

THE HOME OBSERVER

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Light & Lively

Inside New York family homes designed by Deborah Berke, Carrier and Company, Vicente Wolf, and more



UPPER EAST SIDE

Smooth + Shiny

BY DEBRA SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY GILBERT

*No split ends here!
MoroccanOil founder Carmen
Tal's mansion in the sky becomes
a whimsical playground for her
and her three children, courtesy of
Modern Declaration's Daun Curry.*



CENTRAL PARK IS NEVER ENOUGH: New Yorkers yearn for nature in the concrete jungle. Transplanted Manhattanite Carmen Tal, who arrived two years ago from Montreal, is no exception. So when the founder of Moroccan oil hair products teamed up with designer Daun Curry, it was all about invoking natural elements—from the whimsical to the sublime.

“I grew up in the countryside in Chile,” Tal says. Before moving to New York, she and her three children lived in a big house with a yard. “Finding ways to reference nature was important to me.”

The globetrotting head of the mega beauty brand whose nutrient-rich treatments have revolutionized the haircare industry, needed a soothing treatment for her home too. (When you go from being a salon owner to head of a multimillion-dollar company that expanded from a single product to a profusion of hair and body products in a few short years, serenity is key.)

“People find peace in nature,” says Curry.

The founder of design firm Modern Declaration, Curry’s references to the outdoors were rarely literal. In the entry hall, Curry created a custom plaster wall finish with a texture that invokes tree bark. Juxtaposed against an ethereal Murano glass sculp-

ture comprised of etched leaves surrounding a mirror, it’s like entering into a silvery jungle. Above an oxidized maple top dining table hangs a ball chain chandelier modeled after the South African protea flower. This is nature with an edge. Curry’s trick? Infusing organic elements with an urban material or hue. In the case of a custom rug designed with a malachite pattern, for instance, the colorway is neutral rather than an obvious green.

Personal touches abound in the home’s private sanctums. In order to make the transition to New York as smooth as possible, Tal says, “I wanted our bedrooms to be a very personal space that reflected each of us as individuals.” Curry worked with Tal’s three children to uncover the unique aspects of their personalities. For the younger daughter, full of creative energy that is often focused on food, Curry sourced cushioned seats resembling cake slices and installed shelves to hold a candy collection. The older daughter revelled in creating an installation to hang over her bed by choosing handmade Limoges hearts, each one different, which Curry sourced from Austria. The pair also shopped together to find vintage Philippe Starck side tables and a light pendant made from recycled bleach bottles that appealed to the youngster’s green bent. Tal’s son helped



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: In the living room, a mohair sofa is flanked by Paul Laszlo wood-and-brass tables. A built-in seating area cozies up to a wall quilted in individual squares of Lelievre fabric. Willowlamp’s Protea chandelier hangs above a BDDW table; the curtains are of a Holly Hunt fabric. Carmen Tal and her children.




OPPOSITE PAGE: A Modern Declaration-designed bench sits atop the Espina wool rug from Top Floor. The custom textured plaster wall finish was done by Judy Mulligan of Chester, New Jersey. The chandelier is a custom metal mesh design by Daun Curry. The Murano glass mirror is by Glas Italia. **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** The master bedroom walls are clad in Trove's Askella feather-print wallpaper. The custom feather-and-crystal pendant lamps were designed by Daun Curry. The sculpted wool and silk rug is from ABC Carpet & Home. The bed is dressed in Frette linens. Below, in the family room, Poltrona Frau's Travalo table sits under the Dear Ingo chandelier by Moooi; it was purchased at The Future Perfect. The Kennedee sofa is from Poltrona Frau. The Zulu carpet is from Masland.

choose Steven Abrams wallpaper and pistol-shaped side lamps, both of which he found “really cool.”

For the hallway that connects the kids’ rooms, Curry wanted an effect that would take the idea of family photos to the next level. Enlisting the kids, she had each make handprints on large sheets of paper that she transformed into a wall covering. “The whole process helped them tremendously to adjust to so many changes in their lives,” says Tal.

For Tal’s bedroom, Curry designed pendant lighting adorned with feathers. “Getting to know Carmen, I realized the driving force of her success comes from her free spirit,” says Curry. “The feathers symbolize that.” Sconces sculpted from vintage Venini glass in Tal’s favorite colors hang nearby. “My bedroom always feels like an oasis,” says Tal. “It’s just very special.”

What Curry calls the “great room” is also a favorite of Tal’s. To hide structural columns, Curry built elaborate bookshelves that also carved the sprawling room into zones. When Tal entertains, the room “provides areas for dining, lounging, and dancing,” the entrepreneur says. “It’s the perfect setting to relax with my family and guests.”

The pièce de résistance is the terrace with its views of the East River and the 59th Street Bridge. “It’s such a luxury to have such a grand outdoor space in the city.” And, if her tresses become too dry from the elements, the stylist-turned-entrepreneur can always dig up a bottle of golden argan oil that will do the trick. 



Getting Personal

Daun Curry’s tips on making a home uniquely yours

“Your home isn’t a show house,” says Modern Declaration’s Daun Curry (pictured below). “It should reflect what’s meaningful to you.” Personal touches make a house a warm, comfortable, and intimate place to come home to—as well as a testament to your personal style. Curry, who incorporated many personal elements into Carmen Tal’s apartment, shares tips for your own space:

Make your children part of your design scheme. Tal’s children were instrumental in the design of their own rooms—and in the creation of a foyer wallpaper which bears their handprints in golden paint! Try framing children’s artwork or displaying their collections as colorful installations.

Reflect your passions in your possessions. In Tal’s home, says Daun, “another personal element that I incorporated was her love of animals” with a Hunt Slonem painting of a bunny featured prominently in the kitchen.

Go shopping in your closet for inspiration. Fashion choices can be clues to your style. Note fabrics and patterns you gravitate toward. Are your accessories whimsical or architectural? The tailoring of a jacket or the pleating of a skirt could inspire an upholstery; the graphic or metal finish of a piece of jewelry could be represented on custom cabinet hardware.

Personal touches can make the commute to work too! “Carmen loved the vintage Blenko glass bottles I used in her house,” says Daun, who recently decorated Moroccanoi’s New York offices, “so I incorporated those into the office design as well.”



OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A Lucite-encased pendant and chandelier in the kitchen were found at SUITE New York and hang near an oil painting of a rabbit by Hunt Slonem. The vintage lucite stools are from John Salibello. Cole & Son’s Hickory-Lichen wallpaper hangs in Tal’s younger daughter’s room, where curtains in a Scalamandre fabric coexist with stools resembling slices of cake from Lisa Perry. In the master bedroom, a vintage Milo Baughman chair is upholstered in gray cashmere. The 1940s etched mirror is from Venfield. In an office area, Lee Jofa wallcovering pops against a Zettle’s 6 chandelier by Ingo Maurer and Jonathan Adler’s Whitter lamp. **THIS PAGE, TOP:** A Fontana Arte table lamp sits on a BDDW credenza with lacquered frame and hand-carved ebony handles. **RIGHT,** in a hallway, custom wallpaper bears the golden handprints of Tal’s children. The custom candle pendant chandelier is from Mark Figueredo. The hot-rolled steel bench is from Blu Dot. Top Floor’s Esperanto wool runner.



DESIGNER

