

William Haines  
designs

## BEST SUPPORTING PLAYERS

A STELLAR LINEUP OF NYDC FURNISHINGS THAT HAVE  
CO-STARRED ON THE SILVER SCREEN

While big names like Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts may get top billing at the movies, they couldn't make their star turns without a crucial supporting cast—the chairs they lounge in, tables they emote over, and lighting that helps set the mood. Many furnishings and accessories that have appeared in the movies (or were inspired by Hollywood style) can be found at the New York Design Center. Here is a look at some of those star products that have made it to the big screen:



ARRAY  
Inside The New York Design Center  
Jan Feb Mar 2008

8 The classic Elbow Chair, designed by actor-turned-style arbiter William Haines and now available at **PROFILES**, once graced the homes of such stars as Joan Crawford, Constance Bennett, and Claudette Colbert.



By Leanne French

## BACKSTORY WILLIAM HAINES



The lobby at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills (top, middle) features a William Haines' coffee table flanked by his famous Brentwood chairs. Collectors can bring the designer's Hollywood style home with iconic pieces from William Haines Designs including the Brentwood Chair (middle, bottom) and red Drum Chair (right).

In the Golden Age of movies, studios may have transformed actors into stars, but legendary actor-turned-interior designer William Haines (1900-1973) put the elegant sheen on their off-screen lives, decorating homes for the rich and famous in his celebrated Hollywood Glamour style. Now his legacy continues in a new William Haines furniture collection reproduced by Los Angeles-based Lindley Associates, made by the original California manufacturer and available at Profiles (Suite 1211, 212.689.6903) in the New York Design Center.

Haines's life was a true Hollywood story—he arrived in the movie mecca in 1922 after being discovered at a talent contest in his native Virginia. His star rose quickly, as he played the leading man in over 20 films, opposite stars such as Marion Davies, Constance Bennett, and Joan Crawford (whom he renamed Cranberry after the studio changed her name from Lucille Le Seur.)

When his film career waned, Haines's natural talent for decorating took center stage. He opened an antiques shop in 1930 while working at MGM, and his celebrity friends became his clientele, including Carole Lombard, George Burns, and Cranberry (a.k.a. Joan Crawford), who hired him to update her home. Haines's clientele eventually branched out to boldface names in politics and business, such as Walter and Lee Annenberg and Alfred and Betsy Bloomingdale. The designer was very aware of his powerhouse commissions—when asked his specialty, he said, "We collect distinguished clients."

But the distinguished clients patronized Haines not just for his larger-than-life theatricality, but for the unexpected elegance of his interiors, a design

style they couldn't find anywhere else. Haines sought out unusual artifacts, made Chinoiserie one of his signatures, and customized lighting (with no cords showing) to great effect. He also mastered mixing period antiques with his own modern designs.

"When you do a home," he said. "You must do it with the feeling that it has been lived in for years."

In 1939, Haines was invited to share his evocative residential flair in an "American Modern" design for the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. His Desert Living Room turned heads, and he began to design his own furniture. Famous architect Samuel Marx fell in love with one of Haines's original designs, the saddle-stitched leather game chair, which he purchased for his Chicago apartment.

Fast-forward to today and some of the glamorous classics available to current Haines fans include the Elbow Chair, Brentwood Chair, Conference Chair, and Pull Up Chair among many other pieces in the collection William Haines Designs. Browsing through the collection's Web site ([williamhaines.com](http://williamhaines.com)), which is filled with history and stunning black-and-white photos of Haines and his interiors, you see the quintessence of the designer who said, "The only real freedom we have left is the home. Only there can we express anything we want."

And, luckily, we now have a collection of his iconic furniture, available to convey our love for the glam life he inspired.