



WORKING AS A NEW York real-estate agent in the early 1990s, Lisa Smith-Faitell discovered that she had a passion for interior design. She enrolled at the New York Institute of Design, and at the turn of the 21st century, her eponymous firm, Faitell Interiors, was born. Faitell was quickly inundated with requests from couples and families for her creative services.

Not long after, she began to see a new trend in her clientele. Single men—usually recently divorced—began requesting that she decorate, accessorize, and stock their homes. “These men were successful and had good taste, but in the past their homes were decorated by their mothers or wives or girlfriends. Suddenly, they

## Welcome Homme!

*A local designer singles out a new market*

BY JENNIFER MOORE STAHLKRANTZ

were faced with having to create a home for themselves and their children, and they didn’t have the time or the inclination to sift through choices, walk through shops, or worry about coordinating fabrics, paints, and furniture,” explains Faitell, of Pound Ridge, herself a single parent.

“I decided to open a division of Faitell Interiors to serve these male clients, and I named it Homme Interiors—homme being the French word for man,” she says as she leads a tour of one of her impressive projects in Lewisboro. “Often when

we begin the consultation process, the men aren’t sure of their preferences, but they are quick studies and decisive, and I can ascertain from their responses and their personal styles what direction our plan needs to go in.”

Faitell finds that when she works with couples, she often doesn’t hear much from the husband unless it involves administrative issues like cost or delivery times. Female clients are often full collaborators with Faitell, wanting to shop and compare and discuss atmosphere and every detail.

The hommes, on the other hand, tend to treat their home-decorating project like a business decision. “If they like it, they say so, and then they move on. After they settle on the big items, they want to delegate the small stuff like shopping for plates and towels and accessories to someone else, and I’m happy to do that for them.”

While they might not think to add a plant or accent pieces, Faitell says men are just as likely to fill their space with family photos. Says Faitell, “Since they’re often not the custodial parents, these dads need to create a welcoming atmosphere for their kids’ visits. My job is to help them craft a home that reflects their new lives but embraces their families, as well.”