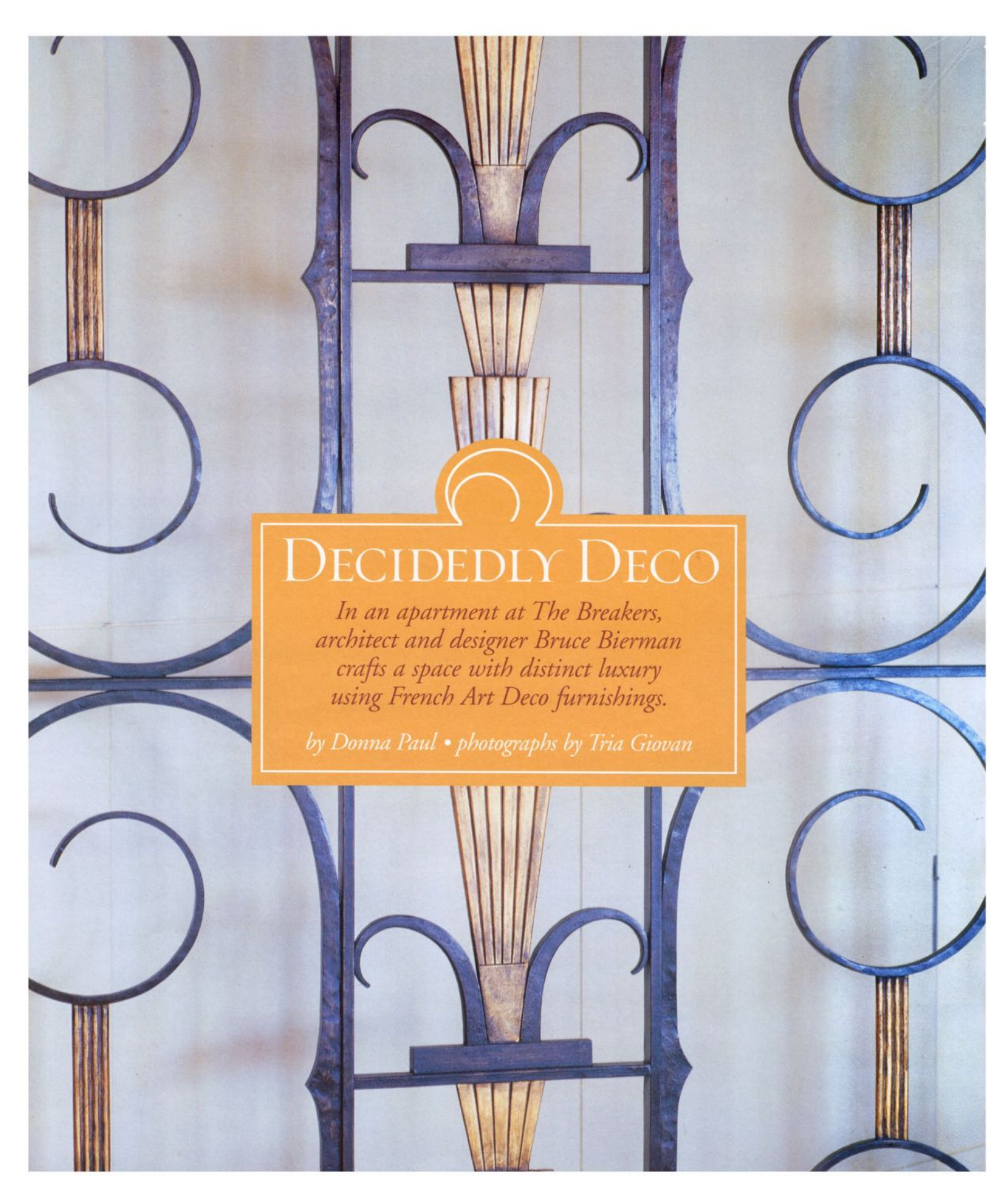




DECIDEDLY DECO

*In an apartment at The Breakers,
architect and designer Bruce Bierman
crafts a space with distinct luxury
using French Art Deco furnishings.*

by Donna Paul • photographs by Tria Giovan



Art Deco Paradise | For a couple seeking a fresh design for their Palm Beach apartment, architect and designer Bruce Bierman suggested an approach based on the use of original French Art Deco pieces. The homeowners took to the idea, even hunting down original furnishings in France themselves. Virtually all the French Art Deco pieces found in the apartment are originals. In the living room (ABOVE), a new sofa replicated from a Jean Michel Frank design is positioned near two vintage Jacques Adnet club chairs, circa 1932. The pedestal in the corner—a Jacques Emile Ruhlmann creation from about 1930—is topped by a Claudius Linossier vase in patinated metal with silver inlays. A Morris Louis painting dominates one wall, adding a strong splash of color. **Deco in the Details** | Small Art Deco touches abound in the apartment. (BELOW, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): A Daum sculpture on the desk in the study; an original Deco light fixture in the bathroom; the Simonet chandelier above the dining table; and a bronze latch on a cabinet in the master bedroom. See Resources.





Room with a View | The living room (ABOVE) features a dramatic Atlantic vista. The game table was designed by Jacques Lardin with a top by Jean Mayodon. The carpet is an extraordinary late 19th century Persian Kirman. **Decorous Dining** | The screen in the dining room (OPPOSITE AND PREVIOUS SPREAD) is one of the apartment's signature pieces. It was designed by Edgar Brandt circa 1925. The cherrywood dining table with matching bridge chairs are by Paul Dupré-Lafon. The chandelier is by Simonet. See Resources.

A GRANDE DAME OF HOTELS, The Breakers has always epitomized the quiet glamour and opulence of Palm Beach. But at a newly decorated apartment inside the hotel's enclave of contemporary condominium buildings, modern luxury also resides.

After a gut renovation of one 3,500 square foot apartment, architect and interior designer Bruce Bierman imbued the new space with a distinctive sense of refined and detailed luxury that relies on original French Art Deco furnishings. The look is understated, precise and sophisticated, with couture-like craftsmanship as flawless as an Armani suit.

The homeowners, a couple who also live in a traditional Manhattan apartment and a contemporary East Hampton house, sought a look that would be different from their other homes. They

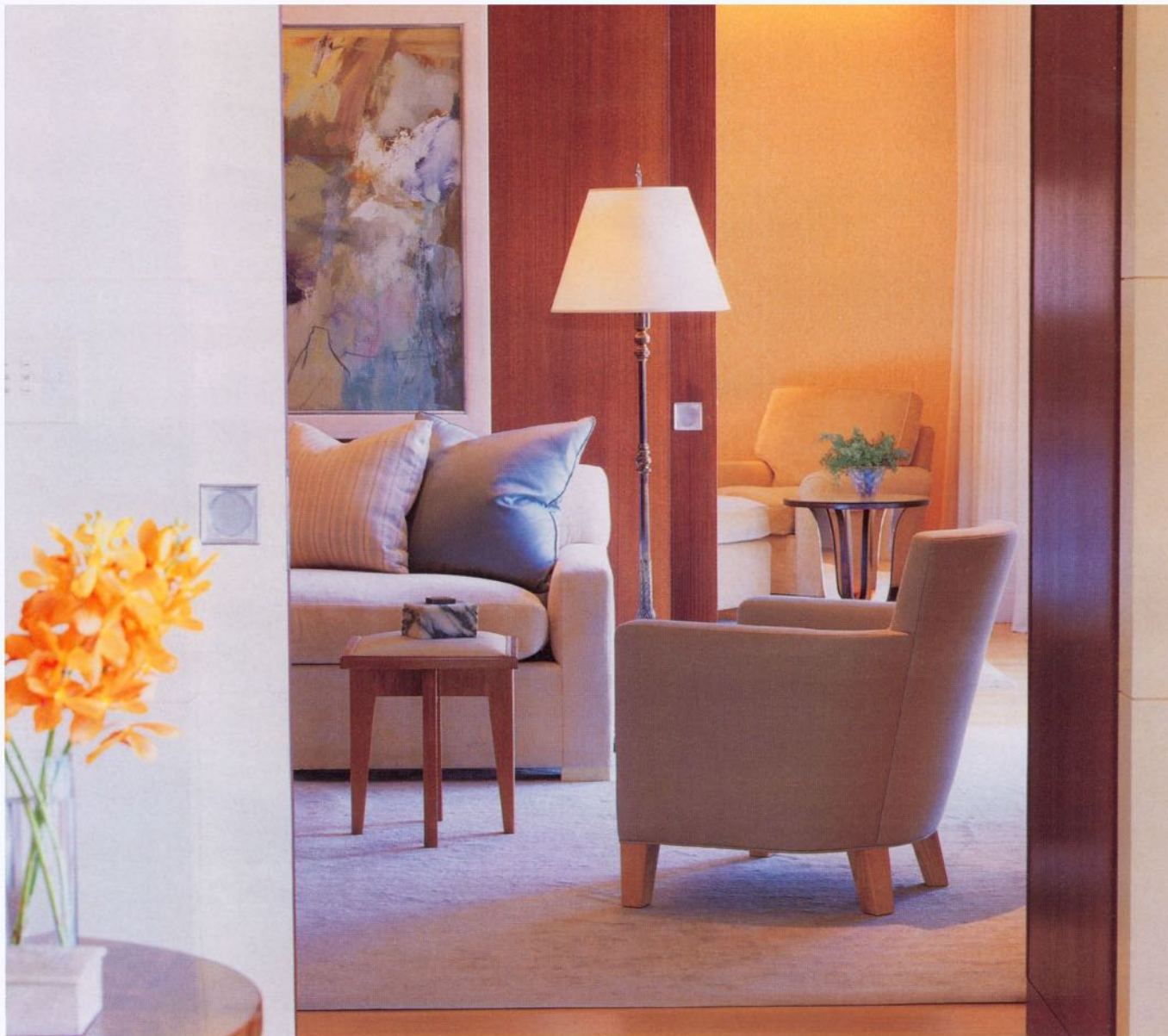
found direction with Bierman, whose New York firm has such a growing Palm Beach clientele that he now lives and works here, too.

Bierman's idea, to decorate with French Art Deco pieces, was new to the homeowners. But once they saw the simplicity of line and the use of exotic materials such as ebony, ivory, parchment, nickel-plating and bronze, they embraced it. With considerable research, visits to galleries specializing in the period and four shopping trips to Paris, the homeowners started their own collection of original pieces. "When I get into something I become very interested. I end up learning more than most people do," explains the husband.

The apartment's floor plan was completely overhauled in the redesign. "Many architects work on plans that are dead-ended," notes Bierman, "where there is only one way to enter or leave a







Open Air | Bierman's plan for the apartment creates a smooth flow between spaces. The view (ABOVE) is from the living room through the study to the master bedroom. **Classic Cabinet** | A wall of the master bedroom (OPPOSITE) frames a cabinet by Ruhlmann's nephew Alfred Porteneuve, circa 1935. Its parchment doors are inlaid with gold threads. The stool is by Jansen. Bierman bid a Sony plasma TV behind the Sonia Delaunay print, which slides aside to reveal the screen at the push of a button. See Resources.

room." His plan allows for a more gracious flow between rooms. The new layout includes an open plan for the main living room, dining and library, a study/guest room and then a private area for the bedroom—a serene chamber with walls of Fortuny silk in tone-on-tone shades of pale yellow and cream.

The redesigned apartment utilizes an open plan concept, where the spectacular ocean views can be appreciated from every room. "I wanted to create the idea of being on a boat," explains Bierman, "to achieve the look and feel of an ocean liner, like the *Normandie*." It is not surprising that the designer cites the décor of the celebrated ocean liner, built in 1932; it was a legendary work of Art Deco design.

Bierman's signature style is clean without being cool, modernist without being minimal. While there is an abiding sense of pragmatism, his work is visually rich, utilizing superb materials and impeccable fabrics with a "compulsive attention to detail," he says. He credits such influential French designers of the 1920's and 1930's as Jean Michel Frank, Paul Dupre-Lafon and Jacques Emile Ruhlmann as sources of inspiration.

"What I love about the French Deco period is that the lines are more refined, the proportions are more delicate and the hardware has elegant detailing," he says.

Classic pieces are found throughout the apartment. Edgar Brandt, a







Beside Beauty | In the master bedroom, a Raymond Suizes table from 1940 serves as a bedside table (OPPOSITE). The Art Deco lamp with stepped square base and matching finial is French from the 1930's. Fortuny silk hangs behind a bed made with luxurious Yves Delorme linens. **Masterful Bath** | A glass tile shower and a glass countertop make this bathroom luminous. The sink, tub and accompanying hardware are from Waterworks. The wooden cabinets are made of sycamore. Slab stone floors are from Stone Source. See Resources.

pivotal figure in French Art Deco, is known for elevating wrought iron into the decorative arts realm. He designed the exceptional screen in the dining area in 1925. At seven-feet tall and 12-feet wide, it has four sections. Its motif is a stylized marriage of scrolled iron with fan shaped bronze. The game table, made of mahogany and bronze with a glazed ceramic tile top, exemplifies the Art Deco style with its complex joining of materials, disciplines and designers integrated in a single work. Designed in 1938 by Jacques Lardin, it has a top by Jean Mayodon.

The couple are avid art collectors and chose a Morris Louis painting for the living room, where there is a new sofa, replicated from a Jean Michel Frank design and upholstered in white silk boucle. It

works in partnership with two vintage Jacques Adnet club chairs covered in ribbed wool and silk—a subtle interplay of textures.

Modern day necessities were deftly integrated into the décor. A Sony plasma-screen TV, for example was hidden with a clever sleight of hand—Bierman placed it behind a Sonia Delaunay print. A mechanism that holds the artwork slides it to the side with a single push of a button. And, in the dining room wall, behind panels that have been painted to look like creamy parchment, Bierman hid the mechanical operations for the apartment.

For this couple, the amenities of modern living coexist in harmony with iconic works from another time. ☀