

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

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SPECIAL ISSUE

# The AD100

TODAY'S GREATEST TALENTS IN ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN



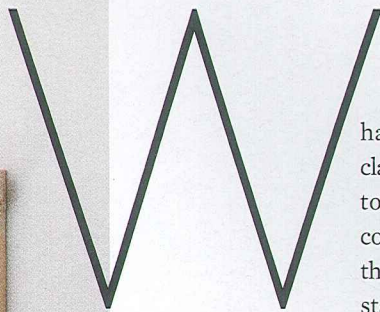
**PLUS:** SPECTACULAR HOMES BY  
RICHARD MEIER, STEVEN GAMBREL,  
DAVID ROCKWELL, ANNABELLE SELLDORF,  
AND MICHAEL S. SMITH





# THE BRIGHT





hat could be lovelier than a classic 19th-century Manhattan townhouse? So elegant, so commodious—no wonder it's the dream of countless space-starved New Yorkers. Yet for

all the romance associated with such stately homes, these buildings present a number of idiosyncrasies and challenges. Their typically long, narrow configurations, for one, tend to leave central rooms bereft of sunlight. And achieving a seamless circulation and flow across multiple floors demands more thoughtful solutions than simply installing an elevator.

Art dealer Christophe Van de Weghe and his wife, Anne-Gaëlle, understand those complexities all too well. In 2009 the Belgian expat couple seized an opportunity to acquire a five-story townhouse on a coveted Upper East Side block. Felicitously, the residence was just a short walk from Van de Weghe's namesake gallery, which specializes in works by Jean-Michel Basquiat, Alexander Calder, Duane Hanson, Andy Warhol, and other luminaries of modern and contemporary art.

But the home—completed in 1887 by builder Charles Graham—had been stripped of many of its Gilded Age refinements and converted into apartments sometime in the 20th century. When the Van de Weghes purchased the

Architect Annabelle Selldorf masterminded a gut renovation of Anne-Gaëlle and Christophe Van de Weghe's townhouse on Manhattan's Upper East Side; the home was decorated with the help of Francis D'Haene of D'Apostrophe Design. **Left:** In the living room, vintage Paul Evans sofas mingle with a midcentury Gino Sarfatti floor lamp and a 1940s Jean Prouvé armchair upholstered in hide from Kyle Bunting; the mobile is by Alexander Calder, the canvases and work on paper are by Jean-Michel Basquiat, and the carpet is by Tai Ping. For details see Sources.

# SIDE

Overseeing a top-to-bottom renovation, architect Annabelle Selldorf brings a light, airy feel to the New York townhouse of art dealer Christophe Van de Weghe and his wife, Anne-Gaëlle

TEXT BY MAYER RUS PHOTOGRAPHY BY OBERTO GILI PRODUCED BY HOWARD CHRISTIAN





property, it had been in the process of being restored to a single-family residence—an undertaking abandoned by the previous owner.

“Basically, we bought a façade and a giant hole—it was nothing but an empty shell,” Christophe recalls. “We had to imagine how it could work as a comfortable place to live and raise our children.”

To accomplish the transformation with efficiency and élan, the couple called on Annabelle Selldorf, an architect known for exquisite, soulful minimalism. The fact that her résumé also boasts a range of townhouse renovations made the Manhattan-based talent the perfect choice for the job.

“The main issue with this project was how to construct a staircase that unites the levels in a graceful, dynamic way,” Selldorf says. “Christophe brings clients to the house and

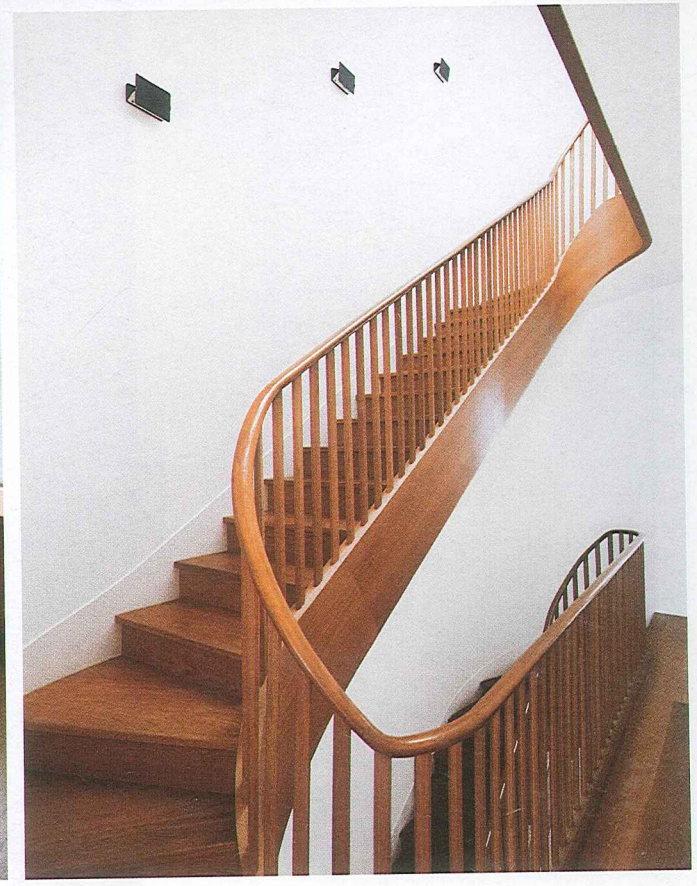
**Clockwise from top left:** The Van de Weghes, expecting their third child, pictured with a prized Basquiat in the living room. Floor-to-ceiling oak bookshelves distinguish the library. A Jean Royère light fixture is mounted above the library’s fireplace, which is flanked by a Picasso drawing and a Roy Lichtenstein painting; the Jean-Michel Frank club chairs are by Hermès, the cocktail table is a vintage piece by Prouvé and Charlotte Perriand, and the glass vase is by Thaddeus Wolfe.





A chandelier by Vilhelm Lauritzen for Louis Poulsen hangs above a Martin Szekeley table and Eero Saarinen chairs by Knoll in the dining area; the photograph is by Cindy Sherman, and the painting is by Lucio Fontana.

**Below, from left:** The office showcases a Sarfatti light fixture, Prouvé desk, and Finn Juhl chair; the mirrors are by Line Vautrin, the artworks are by Cy Twombly (left) and Jean Dubuffet, and the banquette cushions are clad in a Great Plains fabric. Perriand sconces punctuate the stairwell.





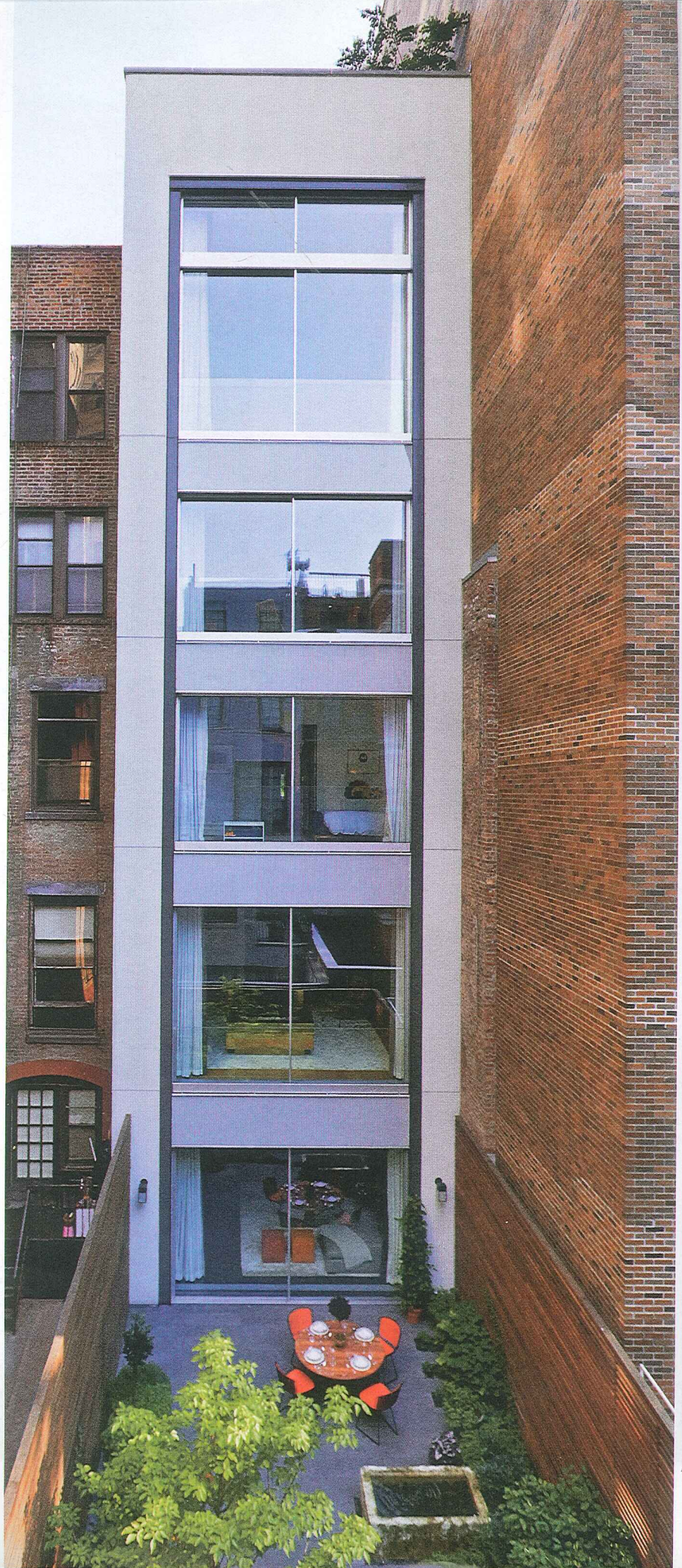
loves to entertain, so there had to be separation between the floors yet still enough fluidity to allow the house to function for a family with young children.”

Balancing those needs, the architect devised a sinuous staircase of white oak crowned by an alluring canopy of milk glass configured in a tortoiseshell pattern. If the skylight is a surprisingly fanciful gesture from the famously restrained architect, the rest is pure Selldorf. By isolating mechanical systems in a central core, situating the garden level deeper in the ground, and raising the rear roofline, she was able to add precious inches—and in some cases feet—to ceiling heights throughout the house. Selldorf also replaced the building’s prewar back façade with floor-to-ceiling sliding glass walls, accentuating the structure’s striking verticality and flooding the adjacent rooms with sunlight. (Glass balustrades preserve the sense of openness.) The resulting bright, airy rooms are ideally suited to displaying the Van de Weghes’ extraordinary assortment of art.

The couple brought in their friend and countryman Francis D’Haene of D’Apostrophe Design to choose finishes and oversee the furnishings that animate Selldorf’s immaculate interiors, among them a floor-through master suite. (There are a total of six bedrooms in the home.) Blending new finds with pieces from the Van de Weghes’ top-notch furniture collection, he arranged spare and sophisticated compositions that don’t skimp on comfort.

The parlor-level office—a cozy, cloistered nook where an underutilized vestibule might otherwise be—is defined by a rare Jean Prouvé desk purchased by Christophe well before the French designer’s creations skyrocketed in popularity and price. Down the hall, a large Cindy Sherman photograph and a painting by Lucio Fontana preside over the dining area, which is anchored by a Martin

**Right:** The new rear façade features sliding window walls and glass balustrades. **Opposite, from top:** In the family room, a Basquiat canvas overlooks a Mecox sectional sofa and ottoman, Paola Lenti poufs, and a Marc Phillips Decorative Rugs carpet; the curtains are of a Castel fabric. The space is connected to the breakfast area and the kitchen, which is outfitted with vintage Swedish pendant lamps from R 20th Century, Boffi cabinetry, a Gaggenau cooktop, and a Samsung television; the photograph is by Sherman.





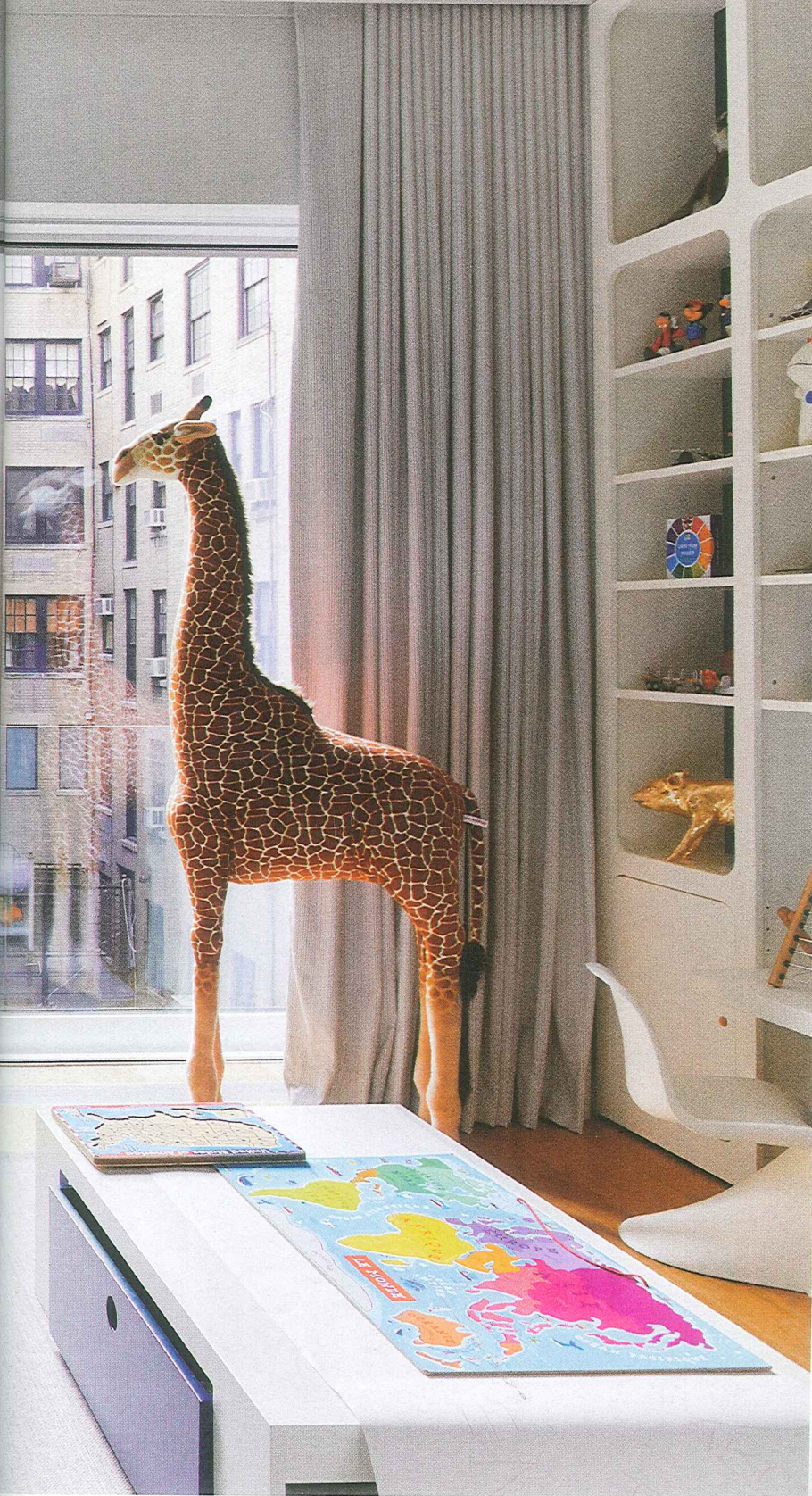








Tristan, the couple's son, is joined in his room by his sister, Emma, and their dog, Cookie; the bed is by De La Espada, and the drawing table is by Ducduc. **Right:** A guest room is enlivened by a Calder mobile, a Juhl lounge chair, a Cassina bed, and a Royère sconce; the wall covering is by Maharam, and the framed work on paper is by René Magritte.



Szekely table the couple bought at Galerie Kreo in Paris. And just beyond, in the living room, a suite of Paul Evans furniture is joined by a beloved Prouvé chair and a Gino Sarfatti floor lamp in addition to artworks by Basquiat, Calder, and Warhol.

In the library, on the top floor, D'Haene placed a daybed and credenza by Charlotte Perriand in the company of four sheepskin-covered Hermès club chairs by Jean-Michel Frank—a refined grouping that tactfully defers to important pieces by Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline as well as a phenomenal assemblage of 21 Polaroid self-portraits by Warhol. “Francis appreciates the intimate relationship between furniture and art,” Christophe says.

The Van de Weghes and their design team all agree that the job, though it took two and a half years, unfolded with a remarkable degree of unity, ease, and good cheer—an impressive feat given the inevitable tribulations that accompany a project of this scale and ambition. “Everyone told us, ‘Don’t renovate a townhouse! It can only end in divorce!’” Anne-Gaëlle remembers. “But I’m happy to report we still love each other—and the home is pretty great, too.” □





**From top:** A Picasso painting and a bed custom made by D'Haene anchor the master suite, where a Poul Kjærholm lounge chair complements an Angelo Lelli chandelier and a Royère sconce; the wall covering is by Phillip Jeffries, and the curtains are of a Donghia fabric. Selldorf lined the adjacent bath in marble; the sink and tub fittings are by Waterworks. **Opposite:** One of the master suite's walls is sheathed with panels of stained oak; the flat-screen television is by Samsung.

