

## DESIGN &amp; DECORATING

HOUSE TOUR

## Digging Gold

Decorating your home in one color needn't feel one-note, as this New York apartment filled with burnished earth tones shows

BY RON BROADHURST

**WE ARE ALL DRAWN** to certain colors. But as anyone who's braved a purple-phile's home knows, decorating your space entirely in a narrow palette can make it seem oppressive, if not mentally destabilizing. This soothing apartment on New York's Upper East Side—a theme-and-variations exercise in golden earth tones—proves it doesn't have to be that way.

The palette was one of the first things the clients—attorneys Dan and Barri Waltcher, a couple with two children—decided on, said New York City-based interior designer Robert Kaner. “There were two fabrics they really gravitated toward. I used those as the jumping-off point to build the color scheme for the apartment.”

While the words “earth tones” might make you think of marijuana-scented '70s shag carpeting or klutzy macramé wall-hangings, here they trans-

lated into an array of rich amber and caramel shades, glints of brass and gold, along with burnt siennas, ochres and the much-villainized but modulating beige.

Mr. Kaner used the two fabrics in question—a gold Joseph Noble mohair and a caramel Rogers & Goffigon linen—to upholster the living room sectional sofa he designed. “The colors in these two fabrics are very warm neutrals which you might think of as having the colors of honey,” he said. “The red notes come through more strongly than the yellows to create this amber tone.”

To ensure that the homeowners wouldn't feel encased in amber, Mr. Kaner judiciously introduced contrasting colors. The breakfast nook features muted greens, still earthy but cooler. And in the dining room—a mildly subversive foil to the rest of the apartment—he went for a silvery take on orange's classic complementary shade, blue.

It wasn't all about the color. The Waltchers had looked at apartments that were fully renovated, move-in ready and priced accordingly. Then they came across this home, said Mr. Kaner: a bit of a mess, with a dated kitchen and bathrooms and layout problems. “But they recognized,” he added, “that with the relative price advantage, they could transform the space into something which exactly suited their taste and lifestyle.”

Architect William Reue opened up the apartment's floor plan to dial down the visual noise so that the space felt as open, light and airy as possible. “The rooms remained in the same position, but what changed was the way the spaces were connected,” he said.

Here's a room-by-room breakdown of how the design team's strategy played out.

**Dipped in amber**

The living room in this apartment on New York City's Upper East Side establishes an earthy color scheme that interior designer Robert Kaner played with throughout the home. While the sectional sofa (custom-designed by Mr. Kaner) and the carpet ground the room in gold, two retro-chic, off-white lounge chairs by Ironies provide

some visual relief. Between them sits a resin tabletop that pops with a vivid orange, an irrepressible color note in an otherwise discreet room. “We were trying to take [the clients] from a more traditional design sensibility to something more contemporary,” said Mr. Kaner.

**A mellow retreat**

In the not-too-sedating bedroom, Mr. Kaner went for “a softer version of the amber hues of the living room.” He luxed up Crate & Barrel's Tate Bed with a custom silk duvet cover and yellow-and-gold pillowcases from The Red Threads. The pale shade on the Osso Table Lamp from Room & Board—and the custom chair upholstered in a beige from Calvin Fabrics through Donghia—are equally mild. Gutsier elements: The burnt-red throw and the painting by Wulf Winkelmann.

**Crisp meets cozy**

Occupying a corner of the newly opened-up kitchen, the banquet was designed by Mr. Kaner and Mr. Reue to emphasize “the importance of family meals as a time to be together, with kids in the kitchen doing schoolwork during meal preparation.” White lacquered cabinetry and the sculptural white Leonardo Pendant lamp by Santa & Cole keep things reassuringly clean, as befits a kitchen, while the Arne Jacobsen-designed chairs are upholstered in Knoll's Pop Parakeet fabric, a mossy, murky green, another example of what Mr. Kaner calls a hue “inspired by nature.”

**Know when to change the pace**

To counteract monotony, the cool, blue-gray dining room strategically departs from the warm palette elsewhere in the home. Custom-designed chairs are upholstered in a Holly Hunt fabric in Sterling, and a shimmering Italian glass chandelier, an icy blue lacquered console and the muted gray tones of the photograph “Tate Modern,” by Doug Fogelson, introduce shades that Mr. Kaner associates with “a sense of sky,” less woody and more delicate. Still, the rosewood of the elliptical table ensures that the room doesn't entirely float away.

**Just far enough into the woods**

To overcome the layout issues that came with this circa-1960s apartment, New York architect William Reue ended up combining what had been a narrow galley kitchen, a small breakfast room and a maid's room into a new, bigger kitchen with better light. While the custom-stained cerused white oak cabinets tie this room into the apartment's earth-tone color scheme, pale 2-by-12-inch limestone wall tiles keep it from feeling too heavy, lodge-like or '70s—creating a modern space for cooking and gathering around an island topped with natural quartzite.

