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GREATER NEW YORK



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Written by Erik Gunnerson  
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Brimming with color and pattern, an Upper West Side duplex tosses rulebooks out the window.

Written by Mimi Branner  
Photography by Tom Lenz

**ON THE COVER:** Inspired by the quintessential stone fences of the area, architect Eric J. Smith conceived a fresh façade clad in local fieldstone for this Greenwich, Connecticut residence. Leading off the rear exterior, a patio seating area comprised of modern-leaning Dedon furnishings offers an inviting perch to take in the lush lakeside views. Page 130

# Rainbow Connection

Festivity and fun define the design of a family's saturated Upper West Side apartment.

WRITTEN BY MIKKI BRAMMER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIM LENZ

Interior Design: Gideon Mendelson, Mendelson Group Inc.





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hat struck designer Gideon Mendelson most about the owners of this freshly renovated Manhattan duplex was their flair. "It was one of those situations where the clients have these

wild, fun, vibrant personalities," he says. "They came to the table with a lot of energy and I really saw that as an opportunity."

Beyond the "handsome, sophisticated" interiors that Mendelson often designs for his New York City clients, this couple—the wife especially—had something quite adventurous in mind. "Usually when clients come into my office, I try to gauge how much they're willing to entertain when it comes to a palette or pattern," he says. "A lot of clients are interested in neutrals and I can only push so much, but as I threw whimsical patterns on the table, her eyes lit up more and more."

Mendelson took that enthusiasm and ran with it, injecting the home's living and entertaining areas with as much punch as possible. That includes a wild, animalian wallpaper in the dining room, which is intended to evoke a feeling of looseness and delight for the guests. "The dining room wallpaper is as crazy as I think I can go," he muses. "It tells folks sitting at their table, 'Hey, we're not afraid of who we are.'"

The pops of purple within that wallpaper in turn inspired the colors for other spaces. Looking across the living room—which follows a rich scheme of turquoise blues and greens—you'll catch glimpses of a purple door leading to a purple office. "I tend to design with the philosophy that a home should have an overall palette or some consistency," Mendelson explains. "And I like the idea of relationships from room to room. In this case, it was the idea of a vista where you can be sitting at the dining table and feel connected to the length of the apartment. That's a comfortable way of understanding scale." Likewise, looking from the

other end of the apartment, the soft, dreamy blue of the kitchen cabinetry and vintage glass pendants connects tonally with the palette of the living room.

While Mendelson selected most of the furniture—a combination of vintage midcentury, antique and custom pieces—the couple had an extensive personal collection of art and ceramics that they wanted incorporated into the home's design. "One of the hardest things as a designer is being able to hang existing art that is very sentimental and personal to the clients," he says, adding that he found ways to let artworks set the tone of certain rooms. In the living room, for example, a painting of a garden scene inspired the green and blue palette of the rug and furniture upholstery. And, just in case the dining room didn't already have enough visual stimulation, he managed to harmonize several artworks against the wild wallpaper. "People are always very afraid to hang art if they have a really strong pattern on the walls," he says. "But my attitude is that you absolutely can. And it could be strong art, it could be softer art, it could be a collection of mirrors. There's no rule other than it's got to feel right."

To personalize the existing framework of the apartment, Mendelson and his team of artisans and tradespeople got creative with millwork. In the dressing room off the main bedroom, custom closets—clad in a suiting-like wallpaper—provide extra storage. And to make use of the wide hallway that led from the foyer to the den, they installed a custom built-in bar that offshoots from the dining room, as a kind of "jewel box space" that adds another dimension to the family's entertaining program.

"What I continue to learn is how powerful design is," Mendelson says. "This is a wonderful family and the design only enhances who they are and how strong their connection is to one another. It's about more than having beautiful things around them—it's about them coming together as a family at the end of the day and enjoying those things even more than they already did." ■



For the entryway of this Upper West Side duplex, designer Gideon Mendelson anchored the space with a 1960s console by Paolo Buffa. "The roundness of the drawers softened its modernity, making it a nice balance to the client's traditional art," he says. A Duane Modern bench upholstered in Jane Churchill fabric sits across, while Harlequin's Makrana wallpaper brings a welcoming warmth.



**Right:** "I'm the one who is normally trying to push my clients, but this time, my client pushed me—and I am so glad they did," Mendelstern says, pointing to the bold dining room. Chair backs are upholstered with Donghia's Ramatuelle in Lavande (the seats wear a hardy Gerrett leather), tying to the purple hues of Cole & Son's Versailles Grand wallpaper.

**Opposite:** Vintage mahogany Melchiorre Bege chairs and an extendable Made by Mendelstern dining table give the clients flexibility and style. The rug is hemp and silk by Dors Leslie Bhu.







**Above:** Mirrored backing and burnished brass Amac Martin hardware add sparkle and drama to the built-in bar off the dining room. Zoffany's Japur wallpaper provides warm contrast to trim and millwork-painted Benjamin Moore's minty Weekend Getaway.

**Opposite:** The pale blue of the kitchen cabinetry is echoed in the vintage Murano glass pendants from John Salbello Antiques and the Christopher Hyland Cote D'Azur fabric on the walnut counter stools from Modern Living Supplies.



**Above:** Mendelson carried the foyer's marbledized Harequin Makrana wallpaper upstairs, pairing it with a geometric chandelier and coordinating pendants, both by Gabriel Scott, and a patterned Patterson Flynn Martin runner.

**Opposite:** The home office is a study in purple with Benjamin Moore's Hint of Violet on the walls and Mauve Blush on the trim. The Modernist lacquered desk from John Salibello Antiques is flanked by an armchair from Van Den Akker Antiques and an orange Dan Johnson for Selig side chair.







**Above:** Handsome custom millwork inset with Philip Jeffrey's Suit Yourself wallpaper brings a sense of occasion to the closet, alongside club chairs done in de Le Cuona wool, and an area rug from Crosby Street Studios underfoot. The coffee table is by Berlin-based ceramic artist Jojo Corviss

**Left:** Donghia Hemp 1 wallpaper in Sea Foam sets a quieter tone in the main bedroom, harmonizing with the Frette bed inners, 1950s brass and white-painted chandeliers by Lightliner and Patterson Flynn Martin, Basham Group III area rug