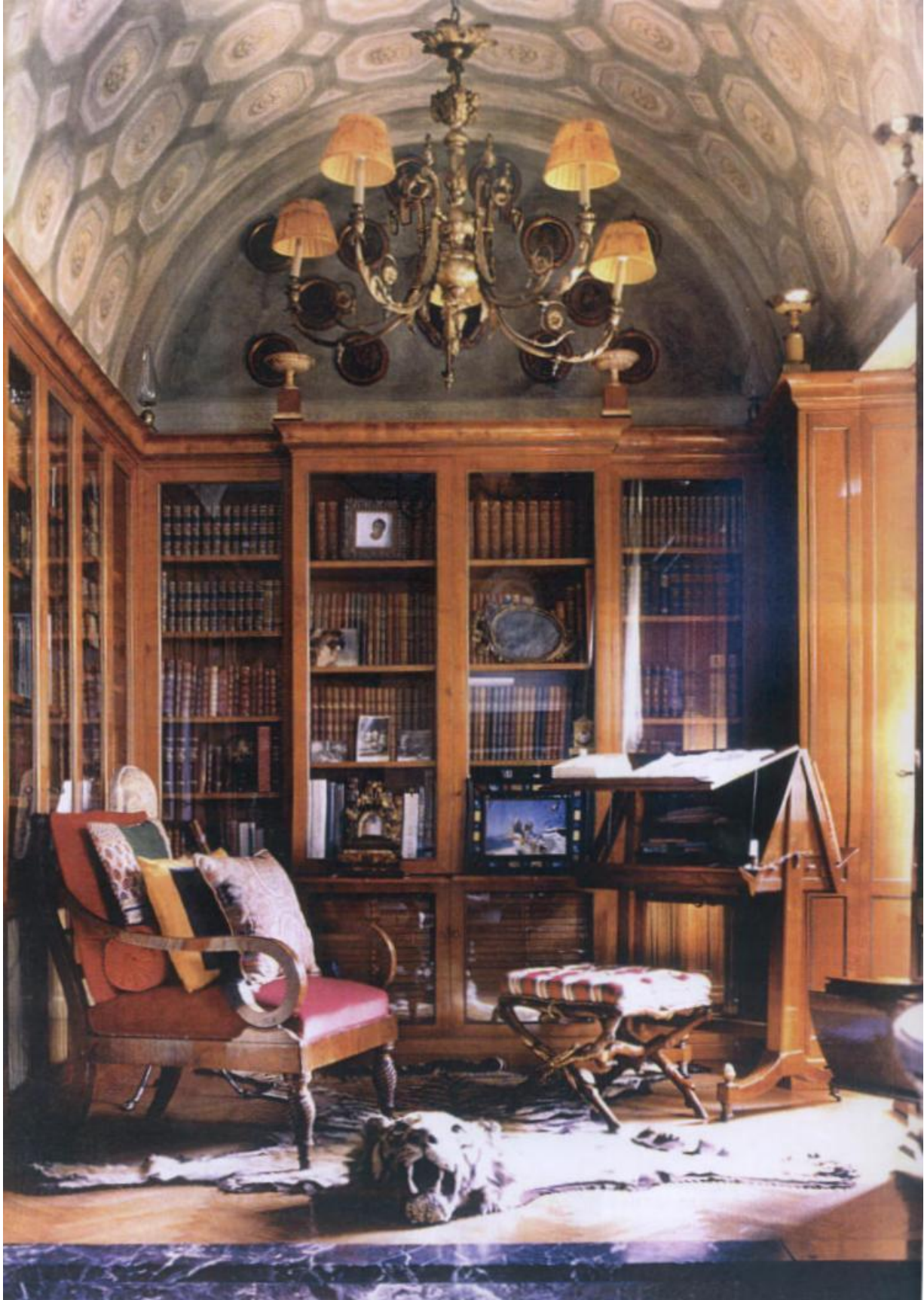
N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.197

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico



C&amp;C, Monografico



**E**

ven when he's at home, architect and fabric designer Piero Castellini Baldissera doesn't stay still for long. During a "relaxed" one-on-one conversation in his living room in Milan, Castellini spoke to carpenters, planned the finishing touches on some metal lamps he'd designed, sent off fabric samples from his new collection of home textiles, and answered a dozen or so phone calls. He is also a chain-smoker and, ironically, a compulsive collector of chairs. Not that he has time to sit around. Although his name, as an architect and designer, is associated with some of the most luxurious and restful houses in Italy, many of them restorations in Tuscany, his house in Milan is anything but a place for repose. "I have lived in this house for decades and yet I keep putting my hands on it, changing it again and again," he says. Home is where Castellini brings his "trophy" from distant lands; he describes the apartment as his "private color laboratory."

This so-called laboratory is situated on the ground floor of a magnificent fifteenth-century palace that was built near the Sforza Castle by wealthy fabric merchants—the Atellani family—who belonged to the court of the Sforzas. During the Renaissance, the palace became the center of Milan's social life. Sixteenth-century chronicles

198



01/09/04

# House & Garden USA

N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.199

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico



## TRADE SECRETS

Light filters through the courtyard windows, opposite page, into the sitting room, this page. **FURNISHINGS**

An upholstered Louis XII stool serves as a coffee table, flanked by a Louis XVI armchair from Piedmont covered in vintage needlepoint, left, and a Louis XV armchair, right.

**FABRICS** The curtains are in Lelievre's Tivol silk. The custom sofa is covered in a goffered velvet, the pillows in a C&C silk. **CARPET** French Aubusson.

01/09/04

# House & Garden USA

N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.200

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico



COLOR EXCITES CASTELLINI, AND HE USES HIS HOUSE AS A LABORATORY FOR EXPLORING THE WAY COLOR INTERACTS WITH VARIOUS FABRICS





01/09/04

## House &amp; Garden USA

N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.201

*The master's touch*

C&amp;C, Monografico

**TRADE SECRETS**

**FURNISHINGS** In the dining room, this page, 18th-century Venetian chairs surround an 18th-century French table. **FABRICS** C&C's toile de Jouy in red covers the table; the curtains are in Lelievre silk. In the bedroom, opposite page, a painted wood sofa is covered in Pierre Frey's toile de Nantes, with cushions in C&C's Caramel silk. **ACCENTS** The 18th-century chandelier is from an Italian church. **TABLETOP** Richard Ginori plates; Murano glass goblets.



201



describe epicurean banquets and midnight dances in the palace's candlelit rooms and in the garden, where "many magnificent ladies" met with "honored cavaliers, senators, arms men, and architects of the dukedom." In 1495, when working on *The Last Supper* in nearby Santa Maria delle Grazie, Leonardo da Vinci spent hours walking in the garden or resting in its shade. After the collapse of the Sforza dukedom in 1499, the Atellanis probably lost much of their wealth, and the palace fell into disrepair. By the time Castellini's great-grand-uncle bought it in 1920 it was a battered old palace with a rural feel to it. "Even as a child in the 1950s," says Castellini, "I remember fields of cultivated land just outside the house." Hard to imagine nowadays, since the palazzo, which Castellini shares with his brothers and sisters, is immersed in Milan's bustling center.



rchitect Piero Portaluppi, Castellini's grandfather, restored the palazzo in a free-spirited way, adding a new wing and allowing his imagination free rein everywhere else. The central staircase and the main rooms on the first floor were decorated with flamboyant frescoes depicting the signs of the zodiac and scenes from nature. The floors, too, offered surfaces for the creation of intricate marble patterns. As soon as one walks into the central courtyard, where an ancient wisteria towers over a graceful portico, one is struck by the fact that nothing here was left to chance. Bits and pieces of stone carvings and pillars are stacked together in a series of deliberate arrangements similar to those found in Castellini's apartment.

"I too am a compulsive collector," Castellini says in describing his rooms. To emphasize the point he draws attention to his most precious possessions: 1,600 pieces of marble from an early-twentieth-century dig in the ruins of ancient Rome. This almost scientific approach to aesthetics is apparent from the main entrance to the apartment. The walls, painted in the 1920s by a pupil of Portaluppi's, display a series of botanical studies meticulously drawn and arranged in such a way as to give the illusion of a winter garden. This room also houses some of the unusual sources of Castellini's inspiration—stacks of ancient books on and under the sofas, empty picture frames, turtle shells, and several stuffed and gaping alligators. ▷

Clockwise from top left: In the courtyard, an old bicycle and a Vespa painted in stars and stripes.

■ A grand walnut and oak bookcase from a Tuscan pharmacy, beneath portraits of famous Italian painters of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. ■ C&C striped silk covers a dining chair; the curtain fabric is by Lelievre. ■ In the sala dello zodiaco, 18th-century marble columns. Zodiac symbols decorate the walls and floors, designed by Piero Portaluppi.

■ In the bedroom, a curtain is in Braquenie's *Marquise de Pierre*. ■ A hand-painted forest scene in the family dining room. The inlaid doors are surrounded by Fior di Pesco marble. Chair covered in C&C striped silk.



## CASTELLINI'S DESIGNS ARE LUSCIOUS.



01/09/04

# House & Garden USA

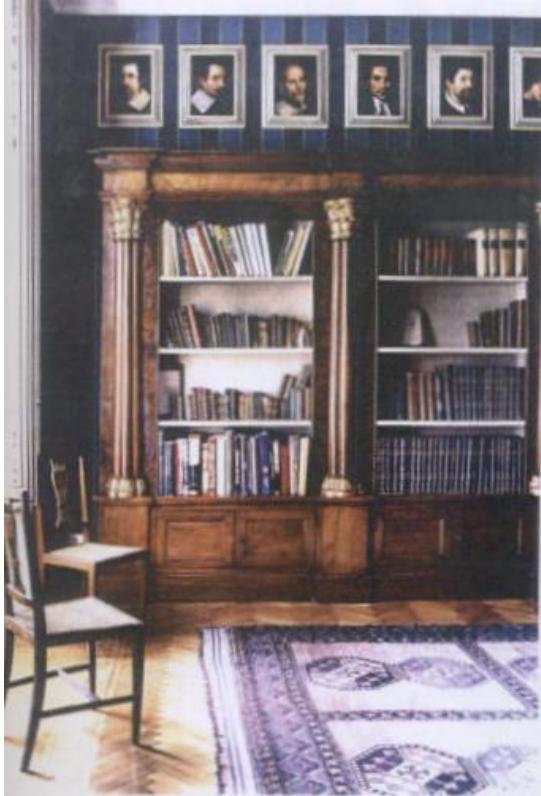
N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.203

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico



SO VERSATILE ENOUGH TO WORK WELL IN SEVERAL KINDS OF ROOMS



01/09/04

# House & Garden USA

N°9

Diffusione 920154

Pag.204

*The master's touch*

C&C, Monografico

