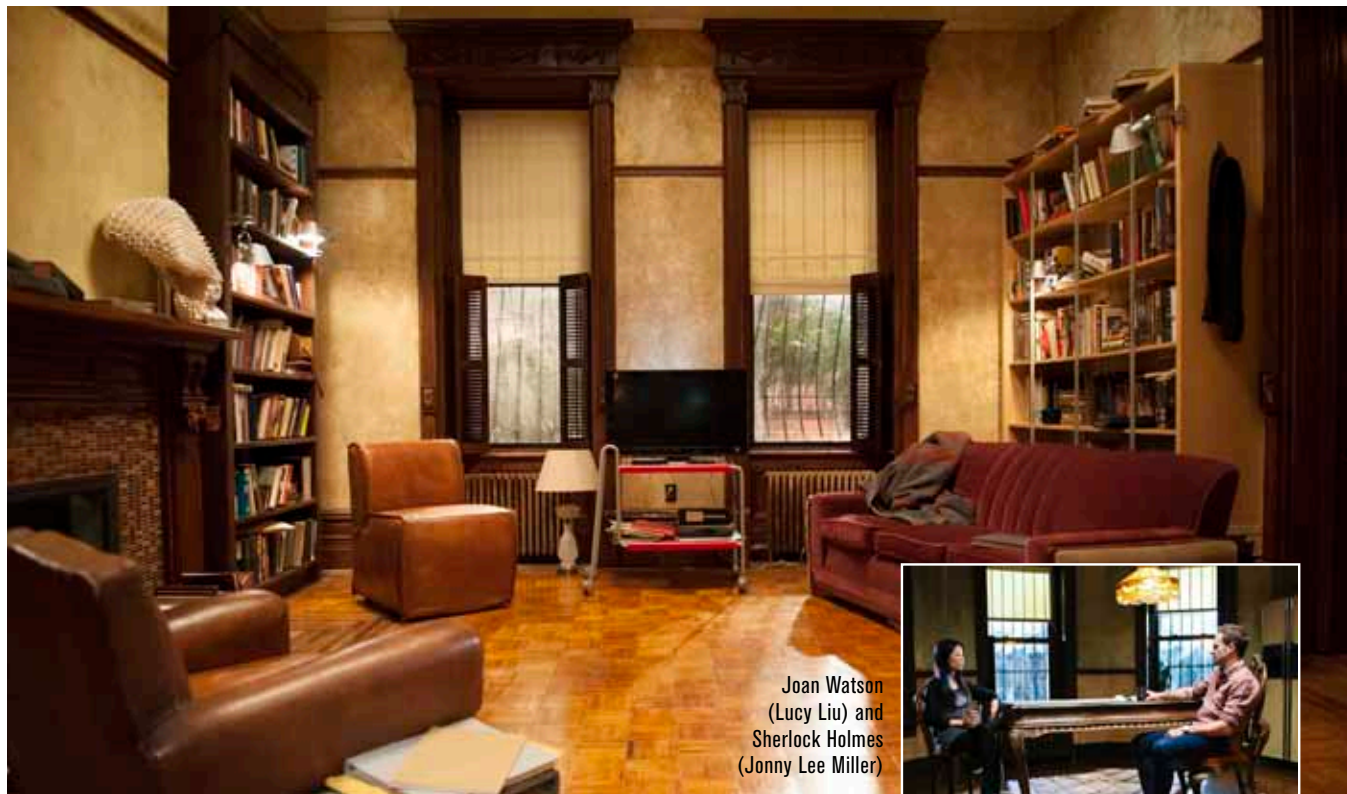


Sherlock Holmes' eccentric, eclectic décor reflects a functional design that's not only *Elementary* but inspires a mind in motion

# HUMBLE ABODE



Joan Watson  
(Lucy Liu)  
and  
Sherlock Holmes  
(Jonny Lee Miller)

**S**herlock Holmes may be a highly decorated detective, but he's not about to win any awards from *Good Housekeeping*. Holmes is, after all, usually too busy solving crimes to clean up around the place—never mind to pore over the latest Pottery Barn catalog for the perfect throw pillow. “Sherlock’s philosophy is one of function over form. He lives to do what he does, and eating and sleeping are totally secondary,” explains Andrew Bernard, the production designer for CBS’ hit series *Elementary*. And so, it becomes Bernard’s job to make sure Holmes’ home reflects the great man’s passions—and lack thereof—while still making it an inviting space where more than 12 million viewers want to spend an hour every Thursday night. — *Jim Colucci*

## SEEING IS BELIEVING

For the pilot episode, *Elementary* producers picked a classic brownstone in New York’s Harlem neighborhood as Holmes’ home and office, and still use that location for exterior scenes. But when Holmes (Jonny Lee Miller) and his sidekick Joan Watson (Lucy Liu) became permanent fixtures on the CBS schedule, Bernard and his team re-created the set on a Queens

soundstage, with concessions to allow for ease of camera movement and improved sight lines.

Bernard explains that, having scouted many brownstones throughout his career, “I often find that the woodwork usually holds up, and it’s the plaster walls and wall treatments that have fallen away.” So he and his team set out to replicate authentic 19th-century carvings, with fluted moldings and medallions they ordered from a nearby lumber yard. The team outfitted the space with authentic built-in pocket shutters and transom windows (typically glass panels above a door frame). This helped create a Victorian feel and gave the director of photography, Ron Fortunato, more control over natural light.

## FROM TRASH TO TREASURE

As *Elementary* has explained, this building is one of many owned by Holmes’ wealthy father; as Bernard and his team further surmised when setting out to decorate the space, many furnishings would actually be items left behind by previous occupants. For these pieces, like a purple velvet couch for the

## DUSTING FOR CLUES

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living room or a vintage settee for under the stairs, they combed area thrift shops, as well as eBay and Craigslist.

As Bernard explains, he got some instruction on Holmes' furnishings straight from the *Elementary* scripts;

for example, the show's creator and executive producer, Rob Doherty, insists that Sherlock have no bed or formal bedroom; the character would crash on a worn black leather-cushioned couch. And still other items, Bernard adds, were chosen mostly for their shapes, from the sleekness of an aluminum desk to the rolling curves of the wooden rococo desk Holmes and Watson use as a kitchen table.

### OLD HAND

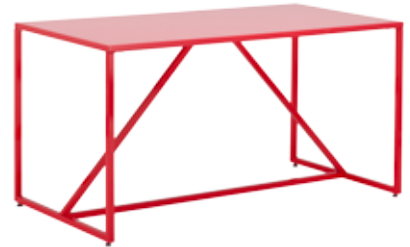
In all, before starting production, Bernard's *Elementary* team had just four weeks to create a space that looks like it's been standing for more than 100 years. The overall aesthetic they strive for, he says, is a type of shabby chic. "In fashion, there's a tradition of putting models in front of distressed, messy backdrops, of the beautiful and stylish versus decrepit walls and peeling paint," the designer explains. So when Holmes and Watson spontaneously spread out on the floor to create one of his physical crime scene models—with Miller and Liu, of course, providing the physical beauty—they're actually sitting on a parquet pattern comprised of self-stick tiles that Bernard has expertly "aged" by beating them with chains.

The team spent considerable time on the treatment of floors and walls, deliberately cracking their plaster and creating effects like remnant wallpaper paste with mottled paint. "The unfinished effect is certainly interesting, and it can be done with the right craftspeople," Bernard explains. "It's all done with paint," he notes, by people who, like Holmes, have spent years perfecting their craft. The power of observation, and a good brushstroke, is a beautiful thing.



### PAD LOCKED

Rob Doherty's pilot script described this collage of locks of all shapes, sizes and origins, "which Sherlock uses almost as a meditative exercise," Bernard explains. "It's a way to for him to gather his thoughts and practice his lock-picking skills." Now, as a piece of wall art, it's become one of the show's most famous visuals. You can see this display along with other *Elementary* props at the International Exhibition of Sherlock Holmes, which debuts Oct. 10 at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry in Portland and will tour 10 cities in North America before traveling internationally. [sherlockholmesexhibition.com](http://sherlockholmesexhibition.com)



**Strut Medium Table.** "Red is one of our accent colors on the show," explains *Elementary* production designer Andrew Bernard. "We try to keep the color palette fairly muted, to let Holmes and Watson stand out, but then we'll have a little accent." [bludot.com](http://bludot.com)



**Keaton Leather Club Chair.** It comes already weathered—"but then we 'scenic-ed' it a bit more to show more wear." [restorationhardware.com](http://restorationhardware.com)

### EDITOR'S PICK



### CIRQUE TWO-DOOR SIDBOARD

Wrapped in copper and boasting a hand-hammered circular design, this storage piece will perk up any entry hall or living space. [crateandbarrel.com](http://crateandbarrel.com)