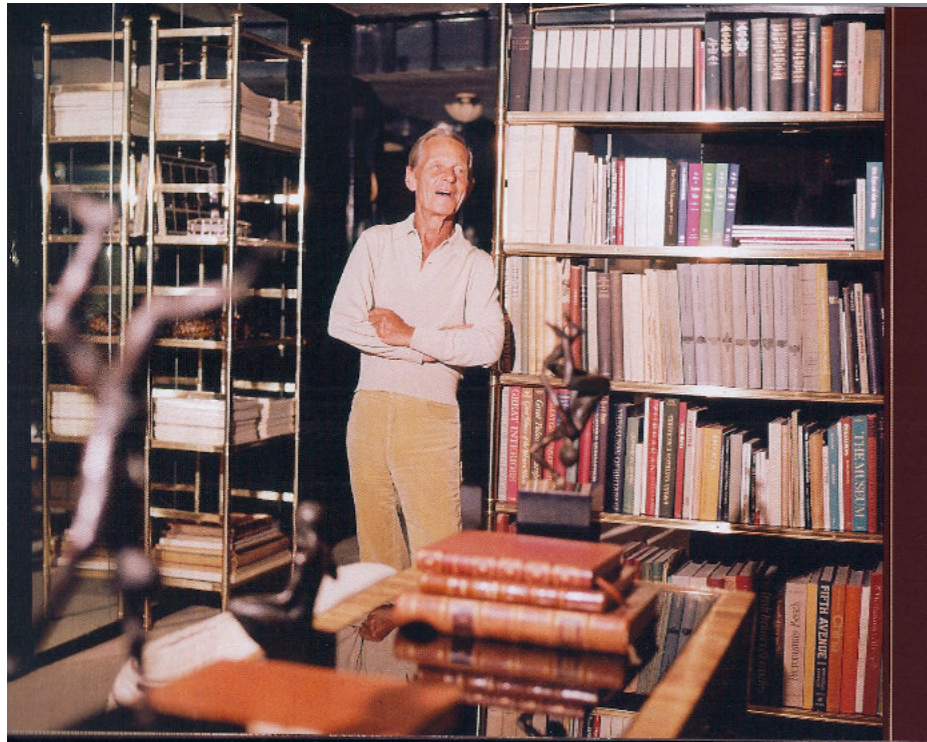


ABOUT COLE PORTER COLLECTION

The Cole Porter Collection began with the design for the étagère. In 1953 or 1954, Billy Baldwin came to Fred Victoria's shop needing pieces for Cole Porter's library. He was looking for fresh ideas and envisioned a series of similar pieces which would fit into multiple places in the room. The question was: what? At the time Fred Victoria had a small, Regency period brass frame dumbwaiter trolley that he suggested as a basis for the design. And so, the Cole Porter Etagere was born.

The design development was all done in house, on the fourth floor of Fred Victoria's 55th street shop - the molding and finials were modeled and the tooling which permitted the trolley to roll was



Billy Baldwin in his famous East 61st Street apartment, standing next to bronze shelving units of his design, photographed by Horst P. Horst for Vogue, November 1974 (provided by Condit Nast Archive, New York © Condé Nast Publications)



ABOVE

The library in the apartment of Cole Porter at The Waldorf Towers in New York City. The famous brass bookcases, attributed to Baldwin, were designed and fabricated by the New York antiques dealer Frederick P. Victoria. The large writing table is where Porter wrote all of his musical scores even though his two pianos were in the drawing room. Photo by André Kertész.

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FACING PAGE

The library of Cole Porter's Waldorf Towers apartment. Watercolor by Mark Hampton. Courtesy of Duane Hampton.

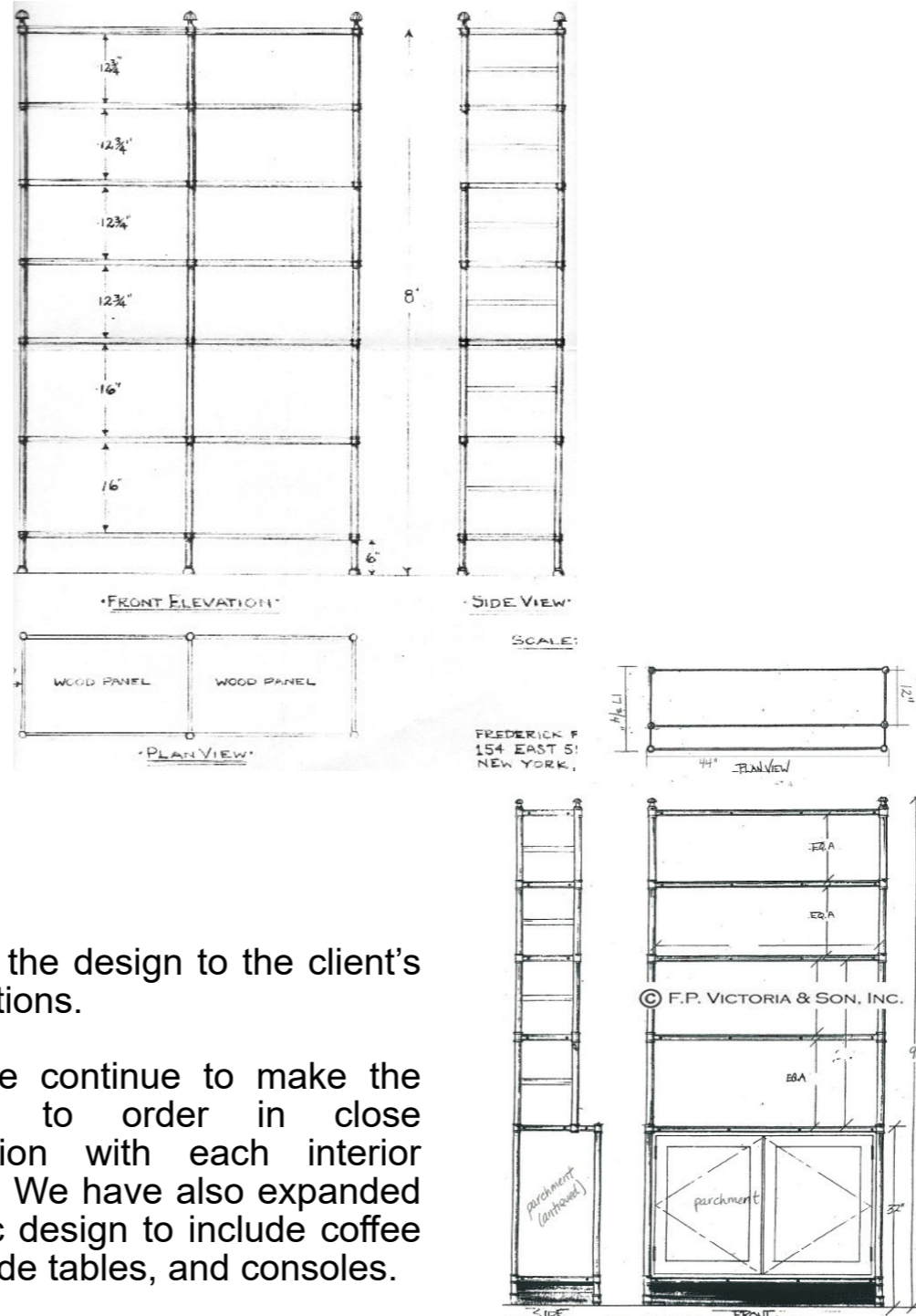
adapted for the étagères. This was the function of the "X" form straps under each shelf: two continuous pieces of brass molding which crossed over each other and were attached to the tubular uprights. You can find these on the very earliest of the etageres we produced. Today, the frames are silver soldered together, making them stronger structurally and making the straps, which were extremely difficult to produce, no longer necessary.



The brass frame design proved to be very versatile - and attractive. Billy Baldwin famously commissioned a set for his own office. Other versions, such as breakfronts and multi-leg etageres, were commissioned by other designers - all benefiting from being able to adapt the size and

layout of the design to the client's specifications.

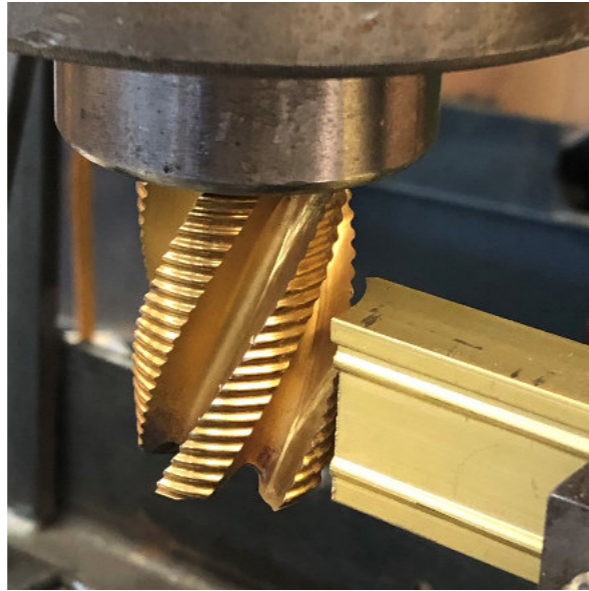
Today we continue to make the etageres to order in close consultation with each interior designer. We have also expanded our basic design to include coffee tables, side tables, and consoles.



FABRICATION PROCESS

BRASS FRAME

All the brass starts out raw and is then finished based on client's choice. Whether it's plated, polished, or any degree of patination, we send out samples for the client to approve and then have the approved one in hand during finishing.



SURFACES

One aspect of the design which makes it so versatile is the wide range of surfaces we can offer. While the earliest examples began with mahogany panels, the possibilities quickly expanded to lacquer, glass, parchment and even marble. Being able to tailor the surfaces is just one more way designers have been able to create their own unique piece.

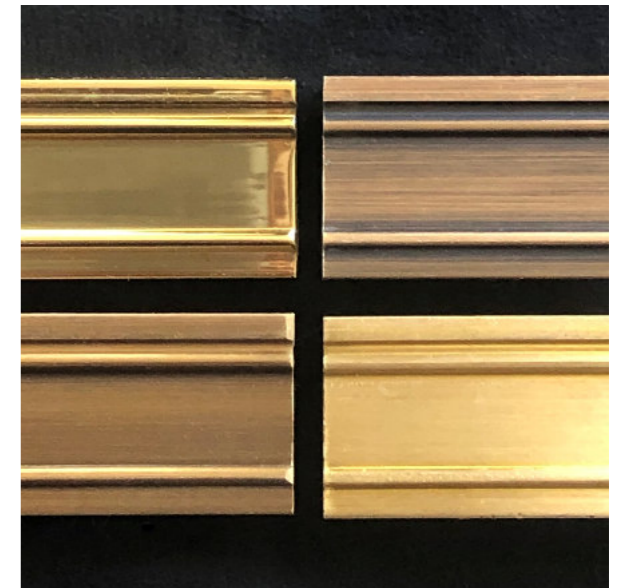


MOLDS

For the étagères we use finials that we cast from our molds which we created using the hand-made original model.

FINISHING

All the brass starts out raw and is then finished based on client's choice. Whether it's plated, polished, or any degree of patination, we send out samples for the client to approve and then have the approved one in hand during finishing.





COLE PORTER ETAGERE

The étagère layout can have just about any number of shelves, with whatever spacing you like. Height and width are flexible and even breakfronts with cabinets are possible. We supply wall tethers for taller pieces which your contractor can install if you like. Also, depending in part on the shelf material we generally need to add center legs when the width exceeds 48".



COLE PORTER SOFA TABLE





COLE PORTER COFFEE TABLE

While we had the drawing for the Coffee Table nearly as long as we had the étagère, we never made one until Tony Victoria decided to around 2002. And when he did, he covered the shelves in parchment, turning the coffee table into a statement. This fired the imaginations of our clients and it quickly turned to other materials, like marble, as well as other versions, like side tables.



COLE PORTER SIDE TABLE

EXPERIMENTAL MATERIALS

Being able to play with the surface material and house whatever it is in an elegant brass frame, allows this design to keep evolving. One new material we have experimented with is Molten Gypsum, shown below. This is a concoction that blends resin, lacquer and chunks of gypsum. Not only can it be done in almost any color combination, it is extremely durable. Besides Molten Gypsum, clients have done their own experiments, like the raised gilded lacquer panels by Nancy Lorenz commissioned by AP Interiors, which turned the tables into real jewel boxes.



CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Generally speaking, dusting with a soft dry cloth should be all you need to clean our Cole Porter creations. For pieces with glass shelves, please apply any window cleaner (windex etc.) to a rag first in order to avoid getting it directly on the brass frame. For wood shelves, it is really not necessary to wax these surfaces, but if you care to, please do not use generous amounts of wax and only do so infrequently to prevent any build up. In both cases the products which are available will contain products (ammonia or petroleum distillates) which may react with or harm the finish of the brass elements.