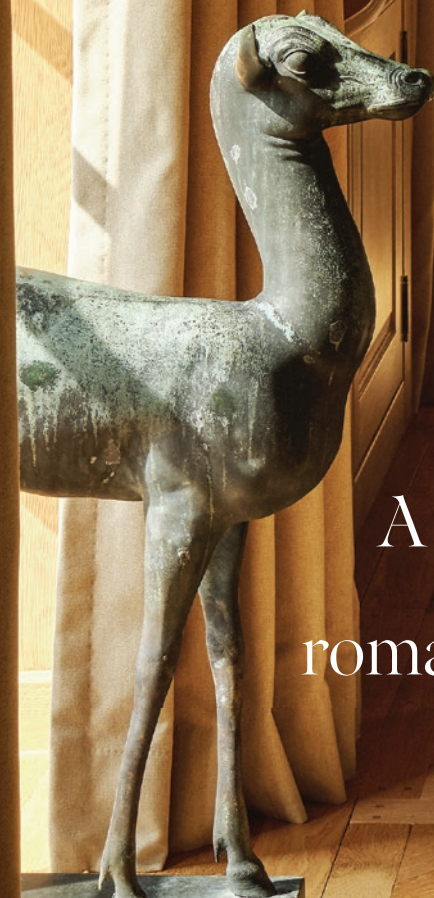


FRENCH ACCENTS

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AN ANTIQUE ITALIAN BRONZE DEER STANDS AT A WINDOW OF THE LIBRARY. THE PANELING WAS PAINTED TO LOOK LIKE OAK, AND THE FLOORS ARE OF ANTIQUE PARQUET DE VERSAILLES. OPPOSITE A BENCH BECKONS AT THE END OF A GRAVEL WALKWAY LINED WITH AMERICAN LINDEN TREES.



A Hudson Valley retreat built to evoke a grand residence in Normandy is romantically reimagined by Martin Brûlé Studio and Grace Fuller Design

TEXT BY MITCHELL OWENS PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADRIAN GAUT



IN THE FAMILY ROOM A BRÛLÉ-DESIGNED SOFA WEARS A DEDAR VELVET. THE RATTAN ARMCHAIRS ARE BY RENZO MONGIARDINO FOR BONACINA, AND THE COCKTAIL AND SIDE TABLES ARE BY BRÛLÉ. A TRIO OF CERAMIC PLATES BY JEAN COCTEAU SITS ON THE BAR.

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antasies and narratives” is how Montreal-born interior designer Martin Brûlé describes the mysteriously soul-stirring residences for which he has become known since establishing his firm in New York City in 2021. (He has recently opened an outpost in Paris.) Why should a private house, a lifestyle boutique, or a department store simply be an envelope when it can set minds soaring and hearts aflutter? Interiors can tell stories, like Scheherazade, that haven’t been told before, and—more to the point—they can captivate their audiences as powerfully as any drama. Such is a young family’s rural retreat that Martin Brûlé Studio created not terribly long ago near Kinderhook, a historic New York town best known for its association with another Martin, namely Van Buren, America’s resplendently bewhiskered eighth president.

Says the designer, “It’s my fantasy of an American country house.” Which means one that has nothing to do with the tropes of Windsor chairs and flowered chintz. Not that Brûlé couldn’t deliver such a vocabulary, but his style is something more refined and decidedly international, usually with a deep European influence. “I’m always going back, consciously or not, to the 1920s and 1930s, the time of Jean-Michel Frank and Diego Giacometti,” he says. This time, however, the designer needed to temper that aesthetic foundation, given that the husband’s taste skews to “classic, traditional, high-style style,” while the wife’s tends to the “whimsical and eccentric.” As Brûlé continues, “They get along very well together, obviously, and working with them was a very pleasant push and pull. It resulted in a house where hot and cold are combined, but subtly—felt rather than seen.”

By hot and cold, Brûlé means variations in textures, materials, scales, and finishes, in much the same way that Frank choreographed a space. It also means fashioning a mix of periods and styles in a similarly restrained if sometimes surprising fashion, as soigné as it is utilitarian. The clients’

dining room is a prime example of Brûlé’s prestidigitation: a 19th-century French mahogany table—“way too deep and wide and long for the space, but it works, without the extensions,” he says—set amid murals depicting Japanese cranes posturing in a landscape not unlike the rolling acreage seen through the casement windows and French doors. Add to this unlikely pairing an antler chandelier and a complement of Regency dining chairs upholstered in dull mustard mohair and you see where the couple’s individual preferences for historicism and quirkiness make happy roommates.

ART: © ARS / COMITÉ COCTEAU, PARIS / ADAGP, PARIS 2023.



SET ON NEARLY a hundred acres, the house occupies the top of a hill like a lodge, with stone walls and chimneys, slate roofs, beamed ceilings, and hearty hewn columns, surrounded by outbuildings clad in weathered clapboard siding and gravel terraces that crunch satisfyingly underfoot. (Built for a previous owner and renovated by Brûlé’s office, it was designed by Alan Wanzenberg Architect and had been inspired by a residence near Deauville, France.) One sofa in the drawing room is upholstered in an old verdure tapestry, while other seating in the room is upholstered in greens that recall clover and spring

leaves. More antlers, antique hunting trophies, are gathered into a long corridor, and in a bedroom, wooden mushroom sculptures seem to sprout from the sised floor. Here, a lamp made from a riding boot stands atop a campaign chest; there, a chinoiserie fabric brings levity to an otherwise serene bedroom where creamy curtains enclose the bed.

Given the suave earthiness of that vocabulary, it comes as no surprise to learn that the interior of the house echoes the landscape, which was conceived by Grace Fuller Design. “The concept was gentleness,” firm principal Grace Fuller

“It’s my fantasy of an American country house,” says designer *Martin Brûlé*.



ART: ROSEMARIE TROCKEL © 2023 ARTIST'S RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK / VG BILD-KUNST, BOWEN.

IN THE KITCHEN, CHARLOTTE PERRIAND DINING CHAIRS SURROUND A CUSTOM TABLE BY GREEN RIVER PROJECT. TUREENS FROM LA TUILE À LOUP; CUSTOM ENGRAVED CRYSTAL GLASSES FROM AU BAIN MARIE. OPPOSITE IN THE LIBRARY, A WOOL

TAPESTRY BY ROSEMARIE TROCKEL HANGS ABOVE A CUSTOM BANQUETTE WEARING A DEDAR LINEN PRINTED WITH A 17TH-CENTURY TAPESTRY DESIGN. A 1920 BRONZE BIRD STANDS ATOP A VINTAGE BRASS COCKTAIL TABLE.



ABOVE JAMB PENDANTS HANG IN THE RUSTIC KITCHEN. CUSTOM WALL FINISH BY AGUSTIN HURTADO; WHITEWASHED ANTIQUED TERRACOTTA FLOOR TILES. RIGHT THE KITCHEN GARDEN, PLANNED BY LANDSCAPE DESIGNER GRACE FULLER MARROQUIN.

Marroquin explains, adding that some trees were removed to clean up the treeline, a few others were planted, but it was all about enhancing and softening what was already there and transitioning the surroundings to the architecture—and the lives lived in it. “When you have that much nature around you, you can’t compete,” she says. “You just try to achieve a balance, coax nature up to the house, so it looks like it’s always been there.”

Clambering greenery cloaks the rocky façade, and the interior’s stone floors seamlessly become gravel terraces that offer places to relax and entertain, even harvest. (There’s a kitchen garden that provides vegetables and herbs for the table.) Giant clipped hornbeams border another gravel area like green monoliths, as solid and tall as the chimneys. Stone fountains, as sturdy in appearance as the chimneypieces indoors, trickle and gurgle and splash; one stands adjacent to the hearty front door, its water music an accompaniment to every arrival and departure. And off in the distance, perfectly regraded lawns disappear into the woodland, as leafy and as mysterious as the library’s forested fabric. “It’s a weekend getaway that has the feeling of a classic American country club,” Brûlé says of the retreat, where as many as 16 people can be found, some reading, others deep in conversation or working in the kitchen, and still others just strolling about, taking in a Hudson River Valley paradise that is the latest chapter in one family’s story. ▲



AN IKSEL-DECORATIVE ARTS LANDSCAPE WALLPAPER ENVELOPS THE DINING ROOM. ENGLISH REGENCY CHAIRS UPHOLSTERED IN MOHAIR; 19TH-CENTURY FRENCH MAHOGANY TABLE; ROSE UNIACKE SCONCES.

“When you have that much nature around you, you can’t compete,” says landscape designer *Grace Fuller Marroquin*.



IN THE PRIMARY BEDROOM, THE CUSTOM CANOPY BED IS DRAPED IN A LORO PIANA CASHMERE AND A HISTORICAL LE MANACH PRINT. THE SAME PRINT COVERS THE SLIPPER CHAIRS. A TWIG LAMP BY VAUGHAN STANDS ATOP THE ANTIQUE DROP-LEAF CONSOLE TABLE. OPPOSITE A SCULPTURE BY NICOLE EISENMAN ON THE LAWN.



ART: © NICOLE EISENMAN, FOUNTAIN SITTING FIGURE, 2017.