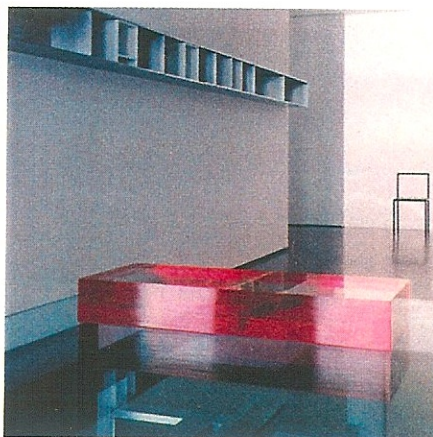




Muriel Brandolini



Deborah Berke & Partners Architects



Alternative Design

The Top 100 Architects & Decorators

Whether you long for comfy crushed velvet or gleaming stainless steel, our metropolis has a designer who is right for your apartment. Here, our definitive list of the city's top interior talents, their signature looks, and their most well-known clients. Bear in mind: You won't find some of New York's biggest draws—Philip Johnson, David Rockwell—in the following pages, largely because their focus is outside the home (call them, however, if you've got a fabulous restaurant or museum to build). What you *will* find is a range of home-design legends and up-and-comers, each of them ready to help you rethink how you live.

Aero Studios Limited

132 Spring Street (212-966-4700)

Thomas O'Brien has a sense of personal style so refined it can be broken down into its constituent parts: dark woods, pale colors, elemental lighting, and modern furniture (by himself and others) in sleek, subtly textured materials. His current passion? "This high-gloss epoxy paint I'm using in my new Bellport house. It has a wonderful vintage-yet-modern quality."

Clients: Giorgio Armani, Ralph and Ricky Lauren

Ahari Associates Architecture

225 Lafayette Street, Suite 205 (212-431-4456)

M. Nasser Ahari adds a romantic flavor to modern rooms, using handmade cast metal, his own sconces, and bronze tiles. An 1850s townhouse, for example, was retrofitted with shoji screens in the bedroom and an adjustable dining table that can be raised for pancakes, lowered for sushi. Plain spaces are roughed up with interesting ob-

jects, many from Asia, some from Africa. **Clients:** Abigail Disney, Robert Kelly

Alternative Design

334 Barrow Street, Jersey City (646-230-7222)

Principal Courtney Sloane's style is bold and high-tech, to suit the electronic needs of her entertainment-industry clientele. But she mixes the heavy metals—"copper in any form"—with a softer, seventies spatial sense (like conversation pits) and an array of Asian and African touches. "We always include ethnic accessories and artworks from other cultures, and mix them with cutting-edge, contemporary art." **Clients:** Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Queen Latifah

Archi-Tectonics

111 Mercer Street (212-226-0303)

Architect Winka Dubbeldam will soon be known for her 497 Greenwich Street condo project, an eleven-story building with a hori-

zontally rippling glass façade. Dubbeldam's houses and apartments also favor the avant-garde: A globetrotting bachelor got a blue concrete tub rising out of the floor, a suburban couple a house like a continuous corridor, with cul-de-sacs for eating, sleeping, and working.

Clients: Frederique Van Der Wal, Steve Saks

Architecture Research Office

180 Varick Street (212-675-1870)

The work of partners Stephen Cassell and Adam Yarinsky moves beyond modern via adventures in materials: laser-cut stainless steel, leather floors, a translucent beeswax partition in a home. "Our work uses carefully studied details, materials, and light to create intimacy and warmth."

Bruce T. Bananto Inc.

159 West 25th Street (212-727-0282)

Light practically bounces around a Bananto-designed apartment, reflecting from tin ceiling to

polished floor. "My color palette is generally neutral"—white walls, creamy Bolon carpets—"with a spare use of objectified color": fifties furniture in sharp reds and blues. **Clients:** Alyssa Gursky and Nunzio Tarantino

John Barman Inc.

500 Park Avenue (212-838-9443)

Clients praise Barman for injecting contemporary glamour into traditional architecture; beneath his classic, tailored exterior beats the heart of an extreme modernist. The designer himself says he takes a "twenty-first-century approach" to the upscale apartment, "luxurious and infused with vibrant color." **Clients:** Wynton Marsalis, Bryant Gumbel, Leonard and Allison Stern

Sara Bengur Associates

525 Broadway, Suite 701 (212-226-8796)

Bengur is a maximalist, known for extravagant combinations of textiles old and new. "The more you can design a space with one-of-a-kind objects, the better," she says, and she's willing to do the legwork to find vintage fabrics and objects. All this without sacrificing family-friendly comforts or room for elegant entertaining. **Clients:** John and Sarah Duerden, Thomas Leddy, Mark O'Donnell and Jim Allman

Deborah Berke & Partners Architects LLP

211 West 19th Street (212-229-9211)

Berke describes her ethos as "simple, elegant, understated . . . subtle, luxurious, thoughtful," and that about sums it up. Sometimes the warm Shaker, sometimes the cool urbanist, she creates rooms out of slabs of golden wood, luminous plaster, and striated limestone. **Clients:** Fabien Baron, William Wegman, Jennifer Bartlett

Bilhuber Incorporated

330 East 59th Street, sixth floor (212-308-4888)

Jeffrey Bilhuber appears to be simultaneously channeling Billy Baldwin, Jean-Michel Frank, and Andy Warhol. In other words: bright, bold, big looks: "the very best representations of cultures past mix seamlessly within an optimistic, contemporary envelope." **Clients:** Randolph Duke, Anna Wintour, Peter Jennings, Iman and David Bowie

Pauline Boardman Ltd.

44 East 67th Street (212-288-8379)

Boardman has moved away from the chintz, fuss, and trim that once characterized Upper East Side decorating and toward an elegant, comfortable Georgian style based on high-impact wall colors and natural-hued upholstery. She emphasizes climate, client preference, and context. **Clients:** Pepe and Emilia Fanjul, Carroll Petrie

Muriel Brandolini Inc.

167 East 80th Street (212-249-4920)

A self-described "color freak," Brandolini doesn't shy away from pattern, either, applying vibrant block-printed fabrics to walls, windows, uphol-

stery. "I use colors boldly, because I believe it to be paramount in creating a place where people can be happy," she says. And the enterprising designer has three lines: fabrics, home furnishings, and clothing. **Clients:** Matt and Annette Lauer, Christopher and Pia Getty, Pavlos and Marie-Chantal of Greece

Sheila Bridges Design

1925 Seventh Avenue, No. 8M (212-678-6872)

Bridges's taste runs to the natural, unusual, and minimal—classic pale rooms that frame exceptional furniture finds. "I bring the outdoors inside with trays of grass, stones, and shells," she says, continuing the theme with sisal rugs and raw silks in bleached, beachy colors. Bridges is currently working on her own TV show, to air in January on the new Fine Living channel. **Clients:** Bill Clinton, Peter Norton, Tom Clancy

Thomas Britt Incorporated

136 East 57th Street, Suite 701 (212-752-9870)

Britt, no wallflower, knows the power of a great room, enhancing the grandeur of prewar spaces (or finding the beauty in an ordinary apartment) via oversize furnishings, plush fabrics, mirrors, and marble. "I take a large-scale, clean-cut approach whether it be classical or contemporary," he says. "I like texture and solid colors in clear, bright tones." Britt cuts the opulence with the addition of Indian rugs or quirky objects from his

alize how their place might look in ten years."

Clients: Robert Redford, Mo'Nique, Sylvia Rhone

Christopher Coleman Interior Design

70 Washington Street, Suite 1005, Dumbo, Brooklyn (718-222-8984)

Coleman's interiors are fresh, bright, and family-friendly, with exceptional kids' rooms, built-in storage, and a great use of color—these days, he's leaning toward "colored resin, anodized colored metals, and embroidery on fabrics, especially in shades of purple, red, and orange."

Clients: Kate Betts, Jane Henson, Sylvester Stallone

Robert Couturier Inc.

69 Mercer Street (212-463-7177)

Couturier's projects, whether Mexican estates or Manhattan apartments, are "clear, light, spacious, and comfortable, with fantasy and humor," he says. He mixes balanced, logical layouts with elaborate combinations of antique and contemporary furniture and patterned fabrics. "I love green and blue together. Or reds. I love hot-color spaces. And all textures." **Clients:** Sir James Goldsmith, Amy Fine Collins, Andrew Solomon

Milly de Cabrol, Ltd.

150 East 72nd Street, Suite 2C (212-717-9317)

De Cabrol's talent is to make rooms look as if they've always been in the family, via comfortable

"My concept is 'happy to be home,' "
says Milly de Cabrol. "I like to have a little
bit of every culture, like a melting pot."

travels. **Clients:** The Raj Mata of Jaipur, Ambassador Charles Price, Seymour Milstein

Mario Buatta

120 East 80th Street (212-988-6811)

The ultimate Buatta room, according to its creator, has "an undecorated look—like it fell into place over a client's lifetime." Known for his love of chintz, Buatta orchestrates prints better than anyone, layering stripes, florals, needlepoint rugs, and chinoiserie. "It's traditional for today—a combination of the best of the past and the best of today's upholstery and reproductions."

Clients: Barbara Walters, Billy Joel, Mariah Carey, Malcolm Forbes

Clodagh Design International

670 Broadway (212-780-5300)

Clodagh's bold, environmentally conscious approach to design doesn't skimp on the details. She's known for stone sinks, concrete floors, and hand-loomed textiles, but all that—and the *feng shui*, too—comes after some major client bonding. "It's almost like working as a travel guide," she says, "bringing people to where they want to be now, gazing into the future to help them visu-

antiques, rich colors, and always a nook in which to curl up and read. "My concept is 'happy to be at home,'" De Cabrol explains. "I like to have a little bit of every culture, like a melting pot." **Clients:** Patricia Morrisroe, Jeffrey Toobin, Gale Hayman

Delson or Sherman Architects

945 Pacific Street, Prospect Heights, Brooklyn (718-789-2919)

"Though our work tends to be modern and spare, we don't shy away from experimenting with bold materials and strong color," says Perla Delson. Oriental rugs and upholstered furniture also warm up the brownstones and apartments renovated by this five-year-old Brooklyn partnership.

Clients: Bruce Weber

Denning & Fourcade Inc.

111 East 56th Street (212-759-1969)

Technology permitting, Robert Denning would happily return to the nineteenth century. Since he can't, he devotes himself to re-creating—with international mixes of opulent furniture—the sumptuous interiors of his favorite era, using damask, silks, and taffetas. **Clients:** Jean Vanderbilt, Oscar de la Renta, Henry Kissinger