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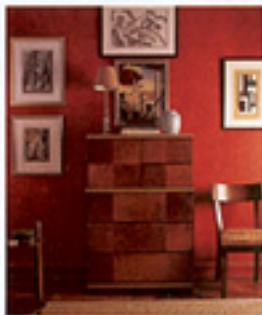
PERFECTLY SUITED

WITH PIN-STRIPED WALLPAPER AND
SAVILE ROW SAVOIR FAIRE, INTERIOR DESIGNER
MATTHEW PATRICK SMYTH'S MANHATTAN
APARTMENT IS AS WELL-TAILORED AS HE IS

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LIKE IT OR NOT, YOUR HOME SPEAKS VOLUMES



about you. Just think how curiously well the adjectives that describe your decor can be applied to your persona. If you'd rather not face the thought that you might be, say, minimal, baroque, or comfortably overstuffed, take someone else's inventory.

For instance, that of New York interior designer Matthew Patrick Smyth. The consummate combination of a gentleman, a scholar, and a decorator, Smyth has fashioned himself a discreet jewel box of an apartment smack in the middle of the Upper East Side, where he has become a quiet favorite among clients. And though his home exhibits the restraint and charm that permeate his work, it also tells much about the man. "I guess that's true," says Smyth. "This is totally different from anything in my portfolio."

To view most of Smyth's interiors would be to think him a terribly polite Anglophile. He has a virtuous knowledge of design's traditional refinements—the dignity of 19th-century English furniture, the softer power of chintz, the splendor of classical architectural details—and only occasionally does he allow a splash of vibrant color to peek through.

His apartment reveals subtle yet crucial differences from his other work. At first glance, the place seems as neatly tailored as the often be-suited Smyth. The entry even has a humorous dash of the haberdashery: pin-striped wallpaper, the tobacco



Facing page, from top: Knight stands in the doorway to the living room. A collection of artwork including an oil painting by Charles Demuth, a portrait canvas and a print by Fernando Leger (right) surrounds a vintage Ford coupe exterior and a brass chair. Top right: A Japanese-style leather campaign chair and a black table drawing. Purcell at desk, in a corner of the living room. See [House tour](#).



color of an elegant banker's suit. Perhaps it's tribute to his father, who worked on Wall Street when Snyth was young. "I knew I didn't want to do that," he recalls, "though I never knew that being a decorator was a career."

The living-room is a complete about-face for him: Painted a rich, deep red with a finish evocative of aged leather, it was designed, Snyth explains, to look glamorous, comfortable, and inviting at night. "That's really the only time I'm here," he says.

The room's details suggest a man more in touch with Modernism than might be expected. There are a pair of brass hood lamps the designer created for Mrs. MacDougal at Hirsch & Co., a Paul Frank cabinet, and a silver mirror glimmering on the wall. Other details show a shockingly practical bent. A camel-

colored wool sofa bed Snyth had made for guests is flanked by folding screens designed as doorknob-closets (one of them stores the glasses, trays, and napkins Snyth needs for his frequent cocktail parties; the other hides an air conditioner). And a peculiar demitasse-cocktail table—think of a demitasse table stretched out to five feet—makes a clean, unfussy statement, as does a simple upholstered slipper chair in red-and-cream-striped linen.

It's in the art, however, where the designer's sharp eye for quality is most in evidence. Snyth's collection of prints, etchings, and paintings from the 1900s and '30s is distinguished by the fact that despite their high caliber, few of the works are by artists that anyone has heard of (although above the Franz cabinet is a Charles Demuth painting bought for a



Snyth supports a photographer's light stand with a black, tapered surface at the back. Her music box sits on the Rothmans box. The Connors, and the table's painting depicts a Manhattan scene. Facing page: The dining-room's vintage barstool is handmade by a Brooklyn & Flat architect and a Cass & Bernard designer once observed in a crowd. (See by Country Specialist, See Resources.)

NOTHING

ing in an early-life New York gangster plot). And a group of 110 Doro paintings was a first for Howard. "The woman told me some romantic story about the guy who did them," he recalls. "I don't really care if it's true, but I like the way they look."

"That's what's great about them," says Tom Tharp, a collector, E.C., and dealer who has known Smith for years. "He's so confident in what he's doing and to what he doesn't need a work to be by someone famous. And he doesn't appreciate that about him. If they want someone who's just going to tell them the hours of exposure things he does it's by the company that there are plenty of those guys around."

Tharp is particularly fond of a 1960s-era scene by an artist he called "the last Smith found at the Dakota for a house in Manhattan. They had Smith that he'd just bought the canvas. They would Smith give it to me the only order 'buy your own work rights back.' That was it."

Like me, it's only on inspection of the big a-trick that another one of Smith's shows. Or bookshelves, tables, and armchairs is a gift after about ten-ten years in Southwest Asia, Africa, Europe—a miniature wood-carved temple, a carved-wood head, a hanging silver object. And all of it is people. "Nothing was brought to the spot," says Smith, about a statement coming from a man who says he's for a living.

And a man famous for his unassuming ways. But while the designer's bathroom door style may have convinced the Fifth Avenue buyer that he's a collector of a great interior and shopping, the answer to another Smith can speak for itself as, making it more well-known. ■



A 1960s Forest-styled room in the modern bedroom design, shown in a bedroom designed by Smith. The corner bed is by Uttermost, the dresser is from the same line, and the Josef Hoffmann chair is vintage. See Resources.

