



THE DISCREET LIFE

The building could almost masquerade as a private hotel. White-gloved staff in the lobby, a concierge, incoming calls intercepted and screened by an operator, a dining room, maid service, and room service are among the amenities. In a crowded city marked by anonymity, a welcoming nod and courtly smile at the door

TEXT BY ANGUS WILKIE PRODUCED BY MARGARET RUSSELL PHOTOGRAPHY BY PIETER ESTERSONN



In the living room, a Jean-Michel Frank parchment coffee table, a leather and sycamore stool, and a Japanese enamelware vase. Facing page: The geometric-patterned hallway's bronze and glass lantern, carved-wood mirrors, and parquet floor. See Resources.



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Clockwise from far left: In the living room, an Edward Burra painting hangs above a mirrored console table that displays glassware by Venini, Barovier, and Steuben. A mirrored diamond-pattern recess in the library, which is paneled with Karelian birch; the banquette was designed by Parish-Hadley. The sitting-room chairs and sofa are from Eric Philippe in Paris. A glass fire surround, early-1900s French mahogany open-arm chairs, and an inlaid-wood screen by Jacques Adnet in the living room. See Resources.



(but without as much as a button to push) can be a relief.

High atop this elite New York cooperative residence, a small pied-à-terre overlooks Central Park. Its subtle palette and fluid but exacting lines reflect the distinguished manner in which its owners, a retired couple, have chosen to live. Along with their friend David Kleinberg, the dapper decorator from Parish-Hadley Associates, they matched a mutual appreciation for 20th-century design with the knowledge and ideas they gained as they traveled and shopped. The process evolved as if by osmosis. “I was never officially hired to do this job,” Kleinberg explains, “but one day I realized that we had joined forces and were doing this together. Ever since, we’ve been sharing a long conversation.”

The first query Kleinberg remembers concerned a lighting fixture for the front hall: the textured-plaster walls suggested a faux Jean-Michel Frank finish, which Kleinberg punctuated with a large cast-bronze lantern that he commissioned from the artisan Bruno Romeda. To establish the tone for the rest of the apartment, a parquetry floor—contrasting woods set in a grid pattern—was installed in the same hall, initiating a geometry that would be carried out in each room. In the library alcove, squares of Karelian birch paneling complement the diamond trellis of a mirrored recess; in a sitting room, walls are scored and painted to resemble blocks of sandstone. The living-room rug is sewn together from squares of pony skin, whereas the India-silk curtains are fashioned from hand-stitched lozenge

appliqués; the bedroom walls are regulated by a cream-on-white repeat. To accentuate the couple’s exquisite objects and furniture, Kleinberg says, “the struggle was to make the background look like nothing, a patterned room without pattern.”

Collecting the antiques was a collaborative effort. While certain pieces were already in place (a Poillerat lamp, an oversize neoclassical mahogany pedestal, the white lacquered bed frame and bedside tables), most were newly acquired. “As my clients have such a keen eye and are so informed, the process was like shopping with friends,” Kleinberg says, describing the two buying trips they took to London and Paris together.

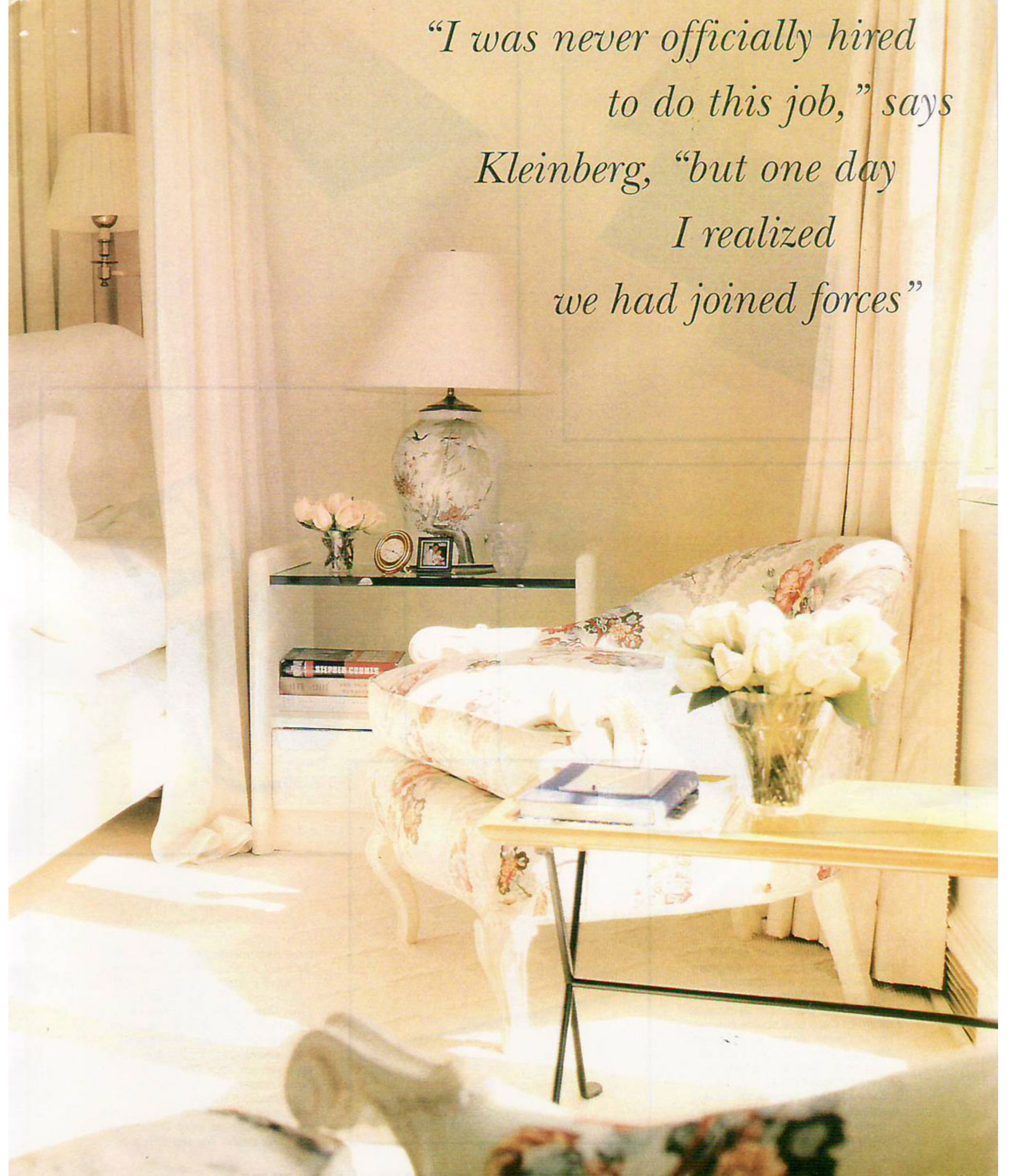
Two years’ scouting yielded a pair of low stools by Pierre Chareau for the library, a folding wood screen from the dealer Anne-



The bedroom chairs are covered in chintz from Schumacher; the yellow Jean-Michel Frank tray rests on a stand designed by Parish-Hadley, which also designed the bench at the foot of the bed. Left: Étagères designed by Philippe Anthonioz and an early-1900s French dresser from Grunspan in Paris. See Resources.

Sophie Duval for the living room, a shagreen commode for the bedroom, and pieces by Jacques Adnet, André Arbus, and Frank. An unexpected find was an extendable Art Deco library table from, of all places, Mallet's, the London dealers specializing in important 18th-century furniture. The couple also had items made in Paris, an example being the pair of bronze étagères by Philippe Anthonioz in the bedroom. The plaster casting of the armature involved several supervisory trips to Anthonioz's studio near the Place de la Bastille; the étagères now display early-20th-century glass, including pieces by Barovier, Venini, and Steuben. The collection lends a surprising accent of acid green to the apartment's otherwise understated hues.

Perhaps the most unique touch is the living room's glass fire screen and its companion mantelpiece, which is made of three conjoined sections of cast glass and looks like rock crystal. The idea was inspired by the late Sister Parish, whom Kleinberg met when he started working at the firm more than 15 years ago. "Mrs. Parish had something similar in her first little living room in Far Hills, right after she got married," he recalls. "She once explained that she had Corning Glass cousins, and so one day she took these glass bricks and glued them all around the fireplace herself. I remember thinking that it looked magical." *



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