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SMALL-SPACE LIVING





WIDE-OPEN SPACES

SMALL-SCALE FURNITURE EXPANDS THE VISUAL FOOTPRINT OF THIS MANHATTAN APARTMENT

Those seeking wide-open spaces don't generally choose Manhattan as a vacation destination. But when families settle into Equity Estates' New York high-rise apartment, designer Nikki Bachrach hopes that the space seems eminently livable and larger than its 1,000 square feet.

In a project completed in February 2006, Bachrach combined classic lines, a neutral palette, and some innovative design elements to optimize the space at the midtown vacation home. The result, she says, is a comfortable destination that gives a family of six a respite from the bustling Big Apple.

WRITTEN BY BETHANY BRADSHER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVAN JOSEPH

“Everything that went in there had to be small scale, which is a clear indication of the difference between urban living and suburban living,” says Bachrach, who works for Pineapple House Interior Design, based in Atlanta. “The main objective is to maximize. In a tight space I find that sticking to basic principles is always the best way to go.”

The 25th-floor home is one of the showplaces of Equity Estates, an Atlanta-based company that invests in luxury vacation homes for its 56 shareholders. The New York project, located in the exclusive Midtown East neighborhood, has three bedrooms, three bathrooms, and an open great room that includes the living area, kitchen, and dining space. Bachrach started her planning in that room, which has two walls of windows showcasing panoramic New York skyline views. To create the most seating possible in the center of the room, she turned to an old standby that is making a resurgence in her designs—the sectional sofa.

IN A TIGHT SPACE, IT'S BEST TO STICK TO BASIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES.

“I am using sectionals so much more these days,” Bachrach says. “They’re just so smart in maximizing your seating area.”

To accompany the chocolate-brown sectional, Bachrach found a unique dark coffee table with space to house floor cushions, which are always popular with kids. Equity Estates has made family-friendly living a priority for its properties, so Bachrach also made sure there was ample space to store video gaming systems for the wall-mounted plasma screen television in the great room.

In the corner of the room flanked by windows, Bachrach created an additional sitting area with a narrow seafoam green armchair and ottoman and a computer work area wedged against the back of the sectional. The twin green armchair faces the sectional, and a matching square ottoman rounds out the central seating area, which can accommodate at least seven people comfortably.

Because the windows take away wall space for art, she also employed an easel to hang one of the many black-and-white photographs featured in the home. Another space-saving secret can be found in the dining area, where the side of the table facing the windows employs a bench instead of chairs.

“The bench fits snug to maximize space, and it refrains from obstructing the view with chair backs, while also giving the kids a fun place to slide and eat meals,” Bachrach says.

In the bedrooms, more distinctive design choices allow guests to thrive in rooms that would be considered small by





most standards. In one of the rooms, a niche in the wall was just the right size to hold a queen-size bed in a daybed style. This touch allows plenty of space to walk around in the room without compromising sleeping comfort, Bachrach says.

“If you had put a queen bed in there in the typical way, you wouldn’t have been able to walk in the room,” she says. “It would have been a disaster.”

Equity Estates embraces designs that are luxurious but sturdy and practical enough to weather the coming and going of guests. To that end, Bachrach and the company made a change to the home’s main hallway after the original installation. Because it is the most heavily traveled area in the home, Bachrach covered the hall in a commercial-grade wall covering and added a chair rail to split the paper panels from top to bottom. Dividing the wall serves to cut down on the replacement costs as the strips of wall covering need to be changed out due to wear and tear, she says.

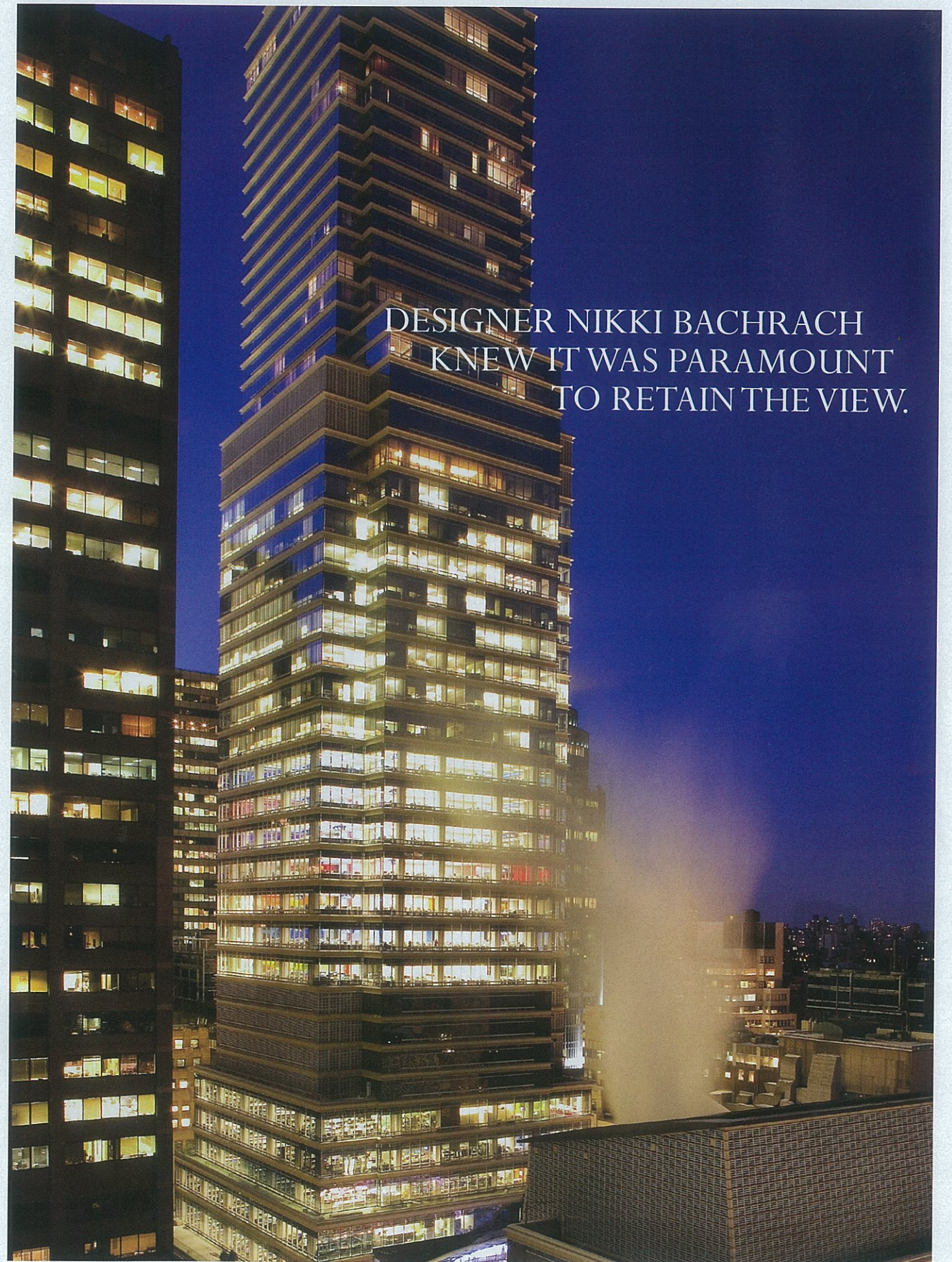
“The majority of the fabrics used throughout the space were contract grade as well,” she says.

In another effort to spread out the bedroom, Bachrach opted for a wall-mounted light fixture and a tiny square bedside table instead of a traditional nightstand. Two of the beds have upholstered headboards to add texture and interest.

Finally, one of the challenges that required the most creativity for Bachrach was the massive windows in the great room. She knew it was paramount to retain the view, but when she spent time in the home she noticed that extreme sun and privacy concerns called for some type of covering. Equity Estates CEO Philip Mekelburg even visited the home with some guests who were uneasy about the expansive view from such a height. Bachrach’s unique solution? Light-colored sheers installed on a ceiling tracking system. The panels can all be pushed to one corner of the room for an open view of the city, or they can be drawn in individual sections or opened to cover all or part of the glass.

“The great thing about these sheers is that the visitor can pull them all to one corner to completely unobstruct the unbelievable skyline view, or have just certain areas blocked off if desired,” Bachrach says. “In New York City, you don’t want to cover up the windows. That’s what you’re paying for.”

According to Mekelburg, the families who have enjoyed vacations at the New York home say that the design affords them a luxury rarely found in that area—a private space to relax. Those who know New York City well often comment that the apartment is relatively large by city standards, he says. “They tell us that the living space is set up in such a way that they can really enjoy time with their family and friends.” ■



DESIGNER NIKKI BACHRACH
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TO RETAIN THE VIEW.