

ROOM TO BREATHE

A Manhattan couple were surprised to find themselves buying a loft apartment after they'd found its spaciousness hard to resist.

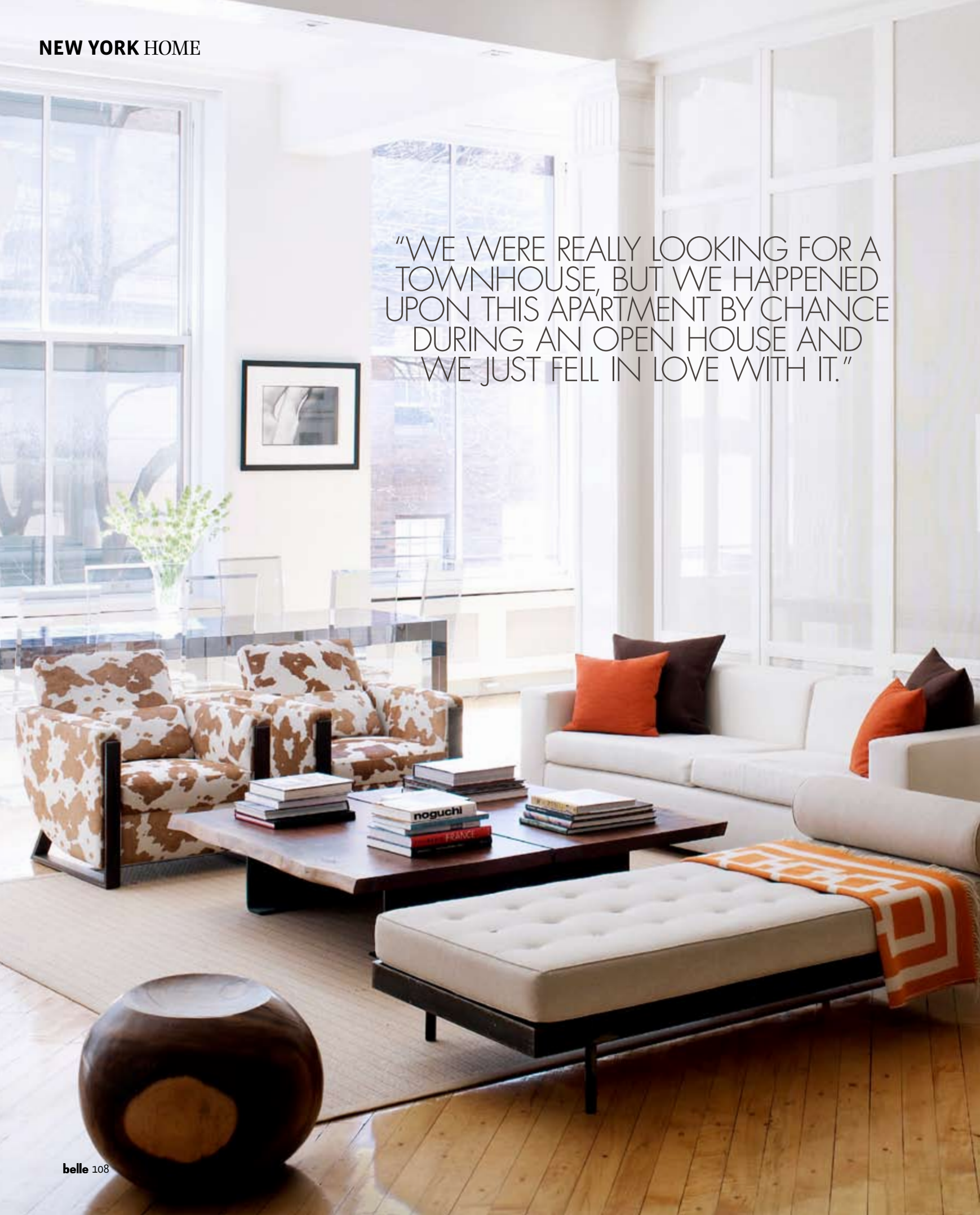
PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD POWERS** PRODUCTION + WORDS **COCO BANCROFT**





THIS PAGE A wall of photographs from Sue and Jon's collection includes works by Henri Cartier-Bresson, David Levinthal and Elliott Erwitt. The couple bought the white suede Deco sofa at the Marché aux Puces flea market in Paris. OPPOSITE PAGE The apartment's huge windows combine with its four-metre-high ceilings to create a sense of light and space.

"WE WERE REALLY LOOKING FOR A TOWNHOUSE, BUT WE HAPPENED UPON THIS APARTMENT BY CHANCE DURING AN OPEN HOUSE AND WE JUST FELL IN LOVE WITH IT."





THESE PAGES The choice of fabrics and decoration in the living and dining areas emphasises the apartment's airiness. Sue and Jon bought the Jean Prouvé daybed at auction at Sotheby's. The low-slung oak and steel coffee table was custom made, as were the pony-skin and wenge chairs. ABOVE RIGHT Owner and design writer, editor and broadcaster Sue Hostetler.



How does a chronicler of celebrity homes live herself? In the case of New York writer Sue Hostetler, with as much high style as the rich and famous folks she profiles. Surveying the SoHo loft that Sue shares with her husband, media entrepreneur Jon Diamond, and their six-year-old daughter, Spencer, it's clear she's picked up a thing or two from the homeowners, architects and decorators that she deals with.

Jon and Sue, who is the author of luxury coffee-table books, the homes and design editor for a US magazine group and the host of her own show on America's Plum Television network, bought the loft in 2006. "Ironically, we were really looking for a townhouse," Sue says, "but we happened upon this apartment by chance during an open house and we just fell in love with it."

The space is one of the classic cast-iron lofts that have become synonymous with this trendy downtown Manhattan neighbourhood. Soaring four-metre-high pressed-tin ceilings and enormous windows, which overlook the charming cobblestoned streets of SoHo, infuse the home with lots of drama. "I call it industrial chic," says Sue. "The light is magical, and the oversized steel and glass doors that separate the various rooms allow for transference of that brightness." The colossal living room, dining room, library and office all flow together and have been kept open, but the bedrooms are more private, divided by clever semi-transparent doors. Immense globe pendant lamps hang throughout the space, adding to the dramatic effect.

Naturally, vast loft spaces can feel cold, so the challenge for Sue became how to make such an expansive residence cosy and warm. Well-known Hollywood interior designer and good friend Valerie Pasquiou helped Sue with some of the furnishings for the 280-square-metre apartment. Known for working with clients such as actress Lisa Kudrow and singer k.d. lang, Valerie gave some of the family's favourite existing pieces new life by reupholstering them in cream and beige linen, cotton and suede fabrics. A standout is a classic Eames lounge chair and matching footstool that Valerie covered in dazzling white leather – the perfect contemporary update. A Christian Liaigre ottoman

NEW YORK HOME

THIS PAGE Clear Lucite dining chairs, bought at Twentieth in Los Angeles, allow the Paul Evans 'Cityscape' stainless-steel table to be viewed in all its glory and are an added element of 'barely there' lightness in the apartment. OPPOSITE PAGE Giant stainless-steel and glass doors provide sound privacy while still leaving a sense of openness.







was sheathed in a blue floral-print fabric that is both sexy and feminine. Dashes of bold Hermès orange were thrown in – the front door, a blanket draped over a daybed – that add cheerful brilliance.

“Valerie also designed and had custom made the handsome low-slung wooden coffee table in the living room,” Sue says. Made from a thick slab of richly grained walnut and set on a raw-steel base, the piece is at once gritty and refined, suiting the space perfectly.

“I prefer mixing periods, drawing on different genres,” Sue adds. “We’ve got items ranging from Deco pieces, which I found at the legendary Marché aux Puces flea market in Paris, to new and very contemporary leather and steel chairs from B&B Italia that remind me of beautiful horse saddles. Then there’s the understated mid-century Jean Prouvé daybed that we bought at auction. I love how each possession tells a little story from our lives and works with the others to create a timeless tableau.”

In Sue’s opinion, though, the pièce de résistance is the Paul Evans patchwork dining table, finished in mirrored, polished chrome. The ‘Cityscape’ design is Evans’s most recognisable work and beautifully complements the stainless steel used in the loft doors. Sue and Valerie selected Z-shaped clear Lucite chairs – found at Twentieth in Los Angeles – to pair with the table, allowing it to be the real star of the show. And because the dining area is rather narrow, the Lucite allows for a clear sightline from the entrance to the far side of the loft.

The couple had Brooklyn-based craftsman Christopher Bailey, whose woodwork is in the Gramercy Park and Standard Hotels in New York, custom fabricate a super-luxe library out of Brazilian jatoba wood. Christopher and Sue designed the off-kilter shelving that gives an added element of interest to the bookcases. “The library is probably the most relaxed and clubby-feeling spot in the loft,” Sue says. Laid-back but still hip, the room feels like an old-world hangout. “My style is definitely simple and streamlined, but with an unexpected twist,” she adds.

Upping the glamour quotient is Sue and Jon’s extensive photography collection (Sue sits on the board of New York’s International Center of Photography, while Jon is a trustee of the New Museum). The collection runs the gamut from late 1800s work by Edward Curtis to edgy contemporary images by David Laundy. Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Eikoh Hosoe and Rineke Dijkstra cover the wall of Sue’s office.

Sue is delighted to have created a home in the centre of such a vibrant metropolis. “New York City, from my point of view, is where it’s all happening,” she says. “Broadway, world-class museums, fabulous restaurants, fascinating people, Central Park ... But honestly, all that really mattered to Jon and me was to be able to live in the city in a home that was sophisticated and chic for adult dinner parties yet also child-friendly for six-year-old playdates – to have a great modern urban family home.” We say, mission accomplished. **15**



SPEED READ

A loft apartment turned out to be the ideal NYC home for a family who'd been looking for a townhouse. + The owner and interior designer worked together to create a light-filled space that's very roomy yet also cosy and warm. + Deco furniture items sit alongside contemporary pieces and auction finds. + An extensive photography collection decorates the walls.

THIS PAGE Looking from the main bedroom, the floors are original oak, and zebra-wood doors conceal the built-in cupboards on the left. Bedding from Calvin Klein Home. OPPOSITE PAGE, ABOVE B&B Italia leather chairs flank nesting tables by Charles and Ray Eames. OPPOSITE PAGE, BELOW The crisp and clean main bathroom features back-to-back stainless-steel vanity units.