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A Manhattan Living Room That's Twice as Nice

A designer helped convince his client to trade up for a "better" apartment across the street. Fortunately, his plan for a \$318,000 living/dining area worked out for both spaces



PHOTO: MARIUS CHIRA

Designer Alexander Doherty had just completed a living room for a client's new pied-à-terre in Manhattan when he came across a nearby industrial building being converted into apartments. He was particularly taken by the 15-foot ceilings. "I thought, 'this could be so much better than what she's about to move into,'" says Mr. Doherty, who runs Alexander Doherty Design. He shared his thoughts with the owner, who works in investments, is in her late 40s and also spends time in Paris and Mexico. She agreed and bought a two-bedroom apartment in the Madison Square park area building. (Her initial apartment is currently being rented.)

In the new place, he worked on a living/dining area that opens into the second bedroom, now set up as a den. Overall, little was changed from his original plans for the home across the street. For instance, the furniture he had custom-made for the prior apartment fit perfectly in the new one. "If you said to me, 'had you started from scratch, would you have done the same things?' I would say more or less, yes," he says.

Here are some of the design elements in the \$318,000 room.

1. The 10-foot high doors were handmade in Paris with straw marquetry. They have custom bone handles. *Price: \$27,000 from Maonia (doors) and Ochre (handles)*

2. The sofa and chairs are by New York upholstery workshop Jonas. “The pieces are not inexpensive, but that’s because they are custom-made in a super expensive city by a family-owned company. And they’re hand-made. All of that comes into play,” he says. *Price: \$57,000 for the sofa, love seat and two chairs.*

3. The cantilever-shaped, lime green coffee table was made by Mr. Doherty and inspired by a similar piece he saw at a French flea market. “The color doesn’t tie in with anything else in the room, but I thought it was a nice contrasting focal point for the sitting area,” he says. *Price: \$9,000*



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4. The dining table is from Italian designer Angelo Mangiarotti and took 14 weeks to make before it was shipped over. “It is unbelievably heavy,” says Mr. Doherty. “I think it took six guys get it into the apartment and ease it down on the legs.” *Price: \$40,000*

5. The room’s most striking element is the hanging light sculpture from artist John Procaro. It’s made of curved wood with an LED strip on one side. *Price: \$27,000 from Todd Merrill Studio*

6. A lot of what we bought was very tall in scale to work with the height of the ceiling,” Mr. Doherty says. “The lamp is quite tall and it’s got these big, solid unlacquered brass rings.” *Price: \$5,000 from Lucca Antiques*

7. The rug was custom-made in a mixture of wool and silk and has a pattern that resembles pebbles. *Price: \$47,000 from Beauvais Carpets*

8. The two antique boxes on the coffee table were sourced by an antique dealer. One is a Louis XVI embossed leather coffer, while the other is from India and made from engraved bone, porcupine quill and sandalwood. *Price: \$9,600 and \$7,700 from Gerald Bland*