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A MANHATTAN COUPLE TEAMS UP WITH AN ARCHITECT AND A DESIGNER TO TRANSFORM A '60S ERA APARTMENT INTO A FRESH YET TIMELESS HOME

INTERIOR DESIGN **GIDEON MENDELSON**  
ARCHITECTURE **GORDON KAHN**  
TEXT **ARLENE HIRST**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **ERIC PIASECKI**

# BLUE MOOD

**CASUAL ELEGANCE** A dining nook in the living room is furnished with built-in banquettes; the expandable dining table and chairs are by Mendelson. A chandelier from Gaspare Asaro lights the space and a 1940's Maison Lunel floor lamp illuminates one seating area.



**MIDCENTURY MINDSET** Jemma Lewis's marbled wallpaper surrounds a Blackman Cruz fixture in the library. In the living room, a coffee table by Nada Debs sits in front of the Mendelson-designed sofa. Darren Almond's photograph is above. Gross finally got a dreamed-of piano. Prints by Robert Mangold line the wall behind it.



**LIFE IN A** rental on Central Park West didn't suit Brad Gross and Stephanie Phillips, his wife. "You don't get to make it your own with rentals," says Gross. The couple bought a classic six-room apartment in a West End Avenue prewar, and threw themselves into the task of reinventing the 1960s-era unit, which was in desperate need of a facelift.

Besides dealing with the basics—it required new windows and floors and an upgraded electrical system—Gross and Phillips wanted to enlarge the master bath, the kitchen, and make better use of the existing formal dining room. **CONTINUED ▶**





“It’s multi-functional—almost like a house.”

**FORM AND FUNCTION** Custom cabinets by Kahn cover the walls, supplying the expansive storage that Phillips requested; a Sub-Zero refrigerator and Wolf range add a professional note. Countertops are bleached and stained mahogany; newly installed quarter-sawn oak floors have been stained and polished.



They went to the department of buildings website to find an architect who had done previous work at the address and discovered Gordon Kahn, who had had years of experience both at their new home and the surrounding neighborhood. He addressed their concerns about the dining room by simply eliminating it, and he was then able to enlarge the living room. He created a large, well-planned kitchen with three distinct areas for cooking, eating, and working, and also added a butler’s pantry. The inviting plan opened up the space and made it more accessible for entertaining, something the couple does frequently. **CONTINUED** ▶



Gross and Phillips went back to the internet to find an interior designer and Gideon Mendelson proved to be a perfect match. They worked so well together that they have since become fast friends. Mendelson responded to the couple's desire to have something elegant and formal but not too precious. "It has a midcentury vibe, but it's not retro," he says of his work. Blue became the dominant color in his design **CONTINUED ▶**

**FAMILY TIME** **ABOVE:** The five-year old son's room carries out the blue color theme. Mendelson designed all the cabinetry. The ceiling fixture is from Rejuvenation. The walls in the master bedroom are covered with Cowtan & Tout wallpaper. The bed and nightstand were designed by Mendelson. A Vaughan sconce supplies light. **OPPOSITE:** A Greg Girard photograph sits above the kitchen breakfast nook. Classic Eames chairs face the custom white marble dining table; a fixture from RH lights the space.



scheme, ranging from a soft hue in the living room to a dramatic, almost electric shade in the library. He designed most of the furniture in the apartment, communicating with Gross and Phillips at every step. "He was a tastemaker for us," says Gross. "We learned what's special and what's not so special." After eight months of living there, he says, "it's still not old." **SEE RESOURCES ■**

**COOL PALETTE** *OPPOSITE:* In the foyer, two Gerhard Richter prints hang above a vintage American of Martinsville credenza. *ABOVE:* A Gilbert Rohde mirror is installed over a bench from CF Modern. The kitchen workspace desk is a custom design by Kahn as is the vanity in the enlarged master bathroom.