



Eric J. Smith and
Erik R. Smith,
architect and
designer,
join forces
on an art-filled
New York
pied-à-terre

talent squared

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It sounds like a recipe for chaos. But when Eric J. Smith Architect teamed up with the interiors firm of Erik R. Smith on a New York pied-à-terre, the practically same-name team managed to produce an oasis of calm, a subtle backdrop for a rotating collection of contemporary art. Works by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and

house and a previous New York apartment while employed by *Interior Design* Hall of Fame member David Easton.

The more contemporary approach for the current pied-à-terre was a departure for the couple—one that came with challenging technical demands during construction. “We just had to be dead-on with every joint and every transition. It’s not like having moldings at the edges,” architect Smith says. Meanwhile, designer Smith threw himself into finding artisans who could panel the foyer in parchment edged in nickel bands, cover the library walls in linen, and apply Venetian plaster in the master suite. “An enormous amount of time was spent procuring materials and completing the custom work,” he says.

Finishes aside, part of the comfort derives from existing virtues of the 1906 building, originally a seafarer’s residence and recently a home for the elderly. Among these are an abundance of sunlight and a generous 3,500-square-foot layout with a central hallway defining the enfilade of public areas on one side—living room, dining room, kitchen, library—as separate from the two bedroom wings on the other. This raw material, however, required shaping.

Ellsworth Kelly are shown off in surroundings that are architecturally immaculate. Yet there’s none of a gallery’s chill, thanks to an array of finishes that add a dimension sensed as much as seen.

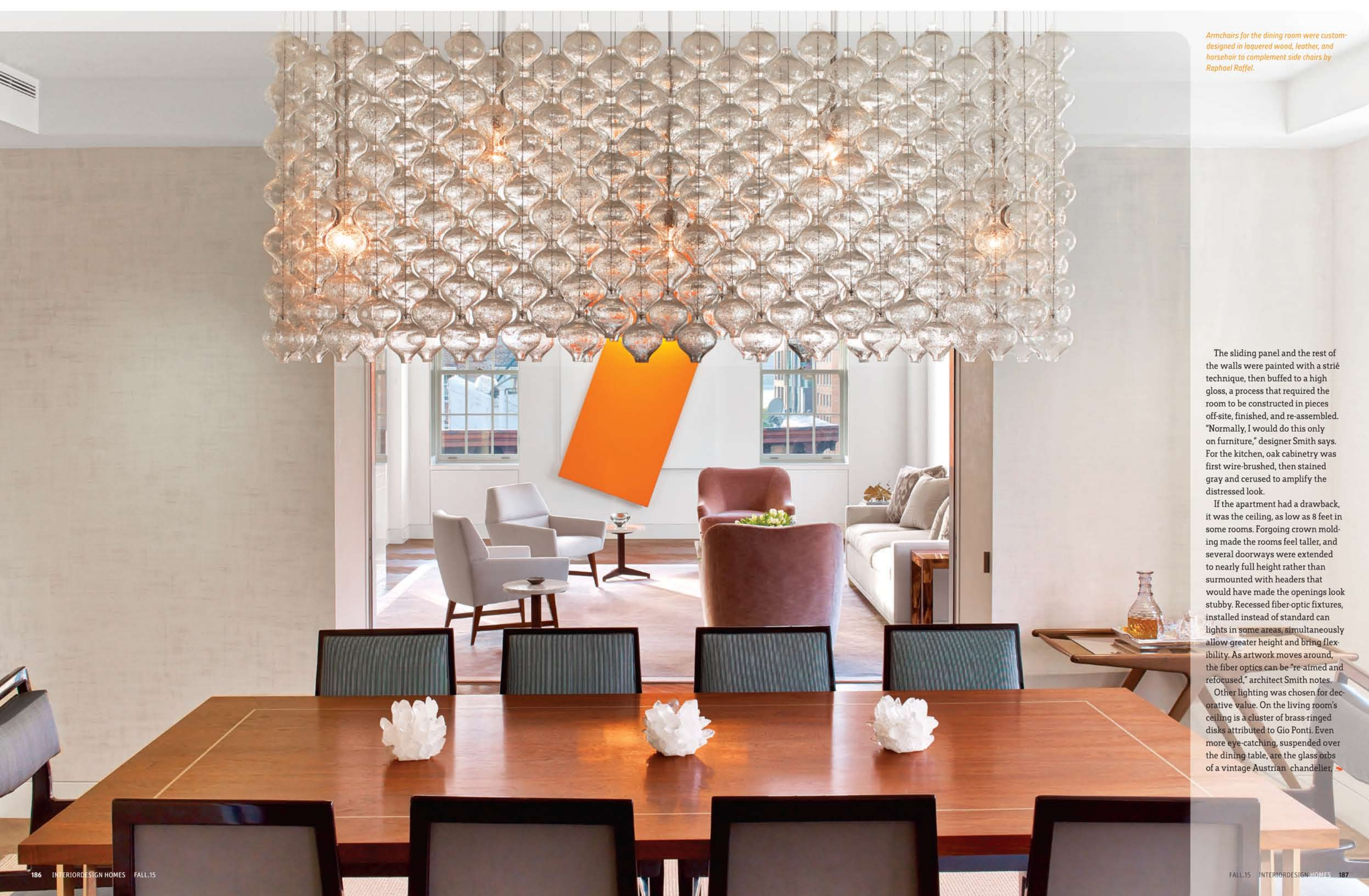
The Messrs. Smith had worked with these clients before, both separately and together. Eric J. Smith—reminder, he’s the architect—had previously built the couple’s main residence, in Chicago, and their Colorado vacation house, projects typical of his “pared-down classical” style, he says. Erik R. Smith—yes, the designer—knew the couple well, too, having worked on their Colorado

The Smiths considered themselves lucky to intervene while the upstairs neighbor was relocating some plumbing. As a result, a drain pipe could be removed from the central hallway’s ceiling to turn it into a smooth, flat surface befitting what was to function as a gallery. Today, a large-scale triptych by Christopher Wool lines a wall, and the long space terminates at an aubergine-lacquered wet bar presided over by a Jeff Koons monkey print. The kitchen and bathrooms could also be customized. A powder room got a shower, but it can disappear behind a sliding panel when there’s company. ➤

Previous spread: Eric J. Smith Architect and Erik R. Smith collaborated on a New York apartment where a chandelier by J.T. Kalmar dominates the view from the dining room into the living room.

Top: The living room’s ceiling fixture by Gio Ponti illuminates drinks tables by Edward Wormley and a cocktail table by Khouri Guzman Bunce Lining, while Ellsworth Kelly’s oil on canvas hangs on the end wall. **Bottom, from left:** The kitchen’s custom cabinetry is wire-brushed, stained, cerused oak. A Jeff Koons print presides over the bar’s counters of glazed French lava stone.

Opposite top: In the entry, nickel bands edge the parchment-wrapped wall panels. **Opposite bottom:** Christopher Wool’s silk-screen triptych lines the central corridor.



Armchairs for the dining room were custom-designed in laquered wood, leather, and horsehair to complement side chairs by Raphael Raffel.

The sliding panel and the rest of the walls were painted with a strié technique, then buffed to a high gloss, a process that required the room to be constructed in pieces off-site, finished, and re-assembled. "Normally, I would do this only on furniture," designer Smith says. For the kitchen, oak cabinetry was first wire-brushed, then stained gray and cerused to amplify the distressed look.

If the apartment had a drawback, it was the ceiling, as low as 8 feet in some rooms. Forgoing crown molding made the rooms feel taller, and several doorways were extended to nearly full height rather than surmounted with headers that would have made the openings look stubby. Recessed fiber-optic fixtures, installed instead of standard can lights in some areas, simultaneously allow greater height and bring flexibility. As artwork moves around, the fiber optics can be "re-aimed and refocused," architect Smith notes.

Other lighting was chosen for decorative value. On the living room's ceiling is a cluster of brass-ringed disks attributed to Gio Ponti. Even more eye-catching, suspended over the dining table, are the glass orbs of a vintage Austrian chandelier.

bought from a dealer who claimed it came from the Las Vegas set of Martin Scorsese's *Casino*.

For watching movies and sports, the couple did insist on a 50-inch television for the living room. In a formal space, intended for cocktail parties with art-world cognoscenti, how do you hide such a beast? Right above the fireplace—lit with a nontoxic, environmentally friendly chemical flame—one of the wall's lacquered panels is movable, and behind lurks the TV. When it's viewing time, the panel slides back, and the screen can extend on a mechanical arm.

Concealing the flat-screen in a modest-size guest room—opposite a bed with a cleverly space-saving upholstered headboard wall—wasn't deemed necessary. The dark blue rectangle in a black frame looks, at first glance, like minimalist art. Mr. Malevich, meet Mr. Sony. 📺

PROJECT TEAM

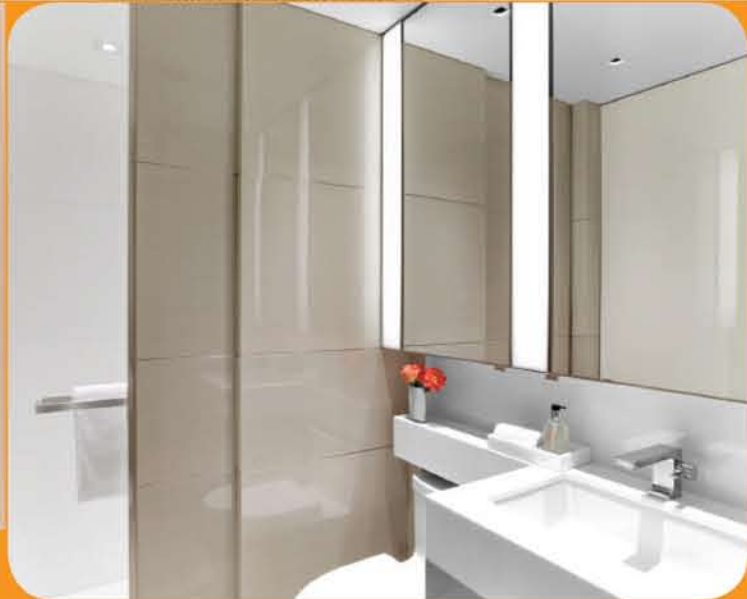
PETRA ANALIA GARZA; KEN YOST; KATERI STEWART; IGOR IDAK; ZAHARENIA SVINGOS; WILLIAM CHEUNG; ERIC J. SMITH ARCHITECT. BETSY BERRY; ERIC R. SMITH. SANDRA LIOTUS LIGHTING DESIGN: LIGHTING CONSULTANT. CLOUD 9 SMARTHOME: AUDIOVISUAL CONSULTANT. JRH ACOUSTICAL CONSULTING: ACOUSTICAL CONSULTANT. DOMINICK R. PILLA ASSOCIATES: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. CONSULTING ENGINEERING SERVICES: MECHANICAL ENGINEER. ARTISTIC MARBLE & ONYX: STONEWORK. GALAXY GLASS & STONE: GLASSWORK. GRACE, RYAN & MAGNUS MILLWORK: WOODWORK. PR METAL DESIGN: METALWORK. J. EDLIN INTERIORS; JONAS UPHOLSTERY; MANZANARES FURNITURE CORP.; ARABELLE TAGGART: UPHOLSTERY WORKSHOPS. FRESCO; STEPHEN GAMBLE SIGNATURE FINISHES; MHG STUDIOS; OSMUNDO STUDIO: FINISH CONTRACTORS. NORDIC CUSTOM BUILDERS: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT THROUGH PRIME GALLERY: CHANDELIER (DINING ROOM). HOLLAND & SHERRY: ARMCHAIR FABRIC (LIVING ROOM). CHAPAS TEXTILES: SOFA FABRIC. BIRMINGHAM & CO.: SOIE DE LUNE: PILLOW FABRIC. THROUGH WRIGHT NOW: ROUND TABLES. ATELIER VIOLET: CUSTOM SQUARE TABLES. KHOURI GUZMAN BUNCE LININGER: CUSTOM COCKTAIL TABLE (LIVING ROOM), CUSTOM TABLE (DINING ROOM). THROUGH PASCAL BOYER GALLERY: ARMCHAIRS (LIVING ROOM), LAMPS (MASTER BEDROOM). HOLLY HUNT: CLUB CHAIR FABRIC (LIVING ROOM), BENCH FABRIC (MASTER BEDROOM). DESIGN WITHIN REACH: STOOLS (KITCHEN). TJS CABINETRY: CUSTOM CABINETRY. NEMO TILE COMPANY: BACKSPLASH TILE. SUB-ZERO GROUP: REFRIGERATOR. WOLF: RANGE. FRANK: SINK. DORNBRACHT: SINK FITTINGS (KITCHEN, BATHROOM). GROUPE PDP: COUNTER MATERIAL (BAR). LUALDI: CUSTOM DOOR (ENTRY). THROUGH LIZ O'BRIEN: CANDLE HOLDERS (DINING ROOM).



STUDIO VAN DEN AKKER: CUSTOM ARMCHAIRS. THROUGH BERND GOECKLER ANTIQUES: SIDE CHAIRS (DINING ROOM), BENCH (GUEST ROOM). DUALOY LEATHER: CHAIR UPHOLSTERY (DINING ROOM, MASTER BEDROOM). BODALAN DRUK: WALL COVERING (LIBRARY). EDELMAN: OTTOMAN UPHOLSTERY. LORO PIANA: CHAIR FABRIC. THROUGH CLAREMONT FURNISHING: SOFA FABRIC. ROSE TARLOW MELROSE HOUSE: PURPLE PILLOW FABRIC. FORTUNY: BROWN PILLOW FABRIC (LIBRARY), PILLOW FABRIC, CHAIR FABRIC (GUEST ROOM). THROUGH ORANGE: CEILING FIXTURES (LIBRARY, MASTER BEDROOM). THROUGH CRAIG VAN DEN BRULLE: CEILING FIXTURE (GUEST ROOM). VCA: CUSTOM DRESSER. THROUGH VAN DEN AKKER ANTIQUES: CHAIR. JOHN BOYD TEXTILES: BENCH FABRIC. RALPH LAUREN: HEADBOARD FABRIC. BLANCHE P. FIELD: CUSTOM LAMPSHADES (BEDROOMS). THROUGH GUERIDON: SCONCES. THROUGH QUOTIENT: BENCH (MASTER BEDROOM). THROUGH SPUTNIK MODERN: CHAIR. J. CURATOLO RESTORATION: CUSTOM DESK, NIGHTSTAND. HINES & COMPANY: HEADBOARD FABRIC. SPINNEYBECK: SHELF UPHOLSTERY (DRESSING ROOM). KOHLER CO.: SINK (BATHROOM). TOTO: TOILET. THROUGHOUT BEAUVAIS CARPETS: CUSTOM RUGS, CARPET. PIVOT-ETC.: DRAWER PULLS, DOOR HARDWARE. NO. 8 LIGHTING: RECESSED CEILING FIXTURES. ABC WORLDWIDE STONE; ALABAMA STONE COMPANY; AMENDOLA MARBLE & STONE: STONE SUPPLIERS.



Opposite top: In the library, a custom chair upholstered in wool faces an Andy Warhol mixed-media work that incorporates diamond dust. Opposite

bottom: Roy Lichtenstein's mixed-media work anchors a guest room. Top: An oil on canvas by Mel Bochner and a photograph of Audrey Hepburn by Richard Avedon stand out against the master bedroom's Venetian plaster. Bottom, from left: The dressing room's built-in cabinetry is bleached onigre. When a painted, buffed panel slides across the front of the shower, a bathroom near the entry can appear to be a powder room.