New beginnings

When their children left home, two empty nesters decided to stay put and give their New York brownstone one truly stunning makeover

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KITCHEN
Rich tones and materials were chosen to bring warmth to the contemporary cabinetry. Dot Line suspension linear pendant, Lambert & Fils. Miguelito walnut counter stools, Luteca. Five-sided ceramic bowl, Maison Gerard. Teapot, Elsa Peretti for Tiffany

DINING AREA
'The nook with the custom banquette seat creates an intimate space nested within the well-crafted joinery,' says Lucy. Banquette in Blob in Timber Rose, Tibor. Clay table, M2L. Elbow chairs, Carl Hansen. Simple Shade 03, 1stDibs

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY A six-storey brownstone built in 1899

ROOMS Sitting room, living room, kitchen-diner, dining room, laundry room, office, four bedrooms, three bathrooms

LOCATION Upper East Side, New York City

‘The asymmetrical fireplace is a striking focal point and brings another layer of creativity to the space’



SITTING ROOM
‘Here, we layered visual elements and balanced pattern, repetition and contrast,’ says Lucy. Artwork by John Wigmore. Charles sofa in Licata in Lichen; Alanda 18 coffee table, B&B Italia. Line lounge chair, Luteca. Gunta Stölzl PL 106 rug, Christopher Farr. *Untitled Tan Ceramic* by Guy Corriero, The Future Perfect

A change in life often requires a change in surroundings. For this successful international couple (a Colombian woman and a man born in the United States to German and Japanese parents), however, becoming empty nesters didn't imply giving up their beloved brownstone. Enjoying their life on New York's Upper East Side – a family-friendly area with world-class restaurants and museums – they decided to opt, instead, for a renovation. For this, they trusted interior designer Lucy Harris, who has an eponymous studio in New York. An American who grew up in a modernist house in New England with creative parents, Lucy also lived in Rome and Milan for two years before establishing her studio, and she married an Italian man.

Refreshing all six floors of the house meant keeping some things the same, while reinventing others. Lucy decided, along with the owners, what should stay or go before looking at colours and architectural finishes. 'Our client originally asked for subtle, neutral materials and patterns,' says Lucy. 'However, when we showed her some design directions with a more interesting mix of high-contrast colours and materials, she got very excited. Her design sensibility changed from this experience; she branched out and is very happy with the result.'

Willing to try something unexpected, the owners jumped at the different ideas proposed by the design team, making it a fun and dynamic project. Architect Brandon Smith from WorkSmith Architects oversaw the renovations with Lucy Harris Studio who collaborated on colour, finishes and wallpaper selection. 'For the ground-floor kitchen, we integrated rich tones and materials that effuse warmth under glowy pendant lighting and paired modern furniture with vintage

LANDING
A highly sculptural staircase designed by Lucy adds a dramatic perspective



MAIN BEDROOM
'This space on the sixth floor feels like a cosy retreat to relax and rejuvenate,' says Lucy. Diamond Quilt in Auburn, Thompson Street Studio. Pium pendant; Imo bench, both Pinch, The Future Perfect. Artwork by Andrew Zimmerman, Sears Peyton Gallery

objects for an eclectic mix,' says Lucy. 'The nook with a custom banquette creates an intimate, cosy space within the luxurious, rich wood-toned millwork of this kitchen.'

In the sitting room, Lucy reupholstered the sofa with a plush mohair and focused on making spaces welcoming and conversational for family time. 'The bold lines of the rug and the angles in the coffee table are juxtaposed with the soft contours of the cushions and decorative objects,' she says. 'We also contrasted the asymmetrical fireplace with the arch of the highly textural sculpture.'

The owners' collection of art inspired the decision to give the home a gallery feel. Lucy created two different atmospheres that allow for unexpected pops while providing a neutral backdrop for her client's pieces: the reception areas are light and airy while the private spaces are warmer. A study was designed to receive in-home wellness treatments, and the playroom was reimagined as a hangout space for the kids who are now adults.

While the owners were initially nervous about big changes, they ended up fully embracing Lucy's vision. The designer succeeded in introducing playfulness while crafting interiors that are chic yet liveable, ushering in a new start for the happy residents. 25

lucyharrisstudio.com; worksmitharch.com



MAIN BATHROOM
'This opens onto a balcony overlooking the city. There are separate areas for the bath and shower, and a generous vanity with drawers for storage,' says Lucy.
Stool 60, Suite NY. Gemma lamp in Pistachio, The Future Perfect. Lodge sconces, Workstead

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