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(Top) Bridges' entryway is elegant and functional. Chaps and boots for riding her horse, Red, hang on pegs, as visitors are beckoned to sit in a pink velvet slipper chair. (Above, right) The designer, porchside, sits atop a table found at a local antiques auction. Her bed (below, right) is piled high with cozy quilts and sumptuous sheets in cool hues. A custom flat Roman shade welcomes sleep as alabaster lighting creates the mood. (Above) Country french upholstered chairs surround a dining table found in the town of Hudson. "Soothing" is the watchword, as lavender hydrangeas lure diners to the table. (Opposite) Dolby, Bridges' dynamic pup, surveys the great beyond from the bathroom window. The painted floor, in tumbling-block motif, was a housewarming gift from a handy friend.

Sheila Bridges: Designing Woman

Don't hate Sheila Bridges because she's smart (her pedigree includes Brown University and Parsons School of Design) or because her home is beautiful. This Philadelphia native's interior design career is setting new standards for "hot." In fact, Bill Clinton recently hired her to design and decorate his Harlem office.

Bridges' home office is in Harlem, and Sean Combs and Tom Clancy are among her clients. When she wants to decompress from her stress-inducing functions in the city, she heads to her colonial farmhouse in the Hudson Valley. The house sits high, overlooking the Hudson River, and is surrounded by lilacs and enhanced by a pool and a view that goes on forever. Bridges' ineffable style adorns every nook and cranny.

After buying her hideaway three summers ago, she knew it truly needed a designer's touch: It had been hidden under '70s shag carpeting, faux wood paneling and years of bad taste. Says Bridges, "I let the house breathe, and gave it back its voice." Her color scheme is soothing; the furniture an eclectic blend of local originals and French country. Bridges credits the house with inspiring her to pen her first book, *Furnishing Forward* (Little, Brown), due in stores this fall. ▼

