



# TWICE AS STYLISH

UPPER EAST SIDE TOWNHOUSE

INTERIOR DESIGN BY KELLI FORD  
AND KIRSTEN FITZGIBBONS  
ARCHITECTURAL RENOVATION BY PETER PENNOYER  
ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURE BY CHARLES BRENDON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAURA RESEN  
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## THE GEOMETRIC RUG INSPIRED HIGH-CONTRAST DECOR

Kelli Ford and Kirsten Fitzgibbons, designers and sisters, decorated the Manhattan townhouse of Kelli and husband Gerald. OPENING PAGES AND RIGHT: Balustrade by Peter Pennoyer Architects. Custom bell-jar lantern. Edward Ruscha's *Made in U.S.A.* Antique French mantel. Club chairs, in Missoni fabric, and sofas, all by Kirsten Kelli, LLC. Two-seat sofa in Lee Jofa mohair. Long sofa in fabric by Jane Churchill. Accent pillows in Holland & Sherry fabrics. Lamp by Christopher Spitzmiller on antique console. William Yeoward vase on custom coffee table for Madison. Throw by Hermès graces bergère in Clarence House horsehair and cut velvet by Holland & Sherry. Sconces, chandelier and ottoman, all antiques. Draperies of Quadrille silk. Abstract art by Ellsworth Kelly. Rug by Stark.







## OBVIOUSLY, IRVING BERLIN NEVER MET DESIGNERS KELLI FORD

and Kirsten Fitzgibbons of the firm Kirsten Kelli, LLC, but he could have written his classic song “Sisters” just for them. The lyrics suit this inventive twosome, who appear to “think and act as one” as they work at their offices in Manhattan, Dallas and Greenwich, Connecticut. Witness the sumptuous, precisely tailored yet invitingly airy interiors the sisters created for this Upper East Side townhouse, which serves as Kelli and husband Gerald Ford’s spacious pied-à-terre.

Designed in 1902 by Charles Brendon, the Beaux Arts-style brick-and-limestone structure was in a sorry state when the Fords purchased it seven years ago. After a century-plus of hard use—including a cameo role in the 1975 Robert Redford thriller *Three Days of the Condor*—that had removed all original interior detail, the building had done warehouse duties for an antiques gallery. Noted architectural classicist Peter Pennoyer was hired to strip the dwelling down to the brick adjoining walls, extend the rear of the house another ten feet—a substantial expansion in Manhattan—and design a new five-bedroom structure behind the original landmarked facade. Pennoyer also created a graceful, classically inspired stairway with a balustrade of water jet-cut steel and a handrail of bronze.

The results read a little bit French, a little bit Federal, of the moment and sure to be chic for many years, thanks to the architecture’s harmonious proportions and the sisters’ well-tempered palette and quiet enthusiasm for elegant, livable decor. All the rooms breathe easily: from the crisp black and ivory living room and mahogany-paneled dining room to the leather tile-lined media room, charming master bedroom suite and French country kitchen with ebonized mahogany cabinetry.

The sisters love symmetry, from furniture placement to lighting fixtures to color splashes. They also love interesting wall finishes, such as ivory lacquered surfaces, and high ceilings. They confidently mix the antique with the contemporary and the very modern: eighteenth-century French, chinoiserie, Art Deco and more. And they know how to use fine art and incorporate new pieces into a collection that includes works by Edward Ruscha, Keith Haring, Jeff Koons, Ellsworth Kelly and Frank Stella.

The duo thrills to the hunt—not surprising, given that Madison, their Dallas boutique, is filled with luxury items for the home. The two scoured Paris’ Marché aux Puces, then shipped their finds to New York and installed them in the townhouse: nine antique stone mantels for all nine fireplaces, glass-front cabinets for the kitchen and a yacht’s Art Deco bar for entertaining in the media room.

The process doesn’t change, whether the sisters are together or apart. Says Kelli, “When I’m in Dallas, Kirsten’s usually in Connecticut. When I go to the Dallas Design Center and she goes to the Decoration & Design Building in New York, nine times out of ten, we’ll come back with the same fabrics. We really do think alike, and we always agree.” And that’s just as Berlin wrote it. □

TOP AND RIGHT: In dining room, antique French mahogany table. Backs of antique chairs in Brunswick & Fils ticking. Goblets, crystal and candleholders by William Yeoward. China and monogrammed linens from Mottahedeh. Silverware by Tiffany & Co. Light fixture and English mirror, both antiques. Draperies in China Seas fabric in design by Kirsten Kelli, LLC. Patterson, Flynn & Martin carpet. Florals throughout home by Belle Fleur and Kirsten Kelli, LLC.









ABOVE: De Angelis lounge chairs in China Seas fabric. Coffee and bedside tables by Lorin Marsh. Antique fauteuil in Brunschwig & Fils velvet. Bed by Kirsten Kelli, LLC; custom canopy and draperies in Durable fabrics. Linens by Madison. Antique carpet by Stark. LEFT: Waterworks tub and custom faucetry. Antique stool. Custom chair in vintage fabric. Antique chair in fabric by Kelly Wearstler for Groundworks at Lee Jofa. Fabric for draperies by Le Gracieux. Antique light fixture. OPPOSITE, TOP: In media room, Edelman Leather tiles on walls. Custom sofa in Quadrille fabric; Holland & Sherry fabrics on pillows. Alan Campbell fabric on custom lounge chairs. Antique coffee table. Vintage crystal lamp; Gracious Home shade. Leather-clad side table for Madison. Draperies in Durable fabric. Carpet by Patterson, Flynn & Martin. Art Deco bar from yacht. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Rogers & Goffigon ticking on chair backs. Table by Howard Kaplan Designs. Viking range. Hood, by Peter Pennoyer Architects, with Bendheim glass. Custom cabinetry. Waterworks faucetry. Antique billiard light fixture.













OPPOSITE, TOP: Restored brick-and-limestone Beaux Arts-style townhouse originally designed by Charles Brendon for William G. Park. The Fords' project required construction of a new structure behind the landmarked 1902 facade. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Sisters Kirsten Fitzgibbons, *left*, and Kelli Ford. ABOVE: New terrace with limestone pavers and fountain, all designed by Peter Pennoyer Architects. Mecox Gardens table. Michael Taylor chairs and cushion fabric. Antique bench; pillows in Holland & Sherry cut velvet. Basket and hurricanes from Madison.