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housebeautiful

seductive bedrooms

passionate colors

pretty prints

romance!

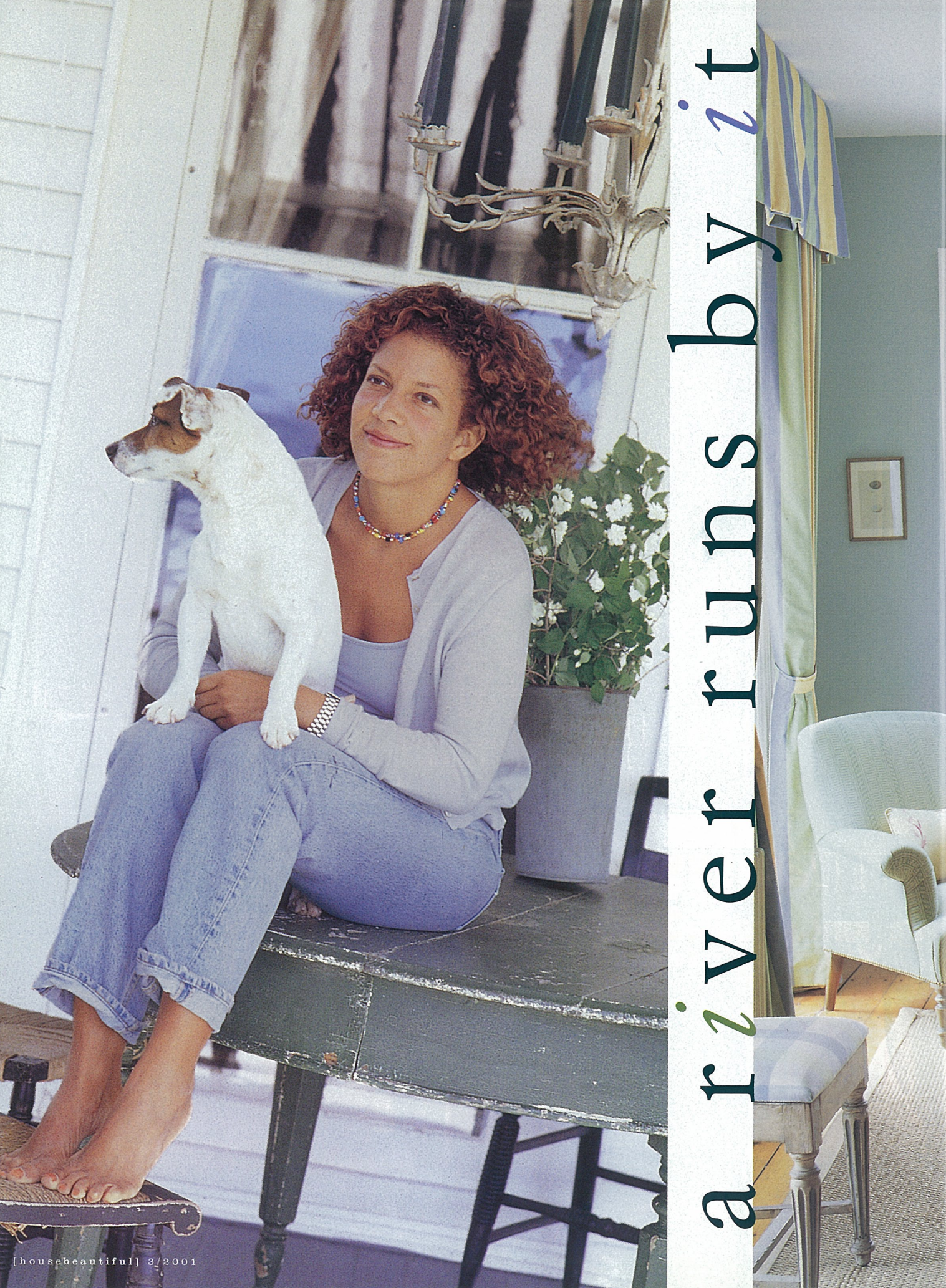
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a river runs by it

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Manhattan designer Sheila Bridges heads for the hills overlooking the Hudson

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[facing page]

On the front porch, Sheila Bridges and Dolby sitting on a painted Empire table from the Armory Art & Antique Gallery in Hudson, New York.

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French 1930s chairs around an antique Pierre Deux dining table are slipcovered in Milkweed linen from Rogers & Goffigon. Tarquina Woven Stripe at the windows.



THERE WERE OTHER HOUSES WITH LARGER ROOMS AND MORE BEAUTIFUL woodwork, but all were forgotten as soon as Sheila Bridges turned down the drive lined with towering spruce trees and saw the view. She stood on the white-pillared porch of the clapboard colonial house perched on a promontory overlooking a bend in the Hudson River. In front of her was the same panorama that had captivated artists like Thomas Cole and Frederick Church over a century ago. "I spotted sailboats and tugs and people kayaking and watched all this activity, mesmerized," she says. The New York designer, who spends her weekdays softening Manhattan's hard edges, was searching for a retreat where she could indulge all those passions that have nothing to do with decorating—like hiking and horseback-riding and snowboarding. "Now Dolby, my Jack Russell terrier, has thirteen acres to patrol," she says. "The setting was so magnificent that the house almost didn't matter. I knew I could fix it."

Built in the 1880s and "modernized" in the 1960s with dropped ceilings and wood-laminate paneling, the place needed to be stripped down to its plain, unpretentious bones. Bridges pulled up the wall-to-wall carpeting to expose the original wide-plank pine floors and tore out closets jammed into odd corners. When she was ready to paint, she just looked out the window

{When she was ready to paint, she looked out the window and plucked her colors from the river and the sky}

[facing page]

Curtains in Schumacher's vertical Wyford Stripe go all the way up to the ceiling and elongate the living room windows. Ageing gracefully are the 18th-century Swedish Mora clock from Arkenskjold Antiques Art and the Art Deco screen from Benjamin Wilson Antiques.

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A painted floor cloth and Cowtan & Tout's Hermitage Stripe dress up a small room opposite the entry.

