



HOME TREND

colours *of* calm

Cream, caramel and palest blue – interior design's taken a soothing turn with the emergence of the New Neutrals. In this New York apartment, subtle, muted shades are used to stunning effect

Words **KARA O'REILLY** Photography **GIORGIO POSSENTI**

A stunning example of the interior design world's growing affection for pale but interesting colours – see our investigation into the New Neutrals trend on p21 – this home's soothing palette was Brazilian-born interior architect Lenka Soares's way of creating a cocoon of calm in the centre of New York. After all, life in any big city can involve seemingly constant bustle, a babble of appointments, neon lights and noise. Even on the grand streets of the Upper East Side, opposite the hallowed Metropolitan Museum of Art, where this late-19th-century, seven-storey, seven-bedroom townhouse is located, there's a need for quiet, contemplative design. 'My vision for the project was to keep it sophisticated and incorporate key pieces from the family's art collection,' says Lenka. 'The owners wanted to have a spacious and modern home that included a mix of mid-century furniture, as well as pieces from Italian and Brazilian designers.' The aim was to give the house a light and airy feel, allowing the key pieces of furniture to sing out against the sensuously soft backdrop of browns, blues and creams. It's the modern way of using muted tones – they have texture and depth, but also a tranquil quality that is completely current. ►



Living room The blue ceramic artwork is by Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão. For a sofa similar to this bespoke one by Bassam Fellows, try the 'Kennedee' by Jean-Marie Maussaud for Poltrona Frau. The glass coffee table from Suite NY is paired with a vintage table from Maison Gerard **Stockist details on p167** ▶



TACTILE SURFACES

While the colours used throughout this tranquil home are low-key, Lenka has injected an extra feeling of warmth through her choice of materials, mixing up fabrics, textures and finishes. 'I love the cossetting feel of the living room, with its leather sofa and velvet chair, and the dining space, where I have covered an entire wall in faux leather and recovered mid-century chairs in gorgeous suede.'

TIMELESS ELEGANCE

Throughout this home, vintage pieces sourced from Europe are mixed with new commissions from American companies and Brazilian designers, although Lenka reupholstered many of her vintage finds 'to bring a contemporary feeling'. It's one of her signature interior design tricks. 'I love to mix the pieces already in the client's house with new ones. I totally believe that the energy in a space comes from memories, from travels, from pieces and details purchased throughout life... it is so important that a home doesn't look like a catalogue, without any soul.'

EFFORTLESS FLOW

The owners of this house love to entertain, so wanted a personal sanctuary that was also welcoming for guests. 'The layout is perfect for this, with all of the social spaces on the first floor,' says Lenka. Tonally, each room flows gracefully into the next - from pale cream to caramel - giving the home a seamless feel. 'The house also encourages the owners' three children to appreciate art and beauty,' adds Lenka. An abode that's enlightening and relaxing - we can all admire that.



Living room The vintage armchair was sourced from LA dealer Den Møbler and reupholstered – try The Modern Warehouse. The pendant light is a piece by Apparatus, available at SCP **Hallway** This display case was designed by Lenka Soares **Stockist details on p167** ▶

TREND IN DETAIL
NEW NEUTRALS

Interior designer Lenka Soares tells us how to work this calming palette

Neutral and light colours make a space appear bigger, and you won't get bored of them as easily as you might brighter shades. Plus, you can add art and decorative objects that will provide interest, jolting the scheme just enough without feeling jarring.

Think tonal shades – the owners of this house would never have a red pillow, for example, they love quiet colours. In living rooms, I always like to cover one of the chairs in a different colour. In this project, the sofa was an off-white leather, so we went with a blue velvet for the armchair.


Texture is the key to keeping a pale scheme interesting. I usually opt for textiles with a matt finish, rarely silks or shiny fabrics. In this home, I chose a neutral linens for the curtains, plus cotton and soft fabrics for the sofas and pillows. The addition of a leather chair or wall panel, and suede detailing on furniture, adds more texture.

This home's sensuously soft, neutral backdrop of browns and creams allows the owners' art and furniture to sing



Dining room The table is from Hudson Furniture – for similar, try Matthew Hilton for Case – and the chairs are vintage, reupholstered in suede. A bespoke console hangs on the faux-leather wall panel. The large artwork is by Marco Maggi, while the smaller one is by Abraham Palatnik **Stockist details on p167** ▶



Bathroom All of the fixtures and fittings in this marble-clad room are by Kohler. For marble, try Lapidica or Stone Age **Bedroom** The Flou bed – available at Aram Store – is finished with a wide custom-made headboard covered in fabric by Knoll. The wall light is by Apparatus, available at SCP **Stockist details on p167** 

Using a palette of soothing colours helps to transform this home into a cocoon of calm in central New York

