



happyhome

Comedienne Caroline Rhea goes for colors that put a smile on your face

PRODUCED AND STYLED BY CHAR HATCH LANGOS
PHOTOGRAPHED BY GREY CRAWFORD WRITTEN BY SAXON HENRY

Actress Caroline Rhea is known for her exuberant personality. This and her career in standup comedy, her own network talk show, and six years on *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* have won the star a legion of fans. The most loyal may be Rhea's best friend, interior designer Amanda Nisbet—they have been pals since they were

both six. When Rhea took the leap and purchased her 4,500-square-foot home, she naturally chose Nisbet to decorate it. The two women share a passion for color. And Rhea has always loved her friend's sense of style. "The first time I realized she had good taste was when she stole my favorite magenta pencil in the fourth grade," says Rhea.



product picks

■ **Dishwasher by Fisher & Paykel;**
888-936-7872, fisherpaykel.com.

■ **Faucet by Kohler;**
800-456-4537, kohler.com.

■ **Range hood by Vent-A-Hood;**
800-331-2492, ventahood.com.

■ **Refrigerator by GE Appliances;**
800-626-2000, geappliances.com.

■ **Sink by Kohler;**
800-456-4537, kohler.com.

Left Rhea leads a hectic life, so she wanted relaxed furnishings, such as the breakfast room's distressed antique pieces. Purple chairs introduce a pretty secondary color to this area's bold green palette. **Opposite** The kitchen's bin pulls, beadboard, and farmhouse sink flesh out the country aesthetic.

Their number one design priority was to create a bright environment that would welcome Rhea after hectic days in the limelight, and color was key. "I told Amanda that I wanted my home to be a haven in Los Angeles, because the city can be so challenging," remarks Rhea. "I wanted the bathrooms to be luxurious, and I wanted a closet that I could spin around in. The rest I left up to her, because she knows me so well."

Rhea was initially attracted to the home's easygoing Colonial-style architecture, "because it reminded me of the house where I grew up in Canada," she says. Nisbet, therefore, used the

architecture as her starting point. "The house, built in 1922, had such good bones that I didn't need to do much structural work," says the designer. "It was mainly about adding color and fun for Caroline."

The kitchen and bathrooms had not been refurbished since 1973, so Nisbet began here, updating them with new, white beadboard cabinets in the kitchen and wainscoting in the bathrooms to amplify the home's Colonial charm. Fanciful roman fabric window shades printed with an oversize kiwifruit pattern echo the kitchen's green walls and lend the room a dash of whimsy. In the adjoining breakfast room, distressed purple and green chairs accompany

an old pine farm table with painted legs and an antique pine hutch.

Rhea loves having company, thus guest bedrooms were high on her wish list. One of the three guest bedrooms in the house sleeps four children; it's a space created with her two young nephews and godson, Travers, in mind. Soft lavender walls, garden gate-inspired single beds, and small-scale furniture produce a fresh, accessible retreat for her diminutive overnighters.

Because visitors are often in residence, Rhea asked Nisbet to make her own master suite a private sanctuary. The walls are painted a whispery periwinkle blue, and the mix of old and new furniture—including a carved

“Caroline wanted the house to be happy and light,” says Nisbet. “She loves sun and brightness, so dark tones were out of the question”





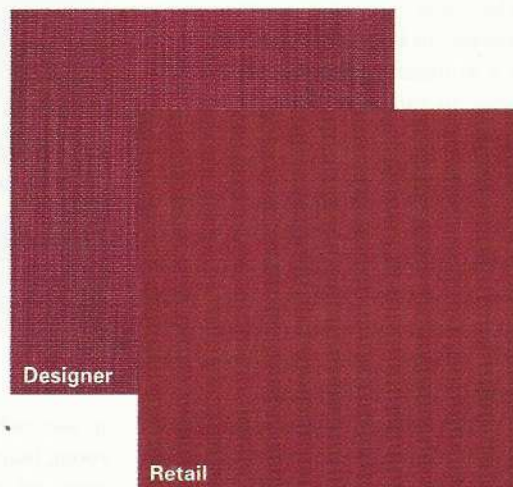


You can get the look designer Amanda Nisbet created in Caroline Rhea's bold home with the to-the-trade-only fabrics she used (see our Resource Guide, page 110, for details about buying designer fabrics without a designer) or with the more accessible retail counterparts we've gathered below.

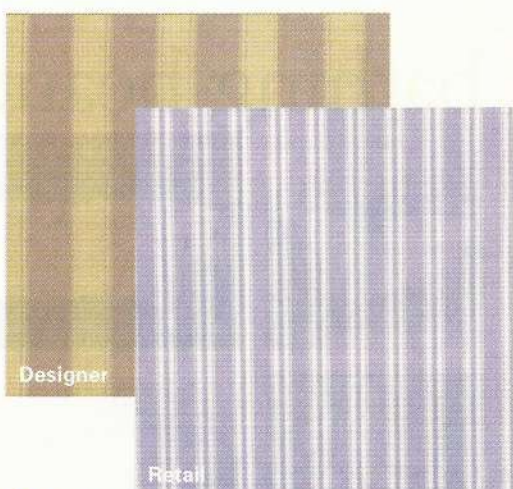
Fabric



▲ LIVING ROOM CURTAINS **Designer** Manuel Canovas' Vita fabric in yellow and rose. **Retail** Pierre Deux's (888-743-7732, pierredeux.com) fabric #1520005 in yellow with green and red flowers.



▲ LIVING ROOM SOFA **Designer** Manuel Canovas' Indochine in cerise. **Retail** Ripple in raspberry from Calico Corners (800-213-6366, calicocorners.com).



▲ GUEST ROOM SHADES **Designer** A discontinued fabric. **Retail** Waverly's (800-423-5881, waverly.com) lilac Fairground Stripe.

◀ KITCHEN SHADES **Designer** Kirk Brummel's Kiwi. **Retail** Marimekko's (800-527-0624, kiitosmarimekko.com) lime green Kivet.

pine headboard with a warm, variegated patina—reflects Rhea's casual sense of style. "Caroline is not pretentious at all, so her bedroom and the whole house are unpretentious," says Nisbet. "She's a fun person: That was the crux of the design scheme, to keep it happy and to make it a wonderful place for her to come home to and entertain in."

Fabrics in the house, most of them designer, may be their most upbeat in the living room, where cerise, yellow, and white upholstery covers Barbara Barry sofas and chairs, and yellow-and-rose drapes cloak the windows.

Rhea collects fellow actor Martin Mull's paintings and can rarely resist porcelain—a passion handed down by her mother, Margery, who is an avid collector of British porcelain. A variety of shelves and niches in the main rooms means there are display spaces



to suit each of her pieces. In the living room, built-in bookcases are painted a crisp white to match wide crown molding. The walls are a bright mango hue. Varying shades of yellow, Caroline's favorite color, coat the dining room and sunroom walls.

Opposite To create a whimsical haven for Rhea's nephews and godson, Nisbet designed garden-gate headboards and kept the furniture small and low. **Above** The guest bathroom, with its clawfoot tub and beadboard wainscoting, is a study in vintage appeal.

bathing beauties

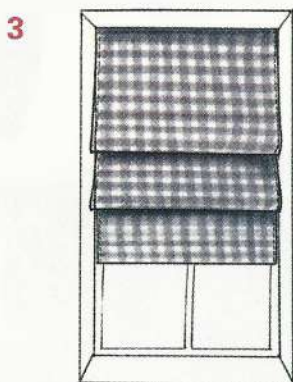
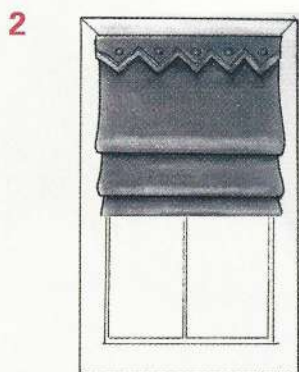
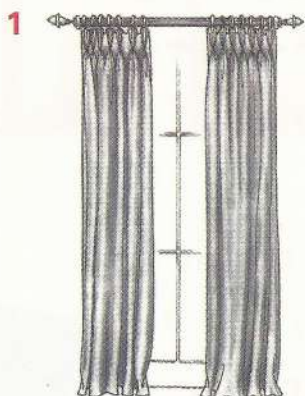
If you like the clawfoot tub shown above, you'll love the vintage-style models below.



1. Acrylic slipper tub by Barclay Products (800-446-9700), with polished chrome feet. 2. Double-Ended tub by Sunrise Specialty (800-444-4280) in white, or primed to paint. 3. Cast-iron slipper tub, in blue, by Clawfoot Supply (877-682-4192). 4. Waterworks' (800-899-6757) Savoy tub, with black or unfinished feet; can be painted with oil-based paint (shown, Misty Teal by Benjamin Moore). 5. Acrylic and DuraBond Reminiscence slipper soaking tub by American Standard (800-899-2614), in 15 colors. 6. Kallista's (888-452-5547) Circe cast-iron clawfoot tub.

style to go

windows of opportunity



To help her clients visualize, Nisbet uses window treatment illustrations from Wendy Baker's *The Curtain Sketchbook 2* (Randall International, 1999). Here, **1.** A pinch-pleat curtain on rings as seen in the living room. **2.** A roman shade with a valance as in the guest room. **3.** A roman shade without a valance as in the kitchen.

Nisbet varied her treatments of the many ceiling-height picture moldings on the first floor—painting them the same color as the walls in the living room to make the walls seem higher, trimming them in white in the sunroom and dining room for contrast.

Molding also decorates a banquette built into a niche in the hall separating dining room from sunroom. Above this seat is a glassless interior window that brings in light from the sunroom.

The sunroom light derives from a long bank of French doors and fixed transoms, which replace one small

Below A champagne-colored cushion and coordinating pillows sit atop a built-in banquette with deep architectural woodwork. The cozy seat adds utility to a hallway dividing two rooms.

door that opened onto the back patio. The light creates one of the most cheerful spaces in the home—exactly what Rhea had envisioned. “A good decorator makes you feel as though you’ve had a say in the design, even when you would not have chosen the things that were chosen,” Rhea says of her friend’s talent.

With a new television show in the works and a standup comedy tour on her plate in the coming year, Rhea is grateful to have such a soothing place to call home. “The house is really about tranquillity,” she explains. “Things in life always resonate from childhood, I think, and when your best friend is decorating your home, it takes on an even greater degree of comfort.”



SEE RESOURCE GUIDE, PAGE 110, FOR MORE INFORMATION.



LOS ANGELES, CA



In the living room, luminous accents, sunny colors, and a cheerful sofa keep the mood lighthearted. New crown molding enhances the home's Colonial style.

Opposite Caroline relaxes in her sunroom, where comfort was a design priority. Fabrics throughout include solids, checks, stripes, and vivacious floral prints.