

THE SARTORIALIST

Interior designer Frank Roop's Boston duplex takes its cues from his fashion-world past, with bespoke pieces perfectly tailored and sparked with a bit of glitter

BY ALEXANDRA HALL OCT 4, 2007



Styled by: Carlos Mota; Photo: Eric Roth

Slicing through Boston's historic Back Bay is a street that is an elegant collision of disparities. Its 19th-century townhouses, brick sidewalks, and vest-pocket gardens give it Edith Wharton charm, but the skyscrapers looming on its margins add an urban edge. Small wonder this thoroughfare a stone's throw from the Charles River won over interior designer [Frank Roop](#), whose duplex successfully juggles a similarly spirited mixture of then and now.

Located on two floors of an 1865 brownstone, the high-ceilinged apartment was just the ticket for the designer and his wife, Sharon, who works for [Neiman Marcus](#). The effervescent couple—they met at fashion-design school 18 years ago—had outgrown their condominium nearby and needed more square footage for entertaining. Cocktail parties for 60 are not uncommon. But it wasn't just the expanding guest list that encouraged the Roops to make the move. There was the challenge of making a statement on a larger scale. "Honestly," the designer says, "I couldn't wait to get my hands on those 12-foot-high rooms."



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Months of renovation and Victorian-detail-scraping have culminated in contemporary interiors as finely crafted as an haute couture gown. The canny, sophisticated blend of art and vintage and custom-made furniture is influenced by the years Roop spent working for the luxury clothing shop [Louis Boston](#) before opening his interior-design business. "I look at a room like it's an outfit or a wardrobe," he explains as he straightens a curtain of pale gray wool that is deeply cuffed with silk and suede in

two shades of green—moss and acid. "All of the materials I use are inspired by clothing, as are my methods for choosing texture and color." A major style influence was his onetime boss, Murray Pearlstein, the famously dapper former owner of Louis Boston. From him, the designer says, "I learned that things that don't match can look fantastic together."

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Consider the smartly outfitted living room. A tailored sofa wrapped in sumptuous indigo velvet is attended by sleek black 1960s tables. Syrian pieces shimmering with mother-of-pearl stand alongside angular linen chairs. Here and there are antique gilt-bamboo footstools that resemble funky brooches. The wall that frames the stone fireplace is paved with thousands of opalescent tiles—the floor of the entrance hall is similarly treated—while the remaining walls are papered to mimic stacked blocks of limestone. All martini-chic and dramatic colors (chocolate-brown sparked with sharp green and aqua), the living room is Roop central. Here the couple entertains weekly, and the designer can be found working into the wee hours. "It's polished enough to handle parties," he says, "but casual enough that I feel comfortable using it as my second office."



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Renovations to the apartment took eight months. The alterations weren't all that extensive, but when it comes to the details, Roop is exacting. The dining room, which flows directly into the open kitchen, is centered on a gas fireplace that is set within a massive slab of seamless vein-cut travertine. "The surround was made out of wood first, then that was used as a model to fit the individual pieces together," the designer explains. The kitchen, with its polished-concrete counters and gleaming cabinets of reverse-painted glass, was born after the demolition of an enclosed galley kitchen. "Sharon insisted on it," Roop says. "She does all the cooking and didn't want to be stuck in Siberia by herself." And since neither of them wanted guests to see stacks of dirty dishes while they are enjoying a homemade meal at the walnut dining table, an extra-deep sink keeps kitchen mess well out of everybody's sight lines.

When the visitors are gone, and the Roops are left to their own devices, the couple spends much of their downtime at the other end of the room, which serves as the television area. Its suave repurposing—the gutsy glass-tile-embedded cocktail table incorporates a cement slab taken from a terrace in Saint-Tropez—reminds Roop of another sartorial analogy. "There's that saying: 'You should wear your clothes, they shouldn't wear you.' That's how I approach a room. No matter how great something

looks, you want to kick back and feel like you're involved in a space."

In the sunny master bedroom, textures keep the atmosphere lively but luxe. Centered in the bay window is a towering four-poster that Roop designed and had sheathed in tan suede and studded with burnished brass tacks. A flannel chaise longue beckons, a 1960s Curtis Jeré metal sunburst sparkles, and a perfectly polished white marble table shines (surprise provenance: the Enron-office auction). Even the bedroom walls are part of this fashionable interplay, their handmade recycled paper glimmering with mica chips. "In a traditional space paired with modern things, you can't overthink the design or it looks contrived," Roop says. "A room really is like an outfit: It develops with seemingly dissimilar pieces that, once you see them together, just happen."

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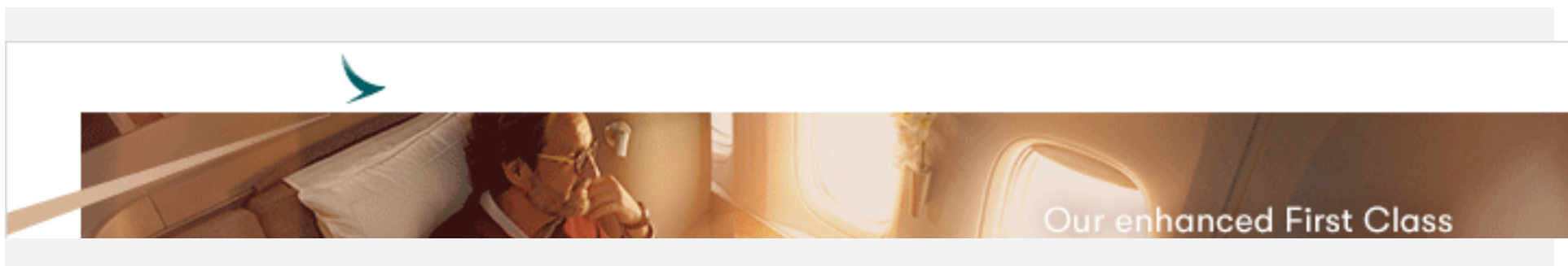


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