How an NYC Family of 6 Finds Respite (and Space!) in Their Three-Bedroom Apartment

Adding a closet for scooters and strollers was key.

Hooks, 1stdibs; Valance fabric, Jim Thompson; Hardware, Baldwin.

Jenny Vorhoff's family didn't grow overnight, but when the interior designer walked into her New York City apartment to find books and scooters scattered about, it sure looked like it. When the founder of Studio Riga and her husband, Robbert, bought the loftlike space eight-and-a-half years ago, it was just them and their two eldest daughters, Evelyn (now 11) and Marian (now 9). "With young kids, you want to keep eyes on everybody at all times, so the open floor plan was fantastic," recalls Jenny, noting how when they walked off the elevator they'd immediately be standing in the living room. Then came Virginia (now 7) and Julian (3), making their crew a total of six. "Suddenly we were craving more space for everyone to be on their own," she explains.

Over the course of a yearlong renovation, architect Anik Pearson's main tasks were to reorient the kitchen so it faced the living room, build a second bathroom, and expand Julian and Virginia's shared bedroom. The biggest change from a functionality standpoint, though, was adding the oak-paneled foyer that's now got a closet where they can hide backpacks and winter boots from view (Jenny thinks of it as a city version of a garage-slash-mudroom). Right off of the new entry is a private reading nook with a window bench. "It's so warm and inviting; you immediately de-stress from the streets of New York," she says.

Pillows, Aero; Seat cushion fabric, Muriel Brandolini.

White lamp by John Dickinson, Sutherland Furniture; Sofa, Montauk Sofa; Kitchen lighting: Urban Electric Co.; Black lamp, Logan Killen; Pair of artwork, Amanda Stone Talley.

No room, corner, or piece of furniture is off-limits to the four Vorhoff kids. In fact the designer loves the look of their antique side tables with noticeable water rings and their leather sofa that's been worn down from bingeing episodes of *Parenthood* on the giant projector screen that rolls down over the fireplace.

Chapo Chairs, Galerie Novella; Sconces, Invisible Collection; Shades fabric, Fermoie; Leather wall panels, Edelman.

Art, Margaret Evangeline; Pillows on sofa, Aero; Throw, Stella Tribeca.

"They're not allowed to watch the show without us, but it's been fun because some rather advanced topics come up, and we get the opportunity to talk about them in real time," says Jenny. Handwoven rugs and chairs covered in natural fibers like cotton and wool top her list of family-friendly favorites. "A relaxed attitude is how we roll," she adds.

Chair fabric, Zak & Fox; Lamp, Circa Lighting; Wallpaper, Mural Sources.

Subtle nods to their current Manhattan life can be spotted in the kids' bathroom wallpaper (peep the images of pigeons, taxis, and Grand Central Terminal), but in the rooms that Jenny and Robbert share, she channeled their hometown of New Orleans (the couple's predominantly green bedroom is meant to feel like a garden within a concrete jungle). "We love the city, but we prefer nature," says Jenny.

Pendant and wallpaper, Soane; Lampshade, Perrotine; Drapery fabric, Ian Mankin; Bedding, Stella Tribeca; Shades, Hartman & Forbes.

On a similar note, the office is swathed in a fanciful mural showing scenes along the Mississippi River. The special detail distracts from the fact that the space is only two-windows wide. The idea to minimize the area's footprint was Robbert's (it freed up room in Virginia and Julian's adjacent bedroom to carve out a built-in desk and yet another homework-slash-reading corner). The bonus: In the process of making the bedroom larger, they uncovered an old structural beam, which Pearson worked seamlessly into the design by tacking on a storage unit full of drawers.

Rug, Stark; Bed fabric, Quadrille; Bedding, One Kings Lane, Stella Tribeca; Bedskirt, Ballard Designs; Crib, New Traditionalists; Shades, The Shade Store.

"By the time we placed beds in there, there was nowhere to put freestanding chests," explains Pearson of landing on the solution. The wide top also came in handy when Julian was still a baby (Jenny treated it as a changing station), but these days the siblings pretend it's a grocery store checkout counter.

Wallpaper, Pierre Frey; Towels, Stella Tribeca; Shower tiles, Dal Tile; Floor tiles: Mosaic House NY; Fixtures, Rohl.

Wallpaper, C&C Milano; Paint, Benjamin Moore; Drapery upper bunk: Tulu Textiles; Drapery lower bunk, Ferrick Mason; Bedding, Stella Tribeca; Rug, Stark Carpet; Ladder, Putnam Rolling Ladder.

While all her kids have learned the art of sharing, Jenny still wanted them to have their own places (like workstations) and objects, from stuffed animals to toys. "They're not the type to ever wear matching clothes," the designer says with a laugh. After her two eldest flipped a coin to determine who got the top bunk (Evelyn claims it was the first toss she's ever lost, but says she's happy closer to the ground now anyway), Jenny outfitted their individual sleeping nooks with different patterned curtains that speak to their personalities and interior shelves where they can each display their knicknacks overhead.

Chair, One Kings Lane; Striped fabric, Ian Mankin; Lamp, Pottery Barn Kids; Lampshade, Fermoie.

Instead of buying baskets that tend to soak up precious play space, Pearson incorporated a deep drawer underneath the bottom bunk to house all the girls' American Girl Dolls and Barbies. Not pictured: the Dreamhouse Marian got last year for her birthday that she redecorated entirely with Jenny's fabric samples. "We hot-glued beanbag chairs and re-covered the tiny plastic furniture," says the designer with a laugh. "They joke that they want to work with me, but only time will tell."

Photography by Annie Schlechter

Wall tile, Dal Tile; Floor tile, Mosaic House NY; Wallpaper: Temple Studio; Vanity, Pottery Barn Kids; Fixtures, Rohl.