



MAGAZINE

The New York City Townhouse Julianne Moore Calls Home

By shuffling the arrangement of rooms, Julianne Moore brings new life to her beloved New York City townhouse

Posted October 3, 2017

Text by Mayer Rus

Photography by François Dischinger and Alexi Lubomirski

The word normal doesn't get a lot of play in glossy shelter magazines. It has the slightly pejorative connotation of something ordinary—the antithesis of the magic and wonder that fabulous design is meant to inspire. Yet, when one enters the Manhattan home of actress Julianne Moore, the first impression is of surprising normality. Teenagers buzz about, doing whatever it is that teenagers do, and dogs bark affectionately for attention. The rooms possess the kind of engaging homeyness that emerges, seemingly without effort, in spaces where someone has paid close attention to proper scale, proportion, and period detail. There is no indoor lap pool, Turkish-style hammam, James Turrell skyspace, or any other conspicuously lavish signifier of luxury. It feels like a home—delightfully, unapologetically normal.

“For years I dreamed about living in a townhouse in the West Village,” says the Oscar-winning actress, who lights up the big screen this fall with a hat trick of high-profile films: Todd Haynes’s *Wonderstruck*, George Clooney’s *Suburbicon*, and Matthew Vaughn’s *Kingsman: The Golden Circle*. “The first time I walked into this one, I knew this was it—I fell in love,” Moore recalls. That was 15 years ago. At the time, the five-story house had been carved up into apartments, but the original front-and-back-parlor configuration was intact, as were the floors, shutters, fireplaces, and staircase. “There was enough character left that we could bring the house back to its Greek Revival roots without destroying the soul and texture of the building,” Moore says.



Bottega Veneta Black and Tan butterfly dress; Giovanni Rossi black heels; Chopard rings

Photo by Alexi Lubomirski

Before the renovation began, Moore married her longtime partner, writer/director Bart Freundlich, in the garden at the rear of the house. Both of their children—Cal, now 19 and a sophomore in college, and Liv, a 15-year-old high school student—were present for the low-key ceremony, effectively putting the family's stamp on the property even before the clan moved in. In fact, the renovation itself was something of a family affair, orchestrated by Bart's architect brother, Oliver Freundlich, and his then-partners Ben Bischoff and Brian Papa, in collaboration with Moore, a passionate design junkie.

The makeover lasted a year and a half, after which the actress stocked the house with an enticing array of decorative treasures that evidence a distinct predilection for organic forms, warm materials, and spruce midcentury lines: a George Nakashima cocktail table, lamps by Isamu Noguchi, a Florence Knoll credenza with rattan doors, and a host of unpedigreed but sympathetic vintage finds. "I like things that have real personality and authenticity," Moore says. "I hate a knockoff."

As months and years passed, the actress expanded her collections, refined the rooms they inhabit, and implemented an extensive redesign of her garden by Brian Sawyer of the AD100 firm Sawyer | Berson (AD, March 2012). But something was still not quite right with Moore's dream house. "We originally put

the kitchen downstairs, where it's supposed to be. That's where we always ended up, crammed on a love seat, watching television. We never gathered in the living room on the parlor floor," she recalls. And then the epiphany struck—why not move the living room downstairs, where it could serve as a casual, semi-cloistered family hangout, and bring the kitchen upstairs? "I cannot recommend more strongly putting your kitchen somewhere with lots of natural light. It changed everything. Now we use the whole house," Moore says.

As part of the latest spatial reorganization, Moore moved her office from the front parlor on the main floor, where foot traffic and street noise were frequent distractions, to a quieter room on an upper floor. She works at a Pierre Jeanneret desk, sitting in a Jeanneret chair, beneath a Paavo Tynell hanging light. The bookshelves beside the desk neatly encapsulate the Julianne Moore story: Family photographs mingle amicably with her Academy Award and a bevy of other professional laurels, alongside stacks of old decorating magazines and monographs on the work of her favorite designers.