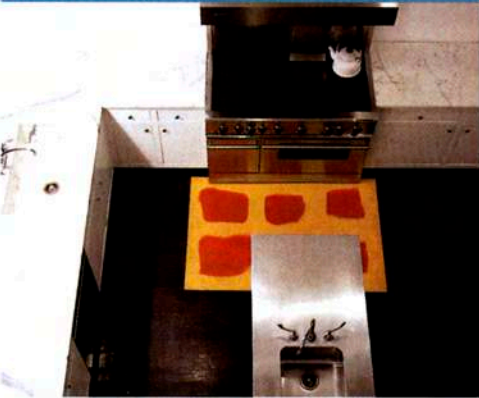


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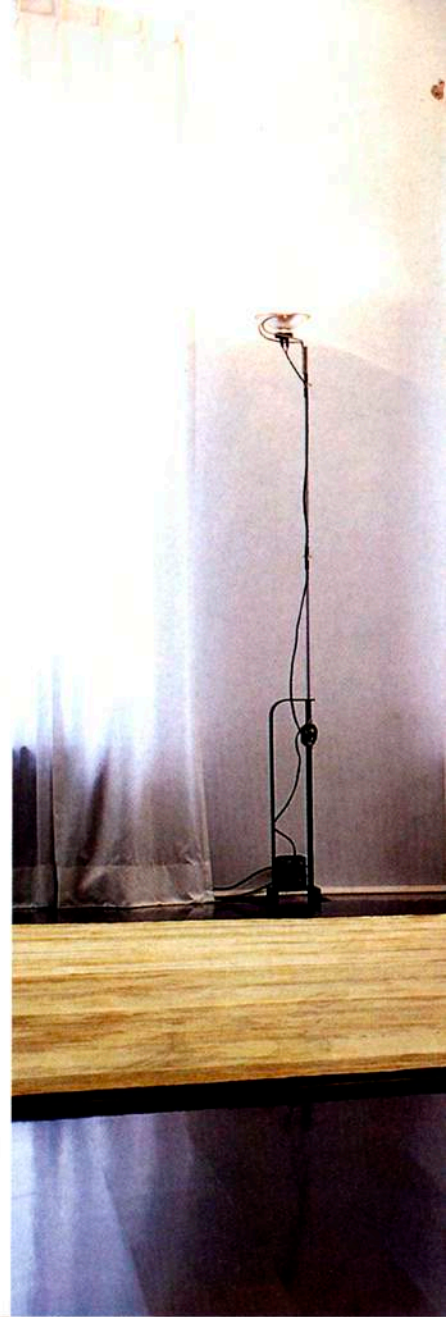


Updating a New York residence, Annabelle Selldorf made mantras of “reduce” and “refine”



Previous spread: At a New York residence renovated by Selldorf Architects, the skylight above the oak staircase fills all five floors with sunshine.

Left, from top: An oak-floored pantry-hallway. The adjacent fourth-floor kitchen. **Below:** The room features Carrara marble countertops, stainless-steel appliances, and Romeo Moon pendant fixtures by Philippe Starck. **Right:** In the fourth floor's living-dining room, a 1965 George Nakashima walnut daybed stands on a custom Tibetan silk rug. Custom leather-covered seating mats surround a custom table of oak blocks topped by granite. Linen drapes the windows.





“Hand-painted wallpaper in the stair hall, gold-speckled green granite countertops in the kitchen, awful woodwork everywhere,” says architect Annabelle Selldorf, identifying the prime offenders at a New York residence. The five-story town house had last been renovated in the early 1990’s—and that was only part of the problem. Visual cacophony was amplified by the narrowness of the TriBeCa building, which, at 5,500 square feet, is just 23 feet wide. Selldorf Architects came in to pare things down for the owners: a South African hotel heiress, her computer-programmer husband, and their two daughters.

Selldorf and director of interiors Francine Pendleton, project architect, immediately

disposed of anything even hinting at fussiness. Fireplaces lost their corbeled mantelpieces. Finials were lopped off newel posts, ceiling coffers smoothed over, exposed-brick walls sheathed in plasterboard to bounce light through the space.

Thanks to an impressive atrium stairwell, natural light is one of the house’s greatest amenities, enticing visitors up to the public rooms at the top. But the stairwell’s central position also restricted what could be done with the layout. “You don’t change the location of the stair. You change the transition of the spaces,” explains Selldorf. For example, eliminating craftsman-style transoms—main culprits among the “awful woodwork”—raised doorways to ceiling

height to improve the spatial flow.

With the interior opened up, plays of dark and light provide contrast. Wide oak floor planks in a custom espresso stain anchor and soften otherwise bright spaces while acting as a foil for the white of the fourth-floor kitchen’s Carrara marble counters and painted cabinets. Dark wood furniture does the same for vivid rugs.

A terrace’s grid of limestone pavers, delineated by strips of pebble-studded concrete, exemplifies the overall rectilinearity of Selldorf’s scheme, as does the living-dining room’s furniture. A 1965 George Nakashima daybed in walnut, with a new mohair-covered cushion, stands parallel to a custom dining table, a narrow granite →

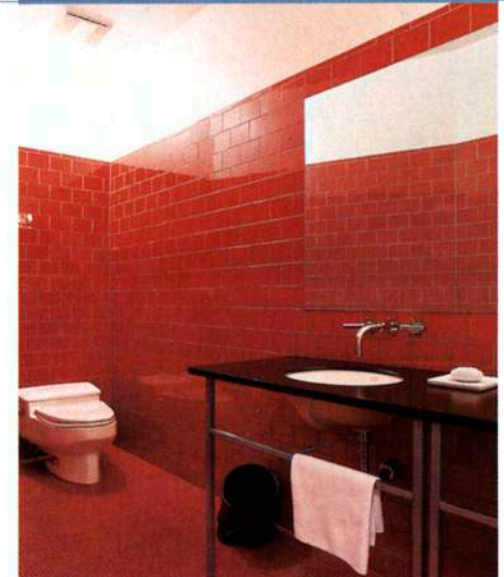




slab set on oak blocks low enough that guests eat sitting on leather-covered mats.

However, the straight lines and neutral colors coexist with more adventuresome gestures. The family room behind the open kitchen features vibrant Tibetan rugs and leggy 1950's Italian lamps. A mat in candy-colored resin and hand-carved African stools enliven the kitchen proper. And a powder room is tiled tomato-red. "With everything so simple," Selldorf explains, "I throw in a curve ball." Indeed, while the project is informed by the same architectural rigor as the galleries and museums for which she's best known, the job also offered opportunities for the occasional improvised flourish.

Juxtapositions of sober and splashy continue on the third floor. The couple's office—with its industrial desks and filing cabinets—lies next to the children's playful playroom, its wall collaged in South Asian prints worthy of a Bollywood poster. Both daughters' rooms feature alcove beds, one canopied in white linen, the other curtained in pale yellow silk.



Left: The family room—with its Selldorf-designed sofa, walnut cocktail table, 1950's Italian floor lamps, and custom Tibetan wool rug—opens to a south-facing terrace. Above: A bamboo trellis shades a Sunbrella-upholstered built-in daybed on the roof terrace. Right, from top: Selldorf Architects applied a multidirectional finish and wax to the steel elevator doors. In the fourth floor's glass-tiled powder room, Corian tops the custom vanity.



Top: In the children's playroom, a collage of South Asian prints papers the walls. Furniture includes a molded-fiberglass Pastil chair by Eero Aarnio and a vintage molded-plastic desk and chair. **Bottom:** In the younger daughter's room, silk curtains enclose a bed with a custom brushed-cotton cover. An Isamu Noguchi lamp is beyond.

Opposite: The master suite's French 1970's sconce hangs beside a custom mirror framed in satin nickel. Reflected in the mirror are Selldorf's platform bed and wall-mounted headboard, both slip-covered in cotton canvas; a David Weeks floor lamp; and a vinyl-covered chair that Carlo Mollino designed in 1959 for a dance hall in Turin, Italy.

Red touches—a cashmere throw on the bed, the vinyl on a Carlo Mollino armchair and ottoman—accent the overall brown-and-white palette of the second-floor master suite. Pure white reasserts itself in the master bath, fitted with a Thassos marble vanity and floor, plus a generous walk-in steam shower clad in structural glass.

The master bath, however polished, could exist in any number of five-star hotels. But a windowless room tucked away next door speaks more particularly to the residents' personal inclinations. What started as a 150-square-foot "dance room" is now a yoga chamber, after Selldorf stripped the ballet-studio mirrors from the walls and the rubber matting from the floor.

It's not the kind of task Selldorf encounters in the art world, but her outlook nevertheless remained the same. "Our job was similar to a chiropractor's," she says. "Adjust the bones a bit, change the proportions slightly—and be a little playful." 🐣

PROJECT TEAM: SANDRA BOHARY; KEVIN CANNON; HEIDI SCHÄFER.

FLOOR MAT (KITCHEN), LAMP (MASTER SUITE): TROY. RANGE (KITCHEN): VIKING RANGE CORPORATION. REFRIGERATOR: SUB-ZERO FREEZER COMPANY. CHAIRS: EMECO. PENDANT FIXTURES (KITCHEN), FLOOR LAMPS (LIVING-DINING ROOM): FLOS. DAYBED (LIVING-DINING ROOM): GEORGE NAKASHIMA, WOODWORKER; MAHARAM (FABRIC), CUSTOM RUG: CARINI LANG. CUSTOM SEATING MATS: HERMES. CURTAIN FABRIC (LIVING-DINING ROOM, DAUGHTER'S ROOM, MASTER SUITE): ROGERS & GOFFIGON. LAMPS (FAMILY ROOM): THROUGH FRED SILBERMAN. CUSTOM SOFA UPHOLSTERY, DRAPES (FAMILY ROOM), CUSTOM CUSHIONS (ROOF TERRACE), CUSTOM BEDCOVER (DAUGHTER'S ROOM): LA REGENCE. CUSHION FABRIC (ROOF TERRACE): GLEN RAVEN CUSTOM FABRICS. WALL TILE (POWDER ROOM): INTERSTYLE CERAMIC AND GLASS. FLOOR TILE: BISAZZA. SINK: KOHLER. SINK FITTINGS: DORNBRACHT. ROUND CHAIR (PLAYROOM): DELTA THROUGH C.I.T.E. DESK, CHAIR: THROUGH AERO STUDIOS. BEDCOVER FABRIC (DAUGHTER'S ROOM): OSBORNE & LITTLE. PLATFORM UPHOLSTERY: HOLLY HUNT. LAMP: AKARI. SCONCE (MASTER SUITE): THROUGH 1950. CUSTOM MIRROR: WYETH. CHAIR: THROUGH R 20TH CENTURY. BED, HEADBOARD FABRIC: KRAVET. THROW: FRETTE. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: GILSANZ MURRAY STEFICEK. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: THOMAS STEPHENS CONSTRUCTION.

- 1 TERRACE
- 2 FAMILY ROOM
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 STAIR
- 5 LIVING-DINING ROOM

