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Charlie Ferrer Creates a Layered, Collected Home in His First Ever Model Apartment

The five-bedroom unit at Cary Tamarkin's 555 West End Avenue is at once comfortable and grand

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The Charlie Ferrer–designed living room at 555 West End Avenue.
Photo: Joshua McHugh

"Spending time in here, especially in the evenings, it doesn't feel like an apartment—it feels like a house," says Charlie Ferrer. The designer is standing in the middle of an airy, white oak kitchen, elbows resting on a marble-topped island. Indeed, the space he's in, Cary Tamarkin's newest luxury development at 555 West End Avenue, feels worlds away from the kind of minimal white-and-chrome apartments that have become the norm in Manhattan's glittering superscrapers.

"It's not a typical Tamarkin project," Ferrer says. "It's uptown; it has some classical details." This differentiation is, in part, due to the building's history: Built in 1908 by the architect William A. Boring (it's anything but), the structure served as a Catholic boys school until Tamarkin bought it. Boring's Gothic architecture makes for tall ceilings, wide windows, and intricate façade details.



The exterior of 555 West End Avenue.
Rendering: Hayes Davidson

It's this storied past that drew Ferrer —a vintage enthusiast—to the project, his first ever model unit. Of course, there was much work to be done by Tamarkin before that. "We wanted it to be big enough to be a real, classic apartment," says the architect-developer. "But, we wanted a design to make sense." So, Tamarkin and his team carved out a floor plan that makes the most of the building's light in the common areas and then sequesters off the private living quarters. "It's very important to us that things either line up or are kind of purposeful," Tamarkin says. "And if you look at this floor plan, there's a simplicity to it. It's laid out in a way that makes sense, both visually and livably."

"That floor plan helped to define this narrative of who the owner would be," Ferrer says. "A family, with children, who entertain."

Of course, since this hypothetical family has enlisted Ferrer as their designer, they are also collectors, their home filled with art, ceramics, and vintage furniture—many of it sourced from the designer's personal collection.

"What's your apartment now—just empty?" Tamarkin ribs Ferrer as he points to another artwork that came from Ferrer's own collection.

"I wish," Ferrer laughs. "I could do another model!"



The apartment's kitchen features white oak cabinetry by Christopher Peacock, stone floors, and appliances by Wold, Sub-Zero, and Miele.

Photo: Joshua McHugh

Though such a collected, vintage-heavy look is far from the norm in model apartments, this one almost begs for it. Ferrer's layered, thoughtful, and comfortable style is the perfect balance for the apartment's architectural grandeur.

Take, for example, the living room, where the designer has managed to make the tall-ceilinged, light-filled space feel intimate without letting its proportions go unnoticed. "I wanted to create the ability to entertain on a large scale, but to also have a sense of intimacy," Ferrer explains "We did that by defining different areas with multiple layers of floor coverings. Then there's flexibility in the furniture."

Vintage items sourced from Ferrer's friend, the gallerist Paul Boyer, get new life with textural upholstery—bouclé, velvet, and cashmere are in no short supply ("I'm big on texture," Ferrer quips)—while art by the likes of Marco Lorenzetti as well as both vintage and contemporary ceramics give the apartment a collected, lived-in feel.

Though it may be a different look for Tamarkin, the concept of designing from a personal space is one he and Ferrer can certainly agree on. "I only do buildings where I would choose to live," the former tells AD PRO. "I don't know what everybody wants, so I just do what I want."



"Architects talk about the expansion and contraction of space and this is supposed to be a darker, moodier space," says Ferrer of the entryway, which offers a view into the brighter living and dining room.



Ferrer divided the large living room into a dining area and several smaller, flexible vignettes in the dining space. Each one is defined by a separate rug.



A vintage Marco Zanuso sofa appears made for this corner of the living room. "We would have done a custom banquette if we had the time, but we brought in two frames that were skeletal to do a fit test, and this one was perfect," Ferrer says. "The solid velvet gives this stroke of color." The Kappa chair at right is upholstered in a Rogers & Goffigon bouclé.



Ferrer commissioned the Marco Lorenzetti painting that hangs above the sofa. "We wanted something muted but strong," he explains. The sofa is upholstered in fabric by ALT for Living. "She's a great resource," says Ferrer of ALT for Living founder Anaisse Taft. "She knows her mills, she knows how to make stuff happen." The coffee table is Jacques Adnet, sourced by Paul Boyer.



In a media room, a sculpture by Maren Kloppmann hangs across from large-scale photographs of the building mid-renovation.



Ferrer created custom bunk beds for a child's room. The desk is a cart from CB2, where Ferrer will launch a vintage line next year.



The kitchen's white oak carries over into the apartment's baths.



A custom headboard in the master bedroom.



"There's this sense of calm in here," says Ferrer of the bedroom's blue-and-cream palette.

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