



## PAST PERFECT

*Atop the legendary Chambord, an interior designer becomes her own client.*

BY JENNIFER MASSONI PARDINI

At the corner of Sacramento and Jones streets, standing white and curvy like the wedding cake it has been compared to, the Chambord Apartments building is impossible to miss. Built exactly a century ago, its balustrades and embellishments are reminiscent of the Beaux Arts era, which also captivated big-name Bay Area architects like **Julia Morgan** and **Bernard Maybeck**. But the fact that its architect, **James Francis Dunn**,

layered these elements onto a building of “billowing poured concrete,” as the San Francisco City Planning Commission noted in 1978, makes the Chambord — now on both the San Francisco Landmarks list and the National Register of Historic Places — all the more unique and eye-catching.

Between a grand pair of Michael Taylor sofas (above) sits a branch coffee table from Barnes’ line of furniture. She also designed the two mirrored end tables. For the primary bedroom (right), Barnes stayed on budget with Belgian linen curtains from Amazon.

“The story with the building is that I was always around it or landing there for some reason,” says **Candace Barnes**, CEO and creative director of Candace Barnes Design, who

previously worked with a client living on the first floor. When she had the opportunity to move into the building’s 2,200-square-foot penthouse, Barnes followed an impressive procession of designers, all of them men, who had also called the Chambord home, including **Paul**

**Wiseman**, **Billy Gaylord** and **Eric Cohler**, who once lived in the same penthouse as Barnes. “Wow, here I am, and I’m the first woman to do an apartment here,” she says of serendipitously stepping in stride with what she calls “a legacy of creativity.”

Working for herself, those creative decisions proved



challenging because of endless options, but not an endless budget. She used several pieces from her eponymous furniture line, incorporated antiques from her years as a dealer at the Design Center, and made strong cohesive choices, like painting a **Billy Baldwin**-inspired chocolate brown on the walls of the library. “Brown is not a popular color at all, so I was a little scared. But then, once we did it, I just loved it,”

says Barnes, who also touched on a tribal theme with four facing club chairs.

Another nod to the popularity of animal print back in the building’s heyday is the crocodile-embossed wall covering in the marble-columned living room. But when Barnes ordered two 10-foot **Michael Taylor** sofas, she discovered there was no way to get them up there. “This is the number one thing

you think of when you’re a designer, and here I am doing it to myself!” she exclaims.

In the end, Barnes called in a crane for a cinematic scene: the street blocked off below and a crowd of spectators watching in awe as the sofas made their way to the penthouse terrace. “Everybody just stopped, and we all went ‘oh! oh!’ and watched it flip around through the air.” At 500 pounds a pop, Barnes said there was about an inch and a half to spare. “Finally, all of a sudden, it just straightened out and it went in. And everybody on the street jumped up and down clapping.”

After the sofas safely landed, Barnes invited the bystanders up to see the space. “[There] was a little housewarming feeling to it even though I didn’t even know any of these people.”

Once settled into the furnished space, Barnes’ favorite element by far was the natural light from the 360-degree window views. “The sun would go down in the dining room and this beautiful light would just come in,” she says. “You could see Coit Tower; then you came around, you saw all of downtown; then it was Grace Cathedral; then you looked out to the west all the way to the ocean.” **NHC**