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## Everything Old is New Again

By Hunter Drohojowska-Philp  
April 15, 2009 | 1:40 a.m.

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*New New York Interiors*  
edited by Angelika Taschen,  
text by Paul Webster  
Taschen, December 2008,  
\$39.99



More than a decade has passed since German editor Angelika Taschen produced her first large volume on New York interiors, and her sequel, *New New York Interiors*, shows what fun an author can have keeping up with the times. In the preface, Taschen writes that the events of 9/11 led the city to be "much less focused on money and the making of it"—perhaps a slightly premature prediction given the recent Wall Street meltdown—and she focuses not on those who made the most money but those who made the most of their living conditions. As a result, *New New York Interiors* is one of the liveliest picture books around. With 39 featured residences, it's a lesson that creativity trumps cash almost every time.

An art historian by training, Taschen appreciates the bohemian and doesn't mind a dose of DIY. Her notion of New York is an inventive mélange where Baby Jane Holzer's Renaissance-revival townhouse full of Warhol paintings is just a few pages away from the Chelsea Hotel apartment of hairdresser Gerald DeCock, who handpainted his jewel-tone walls and furniture and hung curtains of plastic Mardi Gras beads.

The book offers the voyeuristic thrill of peering into a life usually art-directed out of most design books. Interiors include the personal clutter of their invariably fascinating residents. In the Staten Island home of adult film superstar Vanessa Del Rio, leopard-print furniture and carpets serve as backdrops for her stiletto collection, her curling iron, even her garter belt. In the Harlem townhouse of Cary Leibowitz, director of contemporary editions at Phillips de Pury, an ecstatic collection of contemporary art is hung on walls covered in wildly patterned papers, all of it competing for attention with knickknacks like his Campbell's soup trashcans.

Predictably, some of the most extraordinary residences belong to artists. If Julian Schnabel weren't such a fantastic painter and film director, he could be a decorator. His Palazzo Chupi may annoy downtown purists, but the velvet and gilt furniture, pneumatic fireplace mantel, and Venetian colors on the walls—not to

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mention his better paintings and those of friends—exude exuberance. In his eight-room apartment in the Chelsea Hotel, Philip Taaffe had designer Ricky Clifton help him integrate 19th-century American furniture with fabrics as dedicated to pattern as Taaffe's seductive abstract paintings.

The book is not all Dionysian delights—many interiors exemplify restraint. Architect Lee Mindel, of Shelton, Mindel & Associates, designed the clean-swept luxury loft in a Richard Meier tower that claims the cover of the book, as well as a penthouse in the Flatiron district with a curving steel stair that winds to a rooftop solarium.

Excellent photographs by François Halard, Pieter Estersohn, Jason Schmidt and others make the case while Paul Webster's concise, witty text strikes exactly the right tone. If this is the sort of New York we get to see in the current economic downturn, things are looking up.

*This article was featured in the [Spring 2009 Home Observer](#).*

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