

WRITTEN BY SALLY FINDER WEEPIE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY XAVIER BÉJOT

American in Paris

FORMER WILLIAMS
SONOMA VISIONARY
DAVID JIMENEZ SHAPES
A NEW HOME JUST
STEPS FROM THE
EIFFEL TOWER



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aying goodbye was no longer an option.

“Paris had my heart,” David Jimenez says.

The native New Yorker, integral in developing the aesthetic of Pottery Barn, RH, and Williams Sonoma, had long been immersed in an inextricable romance with France—dating from his days as a teen on his first European adventure. “I remember getting happily lost in the winding streets of neighborhoods like the Marais, Saint-Germain, and Latin Quarter, discovering inspiring passages, lovely parks, magnificent bridges, and splendid brasseries,” he says. “For years, I came to Paris for 10 glorious days every July to celebrate my birthday. It became harder and harder to board my plane home.”

He no longer has to. When French company Draeger Paris offered him a leading creative role, David bid adieu to his San Francisco home and set off to his new address, a 19th-century apartment located just off Champs-Élysées.

Just like the city, the apartment offers a lot to love. “I was struck by the high ceilings—14 feet!—the exquisite architectural moldings, stately hand-carved marble fireplace, and the light-filled living room—ideal for entertaining on a grand scale,” he says. “I could already see friends gathered there, drinking swanky cocktails before dinner.”

To bring his vision to life, David started with a base color palette for walls and furnishings that includes warm neutral grays, along with camel and black accents to punctuate the spaces. “I wanted the rooms to feel timeless,” he says.

He then began editing the mélange of furnishings shipped from his old apartment. “Interestingly, many of the heirloom



Living room The gathering space offers multiple intimate sitting areas, including a spot beside the fireplace and a cozy niche with a sofa—all rich with art. “I have a passion for charcoals and black-and-white photography,” says homeowner and designer David Jimenez, *above*. “I’m always looking for new finds—no pedigree required.” **Foyer** Glass-paned French doors connect the entry to the living area. **Preceding pages** David layered in a tall folding screen for interest and to disguise a dated wall-mount radiator.





mirrors and dressers I brought with me from California are, in fact, French antiques that have happily made their way back home.”

High ceilings grant ample space for David to decorate living room walls with overscale mirrors and an abundance of art. “This was a simple way to bring in style and personality,” he says.

Aged-brass picture hangers display paintings and photography salon-style, emphasizing the room’s grandeur. Additional pieces lean against walls with an expressly laissez-faire attitude.

“I enjoy rooms that tell a personal story,” David says. “Each of the pieces in my home has special meaning to me. I love piling books on coffee tables and creating casual vignettes with my collection of vintage vases, decorative boxes, and sculptures. The layers of accessories, books, and art mix with furnishings from different periods to create a soulful vibe.”



While the living room meshed perfectly with David’s love for grandly welcoming friends, the tiny kitchen, short on architectural details and big on 1960s metal cabinets, needed attention. “I made some creative decisions to best leverage the small footprint and make the space feel more open,” he says.

Out went upper-cabinet doors and hinges. In came thick wood shelves that soar to the ceiling, finished with stately new moldings.

Kitchen Handblown milk-glass globe pendants work with undercabinet lighting to give the work space a warm glow. **Desk** A secretary tucked into a corner of the living room opens to offer David a functional office area. **Library** David turned a small unused room off the kitchen into a cozy nook for lazy afternoon reading. **Garden** For privacy on his small patio, David designed a custom trellis that also artfully covers a rickety old fence. Boxwoods grow in handmade Italian terra-cotta planters painted white.





I'VE ENJOYED REINVENTING SPACES SINCE I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO MOVE THE FURNITURE AROUND MY PARENTS' LIVING ROOM."

—designer David Jimenez

Existing worn black countertops vanished, cloaked by sheets of stainless steel. But the true star of the kitchen is David's collection of dinnerware, glassware, and serving trays. Like his art in the living room, the serveware, in a gallery's worth of sculptural forms, fills the room with the spirit of an art aficionado who loves to share his treasures—and his culinary creations—with friends.

As with the kitchen, David's bedroom posed a design challenge. "The walls were originally covered in bright pink floral chintz fabric that matched the bedding, curtains, and upholstery," he says. "It was an authentically French touch, but working a pink floral bedroom into my design scheme proved to be a bit problematic."

He had the damaged fabric removed and painted the walls a warm gray that seems to gently shift through the day from silver sage to classic light French gray. He also updated an existing custom closet that surrounds the bed niche, adding decorative trim on the doors and thick crown molding. "Then," he says, "I filled the niche with art that feels familiar and lends a sense of coziness."

In the master bath, David removed a dated medicine cabinet and a cumbersome bidet, clearing the way for an antique French secretary and a tall mirror with a picture light. "I usually remove medicine cabinets in my bathrooms," he says. "I think it's so much nicer to use a vintage piece for storage."

From the master suite, David can enjoy views of his petite garden. "It's magical," he says. "It makes me so happy when I get out of bed and draw the curtains every morning."

Furnished with a marble café table, white-painted wrought-iron chairs, and other finds from David's favorite haunts at the Saint-Ouen flea market, the garden nook, like the rest of his home, puts the designer's essence on full display.

"There is a romantic in me that is deeply touched by my experience in Paris," David says. "Assembling the apartment has been a catalyst for so many rich and meaningful life experiences. The spaces I've shaped reflect my soul, and I get such pleasure from sharing them with family and friends. A dear Parisian friend recently gave me the greatest compliment—that I had achieved an artistic expression of an authentic French home." ■

Interior designer: David Jimenez

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Bedroom A clean-lined four-poster tucks into a niche formed by cabinets that serve as David's closet. The elegant Paris bedrooms of Yves Saint-Laurent and Madeleine Castaing inspired his French-pleated silk curtains.
Bath A console sink keeps the small space from feeling cramped.

