

DESIGN

Katie Leede Blends Rustic and Refined In a Globe-Trotting New York Apartment

Industrial chic gets a luxurious makeover.

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Desirable as an apartment in Manhattan's West Village might be, what's perhaps even *more* covetable is an apartment in the heart of the city that somehow manages to feel worlds away. And there are few New York designers who manage to capture a globe-trotting *joie de vivre* quite as well as Katie Leede.

Several years ago, the now-grown daughter of Leede's longtime clients came calling with a request to redo her recently purchased Village pied-à-terre. "I think that because she grew in a house that I helped decorate, she knew that I could translate what she wanted into something really livable and practical but still beautiful, and she trusted me to incorporate the special pieces like art, furniture, and even dishes that she had inherited from her family," explains Leede.



A petite, wall-mounted desk from BDDW creates a cozy office nook.



Leede had a metalworker fabricate a custom wine rack for her oenophile client, building it into the living room's brick wall. Leede layered collected suzanis and pillows made from antique textiles.

While charming, the space was in clear need of an overhaul. “It was an unusual apartment,” says Leede. “It was very dark, not a lot of natural light, and it was filled with these large, awkwardly placed beams.” At the same time, the rough-hewn wood and exposed brick created a coziness that the client loved, and which Leede was also reluctant to abandon.

Leede decided to embrace the old while giving it a new, brighter outlook, creating a marriage of industrial, airy and eclectic. First, she replaced existing floors with wire, rustic wood planks, and stained the wood beams a warmer hue. In the living room, the brick fireplace wall was painted white. To balance out the window on one side of the hearth, Leede installed a custom wood wine rack, surrounding it with metal trim to match the hardware on the beams and lining it with a large mirrored panel so that “it almost becomes like another window,” she explains.



The kitchen received a facelift to give it a lighter, airier feel. “It has a real California vibe to it,” says Leede. Pendant light by Urban Electric. A James Brooks painting hangs in the center of the room. MANUEL RODRIGUEZ OF MANUFOTO

In the adjacent dining nook, Leede employed more visual trickery. “We needed that room to pick up as much light from the window as possible because it was so small and dark,” says Leede, who lined its three walls with a metallic silver paper and hung a mirror next to the space’s sole window, which she covered in a sheer Roman shade. Likewise, a quartet of mirrored closet doors greets visitors when they arrive in the front hall; yet another massive mirror hangs behind the sofa.

A few cosmetic changes in the kitchen—replacing the upper cabinet fronts, installing a white marble countertop, retiling the backsplash with simple glazed Moroccan terracotta—gives the space a “laid-back, California vibe,” a callback to the client’s West Coast roots. Black metal counter stools and dark bronze accents on the pendant lights add an industrial counterpoint to the collection of creamware china, originally the client’s mother’s, that fills the shelves.



Mirrored closet doors brighten the entry hall.



A sheepskin-covered banquette and velvet-upholstered chairs by Soane make the dining nook extra plush. Chandelier, Lindsey Adelman.

Yet another intruding vertical beam splits the bedroom in half; instead of removing it, Leede decided to work around it, using it to visually separate the room into a sleeping area and a sitting area. The towering four-poster bed, from Sri Lanka, enhances the scale of the space, while swing-arm wall lights negate the need for table lamps on the petite tables that flank it. Next to the bed, closet doors are decorated with a silver-backed mural for even more light-reflective quality.



A four-poster Anglo-Indian bed, through Charles Jacobson in Los Angeles, commands the primary bedroom. MANUEL RODRIGUEZ OF MANUFOTO

While metallic accents abound, nearly every piece of upholstered furniture is covered in a touchably soft material—sheepskin, velvet, well-worn leather—and strewn with antique suzanis and cushions sourced by Leede during her own travels. High-pile rugs offer similar plushness underfoot. In the study-slash-den, Leede covered the walls in a striped fabric from her own textile line. “I love using paper-backed textiles on walls instead of regular wallpaper because it just adds that extra layer of texture,” she notes. “The stripe makes the room feel almost tented.”



Paper-backed Jaipur stripe, from Leede's own collection, envelops the study. MANUEL RODRIGUEZ OF MANUFOTO

Even the apartment's compact outdoor space has a jewel box sensibility, made more so by a luxe Indonesian daybed, a Cambodian drum table and a variety of vintage lanterns, both hanging and stationary. "It's a tiny little terrace, but it really takes you to a far-away place!" says Leede. "It's a romantic moment tucked into the city."



Slim Munder Skiles chairs, vintage lanterns and colorful Christopher Farr fabric extend the apartment's globetrotting feel onto the terrace. MANUEL RODRIGUEZ OF MANUFOTO

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