

# AVENUE



45th  
Anniversary  
ISSUE

ART ADVISER

## WILL KOPELMAN

GOES HOME TO THE UPPER EAST SIDE

**M**any landmark buildings on New York's Upper East Side represent the early glory days of Manhattan, where the grand, prewar condos were built in the economic boom of the 1920s, mostly by the five major architectural firms of the day. They were designed to be "contained homes," so architects didn't skimp on materials, ceiling height, or scale. This particular building was completed in 1918 and is a solid construction of steel, brick, and concrete, with great details and moldings throughout. As a result of this old-world construction, I don't hear my neighbors and they don't hear me (or the kids!).

I love cooking, so a livable kitchen/family room in the apartment was of the utmost importance, and I knew I wanted certain special inclusions, like a big La Cornue range and a wine cellar. To facilitate this, I teamed up with architect Gil Schafer, whom I had recently met at a wedding and we fast became friends; I have a huge passion for classic American architecture, and we are both rabid sticklers for detail. Gil and I worked to combine the existing kitchen, formal dining room, and laundry to create one big communal space. The floors are all original—a mixture of quarter-sawn oak, and the trim is a combination of cherry wood, oak, and pine—so I simply re-varnished them with a clear coat and then ebonized the rest. The metal-framed glass doors have become a significant design point in the apartment; I often work in the living room and wanted to be able to see the kids wherever they were playing.

I was born and raised on the Upper East Side and have always loved New York, but what carries the most meaning for me now is that my girls are playing in the same area of Central Park as I did when I was their age. My parents still live here, and my sister and her family too, and I moved back from LA and found this apartment about eight years ago. I fell for the soft whites and natural earth tones, and just added to it over time, trying to achieve a sweet spot between maximalism and minimalism. What is meaningful for me is utility...beautiful designs always have superior functionality, and that's always been the cornerstone of my approach.

Buying objects you love should be instinctual. My instinct is eclectic for sure, but I wouldn't have it any other way. People like Albert Barnes understood that the sum is greater than its parts. I love old master paintings, folk art, outsider art, African tribal art, pre-Columbian, Greco-Roman, and Egyptian antiquities, Flemish tapestries...and I mix all of that with some of my favorite contemporary artists. I even have my old motorcycle in my living room—a 1977 Triumph Bonneville 750, made the month and year I was born. It holds a special place in my heart, so I keep it there. To me, if it has meaning, it stays.



**LIVING ROOM** Will Kopelman surveys his living room from a club chair.

**Left:** custom-made steel and glass doors, a feature of the apartment, connect living spaces. **Opposite:** Kopelman's Triumph motorcycle takes pride of place.



*"I HAVE MY OLD MOTORCYCLE  
IN MY LIVING ROOM—  
A 1977 TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE 750,  
MADE THE MONTH  
AND YEAR I WAS BORN."*