

DEPTH CHARGE

FIVE YEARS IN LONDON TURNED ONE OF STEVEN GAMBREL'S MODERN-MINDED CLIENTS INTO A MAN WITH AN APPRECIATION FOR TRADITIONAL LUXURY—SO THE DESIGNER GAVE HIS NEW YORK PAD A SOULFUL MAKEOVER
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The living area of a Manhattan apartment designed by Steven Gambrel features a custom-made Beauvais carpet, curtains of Clarence House taffeta, and vintage James Mont lamps; the Gambrel-designed sofa and club chairs were made by Dune, and the painting above the fireplace is by David Smith. See Resources.



Clockwise from left: A Sigmar Polke painting and vintage Jacques Quinet armchair in the entrance hall. On the opposite side of the entry is a vintage Jean Royère mirror, a sculpture by Keith Coventry, and doors painted in Benjamin Moore shades of gray. Photographs by Richard Prince, vintage Carlo Moretti glass vases, and an Ico Parisi bench upholstered in Glant patent leather in the dining area. Facing page: The sofa was designed by Gambrel, the vintage cocktail table is Edward Wormley for Dunbar, and the walls are painted in Alaskan Husky by Benjamin Moore. See Resources.



TRAVEL MAY BROADEN THE MIND, as the saying goes, but moving abroad can literally change the way you want to live. Prolonged exposure to another culture, far from home, is guaranteed to undermine the tried and true. That's what happened to a high-powered New York banker who spent a rejuvenating five years in London.

"I lived in Holland Park, and I loved my flat," he says, referring to a posh corner of the English capital known for gleaming white rows of Victorian townhouses with pillared porches and neoclassical details. So when he accepted a job that would bring him back to Wall Street, the banker knew that the platinum-colored Tribeca loft he had once enjoyed no longer suited his mind-set. Instead, he bought an apartment in a fantastically balconied building that dates from 1895, in a London-like Manhattan neighborhood anchored by a Gothic Revival church. Then the banker turned to designer Steven Gambrel, who had decorated two homes for him over the years, including the Florida getaway he still owns.

This time around, the design directive was more complex: Give the new apartment an aura of comfort and luxury that felt old-world rather than all-American.



A custom-made sofa upholstered in Savoy by Robert Allen, vintage Paul László cocktail table, and Fonthill wall covering in the library; the brass chandelier is vintage, the ceiling is painted with Pratt & Lambert's Rattan, and the C-print is by Gerhard Richter. Facing page: The club chairs were designed by Gambrel, made by Dune, and upholstered in Glant patent leather. Stainless-steel cabinetry, a concrete floor, and a Five Star range and hood in the kitchen. The unrestored service stair dates from 1895. See Resources.



The high-rise bachelor pad on South Beach is “very mod and very Miami,” the banker says, but for his Manhattan home base, he preferred a richer, more anchored atmosphere—just as long as it wasn’t a set out of *Brideshead Revisited*. “I didn’t want an old person’s apartment,” he says.

The contemporary design practiced by Gambrel has the kind of depth most people associate with traditional interiors, thanks to precisely calibrated balances: slickness with texture, bold colors with lacquer-smooth finishes, and historic references refreshed by up-to-the-minute grace notes. Here the spacious rooms and welcome splashes of sunlight—not to mention his client’s increasingly evolved preferences—led the designer to develop a decorative scheme in which aristocratic sophistication intersects with an attitude that might best be described as intellectual playboy.

“It’s a bit like a clubhouse in feeling,” Gambrel explains. “A perfect gentleman’s retreat in the city.” The banker may own a Keith Coventry sculpture that incorporates a Calvin Klein ad featuring supermodel Kate Moss in a tube top, but it is displayed on a swaggering brass-and-marble console. There is a choice C-print by Gerhard Richter, a Sigmar Polke painting, and Richard Prince photos too, as well as furniture designed by all the smart-investment names: arm-chairs by Jacques Quinet, a cocktail table by Paul László, and lamps by James Mont, a designer who made chinoiserie all the rage in the 1940s. Much of the upholstered furniture, some of it designed by Gambrel, came from the banker’s previous residences and has simply been recovered.

Gambrel saw the apartment’s relatively few structural drawbacks as aesthetic opportunities. The awkward 1895 layout was reordered, a process that included knocking down a wall of closets to turn a

