



# SITTING PRETTY

For years **Christie Brinkley** lived the supermodel life of a vagabond. But now she's settled into a home that's a reflection of her far-flung travels and love of family

BY MARSHALL HEYMAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY DITTE ISAGER



Brinkley and her Labradoodle, Maple Sugar, in her Bridgehampton, N.Y., living room. The pillows are covered in eco-friendly fabrics from her line for JoAnn Fabric and Craft stores (find them at joann.com). Facing page: Photo albums from family trips line the bookshelves. Brinkley made the elaborate shell dolls perched on top. Dolce & Gabbana dress. J. Crew cardigan. Her own boots. Christie Brinkley Jewelry Collection earrings, necklace and bracelet.

was one thing I knew I had to do: Go be an artist in Paris and wear lots of berets." When she graduated from high school in Los Angeles, the quintessential California girl (who was actually born in Monroe, Mich.) moved to the Left Bank, only to be discovered as a model by an American photographer. From this chance encounter in Paris, a remarkable career was born: the three consecutive *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit covers; an unparalleled 20-year contract with Cover Girl; the "Uptown Girl" video with now ex-husband Billy Joel; and the indelible cameo as the hot girl in the red Ferrari opposite Chevy Chase in *National Lampoon's Vacation*.

Throughout it all Brinkley has been a collector, albeit an eclectic one. A nautical phase led to a mini-lighthouse in the living room. Her love of all things Western sparked an interest in at least one twig chair. None of Brinkley's antiques, mostly bought at flea markets where dealers have grown to appreciate her sense



of whimsy, reside in storage. She just finds a place to show them off.

"I'm all about the *abbondanza*," Brinkley says, pointing out the "abundance" of objects on the tabletop next to her, where elephant bookends share space with ceramic cutlery sculpted by Sailor. "I find it, I like it, I bring it home and make a spot for it. It's like that children's book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. If you give Christie a new chair, the whole house shifts."

Brinkley also makes new pieces in her private art studio, a mecca of paints, sketch pads, glue guns, and shells: memory boxes, picture frames, paperweights, even statues of the artist Frida Kahlo, one of Brinkley's muses.

Two of her more recent business endeavors sprouted from art projects. Her collection of affordable jewelry is now available online at [christiebrinkleyjewelry.com](http://christiebrinkleyjewelry.com), and her Hamptons-inspired fabrics, derived from plastic bottles blended with organic cotton, are sold at Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft stores. Brinkley's philosophy about her collection of colorful textiles is much like her attitude about decorating: Be bold and take risks. "Pull in new or old things and try them out," she says. "If you can see the whole room in one quick glance, that can be boring."

"When I go into my art studio to paint, I lose all sense of time," says Brinkley. "If I could stay in there for days and nights on end, I would." Above right: A close-up of her worktable, a still life of shells, brushes, art supplies, and beach glass.

Diane von Furstenberg dress. Her own belt and boots. Christie Brinkley Jewelry Collection necklace and ring.

"It's a question of balance," Brinkley adds, flashing that perfect smile. "But I always say, 'Improvise; give it a shot!' Life is more interesting when something—surprisingly!—just works." ■