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# Trip

Spring Travel

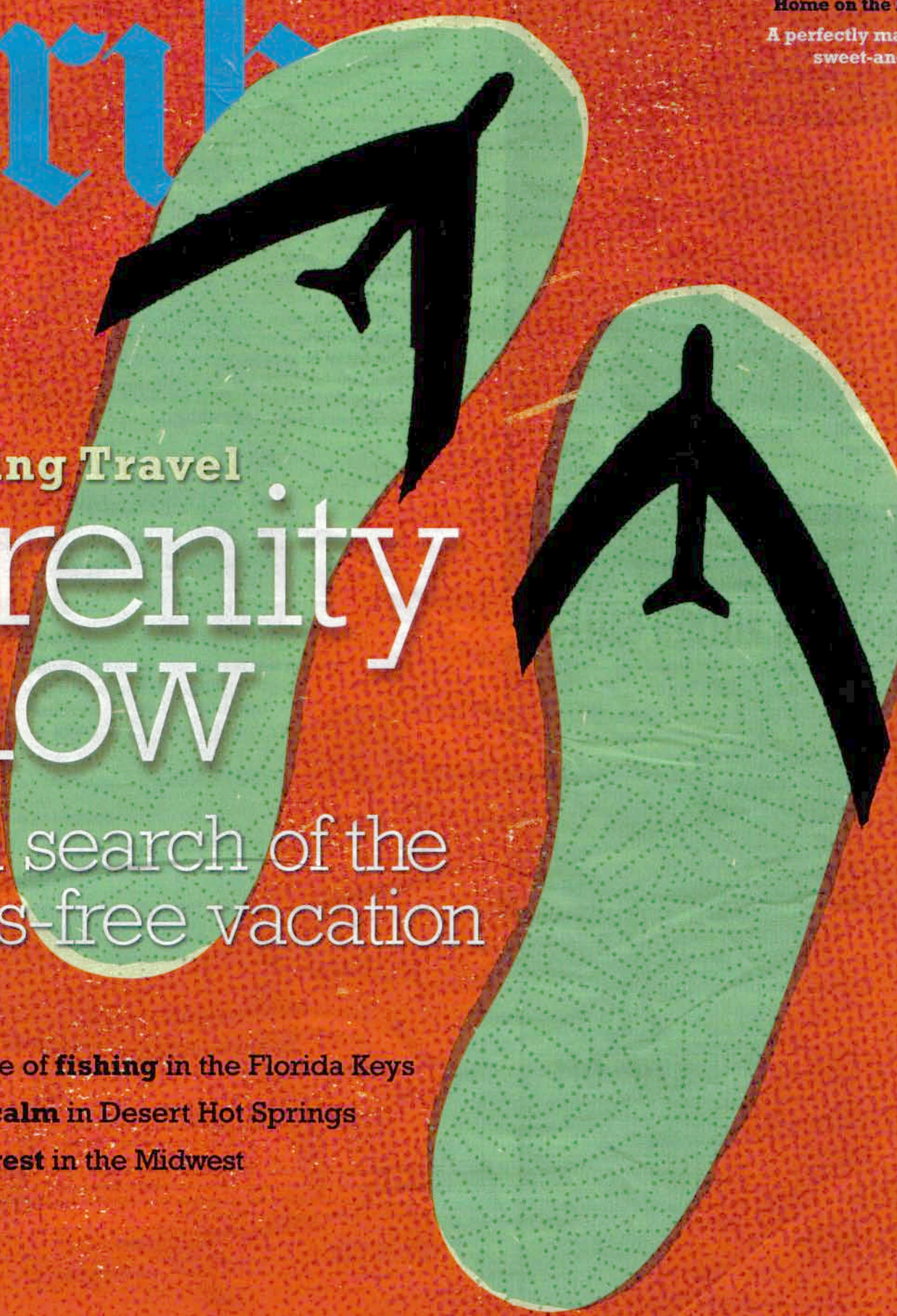
# Serenity now

In search of the  
stress-free vacation

\* The lure of **fishing** in the Florida Keys

\* An oasis of **calm** in Desert Hot Springs

\* At **rest** in the Midwest





# Tropical breeze

SUMMER THORNTON BRINGS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR TO DESIGN: COLOR, PATTERN, THEN SOMETHING QUIRKY

BY LISA SKOLNIK TRIBUNE PHOTOS BY BILL HOGAN

**S**pring is in the air, but Summer is making a bright and breezy mark in the city. This Summer, though, is an up-and-coming designer rather than a season. Her last name is Thornton, and she is building a growing business in interiors (Summer Thornton Design; [summerthorntondesign.com](http://summerthorntondesign.com)) based on this viewpoint: Rather than picking pieces first, she says, "I use color and pattern as a starting point, and mix them up a little." She combines graphic, vividly patterned wallpapers and fabrics with classic pieces, from tucked-in tuxedo sofas or cushy loungers to regal dining tables paired with leggy chairs. Then she accessorizes them with a few singular, and often opulent or quirky, antiques. Her current passions run to scintillating chandeliers or anything silver . . . especially courtly old champagne buckets. They make such elegant planters or vases," she confides.

The results are classic rooms with a modern, and often kicky, edge. Not surprisingly, the willowy Thornton cut her design teeth at the Chicago showroom of Osborne & Little, the British firm revered for its traditional wallpapers and fabrics in cheeky colors and bold prints.

In her own apartment, a 700-square-foot Lincoln Park 4th-floor walk-up she shares with her husband, ad exec Josh, Thornton proves she also

knows how to make a little go a long way—when necessary. "My own handiwork isn't good enough for my clients, but we don't have that kind of budget," she explains.

*Lisa Skolnik, a city editor for Metropolitan Home, writes frequently for the Magazine.*

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## 1. Ottoman Empire

When Thornton found a clean-lined yet pedestrian ottoman with plain metal feet at a Merchandise Mart sample sale, she knew she could recover its classic bones—at any time. For now, she has turned it into a mod-marvel with a slipcover made out of Kelly Wearstler fabric. A roll of Osborne & Little wallpaper was used for a statement-making panel on the largest wall. Her husband built the wall unit, she made the pillows and the chandelier came from Macy's annual flea market.

## 2. Bedroom Secrets

To turn a tiny bedroom into a posh nest, Thornton splurged on five rolls of Osborne & Little wallpaper with a rich gold-leaf overlay, and she and her husband hung it in panels around the room. Nothing went to waste, they hung the wallpaper first, then trimmed the edges with molding rather than vice versa.

## 3. Foyer in a Day

Thornton turns an alcove near her front door into a bona fide foyer. Bedding from Urban Outfitters was turned into drapes, then paired with vintage trunks she used in college to hold books and papers. A vintage mirror adds function and an antique champagne bucket-cum-vase dresses it up.