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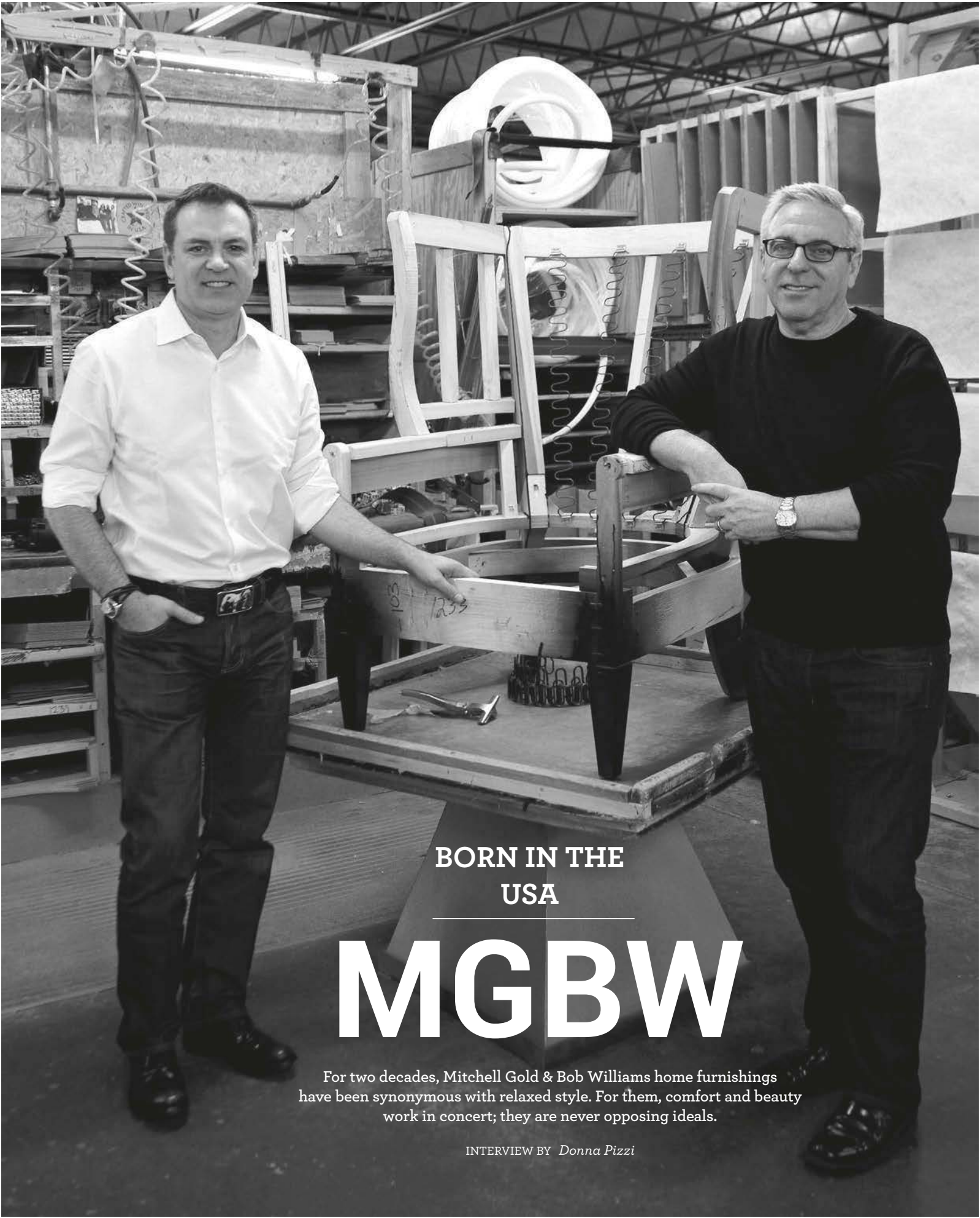
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MGBW

For two decades, Mitchell Gold & Bob Williams home furnishings have been synonymous with relaxed style. For them, comfort and beauty work in concert; they are never opposing ideals.

INTERVIEW BY Donna Pizzi



MGBW SHARE THEIR SENSE OF STYLE & EXPERIENCES

WHAT WERE YOUR GREATEST SUCCESSES?

Mitchell: We have had some really great successes. One thing for sure was the introduction of the leather club chairs that we had first seen in Parisian flea markets. When we proportioned and updated them more for Americans, we sold over one billion dollars' worth in retail over the past 17 or 18 years. Another big success was our slipcovered furniture. We didn't invent it, but we reinvented it in the early 90s. When we introduced it, it was something my grandmother had, which some other folks started doing as well about the same time. We sold hundreds of millions dollars worth of slipcovered furniture and are still selling it. We've had some really big ones.

A third success I would add is that in 1996 or so, when we moved into the new showroom, we introduced our S&M Collection – Soft & Modern. Bob and I had been traveling in Europe and we'd been seeing things there as well as in America. The big thing was that Bob noticed that in any given city, where a new ring of development was happening around it - like in Atlanta or Charlotte – there were lots of mid-century modern homes being built. So, Bob said, "Let's do things that fit into these homes." We didn't want to do hard edge mid-century modern, so we did very soft mid-century modern. Right out of the gate, we sold it to some good retailers and started to see sales on it right away and it has continued to be an extremely big part of our look now.

TOP TO BOTTOM Show-stopping Vega cocktail table with a slatted polished-stainless-steel frame and a smoked glass top. '70s influenced version of the classic shelter-style, the Bennet leather sofa with padded channeled back. Vintage-brass and matte black make the Maxwell floor lamp a classic. Stylishly curved with splayed wood legs the Vera sofa exudes a mod spirit.

READ MORE OF
THIS INTERVIEW
AT PORTRAIT-MAGAZINE.COM/INTERVIEWS

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING APART FROM DESIGNING?

Bob: Believe it or not, I'm the biggest homebody in the world, so I enjoy doing things at home. Whether it's working out in the yard or just piddling around in the house. Just getting things cleaned, organized or whatever. I'm very happy doing that. It's fun that what I do professionally is related to what I enjoy doing during my free time. Even when I'm on vacation or away, I'm always going to flea markets or second hand stores just to pick up stuff. Lots of things I've picked up have ended up becoming a product three years down the road.

Mitchell: I love to read for enjoyment or relaxation. I have a beautiful home on a lake so I read before the view. I like to read biographies, especially about successful people, whether it was Lee Iacocca at one point or President John-son. I tend to read business-y, strategy books. I just read: "It's Not the Big that Eat the Small, It's the Fast that Beat the Slow" (by Jason Jennings & Laurence Haughton). That's very much what we're about, because we work very quickly in our business. We work thoughtfully and carefully, but if we have an idea for a product we can work fast. We could have it on the market within months because we have our own factory.

DELANEY TABLE

A jewel piece for the dining room: the 60" round Delaney dining extension table expands to an 80" oval. Crafted from warm walnut veneers and a flat-bar satin-brass decorative pedestal base, the table has a sunburst-patterned top.



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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams (CONT)

IF YOU WEREN'T A FURNITURE DESIGNER WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO BE?

Bob: I'm a frustrated architect and it drives people crazy. The two are somewhat parallel. I can come up with an idea for a piece of furniture and within weeks get the sample made, look at it and approve it, and that's very satisfying, because it's almost like instant gratification. I feel sorry for some of these architects who spend years working on a building and have to make so many compromises. When we first started working on our business, sometimes we had to change it or make compromises and now I don't have to, so it's much more enjoyable.

Mitchell: I probably would have been a politician. I probably would have been a Republican senator who was liberal and fair-minded (said tongue in cheek!). I'm fascinated by politics, journalists. I don't know if I were a politician what I'd be. Perhaps a senator would interest me the most. I'm from Trenton, New Jersey. We're very friendly with Senator Kay Hagen. In fact, Bob designed her office, which is fabulous. It is the most beautiful office in the Senate. We heard the same from other senators, who actually buy from us as well.

FROM ALL YOUR PIECES WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE AND WHY?

Mitchell: At the moment, I'm very into our Cooper Swivel chair, because I find it to be very convenient and comfortable. In my home on Hickory Lake, I put them in the living room, where I can turn them – there's a pair of them – and look out the big window, and relax. It's a really great, flexible piece.

Bob: I'm in the process of redoing my downstairs and I just got the Malone sofa for my living room. I'm very excited about that. It's going to be floating in the of the middle room. When you walk in, it faces you. I'm kind of excited about that. I like the

piece, because it has a curved back and when you sit in it, it's a very great sofa for a conversation. I want people to easily have a conversation and chat.

HOW DO YOU RECOMMEND PEOPLE LIVE AN INSPIRED AND FASHIONABLE LIFE?

Bob: I always suggest when people first start designing or picking furniture for their house, not to worry about color, not to worry about style, but to really think about how they want to live in the space. Is it a big or small space? A big space is a lot of little spaces all put together or divided into small spaces. Then they need to really think about how they want to interact with people. Do they want to be able to have a conversation, sit back and read a book, or watch TV? When they start shopping for furniture, they'll know what the function needs to be. Getting the right size is easy, because furniture comes in multiple sizes. At least if you know how you want to live in it, when you look for pieces you'll know whether or not it's going to let you live the way you want.

IF ONE WERE GOING TO INVEST IN TWO MAJOR PIECES FOR THE HOME, WHAT SHOULD THOSE BE?

Mitchell: A great sofa, because you use it a lot, and a bed. You could get away with a mattress and box spring, but having nice furniture in the bedroom is important too. That's why we like upholstered beds, because they immediately make a bedroom look soft and inviting, versus an iron bed of some sort.

Bob: I would say a sofa that's big enough for you and the person you live with and love and enjoy.

Mitchell: What if you're single?

Bob: Then you have a potential! At that point, a cocktail table.

Mitchell: A great dining room table and chairs. You can do a lot in a dining room. You can work, have a nice meal.

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