

SUNNY DISPOSITION

An entertainer for visiting grandchildren that doubles as a showcase for the wares of two fabric entrepreneurs, this New York pad proves you can mix business with pleasure.

PHOTOGRAPHS HALLIE BURTON WORDS + STYLING MEGAN MORTON



THIS PAGE A pair of B&B Italia 'Metropolitan' armchairs by Jeffrey Bernett and a sofa by M2L, along with a silk and wool custom-made rug, make a cosy conversation pit in the living room. OPPOSITE PAGE The orange Crypton suede fabric used to upholster the wall makes a dramatic backdrop for the Takeshi Miyakawa Design 'Wedge' table and Lyx 'Kristall' chandelier by Jonas Wannfors.





THIS PAGE Ghislaine's starting point for the dining/living area, the portrait of Craig's mother, sits on the right-hand wall of the dining quarters, opposite the Molteni&C 'Diamond' table by Patricia Urquiola surrounded by Artifort 'Little Apollo' chairs. Artwork above table by Melissa Martin. Chandelier by Lite Brite Neon in New York. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP The Terzani 'Hugo' floor light in the living zone doubles as a piece of sculpture. BOTTOM A view of the city of New York from the apartment.



When Craig and Randy Rubin consulted with Ghislaine Viñas on the decoration of their apartment, they requested only one thing be worked into an otherwise open brief. "It was a painting of Craig's mother," remembers Ghislaine of the tender she received after the Rubins couldn't find a 'natural fit' with the five other designers they had interviewed. The rather large, charming oil takes pride of place in the living room and has informed the design of the three-bedroom, four-bathroom apartment as much as the other purpose-bought works, such as the photography from the collectable Holly Lynton. All of it sits in a jewel-like-upholstered cocoon that Ghislaine has created for the Rubins, in a suitably impressive location on New York's Upper East Side.

The apartment plays one part accommodation for the couple, whose main residence is in Michigan, and one part showroom for their fabric label Crypton, which is known within the American decorating fraternity for its durability and design savvy. Ghislaine has worked to show off the more visual aspects of the range, rather than the practical, with the heavily upholstered soft furnishings on bedheads and feature walls and some distinct colour blocking.

She admits that the apartment's status as a pied-à-terre let her get away with a lot more than if it were a full-time home. "I was able to push a little harder than I would usually to get the results I wanted." There is a deliberate and elegant tension between the artwork, the fabric and the furniture, with the project taking just one year to complete. While no budget or definitive design restrictions were set by the Rubins, the design team did have the challenge of working within the apartment's preset bathroom and kitchen fixtures. The



THE APARTMENT SAYS WHO [THE OWNERS] ARE MORE LOUDLY THAN ANY PRESS RELEASE COULD.

THIS PAGE and OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP RIGHT A Xavier Escriba artwork, an Aqua Creations floor lamp and Jeremy Cole wall sconces are eye-catching features in the main bedroom. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT Cherner bar stools offer a fabulous vantage point over New York's East River. BOTTOM Ghislaine chose vibrant shades of green to bring life to the guestroom.



floor, originally specified as cherry wood by the developer, was the first thing Ghislaine addressed. A simple maple wood replacement was laid. "This let us develop an overall lighter space and a palette to match," she says. For the same reason, she had the kitchen cabinet doors replaced in white to continue the decidedly more contemporary atmosphere than the ageing cherry joinery.

Once the plan was taken back to a lighter backdrop, Ghislaine worked her vibrant handwriting, with its modern undertones, through every room. Removing a wall between the office and the living room resulted in an open-plan desk situation. Its orange upholstered wall acts like a punctuation mark to the space and is the perfect way to show off the fabric's colour capabilities, as well as adding depth and warmth to a nook. Given the fabric is on the verge of being overused, Ghislaine felt the furniture needed to be reduced to simple forms. Interesting side tables and solid yet unfussy occasional pieces in fibreglass, resin and glass were chosen for their ability to be perfectly quiet within the riot of colour happening around the room.

The Rubins, whose six grandchildren, friends, clients and suppliers are among their visitors, have found the apartment says who they are more loudly than any press release could. Clients love it, guests are lining up to stay and they couldn't be happier with Ghislaine's efforts. But the best compliment came from the Rubins' 11-year-old twin granddaughters, Anna and Meredith. When asked why they thought it was so great they collectively replied: "Because you can see millions and zillions of windows, of course!" And their five-year-old cousin, Seth, on his first visit had to be convinced he wasn't flying in the sky! It seems Ghislaine's brave choices, in conjunction with the building's stunning location, has all age groups united in approval. 15

SPEED READ Fabric entrepreneurs Craig and Randy Rubin interviewed numerous New York designers before finding their perfect match in Ghislaine Viñas, who managed to infuse a sense of family fun in an apartment that is one part accommodation, one part showroom extension. • Crypton fabrics, invented by the couple, were used throughout the apartment in place of paint to great effect. For Crypton stockists here, call Materialised on (02) 8558 3500 or visit materialised.com