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nouveau NOW

Elegant Art Nouveau antiques and patterned textiles take a modern turn in a West Village town house designed by Darren Henault



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chic salon

Opposite: Lacquered paneling, gilded molding, a ceiling constellation, and a Beauvais carpet define the cabinetlike library. This page: Club chairs from Roman Thomas, 1930s gold-leaved chairs from Maison Gerard, and a John Boone lacquered coffee table furnish the living room. Fabrics from Christopher Hyland, Fortuny, and Clarence House tie it all together.

new and nouveau

This page: On the living room's 19th-century marble mantel, from A & R Asta, an Art Nouveau candlestick partners with a period French vase with later brass mounts. A silver-leafed mirror from Miriam Ellner, in a Profiles frame, reflects a lantern by Parisian designer/gallery owner Hervé van der Straeten, discovered in New York at Maison Gerard.



IT COULD HAVE PROVEN TO BE A DANGEROUS COMBINATION:

Introduce a pattern-and-texture-obsessed client to an interior designer who was the son of a textile manufacturer and the potential for overshopping at the fabric showroom exists. But in this case, the partnership was fortuitous: Spread out over five floors of a West Village town house defined by a world-class collection of Art Nouveau furniture and decorative arts, the results of the team's shared passion for fine workmanship and intelligently integrated patterns never crossed the border into decadent excess.

Darren Henault remembers when he received a phone call saying he should be in touch with someone who bought a 10,000-square-foot town house from a flipper and "just wanted a little help with existing furniture and paint." We ended up tearing the house apart," he says. His client was a sophisticated woman who was married to a Frenchman with two young children. She spends a good deal of time in France and Asia, and is a passionate collector—not just of Art Nouveau, but also of Art Deco, Napoleon III, Arts & Crafts, 1950s modern, and contemporary artisans like

modern translation

Clockwise from top left: The vestibule and foyer establish the tone, with important Art Nouveau pieces, a Venetian chandelier, and a 1940s French console from Maison Gerard. The kitchen was designed by M (Group)'s Hermes Mallea and Carey Maloney; range and cabinetry are from La Cornue. In the dining room, the collection of Art Nouveau includes a period sideboard and a graceful chair covered with a Jerry Pair horsehair. Sconce is 1940s French.





life at the top

The family room opens to a fifth-floor terrace. Farrow & Ball paint creates an organic backdrop for a silk-and-wool Beauvais rug inspired by a William Morris design. The sofa is covered in an Arts & Crafts-inspired Samuel & Sons fabric. Lee Jofa sheers. Roman Thomas sofa, chairs, and ottoman. The round cloisonne table by Robert Kuo, says Henault, "continues the quiet Asian theme that plays throughout the house."



PLAYING WITH PATTERN exercises the imagination.

There's a time for EXCITEMENT—and a time for restraint.



Hervé van der Straeten. "As much as she appreciates fine textures and quality objects, she didn't want claustrophobic clutter," says Henault, who helped the collector edit, arrange, and find focus.

The project started simply, with the purchase of period fireplaces for the living and dining rooms and the addition of modern egg-and-dart molding. Then walls were painted soft Farrow & Ball hues of ripening peach and pale green. Restraint temporarily went out the window when the client and designer went fabric shopping, selecting

a Jim Thompson silk for the living room window curtains with six different types of trim all sewn in a geometric pattern. Temptation also beckoned in the Ann Sacks showroom, with its miles of exquisite tiles. Generally, rooms were left airy so as not to compete with the antiques, but it was decided the library would be the exception, a true Proustian womb, where, Henault says, "I really got to use all six planes of the room to create a jewel box. If I could choose just one room to live in—this would be it." And his client agreed. — See Resources.

original patterns

Above: In the children's playroom, colorful cushions from Roche Bobois underscore vintage posters and O'Lampia Studio sconces. Madeline Weinrib rug. Top, right: In the master bath, Ann Sacks' Cartman border tile is used as a field; Blue Celeste stone paves the floor. Right: Fortuny silk-velvet dust ruffle; Ann Gish bedding.