

WEB-EXCLUSIVE HOME TOUR

Tour a Park Avenue Apartment With Its Own Carrie Bradshaw Moment

When it came to his own home, designer Wesley Moon was inspired by grand elements of the Vatican

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One minute, New York designer [Wesley Moon](#) is making a joke about how the trappings of his Park Avenue apartment were inspired by the Vatican—arguably the world’s grandest display of religious architecture, with its Michelangelo frescoes and intricate mosaics of rare stones—and the next minute, he’s issuing a retraction.

“It’s really not that much of a joke,” Moon says. “In my work, I’m always trying to figure out what the contemporary version of something classical is so I can get that Old World feeling, but adjusted to modern times. I was at the Vatican looking around at all the different types of stones and thinking, ‘Wow.’”

By ensconcing the two-bedroom prewar apartment that Moon shares with his partner, fashion executive Salvatore Malleo, in a veiny and colorful assortment of geological gems—from the primary bedroom’s Byzantine pink onyx doors to the powder room’s book-matched opera d’arte marble—the impact is sumptuous, almost worshipful. (As is the effect of the nearby dressing room, which Moon describes as being the apartment’s “Carrie Bradshaw moment.”) The luxurious wall treatments are a chasmal departure from the flat’s previous incarnation as a “plain white box,” as Moon describes it, and one that had been stripped of every last inch of architectural detail despite the 1939 building’s rich Art Moderne origins.

Rumor has it that the late architect I.M. Pei was the previous owner’s cousin and had renovated the apartment’s kitchen in 1977 to be a stark vision of white Formica—cutting-edge minimalism in a time of brazen technicolor. Sizable by New York standards, the kitchen has since been handsomely

all this crazy mica” and coffee-hued cerused oak walls, perhaps to match the designer’s espresso martini expertise—while Malleo cooks, Moon tends the bar.

Provenance, it seems, is not always set in stone (or laminate, as the case may be). But Moon has evoked a deep sense of heritage in the 1,750-square-foot apartment, as if he’s been living there for much longer than just one year—a studs-out renovation of the newly purchased property could only plod along, like most things, during the pandemic. But nevertheless, a high degree of collectedness prevails in the princely tableau thanks to a profusion of art and objects of different styles and varying degrees of antiquity, united by a common thread.

“If I love something, I buy it,” says the designer, who grew up on a farm in Georgia, the son of a competitive clog dancer and *Hee Haw* extra who created a considered and comfortable home for the family. “The aesthetics may be different, but my mother’s intention is there. If you love things, you can just throw them together. They’ll work somehow.”

The closest to a Vatican fresco in the apartment is a custom [de Gournay](#) wallpaper in the dining room. Painted on gold leaf with matte pigments, the scene, featuring the palatial Palermo church Maria Santissima del Carmelo, where Malleo's parents wed, is undeniably lush. But in the right light—specifically, candle flame from the Eve Kaplan gilded ceramic chandelier above—it's downright three-dimensional.

"You can almost put your hand through it," Moon says. Based on this lavish virtual reality, you would never guess that a few steps away in the adjacent living area hangs a large-scale watercolor by Bay Area painter Kelly Falzone Inouye that is much less of-the-Renaissance, but no less personally significant in its diaphanous depiction of the opening footwork from the 1980 film *9 to 5*, starring Moon's idol, Dolly Parton. (See also the black-and-white Lego portrait of the pop-culture icon in the library for more proof of his undying fandom.)

But Moon's design forte may actually be his ability to tiptoe the fine line between maximalism and almost-maximalism. In particular, his singular customizations exist along this border, perhaps as a way of flaunting an eye for detail (he frequently hosts potential clients at his apartment for—you guessed it—espresso martinis and to see the potential for their own spaces),

For example, why not showcase the fringy backside of a [Holland & Sherry](#) drapery textile rather than the embroidered squares on its face? The marble fireplace mantel would not have been the architectural showpiece that it is today without the custom Art Deco-inspired molding embossed in python scales and boldly hued in turquoise, a collaboration with Cocobolo gallery director Benjamin Wiener.

Reigning the hearth is a replica of a Dutch master's portrait of Elizabeth I, which may have been too foregone in its original regal state, but since its fantastical fragmentation by artist Michael Mapes of New York's Hudson Valley—featuring, among hundreds of tiny mosaic-making materials related to the monarch, an image of Moon's grandmother, who was named Elizabeth—the piece has become emblematic of the designer's signature classical disruptions.

These are not unlike the bells that ring out from the church across the street several times a day, a joyful interjection that conjures Moon's sonic theory of design: "When everything is on the same volume and wavelength, there's peace and calm."



1/11

The gilded wall panels of designer Wesley Moon's Park Avenue living room are inspired by the walls in Paris's [Restaurant Le Gabriel](#) at Jacques Garcia's Belle Époque beauty, La Réserve. But instead of embossed leather, Moon customized wallpaper by Studio E for a more delicate and, dare we say, neutral effect—after all, it's just a canvas for the salon-style art arrangement, which includes a deconstructed portrait of Elizabeth I by Hudson Valley artist [Michael Mapes](#).



2/11

Ombé drapes by [Rosemary Hallgarten](#) are at the threshold of the primary bedroom, and apropos—oceanically speaking—a restful sanctuary. In contrast, the living room’s Holland & Sherry drapery is presented on its fringy reverse. A vintage armchair covered in [Pierre Frey’s Le Manach](#) spotted textile practically purrs.



3/11

Evoking a Renaissance-era Palermo, where Moon’s partner Salvatore Malleo’s family hails from, the “Scenes of Sicily” custom wallpaper by de Gournay (a panoramic design that is soon to be released as part of the iconic British studio’s Scenic collection), gives the dining room an opulent, old-world sensibility—illuminated, so to speak, by a gilded ceramic chandelier by Eve Kaplan that accommodates bulbs and candles for adjustable ambiance.



The late architect [I.M. Pei](#) was rumored to have designed this Park Avenue kitchen in the late 1970s as a vision of white Formica, a quiet minimalism that spoke volumes in the era of technicolor. Moon reimagined the modern-day kitchen using Breccia Capraia marble floors, Kinon black-and-gold door panels, cabinets faced in verre églomisé (gilded glass), and cerused oak panels.



5/11

If the golden ceiling mural by [MJ Atelier](#) in the library represents heaven, while the floral French Deco area rug from [Doris Leslie Blau](#) symbolizes earth, then it stands to reason that the Milano Smart Living sleep sofa, covered in deep blue fabric by [Toyine Sellers](#), conveys the ocean. With this logic in mind, who or what could the sainted countenance of pop-culture icon Dolly Parton, composed of black-and-white Lego by Los Angeles artist Samuel Hatmaker, possibly embody? What a divine question.



6/11

Though an art gallery's traditional plain white walls have their blank-slate benefits for the art on display, the closest that Moon could come to an intentionally void backdrop for the exhibition space in his apartment was fluted, burnished plaster—all texture and gloss, but differentially bereft of color. Gold and sapphire jewel tones in the velvet knot stools by [Neta Tesler](#) are echoed in the Robert Polidori photograph from the “Versailles” series and in the 19th-century Louis XVI gilt-wood table. A wild garden explodes from the tulipiere by [Matthew Solomon from Maison Gerard](#).



7/11

For such petite confines, the powder room displays a shrine's worth of geological gems sourced from [ABC Worldwide Stone](#), like walls of book-matched opera d'arte marble, Byzantine pink door casings, and a custom solid-onyx basin engraved with tree-bark texture, a practically sacramental upgrade for the ordinary tap water flowing through the Petra by [Waterworks](#) hardware.



8/11

From walls to windows, the primary bedroom is upholstered within an inch of its existence in textiles by [Fortuny](#) (flanking the bed), [Toyine Sellers](#) (the walls), and [Jim Thompson](#) (drapery), which seems appropriately cocooning. Not one to leave a perfectly beautiful remnant from an 18th-century tapestry untampered, Moon commissioned decorative painter [Jane Henry](#) to add squiggles and wriggles of gold paint to the headboard piece, an effect that's more reverential than ruinous.

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9/11

In what Moon calls the apartment’s “Carrie Bradshaw moment,” the drawn-out dressing room features a custom closet system of cerused wood, with softer complementary touches courtesy of a Princess Leia metallic ceiling paper by Studio E that bears a crosshatch texture, plus a matching tufted pouf upholstered in golden [Loro Piana](#) cashmere.



Designer Wesley Moon chose “Smoke of London” stone slabs from ABC Marble for the walls and vanity of the primary bath for the look of terrazzo, without the trendiness. A pink-and-black marble striped floor is a natty counterpoint to the wallpaper, a contemporary version of the imagery seen on classic Greek urns.



11/11

Even the guest bathroom—often an afterthought—is highly considered in its mix of materials, from an Ondulare Rosso marble vanity to black Kyoto wall tiles by [Artistic Tile](#), made of unrefined clay and featuring a rough glazed surface. A 1950s mirror by [Osvaldo Borsani](#) adds a hint of Roman imperium with its laurel wreath motif.