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VIEW POINT

WITH ITS PARTY-READY TERRACES
AND SWEEPING VISTAS
OF THE MANHATTAN SKYLINE, GEORGETTE FARKAS'S
PENTHOUSE IS THE PERFECT PERCH

*Text by Gregory Cerio · Photography by William Waldron
Styled by Carlos Mota*

Spending time with Georgette Farkas you get the feeling she is a New Yorker only by accident of birth. Communications director and all-around problem solver for the celebrated chef/restaurateur (and ELLE DECOR columnist) Daniel Boulud, Farkas seems more of a Parisian at heart, effortlessly elegant and comfortable in her own skin. The terraced penthouse she shares with her British husband, Peter Trapp, an investment-fund manager, is a perfect manifestation of these old-world qualities, perhaps because she decorated it herself. "I like that it has the feeling of being out of another time and place—a place where the pace of life is slower

and more gracious and graceful," says Farkas, who lived with her family in the South of France as a child and worked for a number of hotels and restaurants in Paris for several years in her 20s. "The apartment definitely doesn't say 'New York in 2008'."

Not that the one-bedroom on the Upper East Side said "Paris, Right Bank" when she purchased it. The previous owners had modernist taste, so the rooms were devoid of decorative detailing. Farkas had craftsmen install moldings—the most striking being the egg-and-dart and floral-pattern trims lining the exposed beams in every room. A 19th-century rococo fireplace mantel found at





Facing page: Georgette Farkas on the terrace of her Upper East Side penthouse, which was landscaped by Olivier Gluoni of L'Olivier. This page: In the living room, a crystal chandelier from Elliott Galleries; heirloom Aubusson carpet, ottoman by George Smith, bergères from Andrew Martin, and a painting by Maximilien Luce; the 19th-century French mantel was purchased at Christie's, the ceiling treatment was done by trompe l'oeil painter Patrick Bancel, and the wall color is Benjamin Moore's Santorini Blue. See Resources.



Christie's was installed, as were library shelves featuring cupboards with bronze chicken-wire fronts. As a final flourish, French artisan Patrick Bancel painstakingly hand-colored and gilded the living room crown moldings. "If business is good, I'll get him to do the bedroom next," Farkas says with a laugh.

After completing this grand-yet-relaxed envelope, Farkas set about furnishing it with a diverse mix of European pieces that were, she jokes, largely "begged, borrowed, and salvaged." She certainly had the connections to dip into top-notch troves: Her paternal grandfather founded the Alexander's department-store chain, one of the lost, lamented shopping emporia of old New York. A grandmother provided the landscape by French Neo-Impressionist Maximilien Luce hovering over the mantelpiece. Her mother, meanwhile, gave her the reproduction Boule desk that commands one corner of the living room as well as the seaside painting by Giovanni Meltemi that hangs above the custom-made Knole sofa.

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A Blue Star range, Best hood, and GE Monogram microwave; the wall color is Pink Mix by Benjamin Moore. Facing page, clockwise from top left: A painting by Giovanni Meltemi hangs above the living room's Knole sofa. In the dining room, Hepplewhite-style chairs surround an antique English table; the bust and English mirror are also antiques. Farkas and her husband, Peter Trapp, share a drink with friends on the largest of the three terraces amid custom-made fiberglass planters by Duracraft. See Resources.



Fabrics and window treatments add notes of vivacity to the calm blue palette of the bedroom and living room. The bed is surmounted by a dramatically tall baldachin made of French damask; bergères and fauteuils in the living room are upholstered in hot pink and leopard prints, respectively; and luxuriant satin swags surround the casement windows and doors. "I once had a boyfriend in Paris—very haute, very *seizième arrondissement*—and his family home had curtains like these," Farkas says. "I always wanted to have something similar."

But it was her marriage to Trapp that contributed to the penthouse's crowning glories: two large terraces. One, a narrowish 350-square-foot south-facing aerie that runs the width of the apartment; the other an L-shaped 750-square-foot space that looks out to the north and west. (There is a third, postage-stamp-size terrace outside the dining room that holds two trees in planters.) As Farkas explains, she and Trapp attempted to discourage friends and relations from sending them gifts. However, when the tide of largesse could not be stemmed, they hit upon the practical idea of a horticultural wedding registry. Olivier Giugni of L'Olivier—whose two New York floral ateliers furnish the

arrangements for Boulud's restaurants—served as adviser. Together they drew up a list of plants that were hardy enough for windy and gritty rooftop conditions, yet attractive enough to achieve the desired aesthetic effect. "We wanted to create the same atmosphere outside as inside the apartment," Giugni explains. "Nothing too perfect; just lovely and feminine, with an antique air. The registry was a fantastic way to go about it. Now people visit and say, 'There's my tree!'"

Plants as diverse as hydrangeas, roses, lavender, delphinium, and a Japanese red maple dot the terraces, while wisteria and clematis climb the exposed-brick walls. Giugni created a visual pun by installing a cypress and a conical trellis to mimic the shape of a nearby church steeple. Oversize romantically rusted urns share space with flowering fiberglass planters and such furnishings as a glass-top table that was made from a salvaged iron gate and a brass Empire-style single bed that Farkas has kept since childhood.

"We have a jewel box of a perch above the city here," she says. "To be able to go out and cut fresh roses for the table—I can't describe how wonderful that is. It's all ideal." ■





A baldachin crowns the bed, and the mohair throw is from Susan Chalom. Facing page: Bronze-and-crystal sconces and 19th-century English chairs flank a reproduction Portuguese desk in the foyer, and the photograph is by Christopher Beane. See Resources.