



TAKING FORM

Left and below: Donald Kaufman's DKC-31 chocolate paint inside library shelves gives depth to the homeowner's architectural finial and Indonesian artifact collection. Above: An ink drawing hangs over the entry's French fruitwood table and Asian vessel.



ONE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE AN ETERNAL OPTIMIST, OR A DESIGNER, TO REALIZE THAT some of life's most challenging times can result in transformative decorating. Such was the case in this 1980s Bergen County home, which New Jersey designer Meryl Stern set out to make over into a stylish cocoon of calm for a newly single mother of two teenagers. The homeowner liked the conveniences of newish construction, but craved the character inherent in older homes.

Stern accommodated by adding wainscoting under the existing chair rail