

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

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## Smart Moves

**NATE BERKUS +  
JEREMIAH BRENT'S  
DOMESTIC BLISS**

**HOW AD'S 2015  
INNOVATORS  
ARE CHANGING  
THE WORLD**

**THE U.S. EMBASSY  
IN SPAIN  
GETS A CHIC  
NEW LOOK**

**PLUS  
SAN FRANCISCO'S  
DESIGN BOOM**







STUNNING SKYLINE VISTAS  
MEET GLAMOROUS DECOR AT  
A MANHATTAN PENTHOUSE BY  
DESIGN DUO DUFNER HEIGHES

# URBAN IDYLL

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The design firm Dufner Heighes conceived this Manhattan penthouse for a Chicago-based family. In the living area, a pair of Michael Berman Limited club chairs from Profiles and a Holly Hunt sofa upholstered in a Holland & Sherry wool-mohair surround an Ado Chale cocktail table; the mirror is by BDDW, the credenza and tripod floor lamp are by Christian Liaigre, the Jim Zivic anthracite side table is from Ralph Pucci International, and the custom-made rug is by ALT for Living. For details see Sources.



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ince first becoming fashionable in the 1920s, penthouse apartments—often grandly depicted in movies and books—have been synonymous not just with life at the top but with the last word in luxury. Carrying on that elegant tradition is an aerie in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood that was recently completed by Greg Dufner and Daniel Heighes Wismer of the Manhattan design firm Dufner Heighes. The home is thoroughly refined, both in terms of its aesthetic as well as its modern understanding of how its owners, a Chicago-based client and his family, use it: not as an icon of exclusivity but as a cloud of calm during visits to the rushed, roaring city.

After working with the family on previous residences for 15 years, the designers understood this desire well. For them, the pied-à-terre also presented an exciting challenge: The 11-story building it crowns was not yet complete when they began. The apartment was only slabs of concrete—a blank slate. The rest was up to their imaginations.

At 3,600 square feet, the floor-through needed to be “approachable, not austere,” Wismer says. In other words, someplace that would be perfect for, as the client put it, “hanging around.” The designers carved out the interiors with an eye toward ease and informality, dedicating the bulk of the home’s south side, which boasts the best city views, to a long, open space comprising the kitchen, breakfast area, and family room. “This is the real gathering spot,” the client says of the sun-drenched stretch, where family members can come together for casual meals around the broad marble-top island before retiring to watch movies from the low-slung sectional sofa nearby. (The master suite, one of two bedrooms, also faces south.) No less scenic, arguably, are the combined living and dining areas, which take in stunning sunsets on the Hudson River. As Wismer emphasizes of the free-flowing layout, “It’s not just family-friendly, it’s user-friendly.”

That said, the place lacks not for polish, with an array of exquisite finishes; strong, sculptural furniture; and

**Right:** Bec Brittain pendant lamps hang above the dining table, which is grouped with Vladimir Kagan chairs from Ralph Pucci International. Visible through the windows is a Kiki Smith sculpture installed beside a staircase that leads to the rooftop terrace.









gleaming metal accents—most noticeably the bronze casing that edges the doorways and floor-to-ceiling windows, bouncing light (of which there is a lot) across the interiors. At one end of the entry, setting the apartment's tone of fine craft, is a glass-and-bronze screen by Paris-based artisan Christophe Côme that frames the dining area. Another such screen delineates the bar in the living area, where ten-foot-tall onyx slabs surround the fireplace. The space's ceiling, like that of the kitchen, features a deeply incised diamond pattern that makes a confident contemporary reference to the plaster reliefs found in many historic Manhattan residences. (Says Wismer, "We wanted to reinterpret that traditional look in a modern way.")

That motif, echoed throughout the home, is just one of many subtle nods to sophisticated hallmarks of bygone eras. In the breakfast area, the bricks used for one wall have been coated with platinum-infused resin, bringing to mind the fun-loving ambience of 1960s Palm Springs. Elsewhere in the penthouse, walls of glossy Venetian plaster prevail, complemented by oak flooring and, lining the master suite's corridor, a Damien Hirst butterfly-pattern wallpaper.

Furnishings have been arranged with room to breathe, enhancing the scale, shape, and texture of each piece. Bespoke carpets are plush and eclectic, ranging from the master suite's textured geometric design to the understated weave in the living area. Bold hanging light fixtures—like the Poul Henningsen lamp over the breakfast table and the Bec Brittain pendants in the dining area—offer striking silhouettes while weightlessly defining their spaces. And seating tends toward the curvaceous, as is the case with the master suite's Vladimir Kagan sofa and armchair.

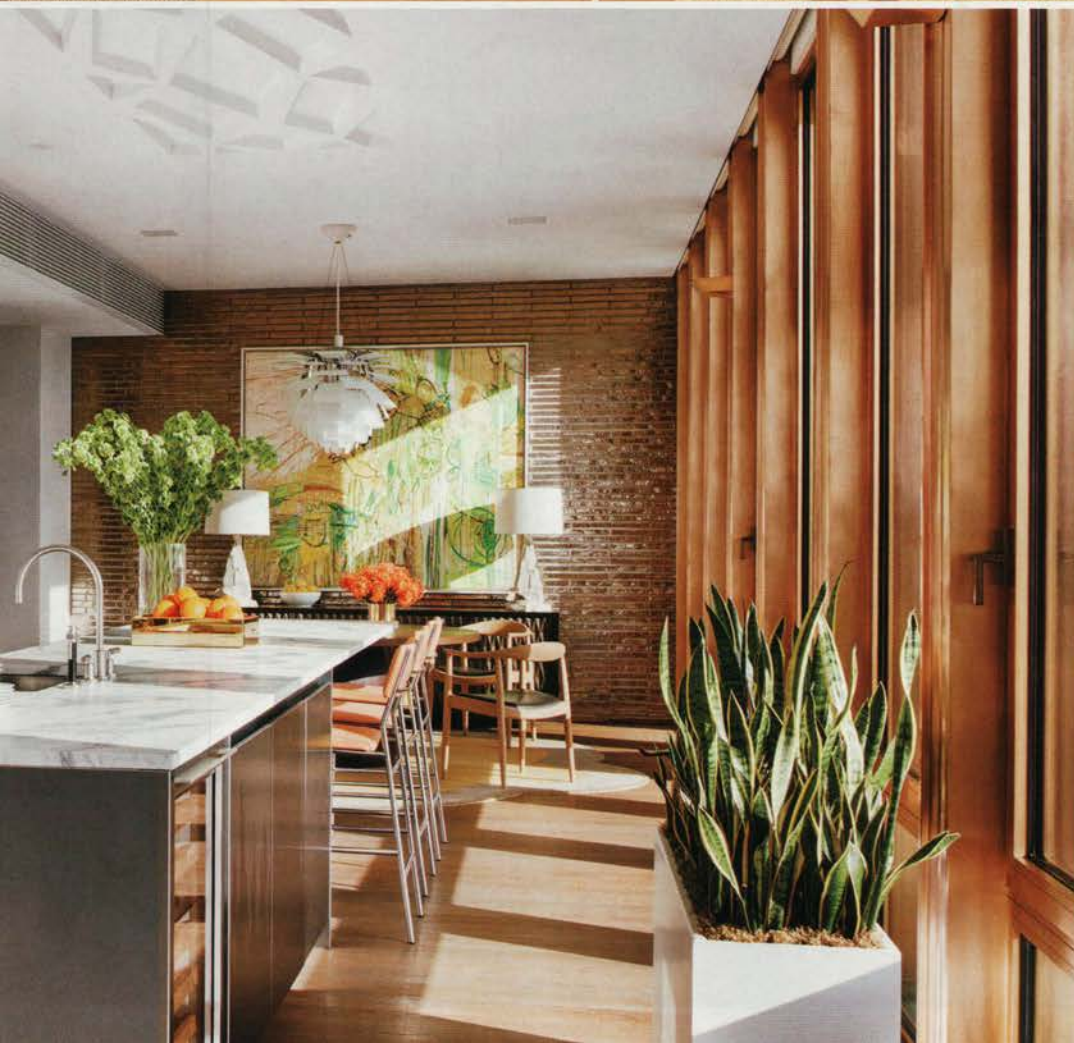
The penthouse's greatest surprise might be what lies above and beyond it. Seemingly rising along the edge of the building, in a glass-enclosed volume just outside the dining area, is a steel-and-mahogany staircase. Beneath it, a Kiki Smith sculpture reclines, as if mid-dream, above a bed of grass that bends in the wind. A walk up the steps reveals a verdant rooftop terrace—life on top of life at the top.

Here, the designers added a kitchen, a lounge complete with its own monumental brick hearth, and—most dramatic—a cantilevered canopy that shelters a dining area. Tiered mahogany planters accommodate a mix of evergreens and Heritage river birches. The terrace's ledges, meanwhile, are planted with low grasses and perennials, from butterfly weed to inkberry to fescue. Landscape designer David Seiter, who heads the firm Future Green Studio, oversaw the plantings. "We pulled from the wild industrial look of the High Line," he explains, referring to the popular park that features prominently in the apartment's vistas. He also trained four varieties of vines, among them Virginia creeper and wisteria, to a bulkhead that houses building services, creating a vertical garden.

One could hardly ask for a more open, airy space. And with few structures looming in the vicinity, "it's very private," the client notes. "You just feel like you're home." □







***Clockwise from top left:** An Hervé Van der Straeten sconce from Maison Gerard punctuates a hallway whose walls are coated in Venetian plaster. In the breakfast area, a table from Holly Hunt and Hans Wegner chairs are arranged beneath a Poul Henningsen pendant light; the painting is by Tom Cassidy, and the credenza and Tai Ping carpet were custom made. Marble surfaces complement Bulthaup cabinetry in the kitchen, which is equipped with Miele wall ovens, a Gaggenau cooktop, Dornbracht sink fittings, and a Sub-Zero wine refrigerator; the Suite NY stools are clad in a Holland & Sherry fabric.*



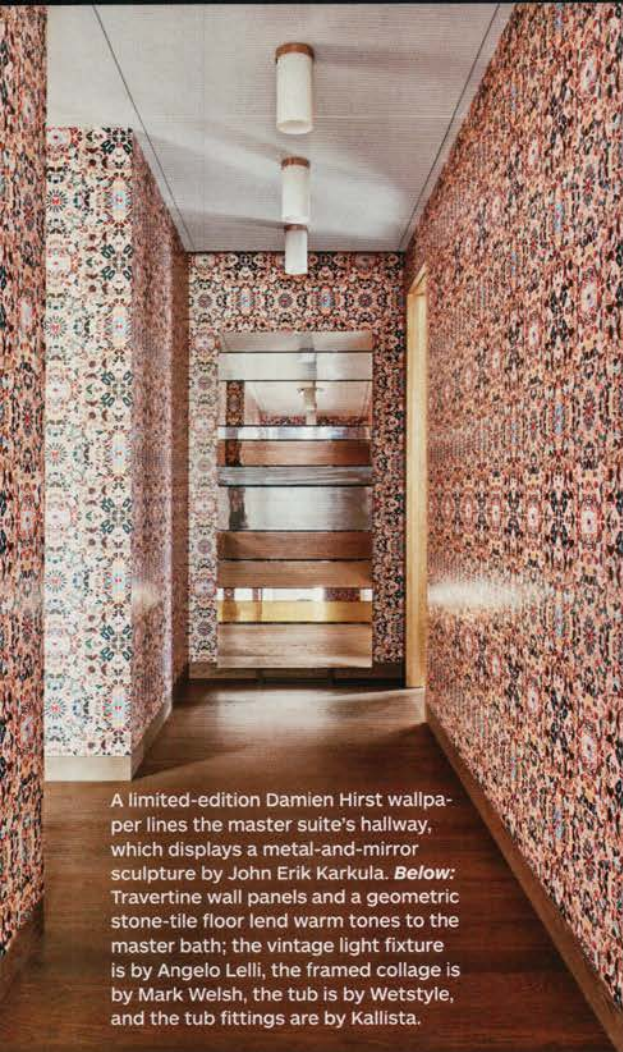




For the sprawling rooftop terrace, Dufner Heighes devised a cantilevered mahogany awning and coordinating planters; the sconces are from YLighting, the tables and chairs are by Richard Schultz for Knoll, and the poufs are by CB2. The plantings were designed by the Brooklyn-based landscape firm Future Green Studio.







A limited-edition Damien Hirst wallpaper lines the master suite's hallway, which displays a metal-and-mirror sculpture by John Erik Karkula. **Below:** Travertine wall panels and a geometric stone-tile floor lend warm tones to the master bath; the vintage light fixture is by Angelo Lelli, the framed collage is by Mark Welsh, the tub is by Wetstyle, and the tub fittings are by Kallista.







The master bedroom's Vladimir Kagan sofa and chair, both from Ralph Pucci International, are upholstered in fabrics by Romo and Holland & Sherry, respectively; the curtains are also of a Romo fabric, the cocktail table and credenza are by Roman Thomas, the silk duvet is by Ann Gish, and the rug was custom made by Rosemary Hallgarten.