

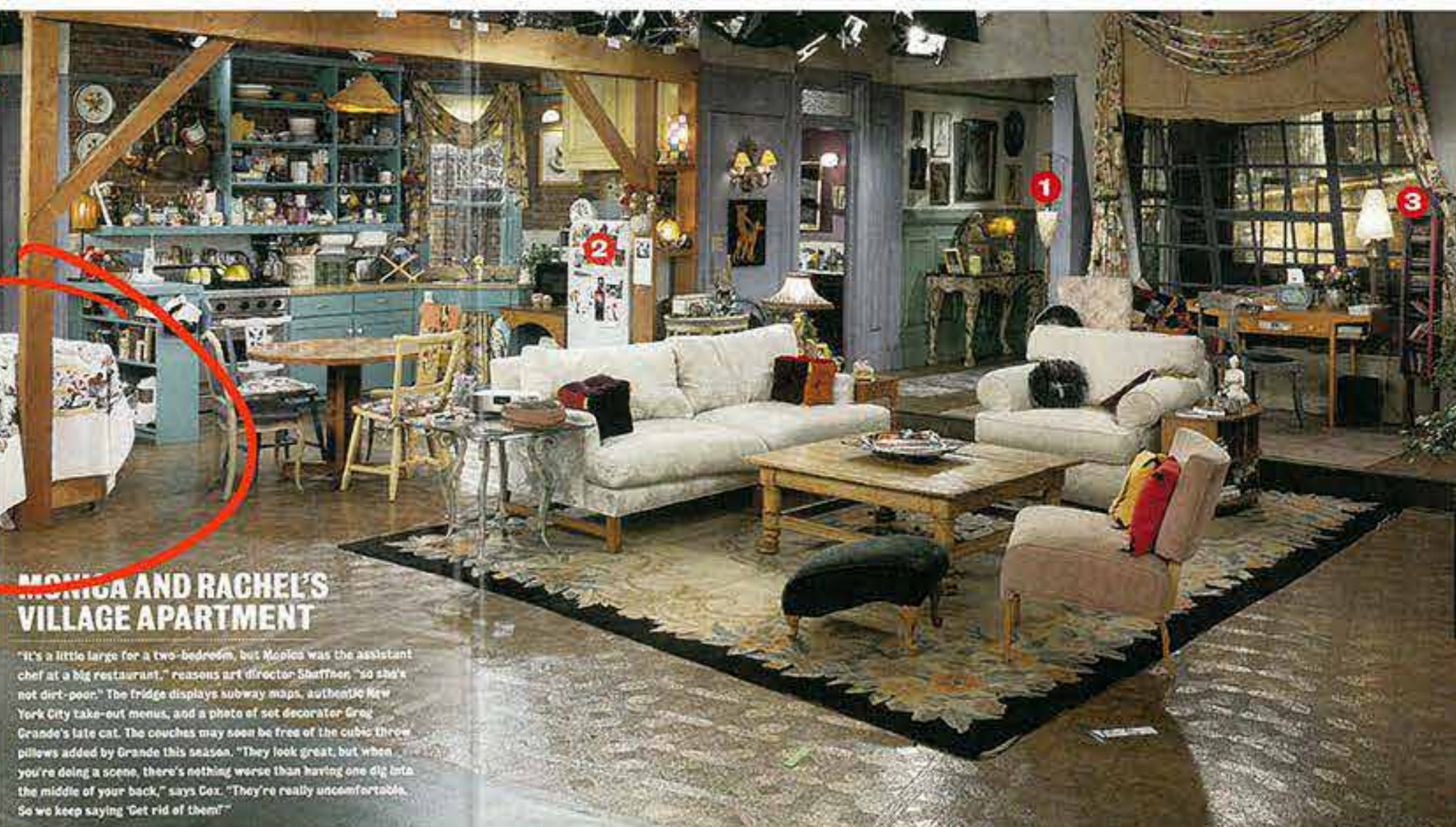
# 'FRIENDS' HIGH PLACES

## THE PALS' SKY-LEVEL PAD AND THEIR COZY CAFÉ HANGOUT

### REACH THE PINNACLE OF TV STYLE

NEO-DADA PAINTINGS. Hand-carved antique sofas. \$75-per-yard fabrics. A terrace with a view...Hey, since when have marginally employed twentysomethings had it this good? ● Well, if you want an exact date, since Sept. 22, 1994, when a certain six-pack of buds hit the air with a hip comic riff on Gen-X life. And now there are surely a number of fans among the 28 million viewers of NBC's *Friends* who have busted their budgets copying the characters' outfits, their hairdos, and—here's where this story can help—their decor. ● Scour every nook and cranny of Manhattan's Green-

BY DAN SNIERSON



### MONICA AND RACHEL'S VILLAGE APARTMENT

"It's a little large for a two-bedroom, but Monica was the assistant chef at a big restaurant," reasons art director Shaffner. "So she's not dirt-poor." The fridge displays subway maps, authentic New York City take-out menus, and a photo of set decorator Greg Grande's late cat. The couches may seem free of the cubic throw pillows added by Grande this season. "They look great, but when you're doing a scene, there's nothing worse than having one dip into the middle of your back," says Cox. "They're really uncomfortable. So we keep saying 'Get rid of them!'"



#### 1 WATT'S THAT?

This odd-looking tasseled Italian lamp—by Fortuay—is the most inquired-about *Friends* prop and, at \$2,200, one of the most valuable. "It has kind of a bohemian feel," Grande says. "It's not expensive looking, but when it's lit, it really glows." What else makes it so popular? "I have no idea," offers Matthew Perry (Chandler). "But I know that you can't put a cookie on it. I tried it once as a joke, and it just didn't stay."



#### 2 VERY UNCOOL

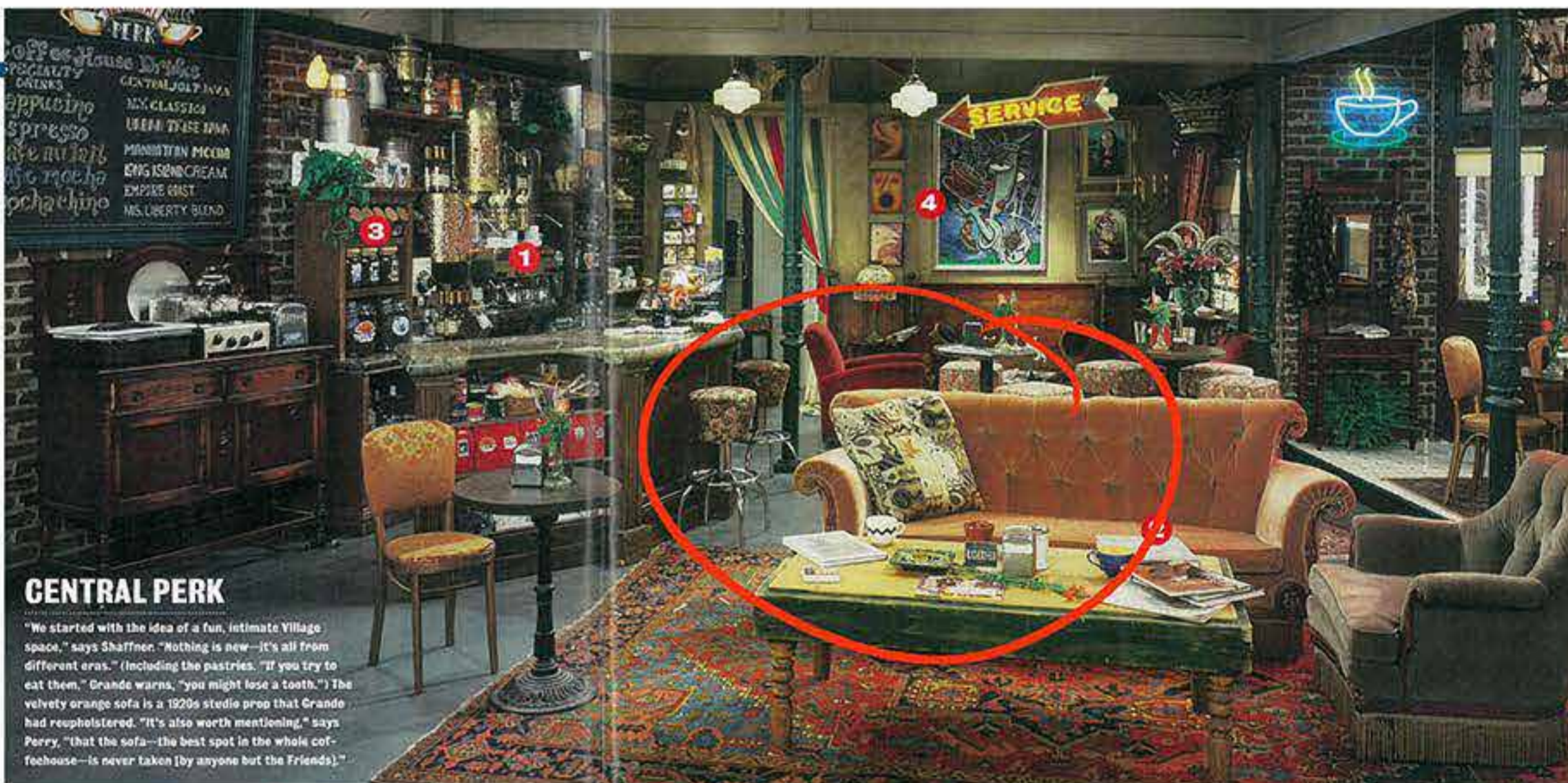
"We keep a lot of water and soda in here," Grande says. "If you've ever noticed, the characters rarely pull out food." And no wonder: The refrigerator isn't always on; thus, all the drinks "taste extremely bad," says Cox, who, like Jennifer Aniston (Rachel), chooses Snapple lemonade for her scenes. Adds Matt LeBlanc (Joey): "There was a smell in the refrigerator for two months, like a rat had died in there or something."



#### 3 LOONY TUNES

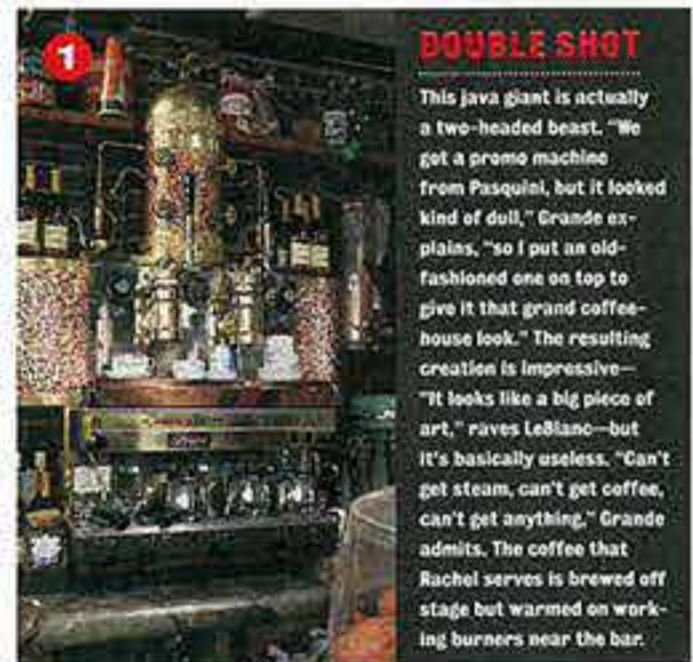
Featuring artists like Anthrax and Nino, Monica's CD collection is composed of Warner Bros. Records giveaways. "Once in a while, I'll look through them to see if I can find something for my dressing room," Cox says, "but there are never any good ones." With one notable exception, of course: the official *Friends* soundtrack. "Could Monica listen to that?" ponders Perry. "It's kinda surreal when you think about it."

with Village (including 90 Bedford Street, where the exteriors of Monica and Rachel's apartment are shot), and you'll never find the pals' fourth-floor digs, or the clique's fave coffeehouse. A better place to look: Burbank, Calif.—specifically, Stage 24 on the Warner Bros. Television lot (previous tenant: *Full House*). ● The *Friends* set is an affront to the principles of sensible design, boasting unorthodox layouts, exposed foundations, and neon tints. "Lavenders, greens, yellows, and pinks—it sounds like too many colors came out of the can," says *Friends* art director John Shaffner. "But it melds together to create a joyous space." ● Even more inviting than the colors are those ubiquitous sofas. "We sleep on the couches all the time," says Courteney Cox (Monica). "Except Joey and Chandler's sofa, which is really gross." ♦



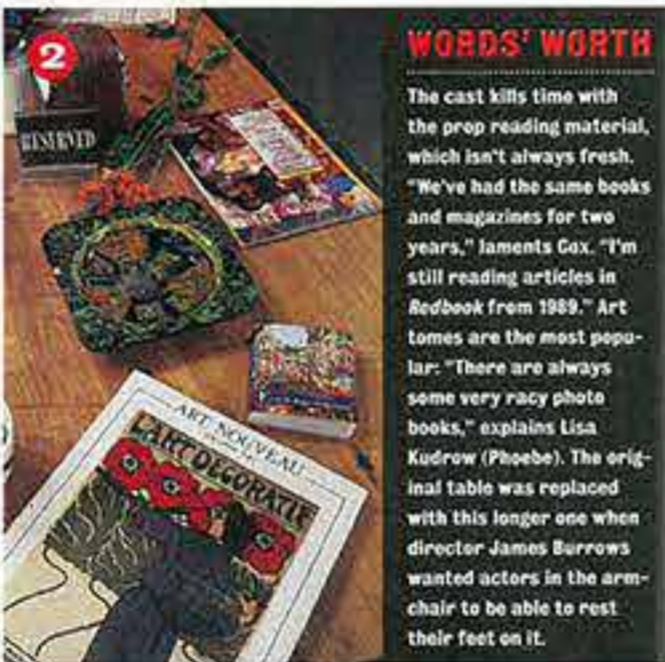
### CENTRAL PERK

"We started with the idea of a fun, intimate Village space," says Shaffner. "Nothing is new—it's all from different eras." (Including the pastries. "If you try to eat them," Grande warns, "you might lose a tooth.") The velvet orange sofa is a 1920s studio prop that Grande had repurposed. "It's also worth mentioning," says Perry, "that the sofa—the best spot in the whole coffeehouse—is never taken [by anyone but the *Friends*]."



#### 1 DOUBLE SHOT

This java giant is actually a two-headed beast. "We got a promo machine from Pasquini, but it looked kind of dull," Grande explains, "so I put an old-fashioned one on top to give it that grand coffeehouse look." The resulting creation is impressive—"It looks like a big piece of art," Paves LeBlanc—but it's basically useless. "Can't get steam, can't get coffee, can't get anything," Grande admits. The coffee that Rachel serves is brewed off stage but warmed on working burners near the bar.



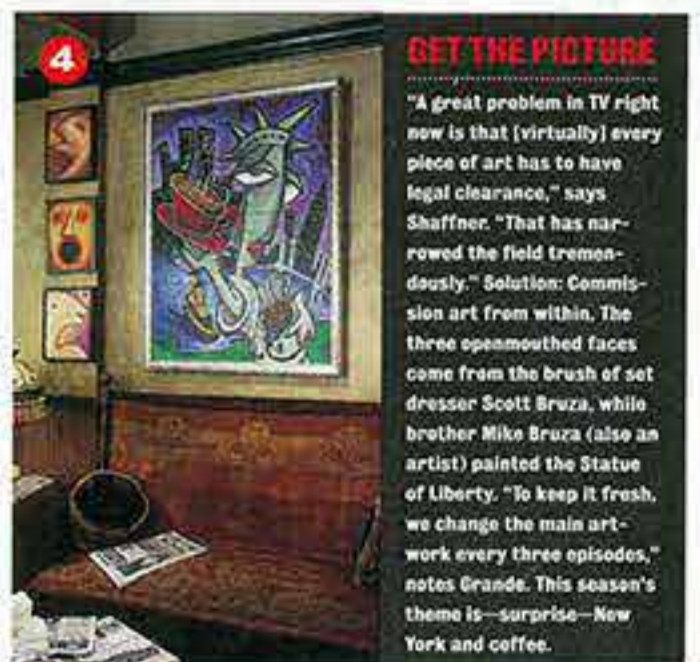
#### 2 WORDS' WORTH

The cast kills time with the prop reading material, which isn't always fresh. "We've had the same books and magazines for two years," laments Cox. "I'm still reading articles in *Redbook* from 1989." Art tomes are the most popular: "There are always some very racy photo books," explains Lisa Kudrow (Phoebe). The original table was replaced with this longer one when director James Burrows wanted actors in the armchair to be able to rest their feet on it.



#### 3 MAGIC BEANS

Next time the *Friends* are espresso-ing themselves, check out the labels on the beanbags and jars, which Grande designed for the Central Perk Flavors he imagined (like Broadway Mocha Quartet and Ms. Liberty Blend). "Because Starbucks is such a big thing, I tried to follow that theme," says Grande. "I just sat down and had fun with the words. It's also a detail that gives us a chance to be a little bit more colorful behind the bar. And whether or not we ever see it on TV, the cast can appreciate it."



#### 4 GET THE PICTURE

"A great problem in TV right now is that [virtually] every piece of art has to have legal clearance," says Shaffner. "That has narrowed the field tremendously." Solution: Commission art from within. The three openmouthed faces come from the brush of set dresser Scott Bruza, while brother Mike Bruza (also an artist) painted the Statue of Liberty. "To keep it fresh, we change the main artwork every three episodes," notes Grande. This season's theme is—surprise—New York and coffee.

