Urban Renewal

Celerie Kemble designs a serene and sophisticated family home on Manhattan's Upper East Side

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A custom Lucite bookshelf, suspended by sparkling brass rods, divides the foyer from the living area without obstructing natural light or movement.

Tasked to decorate a high-rise in Manhattan House, an elite residence on New York City's Upper East Side, the celebrated **Celerie Kemble** set about creating "a tranquil, but feminine" oasis. Famous for her Palm Beach–inspired style, pairing casual elegance with whimsical flourishes, Kemble designed a home fit for a growing family, but with a single girl's creature comforts.

Throughout the apartment, Kemble maximized space without sacrificing personality. By painting horizontal stripes on the walls of the entryway and crowning the space with an outsize starburst light fixture, she provided a sense of expansiveness in the narrow space. To neatly divide the foyer from the living area without obstructing light or movement, she commissioned a custom Lucite bookshelf suspended in midair by sparkling brass rods. The subtle palette of sand, ecru, and pale pink with bright bursts of peacock blue and her signature shade, chartreuse, creates a vivid color scheme that invigorates without overpowering.

Kemble kept the home's largest space—the living and dining area—feeling airy and serene by capitalizing on its natural light and views of Manhattan. "I wanted to create a pretty haze," she says. "New York is such a bold city. We wanted to offset that with colors that tempered the senses." The home's most daring colors and patterns are reserved for its tightest quarters: bedrooms and bathrooms that are alive with delightful surprises, such as striped ceilings and vivid accent walls. Indeed, each of the condo's three bedrooms is a marvel of individuality. The master, with its pale gray Farrow & Ball wallpaper, is awash with exotic materials and Eastern influences. The children's room, with its thick carpet and fringed curtains, is a playful hideaway. And the guest bedroom, which doubles as a den and media room, is party-ready with its shag carpeting and mirrored cocktail tables.

Though presented with a blank slate in need of ready-made decor, Kemble created a home of character and charm. With views of Manhattan thronging below, the apartment "works well for entertaining," she says, but is "soft and cozy at every turn." L

The living area's subtle palette is punctuated by dramatic bursts of black. The pair of alabaster lamps is from Donovan & Gray, and the matching lacquered end tables are custom pieces by Kemble Interiors.

With its low, comfortable furnishings in an array of soft, retiring tones, the living area is an ideal spot for entertaining. From its towering black lampshades to its graphic artwork and picture frames, the space is coordinated without feeling too matchy. Delicately rendered accents painted on the crown moldings draw the eye upward and round out the room's decor.

A daring chinoiserie side table and a pair of silk-upholstered slipper chairs from Hickory Chair gracefully frame the living area without breaking the room's flow.

The living and dining areas share a palette and style yet are carefully delineated by the skillful placement of their furnishings and light fixtures. From the dining table's fret-work place mats to the coffee table's undulating legs, the space functions as a single, harmonious design.

Celerie's Tips for

Designing Distinctive Interiors

Cultivate collections. Anything in groupings of greater than four attracts special attention.

Seek out handmade pieces: artisanal, crafted, and imperfect. I love to see an artist's hand in an object, whether it's a woven rug or a ceramic vessel. There's something unique and honest about being able to see the creative process.

Don't underestimate accessories. Details and small touches make a home personal.

Trim details are a great way of creating upholstery that appears tailored. Adding hand-applied or glued tape trim to a sofa skirt is an easy way to breathe new life into an existing piece.

Add extra lighting. Up lights make a room's far corners seem less dingy and dreary; plant them in your trees to create dramatic ceiling shadows.

A palette of refined earth tones helps establish an atmosphere of understated elegance in the dining area. Low-backed chairs ensure the table's undisrupted line, while a graceful Murano glass light fixture provides the space with a sense of dignity and purpose. The floral paintings are by Alex Timchula.

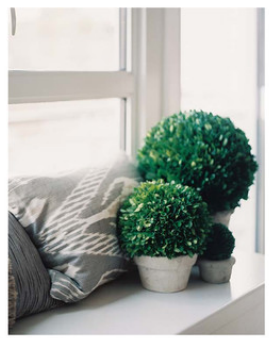
A round mirror and a starburst light fixture supply luster and texture in the entryway.

Thanks to spirited horizontal stripes, the entry hall—which connects the bedrooms to the living area—is transformed from a narrow utilitarian alleyway into an arresting visual destination.

This spacious den might offer a comfortable place for the family to unwind, but its decor remains compelling. Deep peacock blue walls provide a serene anchor to the room's vivid furnishings. The Josie sectional from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams—upholstered in Birches, a modern photographic textile by Schumacher—seamlessly blends into a salt-and-pepper shag rug. Two mirrored cocktail tables seem to float in an explosion of texture and pattern.

Farrow & Ball's Acanthus wallpaper provides a subtle floral backdrop to the master bedroom's eclectic mix of furnishings. Neutral linens by Dea balance the exotic shape of Noir Trading's Ferret Bed, and cinnamon lampshades add a burst of sophisticated color.

The bedroom's demure palette belies its outrageous sense of style. Among its many audacious furnishings are a horse bench from Revival and a peacock chair from Shi & Erhard.



Although the children's bedroom is alive with color and pattern, its decor is eminently functional. The cityscape mural, by The Alpha Workshops, gives a custom touch to the bunk beds, and pom-pom trim supplies an amusing accent to white cotton curtains from Anthropologie.

CELERIE'S ADVICE FOR

CREATING CHIC FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOMES

Don't be afraid to have nice things! We encourage clients to buy what they love and always treat furniture in high-traffic areas. Protective products such as Fiber-Seal serve as armor for sofas, window treatments, and rugs. And don't forget: upholstery can be cleaned!

Murphy beds are practical space-savers for a kid-friendly room or a convertible office/guest room.

Make choices that fit your lifestyle, and be wise about your material selections. Faux leather is the answer to all anxiety about kids and mess! Also remember that high-gloss paint finishes are easier to wipe clean, and darker color palettes and patterned fabrics hide scuffs, marks, and minor stains.

To **incorporate family photos or kids' art projects** into an interior, display them in a uniform way that expresses their sentimental value without letting chaos become the ruling aesthetic.

Wall-to-wall carpeting is perfect for a playroom. Don't be afraid of synthetics—modular pieces such as Flor tiles are perfect for heavily trafficked kid zones.

The vertical stripes on the walls and ceiling of this modestly proportioned bathroom create the illusion of space.

The bedroom is a lively exercise in scale. Next to the play table and chairs, the bunk bed by Resource Furniture and an industrial-style floor lamp seem gigantic, like a scene out of *Alice in Wonderland*.

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