

SKY'S *the* LIMIT

UNDERSTATED LUXURY AND MAGICAL VIEWS ELEVATE
A CHELSEA PENTHOUSE TO NEW HEIGHTS.

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James Huniford makes pulling off a neutral palette look easy. A prime example: the glass-wrapped Chelsea penthouse he designed as a vacation home for his clients, where views include those of New York’s celebrated landmarks, from the Statue of Liberty to the Hudson River to The High Line’s manicured park. But Huniford’s elegant interiors—a composition of geometric furnishings in shades of white, cream, beige and gray—form their own sort of skyline, with the interior designer’s mix of tactile materials adding interest and nuance to the color scheme. After all, he says, “One texture would be boring.”

The couple, who called Huniford after seeing a model apartment he had designed, were looking for a new configuration for this penthouse, one that was equally ideal for a visit from their adult children, a dinner party for 15 or a quiet evening for two. “We were in sync with how they wanted to live,” Huniford says, “and they had a strong point

of view about clean lines and a lot of white and sunlight.” One of the most important things Huniford had to consider was how the various groups of people might occupy the penthouse and how the layout could accommodate each scenario. Working with builder Mark Dobbin, he carved intimate spaces from the main living room that maintain an open sense of flow. “The goal was to use simple design elements without ornamentation,” says the designer. A floating fireplace set in angular cast concrete separates the living area from the family area, which shares space with the open kitchen and dining room.

The couple owns homes in many of their favorite locales around the world, and they wanted their Manhattan residence to be a place to retreat. “They love the idea of luxury and uniqueness,” says Huniford. As a result, much of the furniture is custom, and fabrics and rugs were sourced from specialty weavers. Window seats that Huniford

The living room features a delineated seating area with window seats covered in a high-pile weave from Nantucket Looms across from a pair of custom stools clad in Holland & Sherry grass cloth.

A floating concrete fireplace with a hand-troweled finish separates the living room from the family room and kitchen. Stained oak floors, a stone tabletop from Westchester Granite and commissioned fiber art by Sally England showcase the nuanced palette and textures.





With breathtaking views overlooking the High Line, the dining room features a table designed by Huniford that extends to seat up to 14 guests. Soft horsehair-and-cotton chair upholstery by The Bodenner Collection is from Savel. The alabaster chandelier is by Atelier Alain Ellouz.

designed, for example, feature cushions upholstered in a high-pile handwoven fabric from the venerable Nantucket Looms, while the rug in the entry hall is by Elizabeth Eakins. "I love working with these artisans who are making something that's not mass produced," he says. "That was important for these clients."

Objects throughout the home reflect this same thoughtfulness. A fiber piece by artist Sally England hangs on the family room wall, and, in the dining room, a series of cast-concrete candelabra by Brooklyn-based Vonnegut/Kraft is brutalist, urban and entirely unusual.

Texture on the walls includes a pigmented plaster in the entry, where one stripe is flat and the next is waxed—"inspired by Agnes Martin," reveals Huniford. "I love her work." The den is wrapped in flat wood veneer paneling, and the master bedroom wallpaper is comprised of individual sheets of Barkskin that were hand-applied. Drawing from the work of Billy Baldwin and Karl Springer, Huniford covered a console in painted grass cloth, while the kitchen's polished concrete complements the fireplace.

The views from inside the penthouse are stunning, but the vistas from the balconies and the roof terrace "are magical," Huniford remarks. He designed custom furniture for the terrace, including a mahogany sectional and boxes for plantings. "That kind of tailoring creates something very special," he says. "Everywhere you turn, there's something to see."

It's been said that originality flourishes within constraints, and with its subdued colors and thoughtful design, this vacation residence is a case study. "I love a client who knows what works for them," says Huniford. "It helps me expand my creativity, and I can exceed their expectations." ■

“Everywhere you turn, there’s something to see,” says Huniford of the rooftop, which is lined with plants installed by Roger Miller Gardens. The clients’ stone table sits in front of a custom sectional facing metal-mesh pieces by Russell Woodard from Architectural Anarchy.



Opposite: A custom desk, along with chairs covered in the same horsehair-and-cotton upholstery as the dining room chairs, anchor one end of the media room. The lamp is a vintage find.

Below: Versatile pieces such as the sleeper sofa by Huniford Design Studio and a concrete table transform the media room into an occasional guest room. Unusual touches bring a sense of collected history: a limestone totem sculpture from Mantiqes, a vase from Nest Interiors and a Stark Carpet made of vintage saris.



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In the master bedroom, custom pieces bring an artisanal quality to the space. Barkskin paper on the walls, a bed upholstered in fabric from Studio Four NYC and bedside tables wrapped in Arabel linen incorporate a variety of textures while simultaneously absorbing sound.



Organic shapes and materials lend softness to the master bath, such as the freestanding Agape tub and a tessellated-bone oval side table. The marble-topped custom vanity features a Kohler sink from the Thoreau Collection.