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PERIOD LIVING IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

Gil Schafer

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Is it any wonder that the architect Gil Schafer has chosen to settle in a brownstone in the heart of Greenwich Village? Most of these sober red-brick homes, which line timeless streets, were built in the nineteenth century, and their classic style corresponds perfectly to his preference for a "period look."

Gil Schafer is one of the biggest names in antique home restoration and American Revivalism. Throughout his career he has emphasized that his primary goal is to create homes that "enhance the enjoyment of life." Each of the places that Gil restores and decorates—whether Colonial or Greek Revival in style, and whether located on Park Avenue, in Boston, or Charlotte—is characterized by careful consideration for its original state. This includes the authenticity of architectural details and—albeit more difficult to achieve—a "period" atmosphere. This atmosphere does not depend on slavish attention to the accuracy of a wall color, a shutter, or a porch lantern; it has less to do with the perfect reproduction of a vintage wallpaper, balustrade, or neoclassical chimney than with a host of delicate touches. These might include a fetching stucco decoration, an antique bust, a piece of antique mahogany furniture, a pair of Ionic columns in an entryway, or a wall covered with prints. These are all details that make a house designed by Gil a tribute to the beauty of great traditional American homes.

Gil has infused his home in Greenwich Village with his trademark style, without losing sight of the fact that he is living in the twenty-first century. Its contemporary comforts, however, have been camouflaged with such subtlety and skill that the visitor's gaze lingers instead over delightful details such as a pair of elegant folding stools, old plaster architectural fragments, the curve of a chair inspired by ancient Greece, a steel campaign bed, and a large convex mirror rimmed in ebony.

The recipient of prestigious awards and significant commissions, and the subject of innumerable articles in books and interior design magazines, Gil continues to rescue America's rich architectural heritage with unflagging enthusiasm. Other homes badly in need of restoration await him as he sets off in search of new challenges.