

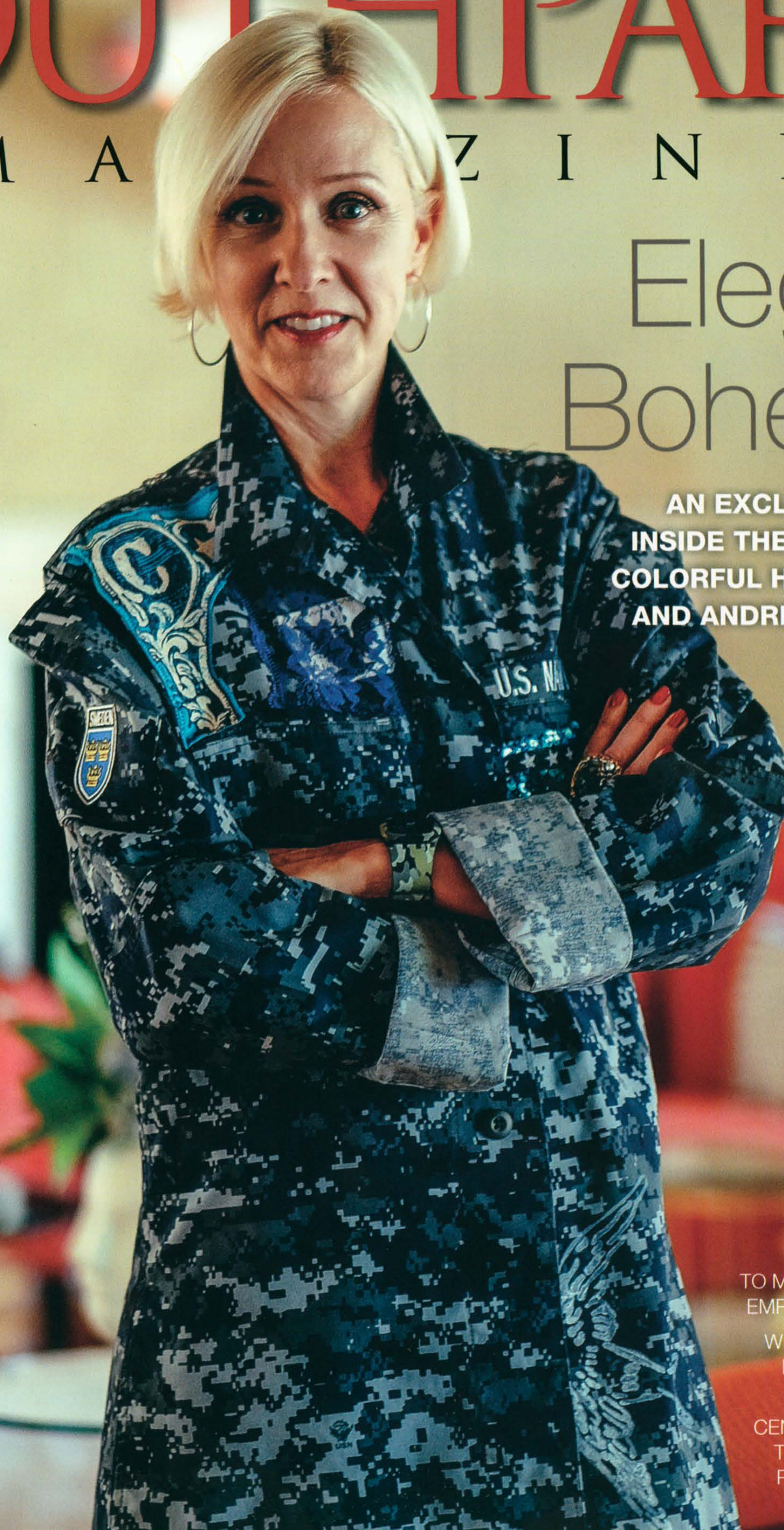
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# SOUTHPARK

M A G A Z I N E

## Elegant Bohemian

AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK  
INSIDE THE ARTISTIC AND  
COLORFUL HOME OF REGINE  
AND ANDREAS BECHTLER



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[ COVER STORY ]



# Designing Woman

REGINE BECHTLERS' CONTEMPORARY STYLE MIXES  
BOLD COLORS AND NONTRADITIONAL ELEMENTS  
IN FASHION, ART, AND INTERIORS.

BY MICHAEL J. SOLENDER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUSTIN SMITH



Pieces of the Bechtler's extensive art collection are found throughout their SouthPark home. For the ceiling in her salon, Regine Bechtler had custom prints made from a section of a 15th-century fresco.



Artist and designer Regine Bechtler

**A**s a young girl growing up in the maritime city of Kiel, Germany, Regine Bechtler saved up her allowance to purchase a bright white rain slicker adorned with loud, brightly colored flowers.

“All the other children in school had traditional yellow rain slickers with blue lining,” says Bechtler, a wide grin slipping across her face. “My mother wanted to be certain that I was sure in my decision knowing I’d be quite different from the others, but she didn’t discourage me. I’ve always had confidence and followed my own sense of style.”

Nowhere is her flair for design and panache more evident than in the SouthPark home she shares with her husband, Andreas Bechtler, the art collector and artist who is the namesake for uptown’s Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Their contem-



The Bechtlers, who frequently entertain, wanted their contemporary home to offer warmth and whimsy. Bold colors, playful art, and an open, uncluttered floor plan make the home feel both inviting and interesting.

porary California-style, open floor plan home underwent a complete interior makeover at her hand in 2007.

"I found a home with white marble floors, white walls, white ceilings and woodwork; it was very cold and not comfortable for me," says Bechtler. "I wanted something that reflects us, our personalities, and the way we like to live and entertain. My mind immediately went to work upon seeing the layout and I envisioned bold color combinations and looked for ways to incorporate whimsy and playfulness for warmth and a relaxed feel."

Bechtler favors an uncluttered look and rooms showcasing fewer, large scale artwork and pieces that are expressive and help set the tone and mood.

The salon is the heart of her home. A European style parlor with an open hearth at the far end and large windows and French doors opening into the expansive garden, the room has playful elements that encourage casualness. Helping set the light mood is an end table with a base that is a large gold human foot. A life-sized sheep replica is just close enough to the room's entrance to silently greet visitors.

When Bechtler first saw the room, her eye was





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—Regine Bechtler



drawn skyward where the magnificent recessed ceiling with twelve large rectangles spoke to her. “I immediately thought, ‘These are frames perfect for a fresco,’” says Bechtler. “I knew just what I wanted there, a scene from the Bosch triptych, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.”

Bechtler had prints made from a section of the renowned work (the original hangs in Madrid’s Museo del Prado) and had them custom fit to the existing panels.

The resulting presence of the dramatic 15th-century work crowning her contemporarily styled room is emblematic of Bechtler’s reluctance to follow convention. When pressed she refers to the look as “elegant bohemian.”

“I’d like to see people take more risk and be braver when it comes to interior design,” says Bechtler. “I once did a room where all the walls were papaya; people loved it but couldn’t see it for themselves. For me, I don’t shy away from bold.”

And Bechtler’s design sensibility is by no means limited to interiors. She is an accomplished mixed media artist who sculpts, paints, and works extensively in fashion design.

She taught herself how to sew and made her own maternity clothes



Regine Bechtler's fashionable peace jackets with corset backs and chic embellishments have become one of her most successful creative endeavors.



when she became frustrated by the lack of fashionable wear for soon-to-be moms.

One of her more recent and successful design projects is her foray into hand-embellished peace jackets. While kicking around a second-hand store in Hamburg, Bechtler found two outsized vintage Navy jackets that she purchased, retailed, and added what has become a signature element: an open exposed 'corset' for femininity in the back of the jacket. She knew she was on to something when people stopped her on the streets of New York and Paris, complimenting her on the look. Now she's producing them for friends and for sale online ([www.peacejackets.com](http://www.peacejackets.com)).

"I scout for fabric, emblems and materials online and create about four custom jackets per month," says Bechtler, who finds she has to limit her production because she is often too busy with other artistic pursuits. She recently participated in a ceramics workshop, put the finishing touches on two new sculptures, and was readying her home to host a group of artists in a free-form, European salon-style discussion.

"I just can't turn off the switch," says Bechtler of her creative nature. "I always have a vision of what I might want to make next." 