

# CREATIVE LICENSE

Homeowners give their designer free rein, and the results are stunning

WRITTEN BY CINDY SCHWEICH HANDLER PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF JSE INTERIORS/DENTE TRADING/LIZA FRIEDMAN



**T**he homeowners hailed from the Upper East Side of Manhattan, where their young family of four had lived in a three-bedroom apartment. They loved their new home on Myrtle Avenue, but didn't love its shabby-chic interior design – at all. They were referred to Julia Epstein, owner of JSE Interiors in Montclair, who, it turns out, shared an "eclectic modern aesthetic with the wife. They said, 'Do whatever you want,'" says Epstein. And that is what she did, with assistance from Classics Reborn, the contractor.

## OPENING ACT

(Opposite) Epstein turned the home's unexceptional foyer into a dramatic entryway with black-and-white marble tile flooring, and hand-drawn millwork on the walls consisting of concentric squares that wrap around the space; white and silver metallic grass-cloth paper covers the walls above them. The cobalt blue in the lamp provides a pop of color.

(Above) The couple had inherited antique French lithographs and the collection of leather-bound books seen on the mantelpiece, as well as Lalique candelabras and the artwork on the wall. "It was almost a shrine to the wife's mother," says Epstein. She used the pieces as inspiration for a Parisian flea market look, with Louis XIV settees upholstered in a modern fabric. "The hide on the floor has a modern design, and [its use here] is almost tongue-in-cheek," she says. The pre-existing, painted coffered ceiling was lightened up with a hand-applied pearlescent paint, and the red brick fireplace was distressed and covered with a metallic wash derived from the ceiling paint. >





## FUN WITH COLOR

(Clockwise, from opposite page, top) The homeowners didn't want the living room/family room to be stuffy, and Epstein had fun being creative with the plaid faux fabric tile on the fireplace. She pulled the rustic blue color in the woven wool and sisal rug from the oversized photo on the wall; the blue sofa is by Baker. (Above) Previously, the kitchen's all-white cabinets and traditional hardware contributed to a country look. Because they were in great shape, Epstein had the cabinets' factory finish resprayed on site. She made the room's color theme taupe, green and brass by having the hood custom-made by Designer Appliances in Montclair; choosing a chandelier, chairs and faucets of brass; and installing a soft green, veined Taj Mahal stone island countertop as well as soft beige granite around the room's perimeter. The Calcutta gold marble tiles were hand-installed in a chevron pattern on three of the kitchen's walls. (Left) The dining room sports black wainscoting and 12-inch crown molding to play off its white walls. With the Italian-made long glass table from Roche Bobois, black, white and gray custom rug from London and polymer Kartell chairs Epstein found online, the pop of color in this room is provided by the teal bar cabinet. (Opposite, bottom) The black theme continues into the music room with the piano and desk, which is highlighted with painted florals. The walls are plum, with a soft gray trim. >



## MIXING HIGH-END AND AFFORDABLE

(Right) The elegant and comfortable master bedroom suite carries the soft purple palate into the home's second floor. While Epstein bumped the wall bearing the electric fireplace out 6 inches to make it flush and coated it with eggplant-colored silk paper, most of the bedroom's furnishings can be found online. The homeowners already owned the velvet-upholstered Restoration Hardware bed; the large chair is from West Elm, and the Lucite stool with the purple top is by Mitchell Gold Bob Williams (the lighting and black sheepskin fur rug are also from online retailers). (Top) Epstein took the existing bathroom down to its studs to build the current design, which contains a freestanding tub, hand-painted, lotus-patterned marble tiles in the shower and accent wall at the tub's left, and ceramic, faux-wood parquet tiles on the floor. (Above) The zebra-print settee in the dressing room, with its indigo-painted walls, is also available online. ■

