Chairish

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OUR VINTAGE FURNISHINGS ARE AVAILABLE NOW.

There is a particularly deli-
cate balance to strike when cre-
ating a room that's both resplen-
dent and understated—such
as this stately drawing room in
Princeton, New Jersey. Tip the
scales on that delicate clash
of color or pattern, and it might
come off as unrelatable, or over-
ly "designed." Alirio Pirela, the
interior designer and owner of
Pirela Atelier who has a distin-
guished taste for neutrals, knows
how to find that balance, creat-
ing spaces that are at once spa-
cious and intimate, joyful, and
subdued. "Using color schemes

within the same tonal family or
palette makes for an aestheti-
cally pleasing environment while
still offering variety," he says.
   Throwing shapes via well-
placed sculptures is one of the
most instinctive weapons in
Pirela's design arsenal. "I have
an inclination for architectural,
organic and graphic shapes—
materials that make your eyes
wander around the room," he
says. Here, a form looms in the
corner, perched atop a spiral
column, another sculpture in
stone contrasts the travertine
surface of the coffee table.

Since bringing his sophisti-
cated medley of travel-sourced
wares to Chairish—mostly
American Art Deco to European
mid-century masters—Pirela
has found the response "over-
whelming," in a good way. (In
fact, it's become fuel for Pirela
to seek out more curios when
styling his rooms.) Among his
most prized finds is a bleached
oak chest of drawers with
brass detailing, discovered in
Boca Raton. After some buffing,
it was revealed to be an origi-
nal design from French furni-
ture magnate Pierre Chapo—

which often retails upwards of
$30,000. Not everyone has that
luck, of course.
   The thing we can all access is
layering, something Pirela con-
siders vital when building eclec-
tic spaces using a single tonal
palette. He likens adding lay-
ers to building a photo album,
a collation of memory-evoking
pieces that stir emotion. "Layer-
ing is key to producing a scheme
that's rich and full of depth," he
says. "It's about using the right
combination of shape, color,
shade, and size to create a har-
monic vibe."