



Joseph Stabilito Designs

INTEGRATING AN ARTISTIC VISION WITH CLIENT DEMANDS

by Ben Corbett

“Automatically when I walk into a space, ideas in my head start to go together, and right away I see visions of different things I would do,” Joseph Stabilito says. “But I don’t try to impose my vision. I always want to hear the client’s input. It’s a back-and-forth process—an integration. I’m not living there; they are, and it has to work for them.”

With one foot planted in interior design and the other in fine arts, Stabilito has spent the past thirty years cultivating an eye for detail and a reputation for excellence. Since going independent five years ago, he has grown his firm—Joseph Stabilito Designs—into a force to be reckoned with on the New York scene. Infusing a client’s desires with his own creative prowess, Stabilito’s work sings

with authenticity and originality, and he attributes much of his success as a designer to his longtime career as an abstract painter.

“They’re equally important to me” he says of design and making art. “They’re intertwined. I’m constantly informing one with the other—meaning my interiors are informed by my painting and vice versa. Color is a big part of it. I have a very good sense of color because of my painting background.”

Color was everything at the condo project on Manhattan’s Upper West Side, and he achieved a range of counterpoints throughout this two-bedroom apartment by selecting diverse fabrics and materials. For instance, the cherry bar with

COZY-CHIC NYC APARTMENT

Open on one side to the kitchen and dining area and on the other side to an impressive view of the Hudson River with Manhattan in the distance, this living area features a chic-yet-cozy design. The four chairs are from Donghia (donghia.com) and are upholstered in whiskey-colored mohair from Pollack Associates (pollackassociates.com). Both the entertainment unit against the back wall and the ottoman (covered in natural cowhide) were custom designed by Joseph Stabilito. The three tiers in the glass cocktail table made by Maurice Villency (mauricevillency.com), can swivel around.

glass shelves offsets the social area with its large central table surrounded by custom-made mohair chairs. The client, a Connecticut resident, bought the condo as a place to stay and entertain guests during city stopovers.

“On this project, everything was high-end,” Stabilito says. “They wanted something fresh and con-

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temporary, very different from their traditional home. It was very cohesive. We went with this cognac-whiskey color that I liked. My approach was to give them a high sense of luxury and comfort. It was very successful.”

On another recently completed project—a farmhouse renovation and addition in rural Pennsylvania—the client bought the property with the idea of creating a family retreat. The challenge for Stabilito was to come up with a contemporary design that retained the home’s traditional aesthetic.

“The client and I had many, many discussions,” Stabilito says. “He wanted to keep the spirit of the original house intact, and he was very careful about scale. He didn’t want to wind up with an oversized, overinflated mansion that would have been out of character with the area, but he definitely wanted more space.”

Highlights of the project include three outbuildings—a poolside spa, potting shed, and garage—all connected by an underground hallway system for convenience during bad weather. Especially noteworthy is the stone fireplace, which serves as the centerpiece of the first level.

“It’s a two-sided fireplace using the same stone as the original,” Stabilito says. “One side faces the entry, and if you look through the hearth, you can actually see the living room. The client wanted it to look modern and yet respect the rustic quality of the original house—such as the stone wall and the rough floor that leads from the entrance going into the kitchen. But it definitely had to breathe and feel contemporary.”

As for the types of woods used in the project: “There was no theme,” Stabilito says. “I used lots of different woods. I don’t choose any one wood throughout for any project, and sometimes, instead of wood, I’ll use metals and glass. I like to mix and match a bit, and I think it’s very important because your eye settles on fabrics and materials in different ways. They pick up light in different ways, so I like to have a combination of things.” ■

