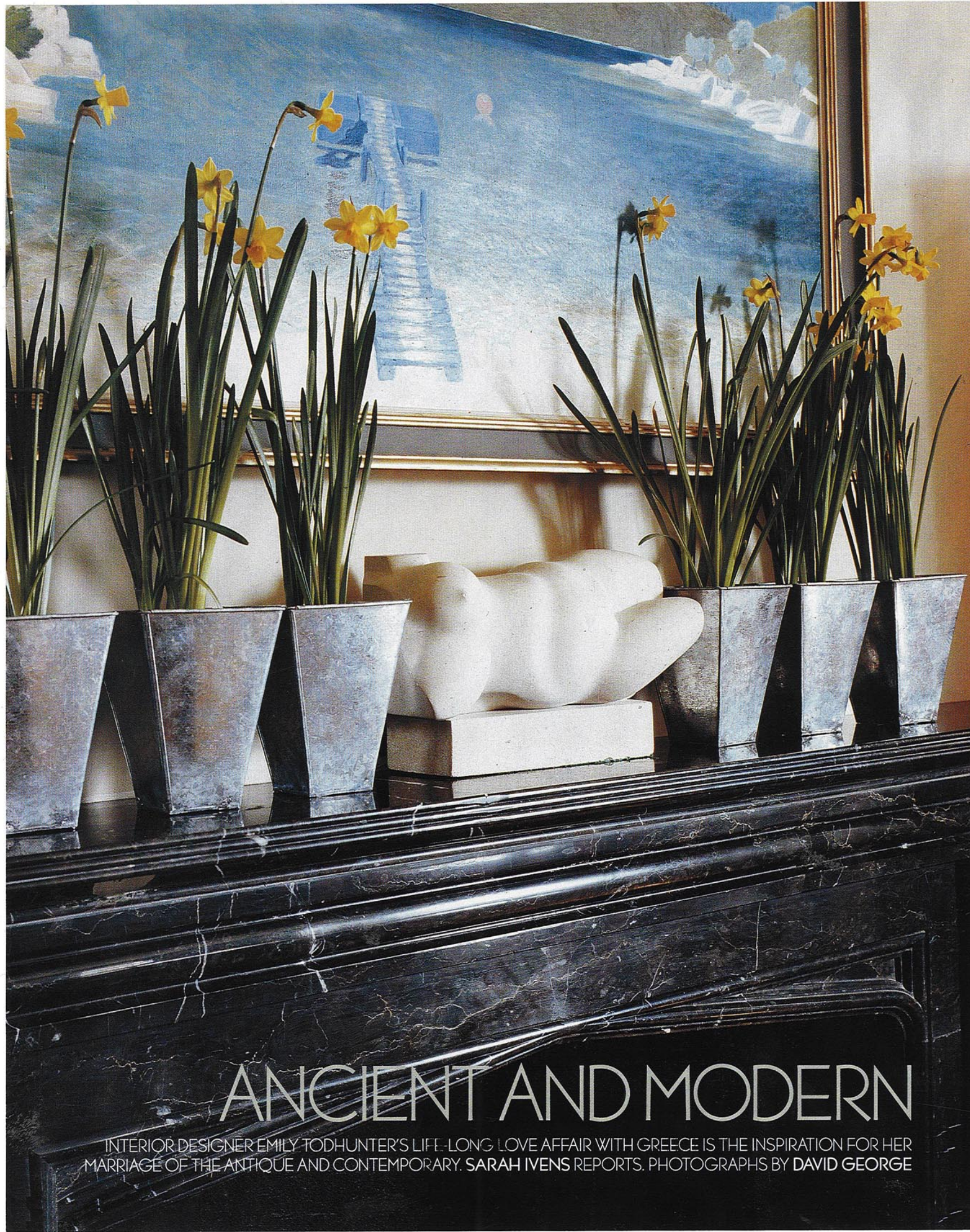


# WOMAN'S JOURNAL



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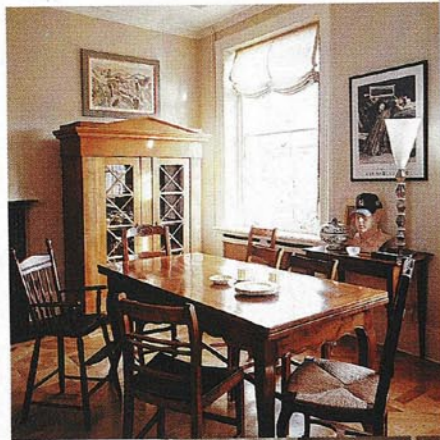
SEX AND SHOPPING



## ANCIENT AND MODERN

INTERIOR DESIGNER EMILY TODHUNTER'S LIFE-LONG LOVE AFFAIR WITH GREECE IS THE INSPIRATION FOR HER MARRIAGE OF THE ANTIQUE AND CONTEMPORARY. SARAH IVENS REPORTS. PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID GEORGE

In the dining room, right and below, are antiques and unusual mementos, including Emily's 'mad and ugly table', far right, with a sculpture of her stepson, and, above it, a signed photograph by Norman Parkinson. Opposite: the bedroom is classically modern - with a cool mix of moleskin and white linen



Berkshire,' says Emily. 'It reflects the stormy energy of my teenage years.'

Behind the dining table, which can extend to seat 14, is a collection of mementos that she calls her 'mad and ugly table'. A sculpture of her stepson, John, sits next to a picture of a clown, bought from a Parisian flea market, while the table is crowned by a signed photograph by Norman Parkinson. And the wallpaper that runs throughout the flat was designed by Emily herself to reflect the personality of the people inside. 'It has a happy, bubbly design.'

The kitchen is the focus for family life. When the family arrived at the house a few years ago, there was a small galley kitchen, which Emily could not work with. She knocked through the wall into the sitting room and redesigned everything. The most inspired decision was putting the dishwasher at waist level. 'I don't want to spend all my time bending over with my bottom in the air.' She was advised by kitchen experts not to have open space and shelves in the kitchen but she rebelled - and is happy she did. 'It's changed the whole proportion of the room. I like to have happening things on display. I have a glass collection, which is not arranged formally, but is just the things I love. I also put all our pasta jars out on the shelf. It's not worth putting them away, because we get through all the pasta in them within two days.'

Working for 10 hours a day leaves little time to talk to her family, so Emily socialises while she's cooking. 'It's easy to produce a stir-fry out of nowhere while Manolo and John are watching football on the other side of the breakfast bar and Olympia is digging around in her box of toys under the table.'

'I'm not great at relaxing,' she admits. 'My husband gets very upset that I can't wind down. I love my bathroom, but I don't spend time in there burning oils. I relax by being the centre of attention in the kitchen, and then after cooking and socialising, I just crash. Since the business has started to grow, I've passed out as soon as my head hits the pillow. I did start reading a great tome called

*The Greek Achievement*, but it's impossible to read more than a few pages at a time.' So rather than keeping books by the bed, there are pictures of the couple and their daughter. There is also a block of wood, which, says Emily, 'I had engraved with a heart for my husband for Valentine's Day.'

The kingsize bed is covered in white linen and moleskin and the cushions are four deep. The floor-to-ceiling windows are draped with heavy curtains underneath an ornate pelmet. The look is classically modern, and Manolo has been equally involved in the design. 'Everyone thinks he has great taste,' says Emily, 'and he's now chairman of my company, so he has an added interest.'

Her dream of a comfortable, modern home has come true - and having Olympia did not disrupt her easy style. 'Thankfully, she fits in with us, not the other way around. I didn't want my home to turn into one big playroom.' Apart from a collection of Disney classics next to the video and Pooh and Peter Rabbit sitting neatly in the hallway, you wouldn't know the designer shared her home with a toddler.

Emily trained as a specialist painter before becoming a designer. She's responsible for a string of stylish London restaurants including Christopher's, Daphne's and Floriana, and she and business partner Kate Earle have also completed a hotel interior for Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons.

Despite this pedigree, Emily insists, 'I'm strangely relaxed about interiors. There are no rules in decorating. Lots of designers are far too pleased with themselves. David Hicks would famously walk around other people's homes tutting, but everyone has their own style.' According to Emily, there is only one thing that should never be seen - flouncy cross-stitched cushions. 'There's just no excuse for them. I couldn't sleep if I knew one was in my house.' □

*Emily Todhunter's furniture collection will be launched later this year. Her company, Todhunter Earle, accepts commissions on 020-7349 9999.*



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