

Alex Papachristidis

As Seen in *New York Social Diary*

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New York Social Diary

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Alex Papachristidis



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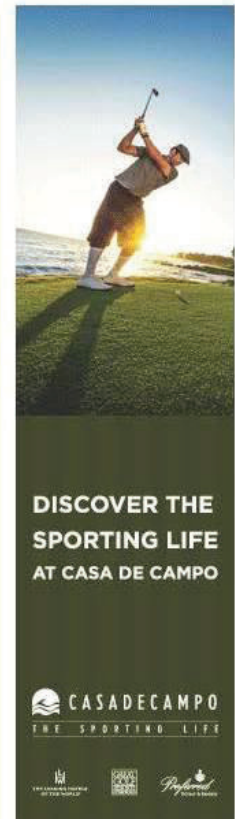
We think **Alex Papachristidis** has recovered from Sian's admission that she uses paper plates and, at his exhortation, she might even consider exhuming her full set of Tiffany silver that has spent decades at the back of a closet. An aesthete to the soles of his bespoke shoes, on our first visit to his former apartment, he gently removed from our hands the paper coffee cups we were holding and decanted the coffee into porcelain cups. And we love this about him. Why not use the pretty things every day? Pretty plates, old crystal, silverware: all these things are a source of delight in a utilitarian world and in that sense, he is un-American. He has made certain accommodations with modern life and is especially fond of Instagram—his profile is called "Alex's Viewpoint"—but the new apartment still has an Old World European feel. This type of decorating, says Alex, is all about history. Is he a dying breed? His answer: "If I'm a dying breed, is history going to die?"

So I live in Williamsburg and coming in here I feel like I've just landed on another planet ...

We say that all the time: we could be anywhere in the world. We could be in Paris Istanbul.

It's not a Manhattan apartment. It's very Old World European. I really love your taste.

You're so nice. Thank you!





A photograph of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor greets visitors at the front door.



A double-sided chinoiserie bookcase from a Hudson antiques store takes center stage in the tented foyer.



The walls and ceiling are covered in a bold Oscar de la Renta striped fabric. The antique chandelier is tole and gilt with painted flowers and leaves. The stenciled floor by Andy Holland was inspired by an Andre Arbus carpet.



But are you a dying breed?

Did you go that Sotheby's show? (Sotheby's Inaugural Designer Showhouse] Well there's a decorator, 26 years old, Max Sinsteden and we've just become friends. We went to his apartment the other night for drinks and it's all this. I mean it's a young version of this. To me, he's that next generation of old school decorators. Look at vintage fashion—this is modern vintage. This type of decorating is all about history. If I'm a dying breed, is history going to die?

How does a young person decorate like this if they don't have much money?

Well you can't do this—I am also 51 years old and I've been collecting since I was 23 years old. My apartment didn't start out looking like this ... 27 years of shopping and buying *and* shopping and buying *competitively*.



Antique mirror-fronted cabinets with glass knobs give the pantry and kitchen a touch of glamour to an otherwise practical space.



Tea and sandwiches from William Pöll were served upon our arrival.



The dining room is a mix of different shades of plum with wool felt walls and satin curtains. Chalky-white chairs upholstered in Fortuny fabric surround a custom lacquered dining table.



A 19th century tole chandelier hangs above the dining table filled with art and design books.



Orientalist paintings and a peace sign by Rob Wynne fill a corner of the dining room. The shell-encrusted bust presides over meals, as it did in Alex and his partner Scott's (Nelson) previous apartment.



Foo dogs and a Delft plate from Paris sit atop an early 20th century Chinese cabinet with a gilt base.



Stacks of books on art and design include a few copies of Alex's recent book, *The Age of Elegance* (Rizzoli).





Gorgeous city views and a slice of Central Park can be seen from all windows of Alex and Scott's Upper East Side apartment.



What does shopping and buying competitively mean?

Auctions ... how cheap you get things are now! When I started decorating Chinese secretaries were all selling for \$120 000 and over. Nowadays you can pick up a beautiful one for \$30 000. I'm not saying that's cheap ... but it's cheap-er. Look at this beautiful Truex gourd I just bought—Christie's house sale—sterling and vermeil—1800 bucks! This is the time to buy because all the rich people are into art work.

You've titled your book "The Age of Elegance"—I'm not sure we're living in an age of elegance.

There are still elegant people. There are people who care. Everybody in my family lives beautifully and their houses are beautifully maintained. Every meal is a different place setting and different dishes and different linens. Scott and I stay home and we eat off beautiful dishes and use linen napkins even if we're having pizza!



Looking across the living room into the library. The hand stenciled parquet de Versailles floors are by Andy Holland.



A custom-made sectional covered in a plum velvet from Schumacher fits perfectly into a corner of the living room. The gilt French armchairs have Claremont covered cushions and antique ikat backs.



The chinoiserie wallpaper is based on an 18th century document that Alex saved for many years. He gave the document to Gracie and they produced this hand painted paper in shades of brown, green, gold and Prussian blue.





A Chinese bamboo chair was deliberately chosen for contrast and to tone down the formality of the living room.



A French lacquer chest of drawers with gilt-metal trim and lion's-paw feet is paired with a side chair upholstered in two contrasting satins.





When I got married, we had all the crystal and china, you know, on the registry list, Tiffany and so on. I have a complete set of Tiffany silverware.

And don't you use it?

No! It's in the back of the closet! And the dishes too ...

Why?! Why!? Why is it not in your drawer?! What are you saving it for?!

I don't know. You have to handwash it!

I have a lot of dishes I handwash. How many dishes are you using for you and your husband? What? Are you washing dishes for forty?!

I think it's more of a European thing. A girlfriend was visiting from Brussels and I took out a paper plate. She was about to have a heart attack. She said, "I think that's horrible. Get me a real plate." I said, "It's just breakfast." She really gave it to me.

Paper plates ... *[he doesn't faint]*



More views of the living room, Alex added a braided trim in Prussian blue to the plum satin valance and swags of the floor-to-ceiling curtains.



A living room sofa is upholstered in a cut velvet from Fortuny. Alex found the upholstered armchair many years ago in Paris and has reproduced it several times for clients.



Peeking into the dining room from the front seating area of the living room. The marble top coffee table found at William Doyle is in the style of a piece by Maison Jansen. The gilt rope stool is Louis Philippe.



'Alex Lamps' designed by Alex for Christopher Spitzmiller stand atop a pair of gueridon tables which belonged to Alex's mother.



Exquisite porcelain flowers by Vladimir Kanevsky are displayed atop one of a pair of gueridon tables flanking the living room sofa.

