



The Magic Touch

Jeffrey Bilhuber's agile mind conjures an Upper East Side townhouse for a British family that has all the quirks, color, comfort, and charm of classic English style

TEXT BY CELIA BARBOUR
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM WALDRON
PRODUCED BY ROBERT RUFINO

In the unlikely event that Jeffrey Bilhuber were to walk away from his career as one of America's leading designers, he could easily become a magician. Sleight of hand seems a natural gift. Clients hardly notice as he lifts their pocket-change dreams and transforms them—presto!—into residences as breathtaking as a flight of doves.

Certainly that's the illusion conveyed by his recent transformation of Toby and Victoria Maitland Hudson's townhouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side. "He somehow picks up on something you're going for," says Victoria. "I can't quite explain it." "And he remembers every little thing you say," adds Toby, "no matter how offhand. It's almost comical."

Bilhuber hesitates to reveal the secrets of his craft, in which a mix of traditional periods, styles, colors, and patterns are made to perform new tricks utterly of this moment. "It's our responsibility to move history forward," he says. "We learn from the past. We just don't want to be obligated to it." Pressed for details, he's liable to divert attention to his more practical skills. "I'm a businessman first," he says. "My office is very productive and detail-driven—not just about the creative process, but also about the business aspects of design. We bring value to the table."

Value that, to the Maitland Hudsons, made for a perfect starting point. The couple—he works in finance; she is an at-home mother to their two daughters—hail from England. "In the U.K.," says Victoria,

LEFT: In the sitting room of Victoria and Toby Maitland Hudson's Manhattan townhouse, which was designed by Jeffrey Bilhuber, custom upholstery pieces include a sofa covered in a Clarence House velvet with cushions in a Chapas Textiles fabric, a settee, and low chairs in a Toyine Sellers stripe; the 1950s sconce by Stilnovo is from Donzella, a Regency-style stool is topped with a Fortuny fabric, the 1920s walnut bergères are Italian, and the antique carpet is Spanish. For details, see Resources.



"people don't use decorators much." Indeed, although the pair had lived in seven different apartments since moving to Manhattan 11 years ago, Victoria had always taken on the task of decorating the spaces as required. But they soon realized they were in a different league upon acquiring the townhouse. "We never would have been able to pull off something like this," says Victoria.

For Bilhuber, their roots suggested a pattern for growth. "English rooms are infused with color and romance," he says. "I wanted to take that foundation and make it very powerful. Very urban."

The sitting room is a case in point. Lacquered yellow walls animate every beam of light, lending an almost liquid sense of movement to the room. The bay window bears a pattern Bilhuber abstracted from a landscape found on an 18th-century folding screen—done here in gesso finished with gilding, lacquer, and abalone. "I wanted to create the sense of a screen that could be penetrated," says the designer, noting that the middle bay opens to the terrace.

Traditional furnishings are composed to suggest energy and to provide flexibility for a growing family. "Jeffrey creates salon-like spaces where you can almost feel the conversations you'd have," says Toby. "The previous owners had a third of the furniture, but the rooms seemed more cluttered. Now it's all appropriately proportioned."

Yet Bilhuber also knows that a chair is not just an object to be arranged aesthetically—the job of a seat is to invite sitting. "There's





so much comfort in his work," says Victoria. "All the cushions are extra plumped." Referencing the designer's books (he has published three), she notes that every image makes you long to install yourself right there in the scene. The trick works in three dimensions, too—the family's sitting room, for example, is anchored by an irresistible Beaux Arts-style sofa upholstered in shell pink. "It's hard to feel in a bad mood if you sit on that sofa," says Victoria.

Throughout, Bilhuber plays with the transformative properties of surfaces: Screens become walls become doors become portieres. In the dressing room, panels from a Chinese screen double as closet doors, making it pretty enough to serve as a guest room. Sycamore paneling in the library can be closed to shut out all light. "City townhouses tend to be a bit myopic," says Bilhuber. "You look from the front of the house right through to the back. It's important to find a way to contain the viewers as they move from one room to another."

In the master bedroom, flocked wallpaper and a hooked alpaca carpet create enveloping softness. And in the entrance hall, a digital graphic design applied to one wall sings a buoyant prelude to the self-assured rooms to come—and to the people who inhabit them.

"These are *enormously* confident rooms that reflect the interests of the owners, who are worldly, curious people," says Bilhuber. "They're always asking, 'Where should we go? What's the next adventure?" For now, that impulse can be sated right here. Says Victoria, "There isn't a day I don't feel tingly with happiness coming home."







Items pictured but not listed are from private collections.

PAGE 30: SwingMe lounger, \$3,230, by Daniel Pouzet for Dedon (212-334-3345; dedon.us). Hawthorne cocktail table, \$1,399, by Ethan Allen (888-324-3571; ethanallen.com). Boro Indigo pillow, \$129, by Frontgate (888-263-9850; frontgate.com)

PAGE 32: Bonsai rug, \$299, by Feizy (800-779-0877; feizy.com). Low Star armchair, \$2,990, by Matthew Stokes for Wigwam Furniture (310-893-6205; wigwam.us). Jobs bookcase, \$17,330, by Rodolfo Dordoni for Poltrona Frau (212-777-7592; poltronafrau.com).

TREND ALERT

PAGE 68: Banshee rug, \$745, by Surya from Wayfair (877-929-3247; wayfair.com). Ceramic teapot, \$664, by John Derian for Astier de Villatte (011-33-1-42-60-74-13: astierdevillatte.com). Wabi wallpaper, \$32/sq. ft., in Cloud, by Calico (347-294-0317; calicowallpaper.com). Newton's Bucket bowl, \$1,045, by Silo Studio from The Future Perfect (877-388-7373; thefutureperfect.com). Velino cotton, in Heliotrope, #VELINO-516, by Jonathan Adler, to the trade from Kravet (800-645-9068; kravet.com). Color Swirls table lamp, \$245, by Safavieh (877-919-1010; safaviehhome.com). Opal earrings, from \$45,000, by Irene Neuwirth (323-285-2000; ireneneuwirth.com). Rectangluar dish, \$540, oval dish, \$205, and bowl, \$165, by Sylvie Saint-André Perrin from Bergdorf Goodman (888-774-2424; bergdorfgoodman.com). Wing shoes, \$795, by Paul Andrew from Clique Chic (cliquechic.com). Watch, price upon request, by Cartier (800-227-8437; cartier.us). Marbelous wood flooring, \$410/sq. yd., by Snedker Studio (011-45-51-80-20-62; snedkerstudio.dk). Anne dresser, \$469, by Steven Shell from One Kings Lane (855-746-7655; onekingslane.com). Capulet cotton, in Carnelian, #175662, by Martyn Lawrence Bullard, to the trade from Schumacher (800-523-1200; fschumacher.com). Multicolor Printed Crepe De Chine dresses, in Blue, \$2,250, and Green, \$1,850, pre-fall 2015, by Bottega Veneta (800-845-6790; bottegaveneta.com). Pavone viscose-nylon blend, in Oro, #30064-003, by Rubelli, to the trade from Donghia (800-366-4442; donghia.com). Firenze plate, \$160/set of 4, by Juliska from Neiman Marcus (888-888-4757; neimanmarcus.com).

PAGE 72: Deborah Osburn of Clé Tile (415-887-9011; cletile.com).

PAGE 74: Robert Long of Robert Long Lighting (415-729-9945; robertlonglighting.com).

SHORTLIST

PAGE 78: Suzanne Kasler (404-355-1035; suzannekasler.com). The Ritz Paris (ritzparis.com). Bungalow Classic (bungalowclassic.com). Watch by Hublot (hublot.com). Uber (uber.com). Portobello diary by Smythson (smythson.com). Chef Anne Quatrano of restaurant Bacchanalia and Star Provisions (404-365-0410; starprovisions.com). Summerland: Recipes for Celebrating with Southern Hospitality by Anne Quatrano from Rizzoli (rizzoliusa.com). Prints by Kris Ruhs from 10 Corso Como (10corsocomo.com). Alexandra side chair by Suzanne Kasler for Hickory Chair (hickorychair.com). Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte (vaux-le-vicomte.com). Rouge eau de toilette by Hermès (hermes.com). Swan House (atlantahistorycenter.com).

UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

PAGE 102: John F. Saladino of Saladino Group Inc. (212-684-6805; saladinostyle.com).

ARTSHOW

PAGES 104-106: Tyson Reeder is represented by Canada (212-925-4631; canadanewyork.com).

TRUTH IN DECORATING

PAGES 108-112: Brett Beldock of Brett Design (212-987-8270; brettdesigninc.com). Darren Henault (212-677-5699: darrenhenault.com).

TOOLBOX

PAGE 117: The Plains wallcovering, in Bone, #WP-7024, by Yolande Milan Batteau for Callidus Guild, to the trade from Jean De Merry (212-715-0646; jeandemerry.com).

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

PAGES 125-130: Interior design and architecture by Joseph Karam of Karam Architecture (011-33-1-44-05-06-06; josephkaram.com).

PAGE 125: HAL bar, LIF daybed and sofa, KUB coffee table, and SAM armchair by Joseph Karam from Galerie Joseph Karam (011-33-1-44-05-06-06; josephkaram.com). PAGE 126: In living room, painting by Joseph Karam of Joseph Karam Architecture. ADM cabinets, and in entrance, NIC table and NUC console by Joseph Karam from Galerie Joseph Karam. La Marie chair by Philippe Starck for Kartell (212-966-6665; kartell.com). PAGE 128: In master bedroom, Diamond chair by Harry Bertoia for Knoll (212-343-4190; knoll.com). Custom Smoked Swamp Oak paneling from Sigébène (011-33-2-37-51-94-72; sigebene.com). In dressing room, MEM bureau by Joseph Karam from Galerie Joseph Karam. PAGE 130: On roof terrace, OIO tub by Michel Boucquillon for Antonio Lupi (312-329-1550; antoniolupi.it). In master bath, Metris S Wall-Mounted sink fittings and shower fittings by Hansgrohe (800-334-0455; hansgrohe-usa .com). Tolomeo wall light by Michele De Lucchi & Giancarlo

DANIEL'S DISH

PAGES 136-138: Daniel Boulud of restaurant Daniel (danielnyc.com).

Fassina for Artemide (212-925-1588; artemide.us).

PAGE 136: Tablecloth of Pineapple Silhouette linen, in Indigo, #PSI003, by Soane Britain, to the trade from Holland & Sherry (212-355-6241; hollandandsherry.com).





pierrefrey.com).

PAGES 144-153: Architecture and interior design by Laura Sartori Rimini and Roberto Peregalli of Studio Peregalli (011-39-02-7601-4140: studioperegalli.com). PAGES 148-149: Dining chair cushions in Woodcut linen-cotton blend, in Green on Beige, to the trade from Bennison (212-223-0373; bennisonfabrics.com). PAGES 152-153: In guest bedroom, headboard, bed skirt, coverlet, and wallcovering of Tajmahal and Rayure Tajmajal cottons, in Bleu Vert, #B1853 and #B1854, by Braquenié, to the trade from Pierre Frey (212-421-0534;



PAGES 154–159: Interior design by Daniel Romualdez of Daniel Romualdez Architects (212-989-8429). PAGE 154: Sofa upholstered in Madison II linen, in

Sterling, #812010-01, to the trade from Rogers & Goffigon (203-532-8068; rogersandgoffigon.com). Vintage Cityscape side tables by Paul Evans for Directional from Wright (312-563-0020; wright 20.com). Amoeba rug, to the trade from Patterson Flynn Martin (212-688-7700; pattersonflynnmartin.com).

PAGE 156: In bar, cabinetry lacquered in Black Ink by Benjamin Moore (855-724-6802; benjamin moore.com). In kitchen, Single Bowl Apron Front sink by Shaws from Rohl (800-777-9762; rohlhome.com).

PAGE 157: Vintage Biomorphic cocktail tables by Frederick Kiesler from Le Lampade (631-899-4140; lelampade.1stdibs.com). Sofas covered in Loofah linen, in Bleached, #91701-02, to the trade from Rogers & Goffigon. Vintage light fixture by Studio Reggiani from Phillips (212-940-1300; phillips.com).

PAGE 158: Three-panel screen by Marc Bankowsky from Maison Gerard (212-674-7611; maisongerard.com). Antique sofa from Todd Alexander Romano (212-421-7722; toddalexanderromano.com). Photograph by Laurie Simmons from Salon 94 (212-979-0001; salon94.com). PAGE 159: Vintage stool from Naga Antiques (518-828-8585; nagaantiques.com). Deep Picture shelving by West Elm (888-922-4119; westelm.com). Walls covered in Repose Staggered Mosaic tiles and floor covered in Signet Basketweave Mosaic tiles by Waterworks (800-899-6757: waterworks.com).



THE MAGIC TOUCH

PAGES 160-165: Interior design by Jeffrey Bilhuber of Bilhuber and Associates (212-308-4888; bilhuber.com).





PAGES 160-161: Sofa covered in Imperial cotton-viscose velvet, in Coral, #34704-1, to the trade from Clarence House (800-803-2850: clarencehouse.com), with cushions in Malibu cotton-rayon-silver, in Dusty Coral, #12-175, to the trade from Chapas Textiles (718-522-7864: chapastextiles.com). Vintage Three-Cup sconce by Stilnovo from Donzella (212-965-8919; donzella.com). Stool topped with Murillo cotton, in Sienna on Parchment, #5514, to the trade from Fortuny (212-753-7153: fortuny.com).

PAGE 162: In entry, chairs covered in Mahmut silk, in Blue-White, by Tulu Textiles (212-518-8710; tulutextiles.com). Antique mirror from Meg Braff Designs (516-801-4939; megbraffdesigns.com). Table covered with Ceylon linen, in Antigua, #805N66, by Raoul Textiles (805-899-4947; raoultextiles.com). Walls covered in Milky Way wallpaper, in Gold-Cactus, #7003, to the trade from Peter Fasano (413-528-6872; peterfasano.com). In dining room, vintage table from Liz O'Brien (212-755-3800; lizobrien.com). Walls covered in Portobello wallpaper, in Electrum, by de Gournay (212-564-9750; degournay.com).

PAGE 163: Sofa upholstered in Shearling polyester-cotton blend, in Wool White, #8791-01, by Larsen, to the trade from Cowtan & Tout (212-647-6900; cowtan.com). Armchair covered in Phinda Ré linen-polyester blend, #PR2.14.4, to the trade from Toyine Sellers (011-33-67-08-42-01; toyinesellers.com). Shell chair in Canestrelli cotton, in Rust and Beige, #5295, to the trade from Fortuny. Michelangelo carpet, to the trade from VandenLoom (212-752-6000; vandenloom.com). PAGE 164: In master bedroom, Cloud Nine carpet by The Ruggery (516-676-2056; theruggery.com). Vintage commode from Christie's (212-636-2000; christies.com). Walls covered in Crenelin Velours wallpaper, in Blue, #856-V, by Zuber (212-486-9226; zuber.fr). PAGE 165: Walls covered in The Cranes wallpaper, in

Coral-Chocolate, #FBW-B073, by Signature Prints from Studio Four NYC (212-475-4414; studiofournyc.com). Shades of Lola linen-cotton, in Apricot, by Tulu Textiles. Sofa covered in Imperial cotton-viscose velvet, in Celadon, #24704-22, to the trade from Clarence House.

PAST INCORPORATED

PAGES 166-171: Interior design by Lorenzo Castillo (011-34-91-420-1991; lorenzocastillo.org).

PAGE 166: Wing chair upholstered in Cord O'Roi cotton, in Navy, #2006194-55, by Eric Cohler, to the trade from Lee Jofa (888-533-5632; leejofa.com). Walls painted in White Tie by Farrow & Ball (888-511-1121; farrrow-ball.com). PAGE 167: Sofa in Marigny viscose-cotton, in Dune #F2738, to the trade from Pierre Frey (212-421-0534; pierrefrev.com)

PAGE 168: Sofas covered in Surabaya polyester, in Zafferano, #7975, by Rubelli, to the trade from Donghia (800-366-4442: donghia.com)

PAGE 169: Chairs backed in Asia Minor cotton-silk blend, in Clove Dust, #3340-11, by Tony Duquette, to the trade from Jim Thompson (800-262-0336: jimthompsonfabrics.com). Walls and bookshelves painted in Rectory Red by Farrow & Ball

PAGE 170: Daybed upholstered in Tea Party linen, in Sweet Mocha, #2069-06, by Richard Smith, to the trade from Jim Thompson. Doors painted in Down Pipe by Farrow & Ball.

PAGE 171: On terrace, Portland stone flooring by Porcelanosa (877-767-7287; porcelanosa-usa.com). In master bath, Pegaso 1 towel warmer by Devon & Devon (011-39-055-308-350; devon-devon.com).



LANDMARK COMMISSION

PAGES 172-177: Interior design by Stephen Sills of Stephen Sills Associates (212-988-6100; stephensills.com). PAGES 172-173: In living room, custom sofa, chairs,

covered in Grains of Sand linen, in Sea Glass, #910100-03, to the trade from Rogers & Goffigon (203-532-8068; rogersandgoffigon.com), cocktail table, and pendant light; all by Stephen Sills of Stephen Sills Associates. Walls covered in Babylon linen, in Celadon, #1640-T. to the trade from Silkworks Textiles (510-839-7022; silkworkstextiles.com). Sultan II rug, to the trade from Marc Phillips (212-752-4275; marcphillipsrugs.com). PAGE 174: In dining room, chairs upholstered in Forte Suede polyester, in Moonsto, #FD514-515, by Mulberry Home, to the trade from Lee Jofa (888-533-5632: leejofa.com). Shades of Taffetas Pompadour acetate, in Blue Steel, #Z0-8012-8000, by Old World Weavers, to the trade from Stark (212-752-9000; starkcarpet.com). Rug, to the trade from Beauvais Carpets (212-688-2265; beauvaiscarpets.com).

PAGE 175: In kitchen, chair covered in Forte Suede polyester, in Horizon, #FD514-1511, by Mulberry Home, to the trade from Lee Jofa. Saarinen dining table by Eero Saarinen for Knoll from Design Within Reach (800-944-2233; dwr.com). Vintage pendant light from Avantgarden (914-764-0010; avantgardenltd.com). In study, carpet, to the trade from Beauvais Carpets.

PAGES 176-177: In study off master bedroom, painting by James Kennedy (jameskennedyonline.com). In master bedroom, light fixture by Christopher Trujillo from Asler Valero Interior Design (212-754-6199; aslervalero.com). Carpet, to the trade from Beauvais Carpets.



COMING FULL CIRCLE

PAGES 178-185: Interior design by Emma Jane Pilkington of Emma Jane Pilkington Fine Interiors (emmajanepilkington.com). Architecture by Joel Barkley of Ike Kligerman Barkley (212-268-0128; ikba.com).



PAGES 178-179: Antique chairs from Florian Papp (212-288-6770; florianpapp.com). Ceilings painted in All White by Farrow & Ball (888-511-1121; farrow-ball.com). PAGES 180-181: In family room, custom Jansen sofas, to the trade from Anthony Lawrence-Belfair (212-206-8820; anthonylawrence.com), covered in Mohair, in Mist, #7400-42, to the trade from Donghia (800-366-4442; donghia.com). Vintage cocktail table from Mecox (212-249-5301; mecox.com). Arabesque Maze rug by Mary McDonald, to the trade from Patterson Flynn Martin (212-688-7700; pattersonflynnmartin.com). Curtains of Moghul Flower linen, in Blue and Brown, #2508-01, by Neisha Crosland, to the trade from Chelsea Textiles (212-758-0005; chelseatextiles.com). In sitting room, chairs covered in Othelia abaca, in Rust, #DE12626, to the trade from Holland & Sherry (212-355-6241; hollandandsherry.com). Custom sofa upholstered in Liberty silk velvet, in Rosemary Grass,

#IZ1000-27, to the trade from Christopher Hyland (212-688-6121; christopherhyland.com). Antique fireplace surround from Eron Johnson Antiques (303-777-8700eronjohnsonantiques.com). Settee covered in Equateur Imprimé cotton, in Crepiscule, #211034-M02, by Robert Dallet for Hermes, to the trade from Jerry Pair (800-909-7247; jerrypair.com).

PAGE 182: On terrace, vintage garden chairs from Richard Steenberg (011-44-7796-761-321; steenberg.co.uk). In front hall, antique table from Jonathan Burden (212-941-8247; jonathanburden.com). Antique Spanish Black and White Marble flooring from Exquisite Surfaces (800-970-9798; xsurfaces.com). Antique chair from Cove Landing (212-288-7597; covelanding.1stdibs.com), In breakfast room, vintage chairs from Bermingham & Co. (201-370-8645; berminghamantiques.com)

PAGE 183: Custom range by Diva-Athanor from Maverick Consulting (201-486-4481; maverickcuisine.com), Antique table from Dienst + Dotter (212-861-1200; dienstanddotter.com). Cascais countertops from Solar Antique Tiles (212-755-2403; solarantiquetiles.com). Fumed Antique Oak floor from Baba (800-542-4812; baba.com).

PAGE 184: In master bedroom, panels covered in Mongiardino and Romeo wallpapers, in Carrara, #5007070 and #5006890, by Martyn Lawrence Bullard, to the trade from Schumacher (800-523-1200; fschumacher.com). Custom XIV Century coverlet, to the trade from Holland & Sherry. Headboard and bed skirt trimmed in Le Musee Rosette and Narrow Braid silk, in Heather Melange, #975-27914-668 and #982-29848-668, to the trade from Samuel & Sons (212-704-8000; samuelandsons.com), and curtains of Strie linen-silk, in Lilac, #011L-18, by George Spencer Designs, to the trade from Claremont (212-486-1252claremontfurnishing.com). Vintage kilim, to the trade from Rug & Kilim (212-829-9995; rugandkilim.com). Antique armchair from Bermingham & Co., covered in Belgian linen, in Ash Rose, #34354-24, to the trade from Clarence House (800-803-2850; clarencehouse.com). In master bath, antique tub from The Water Monopoly (011-44-20-7624-2636; thewatermonopoly.com). Chair covered in Horsehair hemp-cotton, in Rose-Ecru-Noir, #1500-118, to the trade from Clarence House.

PAGE 185: Headboard upholstered in Cyrus linen, in Indigo and White, #2289-01, by Alidad, to the trade from Chelsea Textiles. Cushion and bolster upholstered in Angora mohair, in Ciel, #31872-25, to the trade from Clarence House. Walls painted in Charleston Gray by Farrow & Ball.

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