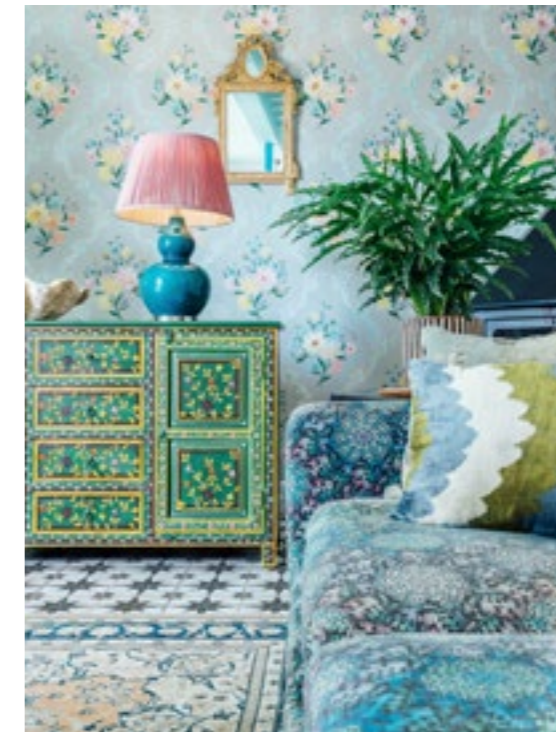




AN AESTHETIC OF EXCESS

INTRODUCTION



Multilayering, a bold palette, clashing styles, and the mantra “more is more” are all common themes of the maximalist decorative style. As you turn the following pages, you will be treated to a visual feast of interiors in which barely a surface is clear of texture, pattern, color, or ornament. You will see shelves bowing beneath the weight of their books, cabinets shimmering with collections of exquisite glass, and you will be able to count more throws and accent pillows than the celebrated American stylist Carleton Varney (p. 134) handled in a lifetime.

Maximalism is not a new concept, but neither is it a steady perennial. Instead, it sees bursts of popularity that have much to do with economics. Historically, maximalism flourished in countries that had a distinct social hierarchy in which people were defined very much by class. The style was associated with only the very wealthy—literally, the