

Friday, October 24, 2014

Robert Couturier

BEAUTY & WELLNESS

BEAUTY SHOP

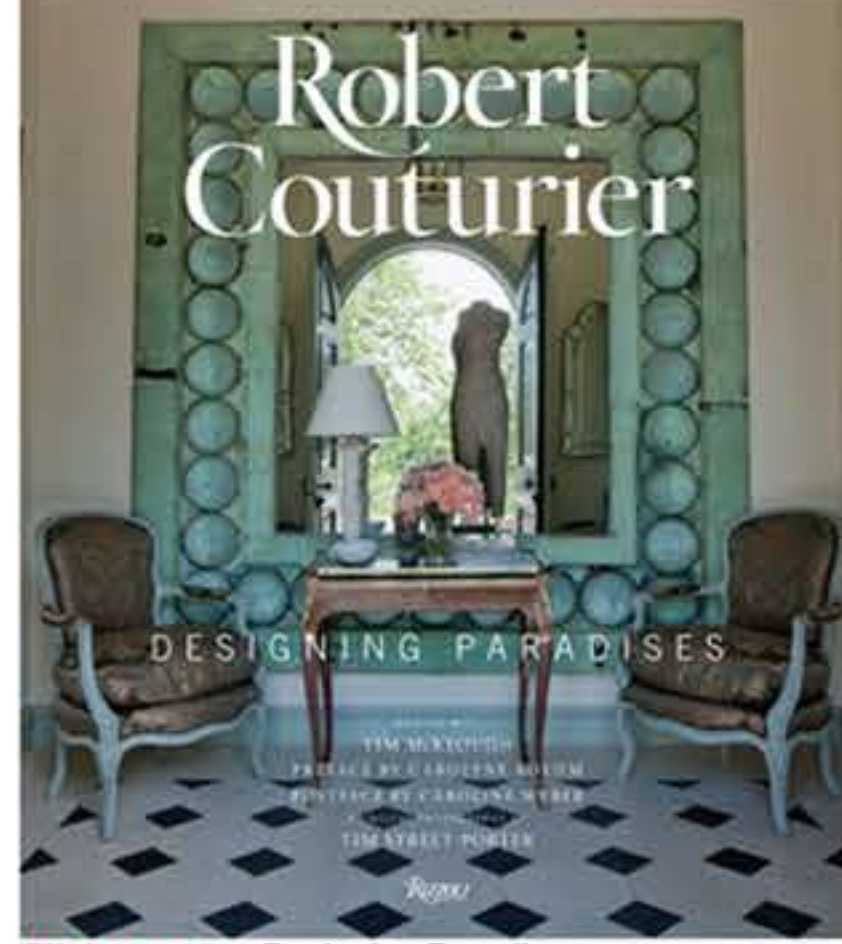


By Sian Ballen & Lesley Hauge
Photographs by Jeff Hirsch

Robert Couturier was our very first **HOUSE** interview in 2006 and he helped us set the tone for the kind of column we wanted: a real conversation where you could hear the actual person speaking—no canned answers or prepared sound bites. It isn't always easy to get that out of interviewees but it was easy to get Robert's real voice straight away because he is candid, funny and cultured. Our second interview is just as good, if not better, and if you want to know more about him, both the introductory essay and the beautiful interiors showcased in his new book (*Robert Couturier, Designing Paradises, Rizzoli*) provide genuine insight into how he approaches his life and his design.

I thought the essay you wrote as an introduction to your book was rather touching. I pulled some quotes from it that I wanted to talk about. One of the things you mentioned was that we all live imperfect lives but we all fantasize about perfect rooms. I'm very interested in that idea of fantasizing about perfection, especially perfect rooms—I do it all the time.

I've never believed in perfection, even in interior perfection. In the work that I do, I strive to make people happy, which is why I only work with people I like ... because why make people you don't like happy?! [laughs] But the role of fantasy is hugely important and we all [fantasize] all the time. And that is true for interiors—we need fantasy.



[Click to order](#) *Designing Paradises*.

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DEADFALL



Looking towards the large front living room windows of Robert's Soho loft. The early-twentieth century table is by Jacques Adnet and Maurice Savin. The sconces are by Armand-Albert Rateau.



In the living room a photograph by Ron Agam hangs above a suede sofa designed by Robert and a cocktail table by Frances Elkins.



A plaster screen by Mark Bankowsky fills a corner of the living room.



An exquisite hand-beaded silk fabric from Combray covers the back of a French chair.



An oversized photograph by Michael Eastman fills a wall of the living room. The eighteenth-century silver candlesticks are Spanish.



More views of the living room. A mid-nineteenth century Persian rug is layered on top of a white rug.



Standing in front of the living room sofa an Egyptian throne service as an ottoman.