



TALK TO DESIGNER STAN TOPOL LONG ENOUGH ABOUT HIS WORK, AND THE CONVERSATION WILL INEVITABLY COME AROUND TO CERTAIN NOTABLE FIGURES, OFTEN FROM HOLLYWOOD'S GOLDEN ERA, WHOM HE CITES AS

models of taste. "Classic screen stars such as Lauren Bacall or Claudette Colbert, to name only two, "had style without being" stylish," he says admiringly, referring to a sensibility that valued the unassuming over the conspicuous and the tried-and-true over the latest fash in the pan.

That knack for effortlessness in matters of refinement was at the forefront of Topol's mind as he designed a house for longtime clients on a tiny island in Naples, Florida. Given what Topol already knew about the wife's allegria was time to inter-

vention—he believed that it's far better to have one exquisite item in a room than a half-dozen of lesser quality—he was able to distill his own mission to a single idea: "Think simply. If you need it, put it there. If you don't need it, ditch."

With associate Reynolds Brown and architects Rob Wasser and Michael Rojas, Topol endeavored to create a house that would project the kind of culture that Bacall and Colbert exuded on screen. The goal had three components: to craft a compound-style residence that nevertheless seemed intimate, to make something brand-new seem like it had existed for generations, and to achieve luxury as something more casual and comfortable than what the world usually dictates.

"We decided to pretend that we'd discovered an abandoned

gymnasium and the subtle repetition of shapes create a graceful composition. Artistic notes: Barnd Swartzel Antiques, a Georgia customer named Chava, John Brown, in Jerry Post's office (top); John Brown, Connecticut; Celia Hartman, screens; Bello, John Brown, in Clint Baker's Pittsford in Missouri home; Cuffee table, Robert Gray; Colonial Trooper—Quonset table, Richard Shapiro; Stoolie, Cuffee in LaSalle's office; Antique rug, Robert Gallery Art; Richard Gagliardi.

