

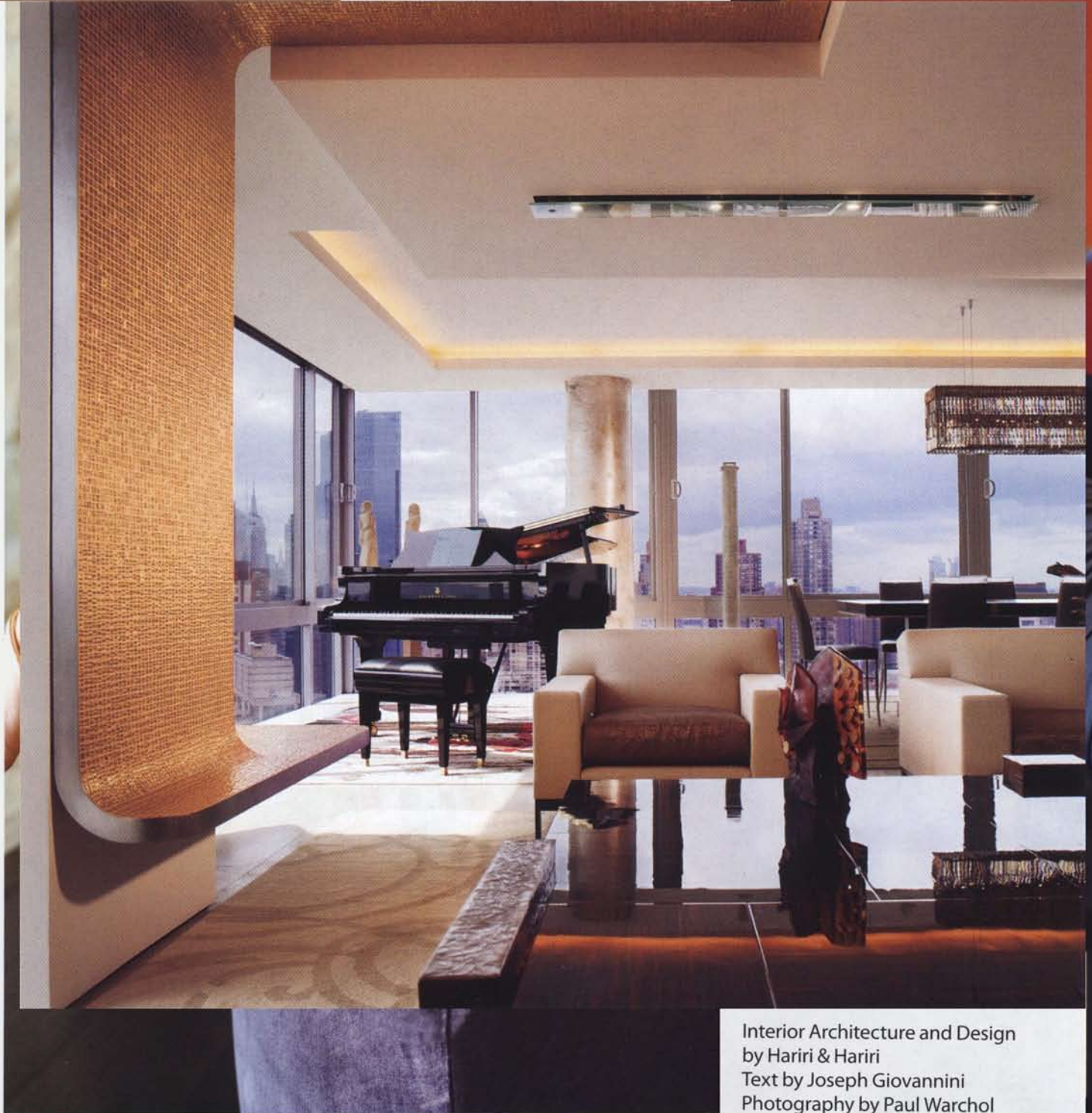
# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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## Simply Sustainable

A 45TH-FLOOR AERIE  
ON THE UPPER WEST  
SIDE GOES GREEN



Interior Architecture and Design  
by Hariri & Hariri  
Text by Joseph Giovannini  
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## A 45TH-FLOOR AERIE ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE GOES GREEN

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Beautiful apartments suffer a stigma shared by beautiful blondes: No one quite believes they can be very smart or practical. But when a pair of empty-nesting New Yorkers called on Hariri & Hariri Architecture to design a Modernist apartment on the 45th floor of a Manhattan tower, the clients asked for environmental intelligence. Collectors and travelers, the couple brought a sophisticated eye to the commission, matched by elevated environmental expectations. They had stayed in many hotels wired to optimize comfort and minimize energy consumption. "They wanted a smart home," says Gisue Hariri, who worked on the apartment with her sister Mojgan.

The well-guarded little secret of recently built New York apartments at swank addresses is that the interiors are often banal and the construction iffy, the result of developers designing buildings with their calculators. The apartments coast on drop-dead views. Here on the Upper West Side, a hop, skip and a jump from Lincoln Center, the Hariri sisters wanted to reset the equation so that the interiors matched the views in quality and drama as they achieved a higher environmental IQ. An energy-consuming Manhattan apartment could go green.

As though making water from scratch, the architects started with the most basic

Seeking energy efficiency and the utmost in comfort, a Manhattan couple hired Hariri & Hariri to renovate their 3,000-square-foot Manhattan apartment. LEFT: The living room. The sculpture is a Mariza Jonath. Sofas and chairs, Christian Liaigre for Holly Hunt. Ralph Lauren Home side table.





THIS IMAGE: The architects situated the dining area just off the living area, all in a single, open space with spectacular southeast views of the city. Chandelier, Swarovski. Artistic Tiles flooring. OPPOSITE: The kitchen. Cooktop, VikingRange.com.

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element of the apartment, the window wall. The Hariris found that the forever views were compromised by clumsy air-handling units in knee walls parked smack dab in the glass façade. They were, as Prince Charles might say, carbuncles on the panorama—big boxes that defaced the vistas. Besides, the units insufficiently heated and cooled an apartment whose glass façade admitted too much hot air in the summer and cold air in the winter.

Revising the glass curtain wall and the air-conditioning systems is usually taboo in high-rise buildings. Stiff by-laws administered by strict boards forbid interference with the structure and infra structure. Rearrange the walls inside, sure, but don't touch the pipes, and *fuggettabout* the window wall.

The determined Hariris challenged all that, and, unexpectedly, the condominium association approved their suggestions: If the Hariris could improve the apartment in question, the solutions could apply to the entire building. The couple were paying for a test case.

“The first thing I wanted to do was to get rid of the AC and the knee walls, to fully expose the curtain wall,” says Gisue Hariri, looking like anything but an environmental engineer in her cashmere poncho and Mexican cowboy boots. “To establish sustainable heating and cooling, we appropriated the existing steam system but embedded pipes in the floors for radiant heating. By removing the knee walls, we could change out all the glass for a better insulated façade.” The result was not only a new baseline of comfort but also a liberated window wall that let more Manhattan than ever into the apartment. The view was no longer rudely interrupted.

The architects then hooked up all the systems—heating, cooling, lighting, shades, humidity, audiovisual, computers and telephone—to a brainy computer hidden in a closet off the bar. “It became a pretty smart home,” she says.

Having tamed the environment for greater comfort and sustainability, they started on the architecture. The clients




ABOVE: A spalike aesthetic was chosen for the wife's bath, with the pale tones of its glass-tile walls, marble shelf and limestone floor playing up the horizontality of the dark wood floating cabinets. RIGHT: The master bedroom. Drapery and headboard fabric, Brunschwig & Fils. BELOW: A built-in desk was created for the wife's study. Glass table, Ralph Lauren Home.



wanted to convert a standard three-bedroom, 3,000-square-foot apartment into a one-bedroom with his-and-her offices and to open and expand the public space while keeping the private spaces at the back private. The couple frequently entertain, especially around the grand piano.

The design that the clients inherited with their purchase was plain without being simple and generic without being universal. The Hariri sisters opened the living room by removing unnecessary walls, and they adjusted the three bedrooms into a large master suite paired with offices. A den outfitted as a screen-





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ing room now leads off the kitchen.

But a floor plan alone does not architecture make. Gisue Hariri says, “The wife loved Modern, and he wanted a quiet apartment but with a subtle wow effect.”

Hariri & Hariri are versatile designers, flexible in their Modernism, and they appropriated a de Stijl design vocabulary straight from the Museum of Modern Art a dozen blocks away. The architects basically translated the spirit of Mondrian’s *Broadway Boogie Woogie* outside into a boogie-woogie of their own inside. Abstract planes float off walls and ceilings, expanding and compressing space. The

composition not only makes the apartment feel bigger, it also marries the cubic, right-angled city outside.

The architects give substance to the abstract shapes with a rich palette of materials—warm *wenge* cabinetry and paneling, plus strategically placed accents of gold mosaic tile. They extend their architectural ideas to the smaller scale of the crisply geometric furniture.

So on the face of it, a guest passing the *wenge* paneling into the wide open spaces of the dining and living areas steps into an abstract three-dimensional composition that frames the views beyond. The

wow of the apartment leads to the wow of the view. The hidden truth is that the architects have delivered the quintessential image of urbanism through green technology: The clients are living in Vermont while staring at Manhattan.

The technology disappears: “We wanted to use technology, but not as a visible gadget,” says Hariri. At night, when the lights of the city become a massive aurora borealis, and the Swarovski crystal chandelier over the dining table sparkles, the dinner lights blend into the constellation outside. City and apartment fuse.

*This blonde is both smart and beautiful.* □