THE SMART SET
DECORATING SECRETS FROM DESIGN EXPERTS

AD’S ULTIMATE RENOVATION STYLE GUIDE
RENZO PIANO REINVENTS THE WHITNEY MUSEUM
Clockwise from left: Celerie Kemble and her clan in the Dominican Republic. Dax Miller and Alexandra von Furstenberg at their L.A. home. Faux bookshelves open to a secret passage in Alexa Hampton's New York living room. Allegra Hicks and Roberto Mottola di Amato in Naples, Italy. Striped porcelain imported from Belgium.
Brave New World

Setting her beloved neutrals aside, decorator Alexa Hampton invigorates her young family’s Manhattan home with rich colors and lively patterns.
Classical meets contemporary in the family room of the recently renovated Manhattan apartment of interior decorator Alexa Hampton, banker Pavlos Papageorgiou, and their three children. The desk is from her collection for Hickory Chair, and she also designed the cocktail table (made by Frederick P. Victoria & Son) and the Jansen-style club chair. For details see Sources.
My family must have been very, very good in 2013. Unwrapping presents on a cold Christmas morning in Manhattan, my children found a tiny package without a card; inside was a key. What it opened was a mystery. After an hour of trying to solve the riddle, my husband, Pavlos Papageorgiou, casually observed that the key resembled the one to our front door. Our young children—twin sons Michael and Markos and daughter Kiki—and I, all still clad in our pajamas, ambled into the elevator hall and tried every lock. Nothing opened. Drat.

Pavlos then pointed out that—as a consequence of our having, a few years earlier, merged our original small prewar apartment with another—we had access to a second elevator hall. Once again the children and I tried the key in all available locks. At the last one, the tumblers turned and the door opened, revealing Santa’s present: a little flat replete with red bows on the walls. Combined with ours and reordered, it could create a home we could live in forever, like the apartment my late father, decorator Mark Hampton, and my mother, Duane, purchased the year I was born and where she still lives. The gift-wrapped square footage also came with an unexpected backstory: Turns out Michael had asked Santa for more space after watching Miracle on 34th Street. So, thank you, Santa. Thank you, Michael. And thank you, 20th Century Fox!

Planning one’s foreseeably permanent home gives one a license, perhaps even a mandate, to live only with what you really, truly love. For me that means classical details. Architectural fragments à la Sir John Soane. Grand Tour souvenirs. Landscape paintings by Julian Barrow, prints by Giovanni Battista Piranesi and Hector d’Espouy, and photographs by Massimo Listri. Tiger-striped silk velvet and antelope-spot carpeting. Irish matting. Marble mantels. Louis XIV and XVI furniture, real or not. And Regency, Empire, and Napoléon III antiques.

Since I also love—and want to live happily with—my family, I had to consider their desires, too, at least a little bit. Pavlos asked for maps, a green dining room (who knows why), a Toto toilet in his bath (I am personally a devotee of Gerber’s flushometer), and a range hood that vents outside rather than recirculates. The New York City Department of Buildings had different ideas about the hood, but I managed the other...
A detail of the Parthenon's frieze, painted by Hampton, hangs above the living room’s custom-made sofa, which is covered in a Kravet fabric; the klismos chair is by Alexa Hampton for Hickory Chair, Louis XVI chairs flank the mantel (designed by Hampton for Chesney’s), and the Irish matting is by Crosby Street Studios. In the family room, a wall painted a Farrow & Ball blue hosts images of architectural elements, framed by J.Pocker, and a Massimo Listri photograph; the rug is by Stark.

From top: A detail of the Parthenon’s frieze, painted by Hampton, hangs above the living room’s custom-made sofa, which is covered in a Kravet fabric; the klismos chair is by Alexa Hampton for Hickory Chair, Louis XVI chairs flank the mantel (designed by Hampton for Chesney’s), and the Irish matting is by Crosby Street Studios. In the family room, a wall painted a Farrow & Ball blue hosts images of architectural elements, framed by J.Pocker, and a Massimo Listri photograph; the rug is by Stark.

Opposite, from left: Hampton stands in the living room beside false-bookcase doors—with spines by the Dummy Book Co.—that open to the dining room. Plaster medallions of Roman emperors are mounted on the wall to one side, and the wainscot is papered with digitally printed patterns devised by Hampton and artist Chuck Fischer.
three, and the last time I checked, that would still earn me a passing grade. Kiki wanted a green bedroom, which was no problem, and the boys said they’d like to be international soccer stars—sorry, not my department.

Stringing together the three apartments would necessitate undoing a lot of the previous renovation. There were nights when I couldn’t sleep for thinking about it, so I would sketch various scenarios until I finally retreated to bed. Deciding on the perfect scheme was like wiggling a loose tooth over and over until it finally pops out. Our former master bedroom is now the dining room. My gorgeous oak walk-in closet turned out to be the perfect spot for a beautiful, albeit tiny, guest room. As for the three small original kitchens, I turned them into an apartment dweller’s dream trifecta: a laundry room, a bar, and an eat-in kitchen.

For a decade our walls had been mostly off-whites, thanks to the timidity of my youth, so choosing colors was a challenge. Once Pavlos asked for a green dining room, I didn’t feel right having just one colorful space, so I summoned the boldness within me, an exciting but daunting proposition. As it shook out, I ultimately embraced dark green (dining room), blue (family room and guest room), avocado-green (Kiki’s room), and black (kitchen). For relief, the halls are painted beige, and the living room and master bedroom are taupe. But how to visually relate the newly chromatic spaces, especially the ones that could be seen through openings or connecting doors? Working with the Gracie wallpaper studio, I customized a silvery scenic for the entrance hall, adding tones pulled from the other rooms so it serves as a hint of things to come.
Clockwise from above:
The entrance hall is lined in a Gracie wallpaper; the blue-glass photophores are by John Rosselli & Assoc., and the Empire-style chairs are from Newel. In the kitchen, cabinetry by S. Donadic is painted a Benjamin Moore black; the hood and range are by Wolf, the refrigerator is by Sub-Zero, and the sink and its fittings are by Rohl. Picture lights by Alexa Hampton from Circa Lighting crown bookcases in the dining room; the side chairs are upholstered in a Lisa Fine Textiles print, the armchair is in a de Le Cuona paisley, and the French sideboard is from Lee Calicchio.
Above: Painted a Benjamin Moore blue, the guest room features a Louis XVI daybed upholstered in a Les Indiennes fabric. Below: In daughter Kiki’s room, a Massimo Listri photograph overlooks an Anthony Lawrence-Belfair bed clad in a Colefax and Fowler plaid; the table is by Alexa Hampton for Hickory Chair, and the carpet is by Stark.

To tighten the relationship between the living room and adjacent dining room—they are joined by double doors brilliantly disguised, I am not too modest to report, as bookcases—I worked with artist Chuck Fischer to adapt Mudejar tile designs into two variations that we digitally printed onto canvas and applied to the rooms’ wainscots.

Observing the renovation’s effect on my family has been as fascinating as the nuts and bolts of the project. The dining room is Hampton-Papageorgiou central: It’s where we eat and entertain, but I also like to work at the table.
and even get my hair styled there occasionally (my bath may be perfect, but it’s minuscule). Pavlos loves the entrance hall, delighting in its role as a designated stage for the mail, the Christmas tree, and suitcases being packed. Markos walked into the living room once, pronounced it “most successful,” and then walked out. Kiki’s queen-size bed thrills her. As for Michael, he is proud of every square inch of the place, feeling that he is the author of it all. Which, in a way, he is. But I’ve written a letter to Santa, just in case, letting him know that no more keys will be necessary.

“For a decade our walls had been mostly off-whites, thanks to the timidity of my youth, so choosing colors was a challenge.”
For a more detailed version of Sources, go to archdigest.com. Other items pictured but not listed here or on archdigest.com are not sourceable. Items similar to vintage and antique pieces shown are often available from the dealers listed. (T) means item available only to the trade.

**High Definition**

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**Sources**

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**Sea Change**


**Shifting Gears**