

AMERICAN HOMESTYLE & GARDENING

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The 34 Biggest-Payoff Home Improvements

LIGHTEN UP!

78 Spring Ideas

From Bed Fabrics to
Flowers to Wall Color

HOMEY PLEASURES

Comfort Baking
Laundry Room Redo
Spring-Clean Tips

GARDEN MUSTS

What's Hot in
Pots, Plants,
Benches, Bushes

Makeover Magic
2 Old Houses
Get Up-to-Date

at home with

douglas & miranda abrams

He's the founder of Portico furniture and bath stores; she's an interior designer. They're both masters of urban cocooning

What's your idea of comfort? A room that's soothing to all the senses. It should be beautiful to the eye with great design and good lighting; beautiful to touch with soft, luxurious fabrics; and beautiful to smell with rich, subtle scents from a fireplace and candles.

You clearly like dark wood. Why do you think it's so popular now? Dark woods have a more interesting grain than light woods, but mostly we love their richness. They evoke so many eras and diverse cultures.

What is your favorite piece of furniture? A massive, boldly carved Italianate sideboard from the 1700s. Douglas found it on one of his trips.

Describe your decorating philosophy. We like rooms that are comfortable, modern, personal, and eclectic. For us,

that means mixing in touches from faraway places we love—paintings from Sri Lanka, where Miranda's mom is from, and objects from our honeymoon in Guatemala—with modern furniture and old pieces. An antique chair looks great in a modern setting if you upholster it with a clean, contemporary, luxurious fabric.

What do you collect? We collect black-and-white photography. It's classic, modern, and elegant. We're just beginning; we'll be collecting for years.

Your tabletop style is a trademark. Why do you use only white? When everything is white—plates, tureens, teapots—you can

mix it all together and easily add pieces. Guests don't notice if one serving bowl has a thicker lip. It's easy to change the accessories—the candles and the placemats—to get another look.

What do you like best about your house? It doesn't feel like it's in New York. We have three floors in a brownstone, and it's very quiet. Miranda loves fireplaces, and we have six. Three of them work, and the ones that don't we fill with flowers or bottles of wine in a rack.

How do you kidproof a house? Slipcovers. They're great if you have dogs, too.

What's your ideal home? If this house was on a huge farm and overlooked water, it would be just perfect.

—Terry Trucco



In the TV room (above), an antique sleigh bed is updated with chenille cushions. Miranda designed the Portico stained-oak bookcase and table. RIGHT: Cinnamon sticks add a spicy accent.



Douglas, Miranda, and baby Sydney Abrams (above) in their Manhattan townhouse. LEFT: An "indestructible" Portico table made from old barn wood fills the dining room. Surprises—like a wine rack put in the fireplace—"give a room personality," says Miranda.

