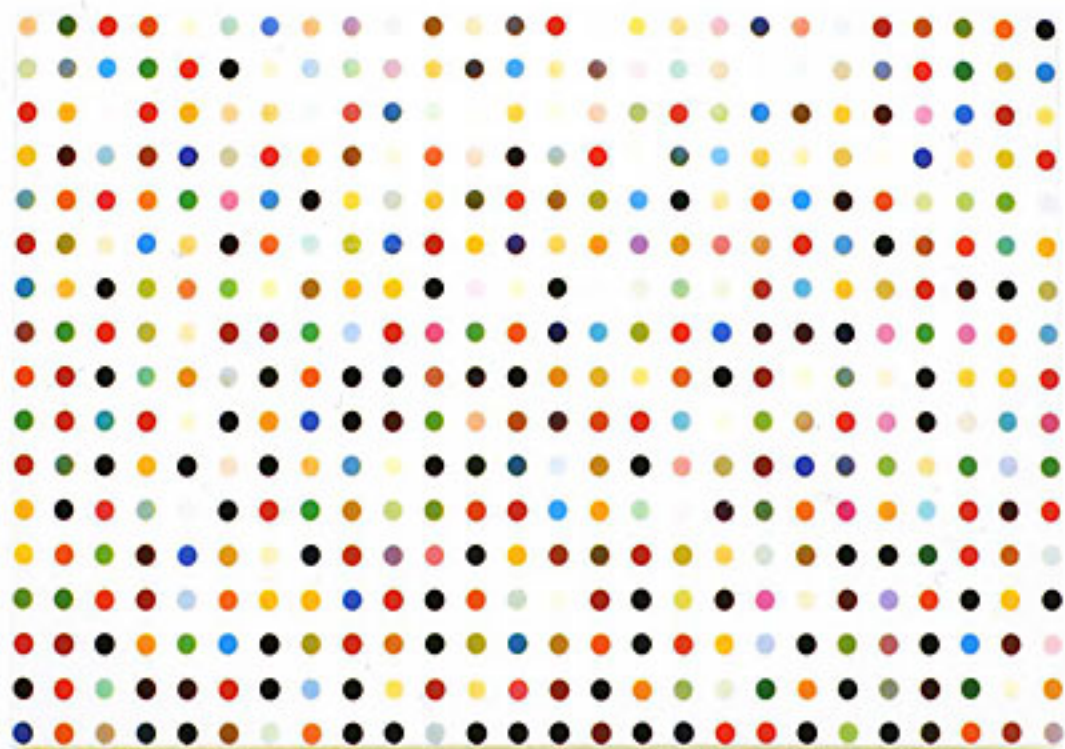


INTERIOR DESIGN[®]

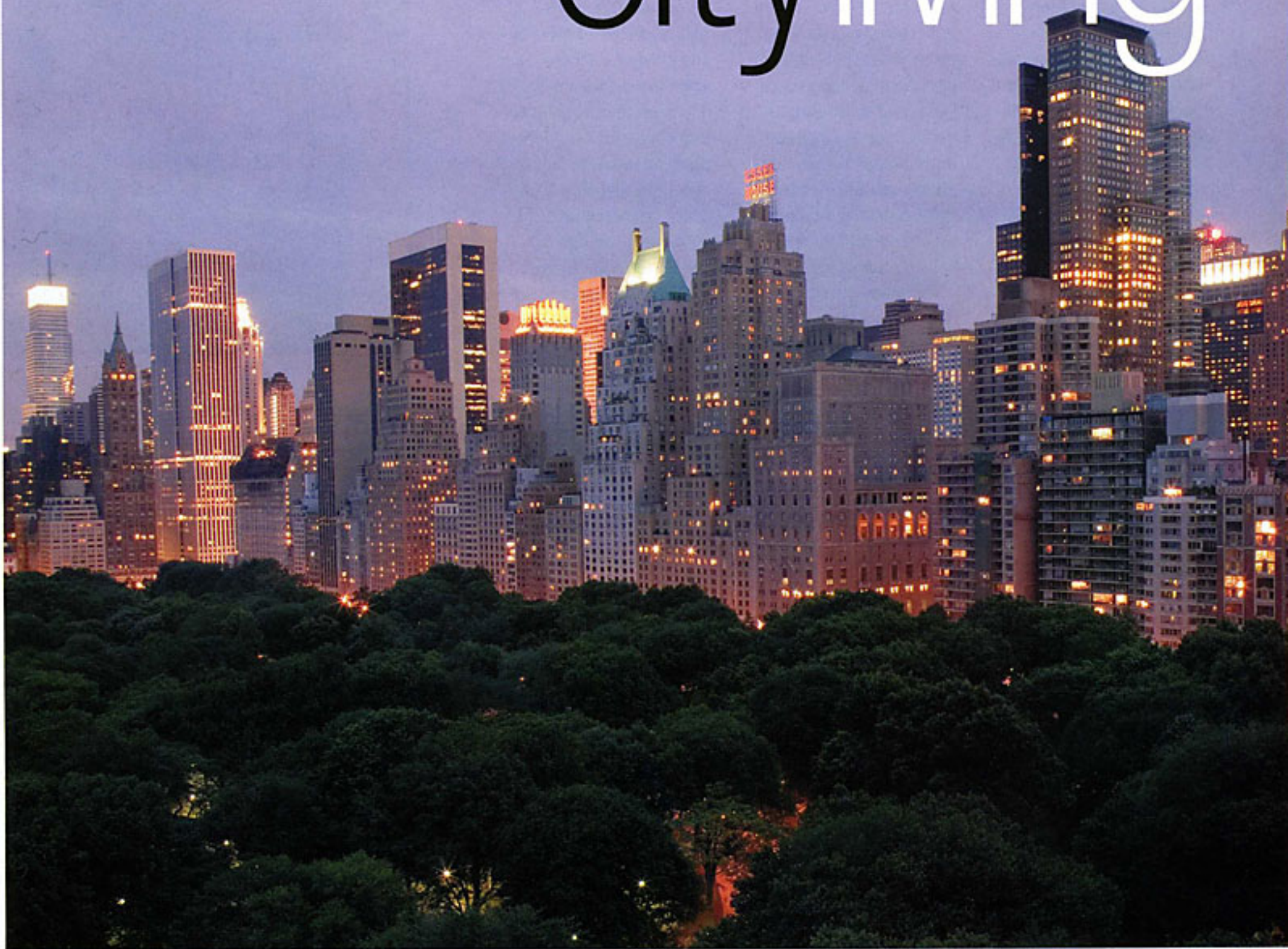
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New York
Flying High



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ART GRAY

MIXING THE OLD WITH THE NEW. Ask any interiors professional: It's one of the trickiest balancing acts in the business. But **Michael Johnston Design Group** walked that tightrope skillfully in helping a wealthy young couple integrate their traditional leanings into a rigorously contemporary Upper West Side home.

Actually two apartments joined together, the 3,200-square-foot duplex is split between the 17th and 18th

floors of an art deco building on Central Park West. An art collector, the husband liked the prestigious address but was ready to relinquish all period details in favor of what his wife →

From top: The view from this Upper West Side duplex encompasses Central Park South and Fifth Avenue. The guest bath features Matteo Thun's tub of resin and crushed almond shells, Neuzig Design's Corian washbasin, and a terrazzo floor.

wryly terms a "white cube" environment. Michael Johnston assured her that wouldn't be necessary. "Prewar bones are an asset—they don't have to dictate what happens inside the spaces," he explained.

The architect concerned himself with maximizing light and space and improving circulation. "Walls and small archways were everywhere—the vernacular of that period," he says. "We took most of them out." On the top floor's park-

facing side, that allowed the library, living and dining areas, and kitchen to capitalize on light spilling in from five picture windows. These public areas form a single long space, separated by a terrazzo-paved foyer and hallway from a parallel enfilade of private spaces: the master suite, a den, and a bedroom and bath for the couple's two children.

The master suite and den have multiple entries. Folding doors open to the

central hall, while pocket doors on either side of the den can slide away to leave an uninterrupted internal hallway between parents' and childrens' rooms. Even when the sliders are closed, a 1/4-inch reveal at the bottom contributes to the impression of unity. "Nothing is defined, definitively, by a door," Johnston says. "Yet every space can be contained when necessary."

The stationary partition between the den and master bedroom looks like a



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solid wall until white lacquered panels fold back to reveal two entertainment centers. There's equally ingenious storage in the kitchen, where the glass panels of what might be mistaken for a backsplash turn out to be the sliding doors of storage for pantry items. In another game of "now you see it, now you don't," a walnut bookshelf in the library slides across to close off the space from the stair hall—and reveal a fully wired office. →

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Opposite: Stainless-steel mesh curtains off the kitchen, with its custom limed-walnut cabinetry; between the upper and lower cabinets, sliding glass doors conceal additional storage.

Clockwise from left: From the living area, which features a custom 20-foot-long sofa upholstered in velvet, 120-year-old oak flooring steps up to the dining area, furnished with a custom table in bolly and cast resin. The den and master bedroom open onto the central hallway, where a dome cut out of the dropped ceiling accommodates a chandelier of Bohemian opaline glass; the oil on canvas is by Gordon Richards. The terrazzo staircase has steel balustrades.

