

RETURN TO GLAMOUR

FOR A YOUNG FAMILY LOOKING TO INJECT A DOSE OF DRAMA INTO THEIR TRADITIONAL NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT, DYNAMIC DESIGNER MILES REDD WAS THE IDEAL CHOICE

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Ask Miles Redd to define his stylistic modus operandi, and the effervescent interior designer delivers a precise but provocative answer: "I like to push the envelope—but just to the edge." Small wonder he has become the man to hire among homeowners who feel their traditional tastes need a bit of a jolt. That is, after all, why a young Manhattan couple with two small children put their Upper East Side apartment into his capable hands.

"This was a match made in heaven," Redd says. The adventuresome clients, he explains, had perused his website and decided his hallmark oomph could be their salvation, transforming their ordinary digs—a 2,400-square-foot three-bedroom in a circa-1925 building—into something sensational. But since substantial remodeling was necessary to achieve that objective, Redd brought the architecture team of Dick Bories and James Shearron on board. "There are architects, and there are architects, and these two stand apart," Redd says of the

New York City-based pair. Their work takes inspiration from stately 18th-century French manors as well as the suave structures of Chicago tastemaker David Adler, two styles that, not coincidentally, reflect the decorator's own particular passions.

The couple—Valerie Colas-Thibouville is half French and grew up amid grand architecture, while her husband's family owns handsome neoclassical residences in New York and Virginia—embraced those references too, and looked to incorporate another one of their interests: "We love old Hollywood movies," Colas-Thibouville says. "Even our wedding had a 1930s theme, right down to the Cole Porter songs. And Miles loves Cecil Beaton and other creative types of that period, as do James and Dick." Not surprisingly, the project turned into a lovefest. The only goal, as Shearron puts it, was for the end result to be out of the ordinary. "They didn't want it to look too goody-goody," he says, "like so many other Fifth Avenue apartments."



The living room of the Manhattan apartment of Valerie Colas-Thibouville and her family; the home was renovated by Dick Bories and James Shearron and decorated by Miles Redd. The custom-made sofa and throw pillows are covered in a Clarence House linen and velvet, respectively, the Oushak rug is antique, and the Louis XVI-style bergère is from Todd Alexander Romano; the porcelain vase, Chinese table lamp, and antique cocktail table are all from John Rosselli Antiques and Decorations. The trio of artworks is by Jean-Louis Forain, the window treatments are of a Kravet silk with Lee Jofa silk trim, and the walls are sheathed in red felt. See Resources.



A custom-made sofa upholstered in a Lee Jofa velvet and a circa-1960 cocktail table from Myrtle in the living room. Facing page: The gallery features a bench by John Rosselli Antiques and Decorations and a leather-covered door trimmed with silver nailheads; the floor is painted in a faux-marble pattern, and the walls are lacquered Yves Klein-blue. See Resources.





The most dramatic alteration in the overhaul was a redesign of the gallery, which originally stretched some 45 feet down one side of the apartment. The corridor was cut into three more-manageable sections: a long central hall lacquered glossy Yves Klein-blue with black-and-white painted faux-marble floors, and two flanking square vestibules lined with sheets of antiqued mirror held in place by snappy nickel tabs. (They are actually blazer buttons Bories and Shearon found online.) The gallery comes in handy as an extension of the living room during frequent entertaining, including a Swedish Christmas party (Colas-Thibouville's husband is of Swedish and Danish descent) on St. Lucia's Day, December 13. "We keep holiday decorations simple—they're mostly made of natural materials," says Colas-Thibouville, an active environmentalist. "No twinkle lights allowed." The hall's graphic floors, which often serve as a racecourse for their children's bicycles, were adapted from the pattern of a stained-wood floor at Château de Longpra in France. The front door, meanwhile, is sheathed in rich red leather and studded with silver-plate

nailheads. "The clients said, 'We love color,' so blue, red, and a strong Nancy Lancaster-style yellow is the scheme of the main rooms," Redd says, "although the kids' rooms and the kitchen have fairly toned-down hues."

Further reinforcing differences between the residence's public, private, and service areas is a subtle hierarchy of architectural details established by Bories and Shearon. "There's no reason to have the same heavy moldings in a kitchen as you would in a library," Bories notes. "It's probably cheaper to install uniform millwork throughout a house, but it means that the interiors feel static." Here, however, the door-knobs, hinges, and moldings are bold and grand in the main entertaining spaces, while less-trafficked areas, such as the laundry room and baths, are given simpler treatments. Ceiling heights have been adjusted slightly here and there as well, a distinction that gives the place a subconscious sense of shifting volumes and the atmosphere of a venerable country home—no small feat considering the actual location overlooks Central Park and fleets of taxicabs.



Clockwise from top left: Glossy cabinetry in the butler's hall. The kitchen features a custom-made cantilevered table with a DuPont Corian top, black-grouted subway tile, and a model of a WWI biplane; the countertops are honed marble, and the sink fittings are by Waterworks. In the library/dining room, a felt tablecloth and suzani curtains. Facing page, clockwise from top left: Valerie Colas-Thibouville. The powder room's wallpaper is by Scalmandré, the medicine cabinet is by Restoration Hardware, and the granite sink has Waterworks fittings. An ebonized table with bone inlay and an 18th-century wing chair in the living room. See Resources.



In the master bedroom, an eclectic collection of small-scale paintings hangs above the bed, which is upholstered in the same Christopher Norman Collection silk used for the curtains. Facing page, from top: A pair of Louis XV chairs covered in a Lelièvre velvet from Stark, an 18th-century chest of drawers purchased at Christie's, and an Etienne Drian screen from John Rosselli Antiques and Decorations. The bed in the children's room is by IKEA, the wallpaper is by Marthe Armitage, and the rug is by Dash & Albert. See Resources.



Also evocative of a country house is the apartment's decor, an inspired mix of eras, materials, and attitudes. "There are butch English pieces and fantasy finds, like the blackmoor in the entrance hall and the fanciful folding screen in the master bedroom," Redd says. The paneling and bookcases in the library/dining room—where a red-felt-draped table is surrounded by swaggering Georgian chairs—were copied from one of Marie Antoinette's rooms at the Petit Trianon in Versailles, though in humble bleached white oak, which the decorator says looks like "the inside of a cigar box." The living room, on the other hand, boasts striking scarlet felt walls, windows hung with pale-blue silk lambrequins, and a sparkling mirrored niche. Talk about de-lovely. "We wanted to keep it young and fresh and happy. Dick and Jim's architecture has seriousness and scholarship, but the palette and furnishings are intense and vibrant."

As one of her children pedals by, Colas-Thibouville remarks, "Everyone tells you it's a nightmare situation full of disagreements when you do a gut renovation. But ultimately this is exactly what we asked for." ■

