

# INTERIOR DESIGN

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# expect the unexpected

Unorthodox counsel yields stunning results at a New York condominium by Eve Robinson

text: jane margolies photography: eric laignel





**Ask the owners of a luxury apartment to drop their ceiling by 1 foot, and they're likely to blanch. Ask them to lower the ceiling and cover up a south-facing window, and they'll begin to question a designer's sanity.**

That double whammy, however, is exactly what Eve Robinson recommended for the expansive living-dining room of a New York condominium—her solutions for two problems. The first was a high ceiling with an overly complicated soffit; the second was a small, oddly placed window in a corner space with floor-to-ceiling glass on almost two entire sides. "Despite the spaciousness and the fabulous views, the apartment needed to be cleaned up and unified," Robinson says.

Though the apartment's owners, investment banker Marc Goldberg and his wife, Beth, had reservations about Robinson's proposition, especially the ceiling part, the couple eventually gave her the go-ahead, trusting that these unusual moves would result in the seamless architecture and luxurious detailing that characterize the work produced



**Previous spread:** In the living-dining room of a New York apartment, Eve Robinson Associates dropped the ceiling, so it aligns with the top of the windows, and concealed storage behind the curved-oak paneling. Against it sits a settee by T.H. Robinson-Gibbins.

**Left:** In the kitchen, Bertjan Pot's pendant fixture hangs over the Eero Saarinen table and Andrew Jones chairs. **Center, from top:** Paul M. Jones designed the bench in the central gallery, where bronze mullions punctuate the back-painted glass paneling. Also bronze and glass, the living area's cocktail table is French 1970's. **Right:** A pair of French 40's lacquered armchairs, reupholstered in a cotton blend, face Clodagh's drum tables in steel and concrete.

**Opposite top:** In the foyer, John Therien's credenza and Tyler Hay's captain's mirror occupy wall space where the door to the powder room used to be.



by Eve Robinson Associates.

A 3,000-square-foot spread on the 44th floor of Cesar Pelli & Associates Architects's Bloomberg Tower, the apartment represents a big change for the Goldbergs. They used to live in a prewar co-op. But that two-bedroom had become too small to accommodate visits from their out-of-town adult children and growing flock of grandkids.

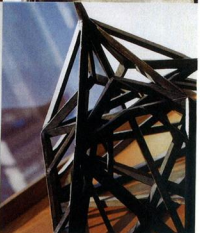
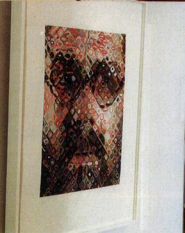
Beth Goldberg had pocketed Robinson's business card after

seeing her library at the 2004 Kips Bay Decorator Show House. "I told her, 'Light colors and furniture that won't be too fussy for the grandchildren,'" Beth Goldberg recalls. "She really *listened*." And there was another thing that she liked about Robinson: her general-contractor husband, who would oversee the project. "I was certain they'd at least communicate with each other," Beth Goldberg continues wryly.

While designer and clients

pondered furniture, fabrics, and a palette of caramel, cream, and beige, designer and contractor worked on getting the interior architecture right. Not only did the living area's problematic ceiling and window need to be dealt with, but the master suite also had two closets that called out to be consolidated into one. And the powder room's door, by the entry, simply *had* to be moved. "You came face to face with it right after stepping through →





the front door, not exactly a welcoming touch," Robinson says. Her remedy was to wall off that opening and move the doorway round the corner, to the long gallery from which most of the apartment's rooms radiate.

Now the foyer is a jewel box with softly luminous Venetian plaster walls, brass sconces, and a credenza "that looks like it's from a Paris flea market," Robinson says. In addition, the compact space offers a concise introduction to the apartment's decorative themes: sophisticated wall treatments and a mix of antiques, made-to-look-old new furniture, and custom designs. Each piece is given plenty of space, so its form and finish can be thoroughly appreciated.

From the foyer, you move into that long gallery. Since it's windowless, Robinson covered the walls with reflective materials. Vertical panels of white back-painted glass are divided by vertical bronze mullions.

Of the walls in the master bedroom, three are a creamy beige Venetian plaster, while the fourth is upholstered in spring-green linen. The deeper greens of Central Park, seen below, are framed by hemp curtains printed with a rustic-looking floral. "It's a tran-

quil space," says Beth Goldberg, who loves to read or knit in one of the velvet-upholstered armchairs by the window wall. At the far end of the room, a Robert Longo photograph of a woman in a sheath dress and spike heels adds edge to the serenity.

The atmosphere is more energetic in the living-dining room, which is paneled in cerused oak anyplace that isn't glass. Behind the paneling hides the offending small window, not to mention a wealth of cabinets for the TV, stereo system, and DVD player and drawers for silverware and

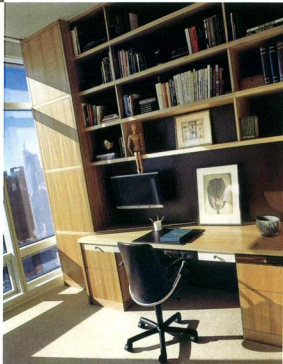
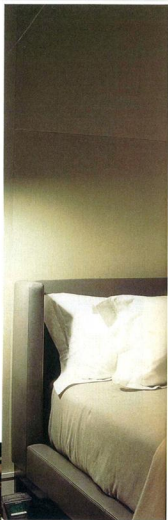


**Opposite top, from left:** A Brazilian bronze sculpture in the living area; French, 1950's eyeglass molds nearby. **Opposite center, from left:** White African butter stoppers in the husband's office; 18th-century porcelain vases on Victoria Hagan's console in the living area. **Opposite bottom, from left:** The living area's Hervé Van der Straeten gilt-bronze basket; the gallery's Chuck Close 1990s self-portrait. An antique wooden architectural model in the husband's office.

**Above:** The dining area centers on Christian Lacroix's table, complemented by leather-upholstered chairs, a bronze chandelier, and a cushioned rug. The print is by Mel Bachner.

**Left:** In the husband's office, which doubles as a guest room, a Jonathan Adler table and linen-covered pillows jazz up a sleeper sofa from the couple's previous apartment. **Center, from top:** The master bedroom's credenza by Hays faces a bench by Paul Mathieu. In the wife's office, cabinetry of French elm hides a structural column near the window. **Right:** Liaigre's bed backs up to the linen-upholstered wall of the master bedroom, which also features a photograph by Robert Longo.

**Opposite bottom:** A 1940's sideboard by Suzanne Guguchon sits beneath a print by Tara Donovan in the living area.



napkins. Lowering the ceiling to a uniform 10 feet meant that Robinson could tuck in recessed lighting as well as solar shades that descend at the touch of a button. Now that the ceiling is aligned with the top of the windows, the cityscape becomes the wallpaper.

Set in the corner of the dining area, a rectangular Christian Liaigre table might have adult dinner guests around it one weekend, toddlers the next. Everyday meals often take place in the kitchen—designed, like all the kitchens in the building, by *Interior Design Hall of Fame* member Jacques Grange and left largely



intact. Robinson simply added some furnishings, notably a lacy pendant globe by Bertjan Pot, an Eero Saarinen pedestal table, and the same contract-quality stacking chairs she has in her own kitchen.

Next to the kitchen are his-and-hers offices that double as guest rooms. In his, Jonathan Adler's square white tables freshen up a sofa bed that the Goldbergs already owned. Hers features a desk built into a wall of elm cabinetry, plus a crib. So there's always room for family.

PROJECT MANAGER: **TATIANA CABAL**  
CHAIRS (DINING AREA): **MATTALIANO**, CHAN

DELIER (DINING AREA), CEILING FIXTURES: (GALLERY), SCONCES (FOYER), FLOOR LAMPS (BEDROOM); **STEPHEN MCKAY**, TABLE (DINING AREA), BED (BEDROOM); **HOLLY HUNT**, CONSOLE (LIVING AREA); **VICTORIA HAGAN HOME**, SETTEE; **THROUGH DONZELLA**; **BORGAMO** (FABRIC); SOFA, CLUB CHAIR, OTTOMAN; **ROMAN THOMAS**, SOFA (FABRIC); **CORAGGIO** TEXTILES; CLUB CHAIR (FABRIC); OTTOMAN (FABRIC); GLASS LAMP: **DONGHA**, GOLD LAMP: **NANCY CORZINE**, LINEN-WRAPPED LAMP: **AERO STUDIOS**, PEDESTAL TABLE; **THROUGH KARL KEMP** ANTIQUES; COCKTAIL TABLE; **THROUGH LART DE VIVRE**; BASKET: **HERVÉ VAN DER STRAETEN**, STEEL AND CONCRETE DRUM TABLES: **DENNIS MILLER ASSOCIATES**, ARMCHAIR (FABRIC); **KRAVET**, ARMCHAIRS; (EYEGLASS MOLDS); **THROUGH AMY PERLIN** ANTIQUES; VASES (LIVING AREA), KITCHEN, (FOYER); **THROUGH GOOD DESIGN**, RUDE (LIVING, DINING AREA); **ODEGARD**, ANVRE; TOPPED TABLE (LIVING AREA); OTTOMAN (BEDROOM); **TODD HASE**, BOLSTER (FABRIC); (LIVING AREA); BENCH UPOLSTERY (BEDROOM); **POLLACK**, MAHOGANY TABLE; TRAY (LIVING AREA); VASES (BEDROOM); **THROUGH**

**ALAN MOSS**, TABLE (KITCHEN); **KNOLL**, CHAIRS; **KEILHAUER**, PENDANT FIXTURE; **MODER**, BENCH (GALLERY); **JOHN BOONE**, **JOHN HUTTON** TEXTILES (FABRIC); BRONZED WOODEN DRUM TABLE (LIVING AREA); **TUCKER ROBBINS**, CREDENZA (FOYER); **THIERIEN & CO.**, MIRROR (FOYER); CREDENZA (BEDROOM); **BDOV**, TABLE (OFFICE); **JONATHAN ADLER**, SCONCE; **LYLE AND UMBACH**, SQUARE PILLOW (FABRIC); **GALBRAITH & PAUL**, **THROUGH AM COLLECTIONS**, LUMBAR PILLOW (FABRIC); **MAHARAM**, CUSTOM CARPET (OFFICE); **PAT-TERSON**, **LYNN & MARTIN**, BENCH (BEDROOM); **RALPH PUCCI INTERNATIONAL**, CHAIRS; **JONAS ZIMMER + RONDE** (FABRIC); OTTOMAN (FABRIC); **WATKINS & FONTHILL**, CURTAIN (FABRIC); **ROSE TARLOW-MELROSE** HOUSE, SCONCES; **NESSEN** LIGHTING, COVERLET; **ARCHIPELAGO**, CUSTOM CARPET; **MARTIN PATRICK EVAN**, CHAIR (OFFICE); **DOCDOMUS DESIGN** COLLECTION, SIDE TABLES (BEDROOM); **SQUARE ONE FURNITURE**, WALL COVERING; **ELIZABETH DOW**, SIDE BOARD (LIVING AREA); **THROUGH BERNI OGGELER** ANTIQUES, GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **SILVER-LINING INTERIORS**.

