

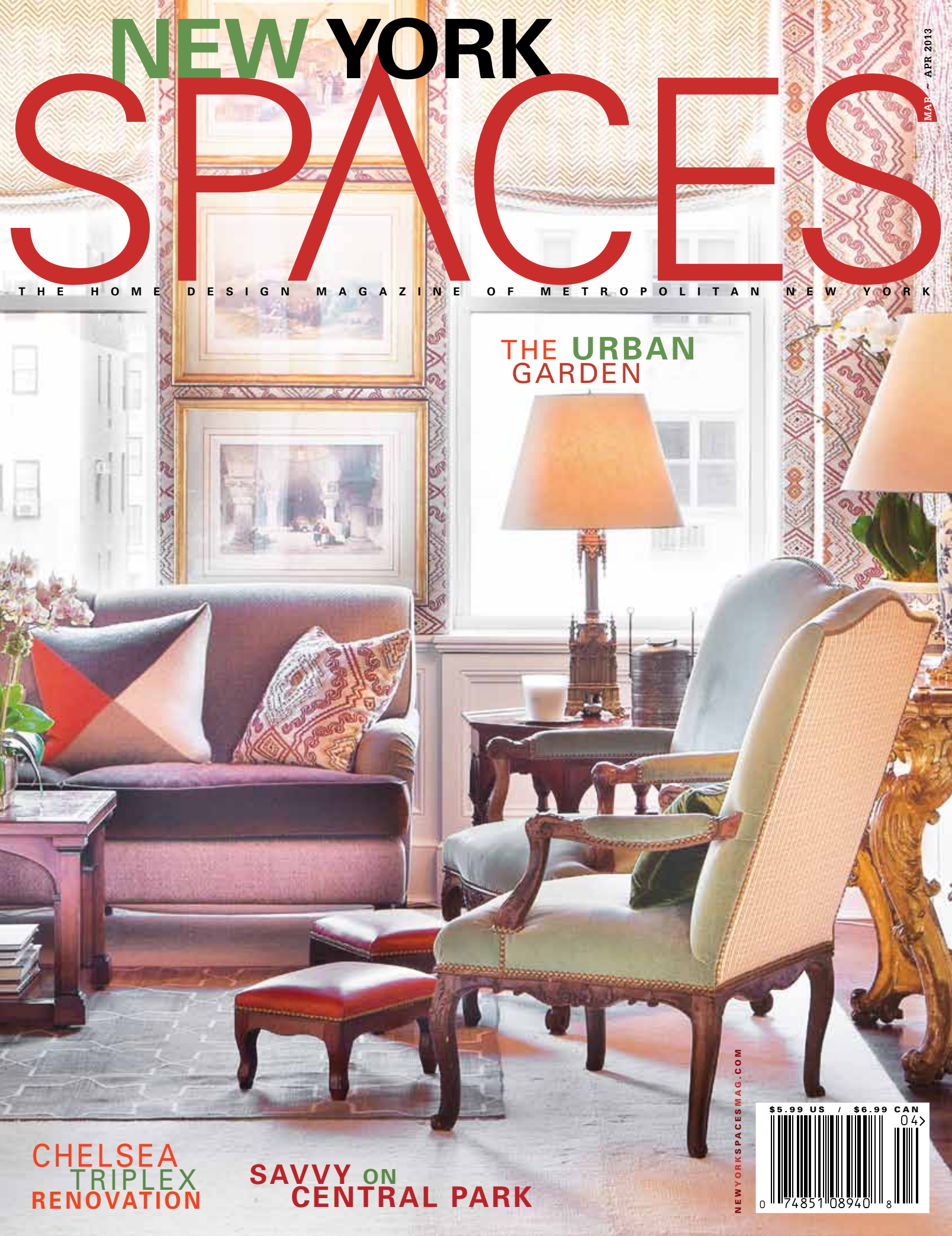
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THE URBAN GARDEN



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INTERIOR DESIGN ROBERT COUTURIER
TEXT SALLIE BRADY
PHOTOGRAPHY PETER MARGONELLI

modern MOVES

Traditional formality gives way to timeless comfort in a 5,000-square-foot apartment Robert Couturier designed for a young family on the Upper East Side



easy elegance

The living room walls had to be reinforced to support the pair of 18th-century North Indian carved sandstone panels. The neutral palette is punctuated by the brilliant colors of an antique kilim from Nemati Collection, used to upholster the ottoman. Barrel chairs have a Clarence House velvet on the inside, and Holly Hunt fabric on the outside. Sofas in Clarence House Ecu. Tufted chair in Holland & Sherry.



bursts of blue

Opposite, clockwise from top: The living room looks into a smaller sitting room, where a French Empire wrought-iron daybed is covered in intense robin's-egg Prelle Toile Barbare velvet. A contemporary painting hangs over a Charles X sideboard. A contemporary painting hangs over a Charles X sideboard. Giant, jewellike yellow-gold and blue-glass sconces by Hubert le Gall illuminate the entry. This page: More brights distinguish the dining room, where a Jim Thompson silk-linen covers Louis XVI chairs assembled around a 19th-century table. A polychrome antique Venetian glass chandelier hangs overhead. Zimmer + Rohde green silk velvet window treatments have Rogers & Goffigon trim.



THE FIRST APARTMENT THAT ROBERT COUTURIER DESIGNED FOR THIS Manhattan couple had lots of rich wall coverings, tapestries, Fortuny fabrics, and a fair amount of gilding, he recalls. That was before they had children and decided to move to a larger, brighter apartment in the same Upper East Side prewar building. This time they wanted a clean, slightly modern environment that was elegant, but not overly sophisticated, and above all else, peaceful. Couturier took many of the furnishings and antiques from the previous apartment and reworked them for this comfortable, 5,000-square-foot setting. The three bedroom apartment itself was opened up by removing doors and walls, creating an easy flow of rooms. Throughout the home, the designer kept to a fairly neutral palette, with accents of blues and greens, and a cozy red library. Shiny blue-lacquered walls greet guests in the apartment entry and a patterned limestone floor hints at the Cogolin rugs that the designer selected for use throughout. In the living room, there's more blue lacquer, this time matte and on the ceiling.

Unlike clients who start from scratch with every new project, this couple wanted to continue enjoy living with things they had acquired over the years. So, the 1860 marble French mantel that they bought with Couturier 20 year ago was moved into the living room, where a pair of custom barrel chairs that were red damask in



richness and warmth

Couturier wanted the library, where the family relaxes and watches TV, to be reminiscent of their previous, more formal apartment. An Oscar de la Renta fabric is used as wall covering and on pillows. Holland & Sherry fabric covers the sofa. The French club chairs are vintage 1930. Lee Jofa fabric on windows. Cogolin rug.



the old apartment received a more modern two-tone treatment. The ottoman was recovered with an antique kilim and the couple's many Eastern works of art were integrated into rooms full of French Empire furniture.

While full of beautiful things, the apartment never becomes too self-conscious. The designer laughs when he describes a painting that hangs as a focal point, over the sitting room's color-soaked French daybed. "When you look at that painting from afar, you think, 'Oh my God they have a Rubens!'" says Couturier. And then you get close and find it's a fun Old Master—impressive but approachable. "That's why we bought it." — See Resources.



making a destination

Couturier added glamour to the hallway that leads to the bedrooms by placing mirror-on-mirror. "Big, expensive mirrors alone can look a little silly," says the designer. "This gives depth." The column painting is a Konstantin Kakaniias commission.



elements of exotic

Clockwise from this image: In the master bedroom, 18th-century gilded Venetian sconces and puddled silk curtains add drama. Also in the master bedroom, a Greek Orthodox icon is displayed on a 19th-century Syrian cabinet. The same cotton Cogolin rug used in the dining room is repeated in this bathroom because it is so easy to clean.

