

By Grace Cain

Creative live wire *Wes Gordon* talks about sharing his *Manhattan apartment* with his husband, their baby son, a dog called *Bird* and some precious *Meissen porcelain*

When I ask Wes Gordon if he spends much time in his bathroom, he gives me a funny look. I hastily explain that I'm not being weird, I just want to know the intimate details of his daily grooming regime – this is the *Harrods* magazine 'Beauty Special', after all. But as well as being the lauded creative director at Carolina Herrera, Gordon is also a new father... so he really doesn't have time for elaborate 10-step skincare rituals. That said, he does swear by Dr. Lara Devgan's Hyaluronic Serum, and is a big fan of Herrera Confidential, a line of fragrances designed to be layered to suit your mood. "I think there's something really nice about waking up and just having your routine," he says. "Especially now, because I like to do the morning feeds with Henry before I go to work. Having that go-to fragrance or hair product means one less decision to make, and that helps me to maximise my time with him."

Baby Henry is the newest inhabitant in the West Chelsea apartment in Manhattan where, for the past four years, Gordon has lived with his husband, glassblower Paul Arnhold, and their nine-year-old cockapoo, Bird. Obviously, then, the *most* important question is whether dog and baby get along? "Like a storybook!" Gordon speaks at double speed, his words tumbling over each other in an effort to keep up with his thoughts. "It's the most beautiful thing. Henry wakes up and immediately starts looking around for her. We actually had to make a three-kiss rule because Bird was kissing him too much."

Sounds like a Disney movie in the making. But Gordon's apartment is so precisely arranged, so full of precious (read: breakable) objects, that surely >



*A perch high on the wall is the perfect spot to showcase the Meissen porcelain – and will (hopefully) keep it clear of the baby/dog maelstrom brewing...*

# NEW YORK STATE OF MIND

having a small child crawling around might necessitate some lifestyle changes? “I think every parent is a little anxious before their first child is born,” Gordon reasons. “I was definitely like, how is life going to change? But having a baby adds so much joy. It’s also a lot of work and we’re super tired all the time, but I love hearing his laughter around the apartment.”

Gordon took it upon himself to decorate Henry’s bedroom, transforming a former guest room into a space perfect for their child. “I was really excited about it,” he confesses. “In the six months leading up to his birth, I was either buying baby clothes or furniture for his room. Not much else has changed around the apartment yet, although his toys are starting to slowly creep into every single room.”

The family usually spend weekends and holidays at their idyllic 18th-century farm in Connecticut (incidentally, I highly recommend Gordon’s Instagram account for both fashion inspo and heart-warming animal content), leaving daily life to play out at their New York base. But it is unlikely that it will remain this way. “This is our current home and we’ve had a great time here, but it’s not our forever home,” Gordon explains.



“I wanted something *eclectic* and *bohemian*... we loved the way it feels like an *older* building”

“I very much think of it as a chapter. It’s our apartment before we had a baby, when I wanted something that felt a little eclectic and bohemian.”

Gordon can’t, though, take the main credit for discovering the space: “Paul initially really liked it because it runs parallel to the High Line [NYC’s renowned one-and-half-mile-long elevated linear park], which means we have all this greenery right outside our window – such a unique thing in New York! And then we loved the way that it feels like an older building, despite being a new construction.”

The latter point proved to be a key factor for the couple, who have opposing tastes to accommodate when it comes to décor. “Paul is kind of a modernist,” Gordon smiles. “He prefers airy open-plan spaces, while I definitely prefer traditional buildings with chopped-up cosy rooms.” That must complicate the decorating process? “It makes the journey longer – and more difficult,” he agrees. “But the destination is better.”

Fortunately, the duo have celebrated interior designer Stephen Sills to guide them. They collaborated with Sills on the property in Connecticut, and Gordon says that they now consider him a friend. “He’s a great decorator. Regardless of how creative you are, he has an ability to take your ideas and tastes to a place you wouldn’t have reached on your own.”

Of course, this particular pair are hardly lacking in the creativity department, and Gordon is quick to admit that he doesn’t leave his work persona at his red lacquered door. “I’m self-aware enough to know that I am a terrible client,” he says, shrugging. “Like, I’m a creative director working in fashion, so I definitely don’t take a back seat. I’m annoyingly micro, and I like to be involved in everything. I bombarded Stephen with pictures and texts all day.

“I never want to take anything as it is. As part of my job, I’m used to being able to change everything – whether it’s the scale of a print or a particular shade of blue. I keep that same mindset when I’m working with Stephen, so all the fabrics and colours we use are very specific.”

Anyone who’s familiar with Gordon’s joyfully glamorous designs for Carolina Herrera will know how vitally important colour is to the designer. He’s famous for his use of exuberant hues, particularly that signature scarlet-fuchsia combination – which, perhaps unsurprisingly, has also found its way into the walls and doors of his apartment. Even the ceilings are pink. “It’s unexpected,” Gordon says. “You’ve just walked through this dark



Art Deco-style building, and suddenly the door opens and you’re in a bright space with red doors and 18th-century Italian console tables.”

His philosophy when it comes to colour is typically charming. “I think about colour as being either happy or sad,” he explains. “To me, a happy colour is very saturated and full of life, while a sad colour is muted and muddy.” And, he adds firmly, “We don’t use sad colours at Herrera.”

That same ethos carries through to Gordon’s home, which is an organised cacophony of patterned wallpaper, bold mid-20th-century furniture, and vibrant art by the likes of Wassily Kandinsky and Daniel W Freeman. “I do the fabric and the furnishings, Paul is in charge of the art. That’s kind of our deal,” Gordon tells me. “Paul has an amazing eye – he’s actually on the board of the Whitney Museum [of American Art]. We’re lucky to own some great pieces, some that we’ve bought together and some from family.”

This includes an impressive selection of early Meissen porcelain that the couple inherited from Arnhold’s late grandfather, Henry. Watching over the living room from their vantage points on the wall, these plates and vases are valuable for reasons beyond their rarity. They’re part of a collection that began in Dresden over a hundred years ago, when Arnhold’s great-grandparents started to acquire 18th-century Meissen tableware. After her husband’s death in the 1930s, Lisa Arnhold moved her family (including young Henry) to America, taking the Meissen with them to save it from being destroyed by the Nazis. Henry Arnhold subsequently took responsibility for preserving and expanding on his parents’ work, and after his death, most of

the pieces were donated to the Frick Collection in New York City, but each of his two grandchildren also have a curation of their own.

“Paul always calls it a ‘miracle collection’ because it evaded the Nazis,” Gordon explains. “But I think it’s even more amazing that it’s been successfully living on these very delicate shelves in the middle of our apartment, with Bird bouncing off the walls. And now we have a baby to worry about! I live in absolute terror of the day that something happens to that porcelain, but it’s already survived for hundreds of years. Hopefully it will make it through us too.”

Children, dogs and fragile objects are hardly the perfect trio, but that hasn’t stopped the couple from turning their apartment into a mini gallery for Arnhold’s glass creations. “I’m very lucky,” Gordon says warmly. “They add so much colour, and it’s so fun to play around with them. The problem is that he always sells them, so I’ll make a nice arrangement on a table and it will be gone by the time I get home again.”

Clearly, this particular apartment has played, and continues to play, a huge role in Gordon and Arnhold’s lives – a fact in no way invalidated by their plan not to grow old here. “It’s like... when you’re looking for a dress, you want to find something that makes you feel happy and shows the world who you really are. I think that same philosophy applies to your home,” Gordon explains. “It’s about broadcasting your personality to the world, and that’s something I’m obsessed with in all forms of self-expression. I just think that there’s too many people and too much noise in this world, and life is too short to be anything other than authentic.” □



Photographer Stephen Kent Johnson/OTTO; Interior Design Stephen Sills; Styling Mieke ten Have



From left, this page: Family ‘snaps’ populate the serene monochrome marble bathroom; signature Carolina Herrera hues pop up – unsurprisingly – on the home front. Opposite page: Paul Arnhold’s sumptuous glassware features (albeit often fleetingly) in the kitchen; dining alfresco offers a front-row seat to life on NYC’s High Line