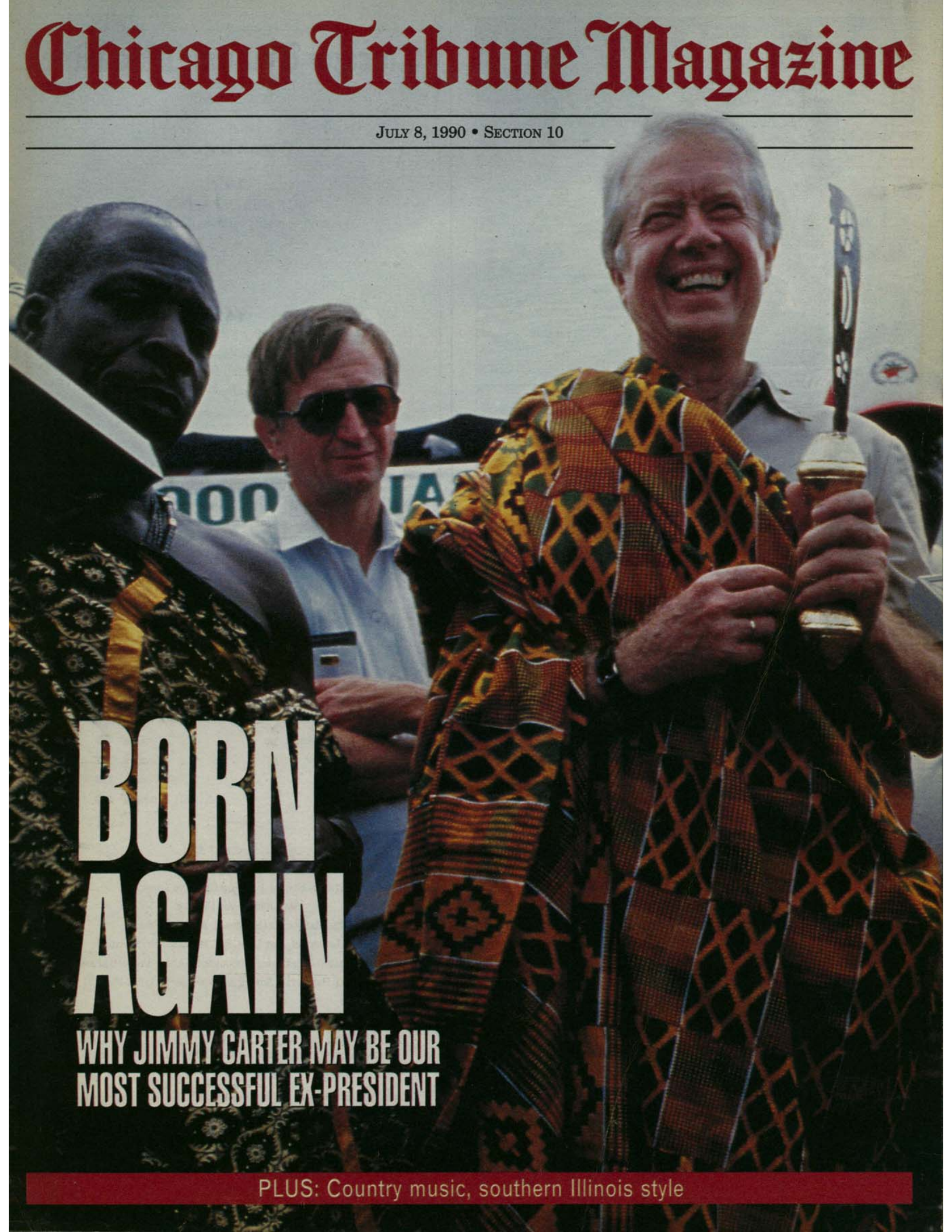


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BORN AGAIN

WHY JIMMY CARTER MAY BE OUR
MOST SUCCESSFUL EX-PRESIDENT

PLUS: Country music, southern Illinois style

Going with the flow

A single-color approach makes for a well-integrated living space

BY ELAINE MARKOUTSAS
PHOTOS BY TONY BERARDI

MONOTONE—BUT NOT MONOTONOUS—WAS THE LOOK REQUESTED of interior designer Sandra Saltzman for the first-level spaces of an eight-year-old north-suburban home.

The job started in the dining room against a backdrop of gray lacquered walls. "Neither my husband nor I wanted a matched set of furniture," the homeowner says. "Although his furnishings tastes perhaps lean more to the English period while mine are definitely more contemporary, we agreed that we wanted a mix."

The dining table, itself a mix of stainless (base) and travertine marble (top), was juxtaposed with more traditional chair frames finished in crackle and a console of snakeskin.

The chair's upholstery, a soft washed silk in shades of gray, pink and taupe, is echoed in the pouffy shades. The eclecticism really shines when the table is set, often in an appealing point-counterpoint fashion. Lace-edged napkins play against mirrored placemats. A traditional dinnerware pattern (her grandmother's) is set onto a patterned glass charger (oversized serving) plate. Grandmother's sterling silver teapot is juxtaposed with more contemporary pieces on the console.

"We wanted a formal but eclectic dining room," the homeowner says, "and that's exactly what we got." Most important, the more or less monochromatic palette is carried into the adjacent rooms.

The most difficult task in the living room was its layout.

"The space is about 12 by 30 feet," Sandra Saltzman says. "It could have looked like a ballet barre or a bowling alley." Saltzman's solution was to create three conversation areas, one of which is anchored by a pair of chaises.

"Unifying the central seating area in a style that was simple and not cramped, so that you wouldn't feel people and the furniture were on top of one another, was the challenge," Saltzman says.

The family room has a decidedly more casual feeling yet one that is equally sophisticated. The lightness, accentuated by creamy color and windows flanking the fireplace wall, was maintained with comfortable leather seating in a deeper tone. Architect Richard Gibbons designed a handsome wall unit that



integrates well.

"He took a wall space of more than 14 feet," Saltzman says, "and integrated a media unit that works with the architecture without being obtrusive. It doesn't jump at you."

The cohesiveness of the design is what the couple most applaud.

"I like the flow," the homeowner says. "When we entertain, which we do a lot, nobody just congregates in any one room—we use all of them. We'll even set up dinner tables in the foyer. The uniformity of color makes it all work." ■

Elaine Markoutsas is a Chicago-based writer who specializes in design. Tony Berardi is a Tribune photographer.