

The living room of Cathryn Marc Laury's Upper East Side townhouse, which DD Allen of Pierce Allen decorated with French and English antiques and modern furnishings. Jonas Upholstery's Jansen sofa is backed by a vintage Jansen desk from Jourdan Antiques; the silk carpet is by Stark. See Resources.



DESIGNER DD ALLEN CREATES A WINNING PALETTE



FAMILY PLANNING

FOR A MANHATTAN CLAN OF SEVEN WITH AN INTERIOR THAT'S EQUAL PARTS ELEGANCE AND F

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An 18th-century French tapestry from Luoca & Co. hangs above a Directoire walnut console table from Amy Parlin Antiques in the dining room; the 1940s painted-bronze-and-wood lamps are by James Mont from Karl Kemp, and the leopard-covered 1820s French stool is from Jourdan Antiques. See Resources.



Across America, front doors—and the foyers behind them—have lately been slumping in a kind of midlife crisis, slouching toward oblivion. The side or back door has taken over the social traffic, and the front door is pressed cheekily into service, like the sterling-silver flatware, once a year at Thanksgiving.

Of course, most city dwellers have no choice: One door is all you get. But open the formidable front door of the 1899 Beaux Arts townhouse in the heart of Manhattan's Upper East Side—proud sponsor of the cold marble foyer—and you wonder, Is this the right door? Because behind it is an unpretentious, cluttered library, and one stocked not with the Great Works of Literature but with children's books, science fiction, board games, and the like.

"The foyer is usually such wasted space," says DD Allen, whose firm, Pierce Allen, designed the interior at the former Stetson mansion for Marc and Cathy Lasry and their brood of five. "You usually end up with the bench, the painting, the big table with flowers—and that's a lot of real estate with no real function." It has a very real function now, telling everyone who comes in, "There's a family here, take it or leave it."

It's a good message to send because the Lasrys are so family-minded that you have to be mathematically inclined just to keep up with them. First, there are the couple's children, Samantha, 18, Alexander, 16, Zach, 13, and 11-year-old twins Sophie and Emma. Then there's the area—12,000 square feet on six floors. Multiply those figures, and the number of minors on the premises increases exponentially. "There are always kids running around," laughs Marc, a hedge-fund manager. "I've learned that if you have a large house in New York, people will send their children over to play."

But make no mistake: The place is no six-story theme park. With Marc's edict that no room be so formal that anyone would be uncomfortable and Cathy's desire for an elegance that would bridge her taste for modern with her husband's more traditional bent, Allen set to work creating an interior that was both glamorous enough for the couple's grown-up guests and playful enough to accommodate the needs of five young adults, all in various stages of adolescence.

Take the mammoth living room, for instance. "My sister used to call it 'the ballroom,'" Cathy says. "We didn't know what to do with it." Allen did. She masterfully brought the cavernous space together with carefully arranged seating areas, both formal and informal, using luxurious materials and soft colors like taupe, wheat, and blue-gray. Even the John Singer Sargent portraits, which some may think would be ill at ease in a modern setting, are totally at home. The subdued, rich color scheme is the perfect complement for Sargent's paintings, accentuating the intuitive way the American master used color and form; take the face away, and you've almost got an abstraction.

Across the landing in the dining room, a large antique table (a vestige of the Lasrys' previous apartment, where the decor was full-tilt 19th-century English) updated with Allen's Jean-Michel Frank-inspired

Clockwise from top left: Cathy Lasry flared by her twin daughters, Emma and Sophie; the sofa, a Pierce Allen design, is upholstered in Christopher Hyland's Honeycomb Ground fabric. The mantel is original to the house. A metal chandelier with a pongee-silk shade by Stephen McKay and an antique mirror from Lou Marotta; the Persian carpet is from Doris Leslie Blau. The dining room's 18th-century gilded mirror is from Amy Perlin Antiques, and the mantel is from A&R Asta. Facing page, clockwise from top: Nienkämper chairs upholstered in Edelman leather surround a zebra-skin table by Wyeth in Cathy's office; the 1960s torchère is also from Wyeth. A Linea chaise longue from Karkula and a mirror from Paula Rubenstein in Sophie and Emma's room. Pillows covered in Designer's Guild fabrics in a sitting room; the 1940s armchair is from Donzella 20th Century, and the vintage Poul Kjaerholm chair and table lamp are from Wyeth. See Resources.





Pierce Allen designed the couple's upholstered bed; the linens are by Braun & Co., the 19th-century Louis XVI-style duchesse is from Amy Perlin Antiques, and the bedside table is by Nancy Corzine. Facing page: Circa-1924 Dominique chairs from Maison Gerard and a mirrored vanity table from Eric Appel in the master bedroom; the portrait is by Mary Cassatt. See Resources.



sleek armless chairs doubles as a study carrel for a quiet round of science homework. The upper floors follow a similar pattern. The master bedroom is awash in both French '30s glamour, with a tufted-satin headboard here and a mirrored vanity table there, and Old World refinement, including a 19th-century Louis XVI-style duchesse and stools. Allen upped the ante in the twins' room—installing a lilac chaise longue and Tulip chairs and a fiberglass form chair against a backdrop of beryl-green walls—and in Cathy's office-cum-sitting room, which she infused with bright bursts of color: tangerine walls, green leather armchairs, and a shocking-pink banquette.

Marc, though, is still feeling his way around the house's more blatant examples of deluxe Modernism. "He kept bringing English furniture in here," Cathy recalls, referring to the antiques that populated their old place, "and I kept telling him to take them out." While he acknowledges that Allen did indeed create that rare hybrid—a space both elegant and delightfully livable—he's most at home in the basement, a room that remains untouched by designer and wife alike. ("They're not getting near it," Marc grumbles good-naturedly.) Here, playing with the kids as he's wont to do, he's free to meditate on the give-and-take nature of marriage and decorating. After all, that's where the ping-pong table is. ■

