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A New Classic

DESIGNER EVE ROBINSON AND ARCHITECT JOHN B. MURRAY REUNITE TO EXPAND AND REFRESH A LONGTIME CLIENT'S APARTMENT TO DAZZLING EFFECT.

BY **LAURA FENTON**
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Old Meets New (OPPOSITE)
Murray restored the gallery's wood paneling and created the skylight during the original renovation. The glass and bronze doors were added in the more recent remodel. Robinson had the Hans Wegner chairs reupholstered in a Holly Hunt fabric as part of the recent refresh. (THIS IMAGE) A painting by Kelly Reemtsen hangs above a custom cabinet by Roman Thomas in the gallery, creating a decidedly contemporary tableaux against the original oak paneling.

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Light & Bright (LEFT) Murray engineered a new staircase to connect the original apartment to the new space above. A Drift chandelier cascades down through the stairwell above a Joel Shapiro sculpture. (THIS IMAGE) The client asked Robinson to curate a gallery wall in the living room from their extensive collection of portraits. The canvases now hang over the Roman Thomas sofa nearby Holly Hunt ottomans, a Roman Thomas coffee table, a custom settee, and Jens Risom chair, which create a welcoming seating arrangement.



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ensitively remodeling a pre-war apartment takes finesse (not to mention infinite patience to deal with co-op boards and New York City permitting). When one family renovated their home on the Upper East Side

nearly two decades ago, they found their dream team in interior designer Eve Robinson and architect John B. Murray. So, when an apartment above theirs became available years later, they called Murray and Robinson back to execute the upwards expansion and a whole-home refresh, which was due after years of raising kids in their home.

“The goal was to retain the pre-war feeling, but update it and make it feel fresh and current,” says Robinson. Working together, Murray and Robinson forged a



Dining In (OPPOSITE) The dining room's vintage Murano chandelier features blown glass flowers. The handmade Odegard rug from Tibet is a twin to the client's old carpet, but reimagined in a lavender. (ABOVE) Robinson used an elegantly veined statuary marble on the backsplash only, opting for a more resilient man-made stone for the countertop.

plan to turn the maze of tiny rooms upstairs into a new lounge and home gym with access to the roof terrace. Downstairs, the entrance hall was extended to the new staircase, while some smaller rooms were combined to create a new spacious family room off the kitchen.

The trick was to figure out how to honor the historical architecture while subtly making it more contemporary. "The original renovation was more classical, but the new direction was a paring back," says Murray. "The interior architecture still has the compositional elements of a pre-war apartment: There's a cornice, a base, trim with the doors, but it's all simplified a bit," he explains of the attenuated moldings. "We don't have anything that's fussy, which I think works nicely with Eve's furniture selections and her interior sensibility."

The kitchen is especially finely balanced between tradition and today. Inset cabinets with hidden hinges keep the look clean without veering too sharply into a contemporary look. "What I like about the apartment is how everything is so taut; it is definitely articulated," adds Murray. Robinson dressed the streamlined cabinetry up with a backsplash of an expressive, modern marble. Likewise, the new stairwell is sculptural and light, but not out of place in the pre-war setting. Glass and bronze doors bring a contemporary sensibility to the gallery that plays nicely against that original oak paneling.

Robinson wove fresh life into the stately rooms with unique wall treatments. "I love layering spaces by adding wallpaper or a textural wall finish," says Robinson. A dazzling Phillip Jeffries wallpaper now adorns the dining room; a delicate,

True Blue

This family room is lacquered in Benjamin Moore's Kensington Blue.

The Roman Thomas sofa is upholstered in a Designers Guild fabric, while the coffee table hails from The Bright Group and the chair from Holly Hunt.





Soothing Suite
(LEFT) In the primary bedroom, a Chuck Close from the owner's collection hangs above the client's chair, which is reupholstered in a Jiun Ho fabric. (OPPOSITE) The wallpaper behind the Roman Thomas headboard is a handsketched pattern from Fromental; the nightstands are from The Bright Group.



hand-drawn print by Fromental appears in the primary suite; a lacquer and a cross hatch decorative finish enliven the painted rooms. Robinson ran with the client's love of blue, but veered to lavender and gray in some rooms for a cool-toned color scheme with depth. "I think that it's really important to have continuity and thoughtfulness between rooms," says Robinson of the defined palette.

While the furnishings are mostly clean-lined and understated, Robinson went all out with light fixtures, likening them to jewelry, as designers often do. In

this apartment, the metaphor is especially apt. A Drift fixture that hangs in the stairwell isn't just a little bit of sparkle thrown on at the end: It is a statement, room-making element that commands attention. "They're almost like crowning moments," says Robinson.

This combination of understated timelessness with bursts of more elevated luxury makes this venerable home feel totally of this moment. "It's a new generation," says Murray. "The simplicity resonates with them and with us." ✨