

Fun House

EQUAL PARTS HILARITY AND HIGH DESIGN JOIN TOGETHER IN THIS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR LOWER MANHATTAN PENTHOUSE

BY SAUNDRA MARCEL

"Hotson Architects did an excellent job of coordinating all the various subcontractors, and through systematic review of each other's plans, mock-ups, and testing we successfully integrated everything," recalls Jeff Tarr, president of Tarr Technology Consulting in New York City. As the audiovisual consultant for this Manhattan penthouse, the boutique residential technology integration company strove to combine the latest technology with reliability and ease of use. "We love working with technology because it is always changing," he adds.

"It's like angels fell out of the sky with money," says Ghislaine Viñas, interior designer of this lower Manhattan penthouse apartment. Together with architect David Hotson, the design duo transformed 6,000 feet of diamond-in-the-rough top-floor commercial office space into a four-level wacky and whimsical dream home for one very imaginative couple. And while they can't reveal who the owners are, they also can't stop talking about them. "They're different, obviously," Hotson says. "They're risk-takers, and they're involved. You know, having a great space to start with, breathtaking views, and a dream budget, that's all wonderful. But having a client who's engaged all the way through, that's the prize."

The standout feature of the apartment is the 80-foot-long slide, a helical option for transportation commencing at the top level and dumping out at the bottom near the entryway. For those looking for a more challenging ascent, there's also the option to rock-climb your way up to the top—a staggering 45 feet. Neither is a very "skirt friendly" option, but nor is the more normal means of getting from floor to floor: a stairway made with disorienting glass views through to below.

The whole place is filled with these kinds of creative

concepts. Like the nest: a brightly colored floral marshmallow of a squishy-floored space perched high above the living area, perfect for snuggling or just sinking in. There are four bedrooms, plus a secret mid-floor sleeping space accessible by an in-wall ladder. The majestic master features a fire hydrant-crowned headboard and matching silver metallic fire hydrant wallpaper. In the shower is a window allowing for the user to partake in a little inter-apartment exhibitionism, but with the press of

her [the client's] idea, and she defended it every step of the way," says Hotson. It's a grown-up playground, certainly a dream home for any kid. Although, surprisingly, none live here. Just a young-at-heart couple with a sense of humor and *joie de vivre*. ❖

Designed by New York City-based manufacturer Skyline Windows, the curved windows of this penthouse offer stunning views of lower Manhattan. Skyline project manager Robert Marino collaborated with the architect to design the custom windows. "We were able to exceed their expectations with narrow sightlines and window performance," says Marino.

a button, it immediately fogs over for privacy. In a different shower, a tiny peephole frames a view of the faraway Chrysler Building. It's now a far cry from the awkward and empty guts that existed here before the project started. "It was the kind of space that people looked at and thought, 'What on earth do we do with this?,'" says Viñas of the pre-renovated apartment. Adds Hotson, "From what I've heard, a lot of potential buyers came through and were just completely intimidated by the scope and scale of what had to be done. Whereas my reaction was the same as Ghislaine's. This is one of the most astonishing properties I have ever seen. The views are incredible, the historical character of the building is amazing, as was the opportunity to work in really dramatic, complex dimensions of architectural space that you don't usually get in New York."

It was the first collaborative project for Viñas and Hotson, one that spanned four years and was not without its challenges. But where their creative ideas differed, the client's desires united them. "You can't impose stuff like this on a client. They wanted it. The slide, for example, was

