

30TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

VERANDA

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GARDEN



PALE FIRE

Awash in lustrous, jewellike details and a softly luxurious palette, an ethereal apartment on Park Avenue, designed by Thomas Pheasant, emanates a quiet, transcendent beauty.



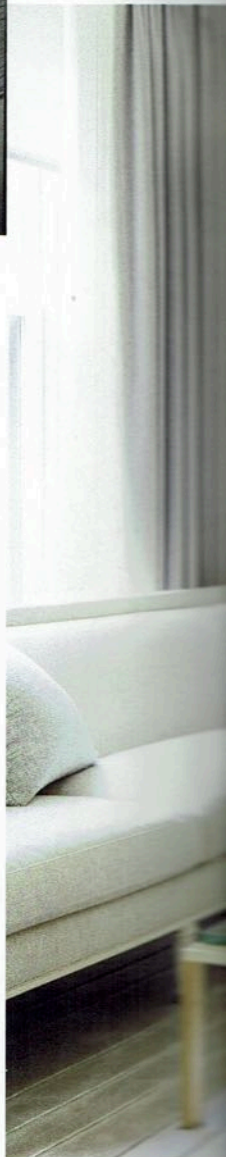
INTERIOR AND ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BY
THOMAS PHEASANT
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Luminous details such as lacquer, gilt, and bronze help transform the dining room into a theater in the round. The dining table, chairs upholstered in a Brunswick & Fils fabric, chandelier, and lacquered cabinets with cast-bronze decoration are all by Thomas Pheasant Studio; églomisé wall finish, Miriam Ellner; painting, Jane Puylagarde; Delphine Brabant sculpture on a custom pedestal.



White and airy spaces, together with relaxed seating arrangements, afford a sense of ease. ABOVE: In the entry hall, a custom cabinet is flanked by Carol Egan stools from Maison Gerard; vintage Jules Leleu gilded-bronze sconces; artwork, Agostino Bonalumi. RIGHT: The living room's custom sofa and Origami chairs by Thomas Pheasant Studio are in Romo fabrics; artwork, Harry Moody. FAR RIGHT: The benches and dining chairs in Donghia leathers, the trilevel table, the games table, and the mirrors are all custom.



"THEY ARE LIKE TWO SIDES OF MY BRAIN," Thomas Pheasant says of the husband and wife who commissioned him to renovate this apartment on New York City's Park Avenue. "She's drawn to tradition and gentle curves. He's happier with a modern edge. Both like taking creative risks." That shared desire to embrace contrast and explore new common ground shaped this project from the start. Although the well-traveled couple own a primary residence on the West Coast and their adult children have flown the nest, they don't see their Upper East Side condo as a mere pied-à-terre. "For them," the designer explains, "it's a home, rooted in a city where they have lots of family and friends."

Based in Washington, D.C., Pheasant has deep aesthetic roots in classical architecture (his epiphany came on a boyhood visit to the National Gallery of Art rotunda), so he warmed to the Manhattan building's impeccable 1911 Beaux-Arts facade. Inside the oft-remodeled apartment, however, lackluster decor and a mazelike layout left him cold. "What captivated me the minute I walked in," he recalls, "was the wonderful natural light on all sides. That's a luxury you can't fake. It's either there or it isn't." High ceilings contributed to another urban luxury that Pheasant prizes, "space to breathe"—as did his clients' decision to join two units into a 4,000-square-foot floor-through and replace multiple bedrooms with a single master suite.

To stake out that private sanctuary and expand generous areas for entertaining on any scale, Pheasant totally reconfigured the plan. The flexibility, luminosity, and spatial flow of his interiors feel as contemporary as the owners' art collection. At the same time, repeated shapes, volumes, and proportions key every room to a harmonic counterpoint of symmetry and axial views that discreetly echo the traditional balance of the surrounding edifice. "There's a comfort in history, and yet this isn't about reproducing the past," Pheasant says. "It is about evolving geometry and





Distilled to its essence, geometry elevates everyday destinations and passages. **ABOVE:** The kitchen has a custom island in polished nickel and glass with Calacatta Gold marble; range hood, Wolf; pendants, Holly Hunt. **OPPOSITE:** In the master foyer, the ceramic-and-bronze table is from Galerie Carole Decombe; wall panels in a Romo fabric; pendant, Jean Karajian Collection; flooring in Crema Marfil and Tundra Gray marbles; artwork, Bertrand Lavier.

essential relationships to strike a chord of, ‘Oh, yes, I recognize this, but...wow, this is different!’” Variations on a theme of rectangles and circles—first sounded by the long entry hall with a cylindrical anteroom at one end—play out through architecture, furniture, and rugs. The anteroom’s fluted walls suggest column shafts turned inside out. Within the dining room’s square shell, curved cabinet doors and a plaster corona overhead spin the illusion of a grand rotunda. A marble kitchen counter radiates the aura of an altar or abstract sculpture.

Rather than raise the curtain on one big reveal, Pheasant prefers staging revelations that gradually emerge over time through a scrim of simplicity. Case in point: “The clients called after a

dinner party to say how excited they were. They’d never noticed until then the way my Willow chandelier casts a leafy canopy overhead at night.” Such impromptu drama hinges on the power of light to animate layers of color and texture. Moment by moment, a spectrum of whites, beiges, and grays—neutral only at first glance—shifts hue, unfolding infinite gradations of calm. Mahogany, silvery reverse-painted glass, gilt, and lacquer reflect ageless finesse. Earthy cast bronze and floral wall reliefs imply nature’s touch. “Maybe when the wife walks through here, she sees the traditional,” Pheasant muses, “and then maybe the husband sees the modern. What matters is that both of them say they love coming home to serenity.” □



Elegantly sensuous texture and pattern envelop the master suite from floor to ceiling; the Jonas bed and polished-bronze bench, upholstered in Romo fabrics, are both custom, as are the nightstands; lamps, Thomas Pheasant for Baker; circa-1960 mirror, Line Vautrin. OPPOSITE: A floral relief installation by Nina Helms decorates the walls and ceiling of the wife's bath; Penhaglion tub with Waterworks fittings; custom dressing table and chair in a Cowtan & Tout fabric; side table, John Boone; walls in Benjamin Moore's Simply White. For more details, see Sourcebook.



