



## Custom Columns

Architect Barbara Del Vicario, top left, on a sofa in a custom fabric that copies a design in the fresco. ■ Clockwise from top right: The dining chairs by Del Vicario are based on a Roman model. She also designed the candle holders on the table; columns from her Ottagono line are on either side of the doorway. The chandelier of 60 Murano glass bowls is made for candles. The hand-blown glasses and personal decanters are part of a set by Del Vicario. The washstand column with hinged top is by Del Vicario. The kitchen features an Ottagono cabinet (here with clothes), which can be used for anything from china to CDs.



shadow. "The frescoes, based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and painted by Battista Franco and Battista Zelotti, were added later," says Foscari. Given the architect's preference for unadorned walls, Foscari adds, "it's possible Palladio saw the frescoes as a breach of the purity of his vision."

**A**WALK THROUGH the light, airy rooms of La Malcontenta with Del Vicario is an exquisite experience. Her gentle approach is matched by an architect's understanding of the building's needs. "A great amount of work was required," she says. The riverbank was shored up; power lines were buried. And that was nothing compared with the restoration inside the house. "The frescoes cover some four thousand square yards," Del Vicario says, "and Antonio oversaw a rigorous conservation of architectural elements, such as returning Palladio's red terrazzo floor"—made of compressed brick powder and lime—"to its original patina."

Passing through a frescoed bedroom or bathroom, or one of the many dining areas, is part of an artistic itinerary. "Each room," says Foscari, "is related to the others like the notes in a symphony." Though spacious and grand, La Malcontenta retains an informal air. Fireplaces heat the rooms; electricity—with a few necessary exceptions—is out of the question. As in the sixteenth century, the main source of light in the evening is candles.

A less tangible aspect makes the restoration of the villa unique: the present inhabitants' respect for traces left by previous owners who also devoted part of their lives to the villa. They include Lord Phillipmore, from whom Foscari and Del Vicario bought the house, and the third most recent owner, Albert Landsberg, the cosmopolitan *saloniste* who rescued the villa from decay in 1925. Between the