

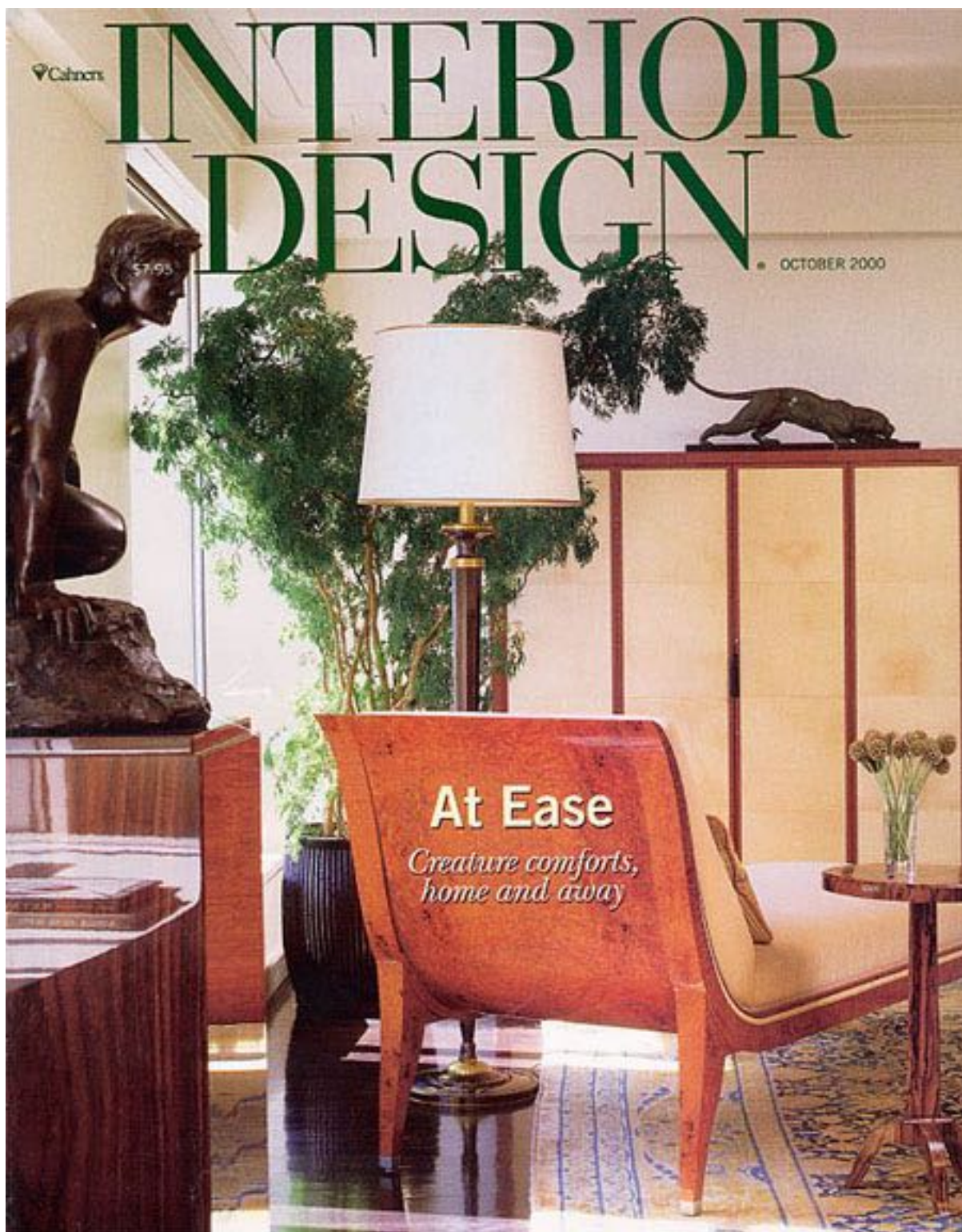
Calson

INTERIOR DESIGN

OCTOBER 2000

At Ease

*Creature comforts,
home and away*



Fabulous Outlook

Bruce Bierman designs a Manhattan apartment planned to capture magnificent views of Central Park.

THERE IS A hint of *déjà vu* about the illustrated apartment, designed by Bruce Bierman, in relation to the residence/studio (published here in April 1995) that he created for himself, again in Manhattan. In the latter case, he had gradually edited his dual-function loft's private sector and work zone to enhance their appeal to potential clients. The results were rewarding, confirming his theory that a designer's own environment tells more about his professional skills than does a presentation, computer-derived or not, complete with sketches, swatch boards, and chips.

Although one project came about by strategy and the other by happenstance, both had their beginnings at the same place, which, in turn, became the catalyst for attracting commissions. This time, a mutual friend and the future client, a businessman who had been thinking about changing his residence, chanced to be in Bierman's neighborhood. They stopped by at the home-cum-office. The first-time visitor liked what he saw. He asked questions, listened to the host's views and, one may surmise, began to see, in his mind's eye, the picture of a place suiting his own wants and needs. Bierman, of course, was to be the designer. What may have clinched the deal was his resolving his client's vexing dilemma about choice of venue:

should he live on the Upper West Side, specifically in the landmarked Deco Majestic Building with its truly extraordinary views to Central Park; or in a supersized loft offering the special character of a fine Tribeca structure? Having seen the former, Bierman voted for the move uptown since it was there, he declared, that both visions could be turned into reality. He set about doing just that.

First, however, he erased the vestiges of 35 years' occupancy by residents who had done nothing by way of renovation or updating. After gutting and opening up the 3,000-sq.-ft. flat, he shuffled previous space allocations so that where it matters most, freed-of-obstructions rooms admit maximum exposure to natural light and unreal views. Among →

Left: Living room, dominated by 19th-century dog painting, is designed for flexible multi-use: chairs are on casters, coffee table contains hidden television projector. Custom club chairs are styled in the manner of Jean-Michel Frank.

CUSTOM SEATING: JM UPHOLSTERY; FABRIC: J. ROBERT SCOTT. CABINETRY, FLOOR LAMP, COFFEE TABLE WITH BUILT-IN PROJECTOR: JWA FURNITURE. RUG: DORIS LESLIE BLAU. ART: THROUGH WILLIAM SECORD GALLERY. SET OF THREE SMALL TABLES: MAKASSAR-FRANCE.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDREW BORDWIN







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deletions were a solarium and butler's pantry; new to the array are exercise and powder rooms.

In ridding the space of extraneous partitions, Bierman did more than uncover a few lookout spots for sightseekers: from most areas, grand vistas and light influx can be enjoyed by the viewer wherever he stands. Or sits. Or reclines, as holds true when the owner, resting in the master bedroom, looks straight ahead to Central Park or, slightly cocking his head, to Henry J. Hardenbergh's 1884 Dakota apartment building. Clear sight lines run vertically and across, facilitating long-distance sighting within and beyond the abode. Even in the kitchen one finds a



rounded corner banquette that serves, as it were, as a deluxe loge for watching the panoramic show. Predictably, the only space divider within the perimetric frame is neither a wall nor flat door. It is, instead, formed by two sets of three folding panels of white laminated glass with mahogany frames placed between the dining area and the master bedroom. When closed during formal dinners, the translucent glazing, set aglow by lights on the other side, acts as dramatic backdrop for the assembled cast.

The client had come from a contemporary milieu, and the style's clean and calm lines were retained though slightly amended to honor the 1930s building's style. French

art deco-inspired furniture, muted colors, pronounced textures, and natural-fiber fabrics are among the period's telltale signs. Woods are represented by sapele, macassar ebony, maple, and anigré. Attention to details is exceptional. In the living room, a handsome coffee table houses the television projector; the screen is lowered from the ceiling soffit above the fireplace. Floors, walls, and ceilings are sound-proofed with cork or rubber underlay. Antique rugs long enough to cover the entry hall being impossible to find, a stair-runner was chosen. Replicated mouldings, their antecedents looking rather tired, are stepped at ceilings, rounded on walls, and supplemented with flat trims at →

Opposite: Looking to dining room and, beyond folding laminated glass panels framed with mahogany, to part of bedroom. Nearly 50-ft.-long eastern window wall admits panoramic views.

Above: Dining room, set against back-lit and aligned glass panels. Table is anigré-veneered; chairs are of dark-stained maple.

FOLDING DOORS: BFI CONSTRUCTION; JWA FURNITURE.
DINING TABLE: DAKOTA JACKSON. ARMCHAIRS: MATTALIANO.
BACKGROUND FABRIC: J. ROBERT SCOTT.



Above: Curved leather-covered banquette in kitchen looks all the way to window wall at the apartment's opposite side. Candy jars stand in for cook books that are yet to be bought.

Opposite: Kitchen is furnished with Carrara marble counters, ceiling-high cabinetry of bleached sapele and mahogany, webbed-leather chairs, and all the latest appliances.

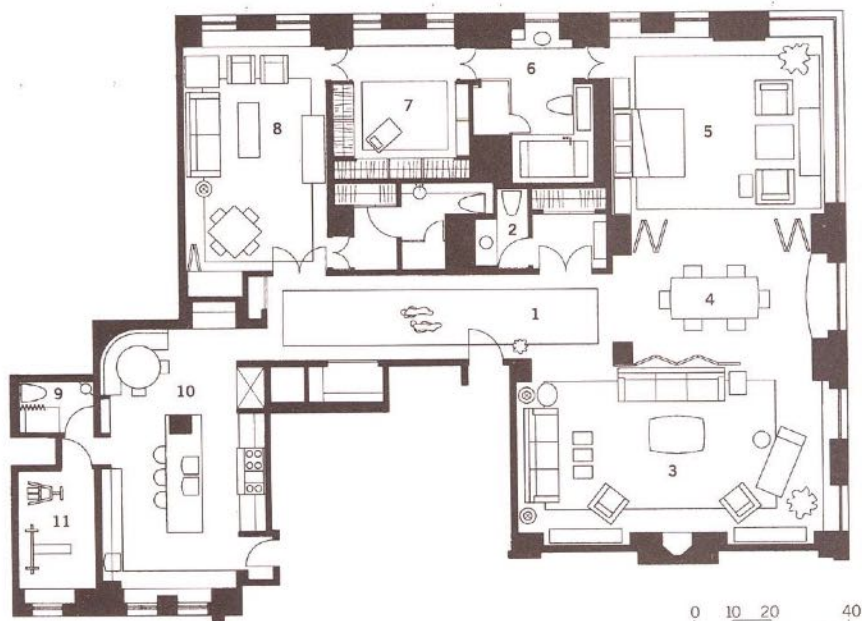
LIGHTING CONTROL/DIMMING SYSTEM: **VANTAGE**. CONSULTANTS: **GARY GORDON, LLC** (LIGHTING); **HOME ENTERTAINMENT DESIGN** (AUDIO/VISUAL). GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **BFI CONSTRUCTION**. TABLE: **PACE COLLECTION**. BANQUETTE COVER: **CORTINA LEATHER**. CHAIRS: **NIEDERMAIER**. REFRIGERATOR: **SUB-ZERO**. OVEN/RANGE: **VIKING**. SINK: **FRANKE**. LIGHTING: **EDISON PRICE**; **DANALITE**; **BELFER LIGHTING**; **LIGHTOLIER**. FLOOR: **STONE SOURCE**.

base levels. And leaping from the 1930s into the second millennium, there's electronic gadgetry that, for example, lets the householder, away on a trip, bleep his magic techno wand so as to turn on his Central Park West air conditioning.

Bierman likens his design approach to couture workmanship: all it takes is the best material, adherence to simple clean lines, and attention to detailing, he says. He also suggests that clients tend to be most content when they perceive their homes to be larger than actually they are, and their storage facilities to be infinitely commodious. Hence the multitude of closets for clothes and linens, big dressing room, and ceiling-high cabinets. As for the kitchen, why are those glass shelves filled with candy jars? Because, the narrator claims, this is where cook books should have been placed and studied so as to turn the resident into a culinary pro. Except no such thing has as yet happened. Finally there is →



- 1 ENTRY
- 2 POWDER ROOM
- 3 LIVING ROOM
- 4 DINING ROOM
- 5 MASTER BEDROOM
- 6 MASTER BATHROOM
- 7 DRESSING ROOM
- 8 LIBRARY
- 9 BATHROOM
- 10 KITCHEN
- 11 EXERCISE ROOM





the brace of bronze jungle cats lounging in the long corridor. Bierman had seen the duo's identical twins at Armani's place in Milan, and was determined to find another pair of the pretty albeit uncuddly pets for his client. It seemed a hopeless endeavor. But he persevered, and eventually found this prey.

It took about a year and three months to do the job. Project manager Robert McGrath, project designer Victoria A. Carrique, and architectural designer Richard Krell made up the team. —Monica Geran

Above: Master bedroom, looking to Beaux Arts Dakota apartments and, out of camera's range right, to Central Park West.

Left: Library windows sport Venetian wood blinds; elsewhere black-out or solar shades pull down from ceiling pockets. Geometric-pattern rug supplies the room's color palette; table is said to be in the style of Jean-Michel Frank.

Opposite: Typical of unbroken sight lines is the continuous succession of master bathroom, dressing room, and library/lounge.

LIBRARY SEATING: DAKOTA JACKSON; FABRIC: JEFFREY ARONOFF. COFFEE AND GAME TABLES, CHAIRS: MATTALIANO. TORCHERE: ROBERT GINGOLD ANTIQUES. RUGS: ENTRÉE LIBRE (LIBRARY); STARK (DRESSING ROOM). SCONCE: L'ART DE VIVRE. SHOWER STOOL: PUCCI INTERNATIONAL. CURVED-BACK CHAIR: SENTOU GALLERY, FRANCE. BED LINENS: CALVIN KLEIN. ART: THROUGH TOM KNAPP ART CONSULTANTS.

