

A LOOK WE LOVE

TIME TRAVEL

A masterful interplay of design styles and eras is on show in the home office of this New York apartment.

ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

Unexpected and delightful partnerships abound. A pair of 1820s French cabinets flank an Art Deco sofa, and mirrors framed in faux tortoiseshell hang either side of the Regency portrait.

COMFORT ZONE

It's easy to forget this is an office space. Robert has introduced softness in the form of wall-to-wall carpet, textured upholstery fabrics, layered cushions and the tactile wool rug.

MIX AND MATCH

Robert's criteria for furniture selection is simple: choose what appeals. Here, French 1940s armchairs sit happily with a neo-Egyptian coffee table from the '60s and a '30s Art Deco rug by Ernest Boiceau.

FOCAL POINT

The massive 18th-century painting by Richard Cosway was bought at a Sotheby's auction. It is a classic portrait, yet the subject's stance conveys an air of informality. This creates a push and pull between the formal and relaxed, which sets the mood of the room.

HUE AND WHY

"I chose light blue for the walls because most of the decorative elements are dark brown and black, and the colour works beautifully with them," says Robert. "The elements detach themselves elegantly from the background. It adds crispness and modernity."

PATTERN PLAY

The original, zebra-patterned covering of the 1940s sofa complements the motif on the bold rug. More subdued patterns on the armchairs prevent the overall effect from becoming overpowering.



ROBERT COUTURIER ARCHITECT & DESIGNER ROBERT COUTURIER INC

Robert Couturier, a Parisian now based in New York, recently took on the task of transforming this sitting area,

which occupies part of the office space in his SoHo apartment. The objective was clear from the start: "I wanted it to be modern, easy to live with, but with enough references that it had some historical meaning," he says. It needed to inspire him too. "This is what I look at when I sit at my desk."

Classic hit

Make this wonderfully eclectic look your own by following these tips:

IT'S INSTINCTIVE

Scour auction houses and eBay for special second-hand finds that resonate with you. "I think all these seemingly disparate elements, fabric patterns included, work together because I selected them all for myself," says Robert. "Their common point is my personal taste. Since I am my own decorator, I work mostly by instinct."

A REFINED PALETTE

Repetition of colour serves to unify this room. The rug and the central artwork dictate the palette, with accessories taking their cues from them. Meanwhile, the rich chocolate tones of the main furnishings and carpet serve to anchor the space.

EMBRACE PATTERN

Repeated pattern and motifs create an integrated whole. The zebra-patterned upholstery, for example, links to the interwoven motif on the rug and is echoed in the graceful sweep of the legs on the coffee table.

ORDER IN THE HOUSE

Experiment with classic symmetry but don't overdo it or the room will look too formal and stitched up. Lest this space take itself too seriously, the curves of the vivid rug and whimsical zebra sofa lighten the mood. **H&G**

Robert Couturier Inc;
www.robertcouturier.com.