



# arresting affect

*Spectacular photography becomes the focus of a setting marked by subdued colors and stylish lines*

TEXT: THOMAS CONNORS  
PHOTOGRAPHY: NATHAN KIRKMAN

*W*hen you've got a classic New York penthouse with a view to die for, it seems only natural to go for a classic interior. That's just what designers Mary Cox and Michael Foley had in mind for a client with a duplex residence in a pre-war building overlooking Carl Schurz Park on the city's Upper East Side. Which isn't to say they went old school. The duo, who launched an interiors division for Ralph Lauren before starting Foley & Cox in 2002, combined a confident sense of scale and proportion with an eye for the contemporary to create a home that is artfully composed and utterly current.







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*it's such a thrill  
to look around ...  
and like what you see*

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In revivifying this Manhattan aerie, Cox and Foley—whose projects range from a chalet in Austria to a 150-foot yacht—made sure that they didn't fuss with bones of the space too much. "It's all about appropriateness," says Cox. "A house in Austria is very different from a New York City apartment. So we worked within an architectural style that's appropriate to the space and the client's needs." This client needed to accommodate a growing art collection. And with one child in college and another well into her teens, the idea was to create an environment that is geared more toward grown-up entertaining than family friendly living. "We give a lot of small dinner parties and cocktail parties several times a year," relates the homeowner. "And I do an annual Memorial Day party on the terrace to kick off the summer."

As so often happens with a redecorating endeavor, the collaborative dialogue between client and designers propelled the project from a simple tweaking to a whole new take on the space. "I wanted to change the furniture, repaint the walls," recalls the homeowner. "Then Mary and Michael said, 'If we're going to lighten the walls and get rid of the furniture, the whole envelop should be changed'. All of a sudden we went from 'Let's change the walls to beige and lighten the furniture' to 'Let's change the molding'. So the project took on a life of its own."

