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# AT HOME™

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## 3 DESIGNERS' HOMES

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A photograph of a room interior. In the center, a lamp with a tiered, conical shade sits on a dark wooden table. The lamp has a decorative, faceted glass base. Behind the lamp, two framed landscape paintings are displayed on the wall. The top painting shows a green field under a sunset sky, while the bottom one shows a landscape with mountains under a purple and blue sky. To the left, a mirror reflects part of the room. In the foreground, a large, round, ceramic bowl with a floral pattern sits on the table. To the right, a wooden chair with a decorative backrest is partially visible. The room is lit with warm, ambient light.

# ...By Any Other Name

Text: CHRIS McCOY  
Photography: CHIP PANKEY

Decorator Jackie  
Glisson avoids  
pretension in his  
Midtown home

**Don't call Jackie** Glisson a designer. "I'm just a decorator," says the long-time Midtown resident, who has been plying his trade for over eight years. "I'm not pretentious." But just because he's not comfortable with the label doesn't mean he's unskilled. Obvious signs of his talent are everywhere in the 3,800-square-foot home he shares with Jay Hester, his partner of 23 years. "This home is very much a product of our collaboration," Glisson says. "He's very creative, but we do have totally different personalities."

"Unfortunately, I know very little about the history of the house," Glisson says of the two-story brick home in which he has lived for three years. Typical of homes built in the nineteenth century, visitors are greeted by a wide, inviting brickwork porch complete with the one feature no self-respecting old Southern home should be without. "We just put the swing in this year," says Glisson, who confesses that the porch, with its tall white columns and wicker swing, has become his favorite part of the house.

Once visitors step inside the foyer, it becomes immediately apparent that the home's inhabitants love art. Glisson says he and Hester bought their first piece in the early 1980s, and it quickly became an obsession. Now, almost every nook and cranny is home to a painting, print, photograph or sculpture. "It almost becomes overwhelming," says Glisson. Hanging in the foyer is a Salvador Dali artist proof sketch and a dynamic bronze cast by an Omaha, Nebraska artist. In the living room, a vibrant landscape by George Garner, owner of Garner's Frame Shop, never fails to draw visitors' attention. Ironically, Glisson says the artist was reluctant to sell him the piece, saying it wasn't good enough. "He doesn't consider himself to be an artist, but that's the one painting that everyone migrates to when they walk in," relates Glisson. "It's just amazing. There's something very telling about that painting."

A large canvas by Tupelo, Mississippi art professor Lynn Long dominates one wall in the kitchen. The piece, which



[previous page] These striking landscapes by George Garner are a major focal point in Jackie Glisson's art-filled Midtown home. [above] A Salvador Dali artist proof hangs in the home's foyer. The unusual, dynamic bronze just in front of the painting was made by an unknown artist from Omaha, Nebraska. [facing page] The dining room fireplace has sported several finishes over the years thanks to Jay Hester, who sometimes uses the home to experiment with new ideas.



won a Best in Show award at the Gumtree Arts Festival in Tupelo, also provided the color for the wall on which it hangs: a dark blue that perfectly compliments the leafy green of the painting. Long, says Glisson, was a big favorite of his and Hester for many years. "We bought so many of his pieces he finally told us to stop. He introduced us to some new artists." A second Long painting hangs over the breakfast nook opposite a wall filled with prints of all sizes. A little humor is injected into the room by a velvet painting of Elvis

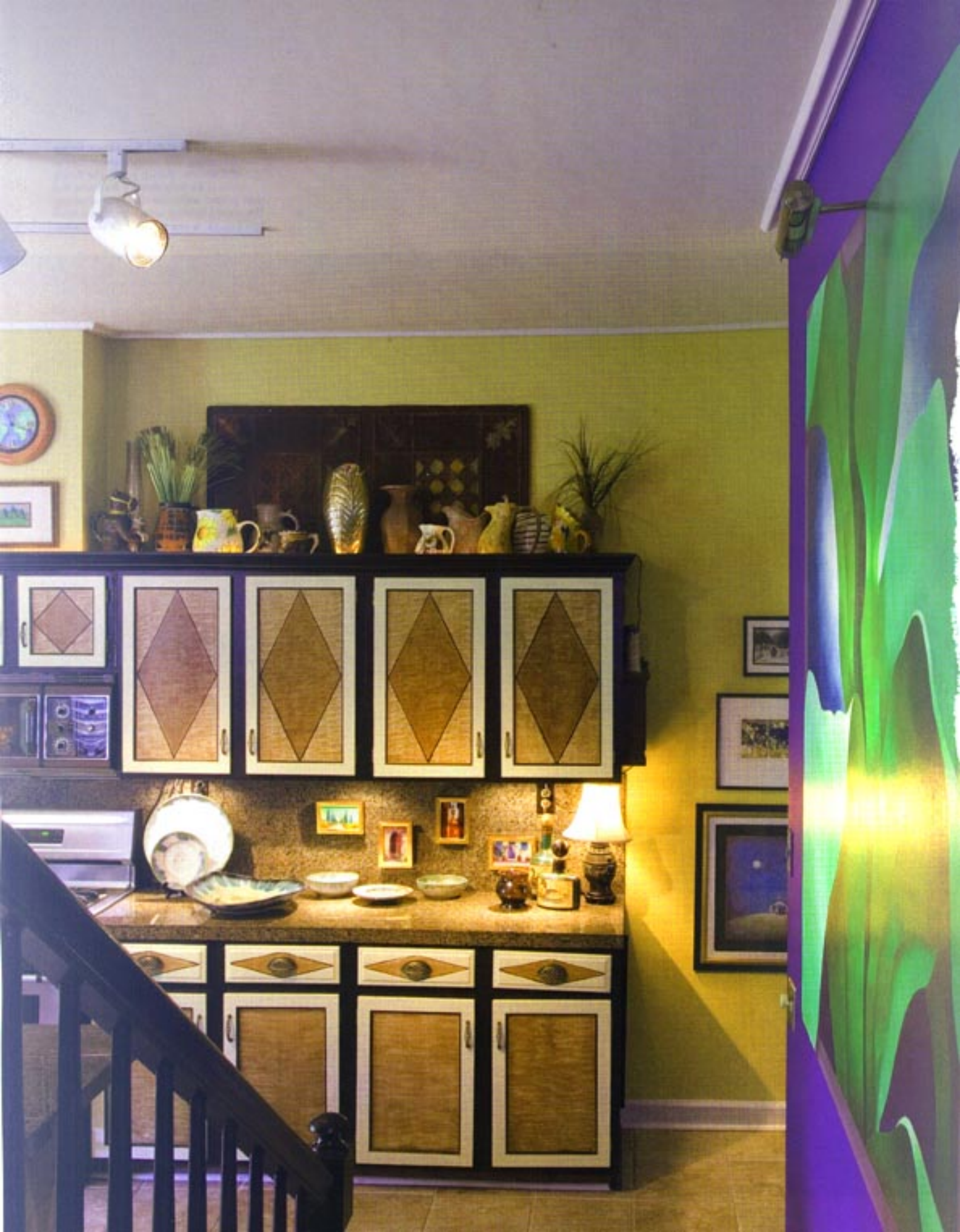
with a loaf of Wonder Bread. Glisson says seeking out talented local artists is an enjoyable and inexpensive way to fill bare walls. "Original art doesn't have to be outrageously expensive," he says. He adds that the personal nature of art makes it the most difficult part of decorating for a client. "It's really hard for me to place artwork," he says. "It's generally one of the last things I do, because it's so subjective." Nevertheless, it is the same personal nature of art that makes it so ultimately rewarding.



“Lighting is the best  
decorating you can  
do.” —Jackie Glisson.

(below) The comfortable living room boasts an interesting and durable mix of fabrics and textures. (facing page) The dining room is the only room in the home that uses printed wallpaper as a wall covering. The careful lighting, using lamps and small light fixtures, is one of Glisson's specialties.







The home didn't need very much repair when Glisson and Hester moved in, "Just a lot of cosmetic work," Glisson says. "The kitchen was the most cosmetically challenged—it had University of Tennessee orange floors and countertops and oak cabinets. So we put in the granite countertops and painted the cabinets and added the flooring, the finishes and the lighting." The cabinets sport an unusual diamond pattern finish, courtesy of Hester, a decorative painter who Glisson says enjoys using their home to show off his latest ideas. "I never know when I go to bed at night what I'm going to wake up to in the morning," says Glisson. "These cabinets have been every color and every possible configuration in the world. But they have been like this for a couple of years, so I think we've stabilized on this for now."

The dining room fireplace has also undergone many changes. "It's been every finish imaginable," says Glisson. "He practices a lot on our house." The current matte white

(left) These kitchen window shutters use silk tissue to provide soft light. (below) The art-filled breakfast nook looks out onto the back yard where a pool and Jacuzzi provide plenty of opportunities to relax. (facing page) The painting on the right is by Lynn Long, a favorite artist of Glisson and Hester. The unusual diamond finish on the cabinets are an experiment of Hester's that has proven durable.



finish fits cleanly with the marble hearth. The dining room's chandelier is the only original fixture in the house. It hangs over a round dinner table, which Glisson says is "good for conversation, because everybody's got a good seat." In order to match the classical theme, the dining room is the only room in the house that boasts printed wallpaper, rather than one of Hester's creative finishes.

Even the best art and finest finishes in the world are no good if you can't see them, so illumination is very important. "Lighting is the best decorating you can do," says Glisson. "Invest in lamps. If you look at any single room in my house, I've got at least a half-dozen lamps—I've even got lamps in the powder rooms." Interesting overhead lighting

should be used more for ambience than mood. "Dimmer switches are imperative," to precisely control the lighting environment, he adds. And to catch the light, walls needn't be all be white, even if you, like Glisson, plan to hang a lot of art on them. Well-chosen color can go a long way. "A lot of people are afraid of paint and color," he says. "But it's really inexpensive decorating."

Glisson's reputation has spread. Most of his clients, he says, now live outside the Memphis area, and he will appear, along with designer Jill Hertz, in an upcoming episode of *Designers' Challenge* on the HGTV network, proving that talent will always find an audience, no matter what you call it. =



Glisson says the front porch, with its wicker swing and chairs, is his favorite part of the house.