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OLD FRIENDS

LIGHTENING THE TONE

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When Mary Jo and William Condren purchased a Manhattan residence some years ago, they bought a bit of history. The apartment had been home to John Jacob Astor VI (Jack), descendant of the legendary fur mogul and financier. John Jacob V died in the *Titanic* disaster. Jack's mother, the former Madeline Talmadge Force, survived. So did Jack—in utero.

For twenty years the Condrens collected English and French antiques, working with the firm of Parish Hadley. Later, with their children grown, says Bill Condren, "We decided to become Florida residents." They maintain a home in the Northeast—he is still active in business—but the Palm Beach home is the family's permanent residence. It has its own legacy. The Mediterranean-style home on the Intracoastal was built by architect Lowry Bell on the former estate of world-champion tennis player Ivan Lendl.

As a trustee of the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach, interior designer Scott Snyder is sensitive to the history of homes. "Even before meeting the Condrens," he says, "I knew the house was well-sited and well-proportioned. I had decorated it for a garden tour the previous year. So when the Condrens bought it, I felt that I already knew it, inside and out."

While the couple sold some of the antiques from their Fifth Avenue apartment, several treasured pieces made the journey to Palm Beach. They had just one request of Snyder: Lighten the palette from their previous home. "The inspiration for the coloration started with the clients," Snyder explains. "They wanted 'a happy palette—salmon, yellows and greens,' and I agreed right away."

A happy palette is often accompanied by whimsical touches, and Snyder began by anchoring the graceful antique French chairs and English tables in the living room with an Aubusson-style carpet painted on sisal. "I thought this

PRECEDING PAGES: In Mary Jo and William Condren's Palm Beach home, designer Scott Snyder anchored the living room with a painted sisal rug. Cracked lacquer coffee table and fabrics for sofas and curtains from Christopher Norman. Fauteuils finished in Scalamantré fabrics. RIGHT: Dining room's stria walls complement Brunswick & Fils silk drapery fabric. Waterford chandelier, c. 1790, illuminates Georgian table surrounded by Chippendale chairs with Edelman Leather. Baccarat crystal. Portrait of Mrs. John Allnut by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830) hangs above George III break-front, c. 1770. Stark carpet. All florals by Tom Mathieu.







Pine-paneled library is leavened with Boussac tropical print on draperies, side chairs and pillows; Brunswick & Fils trim. Scalamandré fabric on club chairs. Schmidt America suede on sofas. Portraits include John Hoppner's painting of a child, *William Russell*, and Sir Henry Raeburn's *David MacDowall-Grant* in riding habit. Carpet by Dek Tillet Ltd.

treatment would set a lighthearted tone, in keeping with the Florida location," says the designer.

And it does, in a space replete with an eclectic mix of antiques, reflected in a baroque Venetian mirror selected by Snyder. Lightening this traditional decor, the overall palette is decidedly tropical, with pale glazed walls and sunny tones on upholstered pieces.

The classical notion of balance and symmetry is especially evident in the dining room, dominated by a Palladian window. Amidst the formality of an antique chandelier, Georgian table and Chippendale chairs, Snyder offers a surprise: pomegranate-hued leather upholstery. "The color pops," he notes. "It's unexpected, alive."

A bold touch also enlivens the library, where

the quintessentially tropical hibiscus blooms on chairs, pillows and draperies with English waterfall valances. Eighteenth-century portraits hang on pale paneling. "The Condrens felt comfortable with pine paneling, which is rarely used in Florida, just as they preferred suede Chesterfield sofas," says Snyder. "The formality may not be what many expect in a Florida home, but it is lightened by the tropical palette."

Just because the homeowners moved to a new region did not mean they had to change an interior environment that had previously made them comfortable. Adds the designer, "I tried to use all the couple's 'old friends.'"

Among their friends, the Condrens feel right at home. □





TOP LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT: "Powder rooms should be amusing," says Snyder, who did a sophisticated chinoiserie treatment with Clarence House wallpaper and a pagoda-topped lantern. Silk stripe from Christopher Norman. Vaughan lamps mix with early-19th-century rock crystal sconces. ABOVE RIGHT AND OPPOSITE: In the soothing master bedroom, bed and windows are dressed in Scalamandré fabrics. Curvaceous Ronald Jonas sofa covered in Brunschwig & Fils fabric. Antique French chest and fauteuil counterbalanced by 1930 Italian coffee table. Stark carpet. FOLLOWING PAGES: Loggia is topped with stenciled ceiling beams. Boussac fabric on Bielecky Bros. rattan seating. Carved wood table from Minton-Spidell. Antique burl frames and animal prints by Carol Brodman. c.1830.







