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LA SOLLI
CITATION
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UPPER EAST SIDE

SALON DU BOIS

DESIGNER ALEX PAPACHRISTIDIS TAKES A
DECIDEDLY ELEGANT APPROACH AT THE KIPS BAY
DECORATOR SHOW HOUSE

Photographs

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Text

RUTH J. KATZ

Opposite page: Above a sofa upholstered in Brunschwig & Fils' silk velvet is a work by Julian Schnabel. The coffee tables are 18th-century Korean lacquer from H. M. Luther Antiques. The 19th-century Persian carpet is from Doris Leslie Blau. Above: Also a 1940s gilded-metal mirror-top nesting table from H. M. Luther; a 20th-century bust from C. J. Peters and an encased rock crystal. The 1900s silver box from Alan Moss Studios is embedded with German coins.



Above: The George II gilt eagle console is from Kentshire Galleries; the lamp is from Daniel Barney Antiques; Judith Eitler's *Sewing, 2000* is from the Cohan and Leslie gallery. The chaise is upholstered in Brunschwig & Fils' *Satin La Tour*. Opposite page: *Satin La Tour* was also used for the hand-stenciled draperies. White Wedgwood vases atop the mantel are from Bardini Palamos; above it on the mirrored wall is a 19th-century Austrian clock from H. M. Luther.

THE BLUES ARE "mystery blues." Sort of aqua, seafoamy, blue-green. Mystery blues, yes," designer Alex Papachristidis says decisively, referring to the dreamy, ever-so-subtle accent tones he used in his "Salon du Bois" room at the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club's 35th Annual Decorator Show House this past May. "They have different sealike casts to them . . . there's not just one color."

The Salon du Bois is Papachristidis's third Kips Bay room, following his "Shangri-La" master bedroom in 2000 and "Le Petit Salon" in 1997. This Salon is a majestic living room and, in hands less skillful, might have been overpowering. But, rendered in cus-

comprising construction, renovation, fabrication of upholstered goods, and installation. "Practically speaking, I selected the fabrics from Brunschwig & Fils right away; then I worked up a floor plan. Then I found the most wonderful carpet from Doris Leslie Blau, which really set the tone. Next, I picked the antiques, the objects, and finally, the artwork," says Papachristidis.

The delicious wood *haiserie* and parquet-de-Versailles floor needed some TLC. "It could have been overwhelming and dark. The wood needed texture, reflectiveness, and depth, which had to be created. We polished the floor and French-polished the wood,



seting textiles and enveloping wood, it's sumptuous yet inviting.

The New York City-born Papachristidis knew the minute he saw the 22-by-32-foot room, with its nearly 13-foot ceiling, that this was a canvas he'd like to work with. "I was the only one who wanted this room as a first-choice selection, and I got it," he recalls, referring to the lottery system that matches showhouse rooms with designers. "I always saw it as a living room—with magnitude, elegance, presence—and I designed it with a family in mind. I envisioned very sophisticated people who had collected beautiful things all their lives—people who were used to the best."

Of course, designing a showhouse room for a phantom client is a very different task from designing for flesh-and-blood clients. And there is the bear-the-clock showhouse pace. To create their chefs d'oeuvre for Kips Bay, designers had a five-week timetable

We painted the ceilings, restored moldings, made radiator covers, polished the mantel." Papachristidis lists the tasks his staff performed. "We brought the room back to its original grandeur."

Once the "bones" were in place, Papachristidis injected some of his signature touches: He created a striped textile by combining two solid satins on a lion-pawed mahogany chair; designed a circle-and-square print in a cognac tone that was custom-stenciled onto the regal drapery fabric; secured custom-dyed mink throws for the chaise longues; and hung an 18th-century Swedish clock from H. M. Luther Antiques in the middle of an existing mirrored wall to "create interest and depth."

What did Papachristidis have to say about the room when it was finished? "I loved it. It came out better than even I expected," he asserts jubilantly. **NYH + see Resource**