



TRIBECAEVOLUTION

ARCHITECT + DESIGNER: BSKS ARCHITECTS

TEXT: AYESHA KHAN

PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT FRANCES

THERE IS AN EXODUS TAKING PLACE ON NEW YORK'S famously upper crust Upper East Side. The newly moneyed and well-to-do are suddenly opting for Tribeca lofts over the condos and co-ops of yesteryear. The tradeoff? Fully customizable spaces, sweeping views and a relaxed vibe that is more about taking care of business than keeping up with the Joneses. And so it was for one such former Park Avenue resident, who enlisted the help of BSKS Architects to create his 5,000-square-foot duplex penthouse in Tribeca.





"GREAT DESIGN HAS MEANING AND CONSEQUENCE," says BKSJ project architect and designer Stacey Jattuso. "What we build, how we build it and how it comes to be used matters." BKSJ has followed that mantra for some 29 years—that appealed to their client for whom function and attention to construction detail were of the utmost importance. The unit was originally laid out by a residential developer, which had a cookie-cutter feel. "When you looked at the raw space in here, it was very much like a shoebox," says BKSJ lead architect and partner Joan Krevlin. "And for such a tall volume, it had not terribly tall windows. We totally re-proportioned the space, celebrating the north-south axis but also creating intimate places within the larger volume."

Entry to the apartment is through a long corridor that imparts a sense of arrival. "We compressed the entry so that when you come out into the broader space, you recognize the intimacy of some spaces and the scale of others," Jattuso explains. A hammered blackened-steel mirror coupled, a leather shelf and bins by Jim Zivic, also a runner by British artist Tania Johnson set the tone for the décor. Further into the open-plan space, a series of dropped ceilings and a segmentation of furniture arrangements help create the variety of living areas the client desired.

To address scale and proportion in the space, and to enhance the views, the entire floor—with the exception of the sunken den—was raised eight inches. The second order of space-planning business was to re-situate the stairway, which in the original design was tucked away. The result is a luminous stairwell that channels light from the glass wall of the upstairs terrace into the first-floor spaces. The stair materials—resin and custom-finished rift white oak—and a specially commissioned blown-glass pendant by Brooklyn sculptor Graham Caldwell were chosen to enhance this ethereal column of light.









TO THE RIGHT OF THE STAIRS IS THE DEN—ONE of several seating areas in the apartment. “You don’t want too many redundant spaces, so how do you make each sitting area look different?” muses Jattuso. BKSJ did so through their selection and arrangement of furniture. The den features wine-colored B&B Italia sofas, a Minotti lounge chair, a Mylla Kasthall carpet; the living room, at the other end of the first floor, is arranged with Troscan sofas clad in a vibrant Maharam stripe, a Vladimir Kagan Couture lounge chair, a Holly Hunt coffee table with side tables by Donghia and Corbin Bronze. The reading area, set off by a semi-transparent glass wall, is simply furnished with comfortable Poltrona Frau lounge chairs and side tables by Stephanie Parmentier.

Set between these spaces is a dining area that overlooks a sleek Bulthaupt kitchen with additional custom cabinetry and an island by BKSJ. A Hudson dining table with Piet Boon dining chairs are presided over by a light fixture by Roll & Hill. “Our client actually read about this,” says Jattuso. “It’s called Endless—it can be as long or as short as you want it to be.” The overscale area rug is by Tania Johnson, and two sculptural seating pieces by Robert Kuo anchor one end of the space.

The first-floor guest bedroom features what may

be the most captivating view in Tribeca. One wall of the room is formed by the back of the adjacent den’s media cabinet; two etched-glass slits in the wall add lightness. “Our furniture choices have a lot to do with craft,” Jattuso says, pointing out pencil slots and a leather writing pad on the BDDW desk. The bed, headboard and millwork were all custom designed by Jattuso and her team.

Upstairs the master bedroom reflects the same attention to craftsmanship shown in the guest room, but this time the color palette is made up of maroons, reds and wines. While the millwork and bedside tables are custom designed by BKSJ, a B&B Italia side chair, a Troscan bed and headboard, and a Jan Kath rug complete the look. A fully equipped outdoor terrace on this level is ideal for the client’s many social gatherings.

With flexible spaces, singular views and an attractive downtown vibe, it’s not hard to see why Tribeca has become the neighborhood of choice for so many, including Krevlin. “As both architect and resident, I’ve been witness to the transformation of Tribeca—first as a warehouse district, then as a home for artists and now as a thriving residential neighborhood with beautiful art-filled lofts. It’s been quite an evolution.” ■

BKSJ Architects 212.807.9600 bkskarch.com