

Urban balm

The owners of an exclusive New York fashion house immerse themselves in color at work—then come home to a hundred shades of pale. From warm white to light gold, every element in this apartment is calculated to calm

Nancy Fabrikant (BELOW RIGHT), in one of her husband's designs, with Steve and their daughter Paris. BELOW: Biedermeier and 1950s chairs convene in the dining room. RIGHT: A Manuel Canovas white cotton, Ondine, downplays the bulk of the living room's eight-foot sofa; the daybed wears a Clarence House damask. George Smith ottoman.



BY DYLAN LANDIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER MARGONELLI
PRODUCED BY DARA CAPONIGRO

Even in black, a Steve Fabrikant dress could not pass for any other designer's—not with its requisite gold button, positioned as strategically as a brooch, flashing from a closure or pulse point. To interior designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz, commissioned to remodel and decorate Steve and Nancy

Fabrikant's city apartment, the sculpted buttons were a clue to his clients' style. "You put those dresses on and you're done: You're already wearing jewelry," says Noriega. "It's the same in these rooms. You don't need pictures on the wall, or rugs on the floor. The decoration is intrinsic."

He literally nailed it into the architecture, driving nickel-plated studs into a moving wall that glides between living room and study. He stitched it into the furniture, shirring the white upholstery on the long, deep sofa he designed. And he



Though wispy, the blinds are motorized: "At night we bare the windows," says Steve, "until about 4 A.M.—when one of us wakes up, presses a button, and lowers the blackout shade."

The windows make flinty frames for the skylines and riverscapes, and that is about all the artwork the Fabrikants want. Their most dramatic piece, an eight-foot-tall Provençal mirror whose frame drips with gilded grapes, leans against the living room wall in an offhand manner (although it is bolted in that stance for safety). Occasionally a visitor may wonder out loud when the place will be finished: when the curtains that whip across the bedroom closet will be supplanted by a door, when the mirror will be mounted, when the dining room chairs, individual as dinner guests, will be forced into a match. "This is it," Steve says, gently understating his case. "It's pretty much done."



Textures in the master bedroom (OPPOSITE) include a Clarence House matelasse bedcover, Jeffrey Aronoff's chenille throw. ABOVE: The bedroom's Biedermeier shaving stand; Kirk-Brummel silk closet drapery.

embedded it into the floor, laying the bleached planks in an immense checkerboard with giant squares. This rarefied brand of ornament that penetrates to the core of things was conceived by Noriega—who spent nine years with John Saladino, six as head designer—but it grew out of the spare aesthetic that Steve Fabrikant, trained as an architect in London, established at the start.

The rock star who last owned the apartment had upholstered its walls in taffeta, and beneath that was the cardboard construction of postwar New York high-rise housing. "The first thing Steve and I did was beef up the architecture," says Noriega. "Instead of doorways we cut portals that are seven feet wide, and when you pass through you see that the walls are substantial, about twelve inches thick. Before, they were five." He painted every room a warm white tinged imperceptibly with pink, then rubbed the same paint into floorboards, completing the monochromatic envelope. This cream-white hue then served as the standard for most of the fabrics, from a calfskin tableskirt in the master bedroom to the gauzy Roman blinds that filter, just barely, the 43rd-floor views.

Preening in the living room's 18th-century mirror (ABOVE) is an Art Deco lamp; both are French. RIGHT: For his study, Fabrikant found the 1940s Robsjohn-Gibbings desk; blinds are of Lee Jofa translucent linen.

For more details, see Reader Information

