ELLE DECOR

HOW INSTAGRAM STAR ALYSSA KAPITO GOT THIS SERENE NEW YORK APARTMENT DONE DURING A SHUTDOWN

She Zoomed her way to the finish line.

By INGRID ABRAMOVITCH JUN 16, 2021



Joshua McHugh

An early Instagram convert, New York designer Alyssa Kapito built her online following—now 191,000 strong—with a string of seductive images of rooms in monochromatic creamy whites. Clients followed, including a family who hired her to renovate their Upper West Side apartment just months before the pandemic hit the city. "We signed on just a few months before everything got crazy," says the ELLE DECOR A-List designer, "and schemed most of the rooms in a work-from-home setting, using renderings and Zoom to get our intention across."

The wife, a jewelry designer, connected with Kapito on Instagram. But it was the husband, a managing partner at a venture capital firm, who gets the credit for getting the project done during a pandemic. In early 2020, weeks before most people were expecting a shutdown, he asked Kapito to measure and photograph the space—just in case. "It was something at the time I couldn't even fathom," says Kapito of the looming lockdown, "I honestly thought he was overreacting." But it was a good thing she obliged: New York indeed shut down and Kapito and her team couldn't access the apartment for months, "but having the measurements and lots of pictures saved the project," she says.

The goal was to create a serene, family-friendly home in a 3,500-square-foot condo in a 1908 Beaux Arts building that used to be a school. "It was in excellent condition but it lacked character, so we added that with a fireplace, moldings, and lighting," she says.

The apartment's monochromatic palette is in keeping with Kapito's style. "My passion is the art, objects, and furniture in a space," says Kapito, who studied art history. "I spend a lot of time thinking about scale and proportion. Neutrals are a great unifier, allowing you to explore a whole range of historical genres while staying visually consistent."

The minute New York City started opening up earlier this year, Kapito was ready to go. The decor was installed and the family moved in. "What a whirlwind!" Kapito says. "But it came together."

Here, Kapito provides a tour of the space.

THE LIVING ROOM



The living room's layered neutrals are a Kapito signature.
Joshua McHugh

Since the condo is a conversion from an old school, the rooms weren't designed as typical apartment spaces. "The living room wasn't proportional," Kapito says. "The space lacked a focal point, and the windows weren't symmetrical, so we added a fireplace from Jamb and strategically placed furniture to give balance."

Multiple seating arrangements create flexibility and comfortable perches for conversations. "The two sofas converse with each other but are nicely distinct," she says.

Her favorite detail: a massive plaster chandelier by Eric Schmitt hangs from the 14-foot ceiling. "It gives this lovely glow and a sense of architecture."

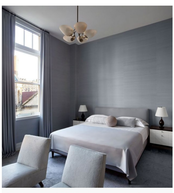
THE KITCHEN



The kitchen's cabinetry is by Christopher Peacock.
Joshua McHugh

The kitchen's transitional style includes Christopher Peacock cabinetry in riff oak (complete with a traditional rolling ladder), vintage chairs by Dan Johnson for Shelby Williams, and modern pendants by Urban Electric. "It's a mix of contemporary and traditional," says the designer.

THE PRIMARY BEDROOM



The primary bedroom's blue silk wallpaper coordinates with curtains and a headboard in a similar hue.
Joshua McHugh

The main bedroom is a rhapsody in blues. "I love doing tone-on-tone bedrooms in varying colors within the same palette," Kapito says. "It feels very enveloping and cozy. We used a very soothing blue silk wallpaper that subtly matches the varying tones of the curtains and fabrics. Set against the rich woods of the nightstands and secretary, and the vintage Swedish brass chandelier, the room is soothing but has enough contrast to be visually interesting."



A collectible vintage desk and chair in a corner of the primary bedroom.
Joshua McHugh

A monochromatic background helps to silhouette some of the antiques Kapito sourced for the project. By the bedroom's window, a Carl Axel Acking desk from Hoxter Barrows is paired with a Frits Henningsen chair from Lawton Mull.

THE PRIMARY BATHROOM



A vase by Yongjin Han, from Maison Gerard, rests on the vanity in the primary bathroom.
Joshua McHugh

"I love when a client is game to put collector's pieces in the bathroom," the designer says. "It says something about the project when even the areas that guests don't normally see are well appointed. The vintage Pierre Chapo stool and artwork by Yongjin Han really give this quietly simple bathroom of Calacatta Gold marble and white oak a lot of character."

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Ingrid Abramovitch, the Executive Editor at ELLE Decor, writes about design, architecture, renovation, and lifestyle, and is the author of several books on design including Restoring a House In the City.