



## AMANDA PAYS

actress and  
furniture designer

**H**er TV role as Theora Jones on the '80s sci-fi comedy *Max Headroom* made her famous. Today the British-born actress stars as the host of Fine Living Network's *Breathing Room*, and, heading her own company, Amanda Pays for Directions, is the go-to furniture designer for A-listers from Nic Cage to Laura Bush. This second career has its roots, she says, in the two places she called home 25 years ago. "I was modeling and going to drama school then, hopscotching between my little London flat, completely decorated with funky flea-market finds, and my stepfather's sophisticated country farmhouse. What I remember most about his home was the green sea-grass carpeting that he used everywhere, topping it off with area rugs. You still see that look today, but back then it was new and chic. He also wove in bold, colorful accents and used everyday objects in unusual ways—a bright orange-and-pink rug standing in as a tablecloth, for example. Thanks to him, I learned that mixing things that don't traditionally go together sparks your decor. I've applied that concept to my furniture designs too. The lines are clean and simple, but with unexpected twists—in the texture of the wood, perhaps, or in the upholstery—for depth and richness. As for accents, I'm still a fan of teaming flea-market treasures with classical furnishings. It rescues a room from boredom." Pays and actor Corbin Bernsen, married since 1988, have four sons and have renovated 16 houses in 18 years.

**ABOVE** Amanda Pays played the object of Rob Lowe's affection in the romantic comedy *Oxford Blues* (1984). **RIGHT** Pays, present day, perches on a chair from her Directions furniture line (800-897-1603, [directions86.com](http://directions86.com)).



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