

## Life Private Collector



A work by William Merritt Chase holds court in Barbara Guillaume's foyer.

## American Impressionism

Turn-of-the-century American masters and local artists keep this longtime art lover's collection fresh

Written by Lisa Kurzner Photographed by Lauren Rubinstein

As an interior design consultant, Barbara Guillaume helps set the trend in Atlanta. As a collector, she has been bucking the trend for many years, and hence her collection remains fresh and surprising. Her light-filled Park Place apartment contains a long gallery of paintings and sketches, while each room hosts its own special treasure. From works by American turn-of-the-century masters to local artists, Guillaume's collection favors those most self-assured with a pen and brush.

Raised in New York and schooled in the galleries of Paris, Guillaume has long been an art lover and collector. She was working at *L'Express* magazine when she married Jean-

Pierre Guillaume, the son of French School painting dealer Paul Guillaume. In Jean-Pierre she had found a partner who wished to build a unique collection of his own. The couple moved to Georgia in the early 1980s and began to buy American Impressionists, a newly popular collecting area. A New York cousin, Robert Preato, worked at the Grand Central Galleries on West 57th Street, a grand old-style art emporium. He encouraged the young collectors to purchase the works that were, as Guillaume says, "just then coming down from the attics and country homes into the galleries." In a short time they had amassed a collection of more than 75 paintings and drawings by well-known artists of the period 1888-1920. They loaned their paintings generously to exhibitions and taught their two children that, while their art was important to their home life, responsibility came along with privilege.

The star of the living room is an oil painting by Colin Campbell Cooper (1856-1937), "Chatham Square," from the original collection. In this lower Manhattan scene, elevated rail tracks swerve above a crowded commercial thoroughfare, with the classical portico of the city court building looming behind. Recently, Guillaume was fortunate to acquire a finished study for the painting in pencil and gouache through a private dealer who knew she owned the painting.

Among other recent finds are a William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) portrait study and a Cecil C. Bell (1906-1970) "Study in Brown and Blue" in an original gilded frame designed by famed New York architect Stanford White (1853-1906). Both were snapped up by Guillaume at Sotheby's Arcade auctions in New York and restored in Atlanta to their fine present states.

Other local conquests include Joseph Pennell (circa 1860-1926) etchings and a 1920s Haley Lever (1876-1958) oil in the original frame. All were discovered by Guillaume at furniture and antique markets.