



*"Luxury is experienced
a moment at a time."* - Bill Stubbs





Filming in the Paris Flea Market. Photo by Robin Marriott

Now wise to the ways of

Mother Russia, Stubbs has survived 15 years of monthly travel and has his jaunt down to a science. He admits that earlier it wasn't such easy going. "I always had to be available," he says. "It wouldn't do to be unavailable. I had a kid in college." When a Russian client called him in his Houston office to set up an appointment, Stubbs says he told him, "I'll be there in one day. So, I called up Continental Airlines and found out what Gordon Bethune, then the airline's chairman, would do if he had to get to Russia in one day." And then Stubbs followed suit, hopping off of one plane in New York to race to the visa office and then jumping on another plane with just minutes to spare.

When Stubbs decided to

pursue his own TV show, he neglected to follow the prescribed rules. He went out and shot his own pilot, skipping over the part where you enlist agents and publicists and networks. He says, "I have never heard a no, a no is a yes turned backwards!" He learned his salesman's craft early on selling vacuums door to door for Kirby. That training came in handy when he began to shop around his pilot. He remembers, "I came to New York with my DVD and met with Sarah Frank, former CEO of BBC Worldwide America and board member of Vivendi, and Lawrence Scott, an experienced producer, in this amazing apartment on Central Park West, the kind you only see in movies. And I asked 'why am I here?' and they said, 'Because we think you are going to be a TV star.'"

Photo by Jack Opatrany



For his personal closet Stubbs re-created the look of George Peppard's closet in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The tattered kilt ensemble was purchased by Stubbs during a trip to Scotland. Photo by Bruce Benner

Stubbs's multi-E Emmy-award-winning executive producer,

Eve Krzyzanowski says that she was struck by Stubbs's charm, curiosity and ability to establish a rapport with anyone, anywhere. Nonetheless, when she saw the pilot, which featured Stubbs in Paris giving simple tips on luxury from the Saint James Hotel, she realized something was missing. "Bill had potential, but in the pilot he was always alone and I wanted to show him sharing his home and hospitality with friends," Krzyzanowski explains.



Stubbs and artist Emily Buchanan on the set of his show. Photo courtesy of *Moment of Luxury*



Talking chocolate with Jacques Torres in his New York store. Photo by Dan Woolsey



Stubbs was determined to

make his TV show a reality. "I used to have drawers full of little notes written on scraps of paper," he says. "I actually found a note scribbled on a church bulletin that said Moment of Luxury and I remembered the pastor's sermon was about Starbucks Christianity and how luxury is experienced a moment at a time — it's like the first time you put on a cashmere sweater. That was what I wanted to give to viewers — that moment of luxury."

Stubbs re-creates the feeling of the owners' favorite London hotel, the Stafford, in this guest suite. Photo by Rob Muir

For Moment Of Luxury Stubbs is happy

traveling the globe. He is a man on a mission to find the remarkable, the lost and the luxurious. His show is a treasure hunt. "We shot at Blenheim Palace with Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill and she showed us this table-sized key that opens the lock to Blenheim Palace's front door, which is patterned after the Warsaw Gates," he says. "There isn't a handbag made that could hold this wonderful key. We uncover so many treasures." Liz Smith has famously called Stubbs the Indiana Jones of Interior Design.

He is obviously having the time of his life. "I will step in any door that someone happens to open," Stubbs says. "How does a guy from a small town in Texas end up being so blessed to have all these exciting experiences?" By being Bill Stubbs, of course.

A client's casual dining room, with a fireplace and a view of a walled garden. Photo by Rob Muir



Style Compass

FASHION:

My fashion tendency leans toward classic. For men, I'm drawn to the Cary Grant, David Niven and **Sean Connery** look of the early Bond years. For women, I love vintage Dior, Chanel and Givenchy.

COLOR:

I'm all over the map when it comes to color. I love an all-white room and have always had an all-white bedroom, but in many of my design projects and even in my own home, I incorporate strong contrast and rich colors.

TRAVEL:

I am a creature of habit and return to my favorite places again and again: **the English countryside**, Paris, San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, **New York** and Los Angeles.

COLOR:

I'm all over the map when it comes to color. I love an all-white room and have always had an all-white bedroom, but in many of my design projects and even in my own home, I incorporate strong contrast and rich colors.

ART or DESIGN:

I have very eclectic taste when it comes to art. Specifically, **Kenneth Noland's** graphic, colorful, contemporary pieces, which fit well in almost any style room. The Impressionist Period also inspires me.

HOW GREEN ARE YOU?

I am as green as they come. I prefer old things instead of new; I like antiques and semi-antiques. When I visit resale shops, I like to comb through the inventory in search of imperfect pieces. To me, there's nothing greener than reusing and finding new uses for neglected items.



STYLE COMPASS: **BILL STUBBS** | by Marcia Sherrill



Seated at tony Swifty's

Restaurant in New York City, Bill Stubbs looks every bit the Southern gentleman. And in this case looks are not misleading. With his Hermès tie, Zegna suit and Gucci loafers and his isn't-that-a-celebrity look about him, he draws the eyes of the regulars, to which he seems oblivious. He has always been that way — shocked by his own uniqueness.

The grand Beaux-Arts chandelier provides the crowning touch above Stubbs's dining room table and chairs. Photo by Bruce Bennett

Yes, Stubbs is the very recognizable

face of *Moment of Luxury*, a popular series on Public Television, now in pre-production for its third season. How did this unassuming Texas interior designer wind up on a show that is the critics' darling? Well, it was a circuitous route, with stops along the way in Moscow after the collapse of the Soviet Union and a deportation to Paris.

Stubbs is a model of doggedness and perseverance. When everyone said he couldn't possibly publish an autobiography he wrote the entire work before even looking for a publisher. He refused to produce some self-congratulatory book of pictures, opting instead to write about his life, his experiences. Published in 2004, the book, *I Hate Red. You're Fired! The Colorful Life of an Interior Designer* has become a collectible, with signed copies fetching double the list price. It's no wonder, since Stubbs is a born raconteur, captivating our small luncheon crowd as he does lecture halls and his weekly television audience. Taking his title from a rather heated exchange with an irate client, Stubbs likes poking fun at Stubbs.



Stubbs filming with longtime friend and jewelry designer Mariquita Masterson.
Photo by Bruce Bennett



Stubbs, who has earned a place on the coveted AD 100 list of design greats, has been practicing interior design in his native Houston for 25 years — that is, with the odd monthly trip to Russia. Russia? Yes, Stubbs is one of the preeminent designers in the new Russia. “Being the biggest interior designer in Russia is not exactly a compliment,” he says. Then there are the unexpected challenges, such as one “memorable day when I was held at gunpoint, arrested and deported to Paris. I think it was the worst day in my life.” One would hope so.

Stubbs explains: “I was invited to Russia when it was like the Old West, Gold Rush days and my client was a Texan in the oil business. There were kidnappings and extortions and it was a really bad neighborhood.” Stubbs was so naïve that he did not realize that the customs officials were angling for a payoff. He did not catch the clues as they repeatedly told him “there is a problem with your visa.” They finally escorted him to the bank at gunpoint to convert some greenbacks into a bushel of rubles. With cash streaming in his wake, Stubbs was still clueless.

A classic good look, with furnishings and art collected over a lifetime. Photo by Rob Muir

A client's collection of furniture and art from around the world was re-interpreted by Stubbs for this fresh take on the living room. Photo by Rob Muir



ENTERTAINING:

When I entertain at home for friends and family, the set-up has to be fast, easy and opulent. I have developed an efficient process to make that possible.

FABRICS:

Natural fibers: cotton, wool, silk, linen. Antique textiles and remnants fascinate me.

RESTAURANT: Stanton Social in New York City, Bar American in New York and La Griglia in Houston

GIFT: My 40th birthday party given by my son.

STORE: Neiman Marcus



HOTEL: Saint James, Paris; **The Stafford, London;** Four Seasons NYC; Beverly Hills Hotel Los Angeles

MUSIC CD: Soundtrack from the *Bridges of Madison County*; and **Seal:** Soul; **Diana Krall**

GARDENING or FLORAL:

I love mostly any garden, and my little piece of heaven is undoubtedly a beautiful flower market. In my own home, you will find dozens of long-stem roses in a crystal Tiffany vase and nosegays of smaller roses in silver mint julep cups.



MUSEUM: American Folk Art Museum in New York





George III mahogany tall case clock. England, circa 1775. Offered by Florian Papp Antiques

BILL STUBBS'S
Quick Picks
FROM *Istdibs*

Vacheron & Constantine watch. Switzerland, 1940s. Offered by Elle W Collection

Tiffany & Co. 18k Onyx Cufflinks. USA, 20th Century. Offered by Smith & Company

Delft garniture set. Holland, circa 1850. Offered by Susan Sullivan Antiques



Louis XVI style miniature chest of drawers. France, 20th Century. Offered by Florian Papp Antiques