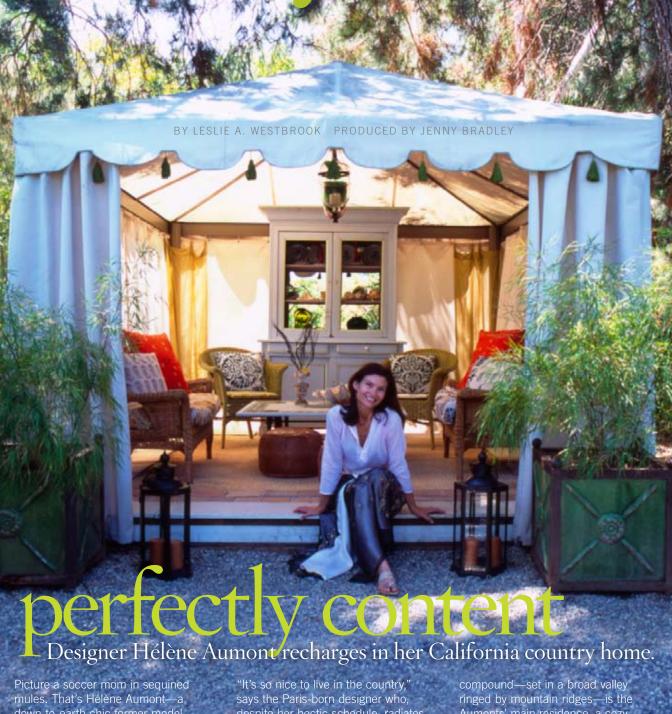
## PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL SKOTT





down-to-earth chic former model, current designer of furniture and interiors, co-owner of an upscale antiques and art shop with husband Patrick, equestrienne, and mother of teens Arthur, 15, and Anouk, 13.

despite her hectic schedule, radiates tranquility. "The atmosphere is conducive to creativity. I unwind here." "Here" is Pepperhill Farm, an oasis

of country living in Santa Barbara's wine country. The heart of the 10-acre

Aumonts' main residence, a cozy 1940s-vintage farmhouse. Down the hill is a stable for Hélène's beloved >

Hélène Aumont relaxes in the tented oasis that she created in her backyard.



Friesian horses, Floris and Romeo. A vegetable garden, tended by Hélène and her children, provides produce for family meals. The Aumont clan also shares Pepperhill Farm with two dogs, a dozen chickens, and a rooster or two.

In an outbuilding, three assistants work with the designer, known for simple style punctuated by dramatic flourishes, mixing clean design with opulent fabric, and blending mid-century with baroque. Here she checks on her latest projects—a new line of tiebacks and ribbon-covered chandeliers, and a jewelry boutique within Europa Antiques, the couple's retail shop in Summerland, down the coast from Santa Barbara.

After tending to design projects, trips abroad, soccer games, and piano

lessons for Arthur and Anouk, Hélène sometimes needs to recharge. In the rose garden she loves just outside her office sits a stone table under weeping willow branches that sway in the breeze like underwater seaweed. Here she enjoys the view of cows and horses grazing in the valley and grapes ripening in the sun. The sound of children playing drifts up from the small school yard just down the hill.

Or she heads for the backyard. Tucked into a corner at the end of the verdant lawn sits an Italian canvas tent fringed playfully with green tassels and decorated with Hélène's usual panache. As with everything

## bolster bash

Use pattern to add exotic appeal, like John Robshaw Textiles' "Maharaja" bolster covers, \$65-\$120 (212/594-6006), trade only.











Patterned pillows are perfect for outdoor spaces. Hélène's came from Rooms and Gardens (805/565-4877).

Fabrics from left: "Paola" from Clarence House (800/803-2850), Nancy Corzine's "Silk Cords" (310/652-4859), and Clarence House's "Monica." All trade only.



## coffee break

The porch (top) off the master bedroom is ideal for sipping coffee. Porcelain and pewter cup and saucer from Botanik, \$99 (805/565-3831).

the Aumonts tackle, fitting out the cabana-like structure has been a family affair. Arthur and Anouk assisted in the tent's construction—installing a section of the flooring composed of recycled Italian and French tiles that surrounds thick, ropelike abaca matting. A 19th-century cabinet was painted by Arthur and filled by the family with seashells and coral. Rattan furnishings are covered in a lively mix of fabrics and patterns that adds energy to the otherwise peaceful space.

Fresh bouquets of Hélène's roses scent the air in the tent. Hélène, who has become a bona fide country girl, insists on no phones and no electricity in the space. Set under enormous pine trees, the tent is silent except for the soothing sounds of a fountain pouring into the backyard swimming pool. The quietude allows for some muchneeded relaxation and leisurely lunches. "I love to have lunch in the tent in the summer," says the designer. "This is a place where I feel in total harmony with the world, where my mind can rest from the constraints and frustrations of my active life."

Even when simply lounging and gazing around, however, Hélène confesses she finds herself "redesigning parts of the garden."

Seems this creative mind rarely takes a rest—even in the country.





A woven resin chair adds a bit of the exotic to any space. Thomas Pheasant outdoor lounge chair, from \$2,825; from McGuire (kohlerinteriors.com). 📅

Find it ... For more information on The Hélène Aumont Collection, visit heleneaumont.com.