

# ELLE DECOR

WINTER 2026

## THE MEANING OF THINGS

HOW MUSEUM WORTHY  
ART FOUND A HOME

A MILANESE ARCHITECT  
GOES SITE SPECIFIC

THE HERMES IN THE  
LIVING ROOM

A BROWN FURNITURE  
MASTERPIECE

+

HOW TO MAKE  
EVERY GIFT FEEL LIKE THE  
PARTY OF THE YEAR



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CRAIG STARR'S  
NEW YORK APARTMENT  
BY CHARLIE FERRER





Alhambra, celebrating luck since 1968

# Van Cleef & Arpels

Haute Joaillerie, place Vendôme since 1906



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Alhambra  
Transformable  
long necklace



Alhambra, celebrating luck since 1968

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Alhambra  
Reversible ring








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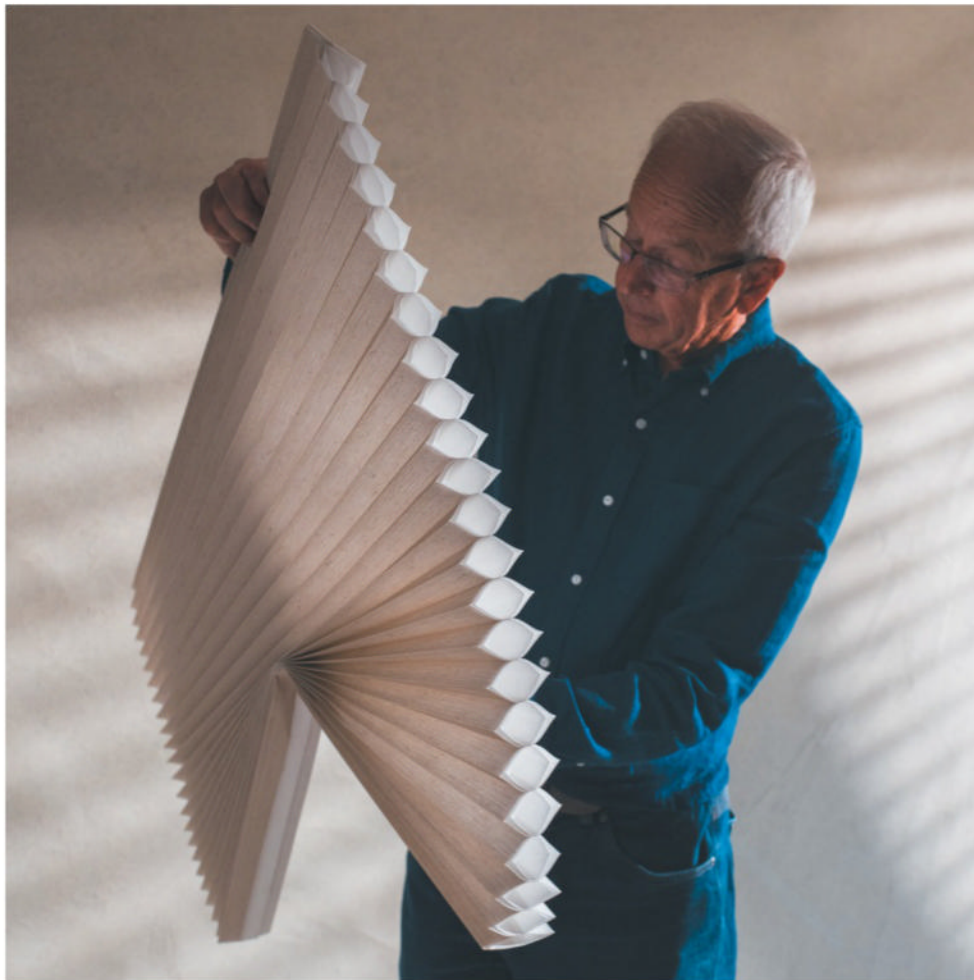
*"What we do with light is magic. It's not just design. It's harmony, serenity."*

– WENDELL COLSON, Head of Research & Development

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Colorful stones and strong martinis—ideally in gem-toned glassware—are the secret to party season success (page 29).

Piano cocktail glass, \$100 for 2, [sophieloujacobsen.com](http://sophieloujacobsen.com). Tourmaline ring, \$27,548, ruby ring, \$15,648, yellow diamond ring, \$60,498, blue zircon ring, \$9,048, and emerald ring, \$103,250, [levian.com](http://levian.com). Mohair Supreme fabric, \$253 per yard, [maharam.com](http://maharam.com)

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A wall of art in the guest bedroom of Luciano Giorgi's Milan apartment feels like an extension of the city's best galleries. See the full collection on page 58.

## STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: ELLE DECOR
2. Publication Number: 0005-5830
3. Filing Date: October 1, 2025
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly, except combined issues in Dec/Jan/Feb and Jun/Jul/Aug
5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 8
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$15.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor:  
Publisher: Alicianne Rand, 300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019  
Editor: Stelene Volandes, 300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019  
Managing Editor: Laura Sampedro, 300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019
10. Owner: Hearst Magazine Media, Inc.  
300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019  
Stockholder of Hearst Magazine Media, Inc., is:  
Hearst Communications, Inc., 300 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None
12. Tax Status: Not applicable
13. Publication Title: ELLE DECOR
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: September 2025
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months:	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date:
a. Total no. of copies (net press run):	401,009	383,300
b. 1. Mailed outside-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies):	338,700	329,913
2. Mailed in-county paid subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies):	n/a	n/a
3. Paid distribution outside the mails including sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other paid distribution outside USPS®:	13,759	10,000
4. Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS® (e.g., First-Class Mail):	n/a	n/a
c. Total paid distribution [sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)]:	352,459	339,913
d. 1. Free or nominal rate outside-county copies included on PS Form 3541:	16,579	16,993
2. Free or nominal rate in-county copies included on PS Form 3541:	n/a	n/a
3. Free or nominal rate copies mailed at other classes through the USPS® (e.g., First-Class Mail):	n/a	n/a
4. Free or nominal rate distribution outside the mail (carriers or other means):	8,877	2,907
e. Total free or nominal rate distribution [sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4)]:	25,456	19,900
f. Total distribution (sum of 15c and 15e):	377,915	359,813
g. Copies not distributed:	23,094	23,487
h. Total (sum of 15f and 15g):	401,009	383,300
i. Percent paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)	93.26%	94.47%
16. a. Requested and paid electronic copies	112,289	101,800
b. Total requested and paid print copies and requested/paid electronic copies (15c)	464,748	441,713
c. Total requested copy distribution (15f) and requested/paid electronic copies	490,204	461,613
d. Percent paid and/or requested circulation (both print & electronic copies)	94.81%	95.69%

17. Publication Statement of Ownership  
If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the Winter 2026 issue of this publication.

18. Signature and Title of Publisher  
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Sotheby's refreshes the pitch room at the Breuer.  
BY ANNIE GOLDSMITH

## On the Cover



The living room of Craig Starr's Upper East Side apartment designed by Charlie Ferrer.

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
COBEY ARNER



The great and the good have cozied up on this Royère couch for eight decades. See why on page 46.

Ours Polaire sofa and Forme Libre cocktail table, [jean-roycere.com](http://jean-roycere.com)



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ELLE DECOR (ISSN 1046-1957) Volume 37, Number 1, Winter 2026, is published monthly except for combined issues in December/January/February and June/July/August, by Hearst, 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019 USA. Steven R. Swartz, President & Chief Executive Officer; William R. Hearst III, Chairman; Frank A. Bennack Jr., Executive Vice Chairman. Hearst Magazine Media Inc.: Debi Chirichella, President; Regina Buckley, Chief Financial and Strategy Officer & Treasurer; Catherine A. Bostron, Secretary. © 2025 by Hearst Magazine Media Inc. All rights reserved. ELLE and ELLE DECOR are used under license from the trademark owner, Hachette Filipacchi Presse. Periodicals postage paid at N.Y., N.Y., and additional mailing offices. Canada Post International Publications mail product (Canadian distribution) sales agreement No. 40012499. Editorial and Advertising Offices: 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019. Subscription prices: United States and possessions: \$15 for one year. Canada: \$41 for one year. All other countries: \$60 for one year. Subscription services: ELLE DECOR will, upon receipt of a complete subscription order, undertake fulfillment of that order so as to provide the first copy for delivery by the Postal Service or alternate carrier within 4–6 weeks. For customer service, changes of address, and subscription orders, log on to [elledecor.com/service](http://elledecor.com/service) or write to Customer Service Department, ELLE DECOR, P.O. Box 5173, Boone, IA 50950. From time to time we make our subscriber list available to companies who sell goods and services by mail that we believe would interest our readers. If you would rather not receive such offers via postal mail, please send your current mailing label or exact copy to Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 5173, Boone, IA 50950. You can also visit [preferences.hearstmags.com](http://preferences.hearstmags.com) to manage your preferences and opt out of receiving marketing offers by email. ELLE DECOR is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or art. None will be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Canadian registration number 126018209RT0001. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to ELLE DECOR, P.O. Box 5173, Boone, IA 50950. Printed in the USA.

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### PUBLISHED BY HEARST

PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Steven R. Swartz

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P.O. Box 5173, Boone, IA 50950

Published at 300 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019.

Tel: 212-649-2000. ELLE® and ELLE DECOR™ are used under license  
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Printed in the USA.

For information on reprints and e-prints,  
please contact Brian Kolb at Wright's Reprints,  
877-652-5295 or bkolb@wrightsreprints.com

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Via Bracco 6, 20159 Milano, 39-02-6619-2935, lcerutti@hearst.it  
UNITED KINGDOM  
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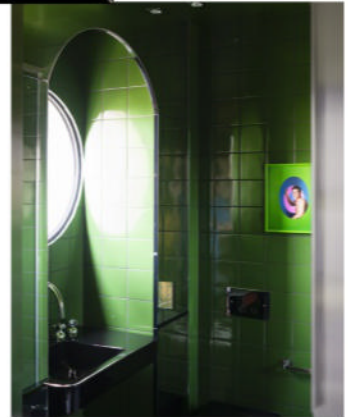


Far left: *Blooming Meadow* by Gustav Klimt, sold at Sotheby's in November for \$86 million.

Left: Ours Polaire armchairs and sofa by Jean Royère, circa 1950.



Craig Starr (left) with designer Charlie Ferrer, on the balcony of Starr's Manhattan apartment.



Above: A bathroom clad in green tile in Luciano Giorgi's Milan home.

## WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

Imagine waking up to work by Jasper Johns, Ed Ruscha, and Louise Bourgeois. Or imagine it's Gustav Klimt, Henri Matisse, and Edvard Munch. The first is the personal collection of the star of our cover, gallerist Craig Starr; the second was that of the late Leonard Lauder. "No one can believe this is how I live," Starr says in our story, which showcases the apartment he created with designer Charlie Ferrer.

Starr's approach to art and life is similar to Lauder's. "It wasn't bought for public consumption," gallerist Brett Gorvy says of Lauder's choices. The Klimt he lived with for 40 years, *Portrait of Elisabeth Lederer*, set

an eye-watering record of \$236.4 million in a Sotheby's sale in November. Real collections—whether of priceless artworks, Meissen porcelain (as in the home of Italian architect Luciano Giorgi), or a Jean Royère Ours Polaire sofa and chairs (on the wish list of many a design fiend)—reveal what matters to the person who put them together.

I would be blissfully happy with one of Lauder's other Klimts, the deceptively simple landscape *Blooming Meadow*, and an armchair from which to admire it. For everyone else, we have the *Elle Decor* gift guide, curated by Will Kahn and Ben Reynaert, which showcases something else that matters: It's not so much what we want to buy, it's what we want to give. ■



G10 armchair, from \$2,820, [ligne-roset.com](http://ligne-roset.com)



ELISA LIPSKY-KARASZ  
HEAD OF EDITORIAL CONTENT  
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"A chic essential for any kitchen."  
—Cody Guilfoyle, photographer  
Olive oil dispenser, \$85, [bellacucina.com](http://bellacucina.com)



"This herbaceous blend is reminiscent of a grand home and spa."  
—Nannette Brown, interior designer  
Pot Pourri eau de cologne, \$180 for 100ml, [us.smnovella.com](http://us.smnovella.com)

"Gifting a photograph I make is a special way to connect with someone dear."  
—William Abranowicz, photographer  
*Girl, Stonehenge*, 1994, \$1,200, [williamabranowicz.com](http://williamabranowicz.com)



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# CONVERSATION PIECE

The object everyone is, will be, or should be talking about. This month: Color blooms in Pedro Almodóvar's *Volver* rug for Roche Bobois.

By BENJAMIN REYNAERT

The vibrant pattern was drawn from a skirt worn by Penélope Cruz in Almodóvar's 2006 film *Volver*, for which the piece is named.

Hand-tufted in 100% New Zealand wool, each rug features a cut border that follows the contours of the floral motif.



The rug's exuberant palette reflects Almodóvar's love of bright colors. *Volver* rug by Pedro Almodóvar for Roche Bobois, \$11,790, roche-bobois.com



# ETCETERA

The little things are the big things. This month: Good design never goes to waste.

By BENJAMIN REYNAERT



Handmade in England, Bridie Hall's apricot trellis pattern bin marries wit and whimsy.  
Pentreath & Hall, \$130, pentreath-hall.com



Hand-silkscreened animal and other designs decorate this irreverent lacquer basket.  
Fornasetti, \$1,770, fornasetti.com



The copper-ribbed corners of this piece were inspired by a 1940s French original.  
Rose Uniacke, \$1,334, roseuniacke.com



This geometric leather bin features a bronze-handled lid and refined tone-on-tone stitching.  
Frette, \$650, frette.com



A limited edition collaboration transforms this classic pedal bin with a copper finish.  
Studio KO x Vipp, \$900, vipp.com



Finely braided wicker offset by supple leather creates an artful interplay of color.  
Hermès, \$9,150, hermes.com



A mosaic of hand-laid lacquered eggshell lends this item an enduring allure.  
Pigeon and Poodle, \$380, pigeonandpoodle.com



Elegant yet functional, this solid brass piece embodies refined Art Deco craftsmanship.  
Steven Gambrel x Drummonds, \$2,365, drummonds-uk.com



A refined union of wood veneer and stainless steel with chic, disciplined lines.  
Ralph Lauren Home, \$995, ralphlauren.com



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ZIGGY BED SOFT letto - bed  
TYLSA NIGHT 54 comodino - night table  
MYRIA libreria - bookshelf

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# GIFT WITH PARTY

How to make every holiday present feel like the fete of the year.

Styled by WILL KAHN Produced by WILL KAHN and BENJAMIN REYNAERT

Photographs by CODY GUILFOYLE



## Dessert for Dinner

There are no rules anymore.  
Don't bother setting a table.  
This sofa has one. Pass the  
sour peaches, please.

Tuffy-Time 20 sofa by Patricia Urquiola for B&B Italia, \$15,648, and integrated table, \$2,588, bebitalia.com. Poppy flower centerpiece, \$26,000, buccellati.com. Tirache tumblers by Federico De Majo for Zafferano, \$168 for 6, lumens.com. Lithographie Equestre bridge playing cards, \$205 for 2 decks, hermes.com. Dice set with tray by Giobagnara for Poltrona Frau, \$2,050, poltronafrau.com. Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra watch, \$42,500, omegawatches.com







## The Reception

A hostess is always pleased to see that you brought flowers (as long as they come in a vase).

Vase, Dior Maison,  
800-929-3467

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## Game Night

The person with  
the best-looking  
board wins.

Pepa cocktail table by Maurizio Manzoni for Roche Bobois, \$2,790, roche-bobois.com. Art Deco coffeepot, \$7,800, puiforcat.com. Hero domino set, \$6,040, armani.com. Indigolite Blue necklace by Pomellato, 929-667-1967. Ellen Rummikub set, \$140, domanihome.com. Dice from Paris-Louxor foldable backgammon set, \$6,850, hermes.com. Mosaïque teacup and saucer, \$305, hermes.com. Roll the Dice cocktail napkins, \$150 for 4, elizabethlake.com



## Book Club

Have you read the book? It doesn't even matter, if you bring the right ingredients.



Duke bar cart, \$18,320, Wyatt triple nut bowl, \$150, Wyatt nut bowl, \$65, and Wyatt tea tray, \$350, [ralphlauren.com](http://ralphlauren.com). Martini glasses by Maison Balzac, \$75 each, [comingsoonnewyork.com](http://comingsoonnewyork.com). The Chip & Dip tray, \$160, [bignightbk.com](http://bignightbk.com). Snoopy table lamp by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for FLOS, \$1,840, [lumens.com](http://lumens.com). Marie coupe glasses, \$38 for 6, [cb2.com](http://cb2.com)





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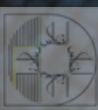
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## Grab & Go

We thoroughly approve  
of a buffet. But please  
shine the silver.

Carrousel two-tone case with 24-piece flatware set, \$4,750, [christoffle.com](http://christoffle.com). Everyday bowl by Fredericks and Mae, \$65, [bignightbk.com](http://bignightbk.com). Minty marbled party hats, \$98 for 6, [housesandparties.com](http://housesandparties.com). Ultrasuede fabric in Laurel, \$127 per yard, [maharam.com](http://maharam.com)





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SCAVOLINI



## The Kids Table

Good taste begins early,  
and at home.



Bamboo Mood end table by Jiang Qiong Er for Roche Bobois, \$4,090, [roche-bobois.com](http://roche-bobois.com). Modern rug, from \$995, [nordicknots.com](http://nordicknots.com). Charlie chair by EcoBirdy, \$225, [goodeeworld.com](http://goodeeworld.com). Ice cream bowls by Pierrot Doremus, \$350 for 4, and porcelain bread plates by Augarten, \$175 each, [abask.com](http://abask.com). Water glasses, \$390 each, Dior Maison, 800-929-3467. Apple sugar bowl, \$40, [store.moma.org](http://store.moma.org). Charlie Bear baby cup, \$350, and BeeBee baby cup, \$350, [christoffe.com](http://christoffe.com). Neocolor I pastels, \$97 for 30, [carandache.com](http://carandache.com). Minty marbled party hats, \$98 for 6, [housesandparties.com](http://housesandparties.com). Opening Night play shoes, \$39, [supersmall.com](http://supersmall.com).







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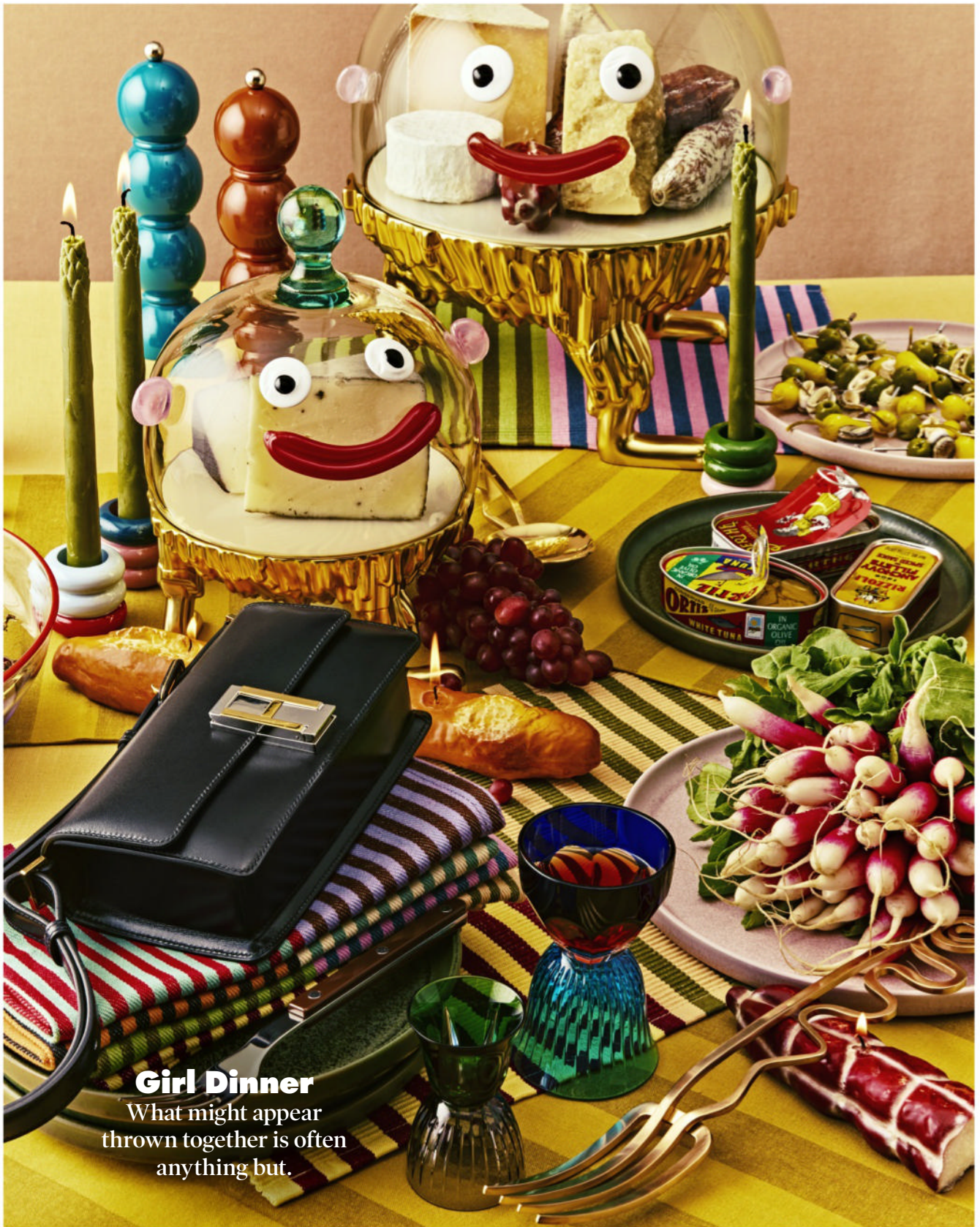
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**Girl Dinner**  
What might appear  
thrown together is often  
anything but.

Haas Niki cake stands by L'Objet x Haas Brothers, large \$3,900 and small \$1,950, and Spirale serving set, \$325, l-objet.com. Mallette bag, \$14,100, hermes.com. Cerdagne glass, \$820, Chambord glass, \$975, and Stella glass, \$930, saint-louis.com. Asparagus Bunch candles by Maison Balzac, \$40 for 4, and stainless steel flatware by Sabre, from \$18 per piece, comingsoonnewyork.com. Duo striped napkins and place mats by Dusen Dusen, from \$60, comingsoonnewyork.com. Essential striped place mats, \$60 for 4, hawkinsnewyork.com. Ondata napkin rings, \$88 for 4, dotybennett.com. Baguette candle, \$48, and Salami candle, \$42, gohar.world. Drift dinner plates, from \$80 for 6, cb2.com. Bobbin salt and pepper mills in Nutmeg and Teal, \$96 each, usa.addisonross.com. Festival tablecloth in Butter, \$207, sferra.com



## The Debrief

Candles may be blown out, but post-party gossip should continue.



Pompei vase by Gio Ponti for Molteni&C, \$1,430, molteni.it/us. Wineglasses by Helle Mardahl for DWR, \$415 for 2, dwr.com. Conanicut coasters, \$110 for 4, dotybennett.com. Couleur Vivante earrings, prada.com. Ultrasuede fabric in Nectarine, \$127 per yard, maharam.com

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## Just Make It Nice

"Store-bought is fine." Ina said it, so it must be true.



Logo lamp, \$5,475, [armani.com](http://armani.com). Acacia candlesticks by Nina Serirafi, from \$5,520, [ralphpucci.com](http://ralphpucci.com). Triangular stacking tables by Miles Redd for the Lacquer Company, \$1,750, [thelacquercompany.com](http://thelacquercompany.com). Medium porcelain serving plate, \$380, [prada.com](http://prada.com). Porcelain chopstick rests, \$220 for 2, spoons, \$220 for 2, and dessert plates, \$240 for 2, [prada.com](http://prada.com). Uni Red chopsticks, \$135 per pair, [christoffle.com](http://christoffle.com). Serie B wine decanter by Josef Hoffmann for Lobmeyr, \$1,683, [stillfried.com](http://stillfried.com). Serie B champagne cup by Josef Hoffmann for Lobmeyr, \$454, [kneenandco.com](http://kneenandco.com). Black Kiku crystal glass by Kimiko Yasuda, \$1,500, [rwguild.com](http://rwguild.com). Chrome fortune cookie, \$40, [comingsoonnewyork.com](http://comingsoonnewyork.com). Art Deco ice bucket, \$2,300, [puiforcat.com](http://puiforcat.com). Liberty Bright Cut hoop earrings, \$88,000, and Deco graduated chain link necklace, \$98,000, [davidyurman.com](http://davidyurman.com). Ultrasuede fabric in Laurel, \$127 per yard, [maharam.com](http://maharam.com).



Dessert coupe, \$88, and  
Bean iced tea spoon,  
\$62, gohar.world.  
Diva sugar bowl, \$255,  
coffeepot, \$590, coffee  
saucer, \$70 each, and  
coffee cup, \$155 each,  
ginori1735.com.  
Festival tablecloth in  
Poolside, \$207,  
sferra.com

## The Grand Finale

Not to be saccharine,  
but there's a reason  
we always end on a  
sweet note.





## BACCHANAL HOW-TO

Party season has arrived. Is your table ready? Our columnist outlines her own personal holiday gathering hotline.

By RITA KONIG Photograph by TINA BARNEY

I always leave my holiday party planning too late into the season. I don't know what it is, but one minute it seems like crazy talk, and the next minute it's past deadline to have anything really special made. So this year I am planning next year. But I made sure to find enough to make festive entertaining feel as such in the meantime.

My first port of call for getting in

the mood is **Houses & Parties**, the most cheer-inducing site on the internet, full of party chic and fun. Rebecca Gardner is everything you could dream of in a Southern hostess. This year my basket is full of her red and green twisty candles for the table, her foil-wrapped candies and peppermint sticks, her marbled wrapping paper

Tina Barney, *Mom's Dinner Party*, 1982.

and crackers. She has little beeswax pine cone firelighters that will be in a basket by my fireplace if they don't find their way into people's stockings. I'm very keen on the vintage St. Louis red twist decanter on my bar, and she always has the best cocktail napkins (such an easy way to add some holiday cheer to the house). If you're starting from scratch you can go all in here with china, glassware, and linens. I'm

COURTESY THE ARTIST



also longing for the year when I put a party hat or tiara at everyone's place setting, and I so wish I had a child young and amenable enough to put her in a Christmas nightie with elf ears and shoes. Gardner is also selling large golden foil sacks this year—amazing for wrapping those impossible presents, like bikes and golf clubs.

The natural next step after Houses and Parties is **KRB NYC**. They have golden Jean Roger frogs to fill with candy and peppermint bark boxes that tie with fat red ribbons (excellent for gift-wrapping something special, and the box is a wonderful file afterward).

The trouble is I keep finding all the best presents for myself. **Bergdorf Goodman** has become a seasonal tradition for my daughter and me—we head to the ornament room on the top floor. I wish I could say we choose one thing a year, but we're like magpies in there, darting about. We always choose a Bergdorf lady and then a few other things. Our tree is all the better for it.

I have just ordered 12 Country Estate dinner plates in holly red from my mother **Nina Campbell's** shop in London. For years I thought it was mad to have china that you use once a year. Now I relish the ritual of seeing the boxes come out from under the stairs and unwrapping these beautiful things that we see so rarely, like the most special sort of friends.

Which then makes me desperate for a Christmas tablecloth, which I've been looking for on **Summerill and Bishop's** website. They have such beautiful options (and, happily, make them long enough). The challenge here is being spoiled for choice and getting sidetracked by all the other things, like their mistletoe napkins. **The Table Love** is another excellent website for linens, though I warn you it can be overwhelming, because you kind of want everything and it all layers in 25,000 ways. But if you can keep your head about you, you will have a ravishingly sumptuous table.

Please also head to **Zara Home**. Yes. Their snowy fir tree candles are really beautiful and come in two sizes. I place

these all the way down the table. They also have a children's seasonal bed linen that is adorable and very well priced, which makes it fun rather than a consideration. It's all about the mix, *always*. One thing I hate spending money on is present tags, and Zara has done a stamp. Completely genius.

For the house, the tree is of course key, but this year I am also decorating the staircase with fir garlands and cones and mini-decorations. And since one can get battery-operated fairy lights, I think I may be illuminating it, too. Wreaths on all the windows facing the garden, and the scent of fir throughout the house, obviously.

Scent is essential. **Ralph Lauren** does a wonderful Christmas candle

called Holiday that does exactly what it says on the box. When I was growing up, it was Agraria's Bitter Orange that announced Christmas to our nostrils. And I highly recommend **Perfumer H** for the best seasonal scents and room sprays. I often have a quick spritz of their Marmalade before I open the door to guests.

And absolutely vital: the drinks tray. I have **Abask** swizzle sticks. (I am in fact in a slight panic to get to the end of this column so I can get back to the site and start shopping for more!) They have really charming napkin rings, too, which add enormously to the table even if you don't want to get involved in Christmas plates.

And I have just bought some vintage clip-on mushroom decorations. It is certainly a good place to start when you need to get catapulted into celebrating in a serious way. Oh, and one more thing: **Dear Annabelle** for all your tags, papers, and notecards. Once you have the house ready for a party, you will need to write down who exactly is coming. ■

I'M IN A SLIGHT PANIC  
TO GET TO THE END OF  
THIS COLUMN SO I CAN  
GET BACK TO THE SITE  
AND SHOP SOME MORE!

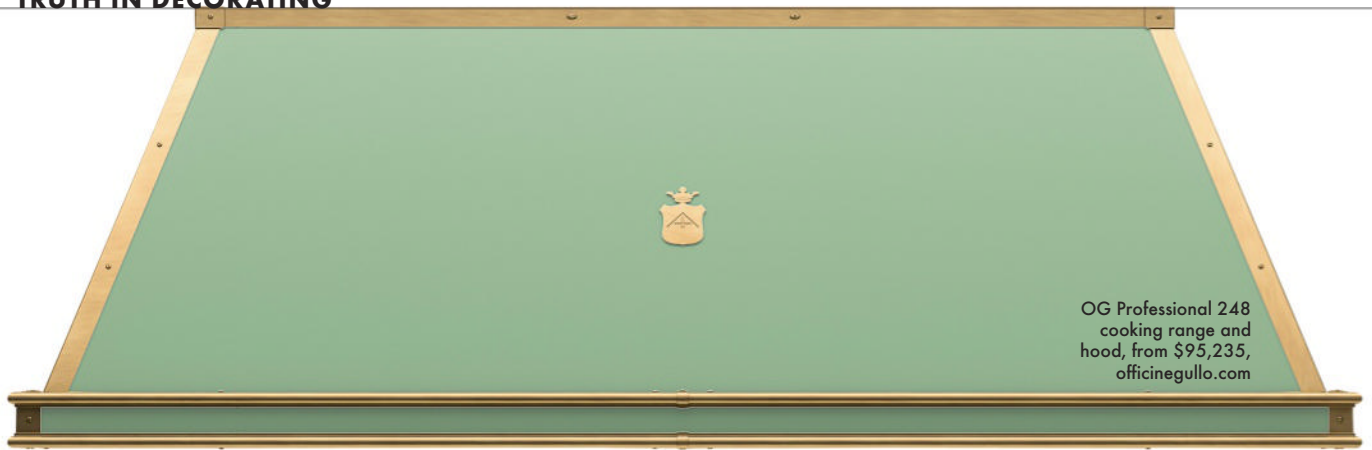
—RITA KONIG



Pierre Bergian, *Flying Flowers*, 2025.







## NECESSARY LUXURIES

The design we need to make our lives and homes work. This month: Precision meets provenance in Officine Gullo's newest high-performance cooking range.

By BENJAMIN REYNAERT



**T**here's something undeniably theatrical about a chef's kitchen: the hiss of a burner, the gleam of polished metal, the promise of an unforgettable meal. Officine Gullo's top-of-the-line OG Professional 248 range, shown here in the new velvety-matte matcha green color with

burnished brass and 24K gold accents, is less appliance than objet d'art. Beneath its bold exterior lies serious power: customizable ovens and a body of stainless steel nearly an eighth of an inch thick. Paired with the brand's handcrafted Pyramid Hood, this is luxury that earns its keep. ■

### SUPPORTING CAST

Thoughtful additions that elevate the rituals of daily life.



Diamant No. 10 casserole by Thomas O'Brien for Reed and Barton, \$250, [copperbeechbythesea.com](http://copperbeechbythesea.com)



Gastro serving boards, from \$120, [jaysonhome.com](http://jaysonhome.com)



Tequila Blanco Ensemble, \$129, [casajtequila.com](http://casajtequila.com)



Teapot by Calle Forsberg for Svenskt Tenn, \$230, [svensktenn.com](http://svensktenn.com)







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A late-1950s photograph of the living room in Jean Royère's Paris apartment. Ours Polaire sofa; Persan VII floor lamp.



## BEARS ON PARADE

If there is one piece of furniture that has captured the attention of our era more than any other, it's this one.

By STEPHEN WALLIS

**T**he Ours Polaires. The Polar Bears. To some insiders, simply the Polars. Sensually curvaceous and decadently cocooning, these minimalist yet ultra-cushy sofas and chairs designed by Jean Royère in the 1940s represent the ultimate in cozy-chic sophistication—particularly for the elite tastemakers who can afford them.

High-profile owners include prominent collector Maja Hoffmann, shoe designer Christian Louboutin, and art dealer Larry Gagosian, who outfitted his New York City living room with a cherry-red Polar Bear sofa next to a

swirling Cy Twombly painting, also in reds. Collector-dealers Adam Lindemann and Amalia Dayan had two chairs and a sofa in their Upper East Side townhouse, perched beneath an Alexander Calder mobile, before they sold the set—still in its original celery-green mohair—at Christie's a few years ago for a record \$3.42 million, more than twice the estimate.

"Royère is the iconic decorator. His colors, design, and lines are timeless," says Flavien Gaillard, Christie's head of design in Europe. For some time now it has been de rigueur among discerning

collectors to pair their blue chip artworks with vintage furnishings by a select group of 20th-century French designers that includes Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand, Pierre Jeanneret, Diego Giacometti, and the Lalannes, as well as Royère. "The Polar Bear set has often felt like that first box to check," says Richard Wright, head of the Chicago-based auction house Wright. "It's fantastically chic furniture that fits into a lot of interiors. It doesn't look at all dated and stuck in its time."

The appeal of Royère's elegantly rotund Polar Bears has filtered down to the broader market, of course, part of what interiors trendwatchers have pointed to in recent years as a desire—amplified by pandemic-era isolation—for soft, inviting furnishings with cossetting shapes. Look no further than Gwyneth Paltrow's latest Goop collection for CB2 or Sarah Sherman Samuel's Billow sofa for Lulu and Georgia, designs that clearly channel Royère vibes.

Not surprisingly, Royère knockoffs are plentiful, but that may be changing thanks to Vladimir Markovic, who began overseeing the Royère estate in 2018. A descendant of Micha Djordjevic, Royère's companion for the last 25 years of his life, Markovic won an important recent California court decision against a company called Edition Modern, which had been selling replicas of more than 50 Royère designs. The estate successfully argued that they were protected by copyright.

"This guy was doing cheap reproductions of Jean's pieces, using his name and, from my point of view, really dishonoring his work," Markovic says. "Now we are controlling, let's say, the universe of Jean Royère."

As well as focusing on issues around copyright, authenticity, and provenance, Markovic also founded "a heritage furniture company" that crafts authorized reissues of Royère designs. Launched several years ago, the company has showrooms in Paris and New York that offer a gradually expanding range of furniture and lighting.

These include many of Royère's best-known creations, such as the Polar Bear chair and sofa, the Oeuf (Egg) chair, and



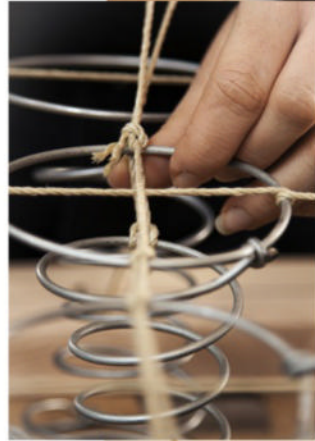
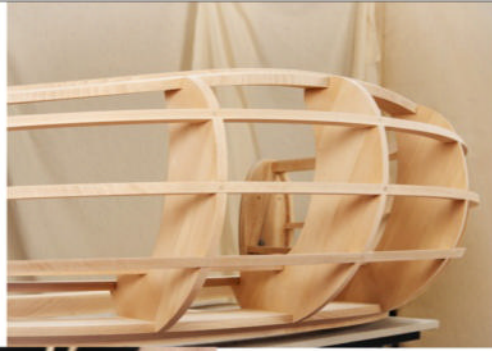
the indoor-outdoor Croisillon seating and tables, which feature distinctive woven metal frames and are available in all six original colorways. Also on offer are multiple iterations of Royère's Liane (Vine) and Persan (Persian) lights, chairs from his Undulation and Yo-Yo series, and his biomorphic Flaque (Puddle) tables, including a version with a straw marquetry top inlaid with star motifs—the same distinctive veneer used on a cabinet that sold at Sotheby's in 2018 for a then-record \$1.76 million.

All the pieces are made to order in France, with artisan collaborators such as fabric specialists Jouffre and wood-working experts Souchet, based on prototypes developed at Royère's atelier in Lyon. It took the team nearly two and a half years to get the Polar Bear right, a process that was less about replicating Royère's fabrication details than combining and refining various techniques he used, to best "represent the spirit of Royère," as the company's creative director, Jonathan Wray, puts it.

Despite the Polar Bear's deceptively minimalist form, which gives the impression of having been sculpted rather than constructed, the wooden skeleton and multiple interior layers are complex. Wray notes that only wooden joinery is used, and the alpaca upholstery is entirely hand-stitched to achieve the distinctive seamless fluidity. If the fabric is pulled too tight, it feels like a drum; too loose, and it sags.

"Right now people feel a need for comfort, not unlike the postwar moment when the Polar was designed," Wray says. "People were traumatized. You have this piece that is enveloping, that is warm, that is rounded, that is fluffy, that is monolithic and feels grounded."

Royère, who died in 1981, is estimated to have produced between 100



From top: The emblematic curve of the Ours Polaire sofa's wood frame; a craftsman fastens an internal spring within the seat; a sheet of the sofa's padding, made of horsehair.



A deconstructed model reveals the layers of craftsmanship and the various materials inside the Ours Polaire sofa.



A white Ours Polaire set made of solid wood and a deep pile alpaca velvet.

Ours Polaire sofa and armchair, [jean-royere.com](http://jean-royere.com)

and 150 Polar Bear sets (a sofa with two chairs), as well as a similar number each of individual sofas and pairs of chairs. Until Markovic came along, there were no authorized reissues of any Royère designs. While not inexpensive—a new Polar Bear sofa costs upward of a quarter-million dollars—these offer an option for buyers beyond rare vintage pieces and knockoffs.

All the new, made-to-order Royère furnishings are marked, numbered, and certified. Lead times for upholstered pieces are typically six to 12 months. Around 80 percent of purchases are made by interior designers, including Joseph Dirand, Peter Mikic, Clive Longstein, Monique Gibson, and the duo Ariel Ashe and Reinaldo Leandro.

"To source authentic Royère is a study in patience and precision, often involving questions of provenance and authenticity," says Ashe, who this past fall had her eye on a pair of Royère Rouleaux sofas (a precursor to the Polar Bear) at Sotheby's that turned out to be copies and were withdrawn from sale. She and Leandro recently commissioned a Rouleaux sofa in white shearling for a Manhattan living room, where they surrounded it with vintage pieces by Ruhlmann and Leleu. "It's monumental yet soft, refined yet deeply inviting," Ashe says.

For Patrick Seguin, a leading dealer of vintage Royère, Markovic's entry into the market is a positive, "particularly thanks to vigilance regarding authenticity," he says. He notes, however, that the reissues lack the rarity and historical value of the originals. This past fall, at the Design Miami Paris fair, Seguin's all-Royère stand nearly sold out, led by a rare freeform table and a trio of Trèfle (Clover) lounge chairs whose backs and frames are a study in exquisite tapers and curves.

That particular Clover chair is not yet being produced as a reissue. "Each year we're going to be adding," says Markovic, who says the company is not looking to expand quickly. "We want to do it the right way. It's not, after all, a mass-market business." ■





## END PAPER

Laura Ashley remains an icon in our hearts—and on our walls. To commemorate what would have been the Welsh designer's 100th birthday, Wallpaper Direct has released an exclusive collection of Ashley's classic and best-selling designs in fresh colorways—including these tulips to tide you over until spring has finally sprung. —Sean Kim

Gosford in Coral Pink, \$98 per double roll, [wallpaperdirect.com](http://wallpaperdirect.com)

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Kravet unveiled its new logo and launched "Never Basic", a campaign featuring designers Shawn Henderson, Jean Liu, Leah Ring, and Melanie Turner. The New York celebration showcased the brand's bold, colorful side—establishing a fresh identity that moves beyond its heritage as a design essential. Partners included ELLE DECOR, Benjamin Moore, and The Shade Store.

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[VisitWestHollywood.com](http://VisitWestHollywood.com)

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# WALLS THAT TALK

In the living room of Craig Starr's Manhattan apartment, which was designed by Charlie Ferrer, the daybed is by Charlotte Perriand and the side table is by Mathieu Matégot. Relief artworks by Jasper Johns.

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Craig Starr lives with a museum-worthy art collection. But it took a collaboration with interior designer Charlie Ferrer for him to realize the power of creating a home that's as much a sanctuary as a set piece.

By TED LOOS Photographs by COBEY ARNER

The breakfast area's vintage desk and chairs are by Jean Prouvé. Pendant by Poul Henningsen for Louis Poulsen; artwork by Paul Thek.







Illustrated plates from a first edition of *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947) by Louise Bourgeois.



An artwork by Myron Stout hangs over a bench by Pierre Jeanneret in the living room.

S

eated in a Jean Prouvé chair, at a desk by the same designer, the art dealer Craig Starr looks very much in his element, ensconced in his Manhattan penthouse's breakfast area. Behind him is a midcentury abstract artwork by Paul Thek and in front of him a

Charlotte Perriand daybed, but overall the look of his place is spare and striking, with no distractions for the eye. That makes it easy to focus on artworks by the likes of Louise Bourgeois, Ed Ruscha, James Rosenquist, and more.

"No one believes this is how I live," Starr says, laughing.

A specialist in modern and contemporary artworks who has run his nearby eponymous gallery since 2004, Starr notes that the penthouse can feel like a cross between a gallery and a home. That's just how he likes it—the paint on the walls, a putty with gray and green tones, is in a shade that Starr uses in his gallery, too. "It has so many colors within it," he says, it flatters a wide variety of artworks.

Starr is self-taught as far as art goes, something that friend

and client Beth Rudin DeWoody—a collector who has her own museum, the Bunker Artspace, in West Palm Beach—marvels at. "He has an innately great eye," she says.

A Nebraska native, Starr moved east and had a brief career in journalism before he started to dabble in behind-the-scenes art dealing. He was a private dealer for six years, during which he started to build relationships with art world luminaries such as the late collector and philanthropist Agnes Gund.

Starr took an old-fashioned approach, writing letters to big collectors and asking them to lend works to his shows, mixing art for sale with contextual pieces. They agreed. No one told him you couldn't approach the world's greatest living painter, so Starr faxed Jasper Johns about lending a painting. Johns faxed back a yes, becoming a friend and collaborator, "which changed my life," Starr says.

Despite all the success, he was still crashing in a space adjacent to his gallery for years, his version of living above ▶



A vintage credenza  
by Martin Eisler sits  
under a painting by  
Billy Al Bengston.







The doors to the living room are framed in a plaster and polymer sculpture by Tom Otterness. Vintage armchairs by Hans Wegner; midcentury cocktail table by Max Ingrand for Fontana Arte; circa 1925 chair by Jean Michel Frank (left); 1964 Swedish rug by Judith Johnson; artworks (from left) by Jasper Johns and Louise Bourgeois.

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© 2025 BARNETT NEWMAN FOUNDATION / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS) NY

A John Baldessari artwork hangs above a 19th-century chair by the Herter Brothers.



A view into the kitchen, where the custom cabinetry is in stainless steel and the ceiling light is by Max Ingrand. Artwork by Barnett Newman.





The primary bedroom's vintage furnishings include a Charlotte Perriand bed and Pierre Jeanneret nightstands. Artwork by James Rosenquist.



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A postcard of a painting by Henri Matisse is displayed in the kitchen, where the counters are of a paonazzo caldia marble. Right: Craig Starr in the living room.



the store. "I never had a real place to live," he says.

A dozen years ago he bought an apartment on Fifth Avenue in a building designed by famed architect Emery Roth in the late 1940s. Starr knew he needed some help, so he turned to designer Charlie Ferrer, whom he had met on a trip to Los Angeles when Ferrer was dealing in furniture there.

Ferrer, who now runs his own prolific residential design firm in New York, says, "Craig has been a taste mentor for me in terms of editing. Often I'm quite the opposite: layering, patterning, and color. Craig likes it austere and calm."

A few years after they had completed the one-bedroom apartment, Starr bought the adjacent penthouse unit, and the two set about combining them. "I knew what I knew, and what I didn't know," Starr says. The designer started with raising the apartment's door heights, or sometimes just the door moldings, wherever he could.

"I wanted to give the spaces more loft," Ferrer says. The two men were aligned in choosing pieces of midcentury lighting and flat-weave Scandinavian rugs—and Ferrer was able to talk Starr into a few key softening touches, like putting silk matting under some of the rugs.

The designer-client duo also "scoured the auction world for a couple of years," Ferrer says of their search for pieces,

"since Craig believes that's where the best value is."

The quality-above-all principle certainly applied to the two Herter Brothers Aesthetic Movement chairs (circa 1875) they found and then split up between two rooms. In both locations the chairs subtly point to the roots of the much later styles on display. "Charlie did upholstery that is a little more modern, so that also helps them fit in," Starr says.

Even a touch of whimsy was indulged, when Starr commissioned contemporary artist Tom Otterness to put a version of his boisterous, bawdy sculptural frieze *Battle of the Sexes* around one doorway. Starr was charmed by the piece at a museum and made the commission, which led to his staging a recent Otterness show in his gallery.

It's by far the most decorative element in the whole place, an exception to the rule and one that invites reflection on all the choices. "I love this apartment and everything about it," says Starr, who has his home at last. "I'm in heaven." ■



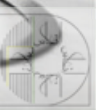


# THE CITY

Italian architect Luciano Giorgi found inspiration in the bustling Milan outside his windows as he created his highly personal home.

In the living room of architect Luciano Giorgi's Milan home, which overlooks the city's Central Station, the artwork is by Emil Michael Klein. Table by Gabetti, Isola, and Drocco for Arbo; armchairs by Luigi Caccia Dominioni for Azucena; floor lamp by Stéphane Barbier Bouvet for Maniera.

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The dining room features untreated brass sliding panels that conceal the kitchen. Table by Osvaldo Borsani and chairs by Eugenio Gerli, both for Tecno; pedestal by Edizioni Luisa Delle Piane; resin sculpture by Goshka Macuga. Floors in Ceppo di Gré stone.

# S Q U A R E

آموزشگاه تخصصی معماری و طراحی داخلی | Text and production by FRANCESCA BENEDETTO | Photographs by ANDREA FERRARI





The steel and jute paneling in the guestroom is custom. Sculpture by Alessandro Di Pietro.



A collection of early-1900s Meissen porcelain is displayed on a custom retractable mirrored steel stand in a hallway.



In the living room the sofas and armchairs are by Mario Bellini for Cassina, upholstered in an ivory bouclé by Dedar. Floor lamp by Vico Magistretti; artworks in the background by Sylvie Fleury and Heimo Zobernig; gold-leaf high relief by Lucio Del Pezzo; monochrome canvas by Beni Bischof; and gouache by Franz Kline.



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# W

hen visitors enter architect

Luciano Giorgi's apartment, they are welcomed in an intimate jute-lined vestibule. When they emerge from this discreet space they're struck by sweeping

views of Milan's Central Station and the busy city life below. "The house was designed as a space in continuous transformation," Giorgi says. "Large and small scenes reveal rooms, wardrobes, and bookcases populated by special works and objects."

In that vestibule, for example, a large tapestry by Corrado Cagli commands attention, yet it conceals a cleverly designed guestroom, compact yet luxurious, "like the cabin of a vintage train," as Giorgi puts it.

Above a 1930s curved wood sofa, a miniature gallery dedicated to Milan pays tribute to the city itself, with works by Stefano Arienti, Arturo Martini, Lucio Fontana, and Marcello Maloberti. Nearby, perforated brass panels inspired by the artist Dadamaino's abstract vocabulary reflect light from the plant-filled terrace beyond.

"Every piece of design selected for this house is a tribute to the masters: Franco Albini, Carlo Mollino, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, and Vico Magistretti," Giorgi says.

His dramatic, loftlike open living room was achieved through the removal of a dividing wall between the two original apartments. Now the room is flooded with light and swathed in calming neutrals—a perfect stage for Giorgi's art collection, which includes large-format works by Beni Bischof, James Lee Byars, and Sylvie Fleury. "It's a place for contemplation," says Giorgi, "and the perfect spot to observe the city, from Stacchini's post office building to the distant Pirelli Tower." He notes that these are all visible from the Bellini sofas.

Behind the living area the mood shifts dramatically. The inky-blue corridor paneling marks a chromatic transition from the calm of the living room to the privacy of the older section of the home. "The contrast is deliberate," Giorgi says. "It transforms the hallway into a threshold between the apartment's past and present."

This sense of discovery continues through to the green majolica bathroom, where a black Gio Ponti washbasin is dramatically framed by an

arched mirror and a small porthole that offers a cinematic view of the iron and glass vaults of the station beyond.

Each room tells its own story. The primary bedroom, which is papered in camouflage motifs, evokes a wild, dream-like landscape, while the dining room uses a traditional Milanese flooring, Ceppo di Gré stone, that meets the brass sliding walls concealing the kitchen. At its center stands an Osvaldo Borsani table from the 1970s surrounded by a curated constellation of artworks by Gilbert & George, Goshka Macuga, and Arturo Martini.

As the evening light settles on the terrace, the apartment glows softly beneath Marcello Maloberti's neon tribute—a Milanese dialogue between architecture and art. ■

## "EVERY PIECE OF DESIGN SELECTED FOR THIS HOUSE IS A TRIBUTE TO THE MASTERS."

—LUCIANO GIORGI



In the guest bedroom, which is lined in jute, the sofa is by Mario Chiattonne, with velvet cushions by Dedar. The pair of ceramic wall lamps are by G. Mazzotti, and the collection of artworks on the wall is a tribute to the city. From top: *Bui Scuri* by Marcello Maloberti, 2003; *Clown* by Federico von Rieger; *Entrance of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan*, bronze relief by Arturo Martini, 1941–2; ink on paper by Lucio Fontana, 1935–40; *Red Orbits* by Grazia Toderi, 2009; *Embroidered Milan* by Stefano Arienti, 2006; and *Untitled Painting in Cerulean* by Sayre Gomez, 2016.







The stair hall of a 1935 home in Weston, CT, designed by architect William McKnight Bowman and recently renovated by interior designer Nannette Brown. English sofa circa 1780 from Humphrey Carrasco; 1940s sculpted iron and reed chair; Venetian chandelier.

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# Nannette's FEAST

How do you bring back a house built by a Rockefeller? In Weston, Connecticut, designer Nannette Brown transforms a historic house into a banquet of delights.

By INGRID ABRAMOVITCH

Photographs by WILLIAM WALDRON Styled by MARTIN BOURNE

The library's black lacquer walls were custom developed by Donald Kaufman. 19th-century Swedish chair from Gallery B•R; vintage brass floor lamp; custom rug by Patterson Flynn.



**D**iane Tate knocked on the door of a Georgian Revival in Weston, Connecticut, with trepidation. Her grandmother, Elaine “Bunny” Rockefeller McAlpin—a niece of John D.—had built the house nine decades earlier with her husband Henry Clinch Tate. The new owners weren’t expecting her, but they were welcoming. “Come in,” they said. “Look around.”

She returned one recent afternoon, her grandmother’s diamond ring glittering on her finger, to meet the couple’s interior designer, Nannette Brown. Out came envelopes of black-and-white photos of the house—including a 1935 cornerstone ceremony in which her grandmother, in a white cotton dress, gloves, and saddle shoes, sipped champagne and playfully troweled mortar onto the brick façade. Other pictures showed skating parties on the pond and her aunt, then a toddler, cavorting with a pet goat.

“This is a house with so much history,” says Brown, who is based in New York City and has spent the last two years restoring and updating the property. “You can’t betray what you inherit. You have to modernize gently.”

The Tennessee native is not a typical designer. She began her career as a local television news reporter, eventually becoming anchor at NBC affiliates in Texas. She later moved to New York City and then London, where she lived for 13 years while commuting to her home in the Hamptons. During that time she bought a venerable American stationery company, Mrs. John L. Strong. “We sold hand-engraved papers to clients like Martha Stewart, Oprah Winfrey, Tom Ford, and Bruce Springsteen,” she recalls.

Design was a lifelong passion. She haunted antiques shops, toured English country houses and European villas, and spent evenings devouring design books and shelter magazines. The Weston clients met her in the late 1990s, when she lived in a neighboring duplex in the same Upper East Side brownstone.

The couple, who work in finance, persuaded Brown to design their apartment. The project launched her firm, which specializes in refined residential interiors that go far beyond furniture and frills. “I take on a project only if I can oversee every aspect, from the architecture to the landscape design and the smallest detail,” says Brown, who recently launched a Substack, *The Living Edit*, which focuses on her interests in design, wellness, food, and fashion.

When the couple moved into their 12,000-square-foot home a decade ago with their five young children, they undertook a preliminary renovation of the residence, originally designed by New York architect William McKnight Bowman. They had bought it from a developer who had painstakingly restored the long-neglected property, which had suffered broken windows, looted mantels, and even a fallen tree that had crashed through the sunroom ceiling. The couple updated the kitchen and furnished the rooms with what they thought the grand ▶

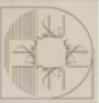


A custom folding wall in bronzed steel and glass separates the dining and living rooms. Vintage table from High Style Deco; chairs by DLV Designs; custom rug by Patterson Flynn; 19th-century mantel from Marc Maison.





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A painting by John Funt hangs over a Steinway grand piano in the living room. Custom sofa; George III armchair from Humphrey Carrasco; Diego Mardegan chandelier from Galerie Glustin; custom Swedish rug from Doris Leslie Blau; 1930s plaster relief by Emile Just Bachelet over the mantel.



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The shelves in the laundry room have engraved brass plates to indicate bedding sizes. Custom folding table. Left: In the art room the easel is from Blick Art Materials. 19th-century Tibetan stool.



The spa has a custom sauna and an ice bath with Waterworks fittings. Circa-1960s chair by René Martin for Charlotte Perriand (left); vintage Pamio & Toso lounge chair; curtains of a terry by Rogers & Goffigon.



Vintage Marcel Breuer  
1920s food warmers top  
a custom stainless steel  
island in the service  
kitchen, where a door  
with an oval window is  
original. Wall tile by  
Waterworks; custom  
pendant by A. Rudin.







architecture required—crystal chandeliers, weighty antiques—but the effect never quite fit their easygoing lifestyle. “My husband always said he needed a house he could be barefoot in,” the wife recalls.

For Brown the solution was as obvious as it was ambitious. She proposed removing the wall between the dining and living rooms and replacing it with a modernist intervention: a bronzed steel-and-glass folding wall that meant both spaces could be opened up and flooded with light. It was a gutsy move in an old house that might have collapsed

in the removal process. Contractor Dana Bowman of Fine Country Homes pulled off the engineering feat by reframing and laser-leveling the floor and adding a steel box beam for support.

The designer and her clients shared the same instinct about furnishings. “It was about light, openness, simplicity, and quiet details,” Brown says. “Sophistication with restraint.” In the living and dining rooms, the old heavy draperies gave way to chain-link curtains that filter the light and the view like jewelry. Brown sifted through more than 20 samples of





The back of the Georgian Revival home as seen from the south lawn. The brick was painted in a custom hue developed by color consultant Donald Kaufman. In addition to the interior design, Brown oversaw the property's landscape design.

**"THIS IS A HOUSE WITH SO MUCH HISTORY. YOU CAN'T BETRAY WHAT YOU INHERIT."**

—NANNETTE BROWN

metal links before finding the perfect kind. "When the breeze moves, it's magic," she says.

Many of the features that make the 24-room house a grand estate remain, from an upstairs laundry room with glass-front cabinets (Brown added brass plates to label bedding sizes) to a basement with an original refrigerated room and a boiler seemingly big enough to heat Buckingham Palace.

With three of the couple's children now grown, the house offered ample room to adapt to the family's evolving interests. Spaces once used for play and homework have become

dedicated rooms for music, art, and yoga, and in the basement there is a ceramics studio with a potter's wheel and kiln. Upstairs, a bedroom was transformed into a spa with a sauna and an ice bath, while the garage now serves as a fully equipped home gym.

There are also abundant gathering spaces, from the black-painted library to the plant-filled sunroom overlooking the garden and pond. "We use every room," says the owner. "Someone is always studying, or playing music, or cooking. It's not a museum. It's a home." ■





# HERMES IN THE HOUSE

The artistic directors of the French heritage brand's home division are challenging the conventional definition of "luxury" one lamp at a time.

By ELISA LIPSKY-KARASZ  
Portrait by VINCENT TULLO Photographs by PABLO LOPEZ LUZ

Hermès artistic directors Alexis Fabry and Charlotte Macaux Perelman with the Contour sofa. Altitude blanket; Pippa console table; Souffle table lamp.







The living room of Silvertop, a 1963 home designed by John Lautner in Los Angeles, as reimagined by Perelman and Fabry. Equilibre d'Hermès table and chairs; Equipages d'Hermès "Diligence" bar cart; Voltige floor lamp; Parcours Cordelie rug.





**W**hat happens when Hermès makes a three-legged bamboo stool? Well, first, they don't plan to.

Instead, the longtime creative directors of Hermès's home division, Charlotte Macaux Perelman and Alexis Fabry, a French architect and curator respectively, start by thinking about whom they might want to work with. (In this case it was Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza Vieira.) "[His work has] a relationship to the enduring properties of

reinforcements or fasteners. What seem like bamboo cords float across and gracefully wrap underneath a triangular seat; the whole thing can be lifted easily with one hand.

"We said to ourselves, 'Now *that's* an object that respects the tension between the original intention and the final result,'" Perelman says. It took them two years, and a single stool costs more than \$10,000. (One with four legs costs the same, for those amortizing for stability.)

"It's okay if it takes us 10 years to do something. We take the time that it needs," Fabry says of their approach.

"It's okay if it doesn't work. It's okay if we don't sell a single thing," Perelman adds. "We want to take risks."

"What makes something characteristically Hermès is that it can't be found elsewhere," says Fabry, who is often an

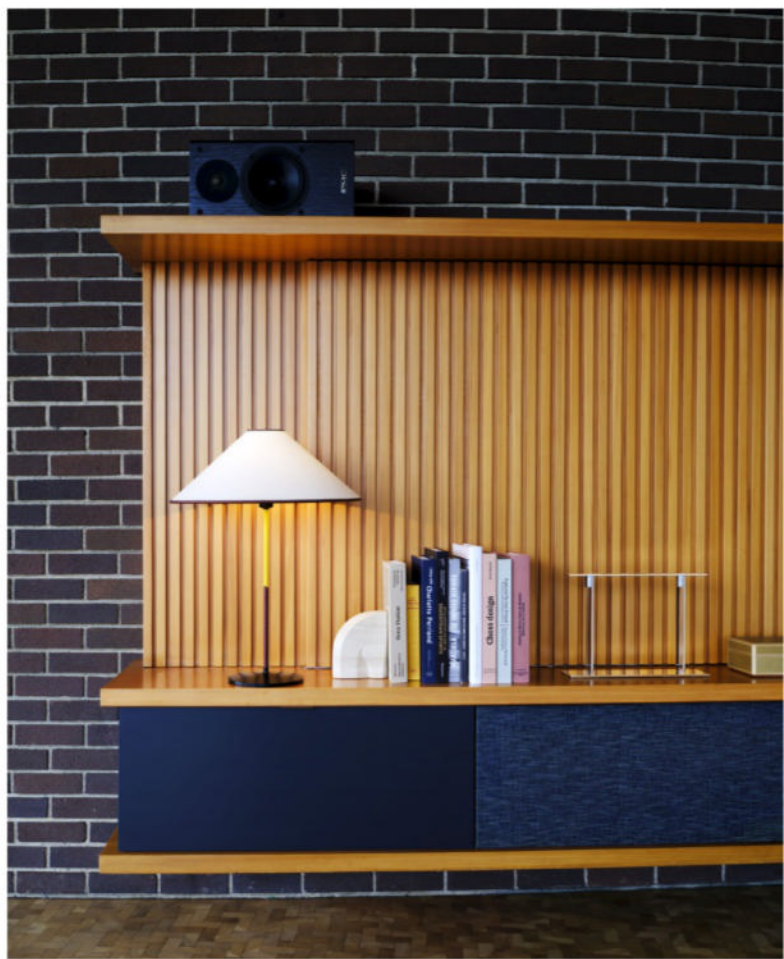
From left: large Voltige table lamp; Alezan travertine bookend; Pilotis candlestick by Puiforcat; small Amalthee Chamkilight box.



A Diapason d'Hermès armchair is placed by the original concrete fireplace. Derby basket; Altitude blanket; silver bowls by Puiforcat.

time that felt relevant to Hermès," Perelman says. Next, Siza did some sketches. Then the trio talked about materials—rather than leather or metal, they settled on the more humble bamboo. And *then* Perelman and Fabry set out to actually make the thing. They tried in Italy; they tried in France. "There were so many nails," Perelman says, throwing up her hands. "We asked ourselves, 'How can we transform this sketch, this architectural wish, into an Hermès object?'"

The answer came from Japanese artisans, who were able to heat the bamboo in order to bend it, and strengthen it from the inside with carbon, without using any visible



artistic sounding board for Perelman's somewhat more pragmatic approach. She has an active architecture practice in Paris under the name Studio CMP, while Fabry co-founded the publishing house Toluca Editions and operates as a gallerist under the same name.

"Working with Hermès is more like having a gallerist than a manufacturer," says designer Jay Osgerby, who created a pair of lamps for Hermès in 2019 with his studio partner, Edward Barber. "The conversation with Charlotte and Alexis





is about the spirit and the soul of the object. It's never about production. There's no limit to where an object can go or where it came from or where it can sit." Their resulting lamps play with light versus dark. The black granite from which the Hecate is crafted is so nearly impenetrable that drilling the stone alone takes 12 hours, while the Halo lamp emits a glow through delicate white porcelain. (In a nod to Hermès savoir faire, the cord is wrapped in orange leather.)

"There is no other company that has the same crazy commitment to craft," Osgerby says, "this utter belief in never

says. "No one is telling us, 'You have to do four collections. You have to make this in this way.'"

When the pair embarked at the house, she says, they asked themselves, "What is Hermès?"

"We thought the furniture needed to be extremely rigorous, extremely well designed, extremely well made," says Perelman. "Now we're starting to seek out color, or fantasy." That's how, for example, they arrived at making a chair completely from papier-mâché in a collaboration with Studio Mumbai. The paper is in fact cellulose microfibers created in Puglia, which are then hand-varnished and hand-painted with stripes, and finished with a cashmere cushion. The price? More than \$60,000.

At a recent presentation of Hermès home objects in Los

A view of Los Angeles frames the Sillage armchair and Lignage side table in the living room.



In the primary bedroom, an Equipages d'Hermès Attelage writing desk is paired with an Equis chair. Hecate table lamp; Mises et Relances desk tray; Cordelie Oxer rug.

taking the easy route."

Perelman and Fabry began working with Hermès in 2014, under the direction of Hermès artistic director Pierre-Alexis Dumas, who is in the sixth generation of the family that founded the luxury house and its resident philosopher-king. (It's not unusual for Dumas, when defining what Hermès stands for, to spout such poetic lines as, "Drawing, with its power and vulnerability, somehow speaks of beginnings... [It] has this aim: giving form. To a vision, an idea, an emotion, a feeling.")

"We are completely free to do what we like," Perelman



Angeles at the 1960s Silvertop house by iconic architect John Lautner, it was placed outside, overlooking the pool. The rest of the home was outfitted in pieces from the breadth of their work, from the Siza stool to a sleek dining room table in solid oak created with Jasper Morrison.

"We like the juxtaposition of the old and the new," Fabry says of seeing their work installed. "We like that tension. Because at Hermès we are seeking to create objects that have the robustness to last. To last a long time." ■



# DRAWING THE LINE



Cartier bracelet and ring in white gold with chrysoprase, coral, onyx, and diamonds, cartier.com. Antique porcelain wall scone. All Art Deco antique architectural remnants from Olde Good Things, ogtstore.com

Art Deco just celebrated its centenary. But the craftsmanship, radical geometry, and refinement of the period? We toast it always, in objects big and small.

Photographs by JOE LINGEMAN Produced and styled by WILL KAHN Props styled by MIAKO KATOH

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Art Deco jewelers paired onyx with diamonds and silver to create striking geometric contrasts. Decades later, it still feels modern in Bulgari's Serpenti. Opposite: Louis Cartier exhibited at the 1925 Paris fair that came to define Art Deco. Coral and the symmetrical patterns of the era remain a house hallmark.

Bulgari Serpenti necklace in white gold with onyx, diamonds, emeralds, and tourmalines, [bulgari.com](http://bulgari.com). Antique bronze elevator dial







Harry Winston launched his brand in New York in 1932. With diamonds and sapphires, he interpreted the city's erupting skyscrapers and the era's geometric textiles. Opposite: The weave of Louis Vuitton's Awakened Hands, Awakened Minds collection reinterprets textures that emerged in the machine age. (The founder's grandson, Gaston Louis Vuitton, also presented at the Art Deco fair.)

Harry Winston sapphire and diamond necklace, [harrywinston.com](http://harrywinston.com). Antique panel

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Louis Vuitton necklace, bracelet, and ring in platinum and yellow gold with emeralds and diamonds, louisvuitton.com. Antique door plates







Tiffany & Co. necklace in yellow gold with opal and diamonds, earrings in yellow gold and diamonds, and brooch in platinum with yellow gold and diamonds, tiffany .com. Antique nickel-plated doorknobs and doorbell from the Waldorf Astoria New York.





In the 1920s Van Cleef's sautoirs (like the one seen here) helped define the long, lean shape of the Art Deco era. Think: the cover of a Fitzgerald novel. Opposite: At Tiffany an opal is set in a sunburst inspired by Art Deco motifs, like those on the Waldorf Astoria's original doorknobs.

Van Cleef & Arpels necklace in white gold with sapphires, emeralds, pearls, and diamonds, [vancleefarpels.com](http://vancleefarpels.com). Antique gilded double-arm wall sconce. Marble tile, [artistictile.com](http://artistictile.com).





# OPEN DIALOGUE

When longtime clients wanted to update their Manhattan townhouse after a storm, A-List designer Cliff Fong listened carefully—to the architecture, to their art collection, and, most important, to the clients themselves.

By WILLIAM LI Photographs by WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ Styled by JEFFREY MILLER

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In the living room of an Upper East Side townhouse designed by Cliff Fong with co-designer Anna Maus, a sofa upholstered in a Castel fabric, a pair of vintage chairs and stools, and a high-back chair by Adrian Pearsall surround a brass cocktail table. Snäckorna rug; large artwork by Richard Serra; mirror by Jacques Adnet.







The breakfast room opens out to the patio, with a table and chairs by Guillerme et Chambon. 19th-century pendant.



In a corner of the living room, a pair of chairs from Lucca Antiques flank a game table by Karl Springer; floor lamp by Fontana Arte; artwork by Bernard Buffet.

For more than a decade, Los Angeles-based designer Cliff Fong has collaborated with a discerning couple, transforming their various properties with a sensitivity that honors both architecture and the art of living well. Their latest project—a narrow 19th-century John G. Prague townhouse in New York—had been evolving incrementally since the clients purchased it in the late aughts, with Fong making small updates here and there over the years. But when a severe rainstorm in 2023 damaged the roof, it provided the impetus for a complete transformation. The challenge: how to make a constrained, vertical space feel expansive and homey while showcasing a museum-quality art collection. The result is a sophisticated blend of historical gravitas and lived-in comfort; every floor tells a different story tailored to its inhabitants. Working alongside project manager and designer Anna Maus, Fong created interiors that feel collected over generations—a testament to a decade-long relationship that allows him to design for his clients as if designing for family. Here, *Elle Decor* and Fong discuss this dramatic home.

***Let's start with the spectacular living room, which is only 17 feet wide but has soaring ceilings. How did you approach making the space feel expansive?***

The proportional relationships are the most important thing. If you think about how a lot of New Yorkers live, with contemporary furniture that's all low to the ground—that New York loft, Tribeca aesthetic—it never would have served our purposes here. Everything would have been lower than three feet, and these ceilings are close to 20 feet. I made the most of the height with tall, vertical pieces of art, a nice tall tree, and similarly high-backed chairs. I made sure that every level had some sort of visual vector so the room could feel intimate and not cavernous.

***This renovation is only a few years old, yet the home feels as though a family has lived here for ages. How did you achieve that?***

The building itself has a substantial history and a very recognizable aesthetic. I took cues from both. The furniture and furnishings that were there before were very well done, but we wanted to deconstruct it a little bit. We kept as much of that tailored aesthetic as possible, then made it a little looser and friendlier and quirkier, and brought in some irony and a little bit of color that might not have been expected in the older, more classic interior. They're museum board members, and the collection here is museum-quality. The art ►





The bar, clad in Brazilian rosewood, is stowed under the stairs leading to the library. Chair by Pedro Friedeberg; painting by Vivian Suter.

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The library sofa, by Dmitriy & Co., is ornamented by a throw by Hermès and pillows by Lucca Antiques. A pair of vintage stools from Donzella face it, on a rug by Woven. Painting by Fernando Botero.





is worth more than the real estate and furniture combined, but the clients are much more interested in comfort. It doesn't matter if something looks good if it's not comfortable. I find that Scandinavian design—midcentury Danish, Swedish, Finnish design—bridges that gap between classic and modern perfectly, because it's more transitional. This is handsome furniture that has been purified through a lens of modern restraint, but the core of the piece still has its roots in something classic.

*There's such a beautiful conversation happening between different eras and origins—the Danish modern pieces, the Art Deco mirror, the Buddha, the Serra prints. How do you think about these pieces in dialogue with each other?*

I find that there are a lot of different ways to unify pieces under an aesthetic that might not necessarily be obvious to other people, but, for whatever reason, it makes sense to me. Often it can start with color—wood color, fabric color, or tone. Sometimes it's just in a shape or a height or a proportion. We're splitting these values and creating some graphic sensibility by separating values between different pieces of art, furniture, textile, and different shapes.

**"WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER SO LONG. I TAKE THE SAME JOY IN DOING SOMETHING FOR THEM AS I WOULD FOR MYSELF."**

—CLIFF FONG

*The library feels like the heart of the home.*

This room became the repository for all the things I didn't really know what to do with in the rest of the house. They're really iterations of my clients' lives. They collected Tiffany and Daum, really beautiful crystal and glass pieces that in the wrong context could feel a little mumsy. But they're all mixed in with books and family pictures that they have

framed during every important stage of their family's life. Now it's the most personal room in the house and where the husband spends most of his time. It's where he really lives when he's in New York.

*What was the greatest joy when you were working on this project?*

It was working with people I feel fortunate to serve. Not all people with financial freedom use it in honorable or responsible ways, so it's nice working with do-gooders. Because we've worked together so long, I can take the same joy doing something for them as I would for myself. They're like family—our relationship is special and maybe atypical of how most designers and clients work together. ■

In the game room bronze vases by Just Andersen gather under an artwork by Robert Rauschenberg.



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# SOURCEBOOK

Designer Cliff Fong brings a collector's eye to a New York City apartment, layering midcentury furnishings, decorative antiques, and a dash of color (page 82).

By BENJAMIN REYNAERT

A one-of-a-kind 1954 Sunburst mirror by Jacques Adnet from Maison Gerard brings sculptural glamour.

Margeaux starburst mirror, \$1,051, kathykuohome.com

Tote bag, \$2,995, armani.com

Vide 2 vase by Ilkka Suppanen for Ralph Pucci, \$14,400, ralphpucci.com

Lady Armchair by Marco Zanuso for Cassina, \$5,310, cassina.com

Xander buffet, \$6,940, madegoods.com

WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ (INTERIORS), ANTOINETTE BOOTZ (RALPH PUCCI VASES)





Tradition 02 rug,  
from \$395,  
nordicknots.com



Burton alabaster pendant,  
vaughandesigns.com



Pool table,  
\$110,000,  
gucci.com



Betwixt fabric,  
donghia.com



Fond Perdu  
floor lamp,  
jean-  
royere.com



Lindo accent lamp  
by Kelly Wearstler  
for Visual Comfort  
& Co., \$800,  
visualcomfort.com

Rococo fabric  
by Peter  
Marino,  
rubelli.com



The Milo mantelpiece,  
chesneys.com

Collepino  
colossal twisted  
candle, \$115  
each, and  
Urbino Colossal  
footed  
candleholder,  
\$235 each,  
ilbucovita.com



A mix of vintage  
treasures anchors  
the game room,  
including a 1960s  
burl stool from the  
Gallery at 200 Lex.





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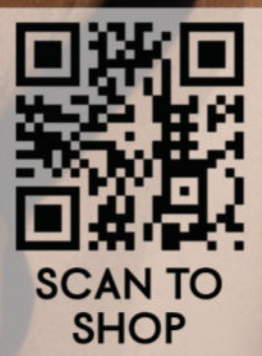
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Sotheby's restored "Pitch Room," with works by Marc Chagall and Helen Frankenthaler.

## BIOGRAPHY OF A ROOM

**T**he biggest moments at auction houses are often the ones the public doesn't see. They happen before the hammer comes down, in private rooms amid hushed conversations, as specialists explain why they are the best guardians of invaluable treasures. The setting for these exchanges matters immensely—and at Sotheby's, that space just got an upgrade.

The storied auction house recently moved headquarters into the Breuer Building, a landmarked Brutalist monolith on New York's Upper East Side. The architect Marcel Breuer designed the building, which opened in 1966 as the Whitney Museum. It has lived many lives since, housing part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection, and then the Frick Collection from 2021 to 2024. Sotheby's bought the building in 2023 and partnered with Herzog & de Meuron, alongside PBDW Architects, to gently renovate and modernize it, while preserving Breuer's signature style.

The Breuer's so-called Pitch Room is one example of the renovation's push-and-pull. The room was initially designed as a space for the Whitney to host board meetings and curatorial sessions.

"It's a 650-square-foot jewel box," says Steve Wrightson, Sotheby's global head of real estate, facilities, and security, who helped oversee the recent renovation. It's one of the few rooms in the building with natural light, thanks to three large windows, and the

only one that features gray slate rather than granite or concrete. It still has the original benches, chairs, and table—affixed to the floor—that Breuer designed. But, Wrightson says, "when we inherited the space, there was a white popcorn ceiling and a beat-up, tattered carpet."

He and the rest of the team updated the ceiling and lighting and replaced the carpet, restored the room's bronze radiator panels, and conditioned, cleaned, and repaired the furniture. "It's special. It's something that differentiates our ability to pitch to clients," Wrightson says. "You don't find rooms like that in very many buildings." —Annie Goldsmith



The same Marcel Breuer-designed space in 1966, when it was the Whitney Museum's boardroom.

STEFAN RUIZ/COURTESY SOTHEBY'S (2025), © EZRA STOLLER/ESTO (1966)



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