

# Master of Design

Stephen Bastone and his creative visions for interior design



## ◆ STEPHEN BASTONE ◆

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**ROOM OVERVIEW:** The carpet is an Empire Savonnerie, 1820; Dassi coffee table, 1940s; the Bastone-designed sofa is a crème silk French damask from Christopher Hyland; Paolo Buffa chairs, 1940s; Grosfeld House clear-glass tables, 1940s; on the table: Russian pink roedenite, gold-mounted and precious stone-mounted dish, 1890; E.F. Caldwell Regency style carved ivory and ormoulo mounted box; Empire Paris porcelain and bisque neoclassical vases, 1810; lamps are 1950s gilt bronze; Rosewood Regency chairs from Newell Antiques, 1820s.

### What is your design philosophy?

You have to know the rules to break the rules—for me, decoration is part of a lifestyle, appreciating beauty overall; it's the art, it's the food, it's the fashion . . . an appreciation of refinement. Whether classical or modern, it is important to possess an awareness of where things are derived. I mean, no-one popped out of a pod! Opinions matter insofar as where they come from, ideally opinions should matter when they come from people who possess a knowledge of history as well a sense of fun.

### Who were your mentors?

I was fortunate enough to work with Vincent Fourcade, who brought the de Rothschild style to America. He was the real deal—not only a connoisseur, but someone who lived the style he brought to people like Jayne Wrightsman, Oscar de la Renta, and Henry Kravis. I've also been fortunate to work with Alberto Pinto who, with his international clientele, showed me an unparalleled sense of opulence.

### Where do you find inspiration for your designs and the materials you use?

For me, it's all about the rough with the refined. For example, a great source of inspiration are The Pavlovsk Palaces: the Russian Czars who commissioned their most important furniture from the same manufacturers who produced their arms, using steel with gold—the combination works for a modern lifestyle. I apply that attitude to both period and modern looks with furniture from the '30s and '40s.

### What's the most exciting part of your job?

I adore the creative process—I began in the fine arts, started out in advertising, wanting to be in the bull-pen on Madison Avenue. I have a great sense of subliminal seduction and its role in creating an atmosphere. It is extremely rewarding to take a Napoleon silk from the nineteenth century and reinvent it in a modern way for a country house bedroom. Or, for that matter, reinventing a 1930's night table to be practical in a Manhattan home. It's all about insight. I interpret my clients' taste with my sense of history and style. ◆



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