

Lonny

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Ten Tips: East Side Address



In the study, the Beares' collection of art looks polished yet unstuffy when hung in an informal arrangement.

When your job involves showing multimillion-dollar listings in some of the most desirable buildings in New York, you're bound to be a bit particular about the details of your own abode. Such was the case for Emily Beare, a broker at luxury real estate group CORE, who more than a decade ago moved with her husband, Brian, into a prewar building in the East Side enclave Sutton Place—in her words, “one of Manhattan’s best-kept secrets.” Two years ago, when the couple relocated to an eighth-floor unit in the same building, it seemed like the optimal time for a decorating refresh.

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PERFECT BALANCE
OF COMFORT AND
ELEGANCE.

—EMILY BEARE

Enter interior designer Robert Passal, a friend and frequent collaborator of Emily's. Already familiar with her sensibility (expressed in her studied collection of American oil paintings) and love of entertaining, Passal proved to be a valuable design ally who wasn't afraid to challenge his clients. The denlike study, for example, was his answer to Brian's desire for a man cave. "He wanted a room where he could enjoy a football game as well as work," Passal explains, and thanks to elements such as a deep-seated sectional and a campaign desk, the mood is both sophisticated and cocooning. Below, 10 lessons from this twist on a traditional space.

1. Hit Refresh If the layout or architecture of your new home is similar to that of your previous one, it might seem natural to arrange your furniture in the same way. But "avoid getting stuck in a design rut," advises Passal. "Challenge yourself to rethink how your belongings are being shown off." The designer suggests collecting items in one central room and strategizing from there, rather than automatically moving pieces to a specific area. In this apartment, a Biedermeier secretary and drop-leaf table were reinterpreted as nightstands.

2. Welcome the Dark Side "Clients are often initially reluctant when I suggest moody tones for their walls, thinking that really means drab," says Passal. In the study, the designer's use of Well-Bred Brown by Sherwin-Williams creates a warm, enveloping atmosphere with dramatic impact.

3. Go for Mass Appeal When it comes to displaying art and decorative pieces, more is sometimes more. Passal displayed Emily's collection of similarly hued flea-market paintings along one wall in the den, and stationed ceramic urns and dog figurines atop a kitchen pantry.

4. Be Smart with Your Hardware Put aside your picture hangers and consider alternative solutions for displaying art. "Hang frames using a track system with steel cables or acrylic rods," suggests Passal. "This allows the freedom for your collection to grow and evolve without the commitment of putting holes in your walls." In the den, the seemingly random way works are hung brings a casual sensibility to more traditional pieces.

5. Designate an Escape The goal for the master bedroom was a sanctuary-like setting where Emily could retreat after long days of meetings and appointments. Passal chose a soothing palette of pale creams, grays, and blues, accented with a citron-hued bed designed specifically for the space. The guest bedroom, on the other hand, lets pattern take center stage.

6. Bring on the Broadloom "One challenge [we had] was in selecting flooring options for the master bedroom," Passal says. "Emily was a bit averse to the idea of wall-to-wall carpet. Knowing that she loves a great luxury hotel, I showed her photos of beautiful hotel suites, all of which were fully carpeted. Once she had the visuals, little convincing was needed."

7. Mix Your Seating "Emily was clear that she wanted to host meals and entertain guests on a regular basis," says the designer. For gatherings around the Christian Liaigre dining table, Passal created an eight-foot tufted banquette, which allows for comfortable seating for 10 when flanked with the Gustavian dining chairs.

8. Consider Mobility The Beares' living room, while quite large, is long and narrow. Passal's solution was to use smaller furniture that can be positioned in various arrangements throughout the space. Chairs, tables, and even the settee can easily be shifted to suit the occasion. The atmosphere is one of refined comfort—or, as Emily describes it, "I feel so happy surrounded by my beautiful things."

9. Layer the Light Install fixtures at multiple levels—overhead and on walls, tables, and floors—and distribute them throughout the room to ensure that it is evenly lit. "Dimmer switches are an absolute must. They allow you to play with the dispersion of light," says Passal.

10. Perform a Balancing Act Mix an antiques collection with newer pieces, or play traditional shapes off more modern ones. "I find that the contrast between old and new, precious and utilitarian, enhances each individual object," Passal says. "Emily and Brian have some great American art and Continental antiques, which we countered with cleaner furnishings and contemporary art to give the space a more youthful feel."