



TEXT ALISON GARWOOD-JONES
PHOTOGRAPHY VIRGINIA MACDONALD

Given carte blanche to decorate an empty urban penthouse for a sophisticated venture capitalist with a penchant for entertaining, designer Sasha Josipovicz - inventive, accomplished and theatrical - boldly rises to the occasion

COSY CHARM A pair of cabinets add a warm library feel to the family room. "Europeans use display units like North Americans use photo albums," says designer Sasha Josipovicz, who encouraged his client to fill the shelves with *objets* from his world travels, including several blue Murano glass treasures. The conversation piece is Sasha's "Dr. Zhivago chair." From Elte, it's carved out of one piece of wood and covered in soft brown leather and honey-colour pearl veneer.

CIRCLES & SQUARES "It's a tight, square space," says Sasha of the sunroom. "Finding a round table that was small enough was hard." He finally sourced the perfect 42" model from Elte, then added a hand-blown glass hurricane from Barbara Barry. "I wanted something that looked like an oversize candle." →

BOLD & BEAUTIFUL



INSPIRED DESIGN The homeowner spends a lot of time outdoors and at his cottage in Ontario's Muskoka region, so Sasha incorporated floor lamps with long sapling-like bases into the living room, as well as a coffee table his client likened to a canoe. "It's an African tribal table made from solid walnut," says Sasha. "Everything else in the room is sharp, but this piece is rough hewn, with a wavy, watery grain."

RECESS TIME "I needed to fill it with something sculptural," says Sasha of the living room's nook. He found this Austrian glossy fruitwood Biedermeier table at an antique store. "European salons always had a table for family photographs, but I put flowers and books on it instead of pictures."



"PARTIES ARE ABOUT ENTERTAINMENT, SO MAKE BIG DISHES AND POUR BIG DRINKS, AND PUT ASIDE ENOUGH CHANGE FOR THE TAXI RIDES HOME" SASHA JOSIPOVICZ, DESIGNER



WHEN A FRIEND INTRODUCED

Sasha Josipovicz, a design partner at Toronto's Studio Pyramid, to his latest client, a venture capitalist with an unfurnished 3,000 sq. ft. penthouse, it felt like serendipity. What else but fate could bring together a homeowner with neither the time nor the inclination to flip through colour swatches, test drive sofas and arrange accent pillows, and a daring designer who throws himself into projects with unbridled enthusiasm and determination?

"He asked me, 'Can you take care of everything, including the plates, flatware and towels?'" says Sasha, who describes the three-bedroom uptown Toronto condo as his client's weekend pied-à-terre for cocktail parties and intimate gatherings with family and friends. "Sasha reads people well," says the homeowner. "When you have that kind of intuitive understanding, you're bound to work well together."

The homeowner's words were borne out by the sumptuous results Sasha achieved. The homeowner wanted something comfortable – not overly traditional or modern, but very simple and elegant and with lots of natural light. To which Sasha said, "Then



SAY IT AGAIN "European salons are all about repetition," says Sasha. The Barbara Barry tuxedo loveseat matches the three-seater on the other side (not shown). Bookending the Barbara Barry parchment table are two Laura Kirar Muji leather ottomans in the softest shade of pewter grey.



COMFORT IS KING "Neither my client nor I wanted to go with plush velvets or heavy materials," says Sasha. The living room couch had to be inviting, so he chose light cotton and linen fabrics for a resort feel. The Lucien Rollin armchairs are deep and soft, combining comfort with 1930s Parisian flair. →

SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL "I never overdo my kitchens with lots of detail and colour. The quality of the appliances is more important," says Sasha, pointing out the gas cooktop, double Wolf oven and gleaming Sub-Zero fridge. The stainless steel backsplash tile from Ciot continues the metallic theme, but the heavily oiled walnut butcher block on the island warms up the space.



we're going to paint the place Benjamin Moore's Oxford White and, in return, you have to give me good art." It was the first of many things the two men gladly shook hands on.

Sasha decided a European salon feel would best suit his cultured client. To avoid making it too stuffy or saturated, he opted for a few classic pieces of furniture to ground each room. In the 40' long living room – the setting for bi-weekly cocktail parties – Sasha installed two 4' x 7' gilded mirrors. "They have a simple Empire look and help break up the large space into smaller sections."

A colourful, kinetic Katherine Harvey abstract from the Nicholas Metivier Gallery, installed above a pair of plush oyster-colour Barbara Barry couches, pulls guests from the foyer into the living room. "The piece had everything we were looking for: strong brushstrokes and a dreamlike quality," says Sasha.

In the family room, he "introduced gold, saffron and dark spice tones in the accents and furniture." Instead of mirrors, he installed two Vanguard display cabinets on either side of a stunning sunset painting by Scott Steele. Sasha grounded the space with a softly patterned Ushak rug for



CHILD'S PLAY "Everything in this room is strong, square and very Empire," says Sasha. "That's why I chose a signature piece of art that's whimsical and childlike. It's meant to make you smile and giggle."

ALL ABOARD! This space was a narrow corridor between the foyer and living room before Sasha widened it and turned it into a bar. "Think of the compartments on the Orient Express," he says. Bevelled mirrors add sparkle and depth to the space, multiplying the shine of the crystal decanters, champagne flutes and the bottles of Veuve Clicquot.

THINK PIECE A high-backed linen-upholstered armchair is great for reading books or editing reports. The streamlined desk is a mahogany beauty from Elte, while the Hunter Douglas wooden blinds minimize the glare on the homeowner's laptop screen.



a warm and relaxed setting. "The family room is where my client likes to spend time with his grown kids or his buddies, watching ball games or reading."

The kitchen faces west, as do the family and living rooms, offering a front-row seat to watch the setting sun. The Oxford White walls turn a soft pink at dusk. "I wanted nature to provide the colour, so I kept everything else clean and simple," says Sasha. He chose small, sculptural pendant lights to avoid detracting from the view.

The only room without a vista is the dining room. "That's how it should be," says Sasha. "When dining, it's important to be concentrating on your guests and the topic of conversation, not looking over one another's shoulders at what's going on outside." Light enters the dining room via the adjacent living room, and after sunset, the steel blue Japanese silk walls and ebonized mahogany table and sideboards feel moody and sensuous. And when it's just dark enough, the homeowner turns on the Thomas Pheasant chandelier above the table. It throws patterns on the ceiling, enchanting guests and getting them in the mood for the sparkle of the season.

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"I'M ALL ABOUT COLOUR. I CAN'T THINK IN BLACK AND WHITE" SASHA JOSIPOVICZ, DESIGNER



ÉGOÏSTE! The Barbara Barry king-size bed and nightstand have an urban French feel, says Sasha. "You'll find similar pieces in the apartments along Boulevard St-Germain in Paris." The powder blue walls and soft, white berber carpet are also very Left Bank. "I was inspired by the men's fragrance ad from Chanel, where the women fling open their balcony doors and yell 'Égoïste!' to the man who has broken their hearts."