

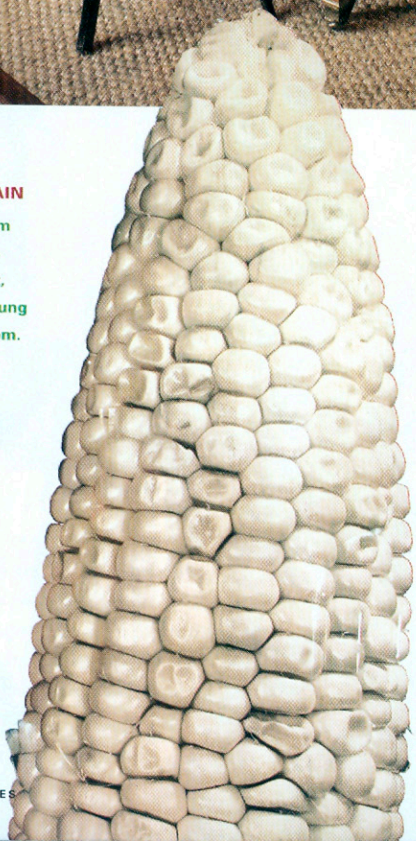


WELCOMING THE UNEXPECTED

"I wanted to go beyond 'country,'" says Meryl Stern of the dining room's deeply stained beams and Maya Romanoff Bauble glass-beaded wall covering. The antique French fruitwood table and chairs were found in New Orleans. Leather-bound sisal rug by Ralph Lauren. Metal chandelier with shades from O'Lampia. Above: Detail of *Arctic Circles* by Kimberly Dawn, a 3-by-3-foot commission.

WITH THE GRAIN

Right: Detail from Robert Hechler's photo mezzotint, *Corn*, which is hung in the dining room.



and widening the home's three-inch base moldings to seven inches. She had a faux painter antique an exposed-brick wall; stained pine floors with a high-gloss ebony; and painted high ceilings a shade darker than walls to make rooms more intimate.

To bring down the scale of the voluminous family room, she introduced oversized pieces, like a 9-by-7-foot gilded mirror that she found in Newark for just \$600—plus another \$900 to hang. For practicality, an antique chandelier was electrified and mounted on an electrical pulley system. Stern also saw possibilities in a powder room just off the home's entry: It was bumped out and turned into a library. Surrounded by built-in bookcases, the sashed windows took on a sense of tradition.

With directions to keep the palette quiet, Stern focused on flowing ebones, ivories, and grays throughout the 4,500-square-foot open plan. Sharing half of the home furnishings with the homeowner's former spouse opened up opportunities for antique finds and custom pieces that the designer upholstered in espresso mohair.

In the dining room, a high-gloss ceiling, glass-beaded wallpaper, and discreet MR16 track lights hidden in the ceiling beams add just the right dash of shimmer. In the end, the '80s-era house was reinvented as a modern classic—one very easy to live with. — See Resources.