

# Southern Accents

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by Elizabeth Dewberry

# Palm Beach Glamour

With great architecture as a canvas, decorator **Gerrie Bremermann** applies her artistic touch with a Swedish palette, French and Italian antiques, and a few midcentury gems

*photographed by* Tria Giovan







THESE PAGES: "When I do an all-white house, I always do one room that's not white," Bremermann says of the library. "It adds an element of surprise, and in this case, I think the color adds coziness." Patterned curtains and a dark, heavy chandelier give the space a more formal feeling. A painting by Amanda Talley hangs above the fireplace.



inventory of the existing furniture. The client had lived for many years in New Orleans, where Bremermann still lives and works, and they wanted to create a look that blended the tropical-island feel of Palm Beach with the eclecticism of New Orleans, using contemporary and period French furniture, with a touch of Italian. "She has good taste," Bremermann says, "and I have a very visual imagination, so we agreed pretty quickly on what we should keep and what voids we needed to fill. We shopped often together in New Orleans—I can't buy anything from pictures because I have to see and feel and understand a thing before I spend money on it."

The final look may appear to have come together easily, but the homeowner credits Bremermann's energy level (which, she says, "is just wow") and the decorator's amazing memory. "She can notice something in a store one morning, and the next day, after looking through 20 more shops and going to an auction, she'll remember the







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—decorator Gerrie Bremermann

exact piece we need and where it is,” the homeowner explains. “Or she’ll just know that the right piece is not out there, and she’ll design it herself.”

With the furniture chosen, they turned their attention to art. “We wanted a great deal of the art to be the work of living New Orleans artists,” says Bremermann. “I pointed her toward some I like, and she chose most of the paintings. She’s very daring. That big Nicole Charbonnet painting in the living room is phenomenal.” The decorator floated the furniture in front of the artwork or glass doors when she felt the situation called for it because, as she explains, “I believe you can block sight lines to a work of art or a view as long as you can see it all if you walk around the room.”

This is the kind of boldness the homeowner loves in Bremermann’s work. “Gerrie knows exactly how she wants a home to look and feel,” she says. “Twice in our long decorating relationship, I’ve disagreed with her. Both times I’ve been wrong. What she’s done with the house is beautiful, elegant, and very inviting.” A look, Bremermann says, that expresses who her friend is as well. ♦

*For details, see Sourcebook, page 206.*

**Bremermann designed the lacquered wood Parsons bed and night tables and placed the Swedish settee at the foot of the bed for the children. “They love to gather in the master bedroom, and the settee gives them their own space there,” she says.**





BELOW: Mies van der Rohe–designed Barcelona chairs float in front of a contemporary painting by Nicole Charbonnet. OPPOSITE PAGE: Small pieces grouped together create vignettes in the entry hall. “I like to keep it sparse but, at the same time, generate layers of interest by piling things up, using different heights, textures, and shapes,” says decorator Gerrie Bremermann. PREVIOUS PAGES: To give the home a year-round summertime look and feel, Bremermann complemented white walls with sisal carpeting in all the spaces that didn’t already have parquet floors. In the living room, white fabrics and a crystal chandelier in the middle of the room unify a mix of styles. “I wanted everything to cross over and speak to everything else, to meld,” she explains.



**Gerrie Bremermann might not seem like a maverick,** but she’s no conformist. She has a keen sense of history, and she takes care to learn her clients’ needs and preferences. But when she creates a room, she works intuitively, trusting her instincts about color, scale, balance, and functionality. “Decorating is an intimate thing,” she says. “I want to honor the existing architecture while using my own signatures, but most important, I try to get inside my clients’ heads and create a look that expresses who they are.”

THESE PAGES: Slipcovers on chairs the homeowner already owned add softness to the dining room. The mirrors flanking the doors to the outside cover built-in niches. "We didn't want to fill them with baubles," Bremermann says. "Besides, I love mirrors. I like to put at least one in every room."



When a longtime friend and client asked the decorator to design her Palm Beach home, Bremermann knew just where to start. "The outside was yellow, and the interior walls were all different colors, but as soon as I saw it, I knew it should be white, inside and out," she explains. "White doesn't hide any sins, but this house has no sins. Its rooms are well-proportioned and gracious, and the architecture is so exquisite that I sensed white would best let the house speak for itself. White is soothing and uplifting, like this house, yet glamorous, like the homeowner."

While the walls were being stripped and painted, decorator and homeowner took