



THE FINE PRINT

INTERIOR DESIGNER DARREN HENAULT TAKES A FASHION-FORWARD APPROACH TO GIVE A CENTURY-OLD APARTMENT ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE A COLORFUL, PATTERN-HAPPY NEW LOOK.

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Take my advice: Never start a renovation and a company at the same time,” laughs Julia Brown.

It was 2019, and the creative force behind Cara Cara had just launched the burgeoning fashion label’s first collection when she embarked on the gut renovation of her newly acquired prewar apartment on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. The 105-year-old “time capsule,” as she affectionately describes it, had not been touched in decades, and while its Formica countertops and tile floors had a certain retro charm, it wasn’t a match for the style—or lifestyle—of the fashion maven and her young family.

Enter interior designer Darren Henault. Over the years, he and Brown had forged a friendship based on their mutual love of equestrian pursuits (the two met on a hunt) and their shared passion for color and pattern (Cara Cara’s signature prints are all designed in-house or adapted from vintage textiles).

“I knew it was going to be good from the moment we exchanged our

ABOVE: In the Upper East Side library of Cara Cara cofounder Julia Brown (pictured in her label’s Piana gown), decorator Darren Henault channeled a bohemian vibe using Topkapi Garden wallpaper by Scalamandré as backdrop. Rug-covered ottoman from Tent by Darren Henault; lighting, Galerie des Lamps; trim paint, Eating Room Red by Farrow & Ball; rug, Patterson Flynn; photograph by Karen Knorr. RIGHT: A painting by Doron Langberg picks up the cerulean hue of the velvet sofa.





storyboards,” Henault says of the collaboration. “Julia was open to my ideas, which made the process more fun and the result more rewarding for both of us.”

One of those ideas: a generous dose of pink. “I had been dying to use it and she was totally on board,” explains Henault, who went all-out in the living room with a mix of sophisticated textures (grasscloth, embroidery, cut velvet), then threaded the hue from room to room. To keep the color from reading frothy, he wove in rich shades of chocolate, cranberry, and peacock blue for contrast.

In the library, the mood is “Upper East Side classic with a touch of Talitha Getty in Morocco, circa 1970,” says Henault, who wrapped the space in Scalamandré’s Topkapi Garden wallpaper; an ottoman draped in a 19th-century Sultanabad carpet and a 14-foot-long velvet sofa up the bohemian appeal. The bedroom is similarly pattern-forward, with its buttercup yellow chinoiserie wallcovering; gray trim brings the scheme back down to earth.

From an aesthetic perspective, the apartment is a departure for Brown, who formerly resided in a stark, all-white TriBeCa loft. But much like her fashion line, the home captures her essence in a way that is elegant, approachable, and authentic.

“At work, I’m inundated with hundreds of prints and colors every day and because I’m exposed to so many, I really have to love the ones I choose to live among at home,” she says. “Thankfully, I do!”

ABOVE: Grasscloth painted in Love Always by Benjamin Moore wraps the walls of the living room. “At night, it gives off a soft, sexy glow that makes every skin tone look luminous,” says Brown. Slipper chairs from Tent by Darren Henault and banquettes in Cowtan & Tout’s Coromandel flank the fireplace. The oil painting above the mantel is by Jocelyn Hobbie. Coffee table, John Boone; rug, Patterson Flynn. RIGHT: “When you wake up to yellow walls, you wake up happy,” Henault says of the bedroom’s painterly floral wall panels by Robert Crowder & Company and the sunny embroidery on the crisp Matouk bedding. A chandelier from Carlos de la Puente Antiques hangs overhead; bedside lamps by Vaughan Designs.

