

New England HOME

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A New Season of
ELEGANCE



EFFORTLESS ELEGANCE

CONTEMPORARY
TOUCHES GIVE A FRESH
FACE TO A HISTORIC
BACK BAY BROWNSTONE.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY READ MCKENDREE

The bay window's sumptuous banquette, where the owners often settle for meals or with their laptops, hails from Lisa Tharp's collection. With multiple seating choices—including an iconic Alky chair designed by Giancarlo Piretti—the room is party-perfect, too. A painting by Takefumi Hori is one of several bold gold touches.

Some people love the energy of bright colors and lots of pattern, but not everyone wants a super-charged home environment. The busy professionals who own this Back Bay brownstone, for instance, prefer their home to be a place of calm in the sea of day-to-day stimuli. The couple longed for



a sanctuary—and they turned to designer Lisa Tharp to help them create it. At the same time, their haven had to be a place that fosters productivity when they choose to work at home and conviviality when they want to entertain.

The tricky part? The owner's aesthetic is modern, but their residence is in one of Boston's most historic neighborhoods. Fortunately, their team, which also included architect Bob Paladino and JW Construction, consisted of veterans used to tiptoeing on the line between past and present. Together they launched a total gut, stripping away what was of little importance to the building's integrity and then carefully reassembling an urban abode that reflects its pedigree but is also of the moment.

Classical moldings highlight the fine architecture, while polished, uncluttered spaces practically whisper "relax, you're home." Tharp's recipe for creating such a blissful retreat—one she refers to as "effortlessly elegant"—is a fine-tuned, skillfully curated blend of furnishings (some from



Sculptural elements like the gold-leafed table beside the midcentury daybed along with well-chosen art—that's Boston-area painter Caroline Rufo's painting above the mantel—boost the living room's persona. **FACING PAGE, TOP:** The architect nixed the dated spiral stairs that led to the roof deck and extended the handsome central staircase from the foyer on up. **FACING PAGE, BOTTOM:** Classic dark floors add gravitas to the airy kitchen.



THE SPARE PALETTE ALLOWS THE ART AND MYRIAD SUBTLE DETAILS—THE FLASHES OF GOLD AND BRASS, THE LUXURIOUS TEXTURES—THEIR DUE.



RIGHT: Mahogany night tables cozy up to the couple's bed. **ABOVE:** Vintage Oscar armchairs revamped with a lustrous Robert Allen fabric anchor a dreamy sitting area by the window. The intriguing linear pattern of The Rug Company's hand-carved wool Circuit rug pops come nighttime, illuminated by the deco-style ceiling light.

ARCHITECTURE:
Bob Paladino, Mellows &
Paladino Architects

INTERIOR DESIGN:
Lisa Tharp, Lisa Tharp
Interior Architecture + Design

BUILDER:
JW Construction

her own collection, some midcentury) and art. "The juxtaposition is what gives a home soul and life," she says.

Walls, moldings, and ceilings are painted the same pale, serene color. And then, in order not to prickle the senses, fabrics step in line.

"The envelope is silver and grays with some slightly lavender undertones," Tharp explains. The spare palette allows the art and myriad subtle details—flashes of gold and brass—their due. Zoom in and you no-

tice the drapery rods have been given a gold wash, for example, and a bracelet of brass accents (check out the ferrules on chair legs) weaves throughout, linking the rooms and providing warmth.

In accordance with how people prefer to live today, the generous living room seeps seamlessly at one end into a highly functional kitchen. Paladino devised a bounty of cabinetry—ultimate floor-to-ceiling storage that shelters everything from colanders to cutting boards. Brass-legged stools flank the



THE ROOF DECK, THE CONSUMMATE REJUVENATION SPOT, SERVES UP CINEMATIC VIEWS.

marble counter, and there's art to elevate the spirit even before morning caffeine.

The stylish rooms may be visually rich (the smoky-hued, hand-blown Murano light fixture is a jewel), but they are never intimidating. Along with sophistication and refinement, the owners sought a welcoming tone. "They really wanted part of the message to read, 'Come in and enjoy a glass of wine,'" Sharp says.

Surroundings as appealing as these, of course, mean guests are happy to linger

long past dinner. But once the hosts have seen their company off, they have an equally alluring master suite to retire to. Their bedroom mirrors the living room in theme and comfort. Indeed, it's a consummate rejuvenation spot, as is the revamped roof deck. The former is all about cocooning; the latter serves up sky and cinematic views. Stepping back from the fray for a moment, the couple can look to the heavens and breathe.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details about this home, see Resources.



The roof deck oasis includes a roomy new head house, a replacement for a tinier rendition. "The copper cladding, an authentic metal found on many area head houses, will patina with age," says architect Bob Paladino. **LEFT:** The structure's bountiful windows funnel light to the home's lower levels.