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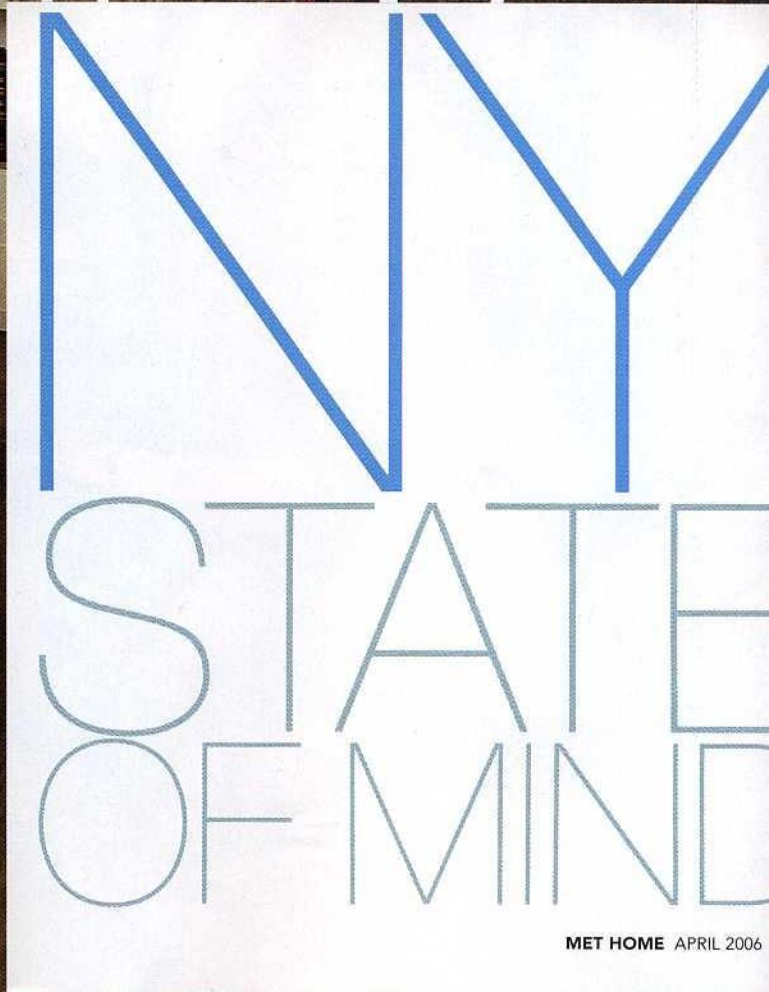
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start a project by looking for
ces I can use as focal points,"
s interior designer Eve
inson. A circa-1950 coffee
le by Gio Ponti became a focal
nt for Susan and Geoffrey
ris's Manhattan living room.
ettee designed by Christian
gre and a pair of vintage
hogany-armed Edward
rmley club chairs surround the
le (seen from above, top right).



MET HOME OF THE MONTH
BECAUSE HOTELS DON'T
TAKE DOGS, THIS
SOPHISTICATED FAMILY
OF SIX SET UP A MANHATTAN
APARTMENT FOR FREQUENT
EXTENDED VISITS
TO THE BIG CITY—WITH
THEIR BLACK LAB.

binson (opposite) keeps
mmetry imperfect: A pair of
d tables (one round, one
quare) balance each other visual-
as do the "mismatched" lamps
h rectangular shades. The
lectic seating group includes a
ir of neoclassical Italian chairs
d a French art deco club chair
a Tundra rug from Odegard.
e painting is by Damien Hirst.





Susan

and Geoffrey Harris and their four children spend a lot of time at a house in the suburbs. But for their frequent visits to New York City, hotels wouldn't do—for one simple reason: "We have a dog," says Susan. And that meant finding an apartment big enough for the family (including Shadow, their black Labrador), and a designer who could make the place friendly and elegant enough for entertaining.

The designer they chose, Eve Robinson, worked for Ralph Lauren before switching from fashion to interiors in the late 1980s. Well aware that styles change, she was determined to create an interior that would look as good in ten years as it does today. That means avoiding the trap of buying too much of any one thing.

So as much as she loves French designer Christian Liaigre, Robinson limited herself to just two of his pieces, a coffee table in the living room and a brown-upholstered settee. Around the Liaigre table are examples of French deco (circa 1930), Italian neoclassical (circa 1850) and American mid-century modern. But making the room timeless didn't mean making it bland. The Italian neoclassical chairs are upholstered in two colors—brown for the seats and light blue for the backs. The idea, says Robinson, is to make you take a second look at otherwise-familiar pieces. Walls are covered in Stucco Veneziano (pronounced stoo-co) plaster onto which a layer of wax has been troweled, producing an almost sinfully smooth finish. "The walls have so much depth," Robinson says, "that you don't need lots of art."

PRODUCED BY LINDA O'KEEFE. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF McNAMARA.
WRITTEN BY FRED A. BERNSTEIN.



When

the Harrises bought the apartment, its prewar layout made every room a cul-de-sac. The dining room was particularly isolated, Susan Harris recalls. Robinson's first task was reworking the layout, so that the front door leads to a small foyer that leads to the dining room, which in turn leads to the kitchen through a swinging porthole door that pays homage to the apartment's prewar vintage, as well as to the living room and bedrooms. Thus the dining table becomes a roundabout.

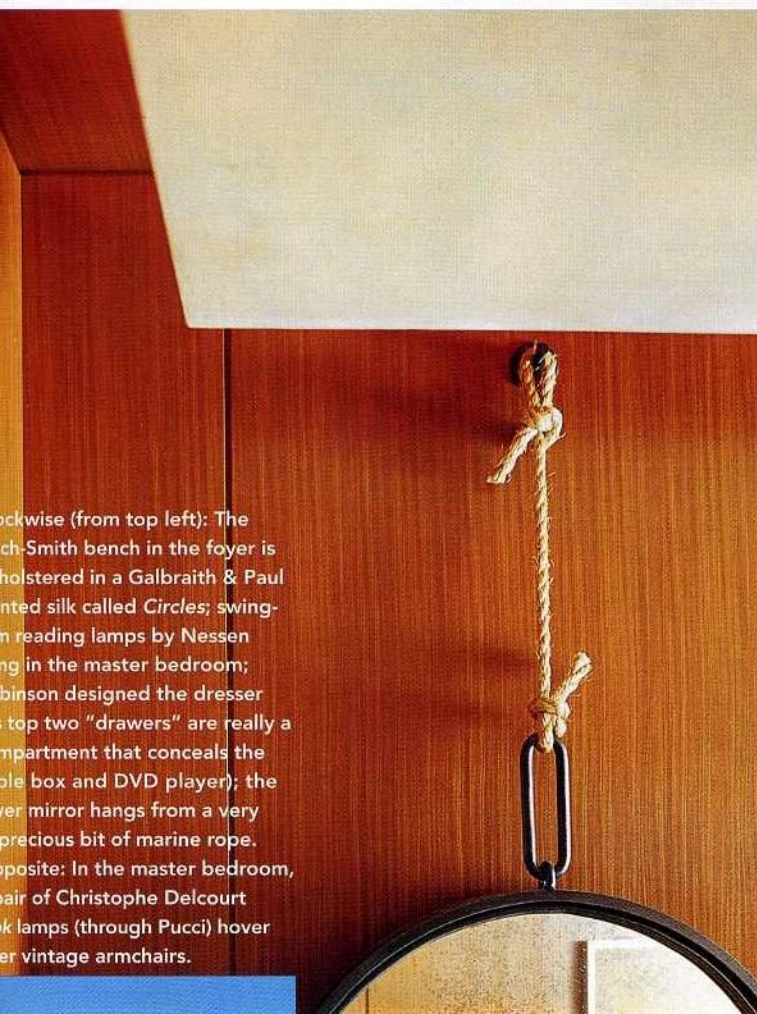
With the dining room now the hub of the apartment, Robinson wanted to make it light and open. A mirrored French-deco credenza creates the illusion of extra space. (Who said a mirror has to hang on the wall to do that?) As in the living room, Robinson mixed old and new: The 19th-century Italian settee, upholstered in gray and pink silks, sits below an iconic

Nan Goldin photograph that couldn't be more contemporary.

Not everything in the room is precious. Robinson made the walls of inexpensive medium-density fiberboard (MDF). The MDF was cut into rectangular panels, their edges cut with a router. Where they meet, they form U-shaped depressions, giving the walls depth (very different from the kind of depth suggested by the Stucco Veneziano in the living room, but no less compelling). The ceiling is wallpapered in a pattern of squares that suggests silver leaf (recessed light fixtures are squares, extending the geometric theme). New floors, of walnut in a herringbone pattern, are softened by another cushy Odegard carpet. Its color gradation—a version of abrash, the unexpected variations that occur when yarn is dyed—means it can handle Beaujolais spills and dog hairs.

An antique dining table is surrounded by contemporary chairs from Mattallano wryly named *Flower Market #1* (through Holly Hunt); grand yet clean-lined, they see neither old nor new. The unique Murano glass chandelier dates from the 1940s; the sofa is a 19th-century Italian antique. The photograph is a Nan Goldin self-portrait. Opposite: a mirrored cabinet from France adds further luster to the richly decorated room.





clockwise (from top left): The
 ch-Smith bench in the foyer is
 holstered in a Galbraith & Paul
 printed silk called *Circles*; swing-
 ing reading lamps by Nessen
 in the master bedroom;
 binson designed the dresser
 top two "drawers" are really a
 compartment that conceals the
 ole box and DVD player); the
 ver mirror hangs from a very
 precious bit of marine rope.
 opposite: In the master bedroom,
 chair of Christophe Delcourt
 k lamps (through Pucci) hover
 er vintage armchairs.



With

not a lot of space to work with (the apartment is about 1,700 square feet), Robinson decided to make every room worth spending time in. The foyer, once a mere pass-through, is now a jewel box. Walls are paneled in a richly colored wood called afromosia. A dropped ceiling, pulled away from the four walls, gives the windowless room the impression of extra height—and light. The terrazzo floor is studded with chunks of Calcutta gold marble, creating the illusion of depth. A wrought-iron mirror frame (“in the style of Royère”), adds an informal touch: Robinson bought the rope it hangs on at a nautical-supply store.

The master bedroom, overlooking a busy Manhattan intersection, felt too exposed before designer Robinson installed layers of swathing. She covered the windows first in translucent solar shades, then in flat Roman shades and finally in floor-to-ceiling

drapes (the design equivalent of wearing a layered outfit on a chilly day). Even the walls are upholstered. Robinson covered them in beige-cotton panels with visible stitching, a kind of fashion-y detail that recalls her days at Ralph Lauren. (She switched careers after her mother suggested she take an interior design course at New York’s Parsons School of Design.)

Robinson found a pair of old club chairs, designed the round ottoman and had them all upholstered in the same muted-check fabric. The mix of old and new is accompanied by geographic diversity: The carpet was made in Canada by Hokanson, the floor lamps are by French designer Christophe Delcourt, and the bed is covered in an antique Indian quilt. Robinson herself designed the side tables (see details, opposite) of wenge wood, nickel and glass.



When

the couple bought the apartment, Susan remembers, the kitchen was hardly a prewar classic. "Whoever owned it in the '80s installed the cheapest white melamine cabinets you could find," she says. And the room, though larger than a galley, was too small for a dining table (or even an island). Robinson's solution was a peninsula, suitable for both cooking and eating. Melamine gave way to precision cabinetry from Boffi, which allowed Robinson to squeeze a lot of technology into a compact space. The "cabinet" to the right of the oven is the refrigerator; the one to the right of that (with a lock) is the wine cooler. Even the coffeemaker is built in. But Robinson made sure to give the hard surfaces gentle accompaniments. Countertops are Pietra Cardoza, a type of stone that looks and feels soft. And the cabinets may be glossy—they come coated in polyester—but they reflect the walnut floor, "borrowing" the wood's natural texture. Backsplashes are a mosaic of tiny glass tiles, their greenish tones recalling other rooms in the apartment, Robinson says.

Green glass tiles (by Waterworks) appear in both the kitchen and the master bathroom, where the mix of large squares and rectangles keeps the grid from seeming rigid. Robinson could have hidden the shower hardware, but she chose to leave it exposed, to evoke a kind of retro glamour. To cover a wood-framed window that shouldn't get waterlogged, she created an inner window of frosted glass in a polished-nickel frame. None of the surfaces are precious. Says Susan, "We wanted an apartment that was easy to maintain." 🍷

See Resources, last pages



Robinson designed the master bathroom's walnut vanity with a marble top and simple nickel pulls. The glass tiles on the walls give way to a floor of mini-brick mosaic. Opposite: In the kitchen, recessing appliances—including the oven and refrigerator—in a cabinet wall hides their bulk. The dining "peninsula" has the simple lines of a Parson's table.