



BY MEGHAN TURNER



white glove treatment

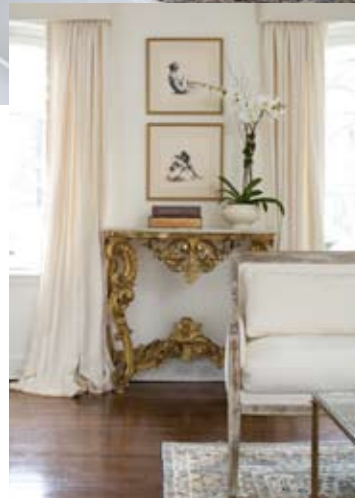
White has a way of creating something from nothing. Defined as the absence of color, white can evoke an aura of distilled perfection that colors cannot. Whether it's used to infuse a feeling of opulence or minimalism, white lends a sense of immaculacy, like a blanket of fresh-fallen snow. In these showhouses, designers remold rooms with flawless finishes and details that command attention—and clean fingertips.





Gail Plechaty

Lake Forest Showcase House
Lake Forest, Illinois



After spotting an exquisite one-of-a-kind piece of furniture, it's often hard to resist it. So when designer Gail Plechaty was asked to design this guest bedroom, she found a home for the 18th-century canopy bed she had seen and admired six months earlier. Making the bed the focal point, she designed a room that radiates modern luxury.

The off-white walls and furnishings of the room accent not only the bed but also the architecture. "I always look at the architecture of a space," Gail says. "Anything with great bones puts me 10 steps ahead in terms of the design process and creativity." She enhanced the symmetry of the room by setting up a sitting area that keeps things balanced. For this retreat's monochromatic scheme, Gail used off-white fabrics for a look of natural comfort. The bed's linens, drapery, and upholstery highlight its original patina. To echo the look, the designer refinished the wood frames on the 18th-century Italian chairs. Also luxurious is the 19th-century Florentine rococo table gilded in 24-carat gold and topped with Carrara marble. To accent the curve of the windows while maintaining the clean lines of the room, Gail used textured matelassé draperies with all-cotton fringe. She completed the room with a screen and artwork by local Chicago artists. ►

Produced by Hilary Rose Photographs by Edmund Barr



Billy Ceglia

Mansions & Millionaires
Lloyd Harbor, New York



Perhaps even more than the books themselves, a library's character often emanates from plaid draperies, a solid oak desk, leather-upholstered easy chairs, and wood-carved mallard decoys. But designer Billy Ceglia gave this library a refreshing twist that is anything but predictable. Designed with young, sophisticated art collectors in mind, he used a traditional idea in a contemporary way.

Billy's young clients often prefer white for the clean, modern look it injects into a space. So he used fashion designer Bill Blass's all-ivory New York apartment as inspiration for employing white to enhance this entire room. "White highlights the architecture and the objects," Billy says. "For impact, I used an extreme white." The color is the perfect backdrop for the room's arresting art. Innovatively hung from the shelves rather than on the walls, photographs and works on paper rest at a height that seems to visually lower the high ceiling. Eliminating the usual knickknacks, the designer filled the tall shelves with books covered in white paper, each numbered for easy reference.

The rest of the room is furnished with classic pieces that appeal to maturing tastes. The sofa, upholstered in gray worsted wool, offers a comfortable place to read while the mahogany desk provides an ideal surface for art research. The brass Georgian mirror, vintage Maison Jansen cocktail table, and 1980s-era wall lights add retro sparkle. A gold-painted ceiling bathes the room in a warmth that balances the brightness of the walls. ➤

Produced by Bonnie Maharam Photographs by Bruce Buck





Lee Bierly & Chris Drake

West Palm Beach Showhouse

West Palm Beach, Florida



Instead of drawing extra attention to a massive fireplace that would stand out regardless of its color, designers Lee Bierly and Christopher Drake let it graciously melt into the matching white background. Warm Florida sunlight that streams through French doors and drenches this creamy living room gives the space a welcoming softness.

Because lush gardens and palm trees are a few steps away, the design team chose green as an accent for the neutral space. On the mantel that rests atop the fluted columns of the fireplace surround, large antique finials flank bundles of blue and green paper amaryllis. The cozy sitting area in front of the fireplace also goes green with a classic Empire chair that has painted swan armrests and upholstery in a subtle moss-colored silk velvet. The sofa is welted to match and sports two velvet toss pillows in the same moss color.

A pair of armchairs face off in front of the fireplace and share a coordinating ottoman. With a bare hint of lettuce green, two voluminous layers of taffeta drape both sets of French doors. "I wanted the fabric to convey a sense of movement as the sun and wind move through the doors," Christopher says. "The more messed up these draperies are, the better they look." †

Produced by Sally Mauer and Hilary Rose Photographs by William Stites

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