

SPECIAL: BEFORE & AFTER

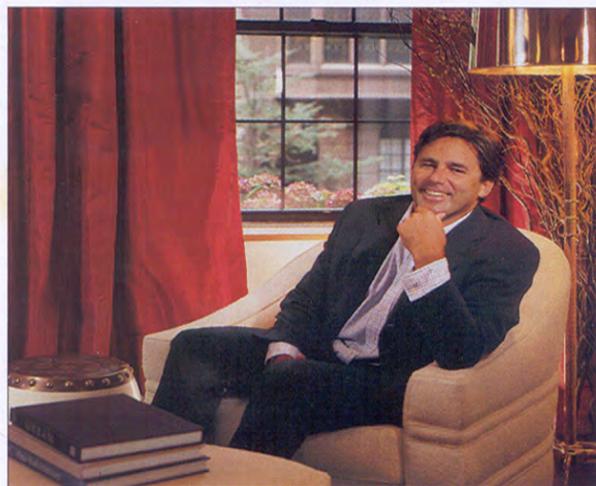
# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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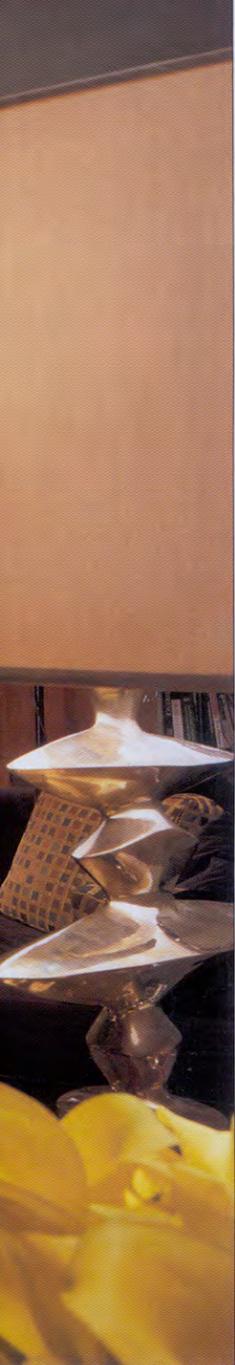
AFTER



## Inspired Connections

A RECONFIGURED MANHATTAN  
DUPLEX FORMS A UNIFIED WHOLE

Architecture and Interior Design  
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Text by Amanda Vaill  
After Photography by Durston Saylor



AFTER

It started the way these things often do: The couple wanted more space. Mary Bernard and Tom Regan work in the securities business. They travel extensively and collect art, and the demands of their fast-paced, overscheduled lives had outstripped their previous residence on Manhattan's Upper East Side. "We wanted a bigger apartment," says Tom Regan, "and we wanted one that was well suited to entertaining." Nor was that all: They were also looking for that elusive element known as charm. And, oh, yes—"Outdoor space—even small space—was a must," Regan adds.

With that kind of wish list, compromises were inevitable. The couple found



BEFORE

BEFORE PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY CAMPION A. PLATT ARCHITECTS

Architect Campion A. Platt (opposite) converted the awkwardly configured Manhattan duplex of Tom Regan and Mary Bernard into an elegantly scaled space. "The first floor is now a large, interconnected entertaining area," says Platt. LEFT: The library felt dark and cloistered.

ABOVE LEFT: By moving a first-floor hallway, Platt allowed the library to flow into the dining room. Holly Hunt chocolate sofa fabric and bronze lamp; Coraggio lampshade; Odegard runner. ABOVE: Platt designed the room's cream-colored sofa and upholstered armchair.



AFTER



BEFORE

a floor-through duplex, with a garden, comprising the first two floors of a brownstone—but it was in Murray Hill, a lower-midtown residential neighborhood they hadn't seriously considered, and it was an architectural mishmash. The first floor was chopped up by a narrow raised corridor that made the library at its end seem "like a bat cave," remembers Regan. The second floor featured a front parlor that had been divided into two tiny cell-like bedrooms, with a central window enclosed by a jury-rigged triangular window wall. Behind the subdivided parlor was the

high-ceilinged, wainscoted master bedroom, painted in a pale green that seemed more at home in a doctor's office than a Manhattan brownstone.

"We'd seen Campion Platt's work," Regan says, "and after interviewing three designers, we chose him because he had an immediate vision of how to solve the flow problem and real excitement about the space." Not to mention plans that would double the budget the couple had anticipated. But, says Platt, "they had had the imagination to buy a place with good bones, and they saw that the floor plan led to real opportunities."



AFTER

OPPOSITE ABOVE: Platt's brief for the dining room was to create a space that could double as a gallery. "I made the dining table out of aspen with a stainless-steel base, combining the soft with the hard," he says. Bergamo cushion fabric. OPPOSITE: The original space.

ABOVE: Platt turned the house's old dining room (right) into a study, for which he designed the zebra-wood-and-stainless-steel low table. The metal on the mantel matches that of the metal-and-glass doors. Old World Weavers sofa fabric; Odegard rug; Janus et Cie planter.



BEFORE

Bernard "wanted the entrance hall to seem like a gallery, with lots of open space," says Platt—but the designer went her one better. He suggested a substantial structural change on the first floor: tearing out the awkward raised hallway, moving it to one side and eliminating the steps, thus providing an uninterrupted flow from the entrance hall to the library. Along one side of this connecting corridor would be recesses for exhibiting the couple's collection of Tang Dynasty sculpture; on the other there would be room for a closet and a guest bath. The loftlike space at the en-



AFTER



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trance would double as a gallery and a formal dining room.

Bernard didn't want a conventional dining table but rather "something that looked like a piece of sculpture," says Platt—so he designed and built a table in French aspen, shaped like an elongated bow tie with deep notches at each end and mounted on a base of stainless steel. He then surrounded it with tall-back bleached-sycamore chairs that evoke the designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and covered the formerly red and green walls with a creamy ivory.

The neutral palette not only made this connecting suite of rooms a harmo-



BEFORE

LEFT: A corner of one of two upstairs bedrooms that were joined to make a new living room. ABOVE LEFT: In response to the clients' request for a work space in the living room, Platt conceived a desk from Gabon ebony and black leather; on it sits a 1940s French nickel lamp.

ABOVE RIGHT: The living room's 19th-century settee came from the Grand Hôtel Noailles in Marseilles. Platt created the nickel-and-leather chairs. Bergamo floor pillow and drapery fabrics; Cowtan & Tout throw pillow fabrics; Edelman chair leather; Jim Thompson throw silk.



nious whole but also served as a foil for the couple's art collection, from which Platt—usually a monochromist—derived the few strong touches of color that spike his design. In the library, carpeted in white cowhide and filled with pieces of Platt's design upholstered in white or off-white, striking panels of tangerine silk taffeta hang on the front wall, where they can be moved like shoji screens to cover the windows. The vibrant color is echoed in the John Grillo gouache that stands in front of them, and again—more faintly—in the glazes of the Tang sculptures in the hall.

Despite his brief for radical change,

Platt knew when to leave well enough alone. He barely touched the kitchen—"just a coat of paint"—and in the former dining room behind it, now a study, he merely walled up a window with an unappealing view and furnished the room in comfortable, functional pieces that work well for casual entertaining—including a yellow sofa that picks up the color of the lemons in the Franco Prayer painting over the mantelpiece.

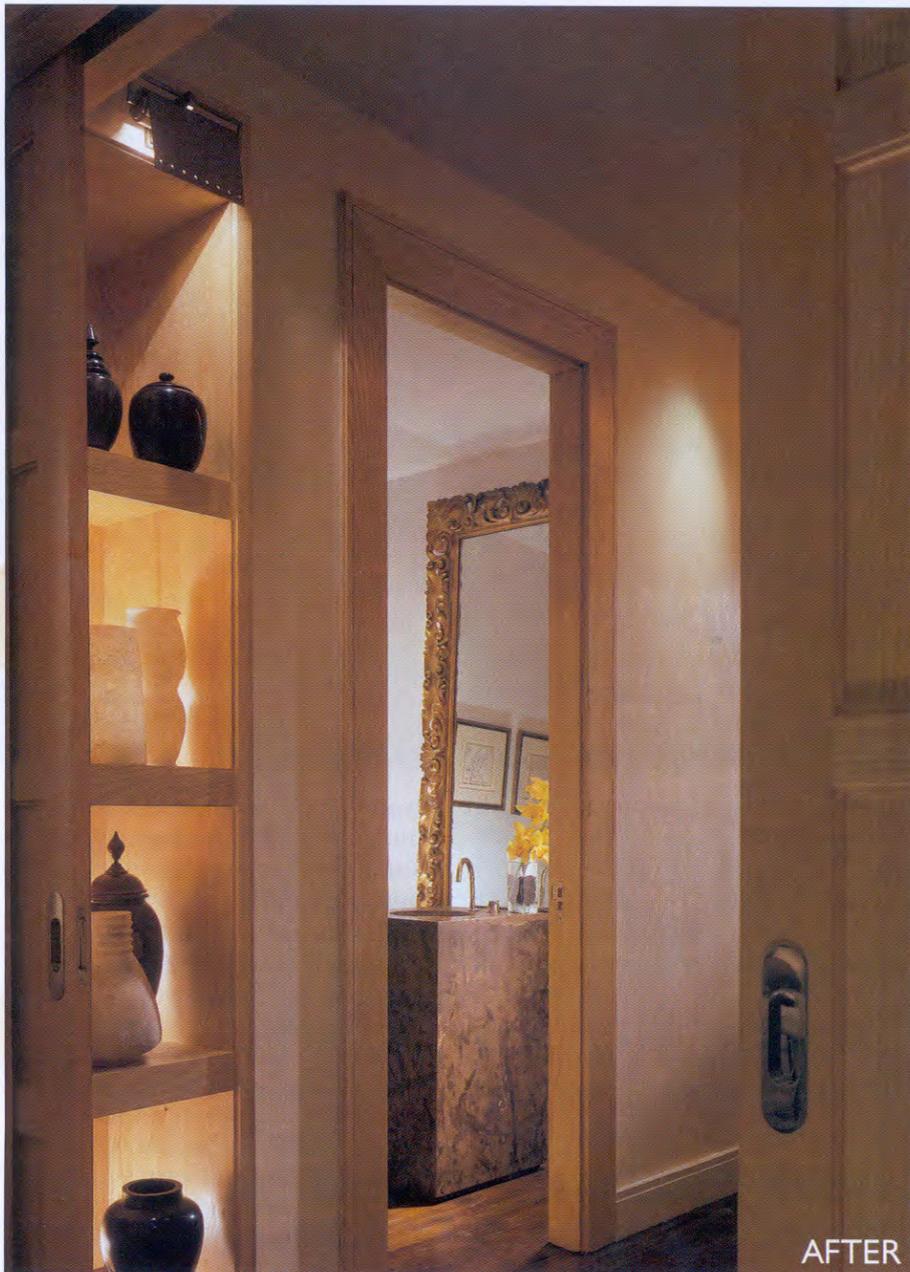
Upstairs, Regan and Bernard had been planning on redoing the master bath, whose black-tile wainscoting and mirrored walls had a second-rate-hotel feel; but Platt persuaded them to rip

out and rethink the bedroom hallway—which featured an awkward flight of stairs—as well as the dressing area and a closet along its length. His solution incorporated custom cherry cabinetwork and cleverly placed the dressing room on one level, the bath on another and the master bedroom itself on a third. In the bedroom, taking his cue from the wainscoting, Platt built a seat in the bay window and topped a 19th-century marble mantel with a Venetian mirror that carries out the classical theme. A 1940s Venetian glass secretaire and nickel-and-green-resin side tables of Platt's own design blend effortlessly



LEFT: The upstairs hallway was originally marked by a jarring angularity. BELOW: "We reorganized the hallway circulation around the center core and shelving." Beyond the door is a limestone sink designed by Platt; the mirror is in a Rococo parcel-gilt frame.

OPPOSITE: Platt left the wainscoting in the master bedroom (right) intact but refinished the oak floors to make them lighter. The 1940s glass secretaire and the 1920s mirror are both Venetian. The marble chimneypiece is Victorian. Lorin Marsh articulated floor lamp.



The first floor was chopped up by a narrow corridor that made the library at its end seem "like a bat cave."

with the older pieces to create a tranquil sleeping environment.

In the restored front parlor, Bernard "wanted a sense of theater," says Platt. So he created a full-width salon with Venetian-plaster walls, cove ceilings and a stark white Thassos marble chimney breast extending to the crown molding, on which hangs an unusual early-19th-century Venetian mirror. Most of the furnishings were from his custom collection, but the pièce de résistance came from a hotel in Marseilles: a massive 19th-century French gilt settee, upholstered in creamy silk, with a tasseled bolster running its entire length. Its look-at-me rococo swagger snaps the whole room to attention.

At last—especially since they're not camping out with friends or staying in hotels, as they did during the worst of their renovation—they feel they got the new home they wanted when they first went house hunting. "It's a wonderful place for entertaining, because the rooms are intriguing but also inviting," says Regan. "It was way more work than we expected at the outset—but we're way happier than we ever would have been if we hadn't done it." □



AFTER