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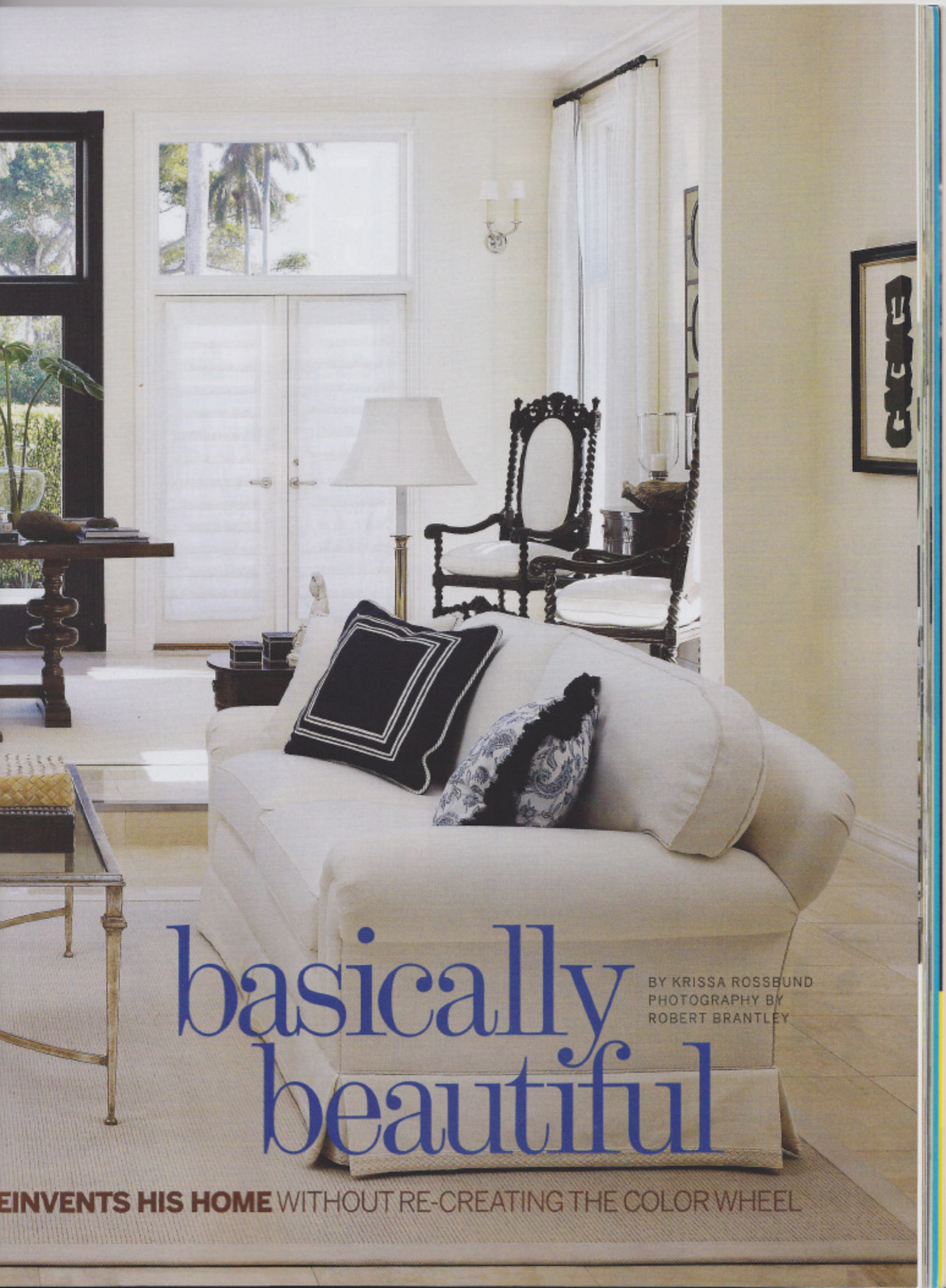

basically beautiful

BY KRISSA ROSSBUND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ROBERT BRANTLEY

EINVENTS HIS HOME WITHOUT RE-CREATING THE COLOR WHEEL

As any psychologist will confirm—women love details while men cut to the chase. So when Florida designer Jack Fhillips signed on to complete the redo of Sheldon Ecklund's spacious two-story bachelor pad on Hypoluxo Island near Palm Beach, he dismissed the idea of poring over fabrics, trims, and finishes and made a snap decision to use an old standby—a blue-and-white combo. It works. Enough said.

This strategy didn't mean cutting corners or being blasé about the overall aesthetic of Sheldon's home. Rather, it meant a classic color partnership that impresses with good-looking appointments that reflect the owner's tasteful yet fuss-free sense of style.

"My whole life has been about blue and white," Fhillips explains. "We live in blue jeans, white button-downs, and navy jackets. The look is American classic, and it translates from fashion to interiors so successfully."

Sheldon, a sportsman with a passion for Florida's warm waters, has his own affinity for the color blue. So he was on board with a scheme that started with the laid-back qualities of a white shirt and a pair of Levis but finished with an urbanity

Left: In the family room, ivory linen drapery panels are edged in blue grosgrain ribbon, a device that designer Jack Phillips used to emphasize the blues in the room's Ralph Lauren and Brunschwig & Fils fabrics. **Above:** Sheldon Ecklund's modern-style home. **Right:** Jacobean antiques—an oak bookcase and library table—anchor the white foyer with their dark finishes. Reproduction benches are covered in Ralph Lauren fabric, its blue stripes nodding to the undulating blues of the water. **Below:** The pool and hot tub overlook Florida's Intracoastal Waterway. **Preceding pages:** The living room is awash in the beauty of natural sunlight.

Right: The shapely Queen Anne dining room chairs are upholstered in white linen and edged with contrasting brown piping.
Above: With a sunny, temperate climate in his favor, homeowner Sheldon Ecklund relishes his home, inside and out.
Below: Although it's from the English Regency period, the straight lines of an antique mahogany cellarette make it a fitting spot to display a modern metal sculpture.

Above: Built-in bookshelves in the family room pop with natural raffia insets affixed to the wall.
Top: Inspired by water and sky, the blue theme seems a natural for the decorative pieces outside. An oversized, blue glass container with a candle and shells illuminates the area after sundown.

that is plenty haute. Involved in the project from the get-go, Sheldon did much of the renovation himself. He reinvented the rooms by adding new appliances, cabinetry, and fixtures in the kitchen and bathrooms, adding to the honed marble flooring, and opening up the floor plan so it would exude a younger vibe.

"This house needed character to shed its art gallery appearance," says Sheldon. "I created a canvas, and Jack made it warm with a combination that is never offensive and has simple ease."

After the basics were in place, Phillips began to pick the accessories for the modern house that departed from the other island- and Mediterranean-style residences in the neighborhood. But even with the simple color palette in place, decorative selections weren't design no-brainers. Phillips made a special effort to get fabrics and furniture that expressed the fact that the occupant was a bachelor. The designer was also careful to stick to a masculine delivery. Cobalt and Wedgwood blue, commonly paired with white, were set aside for heartier values of indigo and navy. And instead of a stark, bright white, Phillips bathed the house in a creamier neutral that emanated warmth and welcomed the infusion of Florida sunlight.

Natural light softens dark colors, like the indigo matelassé on the guest room bench and armchair.

The symmetry of the home leads to a natural progression from foyer to formal living room to casual family room to outside and the water beyond without missing a beat, making the continuity of the palette extra-important. "I don't like houses with beautiful views when you don't know which is more important—interior or exterior," explains Fhillips. "For a serene, relaxed feel, I wanted the color flow between spaces to be effortless."

In the living room, the central seating arrangement was basic—a sofa faces a pair of armchairs, all covered in textured ivory linen, with a silver-leaf table between. Anything "pretty" was avoided. Chosen instead were dark, turned pieces that are sturdy and have heft but which also have a polite presence that's not overbearing. Striped throw pillows offer a handsome glimpse of the different blues to come in other spaces.

To extend a subtle change of tone that doesn't interrupt the scheme, texture was introduced in the family room. A caned bench and a coffee table with a woven top are softened by graphic fabrics, including a windowpane cotton-linen on the sofa and a printed leaf pattern on a pair of armchairs.

Fhillips didn't want any conflict in his blue-and-white game plan, but he didn't want the design to be monotonous either. The dining room reversed the color treatment of the other

Above: In the bathroom, Phillips added a teak-and-cane chaise from Indonesia and a Moroccan side table. Sapurnia marble was positioned in a checkerboard pattern on the shower wall.
Far right: In the master bedroom, a formal English chair is paired with a rustic reclaimed desk.
Below: The home's Anglo-Caribbean pieces offer a breezy island feel without using literal tropical prints.

rooms, with blue stripes reminiscent of men's suiting covering the walls and the upholstered pieces left solid. Because of the limited sunlight in this space, a lighter shade of blue allowed Phillips to continue his use of dark woods. "Stained woods are so much richer, and the grains are honest," he says. "And changing the tone of blue allowed us to shake things up a bit without being too dramatic."

The bedrooms stay on track while maintaining their dapper identities. Headboards that marry dark turned-wood silhouettes with caning or rush textures anchor each space. Stripes on the floor and the bed coverings in the guest room suggest order, while in the master suite, a quilt gives the room a personal touch and an American flair. "I love the warmth of quilts, and try to use them as often as I can," says Phillips. "We've been duveted to death, and duvets are not appropriate for every job, especially in Florida where it gets so hot."

Sheldon is more than pleased with his home that honors a classic color partnership. "Jack is at the top of his game, and we collaborated well," explains Sheldon. "The interiors don't sacrifice polish for comfort, and they nod to a simple way of life that sooner or later becomes appealing to everyone."

Interior designer: Jack Phillips **For more information, see sources on page 154**