



Sitting PRETTY

IN A BUCKHEAD HOME, SCULPTURAL FURNISHINGS AND LUSH FABRICS REVEAL THE SOFTER SIDE OF MODERN.

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ARCHITECTURE / BULENT BAYDAR, HARRISON DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN / PHOEBE HOWARD, MRS. HOWARD AND MAX & COMPANY
HOME BUILDER / FRANK INFANTINO, IDBC CONSTRUCTION INC.



Asked to define their signature style, it's not uncommon for a designer to run around the question, replying with non-committal adjectives like "timeless" or "transitional." Not Phoebe Howard. The lauded designer and owner of multiple Mrs. Howard stores—plus sibling shops Max & Company—isn't all that bashful about claiming her mantra, "keep it pretty," as the underpinning of her success. "I think pretty is a word that can sometimes have a negative connotation, but I see pretty in a pleasing, delicate, uncomplicated way," she explains.

From that statement, it would be easy to spin "pleasing" as pandering, or "delicate" as fragile, but Howard's approach suggests otherwise. And the living room of a recently completed Atlanta townhome may just be Exhibit A. One of

three, incidentally, sitting pretty behind the Waldorf Astoria Atlanta Buckhead, the residence reflects the instincts of a designer who came to know the client and her late husband over more than a decade and three previous projects—a former Atlanta townhome and two New York apartments. "Her style is modern and a little glamorous, but definitely not severe," says Howard, who knew those characteristics would translate nicely to the interiors.

In less capable hands, the client's living room—composed of items in varied tones of white—could have fallen flat. Instead, Howard spins a shapely sub-story where the sofa swoops, the contemporary wingback embraces and two vintage Silas Seandel brass coffee tables seem to "spoon." It's a subtle sensuality that makes this room pleasing, graceful and, as it happens, pretty.

Opposite: In the living room of this Atlanta townhome by designer Phoebe Howard, a crystal stone Made Goods chest anchors the wall on the opposite side of the entry. The framed drawings are from the homeowner's extensive art collection and the vintage brass lamp was sourced from the designer's signature store, Mrs. Howard.

Below: The softly curving sofa in the living room complements the silhouette of an equally shapely Italian club chair, both by Coup D'Etat from R Hughes. The Silas Seandel Biomorphic coffee tables read like sculptures, while a Bernhardt Dorwin chair, covered in Holland & Sherry leather, introduces a linear moment. The bamboo-silk carpet is by Mastour Galleries.



"A banquette seemed a better choice than another table and chairs," Howard says of the breakfast nook's custom seating upholstered in Osborne & Little's Oriole chenille. Mr. Brown London chairs donning a Rogers & Goffigon fabric complete the seating setup around a white oak table from Mrs. Howard. The Michael Amato chandelier is from The Urban Electric Co.



"Every element was designed to interact," Howard says. By the same token, the townhomes were part of a longstanding master plan for the luxury property they occupy, anchored by a 42-story hotel and residential tower completed by the firm of Robert A. M. Stern in 2008. The interior architecture for the trio of private "maisonettes" on-site, spearheaded by architect Bulent Baydar and accessed across a manicured courtyard behind walled gardens, was ultimately tackled a decade later.

Moving to a compound of this caliber at one of Atlanta's most glamorous addresses felt in sync with the owner's appreciation for finer things. "This is the only property of its kind in the city," Howard explains. "In addition to being near all the best shops and restaurants, this residence is considered part of the hotel, meaning owners get all the same amenities—like a chef who can cook for you, as well as massages and facials."

Howard coordinated with Baydar's firm and general contractor Frank Infantino to carry out revisions to the interior architecture, teaming up with her husband, Jim Howard—an accomplished designer in his own right—for elevated updates. His efforts produced a new marble-clad fireplace, gourmet chef's kitchen and dramatically curved black-iron railing that ascends the home's meandering, three-story staircase.

Turning her energy toward the furnishings with a stated goal of "modern with a soft touch," Howard employed graceful textures such as suede to temper hard-lined materials like limestone and brass. Combining both persuasions in a single element, a feminine fixture above the dining table curves lithely, smacking at the heart of Howard's decorating philosophy. "I prefer to take the edge off, not put it on," she states matter-of-factly.

Mixed metals make a statement in the kitchen, where golden-bronze Holly Hunt dome pendants illuminate Design Within Reach counter stools. Cabinetry by James Michael Howard includes a cold-cast pewter vent hood and stainless steel trim. The waterfall-edge island was fabricated with honed Bianco Cristallo quartzite and the backsplash boasts Lunada Bay Tomei glass tile from Walker Zanger.



That concept continues with sumptuous materials (silk, wool and fur in the master suite, alpaca and silk on the living room sofa), a mix of metals, and tiny mirrored tiles that bring just the right amount of bling to the bar. “They make the whole area shimmery and festive,” Howard says.

Not to be understated is the impact of the art. In the entry, a painting by Robert De Niro Sr. (not to be confused with his actor son) is the first of many important works, including two Picassos that further elevate the space. Coalescing the elements of the living room, a compelling Andrew Moore photograph puts the viewer right inside Saint Petersburg’s Hermitage Museum, while two

haunting Zhao Kailin portraits—one in the master suite and another in the office—have a tendency to transfix. The latter space was painted a moody green-gray to complement the hyperrealist painting and tie the room to the garden glimpsed through the windows.

According to Howard, the owner’s knowledge and appreciation of art, combined with her confident personal style, matches both the new environment and the designer’s mantra to a T. “Pretty doesn’t boast, and it’s not loud. It’s quiet and unassumingly lovely,” Howard says. “The owner is pretty, smart and soft-spoken, and her interiors are, too.”

Opposite: The designer’s attention to detail means every space gets its dues—even this vignette visible as one descends the stairs. This kitchen-adjacent arrangement features framed line drawings and a sunburst mirror from the homeowner’s collection above a demilune table from Mrs. Howard.

Below: In the dining room, Quintus dining chairs sourced from Jerry Pair surround a Mr. Brown London table base with a custom top. A curvaceous Kelly Wearstler fixture from Circa Lighting casts a glow from above. The tall shagreen cabinet is also by Mr. Brown London.





Above: The honed white Thassos and polished Calacatta Dore marble tiles from Renaissance Tile & Bath create a subtle contrast on the master bathroom floor. A diminutive drink table can keep a glass of Champagne within easy reach of the BainUltra soaking tub.

Left: In the master suite, a sateen Phillip Jeffries wallcovering surrounds a custom canopy bed from Mrs. Howard topped with Yves Delorme linens. Baker's Avenue armchair wears Romo linen and Donghia's Tiberia lamps rest on Made Goods' sleek Jarin dressers. The stools are by Century Furniture.