

MARTHA
STEWART

Living

Thanksgiving
parade party
tartan
serving pieces
candlelight
mashed potatoes 101
caramel

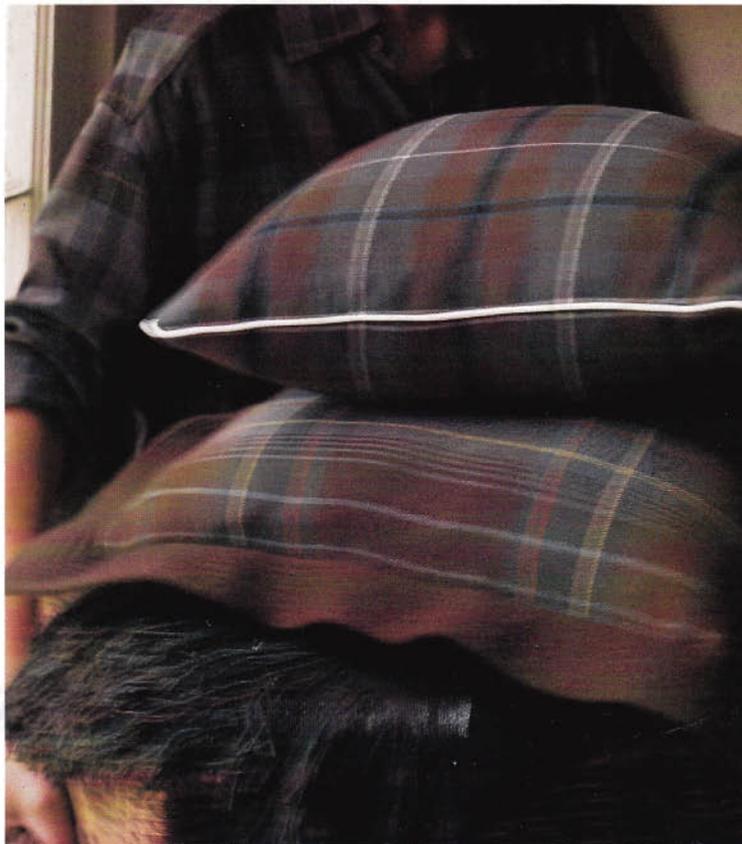


AH, THE HIGHLANDS (THAT IS, ACHHH, THE HEELANDS), WHERE TARTAN MEANS TRADITION. RIGHT? SORT OF. But before you take tartans into your home, let alone onto your furniture, we ought to dispel some myths.

First, and most surprising, tartans that bear the names of clans aren't actually all that old. "Ancestral" plaids—the Cameron, Stewart, Campbell, *et al*—have not descended through the craggy mists of Highland time. It wasn't until the visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822 that Scottish families claimed particular tartans as exclusively theirs.

A second myth: One needs to belong to a clan to take up the tartan. Not so. Only in Scotland, fellow Americans, do only Duncans wear the Duncan plaid, and Mathesons, the Matheson. Though a handful of Scots will condemn all those with nowt a MacDonald in the gene pool to prints and solids, the truth is that here, as in Norway or India, anyone who likes a plaid can have one.

Plaid means "blanket" in Gaelic. (The Highland weather says it all.) In the Middle Ages, the wearing of a tartan signified rank and status. Servants wore cloth of only one color; tenant farmers, two; officers wore three colors; chieftains wore five; druids and poets (!) six; and the clan chiefs wore seven. Women's tartans were woven of softer wool than men's, though in 1580, if a woman wore that tartan outdoors, she was thought to be "up to no good." And men's tartans were always so hard and stiff that when Queen Victoria noticed that the knees of the Highland Guard of Honor had been severely cut and scratched by the sharp edges of their wool kilts, she directed they wear softer wool henceforward. Over here, the colony of Georgia, founded by James Oglethorpe, has its own state tartan because John Mor McIntosh led a band of Highlanders and Creek Indians in defending the colony against Spanish





Invigorated by a living room's aquamarine walls, a collection of hunting plaids on a loveseat creates a small, pillowy explosion of autumnal shades. Strong, cool blues are a good foil to tartans' rich colors. Matching armchairs alternate slipcovered seats and backs with silky damasks and virile plaids. OPPOSITE TOP: Subtly festive tartans in a classically formal room are warm—and warmed—by an autumn fire. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Cozying up to a fringed throw are tartan pillows piped in white or edged with a broad-ribbed flange reminiscent of nineteenth-century carriage robes.



A year-round bedspread is the versatile result when bands of Brimfield plaid are stitched on a creamy linen ground. The welts and crisp inverted pleats of the brown bedskirt reveal the merest glimpse of the Easton tartan. OPPOSITE TOP: Except for its elegant monogram, this Cobblefield plaid bed pillow, neatly buttoned into a starched linen sleeve (once a tea towel), might be wearing a military waistcoat. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: In an unusual but jaunty pairing, an aluminum Warren McArthur chair is covered in steely plaid, the gray of Dee-side granite.

TARTAN
pages 230 to 239
Slipcovers, pillows,
throws, bedspread, bed
skirt, and runners made
by D & F Workroom, 150
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