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HARKING BACK TO THE PALM BEACH HEYDAY OF THE 1950s, A LEGENDARY HOUSE GETS A TIME-TRAVELING OVERHAUL BY DESIGNER LETA AUSTIN FOSTER, WHO CHANNELS THE SPIRIT OF BILLY BALDWIN IN ROOMS FILLED WITH CLASSIC ANTIQUES, BLUE-AND-WHITE PRINTS, AND CHINESE ART.



The loggia of a 1950s house in Palm Beach, Florida, originally designed by architect Clarence Mack and renovated by designer Leta Austin Foster and architect Kevin Asbacher. The rattan furniture and Janus et Cie chairs have cushions in Arbre de Matisse, a China Seas pattern by Billy Baldwin, the iconic decorator whose work inspired the home's current look. Rug: Dash & Albert.

An Ionic pilaster—a Mack trademark—gives structure to the living room's soaring interior architecture. The sofa is covered in a Colefax and Fowler floral. Wall paint, Farrow & Ball Wimborne White. Artwork, Willem de Looper. **OPPOSITE:** In the corner beneath an antique Chinese portrait from Blue Moon Antiques, a custom banquette is covered in a Gretchen Bellinger linen velvet by Schneller, Inc., the same New York workshop that originally upholstered all of Baldwin's furniture. Rug, Stark.



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Am I right that this is the third home you've decorated for these clients?

LETA AUSTIN FOSTER: Yes! About 10 years ago, I received a call out of the blue to decorate their apartment. Six months after that project was finished, they decided they weren't apartment people and asked if I could repurpose all of the furniture we had just bought for a house instead. And I did. They were thrilled. Later, they found this house in Palm Beach's Regents Park. I'm a firm believer that you don't put things in a landfill. My motto: Recycling is good, but reusing is even better.

KRYSTIAN VON SPEIDEL: Do I detect a not-so-subtle nod to the decorator Billy Baldwin throughout the house? Definitely. We discovered that Baldwin had worked in the area, and several people believe he may have originally decorated this house. Plus, the client loves the Baldwin style, mixing classic with modern. His look was our inspiration for the project. We did a lot of

research on his rooms and furniture. **This is a remarkable house. Tell me about its architect, Clarence Mack.** Mack was a marvelous architect who popularized the Palm Beach Regency style. The house was built around 1959 in what was originally called Regent Park; it has since been designated a historic district named Regents Park. The street mimics a London mews and comprises five houses facing a flat park in the middle. The previous owner had decorated with lots of faux marble, but that wasn't Mack's style. He loved white and having light rooms. Our goal was to preserve and restore the architecture and interior design.

Most people associate a 1950s house with midcentury modern, but that's not the case here.

If you look at the great houses here from the '50s and '60s, you'll notice that the Palm Beach aristocrats didn't embrace midcentury modern. That style was happening in Miami—not here. **How did you channel Baldwin?** I sourced several of his furnishings on the internet and found some right here on the strip—there is a great antiques row on South Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach. Then I tracked down Schneller, Inc., his upholsterer

in New York, which was able to restore them. I decorated the home as it would have looked in 1959. Both Baldwin and Mack adored Chinese antiques and art, so that became a theme.

That living room is so grand. What did you have to do to make it feel so intimate as well?

Everything in the house is in perfect scale. To be honest, I largely can't take the credit. Mack was a great architect. For instance, the soaring height of the doors in this room makes the ceiling feel less lofty. Baldwin's influence was also key. In a seating arrangement, you want to be able to speak with someone comfortably. The Billy Baldwin-style slipper chairs are so flexible, they make turning this way or that so easy. That was his genius.

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ABOVE: "The owner loves blue," Foster says, "so I created a mélange of blues in the breakfast room." Curtains and shades in a Raoul Textiles fabric. Wallpaper, China Seas. The tableware is from Foster's Palm Beach boutique. Pendant, Coleen & Company. **RIGHT:** Palm Beach is home to many talented artisans who work on the area's large houses, Foster notes. "There was a Frenchman here who showed me how to create the trim on the master bedroom's headboard," she says. "It takes three fabrics that you roll and then pleat. I think it is a beautiful detail." The headboard and wallpaper are in a coordinating Braquenié print. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES

