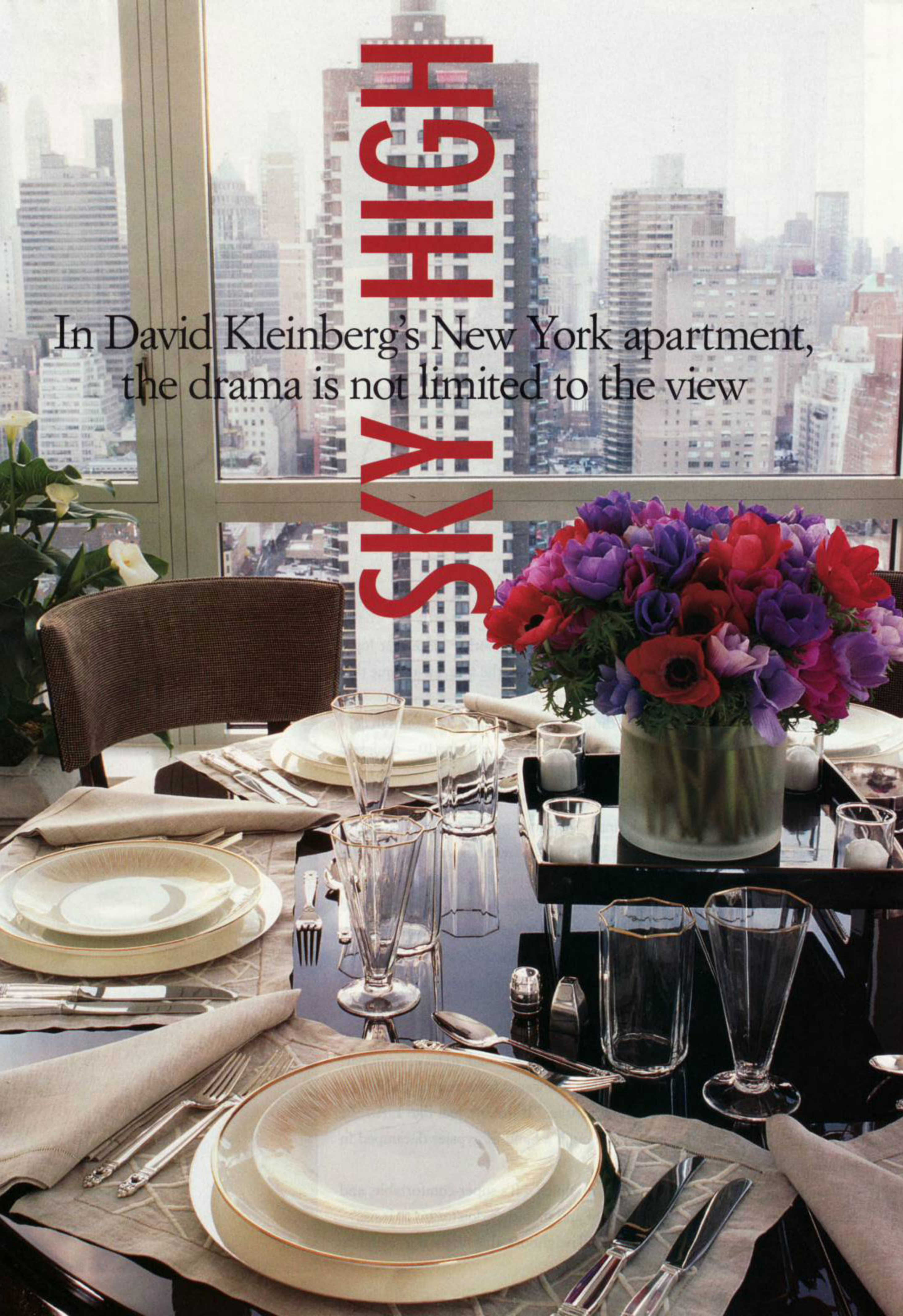


# HIGH

In David Kleinberg's New York apartment,  
the drama is not limited to the view

# SKY



This page: The living room gets a gleam of gold from the coffee table and the 1930s French ceramic vase, which designer David Kleinberg turned into a lamp. He also designed the shapely sofa. The carpet was custom-made by Patterson, Flynn & Martin, and the painting above the sofa is by David Bomberg. Opposite: The 1940s French mahogany table is set with Kleinberg's grandmother's silver, Richard Ginori and Tiffany china, and faceted Carlo Moretti glasses that the designer bought in Venice before he even owned a dining table. Table linens by David Kleinberg Design Associates from Nancy Stanley Waud Fine Linens.



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This page: Black-lacquered doors and a strip of silvered mirror at chair-rail height lend some shimmer to the foyer. Kleinberg set a limestone top on a 1950s French table by Rafael. Opposite above: He found the iron base of the coffee table in Paris, had it gilded, and added the leather-covered top. The sofa, upholstered in Rogers & Goffigon Juliette fabric, is flanked by two 19th-century Danish mahogany chairs. The scale and shape of the Swedish Modern vase from Antik proved irresistible. Opposite below: David Kleinberg, next to one of the doors with his "circles inside of squares" design.



THE MAN WHO OPENS THE BLACK-LACQUERED DOOR COULD have starred in one of those sophisticated Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer comedies of manners directed by George Cukor in the 1940s. Note the impeccable drape of the trousers, the luxurious softness of the sweater, the debonair grin as David Kleinberg leads the way into his cool, calm aerie on the 32nd floor of a Manhattan high-rise. The eye registers a mix of strong lines and provocative shapes in an infinite variety of pearl gray tones—the apartment is the visual equivalent of a dry martini. Guests inevitably head straight for the windows, with their CinemaScopic views of the city. All that's missing from this stylish picture is the Cole Porter score.

Night and day, Kleinberg looks out on a mesmerizing panorama—the sparkling necklace of lights on the 59th Street Bridge, the urban patchwork of towers, the barges languidly floating by on the East River. “It’s been months since I moved in, but the view still takes me by surprise,” he says. The designer, who polished his patrician aplomb at Parish-Hadley before opening his own firm, deliberately left the windows uncurtained. He wanted the whole place to act as a container of light (mechanical scrims roll down at the touch of a button when the sun becomes intrusive). “I was living in an apartment that was the proverbial one room short, so I started looking for something bigger downtown, but I think I missed my loft period,” he explains. “Then I looked at prewar apartments on Park Avenue, but you don’t get this kind of view. I love light, so here I am in a glass box, and I can see right across the street into my office. This is my version of living above the shop.”

The apartment tower was brand new and a bit bland, but the rooms had





In the bedroom, pure white looks more dramatic set off by the dark wood of the standing lamp by Stephen McKay, the Danish Modern chaise, and the intricately carved 19th-century English side chair. There are only a few pieces of furniture, but each deserves scrutiny and has a certain graphic quality. Kleinberg found the rug in Morocco. Bed linens are from Calvin Klein Home. The plaster bust on the windowsill is of Sir Walter Scott.

Guests invariably head for the windows—  
with their panoramic views





10-foot-high ceilings, which made the proportions feel better. It only took a few strategic interventions to subtly change the character of the space. "I put in the kind of details you don't normally find in these white-box buildings—tall baseboards, crown moldings, and a hefty bead molding around the windows to finish them off," Kleinberg says. "I tore out a bathroom to create a more generous foyer, roughly in the shape of a square. Then I wanted to do something to reinforce it, so I sketched a design of squares with circles inside and made paneling for the doors. For some reason, as soon as I walked into this apartment I knew they should be shiny black." The snap of black against white (he also ebonized the floors) ups the glamour quotient. Kleinberg also rationalized the layout by realigning some doors, expanding the sight lines so he could see directly across one room into another, making the space feel larger.

The furniture from his old one-bedroom apartment fit neatly into his new place, a three-bedroom that functions as a one-bedroom since he uses the two extra rooms as a dining room and a study. "Now every piece just has a little more air around it," he says. Of course, he found a few more examples of 1940s French furniture that he couldn't resist, like a coffee table attributed to Jean Royère and brass-and-black-lacquer end tables by Jansen. "I love 1940s French furniture for the same reason I love 18th-century French furniture: it's elegant, classically inspired, and still beautifully crafted, before standards slipped in the 1950s with mass production."

Although at first glance the living room may seem monochromatic, Kleinberg made a concerted effort to add what for him counts as major color. There's pale



This page: Kleinberg upholstered the study walls and the matching sofa and chair in Thorn by Rogers & Goffigon. The vintage armchair was designed by Edward Wormley for Dunbar. Opposite top: Kleinberg replaced the undistinguished kitchen doors with black lacquer and etched glass. Opposite below: The silk on the seat cushions was embroidered to mimic the lattice-back 1940s French chairs. The 1930s Austrian rosewood cabinet is from Bernd Goeckler Antiques. For more details, see Resources.

blue silk on the seats of the 19th-century Danish mahogany chairs and pale blue wool pillows on the sofa. The same light blues, pearl grays, and linen whites are used throughout the apartment and those colors tend to merge into that wall-to-wall sky, giving the rooms a buoyant effect, as if the furniture could just float up and away at any moment. A few well-chosen objects, like a Swedish Modern vase, look even more striking framed against the sky, but Kleinberg is careful not to crowd

his compositions. "Human beings are like water—we tend to fill the available space, but I'm a ferocious editor," he says. "I'm not a pack rat, I don't get fixated on possessions—which is a little unusual, considering my profession—and I read my mail over the wastebasket." Books are piled up on the shelves in precise pyramids. "I've always been a very organized person. I like to put everything in order and then I'm free to think about more important matters." ●