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Couture + Contemporary Space

The View of Central Park West is the Star in this Luxury Condo

BY DEBRA KRONOWITZ | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER DAVIES





Amy Lau of Amy Lau Design has been described as an interior designer who creates environments that combine her client's personality, an artist's creativity and the hand-crafted touch of local artisans, whose work she transforms into objects that become family heirlooms for the clients who inspire them.

"I try to give the room a sense of spirit from the person who will inhabit it," Lau was once quoted. "I like to be creative out of the box in furnishing and design."

In her true fashion, Lau did just that with an introductory project for private investor and entrepreneur Michael Hirtenstein. What drew Hirtenstein to Lau was her energy and style. In fact, her work was so on the mark, that Hirtenstein commissioned Lau for three more projects.

Normally a "soup to nuts designer working alongside the architect," Lau's first project for Hirtenstein was furnishing his newly rented 3,000-square-foot, three bedroom apartment overlooking Central Park West. The catch: Hirtenstein wanted it completed in three months. "Any shorter would have been unrealistic for that scale," she said.

The goal of the project was to create a warm, open environment that was conducive to entertaining, all the while maximizing the views of Central Park West.

The luxury apartment features 10-foot ceilings, dark stained herringbone floors and solid white walls that Lau warmed with different shades of paint. Throughout, Lau used accents in brass for a warm feel. The color palette is neutral throughout. "We wanted the carcass the same throughout so we used beige and off-white and added accent colors where needed," Lau said.

Lau mixed couture and contemporary pieces. "My client has a great sense of design and is one of my clients with the best pair of eyes," said Lau. "He likes sculptural things, mixed mediums and loves textures and layers, so I took that into account."

Though he generally favors warmer colors, Hirtenstein wanted the foyer to be bold and colorful. "He really does love color," said Lau. To accommodate, Lau brought together a Swiss cabinet, a vintage Scandinavian rug, a 1930s French mirror with a gold glass frame and German ceramics in rich tones of orange and brown. Above, a glass chan-





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dealer by Italian designer Vistosi features five tiers of vibrant mouth-blown glass medallions in citrus color. "It truly echoes all the colors in the foyer," Lau said.

The open living room/dining room presented the biggest challenge for unobstructed views. Lau grounded the living space with a Zoe Luyendijk rug made of silk, hemp, banana leaves and wool. "It's rich in texture and layers, and reminds me of an abstract painting," she said.

She chose iconic pieces of 20th century design, including a classically low vintage Vladimir Kagan sofa, a 1950s Phillip Lloyd Powell glass-top coffee table (the glass top was specifically cut to accommodate the seating arrangement), a mid-century Italian leather and brass armchair, and an Edward Wormley chair and ottoman for Dunbar. Lau framed the windows with floor-to-ceiling draperies in tones of beige, orange and gold. A brass candleholder Lau found on eBay sits on top of the coffee table.

The adjoining dining room has more of an industrial feel. On the main wall, Lau created a wall installation from a 196-piece room divider that was made up of interlocking textured glass pieces. "I wanted something bold for that wall. I deconstructed the divider to make a custom art piece," she added.

The wood table is by Tyler Hays. To provide an element of surprise, the seating features a BDDW custom wood bench and four 1950 string chairs. "He reacted to the table; and I really wanted to break up the seating arrangement," she said. Above, a hanging brass and metal fixture with glass bulbs meshes with the artwork and the table below.

Off the living room area is a carved wood wall-mounted bar. Here, Lau paired a Marco Zanuso Lady armchair in silk with brass legs with Powell's circa-1965 hand-carved black-walnut Amoeba sculptural cabinet — the cabinet has four doors that open. The piece is lined with its original Jack Lenor Larsen floral print velvet fabric. Gio Ponti sconces flank the cabinet.

In the kitchen, Lau created an inviting breakfast nook with a Norman Cherner table and walnut re-editions of his historic modernist chairs for Plycraft. A Verner Panton chandelier hangs above while a David Roth silk screen hangs on the wall.

In the master bedroom Lau deconstructed a Roger Capron vintage tile tabletop and installed it as an art piece over the bed. The room also features a cowhide upholstered headboard, oxidized maple side table and leather-wrapped lamps, all from BDDW.

In the study, Hirtenstein asked Lau to pattern the room after a photo of an aerial view of a lake he loved. To accomplish this, Lau hung an oversized 2003 C-print "Terminal Mirage" by photographer David Maisel above an armless sofa from Wyeth and a pair of Hermès suede poufs with removable tops. The room also features a rare Madagascar desk by Hans Wegner.

"With this project, the view is the star; everything else is supportive," Lau said. ■