

FACING PAGE: New York fashion designer Giovanna Randall, in front of a painting by Guilleme Paturel, in the living room of her family's Greenwich Village apartment, which was designed by Fawn Galli. **THIS PAGE:** The living room features custom-made sofas, upholstered in a velvet by Rose Cumming, 1950s Swedish floor lamps, a 1960s cocktail table, and a neon work by Iván Navarro over a Louis XVI marble mantel; the vintage sconces are by J.T. Kalmar, and the antique rug is Persian. For details, see Resources.



DREAMING IN FRENCH

*An apartment in a
stately Greenwich Village building
is transformed into a Parisian
fantasy of youthful energy and joie de vivre
when fashion designer
Giovanna Randall teams
up with a kindred spirit, decorator
Fawn Galli*

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Jacques Adnet chairs from the 1950s surround the custom-made dining table; the chandelier is by Peter Mikic, and the walls are upholstered in an Old World Weavers damask; the painting is by Jackie Saccoccio, and the floor is white oak.



The living room's vintage stools are covered in a Neisha Crosland fabric, the painting is by Agnes Barley, and the curtains are of a Jim Thompson silk with a custom ombré dye. For details, see Resources.



Custom-made doors lead to Randall's office; the orange swivel chair is by Jean Royère.



The custom-made sofa in the media room is covered in a velvet by Rose Cumming, the 1955 side table is by Mathieu Matégot, and the 1970s floor lamp is Italian; the walls are sheathed in a Roger Arlington grass cloth, and the rug is by Jan Kath. For details, see Resources.

A WEEK BEFORE her second child, Estella, was born last spring, fashion designer Giovanna Randall was feeling restless. “You know that adrenaline burst you get at the end of your pregnancy?” she says. “So I decided to throw a dinner party.”

She and her husband, Eric Laufer, quickly dispatched an invitation to friends, who arrived at the couple's freshly decorated apartment in New York's Greenwich Village to find their nine-months-pregnant hostess preparing an entire meal from scratch, including, as a grand finale, a homemade pie that she pulled from a striking cream enamel Lacanche double range.

For Randall, who designs couture and bridal fashions under her label Honor, food is much more than sustenance: It's a source of deep pleasure and a metaphor for everything she touches. “I've always said I want my fabrics to be good enough to eat,” she says. “I feel that way about everything. I want my home to look tasty.”

Trained as an opera singer, she is an exuberant personality who is equally enthusiastic whether discussing her passion for fairy tales and candy or her devotion to Oscarina, the family's three-legged cat. It took time to find an interior designer who could channel her playful vision into a functional family home. “I interviewed several people,”

she says, “but everyone I talked to felt much too by the book.”

This was seven years ago, after she and her husband had purchased a Classic Six apartment in a 1920s building overlooking Washington Square Park. One day, she noticed a magazine article about a young interior designer, Fawn Galli, and her whimsical Brooklyn home. Like Randall, Galli was fond of fantasy, bright color, and bold pattern. The free-spirited decorator had grown up on a hippie commune, then worked for Christie's auction house in its European furniture department. She learned her chops as a designer in the offices of such heavy hitters as Robert A.M. Stern and Peter Marino. “Her apartment was fun, quirky, weird, and yet glamorous,” Randall says. “And then we met, and it was an instant connection.”

She hired Galli, but what happened next was far from instantaneous. No sooner had orders been placed for new furniture, fabrics, and even a marble living room mantel, than the couple ran into their next-door neighbors at a coffee shop and learned that they were moving. So they annexed the Classic Seven next door, and a minor redecoration turned into a gut renovation. Galli was game to begin; her clients were not quite ready. “We kept everything in storage for six years, during which Giovanna started her company, opened a



showroom, and had a baby [daughter Nova is now three],” Galli says. Meanwhile, Laufer, an aeronautical engineer, was focused on his business developing technology for the wind-energy industry.

A year-and-a-half ago, the project finally moved forward and the apartments were combined. Galli, with the help of Randall’s father, architect Paul Randall, was entrusted with transforming the plain-vanilla architecture into a space dripping with old-world character. They spent four months drawing mock-ups of Parisian-inspired moldings, which were transformed into decorative plasterwork by artisans at New York’s EverGreene studio. The painstaking process was hindered by the nine-foot-high ceilings, which lacked the hauteur of their Right Bank counterparts. “I wanted it to look like an apartment designed by Haussmann,” Randall says, “but we kept battling with proportions. Everything had to be made smaller.”

Each week, Randall would meet with Galli and her design team to review options, and the visuals would invariably set her imagination on fire. When a batch of fabric samples was proffered for the living room curtains, she was suddenly reminded of Gwen Stefani’s ombré wedding dress. She connected Galli with a fashion resource, which

was able to dip-dye a set of white silk curtains in a hot pink-and-purple pattern reminiscent of the pop singer’s gown. And when she saw a pink silk wall in a friend’s home in San Francisco, she ordered up a damask version for her dining room in a favorite color, emerald.

Fashion finds its way into many decorative details in the home, from the guest room ceiling, where the plaster pattern was copied from an Honor print resembling a Moroccan screen, to the dining room’s lace curtains, to pillows that were covered in fabric cut from sequined 1980s dresses. And it worked both ways, with architectural details turning up in Randall’s fashion designs, such as a collection of embossed-neoprene clothing inspired by plaster moldings.

Both Galli and her client let their creativity run wild, no matter how complicated the idea or its execution. A doorway has a plaster frieze featuring the image of Oscarina, the adored house cat. And when Galli proposed writing out a poem in braille in nailheads on the powder room’s pink leather walls, Randall instantly responded, “Brilliant. Let’s do it.” She immediately knew which poem she wanted. “We did page after page of Edward Lear’s *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat* in braille,” Galli says. “It took two weeks to install.” ■



In Randall’s dressing room, 1970s sconces by Philippe Lambert flank an 1820 Austrian gilt mirror above a Louis XVI fireplace; the walls are upholstered in a fabric by Abigail Borg. **FACING PAGE:** The master bedroom’s bed, nightstand, console, and bedding are all custom made by Fawn Galli Interiors, the 1950s Royère chair is covered in a Dedar fabric, and the 1960s ceiling fixture is German; the curtains are of a Larsen silk, the tiebacks are by P.E. Guerin, and the walls are painted in Farrow & Ball’s All White. For details, see Resources.