

# BRIDGE FOR DESIGN



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# RESPLENDENT WITH LIGHT

Classic meets contemporary  
in Manhattan apartment

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Brian J. McCarthy

When interior designer, Brian J. McCarthy first laid eyes on this apartment in the historic Apthorp building on Manhattan's upper west side, his first impression was the resplendent light and how it filled the spaces. Light is particularly precious in New York City apartments and an important element in the visual interplay McCarthy creates in his work.

The owners, a sophisticated couple whose primary residence is in the Middle East, have a fantastic art collection and fabulous style, which made for a fun and lively collaboration as they worked with McCarthy to bring new life and vibrancy to the apartment.

Over the years, the apartment had lost much of its original charm and McCarthy was determined to restore the details, including intricate plaster work throughout and the original mosaic floor in the gallery space, that he transformed into a dining area.

Once the year-long restoration was complete the decorating began, and McCarthy married a highly-curated blend of modern pieces with a classic aesthetic for a fresh juxtaposition that suited both homeowners' tastes.

McCarthy was happy to do just that. A multi-dimensional but crisp white paint is accented by a neutral but far-from-boring custom Beauvais carpet in the living room, creating the perfect backdrop for the couple's collection of contemporary art. McCarthy's elegant mix of furnishings from different periods are





artfully composed. The 1950s sconces now hang over a sleek new Chesney's mantel, while cowhide slipper chairs and an antique glass coffee table appear custom-made for the space.

One of McCarthy's signature techniques – constructing a 'skyline' of different furniture heights so that the eye can find interest and move around the room – is something he learned from his mentor, Albert Hadley, and is well employed here. The showstopper of the space, however, is the sculptural, bronze Herve Van der Straeten chandelier that creates a distinctive contrast to the delicate plaster work that adorns the ceiling and walls.

In the library, deep aubergine Venetian plastic walls are a surprising twist and a custom carpet, inspired by a 1950s Swedish rug, brings a pop of colour to the space.

The master bedroom is elevated by embellishing the original panelling with a faux bois finish. The Noguchi lantern echoes the balance of clean lines and traditional details.

The kitchen is transformed by McCarthy's ability to get beyond trends for a truly original but timeless aesthetic. Cerused-oak cabinetry is a delightful antidote to typical all-white finishes seen in most modern kitchens. Hammered nickel subway tile on the backsplash reflects light and keeps the overall sensibility from feeling too traditional: again, a happy marriage of classic and contemporary.

In this apartment, McCarthy's talent for blending bespoke details, luxurious finishes, carefully conjured colour, and a sense of tailored whimsy, is truly in full effect.

## About Brian J. McCarthy

A former partner in legendary design firm Parish-Hadley, Brian J. McCarthy founded his eponymous firm in 1992.

A graduate of New York City's Pratt Institute, Brian is a proud member of *Architectural Digest's* AD 100, *Elle Decor's* A-List and *New York Magazine's* 100 Best.

He is also co-author, with Bunny Williams, of *Luminous Interiors* and *Prish Hadley Tree of Life*. He lectures around the country and lives in New York City.

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