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Tour a Worldly Manhattan Apartment That's All About "Pinking It Out"

When a longtime client entered a new phase in life, designer Aamir Khandwala stepped in for a collaborative effort

By Michelle Duncan
Photography by Jacob Snavely
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Walking into this 3,000-square-foot Manhattan apartment slightly above Madison Square Park's tree canopy, one can sense that they are walking into the cozy home of a seasoned traveler and collector, who has perhaps occupied the space for decades. But even though it's not difficult to ascribe the traveler and collector descriptors to the photographer and mental health youth advocate who lives here, she only moved into her new home this past summer.

That lived-in sense is partly due to a syncopated blend of cultures, texture, color, and time, courtesy of designer Aamir Khandwala, the former head of decoration at Robert Couturier, with whom the owner has worked for 20-plus years, and who now runs an interior design firm of his own.

After her husband passed away and her son moved into his own place in SoHo, the homeowner was ready to "just see how a single person lives," something she hadn't done in a long time. That meant reducing her real estate portfolio and spending most of her time in New York City. To "help ease the transition" of rediscovering life on her own, she needed to incorporate the wonderful memories of her past into her new home's decor. "I wanted to use a few pieces that I always loved, that I've lived around. But I didn't want to use a whole lot; I wanted a fresh feeling," she says.

After working on several homes together over the years, and having an intimate knowledge of her sense of interior style, Khandwala describes his main challenge as: "How do you edit everything and curate it in a way where it looks fresh? Where it really looks like it hasn't been done before?" The designer and his team layered their way through that challenge, selectively integrating the homeowner's existing collection with new pieces, resulting in a space that is sophisticated without being unapproachable, maximalist without being chaotic, and decidedly feminine.

"The bedroom, for me, is very much Hollywood 1930s and '40s. It's glamorous and soft," Khandwala says. Aside from the primary bedroom, pops of pink can be seen in the living room, primary bathroom mosaic work, and a lacquered office. "This is the first time I've been able to do all pink. Without a husband you can start pinking it out," the homeowner jokes.

Part of Khandwala's task was to create a space reflective of places his client had traveled to—New York, Paris, California, and Morocco—which proved to be no simple task. *Tadelakt*, a traditional Moroccan finish that lends moderate texture to its surfaces and plays well with natural light, bathes the walls of the living room. Custom handmade mosaic tiles in the kitchen, the powder room, and the bathrooms make for a similar reference. "New York and Paris come in the layering of the apartment," Khandwala says. "When you think of that black lacquer kitchen with the brass elements, with the mixture of the metals," he elaborates, referring to the uncommon but strikingly elegant finish chosen for the kitchen, "to me, that speaks of being old-world New York. When you think of those beautiful old homes in Paris, they're layered between colors, textures… 17th-century with the contemporary."

Those layers are represented throughout the Manhattan apartment, where eight vintage Kaare Klint red chairs sit comfortably on top of a contemporary custom silk rug with leather hexagon patches. Elsewhere, the eye can travel from a hot pink mohair velvet-covered daybed to a pistachio-toned pair of Louis XV giltwood armchairs to colorful contemporary shades designed by Khandwala's studio.

"It was an interesting project because it was just Aamir and myself this time," the homeowner recounts. In the end, "I was very happy with the outcome. I can be really creative with Aamir; he gives me a wide berth. He is as adventurous as I am as far as mixing designers and elements."

"The gist of our work is still very much based on collaboration, and that's the part we really enjoy the most," Khandwala chimes in. "That is what makes our work very rich."

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The entryway's warm tones are reminiscent of Morocco's desert sands; a custom leather rug from Crosby Street Studios adds a touch of glam. Negus Stool is by Nicolas Aubagnac and from Twenty First Gallery, the vintage carved and ebonized mirror is from the client's own collection, and the contemporary entry table is from Twenty First Gallery.

2/11

Bold earth tones—like the custom *tadelakt* finish by Golden Bee and the Robert Kime fabric, sourced from Chelsea Textiles—blend perfectly with adventurous colors, like the pink Ochre daybed reupholstered in Claremont mohair velvet by LF Upholstery. Mixing furniture, like the vintage Catalan wood coffee table passed down to the client from her father, with a contemporary blush pink custom leather stool by Mark Grattan adds more layers to the space.

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3/11

A bedroom-turned-media room accommodates a custom sectional sofa, pillows, and ottomans—all designed by Khandwala and produced by Atelier Jouffre. A custom mohair rug from Alt for Living adds a sense of luxury.

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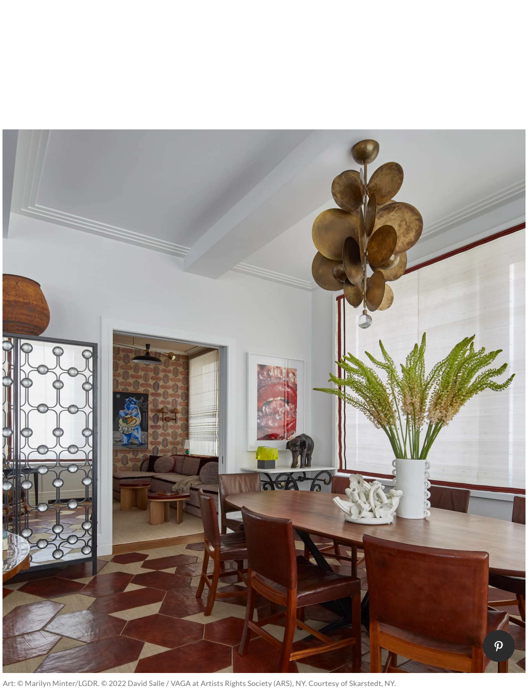

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In the dining room, a made-to-order Herve Van der Straeten chandelier hangs above a dining table from Mexico City–based Atra, which is surrounded by a set of eight vintage Kaare Klint chairs purchased through Dienst + Dotter. In the background, a David Salle painting from the client's existing collection hangs against custom wall upholstery made with Robert Kime fabric, produced by Atelier Jouffre. The custom Holborn Rug in rattan and leather took nine months to complete.

5/11

Large picture windows in the living room allow beams of natural light to bounce off custom cabinet millwork designed by Khandwala and fabricated by Leone. The cabinets' luster is thanks to 12 coats of Farrow & Ball Pitch Black paint finished by EduDeco lacquer.

6/11

A cobalt blue vintage Venetian mirror, custom floating sink in Sienna Bordeaux Stone sourced from Fame Stone, and Moroccan mosaic tiles by Mosaic House help make the powder room a bold jewel-box space.

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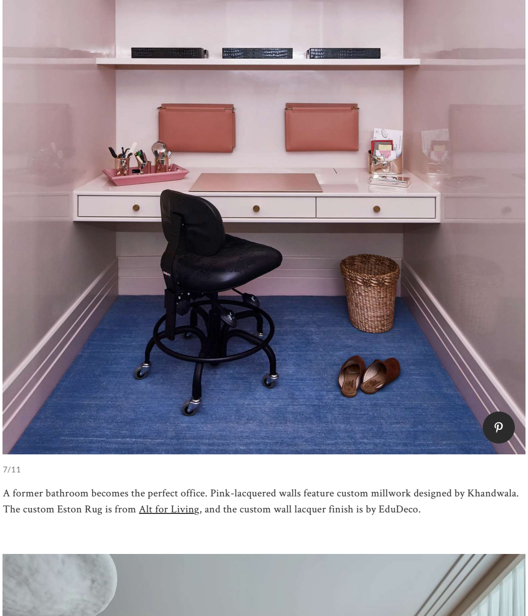

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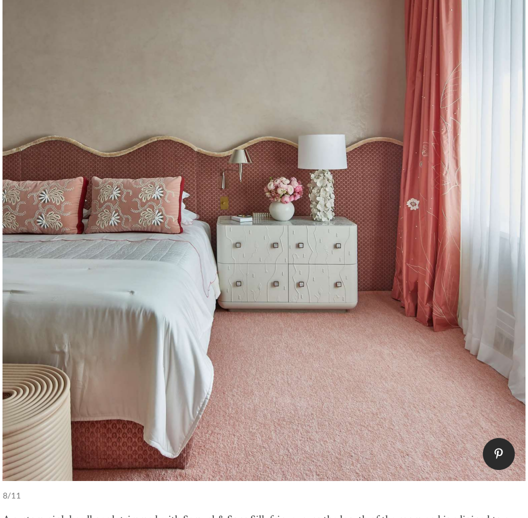
A former bathroom becomes the perfect office. Pink-lacquered walls feature custom millwork designed by Khandwala. The custom Eston Rug is from Alt for Living, and the custom wall lacquer finish is by EduDeco.



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A custom pink headboard, trimmed with Samuel & Sons Silk fringe, runs the length of the room and is adjoined to a platform, both upholstered with Claremont velvet. Custom bed pillows and curtains embroidered in raffia and wool by Combray Designs, along with voile under curtains in Chelsea Textile sheers, and a custom Arequipa Alpaca Rug add a dose of romance to this pink paradise.

9/11

Along with pink floors and walls clad in a mixture of custom Moroccan mosaic tiles and Crystallo Quartzite, a white freestanding bathtub adds glamour to the primary bathroom. Custom vanity countertop in light pink onyx with Nordic hammered brass ball knobs from Etsy. The round stool is from Comerford Collection.

10/11

A bedframe from Room & Board stands atop a custom Sumac rug from Crosby Street Studios, along with heirloom leather side tables and a bench brought from Paraguay by the client's father before she was born. Aamir turned vintage Ikat fabric from the client's personal collection into a custom canopy. All of the bedding was custom made by Nancy Stanley Waud.

11/11

The guest bathroom is outfitted with a glass dome pendant and orb sconces from Allied Maker, a custom vanity countertop, and floor borders. The shower walls are made of Blue Sea marble.

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