

VERANDA

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GLORIOUS SPACES

You'll Fall In Love With



Caroline Kopp ran this project as a Senior Designer at Aero Studios

QUIET GRACE

AN EXPERT CURATES ART AND ANTIQUES WITH AN EYE FOR BALANCE.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY THOMAS O'BRIEN PHOTOGRAPHY BY MELANIE ACEVEDO WRITTEN BY MARIO LÓPEZ-CORDERO

“THINGS CAN BE BEAUTIFUL AND REFINED AND EASY. THERE ARE SO MANY

WAYS TO COMBINE THE OLD AND THE NEW, THE ELEGANT AND THE CASUAL.”

A neutral palette and symmetry bring harmony to a mix of antique and custom furniture. Sofas, Jonas, in Lee Jofa fabric. Slipper chairs after Jean-Michel Frank, Jonas, in Larsen silk with Old World Weavers silk on back. Antique French round table. Custom bolsters in Scalamanré velvet and Fortuny print. Custom lamps. Antique French commodes and Swedish clock.

French polished mahogany doors and original moldings recall the building's rich history. THIS PAGE AND NEAR RIGHT: Sofa and armchairs, Jonas, in Thomas O'Brien for Lee Jofa fabrics. Custom pillows in Brunswig & Fils, Fabricut, Fortuny and Manuel Canovas fabrics. Vintage mirror and Bagues coffee table. Rug, Thomas O'Brien for Safavieh. Framed photograph, top, Imogen Cunningham. FAR RIGHT: Sofa, Jonas, in Old World Weavers velvet. Custom pillows. Curtains in Fortuny damask.



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THE LIVING ROOM IN THIS FIFTH AVENUE APARTMENT DESIGNED BY THOMAS O'BRIEN SPEAKS VOLUMES—BOTH ABOUT HIS KEEN APPROACH TO DECORATING AND THE UNDERSTATED YET CULTIVATED TASTES OF HIS CLIENTS. ARRAYED AROUND

the serene and comfortable space are pieces with a serious pedigree, paired with an ingenious sense of composition and an instinctual feel for what works. Chinese Qijia *bi* disks from the Neolithic era adorn a graceful Louis XVI mahogany commode. A bronze, first-century Roman tripod with delicate feline paws sits on the same silver tray as a robin's-egg-blue Royal Copenhagen jar from the 1940s.

Not only does everything look good together, the scene is telling for a variety of reasons: for the casual marrying of museum-quality objects with lesser things, for the quiet

approach to their display, for the modern way such items, separated by disparate cultures and centuries of history, nevertheless manage to complement each other. If you didn't know the gems were there, you wouldn't notice them; they don't scream hello. What they do is encapsulate—visually, aesthetically and even emotionally—a philosophy that plays out across the four-bedroom residence in similarly subtle ways.

"It's a story," says O'Brien. "That Roman tripod is a rare flower in the garden of the room, and it's magical, but an inexpensive flea market find could just as easily go in its place. A

The bookcase interiors are painted a unifying, high-gloss aubergine. Desk, Jansen. Antique desk chair. Antique lamp, Baccarat. Vintage chandelier and nesting tables. Chair, Jonas, in Lee Jofa fabric. Pillow in Bergamo fabric. Throw, Aero. Antique sconces and library table. Picture lights, Nicholas Antiques. Custom leather ottoman, Jonas. Vintage Tabriz rug.



Fortuny fabric lines the interior of the built-in cabinet. **THIS PAGE:** Custom mirror, paneling and dining table. Chairs, Jonas, in Lee Jofa velvet. Vintage Caldwell chandelier. Antique wooden urn as lamp. Rug, Thomas O'Brien for Safavieh. **NEAR RIGHT:** Custom cabinets. Faucet, Waterworks. Drawer pulls, E.R. Butler & Co. **FAR RIGHT:** Custom table, banquette and pillows. Chairs in leather, Jonas. Glassware, Thomas O'Brien for Reed & Barton. Chandelier by Thomas O'Brien for Visual Comfort. Art, Irving Penn.



vignette is a combination of proportion, form and surprise that also says, 'Here's our life. This is where we live.'"

In this particular family's life, rare flowers abound. There are Han-era ceramic horses and a faience plate by Picasso in the dining room, prints by the likes of Miró and Chagall in the library, photographs by Irving Penn throughout. But they share space with sturdier life-as-a-garden stock: a "greatest dad" pin on a desk and a library filled by a voracious reader with titles such as *Wolf Hall* or *Cleopatra: A Life*. In a bedroom, art by one of the children is framed and hung as reverently as those aforementioned Penns.

These details overlap with a seeming effortlessness. "Things can be beautiful and refined and easy," says O'Brien. "There are so many ways to combine the old and the new, the elegant and the casual." Scale and color are key. "When there's a lot happening, it helps to keep the palette cool." Varying degrees of gray—from misty greige to pale silvery blue—dominate

and change tone, depending on the shifting natural light. "I'm also a stickler about proportion and authenticity."

The living room's original plaster acanthus-leaf moldings were lovingly restored, while in the symmetrical gallery, a table placed off center provides a slightly less static flow. In this pedimented 1930s building just across from Central Park, these touches give the space context without too much pomp.

But the truest testament to livability is how the family really uses the apartment. The kitchen, with its cushy sofas and leather banquette, is command central, where everyone convenes from mid-afternoon to evening. In the regal dining room, lacquered a shimmering dove gray, the wife uses an informal method for entertaining: She sets up four tables, for intimacy, and people periodically switch places to mingle. "When the sun sets, it's fabulous and welcoming," she says. "Every part of the apartment has my family and me in it. And there's not one space where you wouldn't want to sit and linger." □

A contemporary photograph gives traditional elements a modern edge. THIS PAGE: Antique settee and custom pillows in Cowtan & Tout fabrics. Antique English table. Chandelier, Bernd Goeckler Antiques. Antique vase, Aero. Art, Irving Penn. OPPOSITE: Midcentury bar cabinet, Ole Wanscher. Antique stool. Murano vase. Stanford White mirror. Art, Canaletto.

