



GLOBAL SPIRIT

At his Sydney home, designer and Virginia native Thomas Hamel marries all-American style with a light and bright Australian sensibility.

Architectural moldings and a marble mantel give a former industrial space a traditional atmosphere. Custom sofa in a Glant fabric; armchair in a Clarence House linen and lamps, Gregorius Pineo; antique stool, Martyn Cook Antiques; blinds, Kneeder Fauchère; walls in Hog Bristle, Dulux. OPPOSITE: Antique Chinese bookcase, Orient House; stone figures, Hedge.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY THOMAS HAMEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANSON SMART | WRITTEN BY ANNE LIM



A simple sisal carpet is a counterpoint to a sparkling chandelier in the dining room. Table and side chair, Gregorius Pineo; armchairs in a Rogers & Goffigon linen, William Yeoward; chandelier, Hollyhock; carpet, Premier Carpets; art, Coen Young. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Vintage Karl Springer coffee table; 19th-century wing chair in a Nobilis linen; art, Suus Kooijman. Table and chairs in a Kerry Joyce linen, Gregorius Pineo; art, Gabriel Rivera.



THOMAS HAMEL HAS DRAWN all the threads of his globe-trotting life together in the elegant apartment he shares with his partner, George Massar, in the heart of Sydney. Originally from Virginia, Hamel made his name as a decorator in New York, where he worked at Parish-Hadley during what he calls the “crazy ’80s.” There, he developed his design creed of pared-down glamour and sympathetic contrast—the yin of simple materials set against the yang of precious antiques.

Hamel was lured to Sydney in the early 1990s, and his affection for his adopted home has continued unabated for a quarter of a century. “Moving to Australia was definitely an enormous leap of faith, but the experience has been incredible,” says Hamel in his gentle baritone.

Since arriving abroad, Hamel has created one of the leading interior design practices in Sydney, working with a who’s who of Down Under society. These days, he divides his time between Australia and the United States, where he collaborates with designer Dylan Farrell on a furniture collection sold through Jean de Merry.

Hamel’s first residence in Sydney was above an antiques dealer’s shop in a village setting in the city’s east. He found he craved the energy of the city, and in 1997, he decided to relocate to the center of town. “At that point, not many Sydneysiders lived in downtown surroundings, so the move was quite pioneering,” he recalls.

Having worked on many gracious prewar apartments on Fifth and Park Avenues in Manhattan, he hoped to discover the Sydney version of a New York-style classic six. Finding nothing similar, he chose to buy an apartment in the eight-story Broughton House, a converted late-Victorian building built in 1900 as a storage facility



A green Ultrasuede wallcovering cocoons the master bedroom. English Regency bed with canopy in Thomas Hamel and Kerry Joyce fabrics and Samuel & Sons trim, Martyn Cook Antiques; bed linens, Golden Goose; throw, Brunello Cucinelli; 19th-century Chinese side table, Kazari. OPPOSITE: Antique Venetian chair; pillow, Fortuny; art, Belinda Fox. For more details, see Sourcebook.



for wool to be shipped to England. Here, surrounded by modern towers, he set about making a little bit of Manhattan.

He began by raising the ceilings and adding traditional architectural details. Ten years after moving in, Hamel was able to acquire the apartment next door and blended the two into a palatial inner-city sanctuary. He added ceiling beams, widened doorways, and installed a pair of antique timber doors from a bank in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Despite its grand scale, the apartment has a warmth and comfort that come from the use of natural textiles such as sisal and the harmony of a neutral palette burnished with accents in brown, blue, and red.

Four years ago, Hamel's long-distance relationship with Massar—the CEO and creative director of the American furniture firm Kneedler Fauchère—evolved to the point where the couple now commute between L.A. and Sydney. Since then, Massar has helped Hamel to infuse the Australia apartment with a California sensibility. Together, they removed some antiques while adding contemporary furnishings and a sophisticated edit of global treasures from Africa, Southeast Asia, China, Europe, the Americas, and, of course, their beloved Australia. “Through our travels together, we’ve begun to collect art that speaks to us both,” Hamel says. “Our apartment reflects this wonderful journey of discovery.” □

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