

## HOUSE TOUR: URBAN GLAMOUR IN A MANHATTAN TOWNHOUSE

With the gut renovation of a storied Manhattan townhouse, architectural firm Leroy Street Studio and designer James Aman devise a new ideal of urban family life—one that is as glamorous as it is kid-friendly

BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH



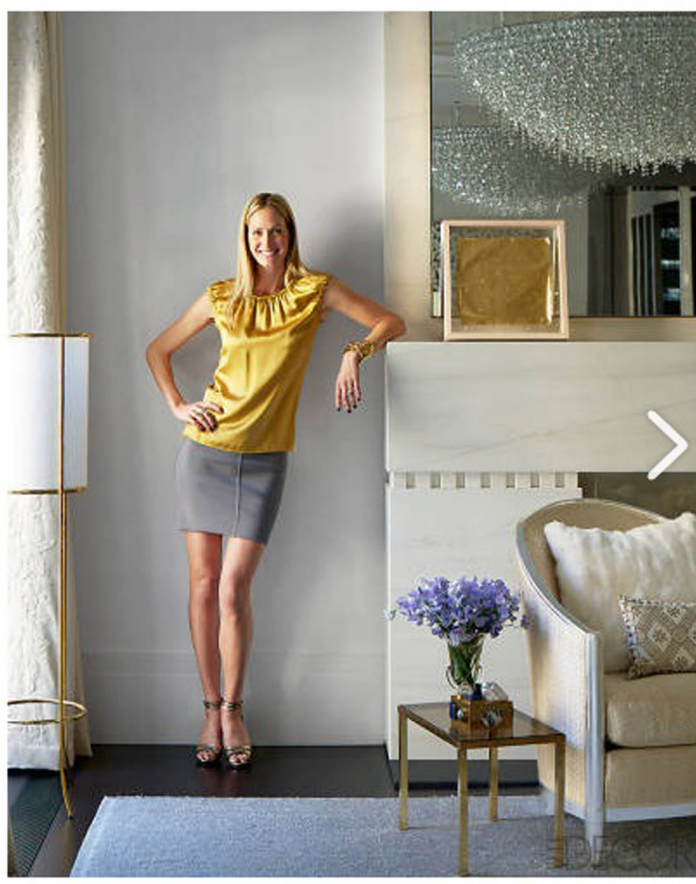
[VIEW LARGER](#) [VIEW THUMBNAILS](#)

Photography By Douglas Friedman/  
Produced By Cynthia Frank

### LIVING ROOM

It was a tale of two opposites from the start. She was a Swedish former model—blond and vertiginously tall—who had walked the runways from New York to Paris. He grew up on Long Island as part of a close-knit, observant Jewish family and was working in Manhattan for the family's real estate firm. "We didn't have much in common," Christine Mack says. "Richard came from a stable upbringing, went to business and law school, and had always done the right thing—until he met me. I was raised by a single mother and left home to model in my teens. When we met I was a free spirit, traveling the world and going to art school."

In the living room, a painting by Ryan McGinness hangs above a custom-made banquette covered in a Pollack velvet; the cocktail table is by Willy Daro, the bronze chair is by Claude Lalanne, and the ceiling fixture is a custom design.



[VIEW LARGER](#) [VIEW THUMBNAILS](#)

Photography By Douglas Friedman/  
Produced By Cynthia Frank

### LIVING ROOM

Now married for 16 years, the Macks are proof that love (or is it compromise?) conquers all. "It all worked out," she says. "We have three wonderful boys." But they admit that their differences came back into play six years ago, when they were looking for a home for their young family. "I wanted to move to the suburbs and have a big backyard," Richard Mack says. "Not with me," Christine told her husband. "I'm staying in the city."

Christine Mack in her family's Manhattan townhouse, which was designed by James Aman, with architecture by Leroy Street Studio. Hair and makeup by Paul Podlucky.



[VIEW LARGER](#) [VIEW THUMBNAILS](#)

Photography By Douglas Friedman/  
Produced By Cynthia Frank

### LIVING ROOM

That prompted their search for the holy grail of urban family living: a centrally located city house with a big backyard. With his real estate background (his firm, Mack Real Estate Group, has more than \$70 billion in investments and codeveloped the Time Warner Center), Richard discovered a property that certainly fit the bill: a rare triple townhouse in the Upper East Side's Carnegie Hill neighborhood, close to Fifth Avenue and Central Park. The backyard alone was 2,000 square feet—big enough for an outdoor kitchen and a basketball court for the boys. "We set out to create a suburban house in the city," says Christine, who designs fashion accessories with her friend Jennifer Creel through their brand Creel-Mack.

The living room's armchairs, covered in a brocade by Pollack, and sofa are custom made, the vintage brass cocktail table and table lamps are by Willy Daro, and the linen-and-metal rugs are by Holland & Sherry.



[VIEW LARGER](#) [VIEW THUMBNAILS](#)

Photography By Douglas Friedman/  
Produced By Cynthia Frank

### ENTRY

But, of course, it wasn't that simple. The property consisted of three rowhouses on East 94th Street that had been patched together over the course of several decades. Built in 1890, two of the homes had been combined in the 1930s into a 40-foot-wide, five-story house with a neoclassical facade. The Spence-Chapin adoption agency bought it in the 1950s and annexed the building next door, which it renovated into a seven-story office tower. "It was a rabbit's warren of small offices," Richard says. "To say the least, it was a mess."

A painting by Julian Opie and a sculpture by Sol LeWitt in the

entry; the Venetian plaster-clad staircase rises to the top floor, and the hanging light fixture is custom.