

HOUSE & GARDEN

the best of ENGLISH

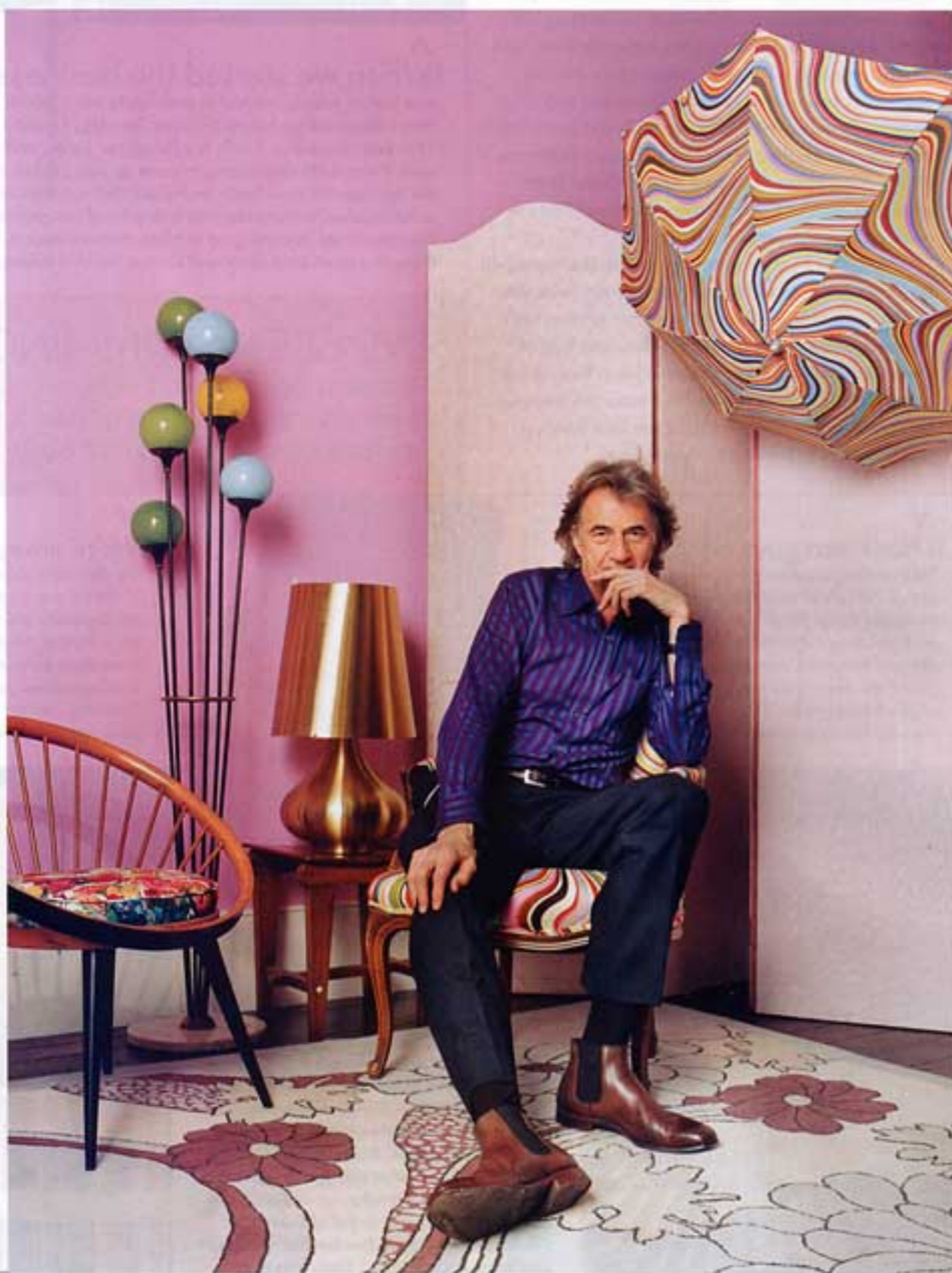
Domestic Bliss

AT HOME WITH ... PAUL SMITH

HE HAS LINED PINSTRIPED SUITS WITH PINK SILK AND CLAD A MOTORCYCLE IN PAISLEY. BUT THE MERCURIAL DESIGN KING SAYS HE'S JUST A NORMAL BLOKE

Paul Smith doesn't appear to have an off switch. At his Covent Garden headquarters, he ricochets around like a pinball, pointing out toy robots, comic books, a rubber chicken—inspirational bric-a-brac that clutters every available surface. The red bike in the corner, he explains, is for riding loops around the conference table when he needs to think. "As you've probably gathered, I'm quite lively!" he says, laughing. "I seem to have boundless energy. I've worn you out already. You're thinking, This boy is mad!" Mad? No. Kinetic? Yes. His restless curiosity, coupled with a knack for finding beauty in unexpected places, is what fuels Smith's exuberant design sense, the basis of a 250-store style empire that has recently expanded into home design. ▶

Smith relaxes among refurbished vintage pieces that will be sold in his new home design shop, including a 1950s floor lamp and chairs upholstered in Paul Smith fabric. His wool carpet is made by the Rug Company.



BY JEN RENZI • PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES WADDELL

DOMESTIC BLISS

▶ "We have a huge archive of old wallpapers—some 1930s American, a lot of Cole & Son. The patterns provide inspiration for my collections. We also like the work of Jocelyn Warner, a contemporary wallpaper designer here in London." Kew in turquoise/red and brown/blue, Jocelyn Warner Collection, through Designtex, NYC.

◀ "I'm not a collector, although I do tend to acquire very large quantities of the same thing—comic books, watches, even Farrow & Ball paint chip books—that inspire my work. The only undercurrent to what I collect is probably kitsch. I like to chuck in the absurd—in a conversation, a room, a collection, a piece of writing, whatever. A light-hearted approach is so needed in today's world."

◀ "I use different cameras depending on my mood, including my dad's old Roloflex and a large-format Fuji for when I'm in a serious mood, which isn't often. But I always keep a camera in my pocket, which I use like a sketch pad. I'm never without an instant camera and my 35 millimeter Leica, loaded with really fast black-and-white film, so I can get really nice, grainy pictures." Leica à la Carte, from \$3,500. B&H Photo. 800-606-6969.

"ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A STRONG INFLUENCE. THE PERFECT PROPORTIONS OF A PALLADIAN VILLA COULD INFLUENCE THE TAILORING OF A JACKET, FOR INSTANCE. ALTHOUGH MY INSPIRATIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS THAT DIRECT—OR THAT HIGHFALUTIN."

◀ "When people ask me what object I wish I'd designed myself, I always say something like the paper clip or Scotch tape; I love the simple things that we use every day and take for granted. I travel to Tokyo all the time, and I admire Japanese design, especially brands like MUJI. They do such simple things, like this flip-top business card holder." Aluminum business card case, \$7. Pencil case, \$12. Pen and pencil set, \$5. All MUJI, through the MoMA Store. momastore.org.



▲ "Our first furniture shop, in Mayfair, will open later this year. We'll sell mostly antiques, which we'll give a little Paul Smith twist—like tufted leather sofas with stud buttons in different colors, or a sofa upholstered in silk swatches left over from tie samples. We lined this early-19th-century Italian chest with a Farnasetti teacup-print cotton." For more, see houseandgarden.com. □

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