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## How One Real-Estate Broker Edited His Manhattan Rental Apartment to Perfection

A talk-of-the-town agent—and voracious furniture collector—practices restraint in his temporary pad on the Upper East Side

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November 16, 2016

Friends of real-estate broker Jared Seligman, founder of Douglas Elliman's elite [Seligman Team](#), will tell you that he knows his way around an antique. "Everyone says I am a grandmother at heart," he scoffs—and then quickly confirms. But if a septuagenarian's style is what he has, then it is certainly of the chic variety. A peek into a former apartment of the broker—packed with vivid [jewel tones](#), [salon-style art walls](#), impressive flea-market finds, and some of the industry's most historically coveted furniture pieces—corroborates this notion. "If I have 12 inches of wall space, I find something I love to put there," Seligman admits.



A displaced center table from Seligman's previous apartment anchors the informal dining nook, where an impressive ensemble of Louis XVI-style dining chairs by Jean-Michel Frank, upholstered in their original burgundy leather, complete the setting. "Usually, I'm a frugal shopper. I always negotiate and buy mostly at auction. But those," he adds candidly, "I paid retail for." A Japanese screen from Christie's hangs behind.

While the broker was searching for a new apartment on New York's Upper East Side, he chose a modest one-bedroom, one-bath rental to call home in the interim. Rather than dumping all of his 18th-century paintings and stuffed fauna into his temporary pad, Seligman saw the transitory arrangement as an opportunity to cleanse his design palate. "I wanted to clear my head and think about what I liked and what I didn't like," says Seligman, who confesses that the prewar unit's spacious bath and views of Central Park made the move all the more appealing. To execute his vision, he called on New York designer Patrick McGrath, the former head of visuals at Giorgio Armani, to help him create a blank slate—albeit a well-appointed one.



In the living room, an antique commode holds a torso sculpture plucked from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's gift shop; above it is a painting by New York artist Dan Colen. Seligman chose bronze sconces, illuminated by candles instead of more permanent, electric iterations, to give the space a bit of the drama he craved.

The fact that the apartment was a rental actually helped the collaborators' achieve their goal. They kept the walls a soft beige (a fact that still surprises the tenant) and edited the decor to just a few choice art pieces. McGrath also persuaded Seligman to streamline light fixtures, choosing a simple flush mount for the living room, and the pair installed blinds in favor of lavish window treatments—the homeowner's usual preference. One of Seligman's main challenges was the open, informal nature of the home. "It had no entrance foyer and an open dining area," he says. "I had to somehow incorporate everything I traditionally stand for in a more casual layout." He used what was a center table from his old apartment as a dining table, and in a subtle act of rebellion, positioned an ornate wheat chandelier above. Hints of his former apartment are seen throughout the space, mainly in the collected, antique furniture pieces—only this time there are fewer of them. "Nothing happened by mistake in this apartment," says Seligman. "A thought went into each piece and each placement."



Seligman scoured estate sales and auctions around the world to find the perfect straight-lined Parsons bed for his master bedroom. To his surprise, he found exactly what he was looking for at Pottery Barn—an unlikely shopping source for the antique-furniture devotee. A pair of Jean-Michel Frank-inspired nightstands by R&Y Augousti play host to two 1930s alabaster lamps from Michael Bargo. A painting from an 18th-century French château, acquired at an estate sale in France, hangs above.

In the end, whether this exercise in design restraint has changed his aesthetic preferences remains up for debate. “It’s been an interesting experience,” says Seligman, who is cochairing New York’s annual Holiday House, a charitable show house whose proceeds benefit breast cancer research and awareness. “It taught me how I want to decorate my new apartment, which will be a mixture of this and what I really love.”



Seligman and McGrath incorporated nontraditional furniture pieces, like the 1930s Hollywood Regency gilt-metal side table in the apartment's airy, larger-than-standard bath. Turkish towels the designer scooped up while on holiday in Fethiye soften the scheme.