

# CAPITOL FILE

**EXCLUSIVE**

**JASON  
TAYLOR**

TALKS ABOUT  
REDSKINS FEVER  
AND WHAT  
MATTERS MOST



**55** HAUTE  
HOLIDAY GIFTS

JENNIFER LOPEZ HONORS  
MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN AT  
A CAPITOL FILE RECEPTION

**PLUS**

Nick Clooney, Nacho Figueras,  
Carson Kressley, Matthew Modine,  
Julia Ormond, and Anthony Shriver

# HOME RULE



## Global Sensibility

Mei Xu, owner of two trendy companies, describes how Washington, DC, inspires her.

**AFTER GRADUATING** from the University of Maryland with a degree in journalism, Mei Xu used her communication skills and ability to detect the latest trends in culture and fashion to create her first business, Chesapeake Bay Candle, which she started in her Annapolis basement with her husband, David. With a second company, Blissliving Home, now well under way, Xu shares some of her business savvy.

**CAPITOL FILE: What did you think about Washington, DC, when you first arrived to pursue your education?**

**MEI XU:** While some people may see DC as a center of politics, I found that this unique city was a great place to present consumer product brands that combine fashion sense with global sensibility. Washington is as inspirational as New York, Paris, or Shanghai, and is home to many talented international designers and professionals.

**CF: How did you transition from journalism major to entrepreneur?**

**MX:** Starting my [home accessories] business in 1994 after graduation gave me a creative outlet for my passion for fashion. After some research, my husband and I came up with our first collection of contemporary candles, using Campbell's Soup cans as molds.

**CF: How did you settle on the idea of Blissliving Home?**

**MX:** As a passionate traveler, I have always been fascinated with different cultures and wanted to translate my global travel experiences into home lifestyle products. With Blissliving Home, which I started in 2005, I adopt traditional cultural themes and update them in unexpected, stylish ways.

**CF: What's new for the holiday season?**

**MX:** Blissliving Home offers a sensory escape to France, Russia, and Italy, with our signature duvet sets as well as luxurious sheets and evocative home fragrances.

Visit [blisslivinghome.com](http://blisslivinghome.com) and [chesapeakebaycandle.com](http://chesapeakebaycandle.com).

# 'Tis the Season to Be Merry

Fight the recession with these covetable gifts for her, him, and home.

BY BROOKE TOWNSEND

## SUPERSIZE STYLE

Considering all its classic "It Bag" trappings, it's no wonder **Louis Vuitton's** new Mahina handbags have been selling out like mad! Offered in XL and XXL (pictured, \$4,210), the collection of hobo-shaped handbags are crafted from soft and supple calf leather and designed with meticulous LV monograms, contrast topstitching, metal feet for protection, and double-rolled leather straps that are long enough for the shoulder but short enough for the forearm. *Louis Vuitton, 5481 Wisconsin Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland, 301-654-1101; louisvuitton.com.*



## METEOR SHOWERS

Stock up for your holiday soirées with **Liljenquist & Beckstead's** dazzlers. Roberto Coin's Meteorite Parure, shown here, offers versatility with its detachable pendant featuring cognac, champagne, and white diamonds set in 18k white gold. *Liljenquist & Beckstead, Tysons Galleria, 2001 International Drive, McLean, Virginia, 703-749-1200; liljenquist.com.*



## BOLD BEAUTY

Among the myriad of otherworldly designs offered at **I. Gorman**, Michael Zobel's are unique. Using layered metals and exotic gemstones, this Germany-based artisan crafts beautiful pieces of wearable art. Shown here, reminiscent of his famed cuff bracelets, is the Michael Zobel star sapphire ring. *I. Gorman Jewelers, 1133 20th Street NW, 202-775-8544; igorman.com.*

## MOD MALE

With an army of designers from LA to New York, a personal shopper with impeccable taste, and a client-profiling system to track your shoe and pants sizes, **Lost Boys** gives Washingtonian men no choice but to be stylish. As if that weren't enough, Kelly Muccio has designed her boutique with the grandeur of a Fifth Avenue showroom, with flat-screen TVs and reclining leather chairs to make you feel like a king. *Lost Boys, 1033 31st Street NW, Georgetown, 202-333-0093.*

## KNOTTY OR NICE

Scented with deep notes of cedar, mahogany, and maplewood, with gentle laces of geranium, **Blissliving Home's** Tree Trunk pillar candles bring an ambrosial breath of the Alps into the comfort of your home. Offered in sets of three in two sizes, each candle has been hand-colored with knots and other textural accents to perfectly replicate the beauty of birch. For the complete look, splurge on Blissliving's Bird and Branch holder, shown here. *Available at Rckndy, 1515 U Street NW, 202-332-5639; blisslivinghome.com.*

