IN *Place* AND *Time*

A PARK AVENUE APARTMENT FEATURES A MIX OF ANTIQUES FROM A VARIETY OF ERAS AND COUNTRIES, CREATING A WONDER-INSPIRING HOME SUSPENDED IN TIME.

By **Autumn Krause**
Photography by **Marco Ricca**

TO ADD PERSONALITY TO A ROOM WITH A SIMPLE COLOR PALETTE, designer Michele Safra mixed different patterns on the chairs, sofas and rug. The subtle designs maintain a certain French sophistication, while accents of color from the throw pillows and planters give the space a bit of whimsy.

TIME PERIODS MIX IN THIS UPSCALE PARK AVENUE APARTMENT in New York City, where antiques from a variety of eras combine to create an elegant yet comfortable home for a family of five. The design was overseen by Michele Safra of Michele Safra Interiors, a full-service design firm specializing in high-end residential projects. Knowing that her clients appreciated historical pieces, she created a one-of-a-kind interior that brings those items into everyday living.

"I love blending periods and styles when creating a more traditional look," Michele says. "I find that if you stick to the same period, an apartment feels like a museum with no soul." The effects of Michele's curative eye? A stunning home where pieces from the past find new life.

DRAPES ARE VITAL TO DRESS ANY FRENCH HOME. "These were made in a traditional style and complement the décor of the room," Michele says. They also help frame the impressive Russian *secretaire* and clock, a truly stunning piece.

SCENIC WALLPAPER AND AN ORNATE RUG TURN this dining room into a resplendent vision. With such bold patterns in the room, Michele incorporated warm wood antiques with an air of understated elegance to create a cohesive space.

EXQUISITE DINING

Stepping into the dining room, one is transported by the panoramic Zuber *Les Monuments de Paris* wallpaper, a stunning backdrop for a collection of French and English furniture and Savonnerie carpet.

"The scenic wallpaper preserves the elegant feel but softens it, making it less rigid," Michele says. "This particular wallpaper was perfect for the French flair the owners wanted."

While the wallpaper adds a certain enchantment to the space, the furnishings add a sophisticated air. A Directoire dining room table from Brussels, Belgium, is surrounded by custom Louis XVI-style chairs. The effect is overall elegance.

ELEGANT LIVING

For the living room, Michele says the residents wanted a "traditional and grand space that was still cozy and homey." To achieve this, she selected a color scheme to go with the surrounding rooms. Each room is a different color, but all the hues flow together.

"The lighter palette in the living room gives it a brighter air, which was important to the

> "I LOVE PLACING MIRRORS AND CONSOLES IN AN ENTRANCE. *I FIND IT BOTH PRACTICAL AND INVITING.*"

FORM AND FUNCTION MEET FRENCH FLAIR when Michele mixes antiques from many different eras.

clients," Michele says. An exquisite mantelpiece, which was so heavy it required six men to install, anchors the room in an inviting way, beckoning the residents to sit and converse awhile. The mix of antiques and custom pieces gives the living room a sense of life and interest. "It doesn't feel too static," Michele says. "It has personality."

SOPHISTICATED WELCOME

For the foyer, Michele sought to create an "elegant, warm and welcoming" atmosphere. While the living room has softer colors, she chose to go bold here. "The paint is a Venetian plaster that has six layers," she says. "It took us days to mix the colors to find the perfect one." The result is a dramatic hue that enrobes the space.

As for the furnishings, "I love placing mirrors and consoles in an entrance," Michele says. "I find it both practical and inviting." She hung an antique mirror over a Louis XVI console, creating a stunning tableau that stands out against the distinctive walls. "Everything works together well and is an introduction to the rest of the apartment," she says.

With careful attention to detail and a grand vision, Michele successfully created a home that is full of stories: the stories of each individual antique's past, as well as the present and future stories of the family that lives out life in this beautiful space. FS

[right]
MATISSE LITHOGRAPHS ADD ARTFUL NOTES OF COLOR when hung over a Louis XVI-style desk.

[bottom right]
GOLDEN HUES CREATE A RICHLY REGAL POWDER ROOM, which is actually a repurposed laundry room. The tilework, inspired by one of Versace's floors, is perfectly accented by the gilded sink legs, mirror and faucets.

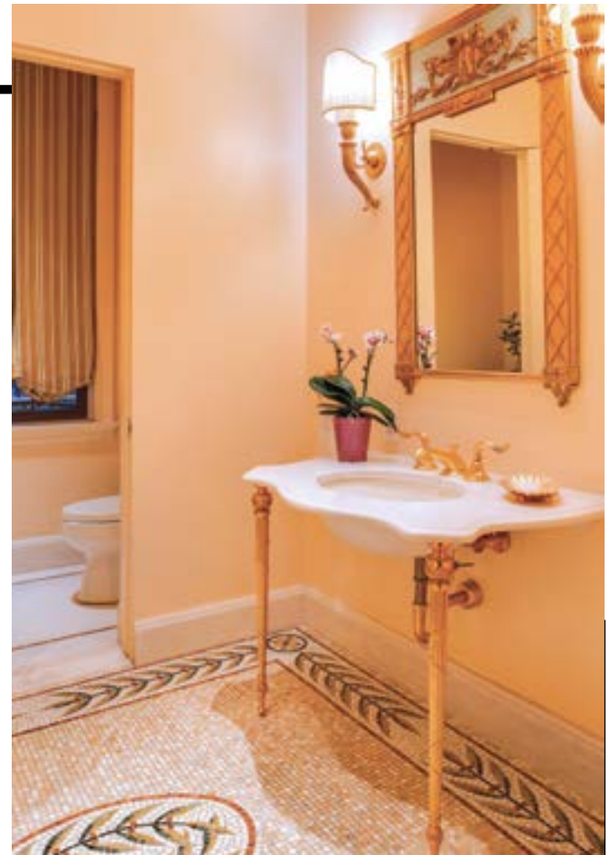
DECORATING WITH ANTIQUES

HERE'S HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DÉCOR.

MIX AND MATCH. As seen in this apartment, a mix of antiques from a variety of time periods and countries—and even some brand-new traditional pieces—gives depth and style. You don't want your home to feel "like a museum," as Michele says. Combining antiques ensures it won't.

BUILD AROUND A SINGLE PIECE. Each item has its own personality and story, so notice what piece you're most attracted to. Sometimes Michele falls in love with a piece so much she works décor around it. Follow this instinct and you never know what surprising direction it may take you and your design.

USE YOUR IMAGINATION. It can be hard to "see" a piece in your home when it's surrounded by a variety of other items at a busy flea market or antiques shop. If you can, place the antique against an uncluttered backdrop and take a photo of it to help you block out visual distractions and better imagine it in your space.



AN INCREDIBLE ANTIQUE SHOULD ALWAYS TAKE CENTER STAGE. When it comes to finding the perfect pieces for her clients, Michele scours antiques shops and fairs. "Sometimes I just see a piece when browsing, fall in love and work around it," she says.