



*new* traditional  
**KATIE LYDON**

## *Simply Luminous*

Location, location, location. The mantra of real estate agents is also the unspoken foundation for good interior design.

Case in point: the Upper East Side apartment that designer Katie Lydon pulled together for longtime clients. The “bizarrely amazing” light dictated everything that followed, according to Lydon, a London transplant. “It was the first thing that hit me when I walked in the door.”

Lydon wanted every element to enhance the luminosity of the space, starting with

the ceiling, which she lacquered to a pale moonlight sheen. The rooms were left lightly furnished—a nod to the downtown loft the family had just vacated and nirvana for the family’s two energetic young boys.

The clients wanted a clean, spare look that discouraged clutter: modern and minimal but not cold and unwelcoming. Their art collection was the bridge. “Great art allows you to keep a room simple and easy without it feeling staid or bare,” Lydon shares.

By Abigail Stone Photography by Rebecca McAlpin



**Living room** Designer Katie Lydon helped unify the two halves of the space by using the same rug from Merida on both sides. A classic leather bench from Desiron is used as a coffee table in the light-filled space. The sofa is a custom design by Lydon. **Preceding pages** The built-in bookcases are original, but Lydon updated them by removing the molding, adding picture lights, and replacing shiny knobs on cupboard doors with oil-rubbed bronze.

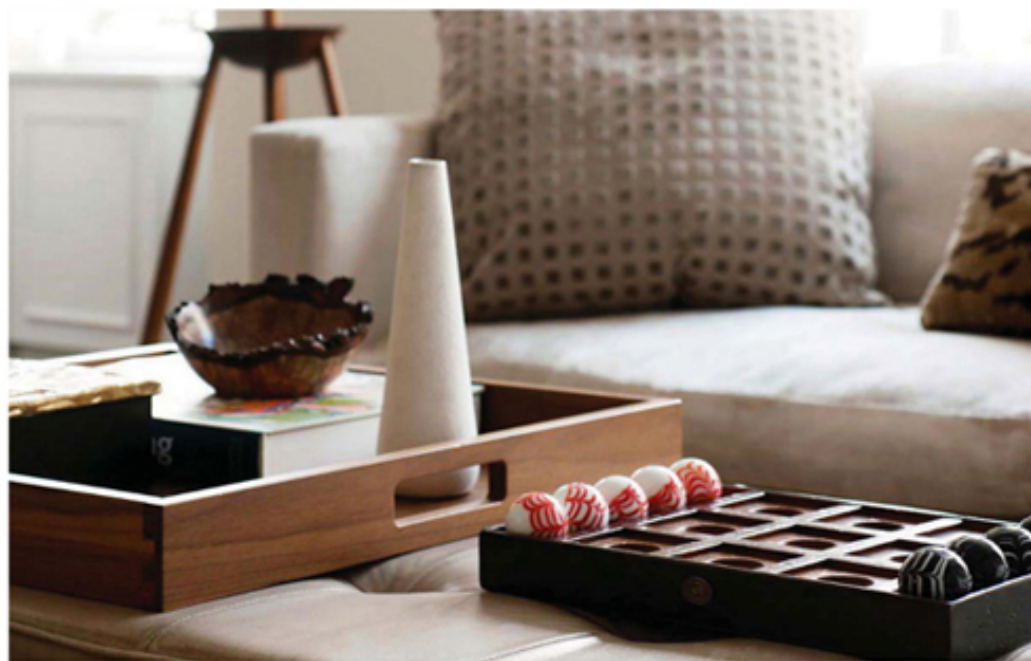
**Living room** Vintage finds—Lucite lamps with black paper shades and side tables with travertine tops—mix with chairs from George Smith and a sofa custom-designed by Lydon. Textural pillows on the sofas and gray Farrow & Ball paint on the back of bookshelves add depth to the space.



Modern meets traditional in the living room. Separated into two distinct seating areas—a more modern side often co-opted by the children and a more traditionally styled area with an elegance that begs for a *Mad Men*-style cocktail party—the room is unified by furniture with similar lines.

The children's rooms also demanded careful planning. The tight spaces begged for built-ins, which would be visually interesting while still keeping the inevitable collections of toys and treasures in check.

And while some pieces in the apartment were moved from the downtown loft and re-covered or refinished to fit into the new space, others were sourced upstate or from auction houses. Lydon loves to use vintage pieces, believing they add a layer of history and warmth. "I do believe it's the only way to make things feel unique," she says. Set against the soft grays, blues, greens, and creams of this apartment, they imbue a patina of richness, immediately making the space feel like home.



**T**h Katie Lydon



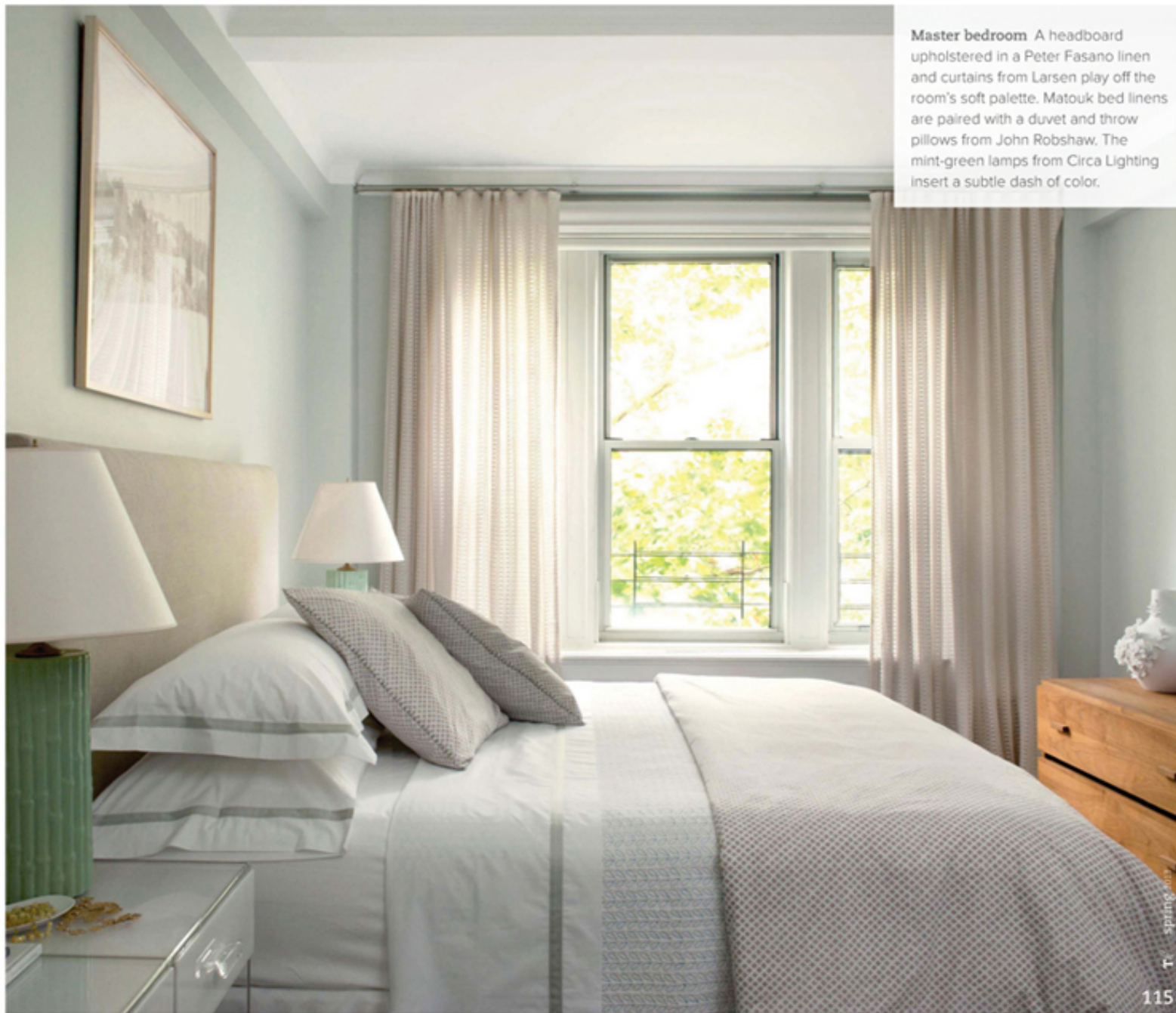
## Katie Lydon's tips of the trade

**Lacquer the ceiling** It will give the surface a wonderful reflective quality that can make a room feel completely rich and bright.

**Consider multiple seating areas** This is especially important in a big room because it allows areas of intimacy that create a more complex and grander whole.

**Artwork is important** It sets the tone for a room and adds gravitas and style. If the budget is tight, consider reframing a selection of smaller items to hang salon-style or in a graphic grid.

**Paint the backs of bookcases** in a rich shade. It's an easy way to give a space a quick update and inject a pop of color into a room.



**Master bedroom** A headboard upholstered in a Peter Fasano linen and curtains from Larsen play off the room's soft palette. Matouk bed linens are paired with a duvet and throw pillows from John Robshaw. The mint-green lamps from Circa Lighting insert a subtle dash of color.

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115