

Kitchens + Baths: We Choose the Best New Products

Metropolitan Home

Design
Secrets
For Every
Room in
the House

Home of the Month:
A Spectacular
Modern Lake House

Exclusive:
Our Interview with
Giorgio Armani

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updated page of
a 1980s volume
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This page The youngest residents, four-and-a-half-year-old twins, Bob (left) and Jordan, share secrets in a studio foyer with natural pine and white-painted metal and dabble in watercolor. A 1950's Anadolung chandelier and a wood, leather and stone ring sculpture by Brandon Pettit for Galin & Co. of Brooklyn painting by Oysterjet Oppenhe Designer Robert Kaser replaced an elaborate brass Chippendale mirror in the living room with stream-lined lines, photograph by David LaRocca





Queens for Today

Designer Robert Karner helped a couple just starting a family make the transition from Manhattan loft living to a landmark exurban planned community in the borough of *Queens*.



Arguably the most alluring thing about loft living is the blank-slate freedom of raw space. Possibilities are endless: Keep it open and flexible or slice the space into rooms with designated uses? Run walls to the ceiling or stop short so light can flow? How then does a

thirty-some living couples in line with the undisturbed liberty of their left in Manhattan make the leap to a Georgian Revival home in an outer-borough planned community where a rigorous architectural review committee dictates heights of hedges, colors of houses and color shades of exterior relief.

"When we arrived for a first visit, we were a bit nervous," admits the wife, a photojournalist who put her career on hold when she became pregnant with twins. But since her real estate developer husband's work was headquartered in Queens and they knew they would eventually need more space, she says, "when we left, we were 90 percent nervous."

They returned to Forest Hills Gardens five months after the birth of their sixth and eldest child, who lived in this

house whether they might be willing to sell. An heir would have it. The retiree had already arranged to move to an assisted living facility. The husband told the prospective buyers that if they were serious about buying the house, they should come back to Queens. The following Monday with their insurance

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PROCEEDINGS CLAS FROM THE WORLD, PHOTOGRAPHY OF WORK TO BE DONE ON
THE BASIS OF A JOURNAL OF RESEARCH.







Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (the son of Central Park's chief planner) and Grosvenor Atterbury (the architect

of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American wing) began the development of Forest Hills Gardens in 1908. Their inspiration was England's "garden city" movement, which arose in the late 1800s as a repudiation of the inhumane housing that plagued London's factory districts.

This home was built in the 1930s. "We didn't want to ruin the integrity of what was," explains the wife. "Our dad was that we wouldn't change anything original. What's beautiful to me about this home is the craftsmanship and detail."

Over the next eight months, designer Robert Kauer says he "introduced a new stylistic vocabulary" within the structure's traditional architectural envelope. He began by painting walls pure white and darkening the floors, "which allowed the moldings and trim to really express themselves," he explains. Everything else became a contrasting juxtaposition to this backdrop.

Kauer partly tweaked the Palladian order of the formal living room with an asymmetrical arrangement of furniture. Since decorative trim already emphasized the room's right angles, he threw in some curves with a voluptuous Vladimir Kagan sofa and 1930s rounded-back chairs. He also used single-paneled draperies on the windows. "They have a nice presence, but four smaller strips of curtain, which would have felt busy," he says.

This page (from top): The home's appealing new Georgian facade (see street-level information); the relaxed master bedroom features an armchair from ABC Carpet & Home and a custom dresser that serves as both a vanity and a dresser; from a single, symmetrical space, living room and kitchen, thanks to designer Robert Kauer, the kitchen was once a suite of rooms that included an eat-in nook, powder room, mudroom and foyer.

What the Pros Know

"I wanted the kitchen to be functional but warm," says the wife, explaining the choice of 2016's kitchen panel. It includes the handle for Laidlaw. Robert Kauer had the back splashes custom-made, white-stained, and he converted a chair under the kitchen's kitchenwork yellow made with average drawers and shelves for cabinets. He added custom windows and furniture that he calls "definitely quiet" and created a beautiful architectural plan that appears to

be placed randomly, even though, he says, "there's nothing random about them." The client didn't want an island, so Kauer started the space a pretty tight kitchen on one side (the kitchen) and an open area on the right where the study now sits. The kitchen's yellow color was chosen. The arrangement makes the house, the area, the space, and the living space with a beautiful open space for all of the kitchen's family kitchen is comfortable, from quiet to the house while creating a lot.





The home's new palette took some negotiation. The husband craved color, but the wife, who grew up in a 1970s

whitewashed ranch, wanted neutrals. She compromised on the dining room, near a classic deep red, as well as on the bedroom, which was washed in a buff khaki.

The kitchen and baths had been modernized over the years, so the designer wasn't bound by the "don't change anything original" rule. "We thought of them differently," he says. "We wanted them to be warm and inviting but to take advantage of modern appliances." So, after complete guts, color was allowed: yellow and red accents in the kitchen, robin green in the master bath and, for each of the three other baths, a monochromatic take on a different color—one is blue, one yellow and one robin's egg.

"Robert and I worked very hard to balance the traditional and modern," says the wife, "and to have beautiful things that were also friendly. I didn't want anyone to feel they had to keep their hands in their pockets."

The result also held a pleasant surprise. Thankfully, a profusion of French doors on the main floor created a democratic sense of openness and connection. "I can run a table from the dining room into the den. I can open and close doors to create new traffic patterns in the living room and library," she says.

In other words, the house has all the flexibility of a city loft. *By Sheri Amador, last pages.*

This page (top): A third-floor bath with blue glass tile. Big two-paned tile the house—one yellow, one orange—is about "being in a field of color," says Amador. This page (bottom): polychromatic French colonial-style bath and shower with a new master bath. Finding the custom material right, he and Amador like "classics in a room," he says, "makes the environment feel like a French-style film set for the house, but the grid design feels clean and more modern."

