



OPPOSITE, TOP: *Paul Mathieu's 'Aria' chair, footstool and floor lamp, all in hand-cast bronze, are a counterpoint to Paul Philp's earthy ceramics*



OPPOSITE, BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: *A 19th-century marble and ormolu wine cooler; Limoges porcelain tableware by Willer; ceramic form by Paul Philp; a 'Biedermeier' silver candlestick by Ted Muehling for ER Butler; and a glass sculpture by Masuda Hiromi*

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stuff in your spare time.' What spare time, I ask you?" she says, laughing. Willer arrived in London from New York in 1971 and after a number of years staving off various offers to return to academia, she decided to stay put for good. "I went to law school then worked for years in the City. I was the first woman to be allowed through the doors of the Baltic Exchange and have lunch in the dining room." She was even allowed to wear trousers, after special permission was granted. "Times have changed a lot!"

For many years, Willer practiced law while appeasing the other side of her brain with building and design projects as hobbies. Many of her friends were architects, designers, stylists and journalists, and would go to her for sources and for information. "After I had my second child and really only wanted to work part-time – which was unheard of in those days – I knew it was right to make the change in direction. That's when the idea came of becoming the 'sourcer's sourcer'. From the start I focused on the haute couture of design. I went into

business thinking, if I have to compromise, then I'm out of here – I will have failed. And I haven't had to compromise."

Working with beautiful things and talented people is always a thrill for Willer. "There is a wonderful excitement when you find an artist and they really speak to you. It doesn't happen that often. You know it when you see it," she says. "We give people the chance to create something unique. It's very satisfying to be able to facilitate the commissioning process and also to help clients articulate what they want. It doesn't have to be a huge project, it could be an incredible statement tabletop piece."

Whether it's Roman, art deco or brand new, what unites the gallery's contents is their quality. "Good things are always good things, well-crafted things are always well-crafted things," she says, holding a gilded dinner plate, then placing a smaller bowl, edged in emerald green, on top. "It doesn't get any better than that," she says, admiring the combination. We couldn't agree more. **A**

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 www.willer.co.uk