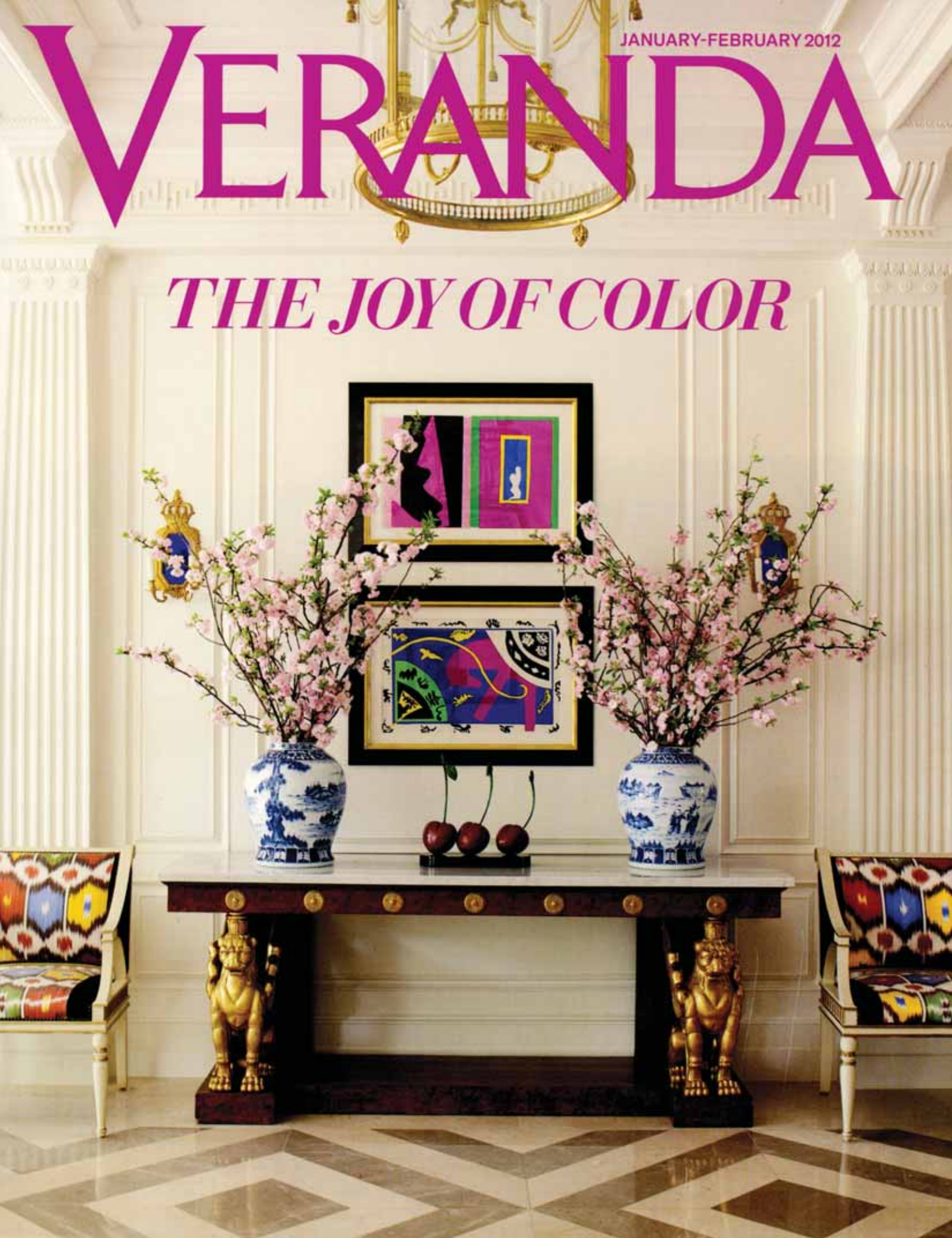


JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

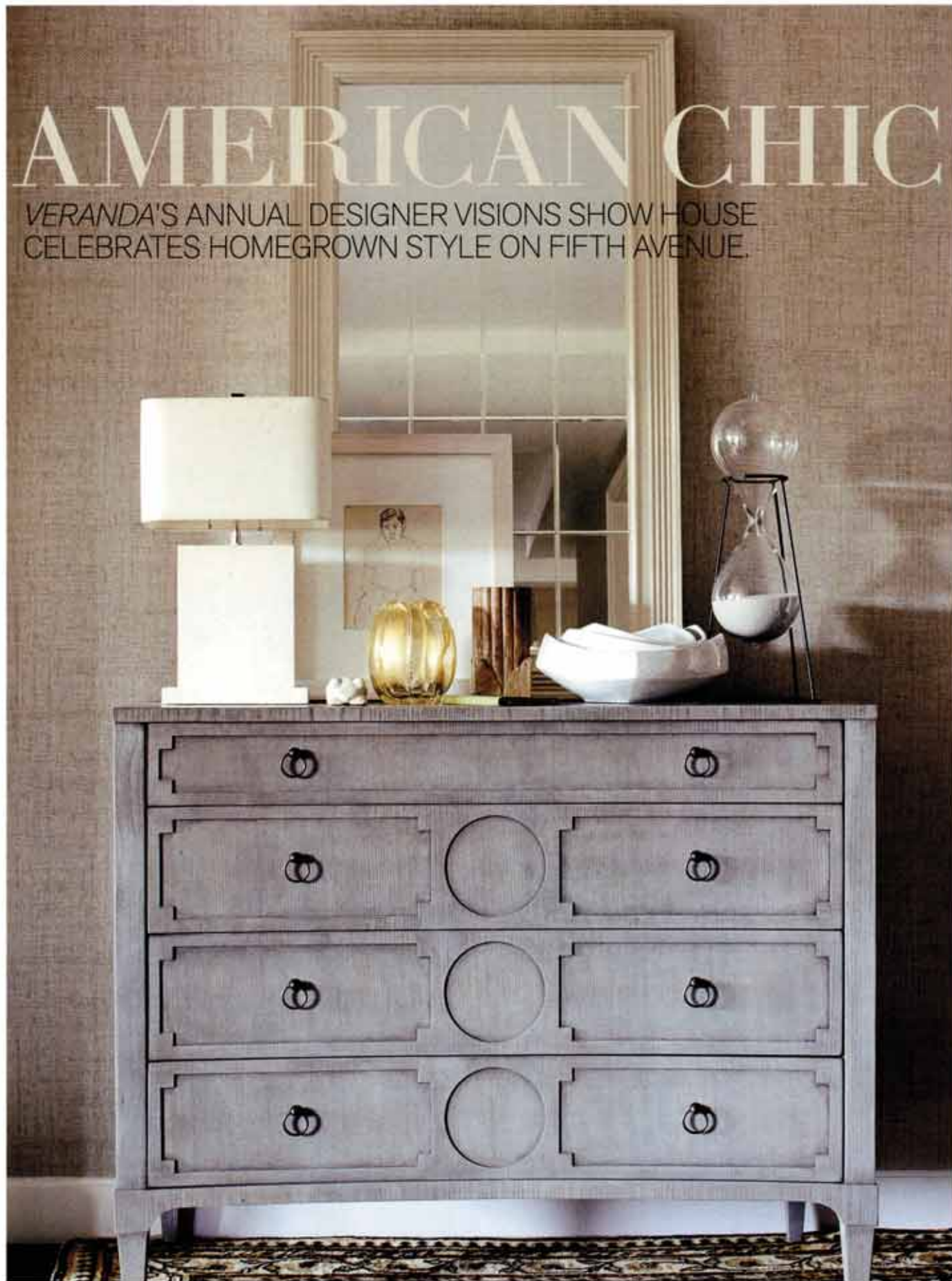
# VERANDA

*THE JOY OF COLOR*



# AMERICAN CHIC

VERANDA'S ANNUAL DESIGNER VISIONS SHOW HOUSE  
CELEBRATES HOMEGROWN STYLE ON FIFTH AVENUE.



Art punctuates a clean, modernist aesthetic.  
THIS PAGE: Chair, in Thibaut fabric, and plinth, both  
Formations. Vase, Aero. Floors, LV Wood.  
Photographs, Michelle Arcila. OPPOSITE: Mirror and  
chest, Hickory Chair. Lamp, hourglass, vase, and  
ceramics, Aero. Walls in Thibaut raffia. Throughout  
living-dining area, walls in Polaris, ceilings in Brilliant  
White, and trim in Stucco White, Ralph Lauren Paint.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY THOMAS O'BRIEN INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE BY S. RUSSELL GROVES  
DEVELOPMENT BY DURST FETNER RESIDENTIAL  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAX KIM-BEE WRITTEN BY MARIO LÓPEZ-CORDERO

DURING ANY GIVEN DECORATING COMMISSION, A DESIGNER CAN END UP WEARING A VARIETY OF HATS: ADVISER, CONFIDANT, MARRIAGE COUNSELOR. IF THE PLANETS ARE ALIGNED AND THE PRACTITIONER IS ESPECIALLY TALENTED, he can also ascend to the status of guardian angel. "When the project is the best it can be, that's exactly the role I play," explains Thomas O'Brien, who furnished a tranquil New York City apartment for *Veranda's* fifth annual Designer Visions show house, bridging classic and modern elements while steeping the interiors in ethereal hues.

O'Brien is known in part for his embrace of traditional American antiques and his ingenious knack for making those centuries-old pieces feel relevant—and glamorously new—in artfully composed twenty-first-century spaces. He proved an ideal steward for another aspect of the magazine's show house: a celebration of American-made goods. Most of the furnishings that he deployed, from his felted-wool-covered bookcases to an elegant chandelier with dangling rock-crystal teardrops, were produced in the United States.

In the tradition of Designer Visions, O'Brien took inspiration from a film: *Someone to Watch Over Me* (1987), starring Mimi Rogers as a socialite in peril and Tom Berenger as the cop sworn to protect her. *Veranda's* aerie, perched on a high floor at 1212 Fifth Avenue, a renovated building facing Central Park, is a refuge where O'Brien subtly illustrates his designer-as-protector ethos.

Comfort, both visual and literal, was a guiding principle. The living room is



Curtains in a buttery shade warm up a cool palette. Sofa and club chairs in Lee Jofa chenilles, chair with ottoman, chest, coffee table, and bookcases, Hickory Chair. Benches, Dennis & Leen, in Lee Jofa chenille. Pillows in Kravet and Lee Jofa fabrics. Trim, Samuel & Sons. Pompon pillow, Aero. Lamp, left; floor lamp; and whale vertebra, Aero. Table lamp, right, Formations. Hexagonal table, Dennis & Leen. Curtains in Kravet fabric. Curtain fabrication, Jonas. Curtain hardware, Joseph Blunno Ltd. Vintage rug, Safavieh. Art, John James Audubon.

A chandelier and triptych anchor the dining area in an open floor plan. THIS PAGE: Table, chairs, and cabinet, Hickory Chair. Chandelier, Dennis & Leen. Tray and ceramic sculpture, Aero. Triptych, Natural Curiosities. OPPOSITE, top: Bench, Formations, and chair, Dennis & Leen, in Thibaut fabrics. Table, Hickory Chair. Wallpaper, Thibaut. Window shade in Leo Jofa

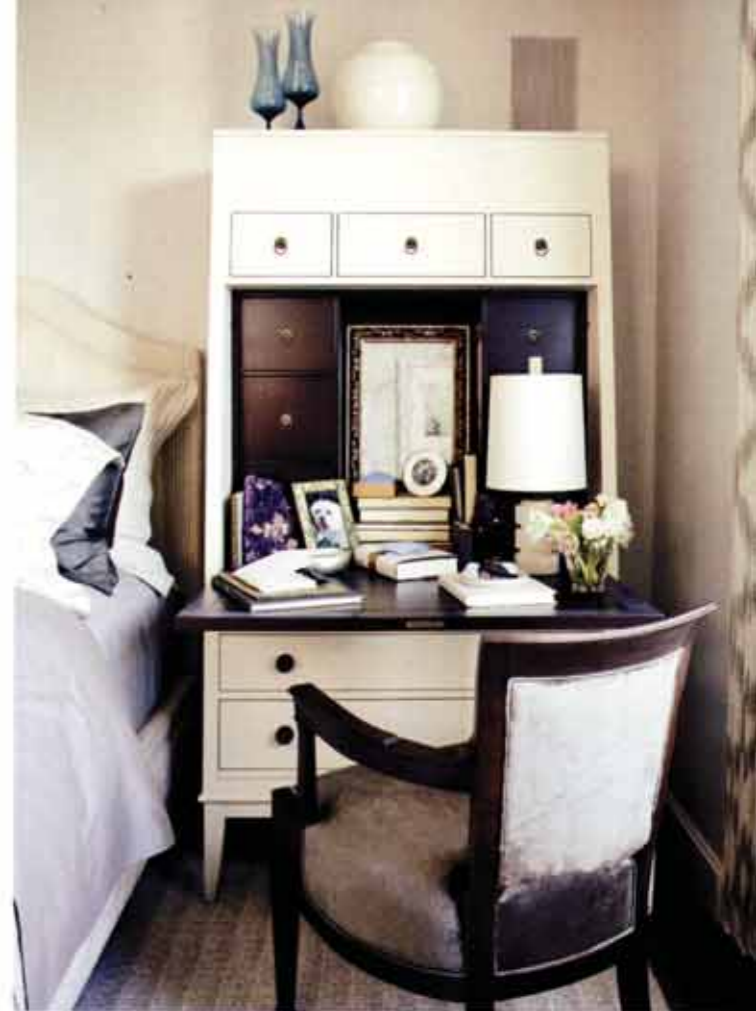
fabric. Throw pillows in Kravet fabrics. Trim, Samuel & Sons. Bolster, Aero. Rug, Karastan. bottom: Kitchen design by S. Russell Groves. Counter, Caesarstone. Range and hood, Bertazzoni. Ovens, Miele. Tile, Jantile. Chairs, in African fabric, and table, all vintage from Aero. Light fixture, Visual Comfort. Walls in Brazilian Ruby, Ralph Lauren Paint.



“I STRIVE FOR A PLACE TO FEEL LIVED IN AND SETTLED. IT SHOULDN'T LOOK LIKE A DECORATOR JUST INSTALLED IT.”



Subtle, soft patterns add life to a neutral room. **THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE, TOP:** Walls in Stone, Ralph Lauren Paint. Wing chair in Kravet fabric, headboard in Lee Jofa fabric, chest, secretary, desk chair, and table, Hickory Chair. Chair pillow in Lee Jofa fabric. Bedding and driftwood lamp, Aero. Alabaster lamp, Visual Comfort. Rug, Karastan. Speakers throughout, Leon Speakers. Curtains in Kravet ikat. **BOTTOM:** Chest, Hickory Chair. Lamp, Formations. Vase, Reed & Barton. Art, John James Audubon.





“AS IN DRESSING, YOU WANT THINGS TO FEEL LAYERED AND LESS THAN PERFECT.”

serene, with misty blue-gray walls and picture windows that spill sunshine across a sofa and armchairs covered in plush, nubby chenilles. “I love the afternoon light against these softer colors,” he says. “The blend of warm and cool balances out and has a peaceful effect.”

Expertly calibrated wood finishes follow suit throughout. In the entryway, an ash-gray chest with geometrically patterned drawers harmonizes with a nearby wooden plinth holding a worn marble sculpture. The items share a sober matte quality that highlights their grain patterns in dusky gleams of light.

O’Brien also gave the spaces a sense of history, using objects such as a claw-foot pedestal dining table of his own design and antique Audubon bird prints. “I strive for a place to feel lived in and settled,” he says. “It shouldn’t look like a decorator just installed it.”

To that end, a beautifully subdued ikat lines the library walls, while mid-century modern chairs in the kitchen have seat cushions in a vintage African fabric. In the dining room, a large-scale, hand-painted botanical triptych twinkles with subtle silver gilt details.

Scattered about are vignettes of gathered objects, such as an hourglass, a vintage line drawing, and a golden glass vase. O’Brien has curated rooms with treasures that reflect varied interests and a worldly perspective: “As in dressing, you want things to feel layered and less than perfect.” It’s a formula for a seriously stylish apartment that nevertheless encourages you to curl up, cocoon, and exhale. The city, bustling just stories below, seems so far away. The effect, quite simply, is heavenly. □

Project directed by Alana Frumkes, Executive Director, Designer Visions.

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Printed fabrics suffuse the room with graphic charm. Bed and nightstand, Hickory Chair. Headboard, walls, and Roman shade in Katie Leede & Company fabrics. Tall lamp, Visual Comfort. Small lamp, linens, Mexican bedspread, and vintage Korean prints, Aero. Rug, Karastan. Art, left, Natural Curiosities. Media integration providers, Clareo Systems.

## AMERICAN CHIC

*Interior design: Thomas O'Brien, Aero Studios, 212-966-4700, aerostudios.com. Interior architecture: S. Russell Groves, 212-929-5221, srussellgroves.com. Development: Durst Fetner Residential, 212-427-9700, durstfetner.com.*

**Page 96 Mirror, chest:** Hickory Chair, 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com. **Lamp, hourglass, vase, ceramics:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Page 97 Fabric for chair:** Thibaut, 800-223-0704, thibautdesign.com. **Chair, plinth:** Formations, 310-659-3062, formationsusa.com. **Vase:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Floors:** LV Wood, 212-627-9663, lvwood.com. **Paint for walls, ceiling:** Ralph Lauren Paint, 888-475-7674, ralphlaurenhome.com. **Pages 98-99**

**Chenilles for sofa, club chairs, benches, pillows:** Lee Jofa, 800-453-3563, leejofa.com. **Sofa, club chairs, chaise, ottoman, chest, coffee table, bookcases:** Hickory Chair, 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com. **Benches, hexagonal table:** Dennis & Leen, 310-652-0855, dennisandleen.com. **Fabrics for pillows, curtains:** Kravet, 800-648-5728, kravet.com. **Curtain fabrication:** Jonas, 212-691-2777, jonasworkroom.com. **Pompon pillow, lamp, table, stool, floor lamp, whale vertebra:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Lamp:** Formations, 310-659-3062, formationsusa.com. **Curtain rod:** Joseph Biunno Ltd., 212-688-6121, antiquefurnitureusa.com. **Rug:** Safavieh, 516-945-1900, safavieh.com. **Page 100 Table, chairs, cabinet:** Hickory Chair, 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com. **Chandelier:** Dennis & Leen, 310-652-0855, dennisandleen.com. **Tray, ceramic sculpture:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Paint for trim:** Ralph Lauren Paint, 888-475-7674, ralphlaurenhome.com.

**Triptych:** Natural Curiosities, 323-906-1083, naturalcuriosities.com. **Page 101 Bench:** Formations, 310-659-3062, formationsusa.com. **Chair:** Dennis & Leen, 310-652-0855, dennisandleen.com. **Fabrics for bench, chair, wallpaper:** Thibaut, 800-223-0704, thibautdesign.com. **Table:** Hickory Chair, 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com. **Fabric for shade:** Lee Jofa, 800-453-3563, leejofa.com. **Lamp, bolster, chairs:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Fabrics for pillows:** Kravet, 800-648-5728, kravet.com. **Trim:** Samuel & Sons, 212-704-8000, samuelandsons.com. **Rug:** Karastan, 800-234-1120, karastan.com. **Counter:** Caesarstone, 818-779-0999, caesarstoneus.com. **Range, hood:** Bertazzoni, 866-905-0010, us.bertazzoni.com. **Ovens:** Miele, 800-843-7231, mieleusa.com. **Tile:** Jantile, 718-655-5450, jantile.com. **Light fixture:** Visual Comfort, 713-686-5999, visualcomfort.com. **Paint for walls:** Ralph Lauren Paint, 888-475-7674, ralphlaurenhome.com. **Pages 102-103 Fabric for wing chair, ikat for curtains:** Kravet, 800-648-5728, kravet.com. **Wing chair, chests, bed, table, secretary, chair:** Hickory Chair, 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com. **Stripe for headboard, shams, fabric for chair pillow:** Lee Jofa, 800-453-3563, leejofa.com. **Bedding, lamp:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Speakers:** Leon, 888-213-5015, leonspeakers.com. **Lamps:** Visual Comfort, 713-686-5999, visualcomfort.com; Formations, 310-659-3062, formationsusa.com. **Rug:** Karastan, 800-234-1120, karastan.com. **Paint for walls:** Ralph Lauren Paint, 888-475-7674, ralphlaurenhome.com. **Vase:** Reed & Barton, 800-343-1383, reedandbarton.com. **Pages 104-105 Bed, nightstand:** Hickory Chair, 800-349-4579, hickorychair.com. **Fabrics for headboard, walls, Roman shade:** Katie Leede & Company, 310-394-7524, katieleede.com. **Tall lamp:** Visual Comfort, 713-686-5999, visualcomfort.com. **Small lamp, linens, bedspread, prints:** Aero Studios, 212-966-1500, aerostudios.com. **Rug:** Karastan, 800-234-1120, karastan.com. **Art:** Natural Curiosities, 323-906-1083, naturalcuriosities.com. **Products, services:** Clareo, 646-514-9768, clareonetworks.com; Collins Brothers, 914-834-0048, collinsbros.com; RC Dolner, 212-645-2190, redolner.com; Par Plumbing, 212-926-1088, pargroup.com.