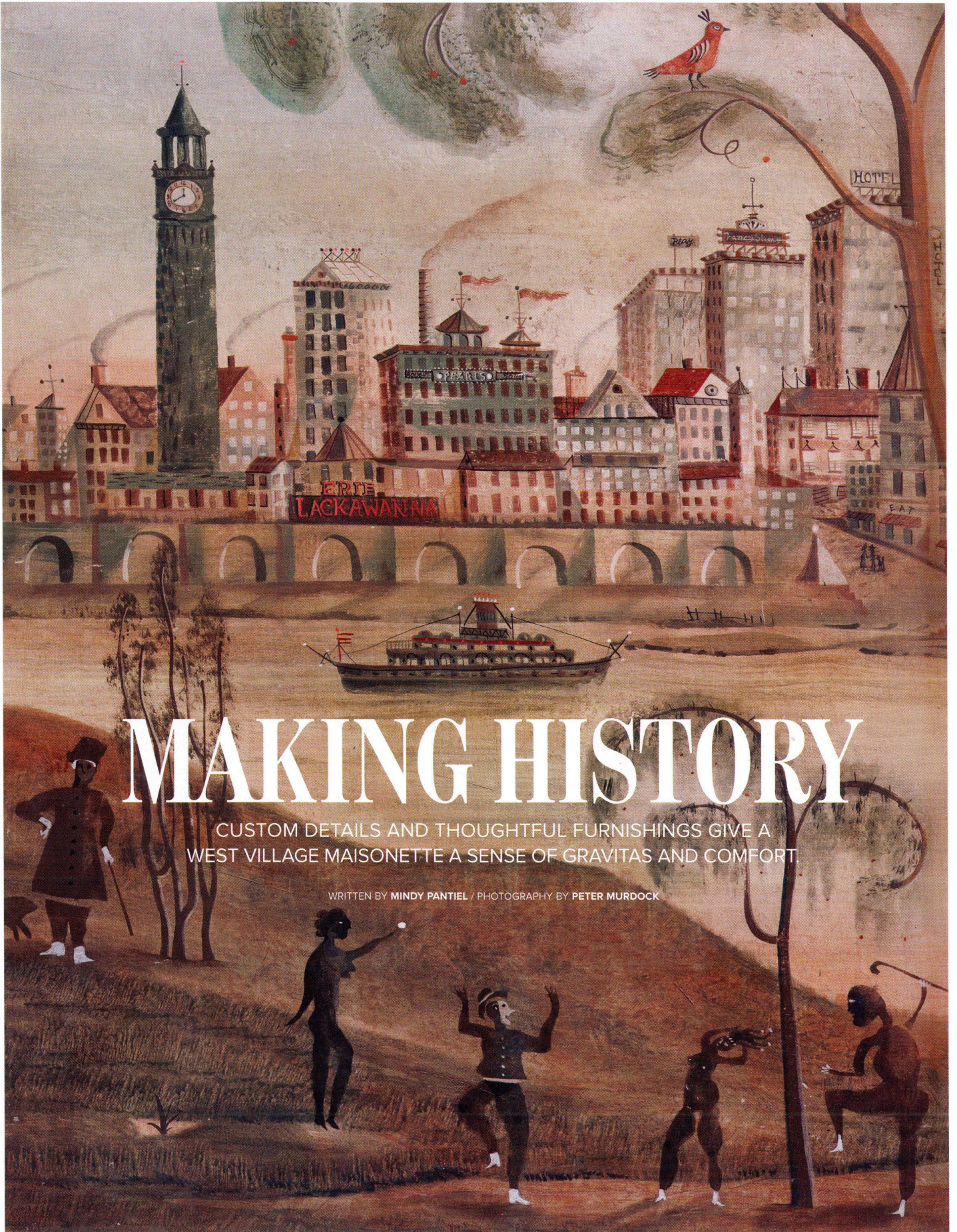




INTERIOR DESIGN / GLENN GISSLER AND CRAIG STRULOVITZ, GLENN GISSLER DESIGN
HOME BUILDER / DALE FAUGHT, NUTECH INTERIORS INC.



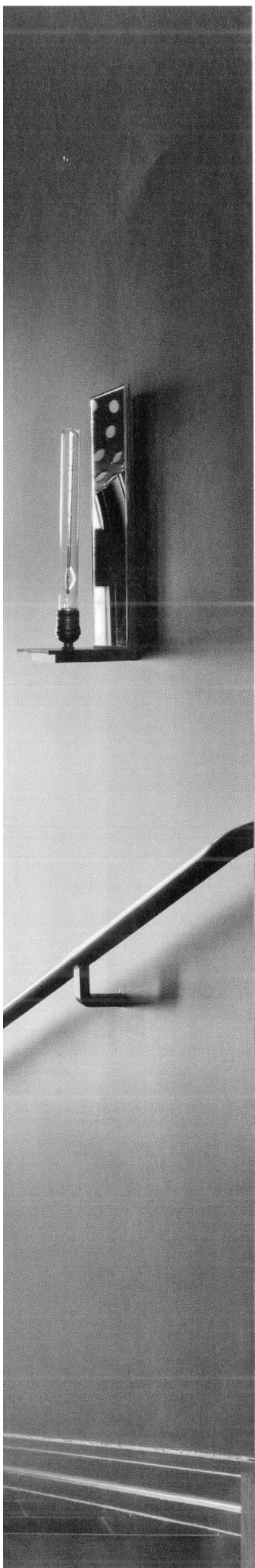
MAKING HISTORY

CUSTOM DETAILS AND THOUGHTFUL FURNISHINGS GIVE A WEST VILLAGE MAISONETTE A SENSE OF GRAVITAS AND COMFORT.

WRITTEN BY MINDY PANTIEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER MURDOCK

An antique-brass globe by Profiles casts a subtle glow on the wool rug by Martin Patrick Evan in the entry of a 1906 West Village maisonette. A 19th-century Chinese bench upholstered in Kravet fabric provides a place to remove shoes, while a dresser of the same vintage—both from Pagoda Red, via 1stdibs, in Chicago—is a convenient spot for stowing gloves and scarves. O'lampia sconces light the aubergine walls.





Most designers would look at a windowless room in a historic 1906 building and immediately start layering with mirrors and other reflective surfaces to create the illusion of light. But faced with a dark formal dining area in a West Village home, interior designer Glenn Gissler, in collaboration with senior designer Craig Strulovitz, opted to turn the lack of fenestration into an asset. “We took the position that it’s a space only used at night, so why not create a special environment and fill the walls with decorative murals that depict an imaginary version of New York City history?” says Gissler, who installed Moroccan-style metal fixtures and recessed architectural lighting to cast a romantic glow on hot-air balloons, palm fronds and fanciful characters that dance around the room. “When you dine here, it’s as if you are in the landscape. It’s positively magical.”

The murals were just one part of a larger design scheme that involved recreating a past for the stripped-down maisonette, housed in an early-20th-century building that once served as a women’s hotel. The homeowners, a couple who have two young daughters, also charged the designers, working with builder Dale Faught, with making the spaces in the two-story 6,000-square-foot residence feel welcoming despite the imposing scale. “They wanted to turn down the volume and amp up the detailing to establish a historical connection, but they also wanted it to be livable and happy,” Gissler says.

Providing an immediate link with the past is a new entry door that is an exact replica of the original. Just inside, the walls lining the stair that leads to the main level are painted a warm aubergine—Donald Kaufman’s DKC-90—to fulfill the inviting requirement. Curtains hang across the opening on the landing—“portieres were common back then,” Gissler explains—creating an intimate transitional moment before the grandeur of the first floor is revealed. There, a spiraling staircase enveloped by wood paneling designed by Gissler climbs to a 30-foot ceiling, where a massive Lindsey Adelman chandelier offers a contemporary counterpoint.

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Interior designer Glenn Gissler conceived the cerused-oak panels that hug the swooping stair leading to the upper-level rooms. Each piece of the custom runner from Martin Patrick Evan was fabricated individually to accommodate the complex geometry of the curving stair treads. The chandelier is by Lindsey Adelman.





All the public spaces fan out from the central foyer, including the decidedly unfussy living room. “In their previous home, the clients had a living room they never used,” Gissler says. “They dubbed it ‘the fancy room.’” The designers avoided that moniker here with a playful blend of furnishings, such as a Bohemian-leaning woven tapestry on the sofa, a midcentury coffee table and a pair of side tables that evoke the Vienna Secession. “On one level, the furniture silhouettes are more classical,” Gissler says, “but there are tweaks—like a colorful contemporary rug instead of a Persian under the baby grand—that tell you: This is not your mother’s prewar apartment.” Plaster crown moldings, a picture rail alongside the piano and baseboards scaled for the room evoke a time gone by, but a bold canvas by Robert DeNiro Sr. brings visitors back to the current century.

Art plays a critical role in the overall design of the home. From the living room, it’s possible to glimpse the sextet of Walton Ford’s large-scale bird editions dominating a wall in the library. “It was decided early on that the prints needed to hang together, and they were a driving force for the palette,” says Gissler, who in response painted the walls a deep olive green. “In galleries, you always see art on harsh white walls, but I prefer to use color to frame the art.” A cushy upholstered sofa mimics the wall color, while patterns on the lamps and decorative pillows punctuated with tones of terra cotta provide an ethnic accent.

While most spaces incorporate a sense of modernity, the ambience in the kitchen is pure turn-of-the-last-century. New ceiling beams painted to match the deep blue recessed-panel cabinets and a wall of hand-wrought

The first-floor landing is encased in the same cerused-oak paneling as the staircase. A pair of 1980s bronze table lamps from Rago Arts and Auction Center in Lambertville, New Jersey, rest on a 1940s French trestle table from Galerie Sommerlath in Culver City, California. The Moroccan-style area rug is from Marc Phillips Decorative Rugs.





In the living room, Gissler layered on a variety of furniture styles, including a Monte Carlo sofa and a dark gray Duchess of Windsor armchair wearing Kravet fabric, a Cambridge armchair covered in Quadrille fabric and a skirted ottoman dressed in Stroheim velvet, all from Jonas. Carved-wood James Mont lamps from 1stdibs sit on oak side tables from Mark Newman in Palm Springs, California, and the coffee table is by French Art Deco Furniture. The perforated copper lanterns are by Dennis Miller Associates. Over the sofa is *Tough Girls* by Amy Sillman.

subway tiles with wide grout lines imply age. "One wall of cabinets was designed to resemble an old hutch that could have been there for years," Strulovitz says. To break down the scale of the room, he adds, an upholstered banquette wraps around a custom double-pedestal table, supplying a cozy family hangout.

Nearby, a trip up the central stair leads to a patchwork of rooms, including the master suite, children's rooms, play areas and guest quarters. In the master bedroom—a commodious 750 square feet—a large portrait by Alex Katz handily brings the sitting area into focus and satisfies the scale of the room. Cheerful patterned draperies and a lush custom-woven carpet layer on the warmth, and there is ample room for a tall freestanding sculpture by Richard Filipowski. But unlike the walls in the entry and the first-floor office, where a deep hue establishes a dramatic mood, this room has shades of blue, gray and lavender that are suitably calming.

Thanks to the designers' thoughtful use of color and millwork, coupled with appropriate furnishings and flourishes, the bare bones of the residence blossomed into a family home that effortlessly balances sophistication and comfort. Says Gissler, "It is a home that was designed to be lived in." ■





Deep blue Shaker-style cabinets and a coffered ceiling establish a historical context in the kitchen, where the mahogany barstools and large brushed-nickel pendant above the island are from Ann Morris; the smaller Thomas O'Brien pendant lights are from Circa Lighting. A banquette upholstered in Kravet fabric and English oak spindle-back chairs from Robert Stilin surround a double-pedestal table; above the scene is *The Goldfish, After Matisse* by Vik Muniz. The range is Sub-Zero and Wolf, and the stove hood is Best.

To compensate for the lack of windows in the dining room, Gissler commissioned artist Kevin Paulsen to paint murals depicting fantasy landscape elements based on New York City history. The images, on distressed synthetic plaster on muslin, were painted off-site. The custom area rug is by Marc Phillips Decorative Rugs.



Below, left: Also in the dining room, a 1940s Charles Dudouyt cabinet provides storage. The oak-and-antique-bronze dining table is by Holly Hunt; the Whidbey chairs upholstered in Duralee fabric are by Roman Thomas.

Below, right: A close-up of the mural shows views of what might have been New York Harbor mixed with unexpected fantastical elements such as palm fronds and hot-air balloons. The 20th-century vintage-brass chandeliers are from Downtown, via 1stdibs, in Los Angeles.



Lavender hues soften the master suite, where a bronze-and-silver sculpture by Richard Filipowski from Hostler Burrows dominates one corner of the room. The curtain panels were fashioned with Lee Jofa fabric.





Above: Grays and purples define the sitting area in the master bedroom. The 19th-century English ebonized-oak armchair upholstered in Cowtan & Tout fabric is from Stair Galleries; the gray sofa and Alex Katz painting hanging above it are from the homeowners' collection. The ottoman covered in Edelman Leather is by Jonas.

Left: A cast-iron tub by Cheviot Products nestles in wainscots of marble in the master bathroom. The Chinese rosewood garden stool with a marble top is from Naga Antiques, and the glass towel bar is from Urban Archaeology.