

# *bring on the blues!* athome

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# high life

A modern mix of blues, patterns and periods strikes the right note for traditional city living



**You met these clients through mutual friends. When did you start work?**

This apartment was new construction in an old building that was gutted, and the clients brought me in during the initial stages of the construction. The apartment was what it was—we couldn't change anything until after the clients bought it, so it wasn't customized to them. We didn't have a lot of wiggle room with architectural changes, so it was very much a decorating project, which is different for me. I typically work directly with architects and build houses from scratch.

**Since you came on board early on, what kind of a time frame were you working with?**

About nine months, from when we started decorating to when they moved in, which was pretty fast.

**What were they looking for?**

Since they're a young family, the space needed to be livable and functional. It's a bit of a mixture, but it's definitely more on the traditional side than the contemporary side. The client liked color and some pattern, and she wanted to incorporate both without it looking old and stuffy. She wanted it to have a freshness, but she still wanted a little more color and pattern than most people tend to like today.

**Did you click with the client right away?**

I fell in love with her, and we've become really good friends. I think we went out of our way to spend time with each other! We went shopping together a lot, and I saw her about once every two weeks for those nine months.

interior design **JENNIFER SMOKLER INTERIORS**  
interview **LAUREN FETTERMAN** photographs **STACY BASS**

In the blue-lacquered library, a custom Paley sofa in a Holland & Sherry mohair velvet faces a French 1950s gilded-iron coffee table from Alexander Cohane Ltd. Stark's Brigade carpeting is underfoot, and a Highwire Tandem light fixture from Apparatus illuminates the space at night. Curtains in Holland & Sherry's Bebe fabric in Glacier dress up the view.

In the dining room, seating from Studio Van den Akker in JAB's Cheeky Plain fabric carries on the blue tones. With a bowl from Bungalow as its centerpiece, a glossy Lindsey Studio Van den Akker table sits underneath a Lindsey Adelman chandelier.



**Where did you start with the furnishings?**

We incorporated a bit of existing furniture, but not very much. A lot of pieces were vintage, and we got a few from Europe that we bought through a dealer. We bought a few pieces from Van den Akker. The table, chairs and Lindsey Adelman chandelier in the dining room were new, and all of the upholstery was custom.

**The entire apartment features a great mix of vintage, antique and new.**

It's a total combination. I think old pieces give so much soul, character and individuality to a home. I love looking for them—I love the hunt and the excitement of finding them. I don't like it when everything is brand-new, but I do think you need new things. It's getting the balance right that makes it work, and the client felt the same way.

**Since you had to work with what was there, were there any design decisions that made a big difference?**

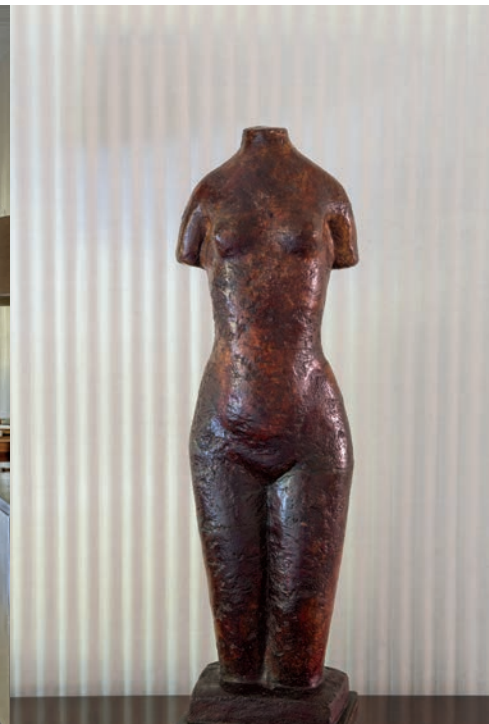
In three of the rooms, we had the painter Artgroove do decorative finishes that I feel made a significant impact. In the library, the whole room is lacquered in blue. In the entry, we did a textured, slightly metallic technique on the walls. And in the living room, we did a Venetian plaster. Because we couldn't change a lot of the architecture, we used a lot of decorative finishes in the apartment.

**How did you dream up that color in the library?**

Sometimes, in the beginning of a project, I lie in bed at night and literally go through all the colors in the rainbow, envisioning rooms in different colors, and I did that with this project. I got this blue color in my mind and described it to the painter, and we went from there making samples. It's like a smoky French blue.

**That shade is so striking in there. How did the rest of the library come together?**

Other than the wall lacquer, everything is very neutral. We added an entire wall of millwork, and the painting over the sofa was



top: The walls in the entry welcome visitors with a custom three-dimensional ribbed plaster in a subtle metallic silver finish. A 1950s plaster sculpture by Willy Anthoons is prominently displayed on a Scala Luxury sideboard fronted in goatskin. above left: A 1930s French Art Deco sideboard from Antiqueria Tribeca is a chic addition to the dining room.

The living room's custom handmade and hand-dyed Bakhshayesh wool rug from Warp & Weft ties in the blue tones from the dining room and echoes the hue in the library. Pillows in Fortuny's Granada blue-and-silver fabric and a Holly Hunt York mirror rimmed in blue glass are additional touches of the color. Roma fabric-covered sofas and a pair of 1950s Italian chairs with walnut arms create an inviting gathering space with a Garcon table from Julian Chichester in the center.



"It's a very happy home—it has a  
**HAPPINESS AND  
PEACEFULNESS** to it."

—JENNIFER SMOKLER





A pair of Tamaso porcelain table lamps from Circa Lighting flanks the sofa along the wall. opposite: The living space is rounded out with an A. Schneller Sons custom chair covered in Holly Hunt's City Lights II fabric in Haze, and a nineteenth-century Italian three-drawer writing table is tucked into the corner.









Launched by the custom hand-knotted Moroccan wool rug from Doris Leslie Blau, the family room is anchored by a Bunny Williams Home blue leather ottoman with a built-in removable tray for easy entertaining. The chandelier topping off the space was a find by the client. opposite: In the kitchen, Emeco Navy stools provide seating at the island, and Robert Long Belmont lights above are an elegant focal point. In the breakfast nook, Hollywood at Home chairs in a JAB navy blue faux leather make cleanup with young children a breeze.





a piece the clients bought. We didn't have a specific place for it, but it works beautifully in that room.

**Since the library and living room are connected by the entry, how did the living room carry on the blue tones?**

The living room rug is from Warp & Weft, and we loved it. It's yellow, blue and cream, so the living room ended up having hints of blue as well because we just loved that rug. I think there's a little bit of a different shade of blue in every room, and it just evolved that way. I like homes to have a certain palette flow to them.

**In addition to the library and living room, there's a family room off of the kitchen. How did you layer in pattern and color there?**

I like to select rugs first for a room, so we chose this Moroccan one from Doris Leslie Blau. We added some color with the art and pillows, but it's fairly neutral. We didn't want to do the whole sofa in a pattern, so we had the pillows made from the Uzbek print from Brunschwig & Fils. It added enough brightness, youth and fun to the room without being too busy.

**Did you have any challenges with this project?**

There were some architectural challenges that, if we had been able to make our own



In the serene master bedroom, Smokler enveloped the walls in a Holly Hunt suede wallcovering for a soft look. Flanked by John Lyle Jean Stand tables, the bed is dressed in Casa del Bianco linens. Pillows in Osborne & Little's Rosslyn Lochwood fabric in Indigo/Charcoal add graphic pops of pattern and color throughout the room.

opposite: The seating area is a seamless blend of old and new, with a Holly Hunt table on one side of the sofa and an antique French black laquered table on the other. A 1960s T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings lounge chair with curved walnut legs and a Liz O'Brien acrylic bench topped with a leather cushion finish the space.




decisions before it was done, would have been a little easier. The apartment came with lighting, but we changed most of it. It came painted, but we repainted almost all of it. But I had no challenges decorating-wise with this client. We were three months ahead of schedule, and she was unbelievable to work with. I'm so happy with the way it came out.

**Describe this home in one word.**

Perfect. It's the perfect home for them, and it's a very happy home—it has a happiness and peacefulness to it.

**What will you take away from this experience?**

What I walk away with is my friendship with the client. It's a rare thing, to really love your client; that was the most meaningful part to me. 

**RESOURCES**

*Interior design: Jennifer Smokler Interiors, Westport; 203-227-0477; jennifersmoklerinteriors.com*

*Decorative finisher: Artgroove, New York City; 212-244-7199; artgroovenyc.com*

*Upholstery/window treatments: A. Schneller Sons/Bradmor Corporation Custom Furniture & Draperies to the Trade; Brentwood, NY; 631-388-5333*

*Painter: Nermin Brbutovic, Brothers Painting & Decorating Ltd., Hampton Bays, NY; 631-728-2820*

*Contractor: Daniel Galea, J&J Johnson Co., Inc., Long Island City, NY; 718-392-3033; jandjjohnson.com*

In one child's bedroom, a sleek changing table from ducduc and shades crafted from Romo's Elmore Dusk fabric keep the look simple and clean. opposite: In another child's bedroom, Smokler added millwork for easy access to books and toys. A custom-made daybed is covered in Villa Nova's washable Belgravia Smoky Blue fabric. Opposite the bed, a chest of drawers from Restoration Hardware offers additional storage.

