An exclusive image from *Bunny Williams: Life in the Garden*, from which this essay is adapted (Rizzoli, $60).

Moments in the Woods

BY **CARTER BLACKWELL**

The route from Boston is etched in my mind. As a kid, I remember taking the Massachusetts Turnpike to Lee/Exit 2 and then an extended series of jogs and turns—a left here, a right over the tracks there—through a large farm nestled in a valley in Connecticut. It was all open fields until we would round a lefthand turn down the hill and arrive at Aunt Bunny's. You might know her as the great American decorator Bunny Williams.

The moment I laid eyes on her home—with its stately columns, ornate details, and many porches, set amid trees and rolling land—I would be overcome with a special kind of imaginative joy. From as early as I can remember, I have lost myself in Bunny's bookshelves, especially the one at the far end of the library. I would perch on the arm of the sofa, looking at the titles, committing the various colors of the spines to memory.

The house was full of spaces like this. I remember coming down the back stairs into the kitchen, where my Granddaddy Jimps would be the first one up, drinking coffee in his robe. Eggs and bacon would fly off the stove, over the massive wooden kitchen island, and onto the table, as plans would be made for the day. Over the course of the year, the house took on distinct characters, each season activating different senses. In the summer the screened porch would have its own smell and textures, a combination of wicker, flowers, and open air. The tones of the surroundings, complemented by the arrangement of the furniture, seemed to celebrate the gathering of family and friends as much as the beauty of the season.

When Kate and I were considering where to get married, we thought about Falls Village. We looked at each other, and we knew. Later, as our daughters Mika and Anna became old enough to love making things, Bunny turned over a new leaf and spearheaded some maskmaking events, the most memorable of which had a woodland theme. Acorns, leaves, branches, berries, and other natural materials found their way into each artist's creation. My dad diligently created an amazing Bigfoot-like face with bark, and it prompted us to run around the woods and jump off rocks like crazed druids. As I took pictures, which I often do on visits to Aunt Bunny's, I thought that nothing could be more fitting for this magical place than our family of Bigfoots and druids frolicking in the woods. T&C

ANNIE SCHLECHTER