

# TRADITIONAL HOME

March 2009

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spectrum *of* change

DISCOVER  
A DESIGNER'S  
WHIRLWIND OF  
**COLORFUL  
TRANSFORMATION**



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When Manhattan interior designer Jennifer Flanders decides to make a change, she moves at a chop-chop pace and with a spectacular plan. Mid-winter last year, the newly single Jennifer found an Upper East Side apartment that she shares with her daughters Emma, 9, and Allie, 6. Within six weeks of signing the lease, Jennifer had chosen a dynamic color palette and picked an array of vintage and antique furnishings. She quickly transformed the apartment into a haven where she could feel inspired to start her new life. That was February.

A business change seemed inevitable. She and two friends—tabletop designer Charlie Akwa and custom upholsterer Johanna Santos—discussed showcasing their work together. The three decided to consolidate their businesses under one roof in a Manhattan townhouse. The one-stop design destination, Ensemble Designs, opened in December. While each woman still owns her individual business, as a group they offer different design aspects for home and entertaining—and happily collaborate when a project calls for it.

It was this same kind of collaboration that provided Jennifer with speedy solutions for her new apartment. Assisted by sister Jordana Kosow (who also works for her), the determined designer coaxed upholsterers and fabricators to complete work on her colorful furniture—including some of Jennifer's own designs—and her window treatments just in time for the February move-in day.

To keep the number of patterns in the living room under control, Jennifer Flanders introduced solid brown velvet on matching sofas that are separated into two seating arrangements. Piped in orange, the sofas are topped with soft cashmere throws and pillows in orange, red, and gold.

Right: Jennifer and daughters Emma, left, and Allie.





The library/dining room's built-in bookcases pick up a shade of eggplant from the rug and from the crystals of a vintage chandelier. The deep color, also used on a banquette and on the decorative host chairs, accents the pumpkin-colored walls. **Opposite top:** Luxurious gold braid highlights newly covered 1940s-era ebonized armchairs.

**Bottom:** A vintage crystal chandelier glows in the hallway of the Flanders apartment.



## COLOR COORDINATED

Designer Jennifer Flanders was not shy about dousing her apartment with strong and dramatic hues. She follows these guidelines when choosing colors for her design work.

■ **GO BEYOND TRIED AND TRUE.** Instead of having go-to colors, Jennifer prefers to tackle new color combinations for each project. "Not only does it keep the work interesting, but it allows me to give something unique to each client," she says. She does, however, use one trim color repeatedly—Benjamin Moore's white dove, which, she explains, is neither too bright nor too creamy, just the perfect white.

■ **INTRODUCE COLOR SURPRISES.** Trying a new wall color is the easiest way to change the look of a room. But why stop there? Jennifer advises painting the moldings white and suggests painting the inside of bookshelves a contrasting color. That offers opportunities for more interest and drama.

■ **THINK BALANCE.** Mix light with dark and large scale with small scale to create a room of ease and comfort. Bold colors and patterns should be evenly distributed throughout a space, not clumped together in one area.

"I wanted to have a home for my daughters that was settled and finished, not half-done," says Jennifer.

The warm and uplifting colors she used throughout the apartment were drawn from the living room and dining room rugs. An orange-and-burgundy flocked wallpaper she initially selected for one of her clients has found a perfect place in Jennifer's foyer, where it provides a dramatic welcome home each day. Because clients often resist bold colors and motifs, she explains, she sometimes uses her own home as a laboratory to test their livability. Another experiment is the placement of a pair of vintage cabinets from the 1940s side by side in the entry. "Placing furniture symmetrically is not an arrangement I would typically execute," says Jennifer. "But it filled the space and also provided double the storage, which was important."

Intense color also saturates the living room. Two separate seating arrangements—one in front of the fireplace, another against the back wall—are enveloped by red walls and are anchored by matching brown velvet sofas. Simple window panels of embroidered silk were fabricated with chunky tassel fringe along the edges.

Designed with multi-functionality in mind, the pumpkin-colored dining room triples as a library (after-school home-



work), a workspace (late-night projects), and a place to dine. Storage in the apartment is minimal, so bookshelves with interiors painted a contrasting shade of eggplant were installed to house books and dinnerware, and introduce an additional vibrant color. "I thought this room would feel more warm and inviting if there was seating beyond the formal dining chairs," says Jennifer, "so I pushed the table against the wall to make room for cozy, comfortable chairs." Vintage armchairs upholstered in textured orange velvet are situated in front of the window.



**Right:** In a corner of the master bedroom, an armchair designed by Jennifer draws attention with its nailhead decoration.  
**Left:** Sprinkled with shots of turquoise, the girls' bedroom has curvaceous twin headboards.  
**Below:** Jennifer's headboard goes girly, too, with tufting, trim, and pleating details.  
**Above:** Emma and Allie read and relax in their shared bedroom.

The ultra-feminine master bedroom glows in raspberry tempered by a taupe glaze applied in a crosshatch pattern. Jennifer used an antique bed as inspiration for the shaped headboard tufted in hot pink wool. Instead of the expected stark white, the bedroom trim was painted in taupe to add depth and more warmth. Newly constructed armoires faced with mirrors house Jennifer's clothes and accessories.

The bedroom for daughters Emma and Allie was the biggest design challenge. They are used to having separate bedrooms, but in this apartment they will be sharing a room. So Jennifer worked toward a happy compromise in tastes. "I knew they would have conflicting thoughts about what their room should be," Jennifer says. "But in the end, they loved it. They are like me. Offer them a bit of sparkle, and they'll take it."

A silver damask motif on reddish pink walls updates a traditional pattern, and floral window panels complement the wallpaper's oversized pattern. To give each daughter a modicum of privacy, matching storage units with a shared bookcase in between create niches for beds upholstered in a metallic turquoise fabric.

Although Jennifer and her daughters have lived in the apartment not quite a year, it already feels like home. "This was not just about making a pretty home," says Jennifer, "but also about creating an environment where we could be happy, thanks to the support of all who helped me complete it so quickly." ■

For more information, see sources on page 132

