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ELLE DECOR Style

Trusting your interior designer can take a leap of faith, but it's an investment that usually pays off. In New York, writer **Shyama Patel** turns to **Miles Redd** for help energizing a Gramercy Park duplex, while uptown, a young family taps **Wayne Nathan and Carol Egan** to freshen a townhouse. Jewelry designer **Fruzsina Keehn's** choice to make over her Knightsbridge flat is a friend, **Alex Papachristidis**. Designers themselves are another story. In Pasadena **Matthew White** converts a 19th-century solarium into a dramatic loft, Manhattan's **Tony Fornabaio** zaps his apartment with color, and London furniture guru **Julian Chichester** embraces eclecticism. For an investment of another variety, check out our selection of chandeliers and pendant lights. They're dazzling.

PERFECTLY COMPOSED

WHEN JEWELRY DESIGNER
FRUZZSINA KEEHN TURNED TO ALEX PAPACHRISTIDIS
FOR HELP WITH HER LONDON FLAT, THE
COLLABORATION YIELDED A WINNING COMBINATION OF
SOPHISTICATION AND BRIO

TEXT BY IAN PHILLIPS
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When it comes to things that look good in the home, jewelry designer Fruzsina Keehn is a woman who knows her mind. In the realm of fabrics and furnishings, she adores Fortuny, silk velvet, satin, and vintage Baguès and Jansen pieces. What she detests include pattern, cheap reproductions, wool carpets, and matching upholstery. "I find all that uncreative," sniffs Keehn.

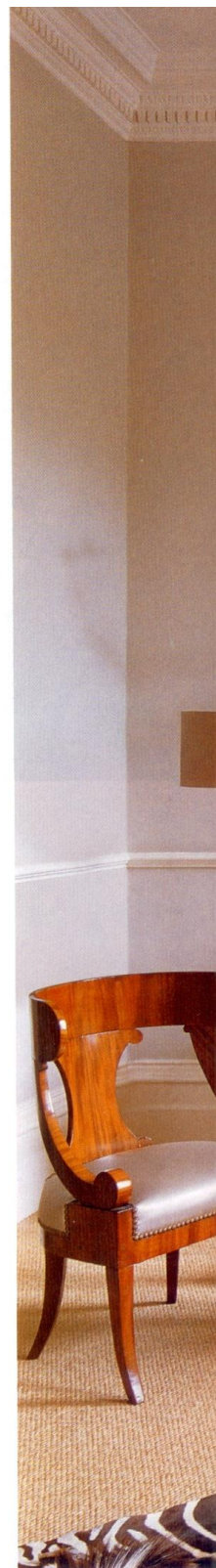
Such intransigence is exactly what got the London-based Keehn into jewelry design in the first place. She ventured into the business eight years ago because she couldn't find any baubles she liked enough to buy for herself. Today, she prefers her pieces large though not gaudy, supersophisticated, and more about the stones than the metal. Her influences include David Webb, Audrey Hepburn, and Liz Taylor. If demand is a measure, her taste must be excellent, because her handiwork is a fixture in society hangouts like Aspen, Gstaad, and Sardinia. And her private sales—in London, at the home of her design partner Tracey Hejailan, and in San Francisco, hosted by Ann Getty—are discreet and exclusive affairs.

Normally, a self-assured tastemaker of this order would be able to tackle decorating a new apartment

with ease. But when Fruzsina (it's an ancient Hungarian name) moved into her Knightsbridge flat, she felt she needed the help of a friend, the New York-based interior designer Alex Papachristidis. He's a huge fan of hers—"Fruz is divine!" he likes to proclaim—and the two immediately agreed upon what the overall spirit of the place should be. "We wanted the apartment to feel clean, but interesting," says Papachristidis, with a tightly edited selection of what he calls "fine pieces."

Their canvas was a well-laid-out two-bedroom flat with high ceilings and lots of light, albeit with too many reminders of a former tenant, from wallpaper and swagged window treatments to dated chandeliers. "It was terrible," says Keehn. They started with the basics, replacing the curtains, light fixtures, and carpeting. Then, to complete the picture, they shopped London, Paris, and the antiques mecca of Hudson, New York. The two discussed every detail and regularly sent fabric samples back and forth across the Atlantic. Certain elements, however, became the source of spirited negotiations.

"I told Alex that I needed pale gray," recalls Keehn. "He said, 'Never, never in London. It's a depressing





In the Knightsbridge apartment of jewelry designer Fruzina Keehn, which is decorated in collaboration with Alexander Pachristidis, a sofa adapted from a 19th-century Jean-Charles Moreux design and upholstered in a Brunswick & Fils silk velvet is flanked by a pair of 19th-century Russian Empire-style chairs and antique Italian gilt-wood sconces. The vintage nude studies were found in a Vermont antiques shop, the bronze gueridon from Hinson & Co., and the standing lamp and bronze-and-lacquer cocktail table are vintage Bagues. See Resources.



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IN PAPACHRISTIDIS'S
OPINION, A
QUIRKY GUEST ROOM SUMS
UP KEEHN'S LIVELY
PERSONALITY.
"SHE'S A HOOT AND A
HALF, WITH AN INCREDIBLE
ZEST FOR LIFE,"
HE SAYS

finding furniture, lighting, and accessories that met Keehn's exacting standards. The overall feel is classic and soigné, with the gray-and-white color scheme punctuated by classic accents, such as marble statuary and gold frames. In the living room are a pair of Russian chairs, elaborate 19th-century Italian sconces, and a set of vintage nude studies unearthed in an antiques store in Stowe, Vermont. In the entrance hall, 18th-century Swedish chairs are lined up against a wall next to a 1960s chrome-and-glass Italian table. The antique secretary and clock in her office were inherited from her father.

The mood changes somewhat in the guest bedroom—one of the few spaces in the home that isn't painted gray—where, Papachristidis says, "we got hipper and funkier." Here, the walls are sheathed in a rich chocolate linen, the curtains are of a purple-and-green geometric print, and two silk-velvet-upholstered chairs from an Italian train flank a Jansen desk. There are also a few offbeat touches, like dangling tassels that serve as drawer pulls and two Paul Evans lamps with sculptural cast-bronze bases and aubergine shades.

In Papachristidis's opinion, this look suits Keehn's lively personality much better than pale gray. "She's a hoot and a half," he says. "She has an incredible zest for life. She's not one of those incredibly thin women who don't eat." Indeed, Keehn confirms that she loves meat, sauces, and French and Italian food, not to mention entertaining with flair. "There are cocktails before dinner often and big parties not so often," she says. "But when I do them, you don't get out of bed for two days!" ■

