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Issue Two






**Calm**  
**Focused**  
**Joyful**

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## Interior Design

### The Reflective Countenance

by  
John LePrince

I carried the reverberations with me as I drove.

"You had better not be late. Not now, not ever!"

There was a tense urgency in her voice that I felt was uncalled for. True, this party was very important to her, and I could well appreciate that, but surely I couldn't have been the only guest with a reputation for tardiness.

As I approached, I could see the line of cars swirling around her estate. Already, a heavy feeling of nervousness was in the air. Had she said something to each attendee? Walking up the driveway, people seemed to be gazing at their watches more than at each other. Chauffeurs sank low in their seats, dispensing with their usual guard stances. And it was so quiet, why, my heavens, I don't think that I heard so much as a cough from anyone.

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**Most people find  
mirrors to be comfort  
zones of reassurance.**

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With not a small amount of trepidation, I rang the bell, only to have a sobbing debutante answer the door. She took my hand and said nothing as she led me to the end of a queue in the foyer. No heads turned, nor were any glances exchanged as I took my place.

While waiting, I noticed the awkward placement of various groups of nesting tables throughout the room. Atop each one was a silver

ginkgo vase that contained a blue glass rose. On the walls, seemingly randomly arranged, were tiny mirrors whose reflections of the guests were then replicated by the silver.

What is it about a mirror that allows it to dominate a room? It appeals to our vanity, of course--who among us doesn't surreptitiously stop to glance at his own reflection? Most people will seek out the mirrors in a home, finding them to be comfort zones of reassurance. And, certainly, well-positioned mirrors can create the illusion of size, virtually doubling the square footage of their surroundings.

Mirrors tell the truth. And yet they play with reality.

So what to do with these things and where to place them? First of all, most houses contain far too many mirrors, with some rooms having two or more. Reflected images are all around us in the outside world. Why overdo it at home? Simplify and make it something unexpected. Secondly, don't hang the mirror too low. It isn't a painting. It needs space in order to be responsive. And please, don't give it a location directly next to a light source. Glare is a most distracting annoyance.

The style should not overwhelm. Quite fashionable these days is the *trumeau*, with its ornate top, but I find this rather tacky and more befitting a turnpike motel. While the nouveau metallic look can be intriguing, overly ornate or artificially distressed frames are most definitely to be avoided. I prefer simple mahogany, particularly for a full-length item.

A mirror is a chameleon, changing its appearance from moment to moment. Treat it well, place it properly, and it will create magic.

By the way, I'm still waiting in the foyer.

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