

Brito chose the chairs in the living room because he liked the Empire influence of the design. Made of gold embossed leather, Brito says, "They hug you when you sit down."

# The Everyday Exotic

IN HIS OWN HOME,  
ALFREDO BRITO  
SURROUNDS HIMSELF  
WITH AN ENIGMATIC  
AMBIANCE. *By Saxon Henry*

“PURITY CAN BE BORING,” says designer Alfred Brito, whose Miami home looks as if it were born in a time when titled gentlemen left the Occident for safaris in the wilds of Africa and Asian Minor. “I like to take purity to a certain point and then break it with the unexpected.”

In the procession of spaces, the ochre, gold and brown palette was a natural choice for the fan of earth tones. “They soothe me and make feel at home,” he explains. “I live alone, so I created a masculine environment that is very reflective of who I am.”

One look at the collection of rooms and it's no surprise that Brito is an adventurer who loves to travel to exotic places. “I feel the excitement of all of the varied places I've been when I come home,” he remarks. “I've collected the European furniture, contemporary and African art, and accessories myself during my travels.”

Texture trumps all in each room, especially the living room where embossed leather chairs, chenille cushions on the sofa, a sea grass carpet, raffia walls and a ceiling with an embossed French wallpaper painted in metallic gold come together. In many of the spaces, burl wood, which is actually a faux finish treatment, adds to the textural milieu. “Eliana Barbosa from Brazil did all the faux finishing,”



The bed in the master bedroom, which is draped in black and leopard-skin velvet, is fit for a king.

The bedroom is one of the most elegant examples of his lush aesthetic. “When I create a certain level of elegance, I am truly able to relax.”



An award-winning lamp—a monkey holding the lampshade with its tail and a ball in its hand—balances on a brass and leather trunk in the bedroom.

remarks Brito. “I call her Mother Nature because she can do anything—wood, stone, granite, you name it.”

His favorite space in the house, a sitting room, is where he holds intimate gatherings with friends. “I love to entertain at home, and I love to play backgammon,” he remarks, noting the leggy game table that poses as a coffee table. He found the Turkish chandelier in the room in a shop in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. “This is the most lived-in room in the house,” he says.

Each space holds at least one piece of contemporary art. In the sitting room, it’s an ethereal painting of a piece of coral above the sofa. In the master bedroom, it’s a fanciful painting titled *Beach Boy*, in which a smiling lad wears a neon-green straw hat and bright turquoise shirt. The painting contrasts the room’s restful air while bringing in a hint of whimsy.

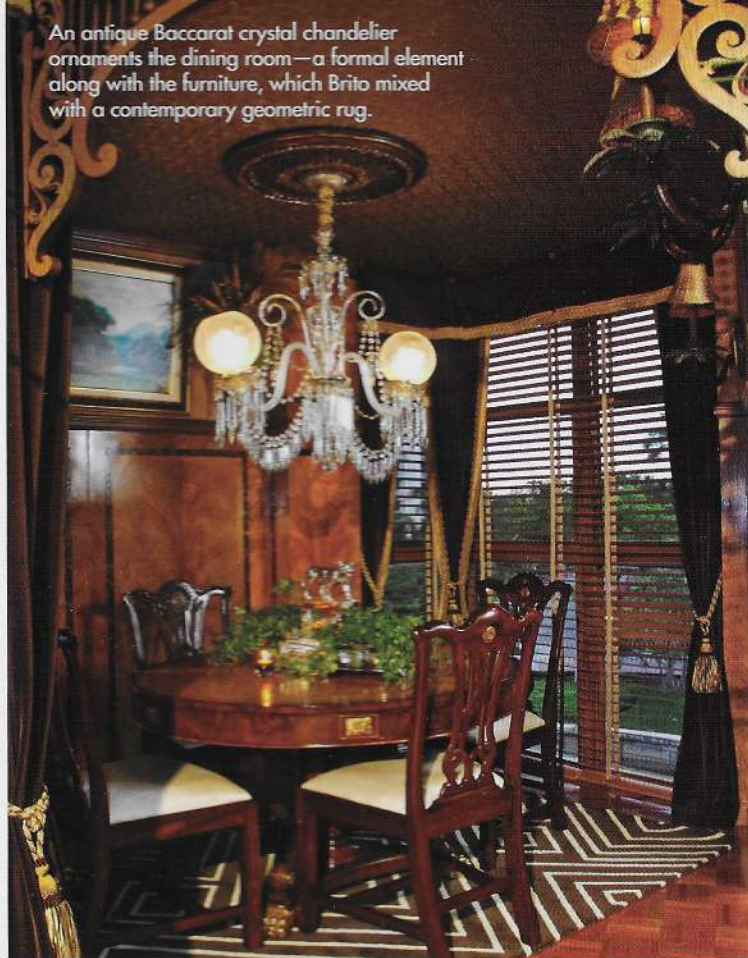
The bedroom is one of the most elegant examples of his lush aesthetic. “When I create a certain level of elegance, I am truly able to relax,” says the designer, who canopied the Maitland Smith bed with black and leopard-print velvet. “I loved that bed the minute I saw it: It’s like a giant wing chair and the crest on the headboard looks like it came out of a Spanish galleon—it’s my throne!”

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Proving that Brito’s theory of breaking purity with the unexpected works, wood fretwork spandrels in the openings between the sitting room, the kitchen and the dining alcove bring in a subtle femininity that’s surprisingly at home in the masculine surroundings. Another genteel touch is the antique Baccarat chandelier above the dining table. “I used the wooden millwork to bring a touch of the Victorian in; I like how it heightens the romance in the spaces,” says Britio. “I chose the over-scaled light fixture because it looks like a large jewel.”

Adeptly mixing the long list of styles and periods contained within these rooms is no small feat. How does he explain his acumen for complexity? “It’s just a gift that God gave me,” he says. “I seem to have a natural sense of combining unusual elements and making them work.”

An antique Baccarat crystal chandelier ornaments the dining room—a formal element along with the furniture, which Brito mixed with a contemporary geometric rug.



The sitting room is Brito’s favorite. The cozy space has silk taffeta and velvet drapes, and raffia on the walls.