

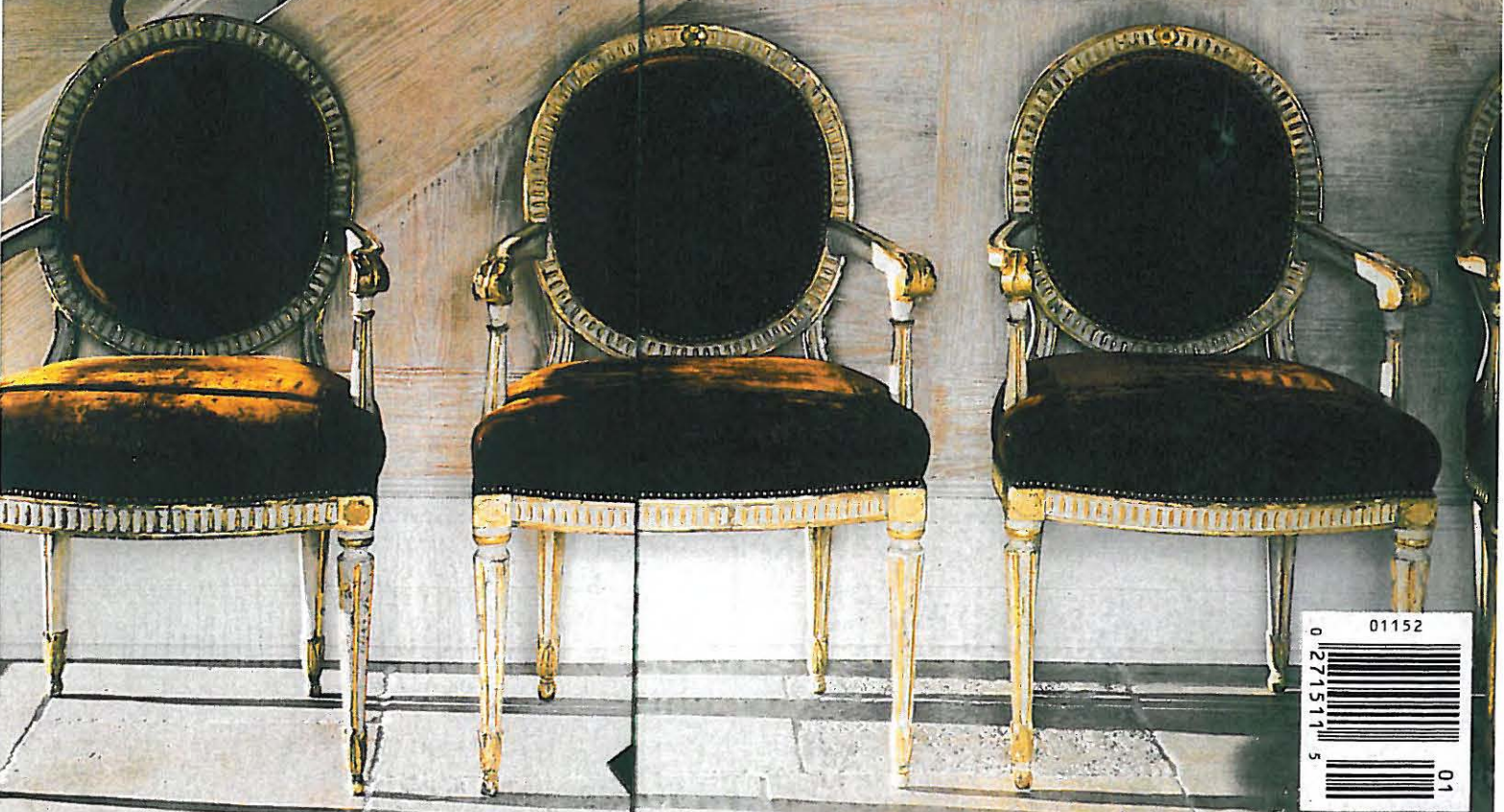
# ELLE DECOR

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## 20 ROMANTIC BEDROOMS

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# british revolution

Nick Munro's cutting-edge classics

What do Prince Charles, the Duchess of Westminster, and U2 drummer Adam Clayton have in common? Each owns objects created by British designer Nick Munro. His pieces' broad appeal, though, shouldn't fool you into thinking they must be bland. Witness Munro's bone-china tea sets, inspired by the shapes of tropical fish; spherical silver-plated salt and pepper grinders; tall, slim, wicker-handled water coffee sets; and goblets and jugs decorated with sterling-silver fish patterns, which magnify one side when the vessel is filled with water. "I like to think that my pieces can work in any setting," says Munro. "And this quality they have of being somehow familiar, even though you haven't actually seen them before, makes them difficult to date. So they're not so liable to go in or out of fashion."

As a designer, Munro is definitely not of the turn-headed, body-pierced variety. Dressed in a checkered sports jacket and slacks, the 32-year-old looks more like a mechanical engineer, which isn't surprising, since he graduated from the University of Nottingham with a mechanical-engineering degree. What is surprising is that he went on to study at London's prestigious Royal College of Art, graduating in 1986 with an M.A. in industrial design, though he "couldn't even draw."

Both concentrations inform his work today. Inspired by positive feedback from his final show at RCA (he exhibited a sleek electric toaster and a showerhead), Munro decided to go into business, manufacturing napkin rings made of silver-plated springs, which he sold at the Design Centre in London. He soon gained other clients, including Barneys New York (his first outlet), and before he knew it he had won the 1988 Shell U.K. Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. With the £3,000 prize, he developed his second product: rocking salt and pepper shakers shaped like wedges of cheese. Since then he has gone from ceramics and wall and floor lamps (introduced this past fall) to an espresso maker (in the works). But the early pieces also continue to sell well. Aware that his creations are destined to become classics, Munro signs all his work. "When people buy one of my pieces," he says, "they're not just buying a thing, they are investing in it." **TESSA SOUTER**

Nick Munro with some of his wares. See Resources.