



Past Perfect

Darryl Carter helps a campaign strategist modernize his DC condo, paying homage to antiques and heirlooms.

| By Jennifer Sergent |
| Photography by Greg Powers |

David Morey, a political and corporate strategist, first purchased his 16th Street condo about 15 years ago. Believing Washington was at best a place to work and sleep, he says he “didn’t really do anything with it” until he realized the city had, seemingly overnight, become “cool.”

He had traveled the country—and the world—advising the campaigns of Barack Obama, Mexico’s Vicente Fox and the Philippines’ Corazon Aquino. He was crafting strategy for the chiefs of Apple, Nike and McDonald’s. It was during a stop at his home base about three years ago, having cocktails with a friend at The Gibson on 14th Street, that it finally dawned on him: “There seemed to be a new attitude about DC—a new spirit,” he says. That’s when he began searching for a designer to transform his condo into a proper pied-à-terre, where he could both work and entertain on a more regular basis.

Morey got Darryl Carter’s name through a friend, and from the time he entered Carter’s Massachusetts Avenue home for a meeting, he knew he had found *the one*. “I want this,” he remembers thinking as he toured the rooms. Carter’s home, he thought, is the “ultimate marketing” of the aesthetic the designer infuses into his clients’ expanses.

This month, Carter is set to make that aesthetic available to the public when he opens a store in DC’s Shaw

neighborhood. “It’s my personal laboratory,” he says. The opening coincides with the publication of his second book, *The Collected Home* (\$45, Random House), which embodies the philosophy behind the environment he’s created for his eponymous store. Morey’s condo is another illustration of the Darryl Carter brand. “The simple elegance—the combination of old and new—I’d never really seen that done before,” Morey says. “It appealed to my interest in modernizing the great antiques of our day, almost to reincarnate them.”

The duo shares the feeling that “trend” is a dirty word. “Trends are so finite and disparate that you have to vacate them, unless you want to go from lime to orange,” Carter says dismissively. “Furniture is an investment. You’re better served by spending a little more money on things that are beautiful and classical.”

Translation: Invest in pieces that will last forever. Indeed, once Morey toured his newly designed space for the first time, he says “it was like my own museum moment.”

He points to an 1872 painting of his grandmother, updated with a contemporary white frame. An 1800 daybed from Paris sits before a modern cocktail table commissioned from DC artist Margaret Booser. A Buddhist hand sculpture, circa 1400, sits atop one of Morey’s prized magic books—a CONTINUED...

BEST LAID PLANS

David Morey, standing, reviews plans with designer Darryl Carter, whose work for Morey’s DC condo and Pennsylvania retreat are in Carter’s new book.



TRUST FUND
Morey's condo is filled with objects and combinations that he was initially skeptical about, but Carter said, "Trust me." Morey did—and says he loves the result.

“Like a well-curated museum exhibit, there are surprises along the way: A gold clock (“It’s so wrong, it’s right!” Morey exclaims) sits atop an antique armoire, which Carter painted black and topped with a slab of marble.”

...CONTINUED meaningful combination, as Morey once consulted for the Dalai Lama and is also a professional magician in his spare time.

Morey reels off more of Carter’s finds: a Bucks County, Pa., table, circa 1810; a 1920 side table; a 1960 French end table; a 1917 mirror and wall sconce; a Bösendorfer grand piano, circa 1828, the year the famous Viennese company was founded. “You really do feel good in a home that is collected,” Morey says, crediting Carter’s ability to hunt and gather in a way meaningful to the client.

And like a well-curated museum exhibit, there are surprises along the way: A gold clock (“It’s so wrong, it’s right!” Morey exclaims) sits atop an antique armoire, which Carter painted black and topped with a slab of marble. A chandelier over the dining table was pieced together from at least four other lighting fixtures Carter had assembled. An old barn door placed on sliders serves as Morey’s closet door in his bedroom.

Such unlikely combinations landed Carter’s design for Morey’s Pennsylvania retreat—the second project for the pair—on the cover of a recent issue of *Elle Decor*. Carter’s new tome features both homes. The interior designer, who refers to Morey as his patron, says this look is what customers will find at his store. “I’m a curator, and I’m a purveyor,” Carter says. “What I hope to create are environments that are welcoming to the individual.”

Of course, Carter has a specific individual in mind. “My clients, in general—they tend to have a certain DNA,” he says. “They really appreciate history and craft. They tend to be really thinking.”

In keeping with that idea, visitors to Darryl Carter will enter the 19th-century building through a giant salvaged Tudor arch. From there, they will walk through a space marked by huge columns. Shelves will be stocked with the work of local craftspeople, in addition to repurposed vintage and antique pieces. “These rooms are to be experienced,” Carter says of the store, where the architecture is just as important as the pieces that fill it—another principle that is emphasized in his book and Morey’s home.

Carter matched his client’s foyer floor to the original 1917 wood floorboards in the rest of the unit. He took down walls separating the main living areas, marking the spaces instead with columns to create a more open feel. He added transom molding above doors flanking the foyer, so their differing heights would look uniform. “The room should be right, first of all,” Carter explains.

“To me, he’s a genius at design,” says Morey. “He can walk in and see things that others can’t. That’s a really special talent. He just lands on a piece you would never expect.” ■