

New York Attitude

A COLLECTING COUPLE'S SHERRY-NETHERLAND APARTMENT OFFERS THE PERFECT FRAME FOR THE CITY




Interior Architecture by Richard Meier & Partners
Interior Design by Rose Tarlow
Text by Joseph Giovannini/Photography by Scott Frances



Architect Richard Meier and interior designer Rose Tarlow collaborated on the renovation of a couple's 2,500-square-foot Central Park apartment. OPPOSITE ABOVE: In the entrance hall, Tarlow devised slotted doors that afford privacy but still let light flood in on a slab of ancient Roman *marmo africano* and the building's original mail chute. ABOVE: The reconfigured living area faces Fifth Avenue.



A bookshelf designed by Tarlow spans the length of the living area to unify the newly enlarged space. The expanse awaits selections from the clients' prominent collection of postwar art. The Bactrian stone disks date from 2000 B.C. Upholstered furnishings, Rose Tarlow—Melrose House. Green pillow fabric, Calvin.

A photograph of a modern interior space. In the foreground, a large, white, rectangular pillar stands on a light-colored wooden floor. To the right of the pillar is a white console table with a thick wooden top. On the console table sits a small, dark, rectangular object. In the background, a living area is visible through an opening. It features a yellow sofa, a brown leather chair, a floor lamp, and a small table. The ceiling is white with several recessed lights. The overall aesthetic is clean and minimalist.

"Tearing down all the walls would mean a lot of construction, but you'd be able to see the whole sweep of the park," says Rose Tarlow.

There are slaves of New York, and then there are the captives of The Sherry-Netherland: people who have lived for decades in the famed, iconic Fifth Avenue tower topped by an ornate Gothic-style minaret. Their idea of switching neighborhoods is to move to a different floor, often for a better, more Epicurean view of Central Park, the Plaza opposite and the towers of Central Park West. Like antiques that move up the food chain to London, Paris or New York, never to leave again, people just don't seem to budge from the Sherry. No other address captures so elegantly the New Yorkness of New York.

Then again, maybe it's the Cipriani room service.

For years, a prominent Los Angeles philanthropist and his wife have had a pied-à-terre in the building, which is part hotel and part co-op, and they recently moved into their third apartment—to a different neighborhood in the sky. This time they are on a lower floor of the tower: still overlooking the park's green canopy but not so high up that they lose intimate contact with the trees. Their apartment is large enough to surround the elevator core, giving them views throughout and circumnavigational sunlight—rare in New York's asparagus patch.

The existing layout, original to the 1927 building, did not make the most of the apartment's raw materials—the light, the view and the mystique of the corner of 59th and Fifth. As in most such New York buildings of a certain age, the rooms were traditionally decorated and a tad parsimonious, both discreet and discrete, an orderly suite of well-behaved, introverted boxes that looked in rather than out. “In the last apartment,” says the wife, “I didn't like being in one little room where the TV was, scrunched in a den that was eight feet square. We needed a friendlier apartment where we could use all of it.”

“My wife and I wanted it to be a loft-like apartment,” says the philanthropist, whose California-based foundations contribute to the arts, education and medical

“The intent for this residence was to open up the existing layout,” explains Meier. **RIGHT:** For the dining area, which fluidly connects the living area and the kitchen, Tarlow chose caned and ebonized-teak chairs by Pierre Jeanneret, from Christie's, to go with a table of her own design. A Franz West pendant hangs from the ceiling.







research. “Not quite a SoHo or NoHo loft, but something that admitted a lot of light.” The clients also wanted to transform the prewar apartment into a gallery-like environment for their collection of postwar art, one of the foremost in the world. The designer they chose, Los Angeles-based Rose Tarlow, favored sleek, unadorned surfaces that would be ready to receive works of art as the couple made suitable selections.

To bring the light, view and mystique inside, Tarlow decided to merge the three rooms at the front of the apartment, along Fifth, into a long space with a colonnade

of picture windows parsed at the perimeter. “My clients knew tearing down all the walls would mean a lot of construction, but you’d be able to see the whole sweep of the park and up and down Fifth Avenue,” says Tarlow. Working with New York architect Richard Meier, who made a rare appearance in an apartment commission, she positioned the master bedroom and guest room along the flanks of the apartment. The south end of the main room is served by a small, elegant kitchen that opens to the dining area.

Having made the bold architectural

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Anigre veneer was used on the walls and shelving of the office. Desk and lamp, Pollaro. Desk chair fabric, Great Plains. Carpet, Mansour. OPPOSITE: Meier strove to emphasize the brilliance of lacquered surfaces and stainless steel in the Bulthaup kitchen. Tarlow introduced casual seating at the oak-topped bar.



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Left to right: Waterkeeper Alliance chairman Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Lexus' Andrea Lim, singer James Blunt.



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move, Tarlow proceeded diplomatically in the smaller decisions, in order not to compete with the light and view she had cultivated. She wrapped the apartment in a palette of soft monochromatic colors, which supported the notion of one big, continuous space uninterrupted by breaks and contrasts, and she took into account all the paintings—then on loan to a museum—that would eventually be installed. “To tie all the rooms together, I designed a bookcase around the perimeter. It became a focal point. I chose the pale bleached woods, as I wanted the apartment

“Rose is extremely good at mixing different kinds of furniture together, and the unique character of her spaces comes from that mix,” says Richard Meier.

to be light and fresh. The woods tie the spaces together.” She used linen-and-wool rugs, which she designed, to define three different areas within the expanse and was careful to give the groupings equal visual weight. “At the far end I placed solid, heavy pieces to balance the dining table on the near end. With a small apartment, you have to make it all one unit. It’s all about balance.” Meier adds, “The materials used create a brighter space, capitalizing on the sunlight.”

With the deferential shell established, Tarlow turned to her clients’ furniture. “They’re collectors, and I took the notion of the collection into the furniture, into collectible pieces,” she says. “The chairs are by Jeanneret. Two of the lamps are Alvar Aalto originals, and the oval table is by Ruhlmann. Everything has pedigree, but the pieces are all understated.”

“Rose is extremely good at mixing different kinds of furniture together, and the unique character of her spaces comes from that mix,” says Meier.

“You know how musicians have perfect pitch?” says the wife. “Rose has the equivalent in design. A perfect eye. The apartment is everything I hoped it would be. I walk in and I love it. It has a lightness of spirit that suits us.” □

BAGHVAN

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car; a table in the lounge holds a collection of blue-glass syringes that were filled with dye to put in the wood blocks used for printing fabrics; and an entire exterior wall is hung with cowbells.

Parsi-style tiles, which come from Mumbai, are favorites of Browne’s. “I set them into the walls,” he says. “They established the color palette for the lodge.”

The furniture and accessories throughout come from local markets in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Rajasthan and Kerala.

Safari expeditions take place twice a day. Guests are taken in 4x4s into the park, which covers 290 square miles. It was the 19th reserve established under Project Tiger, the Indian government’s conservation effort to protect the country’s tiger population. Pench National Park also safeguards many other species of mammals, including monkeys, deer, wild boar, gaur—massive, dark-skinned wild cattle—jackals and wild dogs. There are over 200 kinds of birds and 13 species of reptiles. Armed with cameras and binoculars, each group of visitors is led by a trained guide. Each morning park rangers look for tigers so that the safari can explore that area later in the day. Elephants are led to the site; when the guests arrive, they

Browne “wanted the feeling of a home that had survived into the 1950s from earlier days,” he says.

can mount the beasts—for an experience reminiscent of the days of George V—and trundle out to where, they hope, they will see tigers.

When the excursions are over, guests return to the lodge to relax, have a drink and eat either on the terrace of their cottage or in the indoor or outdoor dining areas. “Food is a major part of staying at Baghvan lodge,” says Browne. “We celebrate Indian cooking. The kitchen is open to the dining area so that everyone can share in the enjoyment.

“There’s an unmistakable golden thread tying our lodges together, a homelike atmosphere,” Browne adds. “We involve everyone in the experience.” □

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