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House Beautiful

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A WARM WELCOME

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It's Cole Porter chic with casual charm when Markham Roberts creates a Manhattan pied-à-terre for a West Coast couple who jet in for paint-the-town-red weekends—with or without the kids.

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INTERIOR DESIGN MARKHAM ROBERTS

INTERVIEW JULIA LEWIS



In the dining room of a Manhattan apartment decorated by Markham Roberts, walls sheathed in Schumacher's Prestwick wool satin in Paprika are hung with antique watercolors depicting minerals from Cove Landing gallery. Antique chandelier, James Sansum Fine and Decorative Art. **OPPOSITE:** The wall fabric is repeated on the custom chairs, paired with Brunschwig & Fils's Oatlands Tapestry. Custom rug, Studio Four NYC, Photograph of Drottningholm Palace, Massimo Listri.



ABOVE: A custom sofa upholstered in a Brunswig & Fils wool anchors an elegant seating arrangement in the living room. **BELOW LEFT:** A custom armchair is covered in a vintage chintz; the antique French table with an inlaid marble top is from James Sansum Fine and Decorative Art. The abstract landscape is by Alex Schuchard.

BELOW RIGHT: At the opposite end of the living room, a custom L-shaped sectional upholstered in Schumacher's Gainsborough velvet provides ample seating for entertaining. The oak-and-leather coffee table was designed by Roberts, and each of the mandala prints by Julia Condon represents a different spiritual state of mind.





Roberts created intriguing vignettes throughout the apartment. One of his own photographs, a gift to the clients, hangs above a Sheraton table and a Karl Springer-inspired bench. A 19th-century owl oil lamp, now wired for electricity, provides a charming note of levity.

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When a West Coast couple bought a Manhattan apartment to serve as an East Coast base for family visits, they searched for a designer well attuned to matters of both style and comfort. Markham Roberts—whose high-toned interiors are sophisticated but never stuffy—was the clear choice. The homeowners entrusted him with an all-encompassing design that included everything from curtains to cutlery. He responded with a flexible, multitasking scheme that works equally well when the couple are on their own as when their kids, one of whom is in college, are in residence. What follows is the designer's advice for crafting rooms that, while tailored and dressy, feel easy and relaxed.

1. The upholstered walls in the dining room are **the color of tomato bisque**. The orangey-red wool satin absorbs the clamor of boisterous dinners and provides a beautiful background for art, day or night.

2. **Formal but not intimidating** was the goal. I designed a parchment-covered dining table that works for two but leafs out for larger groups. The patterned rug hides a multitude of sins.

3. Nothing flatters like candlelight. **The chandelier holds real candles**—which I encourage my clients to use—but is also wired with tiny electric bulbs for additional light.

4. For two people or 20, the living room is relaxed and inviting. There is seating near the windows for entertaining and **a corner banquette for reading** and watching TV. The two zones are distinct but still relate to each other.



5. Simple **matchstick shades** make the room feel lighter and younger. It's an airy, uncomplicated look.

6. A **tufted L-shaped sectional** adds a casual seating area to the living room. It's an efficient use of space—and it fits lots of people.

7. Unlikely pairings are more visually interesting, and the same is true for decorating. I put this proper Sheraton console and cool Karl Springer-style bench together because **opposites attract**: The table looks serious, but the chrome stool helps to loosen things up.

8. While **the marble mantel** provides a focal point, I didn't organize the furniture around it. This isn't a drafty manor where you need to huddle around the hearth! Still, you can pull up a chair and enjoy the fire.

9. A **striped wallcovering** breaks up the entry's long wall. Without some pattern and surface interest, I would have had to hang a lot of art!

10. It sounds over-the-top, but **layers of blue-and-white patterns** can actually be coherent and calming. The prints in the master bedroom (*next page*) are unified by scale and color.

11. The breakfast area's palette—a turquoise table, a true-blue banquette, and citrine cushions on the Saarinen Tulip chairs—isn't an obvious combination but looks bright, cheerful, and pretty together. **Colors don't have to match.**

12. Deep teal upholstered walls make the study a moody, masculine space. **Saturated color** can keep a room from looking dim when there is not a lot of light.

13. **Cork wallpaper on the ceiling** creates a quieting effect. Putting a decorative treatment up above enhances the room's rich, textured feel.



A marble Belvedere mantel by Alexa Hampton for Chesney's provides a visual anchor between the living room's two seating areas. Above it, Italian glass sconces from the 1960s flank a 19th-century Dutch mirror. **OPPOSITE:** In the entry, a carved Irish Georgian console from KRB displays plants and decorative objects. Wallcovering, Victoria Hagan. Globe lantern, Jamb.



In the master bedroom, a tufted sleigh bed is a nod to the iconic designer Syrie Maugham. The bed and curtains are in prints by Lake August, and the walls are covered in an Alamwar pattern, all from Studio Four NYC. The pendant is by Paul Ferrante. Carpet, Stark.





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Roberts designed an Art Deco-inspired shagreen-covered dressing table, pairing it with a Venetian mirror. The custom breakfast table is painted in Fort Pierce Green by Benjamin Moore; Roberts's schnoodle, Harriet, sits on a Saarinen Tulip chair, in a Durable fabric, from Design Within Reach. Roberts alongside



Senga Mortimer, *House Beautiful's* celebrated contributing editor. The study's walls are upholstered in Divine Wool from S. Harris; Roberts designed the low mahogany bookcase to allow space for a quartet of Neapolitan gouaches and a surface for accessories, including a pair of wooden Indian lamps. **FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES**

