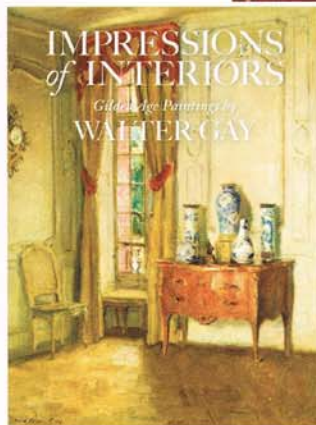


Rich & Regal Rooms

American artist Walter Gay (1856–1937) found his muse in artful interiors—curvy commodes, crystal chandeliers, marble mantels, blue-and-white porcelain, and antique boiseries. Not only did the Boston native capture the poetry of interior design, particularly dreamy French rooms, but Gay lived the grand lifestyle hinted at in his paintings. At age 20, the ardent Francophile moved to Paris; there he met and later married heiress Matilda Travers, daughter of a prominent New York lawyer.

The well-connected couple soon moved to the French countryside, where they socialized with other American expats—Mary Cassatt, Edith Wharton, and Henry James among them. Walter and Matilda entertained at Château du Bréau, an 18th-century estate on 300 acres near Fontainebleau that they purchased in 1907. For a glimpse inside the stone fortress, see *The Interior of the Bedroom of Château du Bréau* (below), Gay's depiction of a guest bedroom, on display at the Frick Art & Historical Center in Pittsburgh from October 5 through January 6, 2013.

The Old Fireplace (right) shows a room in Gay's temporary digs, Château de Fortoiseau. "Gay's interiors open the door to your imagination," says Sarah Hall, director of Curatorial Affairs at the Frick Pittsburgh. Tap into Hall's blog—thefrickpittsburgh.org/SarahBlogsFromParis.php—for a peek behind the velvet ropes. And visit the show to see how Gay made a career out of recording sumptuous roomscapes for flush Europeans and Americans (Henry Clay Frick's daughter included). —Doris Athineos



Isabel L. Taube *Impressions of Interiors* Gilded Age Paintings by Walter Gay

"I was searching for the spirit of empty rooms," wrote artist Walter Gay, and this comprehensive, beautifully illustrated book proves he found it in the châteaux, villas, and houses owned by patrons and even the Gays themselves. Bonus: Discover which collectors—among them interior designer Charlotte Moss—lent paintings to the show. (D. Giles Limited, \$55) —D.A.



Amanda Nisbet *Dazzling Design*

Joyfully breaking the rules as she combines color, pattern, and texture, Amanda Nisbet has earned the right to the adjective "dazzling." From city apartments to country homes to beach houses, feast your eyes on her updated classic rooms. (Abrams Books, \$50) —R.C.



Ben Pentreath *English Decoration* Timeless Inspirations for the Contemporary Home

Ben Pentreath studied art history, and it shows in his Bloomsbury-based architectural practice, his design shop, and the beautiful homes, shown here, that he designed for artists and writers. (Ryland, Peters & Small, \$45) —R.C.



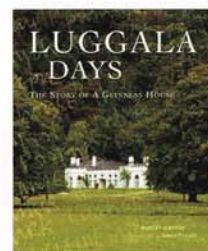
Susanna Salk *Be Your Own Decorator* Taking Inspiration and Cues from Today's Top Designers

Fifty rooms from 50 top designers (Albert Hadley, Kelly Wearstler, Nate Berkus) are woven into practical, user-friendly chapters about the choices that make these interiors look so great. (Rizzoli New York, \$45) —R.C.



Hermes Mallea *Great Houses of Havana* A Century of Cuban Style

Hermes Mallea traces the evolution of Cuban style from colonial Spanish courtyard homes to "tropical modernist" villas. See Hemingway's lair, Finca Vigía, where he wrote *The Old Man and the Sea* amidst books and taxidermy. (Monacelli Press, \$75) —D.A.



Robert O'Byrne *Luggala Days* The Story of a Guinness House

The beauty of the Guinness family's exquisite 18th-century Irish estate, Luggala, is celebrated in this book that also tells the story of its charmed circle of visitors, from Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes to Michael Jackson. (CICO Books, \$45) —R.C.



Werner Dressendörfer *Album Vilmorin* The Vegetable Garden 1850–1895

Love food? History? Art? Win the trifecta with gorgeous images of traditional veggies from the humble bean to gnarled root crops, all from the catalogs of a 19th-century French seed company. (Taschen, \$60) —R.C.