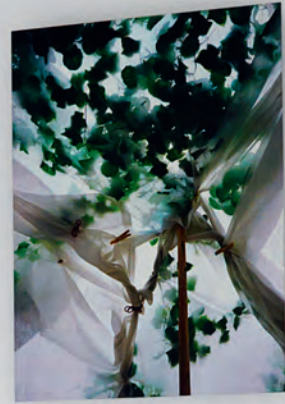


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SPRING STYLE



Family Ties

For his first grown-up New York apartment, a young lawyer turns to a decorator with all the right answers: his mother

BY DAVID MASELLO | PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY AMBRIDGE

Mod Squad

The living room features an American Leather armchair from Jensen-Lewis, a cocktail table from TRNK, and a custom area rug from Sacco Carpet. The English Country Home sofa is upholstered in a Nina Campbell chenille from Osborne & Little. See Resources.

“It’s like having a doctor in the family—you’re going to take advantage of that, right? My mother is a great decorator”



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Benjamin Deutsch, a 28-year-old corporate lawyer, knows more than his fair share about the interior design world. “I’ve grown up in homes decorated by my mother,” he says, “and I’ve watched her decorate other people’s homes, including those of my brothers, so it was an unstated, for-sure thing that she would decorate my apartment.” Like any dotting parent, Deutsch’s mom, noted interior designer Penny Drue Baird, backs up her son’s assessment. “We’re a tight-knit family—Ben is one of six brothers—and it was just assumed I’d be the family decorator,” she

says, to which her son adds, “It’s like having a doctor in the family. You’re going to take advantage of that, right? My mother is a decorator. And a great one.” Not to be left out of the fun, Deutsch’s father, Fred Deutsch, was instrumental in nabbing the apartment that his son now shares with wife Maya Citron, a 28-year-old PhD student in clinical psychology. The elder Deutsch, his son recounts, is “always curious about apartments and was randomly driving around the empty streets of Manhattan during COVID. He saw this building, which had

Nice Spread

The airy open kitchen (ABOVE) includes a ceiling fixture from Luxe Décor and barstools sourced from Food52. The range is from Viking and the hood is from XO Appliance. (RIGHT) Pierre Jeanneret armchairs surround a Loewen Design Studios dining table. See Resources.



just been finished but was empty. He parked the car, walked inside, and introduced himself to the manager. Then he called Maya and me and said, 'I've found the most fabulous apartment that you or I could imagine.'" The couple, who were staying with Citron's parents in Colorado during the early days of the pandemic, took a virtual tour of the apartment and signed on the PDF's dotted line.

Baird, who has flexed her muscles on projects ranging from alpine ski chalets to modern beach houses, wasn't intimidated by the apartment's raw urban shell. "My mission statement is that there isn't just one way to decorate," she says. "You need to consider the geography of a home and how it will interact with your clients' tastes and fantasies." The building's peculiar shape—all angles, built tightly into the intersection of three West Village streets—dictated oddly configured apartments with quirky floor plans and awkward support columns, much improved by sleek polished cement ceilings and enormous casement windows. Baird and her "clients" did a lot of shopping together to find the perfect pieces to the challenging design puzzle. Deutsch and Citron had wanted to put a beloved old sofa in their new digs, for instance, but with no expanse large enough to con-

tain it, Baird found what she calls a "Vladimir Kagan-esque curvy thing for the living room. It was one of those situations where the girl has to fit the dress, rather than the dress fit the girl."

"My mother's strongest suit as a decorator is her versatility," her son says admiringly, while conceding that her "default style" is classic French. (A Francophile, Baird keeps an apartment in Paris and has written numerous books about French-inflected decorating.) "She knew this place wouldn't be right for the antique moldings, wood paneling, and dark greens that she favors." The airy, loftlike abode, they all agreed, called for a neutral palette and mid-20th-century-modern-style furnishings. "There wasn't a single conflict among us," confirms Baird, who finished most of the work in less than two months. "It wasn't even a topic."

"Working with Penny was seamless—wonderful and collaborative," says her daughter-in-law. "She really let us take the lead and helped us figure out what we wanted our first home together to be." The trio was "all very focused from the start," Deutsch adds. "My mom let us put our mark on our home while helping us make our home." ✨



Mother Love
(OPPOSITE) Decorator Penny Drue Baird raises a glass to her son Benjamin Deutsch and daughter-in-law Maya Citron. (THIS PAGE ABOVE) The primary bedroom is accented with curtains by Custom Decorators Workroom, a chandelier from Visual Comfort & Co., and an alpaca throw by Rosemary Hallgarten. (THIS PAGE BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT) Deutsch and Citron relax in the office, which includes a pair of Pottery Barn desks and a West Elm half-sleeper sofa. See [Resources](#).