

AT HOME™

IN ARKANSAS

DESIGNERS' OWN
HOMES

Renovations
for Living


JUNE 2003



0 74470 98618 8

\$3.50

RED HOT
CARD PARTY



A trio of curvy black-and-white vases provides subtle contrast in the living room, where shades of orange—on the walls, throw pillows, furniture and flowers—reign supreme. (facing page) Black-and-white accents—like the monogrammed slipcovers on the dining room chairs—in the living and dining rooms help to establish a feel of continuity in the two rooms, which flow together.

DESIGNER DESTINY

Owner of a Benton-based design emporium, Tobi Fairley boasts an intrinsic flair for design



Photography: JANET WARLICK, CAMERA WORK

Text: AMY GRAY LIGHT



(this page, clockwise from top) The kitchen's black cabinets and orange walls are a fitting backdrop for graphic stripes and animal prints. To offset the bedroom's primarily pink palette, Tobi chose to integrate touches of rich black with the lacquered bureau, angular lamp and whimsical Andy Warhol print. In the bath, Tobi combines an eclectic mix of glazed terra cotta tiles and metallic-fish-speckled black wallpaper with a contemporary mirror, stone busts and a tiger-striped chair. Just off the kitchen, a table for two not only displays an assortment of Tobi's finds, but also acts as an attractive storage space for an extensive selection of wines. (facing page) Thanks to a liberal dose of tonal pinks, the bedroom's clean-lined nesting tables, retro upholstered bed and translucent ceiling fan and lamp look stylish, not stark.



For Tobi Fairley,

owner of T. Lamarr Interiors, her career as an interior designer seems predestined. She grew up admiring the design work of her great aunt and a cousin, as well as her mother, Beverly Wells, who has a natural flair for decorating and often assists Tobi in her shop and on jobs.

Although Tobi initially tried to buck the trend by earning an accounting degree, she soon realized her creative instincts couldn't be stifled, going on to earn both a bachelor's degree in interior design and a master's in business administration. The business degrees haven't gone to waste, however—they came in handy when Tobi began planning to open her own business. "I decided there wasn't a great need for another store in Little Rock," she says, and realized that locating her design store in Benton made great economic sense. "It's a growing area, and the store fills a void for personalized service." Located near the town square in a circa-1940 stucco house, T. Lamarr Interiors incorporates both a retail store and Tobi's design services, allowing customers and clients to envision how furnishings and accessories will look in a "real" home.

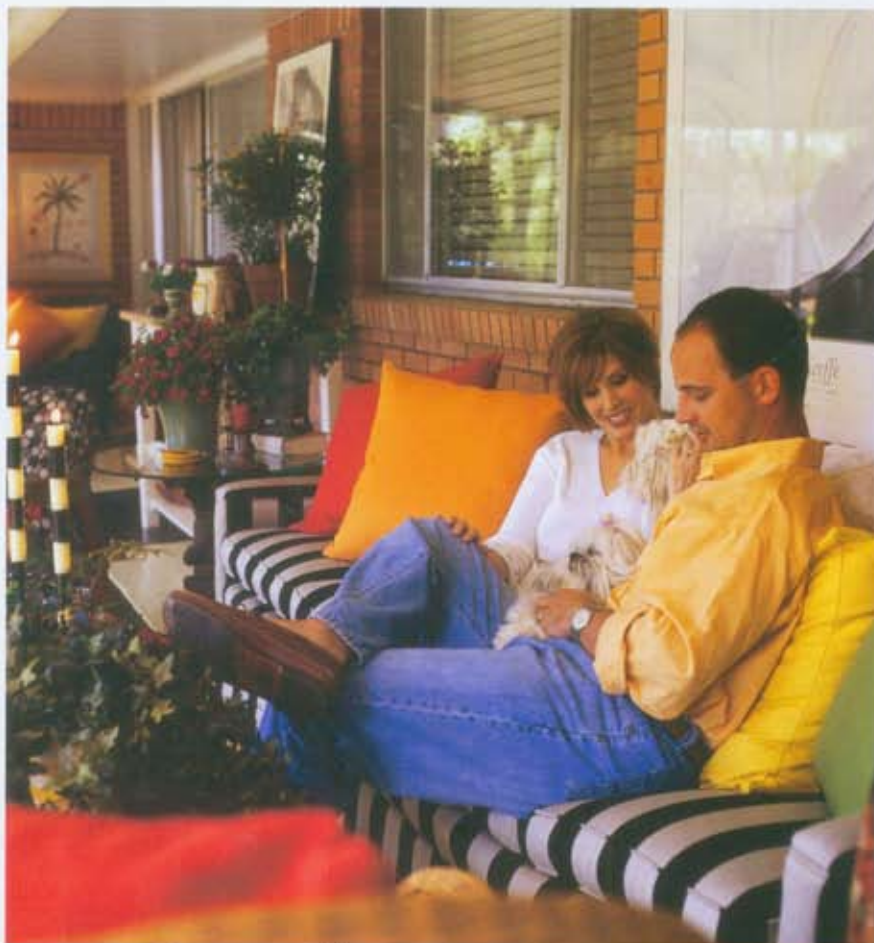
A designer for the past four years, Tobi typically juggles between eight and 10 projects at a time, with at least that many more on the back burner. In addition, she volunteers her time to the Junior League of Little Rock and has worked on two Build for the Cure Idea Houses and two Symphony Designer Houses. What makes work fun for the young designer is primarily the client. "After a job, I feel I've made personal friends, with a mutual respect and admiration for each other's talents," she says.

Tobi's belief that a house should be comfortable, fun and functional is evident in her own home. The unassuming exterior of the ranch house she shares with her husband, attorney Carter Fairley, in Little Rock's Wingate division hides an interior filled with bright, lively





"WE LIKE TO KEEP THINGS
SIMPLE AND MODERN,
WITH CLEAN LINES." —TOBI FAIRLEY



color. Her love of color, whimsy and bold design took hold during a college internship with a Las Vegas design firm specializing in casinos, and she has employed these elements in her own house and in many clients' homes. "We bought the house six weeks after we married and have lived here for about a year," she says. "It's our plan to be here three to five years, so we've put our money to decorative, cosmetic use, rather than in structural changes."

For the fun-loving couple, the house's biggest asset is its long, open floor plan. The pleasingly oversized public rooms interconnect throughout, making the home perfect for entertaining. When decorating, Tobi strove to maintain the home's 1950s roots, while also creating a look indicative of her and her husband's personalities. "We like to keep things simple and modern, with clean lines," she says. Furniture and artworks accumulated over the years are worked into the design, resulting in an eclectic look that reflects the lives and personalities of the young couple. ■

(top left) Tobi and Carter relax with their dogs on the porch. (bottom left) One of the couple's favorite places to entertain is the screened porch, which Tobi furnished with a sturdy square dining table and wicker chairs. (below) A leather club chair piled with colorful pillows makes for a comfortable perch on the screened porch.

