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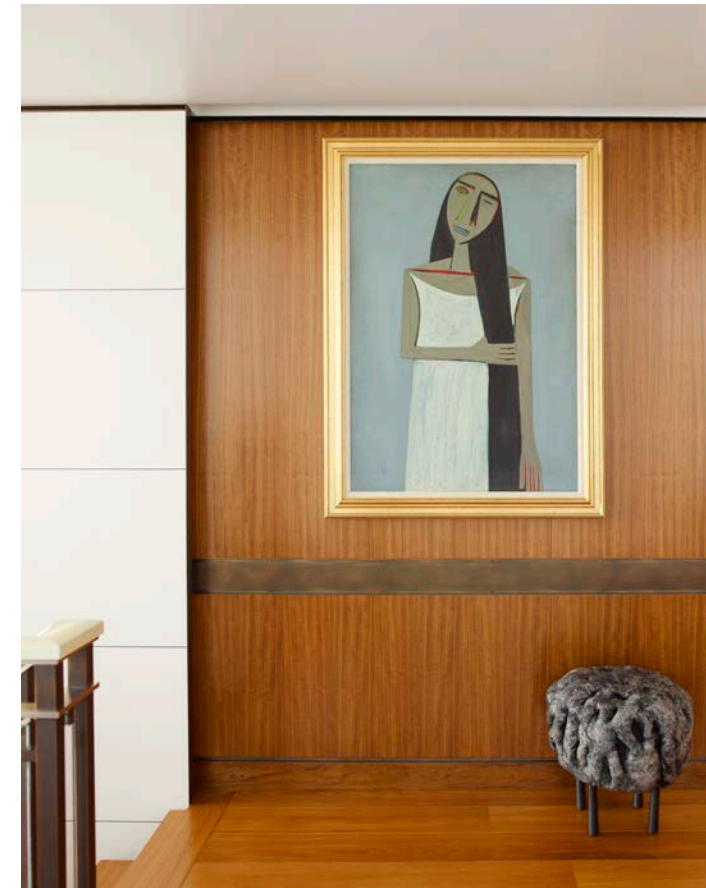
In the living area of a Manhattan duplex designed by Phillip Thomas, a Patrick Naggar sofa from Ralph Pucci is upholstered in a Loro Piana fabric with a tufted cushion in a Holland & Sherry fabric, the cocktail table is by Lorenzo Burchiellaro, the smaller sofa is by Holly Hunt, the vintage stools are by Edward Wormley, and the floor lamp is by Achille Salvagni; the central column is sheathed in a Dualoy leather with a shelf installation by Chris Lehrecke and Gabriella Kiss, and the wool-and-silk rug is a custom design. For details, see Resources.

# POINT of DEPARTURE

*In a Manhattan tower overlooking the Hudson River, designer Phillip Thomas crafts an apartment as carefully conceived and precisely fitted as a classic yacht*

TEXT by CAROL PRISANT PHOTOGRAPHY by ERIC PIASECKI PRODUCED by ROBERT RUFINO





*DESIGNER PHILLIP THOMAS* likes to describe himself as “a type A personality.” Which means that, in addition to his Georgetown University and New York School of Interior Design credentials and his fluency in Spanish—which endears him to Latin American clients such as the owners of this duplex—he is, well, a tad obsessive about details. Luckily for all concerned, so are his clients. In fact, their New York City digs, in a glass tower by Richard Meier overlooking the Hudson, are seriously type A, from the precise carpet seams to the custom-monogrammed table linens. “A lot of cocktail napkins died for those monograms,” Thomas says with a laugh.

The owners are thrilled with their apartment’s new warmth, which they attribute to “the love put into each moment of working in, and on, it,” as well as “the quality and nobleness of each piece of furniture, material, and object selected.” A little less formally, perhaps, they refer to it as their “tree house on the Hudson.” But not because the spiraling shelves on the living-room column look a little like tree fungi. And not because their children play let’s-pretend here. (They’re all grown and gone.) No, it’s more likely to be the lavish woods throughout. Those African-olivewood cabinets and closets, for example: so impeccably neat they’re virtually yacht-like.

**FACING PAGE:** Chairs by BDDW with seats embroidered by Lesage Intérieurs surround a custom tiger maple—and-bronze dining table topped with vintage French ceramics; the light fixture is by Lindsey Adelman, and the armchairs are by Holly Hunt. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** On the landing, a Wifredo Lam painting with an Ayala Serfaty stool of wool and silk felt. The banister is clad in a Dualoy leather, and the glazed stoneware pieces are by Éric Astoul from Maison Gerard. The kitchen counter is by Antolini, the stove and oven are by Miele, the refrigerator is by Sub-Zero, and the sink fittings are by Dornbracht; the rosewood barstools date from the 1960s. For details, see Resources.







Or the rosewood, sycamore, mango wood, and fumed maple just about everywhere else. It's these materials—plus leather and bronze—that add up to an apartment as luxe and carefully orchestrated as any house, anywhere. Let alone a tree house.

Take the living room rug, for instance. Based on a vintage pattern, it's been “translated here to reflect the current of the river below,” says Thomas, who anguished for weeks (of course) about “which areas should be silk and which should be wool.” He devoted further countless hours to hiding the seams where the carpet flows around the central column. Which, by the way, along with every other column here, is encased in a pearlescent leather: Those on the upper floor have gold-tooled seams, while those on the lower floor are tooled in silver. And all of them have been stitched with silk thread to keep them pliable. It's just one small example of the meticulous micro-attention that Thomas has poured into these rooms.

Another? Well, there's the master bedroom's bed. In addition to the television that recedes completely under the footboard, it has a “seasonal” headboard. Unbutton its furry, wintry cover when the weather begins to warm up, and button on its cashmere summer twin. Or consider the dining table, with its wavy edges and silvered-bronze base.

The undulant edges add a natural element, as do those patinated-bronze butterfly joints inlaid in the tabletop. And the delicate-looking chairs? They are lightweight but also sturdy, one of the designer's top priorities. The seats are linen and leather, embroidered with hammered-metal thread—and no two embroideries are alike. (Take note of those open backs, too: They don't block that smashing view.)

There are, sadly, one or two things that rarely submit to designer nano-control, even designers of the type A variety: technology, for instance. And electrical wires and outlets. Thomas hates the fact that “pipes and air-conditioning keep spoiling my designs,” and yet he's triumphed in the kitchen that stands at the core of the duplex. “That ceiling hides lots of mechanical equipment,” he says with obvious satisfaction. That's why, in the streamlined space below it,

**ABOVE:** The downstairs media room is paneled in African olivewood detailed with brushed nickel and a Dualoy leather. The custom sofa is upholstered in a Loro Piana fabric, the club chairs, based on 1950s Danish designs, are from Lucca Antiques, the side tables by Holly Hunt are topped with lamps by Guido Gambone, the painting is by Ángel Botello, and the custom wool-and-mohair rug is by Stark. **FACING PAGE:** Danish midcentury chairs and a bridge table from Holly Hunt on the lower level; the collection of 1950s French mirrors was found at Bernd Goeckler Antiques, and the 1950s swing-arm sconce is by Ico Parisi. For details, see Resources.







there's only unity, order, and calm, sympathetically expressed by the frosted-glass cabinets that are "reflective, but not too reflective," and a "monumental quartz peninsula" that rests on buttery leather panels. "If you can find a surface for me to put leather on, I will," the designer jokes, although typically he likes to dress his leather up, as in the kitchen stools' embossed-leather seats.

Thomas's clients—who praise their designer as "enthusiastic, disciplined, a hard worker, honest, committed, and refined, with very good taste and the ability to hear and incorporate our suggestions"—especially love the lower floor, which comprises their bedroom, a sitting area, and a small study. "We spend most of our time there," says the wife, "playing canasta or reading books."

Behind their games table, Thomas has grouped 12 French mirrors on a wall—each one different. He doesn't often buy collections all at once, he says, since he has such exacting taste. And besides, it's so much more fun acquiring things bit by bit. But the designer freely admits that he exhibited very un-type A behavior when it came to the acquisition of that dazzling dozen: "I just walked into Bernd Goeckler's shop and said, 'I'll take them all!'" ■

**FACING PAGE:** A painting by Fernando Botero is mounted as a screen to shelter the master bath; the high-back club chairs in the bedroom beyond are circa-1950 Italian. **THIS PAGE, FROM TOP:** The master bedroom's custom bed—which conceals a TV lift under the platform—is dressed in linens, a quilt, and a blanket from E. Braun & Co.; the hand-carved stools by Carol Egan are upholstered in shearling, custom side tables by Holly Hunt hold lamps by Lianne Gold, the curtains are of a silk by Holland & Sherry, the carpet is by Edward Fields, and the gouache-and-pastel drawing is by Alfredo Ramos Martinez. Chairs by Enrico Pellizzoni and custom lacquer-and-parchment desks in the office area; the flooring is Burmese teak. For details, see Resources.