

► This utterly grand Borough Park, Brooklyn, home, designed by French-born, New York-based architect designer Robert Couturier, is “an 1880s version of a Louis XVI house.” Couturier took the homeowners to Paris in 2010. What resulted: “The pale blue salon, with its magnificent Savonnerie hand-knotted carpet, a vintage Lalique glass coffee table, and beautifully embroidered silk curtains, is now a showcase for beautiful pieces, including many important Louis XVI antiques: gilded chairs, commode, desk and center table. No luxurious detail is lacking — even the mantel has gilt-bronze decoration, as do the Rococo sconces and lyre-shaped firedogs.”



Jacques Péfition



Design expert Wendy Moonan (inset) takes readers inside gorgeous city apartments in her new coffee table book, “New York Splendor” (top).

Rooms to remember

Just-released book “New York Splendor” showcases lavish local lairs

By HANA R. ALBERTS

WHEN Wendy Moonan was growing up in Westport, Conn., during the 1960s, no one she knew hired a decorator. It was considered *déclassé*, Moonan says, to hire a professional when the general wisdom was that “people with taste should be able to furnish and design their own interiors. Period.”

How times have changed, jokes Moonan, whose new book, “New York Splendor: The City’s Most Memorable Rooms,” debuted this month. The tome — a hefty volume with 200 glossy photos — is “a compendium of my favorite private residential rooms in New York City.” She entered countless stunning homes while holding a variety of positions in the design world: At Home editor at Town & Country; writer for House & Garden and Architectural Digest. “My main criterion was that each project have the ‘wow’ factor — rooms that elicited, from me, gasps of pleasure and admiration,” Moonan says.

The book’s cover is one such space: Joanna de Palma helped a couple furnish an apartment in a late 1800s building on Central Park West with period-appropriate furniture, lighting and art, sourcing green, blue and gold decor inspired by a teal rug circa 1900. “I often think of Manhattan apartments



Michelle Arnaud

and townhouses as secret gardens, hidden from view by building facades behind which flower personal expressions of great taste and sophistication,” architect Robert A.M. Stern writes in the foreword. “Wendy Moonan opens the doors to these private ‘gardens.’”

◀ Until 2014, Adolfo F. Sardina — the Cuban-born interior designer to the likes of Jackie O and socialites like C.Z. Guest and Babe Paley — had an ornate duplex in a Fifth Avenue mansion. He and longtime companion Edward C. Perry decorated it with sumptuous style, dripping with antiques, carpets and portraits by Old Masters. “Adolfo once commented that he preferred portraits over all other art: ‘I can talk to them,’ he said,” Moonan writes. “The cozy foyer (left) was strictly organized, with portraits and pairs (stone statues of Greek water carriers, wooden urns, antique sconces and rugs).” Two 17th-century paintings hung on the back of the red front door.



Durstin Saylor

▲ In 1996, the late corporate lawyer and philanthropist Donald Oresman tapped Fairfax and Sammons Architects to update his pied-à-terre at 222 Central Park South. He requested storage for his massive book collection, as well as adequate display space for 1,800 artworks all depicting people reading. The 1905-built co-op itself, called Gainsborough Studios, had housed high-ceilinged artists’ workshops. Oresman asked Richard Sammons for “a Renaissance-style library” with perches for birdwatching over the park. Sammons complied, installing maple bookcases on two levels under a coffered ceiling and graceful staircases.