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By PENELOPE GREEN APRIL 26, 2017



For the two-story staircase and landing, John Savage, a Nashville-based designer, laid in a Southern-style chinoiserie wallpaper with hand-sculpted plaster motifs by MJ Ateliers. Danny Giblin for The New York Times

This year's [Kips Bay Decorator Show House](#), open through June 1 at 125 East 65th Street, is a brick Georgian designed by Charles Platt, a self-taught classical architect, landscape architect and artist, at the turn of the 19th century. From the mid-1940s until a few years ago, the house was the headquarters of the China Institute in America, and is now [on the market for \\$26.8 million](#) (at 35 feet wide, it's known as a superwide in broker parlance). Inside, 18 designers have expressed themselves on five floors, including a garden level. Here are 16 of them.



Danny Ghitia for The New York Times

In the front hall, [Powell & Bonnell](#) made a rakish nook with black walls by Farrow & Ball, custom wool chairs and a lozenge-shape table they designed for the space. The neon-framed painting is by [Thrush Holmes](#). As in most of the rooms in this house, a tangle of sprinkler pipes hangs from the ceiling. You can't see it in this photo, but the designers commissioned [Zac Ridgely](#), a Canadian artist, to make a nestlike installation from lacquered steel to hide it.



Danny Ghitia for The New York Times

In [Richard Mishaan's](#) first-floor sitting room, the print on the custom wallpaper, by [Iksel Decorative Arts](#), was taken from a 15th-century house in the Middle East. But much of the room was inspired by Turkish and Venetian palaces, and the layering that went on there. The pillow fabrics are from Luigi Bevilacqua. The rug is a 19th-century Serapi from F.J. Hakimian. And the feral-looking panther on the wall, a contemporary Audubon painting, is by Walton Ford.



Danny Ghitia for The New York Times

Lauren Kruegel and Ross Alexander, design directors at [Robert A.M. Stern Architects Interiors](#), were inspired by the Villa Necchi, the 1930s-era Milanese house that is a star of the lush 2009 film “[I Am Love](#),” along with Tilda Swinton, who plays a wealthy, frozen wife on the brink of being unthawed by an affair. Their custom-made bright green velvet sofa is as luxurious as Ms. Swinton’s wardrobe. The tomato-red plates hung below the mantel are by Gio Ponti.



Danny Ghitia for The New York Times

A French-Scandinavian sitting room by [Neal Beckstedt](#), with a fuzzy 1940s-era armchair from Fritz Hansen, the Danish company, that aligns with that country’s latest import, hygge, otherwise known as the pursuit of coziness. Mr. Beckstedt went for a rustic and swooping midcentury look, with rough, exposed joists and ceiling beams, a biomorphic black plaster and cobblestone fireplace and pale oak paneled walls.



Danny Ghitia for The New York Times

These ravishing flowers are by Ken Fulk's Flower Factory, part of the design team overseen by [Ken Fulk](#), the home stager turned event planner turned Silicon Valley decorator, who works out of a 15,000-square-foot former S-and-M leather factory in San Francisco, as well as a loft in TriBeCa. Here, Mr. Fulk, the mastermind of Sean Parker's lavish wedding, among other spectacles, imagined a dining room for a grande dame who had outlived three husbands and was enjoying her solitude until she was visited by several escapees from a local zoo, including a monkey, a zebra and a polar bear (see the hand-painted [de Gournay](#) wallpaper for details). On the menu, steak tartare and Gershwin.



Danny Ghitia for The New York Times

[Timothy Brown](#) swathed the walls and doors of his top-floor landing in hand-blocked daisy wallpaper made by [Adelphi Paper Hangings](#). Like a number of designers here, Mr. Brown decorated for a fictitious female client. His was French, gay and in her 40s, he said, a competent and stylish woman who rode a motorcycle in her heels and who inherited this townhouse from her grandmother, along with this midcentury Italian love seat upholstered in silvery silk velvet.



Danny Ghitis for The New York Times

[Billy Cotton](#)'s female avatar had a sadder story: This shadowy bedroom, he said, was the final home of a woman who had seen all sorts of tragedy, some self-inflicted. "She loved too much, and all the wrong men; there was definitely addiction and financial ruin," he said. In her last stage of life, he said, she is holed up in the top floor of an S.R.O. hotel, once a grand townhouse, surrounded by donated finery and decoration — a spangly pillow on a chair with a tropical print, a leopard-print carpet, the novels of Graham Greene — the largess of her decorator friends. "This has long been a profession of gay men," he said, and this room celebrates the relationship "between the decorator and his female patron."



Danny Ghitis for The New York Times

[Kirsten Fitzgibbons](#) and [Kelli Ford](#) made a contemporary gilded-age living room, with reflective surfaces and touches of gold (even the birch logs in the fireplace are gilded). On the walls, wood veneer wallpaper from [Phillip Jeffries](#); the royal purple velvet love seat is from [De Angelis, Ltd.](#); the coffee table is an edition of Yves Klein's Table Bleu. "Honestly," Ms. Fitzgibbons said, "we just wanted to make something that was happy, and would appeal to both men and women."



Danny Ghitis for The New York Times

You can fit two seating areas in their 35-foot long room. The blue painting is by [Corinne Bizzel](#); the “diamond” painting is by [Kurt Pio](#), and on the right, one of Damien Hirst’s “Spot” prints. A Lorin Marsh coffee table has polished steel rails finished in rose gold. The rawhide cube chairs at right have black patent leather upholstery.



Danny Ghitis for The New York Times

Concrete wallpaper from Resource Furniture in a hallway by [Scarpidis Design](#). The bronze nude is by [Tom Corbin](#) at Holly Hunt.



Danny Ghitla for The New York Times

[Robert Stilin](#) designed a room for an ambitious collector with a taste for midcentury and contemporary Italian furniture. The purple cashmere lounge chair is one of a pair; on the 1970s-era lacquer and aluminum table, Brutalist-inspired stoneware; the patinated bronze, wood and hide armchair in the foreground is by [Mattia Bonetti](#). The truck photograph, called “World’s Fastest Mobile Home,” is by Richard Misrach.



Danny Ghitla for The New York Times

“I had to find a muse,” said [Susan Ferrier of McAlpine](#), whose first moves in this bedroom involved a collection of archaeological prints, left. “A little romance.” Who are we romancing? “A league of extraordinary male archaeologists,” she said. And so, a bed-sitter for a meeting of the Explorers Club, swagged with smoky green velvet curtains behind which, Ms. Ferrier said, “is some very confused architecture, a window and a few false doors; we just had to calm it down.” The room was so soothing that on Sunday night, as the designers were putting the finishing touches on their rooms, many of them ended up here, christening the house with a few bottles of wine.



Danny Ghitla for The New York Times

When he put together this sitting room, [Nick Olsen](#) was thinking about the Paris apartment of Yves Saint Laurent and his partner Pierre Bergé, a dense, nine-room Art Deco duplex in which Jean-Michel Frank pieces mixed with Picassos, Old Masters and African art (in 2008, [the contents were auctioned at Christie's](#) for \$484 million). On Mr. Olsen's walls, wood veneer wallcovering from [Maya Romanoff](#) mimics the straw marquetry favored by Frank. The drapery floor lamp is from [Mecox Gardens](#).



Danny Ghitla for The New York Times

In a modern bedroom by [Dineen Architecture & Design](#), a Christian Liagre sofa and a mural-like wall treatment by [Eva Buchmuller](#).



Danny Ghiblin for The New York Times

The firm of [Lichten Craig](#) drew the show house short straw: a weird basement space with no windows, random soffits and bumps, and, like most of the rooms, a tangle of sprinkler pipes hanging from the ceiling. It was the ultimate design-school challenge, as Joan Craig put it, “definitely a departure from the glorious salon we’d already designed in our heads.” The salon was reimagined as a louche and swanky bar space. Dark walls and ceilings masked the rough spots. A mural by [Anne Harris](#), a New York artist, was inspired by 17th-century Dutch paintings. A pair of midcentury chairs by Charles Ramos is upholstered in champagne silk velvet.



Danny Ghiblin for The New York Times

For decades, the house was the headquarters of the [China Institute in America](#). In the backyard, there was a traditional Chinese garden, with pebble mosaic paving and a herd of scholar's rocks. [Janice Parker](#), a landscape architect, planted a thicket of bamboo among them and fashioned a moon gate from green pussy willow branches, among other interventions that recall, she said, the influences of Tony Duquette, Bermuda, China and Hollywood. “The place was so derelict, we’ve been power washing it for weeks,” she said. “But it was so beautifully done.”