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Tribeca Triumph

Francine Gardner of Intérieurs gives a longtime client's boxy apartment the downtown update it deserves

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILL ELLIS

What do you do when an apartment is having an identity crisis? That's the question Greenwich-based designer Francine Gardner faced upon returning to the Tribeca apartment she had decorated for her client, Lisa Rhoads, nearly a decade earlier. A series of small rooms suddenly made the place feel "more like an Upper East Side residence," says Gardner, "and didn't fit Lisa's lifestyle." So she started from scratch, getting rid of walls and revealing the "bones." Rhoads, a healthcare investment executive, who shares the 3,000-square-foot pad with her college-age daughter and Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, had been working in Bermuda

Modern Mania
In the living area,
a light beige tufted
chair from
Modern Mania
adds a pair of
modern seats
with a touch of
class. The chair
is from ABC
Carpet & Home
Decor.

Pump It Up
A citron plaster wall enlivens a section of the open-plan living area (this wall). The artwork is by Bruce Talman, the chair is from Holly Hunt, and the tufted leather ottoman is custom. The kitchen (previous page) features walnut cabinetry, a hammered-steel backsplash, a pendant from Hammeron, and a custom maple dining counter (shown above). A fixture by Sitkovit illuminates the dining area; the kamejong table is custom. See Resources.





and setting out the New York apartment, but "always knew that I eventually wanted to change things around and make it look more like a home" upon my return," she says. "Plus, my daughter and I love to cook." So recently using the galley kitchen and "making everything feel light and bright" became a priority.

In addition to removing the walls that separated the cramped kitchen from the living and dining areas, Gordner designed a freestanding island with a live-edge maple top that further integrates the main living spaces together. Now airy and drenched with light, the contemporary walnut kitchen takes full advantage of the apartment's massive floor-to-ceiling lacquer-style windows. "It doesn't even feel like a kitchen because it's so minimalist," says Gaudier, who also replaced standard oak floors with 10-inch-wide, eucalyptus planks, creating a look that

Rhoads describes as "modern farmhouse with a downtown edge."

The master suite also received a major overhaul. "Lisa is incredibly smart and fashionable, so I wanted her to have a glamorous bedroom," says Gaudier, who carved out a new master bath and a large dressing area where every shoe, bag, and blouse has its place. "It took us weeks to count the pieces in her wardrobe and figure out how much space we needed. And of course, we left some room for her to buy more!" Beyond the dressing area—which Rhoads says she "lives in"—lies the luxurious bath, complete with textured marble walls, a deeply soaking tub, a Gaudier-designed eucalyptus vanity, and a hand-blown glass pendant that was custom made in Brooklyn. "A lot of people think of lighting as an afterthought," muses the designer, "but I usually start with it because each fixture should have purpose and defini-





"I knew that I wanted to change things around and make the apartment look more 'downtown'"





tion within a room." The point is well taken throughout Rhoads' home: A spiral-shaped steel pendant helps delineate the dining area within the kitchen, a bronze and glass piece from Portugal adds opulence to the master bedroom, and an ethereal banana-fiber fixture in the dressing area is, appropriately enough, like "a beautiful evening gown."

Rhoads was additionally adamant that Gardner inject her clients with "a sense of color," something that the neutrals-loving designer doesn't naturally gravitate toward. "When I arrived in New York from Bermuda," Rhoads jokes, "I was the one wearing theucci pants!" The resulting scheme, which ranges from purple walls in the master suite to a citrus-plaster "art wall" in the living area, "is unexpected and makes me smile." Gardner was definitely up for the challenge. "Lisa really opened my mind to bright shades, and we had a lot of fun exploring different color stories," the designer says. "It feels young and energetic. Just like a contemporary update should." ■



Glam Factor
The master bedroom (opposite page) features a light fixture by Blau & Co and a coverlet from Latner Linen. (opposite page) A Rappael tub takes center stage in the master bath. (this page) Lighting by Pinch and a Moroccan chair and ottoman lend drama to the dressing room. See Resources.