



A tent environment was created in the dining room for intimate meals with lots of close conversation.



The study is a profusion of warm colors and bright patterns.



The studio has a two-story north window and is the place where weaving is one of the activities.

## Designer lets his rooms, home evolve

Like most interior designer's homes, John H. Mitchell's suffers from the "shoemaker's children" syndrome.

"And it'll never be finished," boasts Mitchell, whose studio is in Birmingham.

"It's always in a state of flux. Over a period of years the rooms will just evolve."

Mitchell insists the living room "hasn't been touched," because it wasn't one of the rooms he and his wife tackled immediately when they moved in a year ago. But even in its "untouched" state the walls have been covered in plum-colored suede and the room is the gallery for examples of contemporary art.

"What we have done we did all at once. We didn't work a room at a time. One reason the house appeared to us so much was that it is built on a people scale. With all the different levels, none has to relate to the

other to be appreciated," he said.

One thing which conforms, however, is Mitchell's use of textures.

"We use texture the way most people use color," he said.

One striking example of this is in a small study off the kitchen. The walls are covered in an orange horizontal split bamboo material.

"The wallcovering gives one a very warm, closed-in feeling. We use this room a lot in the winter. We designed it with an intimate character for two people to use."

Except for the master bedroom and the kitchen, most of the rooms in the house have a decided winter look about them. Mitchell explained that both he and his wife are avid gardeners and work outdoors most of the warm months so they only "live" in the house in the winter.

The bedroom is a fantasy of blue and white which Mitchell designed that way because his wife "wanted a very feminine bedroom; not sexy, but feminine. This is like a morning room you'd see in Switzerland," Mitchell said.

His wife got her wish in a room with an antique fireplace and a Portuguese hand-painted and carved headboard for the bed. Two blue velvet wing-back chairs rest on either side of the fireplace and skirted tables grace each side of the bed.

Balloon-draped curtains of eyelet lace adorn the windows. The walls are covered in a blue grasscloth material which adds another texture to the room.

Mrs. Mitchell inherited a well-appointed kitchen from the home's former owners, but she and her husband added a shiny, large Iris pattern wallpaper to

give brilliance to the North-light room.

It is a room which Mrs. Mitchell uses to her advantage, if her husband's compliments about her culinary expertise are to be believed.

"She is a superior cook," he said.

What she prepares is served to guests in a dramatic dining room, which could conceivably overshadow any soufflé.

"I have always been infatuated with tents, so I did the dining room to look like an elegant one," Mitchell explained.

The tent is draped from a center circle of smoked mirror. The chandelier is suspended from the center of the mirror. The walls are painted the same putty color as the cotton duck in the tenting.

A glass and chrome dining table contrasts with the matte

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