

A New York City couple with three young children enlists designer *Alisa Bloom* to create a home for all ages

TEXT BY **KATHLEEN HACKETT** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ISABEL PARRA**
STYLED BY **MICHAEL REYNOLDS**

FAMILY PLANNING

ANNA FLETT AND BRANDON HALEY GATHER WITH THEIR THREE CHILDREN, ANDERS, ADA, AND WILLEM, IN THE KITCHEN OF THEIR HOME IN MANHATTAN. THE CABINETRY IS CUSTOM BY DESIGNER ALISA BLOOM; FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.





A

nna Flett was pregnant with her first son when she and her husband, Brandon Haley, took on the renovation of their dream town house in Manhattan's West Village. And like all first-time parents, they imagined life would continue apace with their bundle of joy. "We designed that house thinking the baby would simply join our sophisticated-adult lives," says Flett. After they lived there for about three-and-a-half years—along with their second son and a daughter on the way—it became clear that silk velvet sofas, sumptuous rugs, layers and layers of furnishings, and, most pointedly, a ground-floor kitchen were designed for, well, sophisticated adults. "It was such a beautiful house—every room—but we spent all of our time in the kitchen, naturally. Whenever I walked up the stairs to the third- and fourth-floor bedrooms, I'd stop for a minute on the way to admire the front- and back-parlor floors. But we were never in them!" says Flett.

They found a solution just down the block, in a late-19th-century Italianate brownstone with an irresistible south-facing garden. Flett, whose corporate-lawyer dad took the family to live on three different continents during her childhood, was no stranger to moving. What was once more? "I actually relish change, and this was just a few doors down," she says.

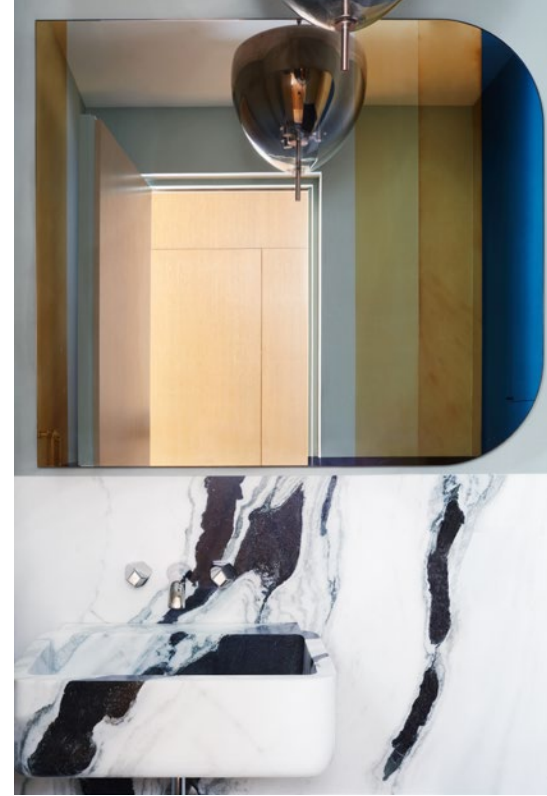
And change is what the family of five got. A 180-degree design pivot is not for the faint of heart, but then Flett had a cheerleader in Chicago-based designer and friend Alisa Bloom, whose signature is that each interior is unique. "Once I do something, I don't want to repeat it," says Bloom. A relentless globe-trotter in search of important, novel, and never-seen-before furnishings and objets, she found a soul sister in Flett, whose affinity for beautiful things is genetic; her great-grandfather Sir Alec Martin was a managing director at Christie's for almost two decades. Having grown up around "pretty things," Flett says, she and her two sisters naturally went on to earn degrees in art history.

Steeped in that family heritage, Flett harbors an undeniable traditional streak, shared by her husband and elegantly borne out in their home's simplified classical interior as designed by New York City-based firm Bories & Shearron Architecture. But the couple

From the garden level to the top floor, the family enjoys the whole house.

ABOVE IN A SITTING AREA, A VICTORIA SAMBUNARIS PHOTOGRAPH HANGS OVER A SOFA BY R. & E. BOUROULLEC FOR LIGNE ROSET. RIGHT A VINTAGE STILNOVO CHANDELIER CROWNS THE LIVING ROOM. VINTAGE JAN VLUG COCKTAIL TABLES.

LEFT: VICTORIA SAMBUNARIS; RIGHT: NERONE CECARELLI



LEFT A CUSTOM MIRROR HANGS IN A POWDER ROOM. BELOW WILLEM SITS ON THE CUSTOM STARK RUG IN HIS BEDROOM; VINTAGE MIRRORS, LAMPS, AND SIDE TABLES.



LEFT ADA STANDS IN THE MASTER BATH'S DEVON&DEVON TUB WITH GRAFF FITTINGS. ABOVE THE MASTER BEDROOM IS WRAPPED IN A WOOL-BLEND BY WEITZNER. A PIERRE FREY LINEN-BLEND COVERS THE DLV DESIGNS BED. RIGHT ADA'S ROOM FEATURES AN YSABEL LEMAY PHOTOGRAPH OVER THE BESPOKE BED IN A HOLLY HUNT COTTON.



LEFT: KIKO LOPEZ; RIGHT: YSABEL LEMAY; WILLIAM WEGMAN

Flett calls this the family's forever house and, to that end, wanted the children's rooms to carry them through their teens.

felt an itch to loosen and lighten things up. They wanted the rooms to breathe. “Alisa showed me a photo of a sleek kitchen in a Paris apartment with gorgeous traditional moldings and architectural details. I wanted that combination—classic and modern,” Flett says. She and Haley also wanted space for the kids to stretch out.

Bloom took her client’s directive and ran with it—all over the world. For two years, she searched for pieces that reflected both Flett and Haley’s love of quality, beauty, and heritage and a desire to simplify. Bloom’s solutions came in the way of sculptural furnishings and a deft deployment of hefty materials cushioned by curves and soft colors,

as exemplified in the kitchen. Bronze pendant lights, each weighing more than 100 pounds, appear to float overhead. A sleek, coal-black industrial-steel island and custom built-in cabinets give the space heft, while a pair of Bloom-designed powder-coated-steel armoires flanking a sinuous butter-leather banquette soften the edges. “Anna did not want a formal dining room, but the seating had to be just formal enough for entertaining,” says Bloom.

And for the kids? Ceiling-mounted arm bars in the playroom allow them to actually stretch out—and swing from the rafters onto the plush sofa. Flett calls this the family’s forever house and, to that end, wanted the children’s rooms to carry them through their teens. Bloom obliged with sophisticated palettes and furnishings that will never see a landfill.

Not surprisingly, Flett, who stays home with the children, and Haley, the founder of an investment firm, love fine-art photography, painting, and ceramics and wanted to build a collection in sync with their new surroundings. Artworks from the previous home that made the trip down the block were joined by pieces by Anna Malagrida, Elliott Puckette, Zanele Muholi, Victoria Sambunaris, Robert Polidori, William Wegman, and ceramist Adam Silverman, all displayed for maximum dramatic effect. Indeed, there is no more wistfully passing by any room on the way to another; from the garden level to the top floor, the family enjoys the whole house.

For Flett and Haley, the second time is the charm. “I remember my mother telling me years ago that when it comes to renovations, it is so hard living with your own mistakes. If someone else had made them, you could blame them! She was so right. It feels pretty awful to go through all of that construction and design, live in it, and find yourself saying, ‘Uh-oh.’ We were so lucky to be able to do it again,” says Flett. ▀



A MURAL BY REBEL WALLS DECORATES THE PLAY AREA. SOFA BY FRANCESCO BINFARÉ FOR EDRA; CUSTOM CABINET, ROOM & BOARD SIDE TABLE; CHAIR BY PERRINE VIGNERON & GILLES BELLEY FOR SANCAL.