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**bathrooms
in all styles
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exterior facelifts**

**Homes in Mountainville,
Murray Hill, Sea Girt**

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editor's letter

MARY VINNEDGE

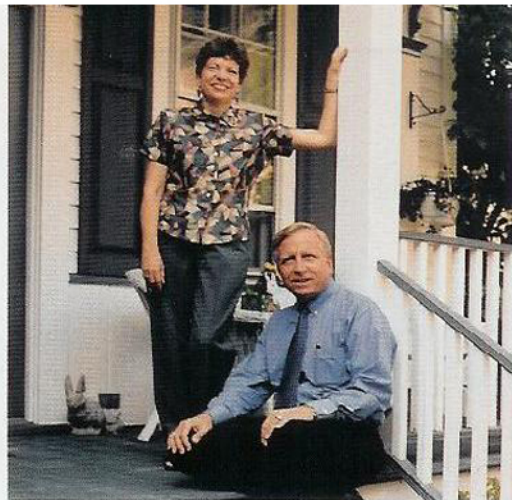


Photo by Marisa Pellegrini

ONE OF THE MOST INTRIGUING PROJECTS I'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO WRITE ABOUT for *Design NJ* appears in this issue. Nope, it's not about a 40,000-square-foot Vanderbilt mansion or a Colonial saltbox rife with George Washington-slept-here history, although those types of projects are certainly fun for me, too. Instead, this Murray Hill home, a

condominium, holds more fascination because it is what it is or — perhaps more accurately — because of what it was.

The residence that's photographed and explored in Act Three on Page 39 started its life during the 1970s as the Hitchcock Chair store within a tony village of picturesque shops. As a young architect with a new solo practice, Al Bol (pictured with me in front of one of the other village condos) landed the plum commission for the project.

The shopping village never managed to catch on, so during the 1980s, Bol got the call to revamp all of the buildings as residential condominiums. He partitioned their wide open spaces, added bathrooms and kitchens, and addressed issues such as fire codes. The spaces were finished out simply — no fancy stone countertops, no thick crown moldings. And the revamped homes lacked open floor plans, because free-flowing living spaces hadn't become popular by that time.

There was no immediate public rush to buy into a community of stores that would evolve into dwellings, Bol says, because prospective buyers had difficulty conceptualizing how they would turn out. But one by one, as the contractors removed all hints of the structures' retail roots, they sold.

And the revival has been a success. No one

has called on Bol to revisit the community as, say, an industrial park or college campus.

But the Berkeley Heights architect did hear from the most recent owners of half of that one-time Hitchcock Chair store. Among other things, the empty-nest couple wanted to unite their kitchen and its adjacent living area — both of them relatively small — as well as put some pizzazz into their home. And who knew the place better than the original architect?

Bol was thrilled to tweak the place again, pumping up the architectural details and reconfiguring the master bath and main-floor powder room in the process.

Ann Lind Bowers, a Far Hills interior designer, was the second critical design professional involved in the process. Bowers' mandate was to create a sense of elegance while avoiding stuffiness; practicality was important to her clients, too. Her accomplishments include squeezing an impressive amount of function into the handsome kitchen, pulling together a dramatic dining room, and outfitting an ultra-comfortable living area.

The result of the teamwork between Bol, Bowers, and their obliging clients is a home that can gracefully walk the line between tuxedos and blue jeans, catered affairs and sandwiches in front of the television. It's pretty without being imposing. ■

ACT THREE

The latest incarnation for a Murray Hill condominium

PERKELEY HEIGHTS ARCHITECT AL BOL SHARES A LONG professional history with a Union County building complex. During the mid-1970s, the young architect drew plans for 34 vintage-style

WRITER: MARY VINNEDGE
PHOTOGRAPHER: MARISA PELLEGRINI
ARCHITECT: AL BOL
INTERIOR DESIGNER: ANN LIND BOWERS



ARCHITECT AL BOL designed the millwork — including the beams, mantel, dentil moldings, and arched door frames — that added distinction to the condo's ground floor. William Toth, AIA, of Alexander A. Bol AIA Architect and Associates in Berkeley Heights served as the project architect for this recent renovation. SOURCES: upholstered furniture, Ann Lind Bowers' New York City workroom; obelisks, Robert Fountain Antiques in Morristown; bookcase, European Country Kitchens in Bedminster; most other antique furniture, Shug's Antiques in Far Hills.

MOST OF THE WALL between the kitchen and combination living-family-great room was removed during the recent redesign. The oak floor, which has a light walnut stain, was extended into the kitchen. **SOURCES:** contractor, Creative Construction LLC in Califon; cabinetry, European Country Kitchens in Bedminster; oven and range, Thermador; light fixtures, Ann Morris in New York City; tile, Waterworks in New York City; floor, Falcon Floors in Morristown.





buildings to serve as a picturesque shopping center, the first major project for Bol's solo architectural practice. Some of those buildings resemble area landmarks; he found photos of them during his early research. Then, after the retail venture failed and the bank took control of the nine-plus-acre property, Bol, an American Institute of Architects (AIA) member, was commissioned to redesign the buildings as 46 condominiums during the early 1980s.

Most recently, an empty-nest couple who own one condo — formerly half of a Hitchcock Chair store — wanted to remodel and enhance two floors. Bol, whose Berkeley Heights firm is Alexander A. Bol AIA Architect and Associates, got the call, as did interior designer Ann Lind Bowers of Far Hills. Bowers said the husband “loves New Jersey, and he wanted to make it wonderful for her [his wife], who loves New York City.”

Bol and Bowers joined forces to produce a more-open ground floor with complex colonial-style woodwork as well as a new kitchen and powder room. On the second floor, the master suite enjoys a new look while retaining its great view of the village courtyard. The condo also has a third floor, used for overnight guests, as well as a basement with a kitchen area created from salvaged cabinetry and appliances from the 1980s kitchen. Each floor

THE EYE-CATCHING RUG determined the dining room's color scheme. **SOURCES:** rug, Stark Carpet in New York City; mahogany table (new), Shug's Antiques in Far Hills; lamp, John Rosselli in New York City (to the trade); wall treatment, Judy Mulligan in Chester; Chinese rose medallion bowl, Flying Cranes Antiques in New York City; curtain rods, Joseph Biunno Ltd. in New York City (to the trade).

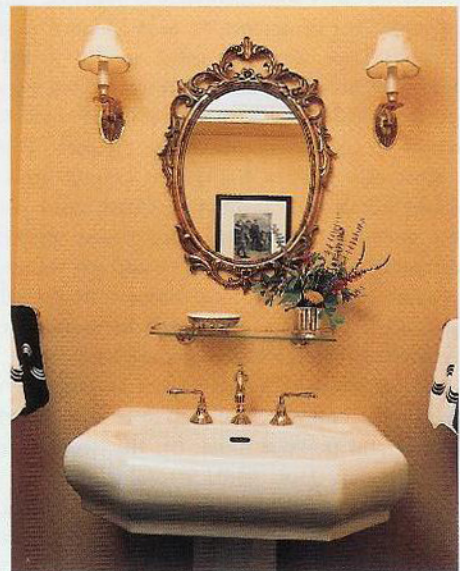


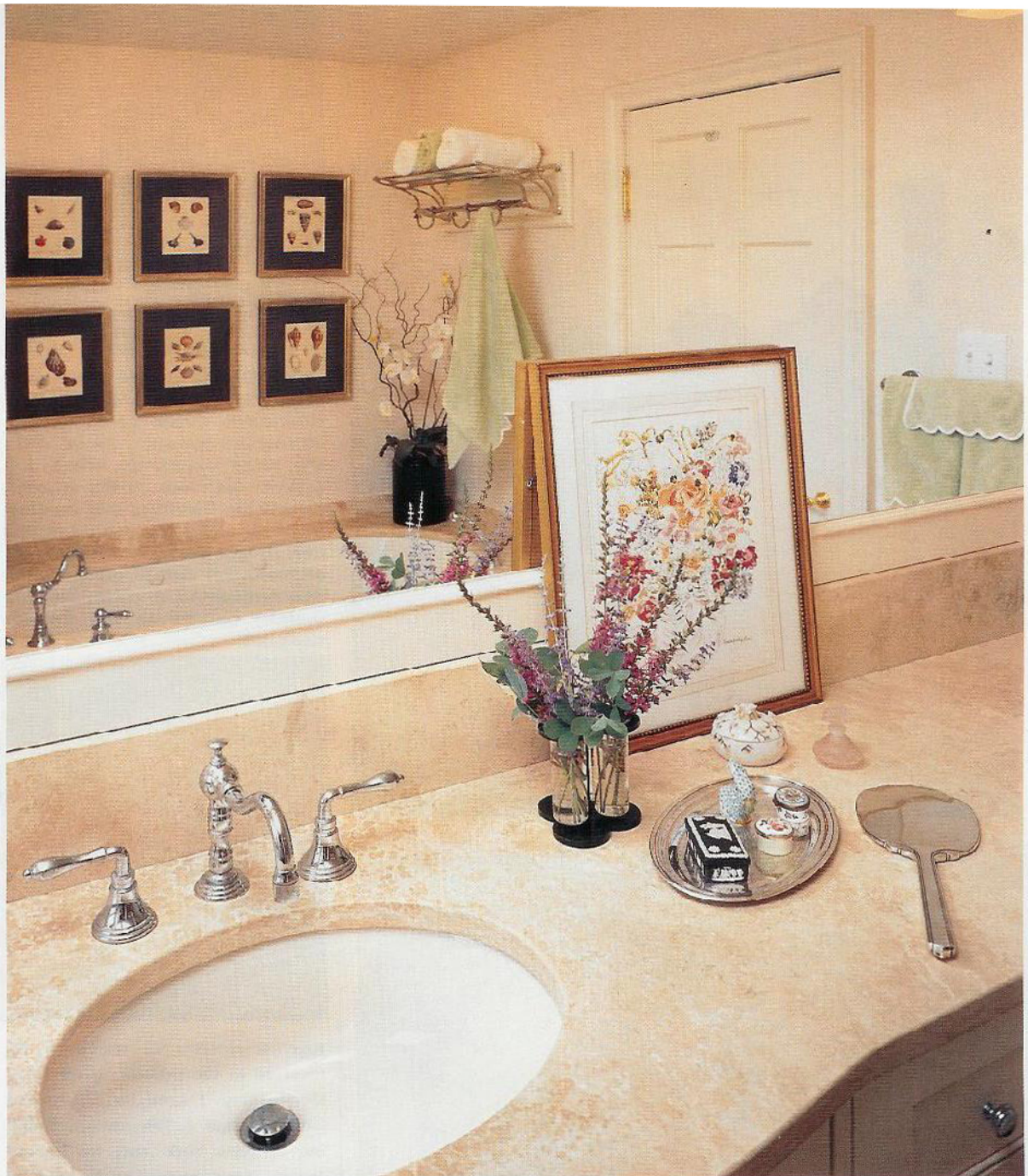
of the condo is about 1,200 square feet, and high ceilings arc at every level: 12 feet in the basement and on the third floor, 10½ and 10 feet on the first and second floors respectively.

When Bol turned the Murray Hill shops into residences some 20 years ago, he partitioned the interiors but left them relatively plain. The living areas in this condo now have a richer, distinctive character, he said, with “lots of molding, special ceiling treatments, lots of architectural details. And most of the other units have a separate kitchen, not a kitchen-family room” like the one that was born during the redesign.

To merge the rooms, Bol removed most of the wall between the kitchen and family room and substituted a wide arched opening. The space seems to have grown. “It had been just a regular doorway,” Bol said. “The idea was to create more of what’s current — open between the family room and kitchen. We added arches to the tops of the small doors off the family room to blend with the arch over the main opening [to the kitchen].”

When it came time to select furnishings for the renewed spaces on the ground and second floors, Bowers and the wife worked





THE HOMEOWNERS asked designer Ann Lind Bowers to reuse the rug in their master bedroom (opposite), so it ultimately served as the foundation for the room's other furnishings. **SOURCES:** bedspread, Pratesi in New York City; additional bedding and chaise, Ann Lind Bowers Interior Design in Far Hills; headboard fabric, Clarence House in New York City (to the trade); lamp, Oriental Lampshade in New York City; bench and drop-leaf table, Shug's Antiques in Far Hills; Joan Brady painting, Riverside Gallery in Pottersville; wall treatment, Judy Mulligan in Chester.

■ Once the main-floor powder room (opposite) was enlarged, this oversize pedestal sink suited its scale perfectly, the interior designer says. **SOURCES:** sink and faucet, Imaginative Hardware in Bedminster; wallpaper, Clarence House in New York City with Osborne & Little border (to the trade); sconces, Christopher Norman in New York City.

■ Architect Al Bol said the master bathroom was a challenge because it is relatively small — roughly 9½ by 10 feet — and yet the couple wanted a whirlpool tub and a shower. **SOURCES:** Osso travertine for counter and tub, Terra Designs in Far Hills; George Wolfgang Knorr engravings over tub, Laura Breyer Works on Paper Inc. in New York City; cabinetry, European Country Kitchens in Bedminster; permanent orchid arrangements, Ann Lind Bowers Interior Design in Far Hills.



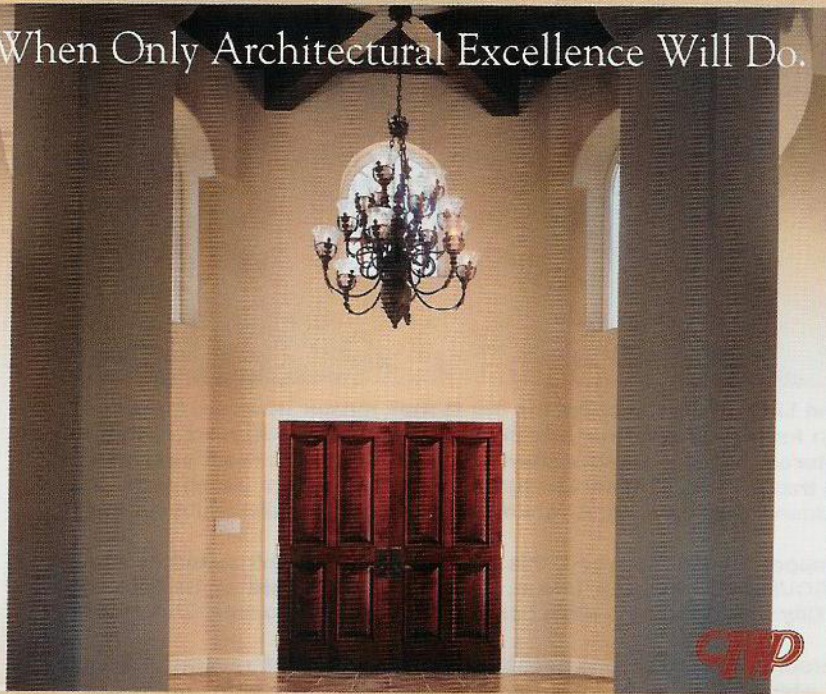
THE CONDOMINIUM UNIT (left) originally housed half of a Hitchcock Chair store in the Murray Hill shopping village. After the retail enterprise failed, the original architect, Al Bol (above), turned the buildings into condos. More recently, the owners of this unit sought Bol's input for interior architectural details added when they remodeled. Ann Lind Bowers (below) served as the interior designer.



together closely. "She wanted to be involved in the process, in the decision-making. I brought her to the D&D [Design & Decoration] Building in New York, and we looked around. I got an idea of her colors. Just spending a day with her and talking with her, I knew exactly what would make her happy: a sophisticated country style."

The wife's favorite room is the dining room, said the designer, whose firm is Ann Lind Bowers Interior Design. The wife fell in love with a rug from Stark Carpet in New York City, and the fabrics and wall treatment "were keyed off the rug," said Bowers, who is an allied member of the American Society of

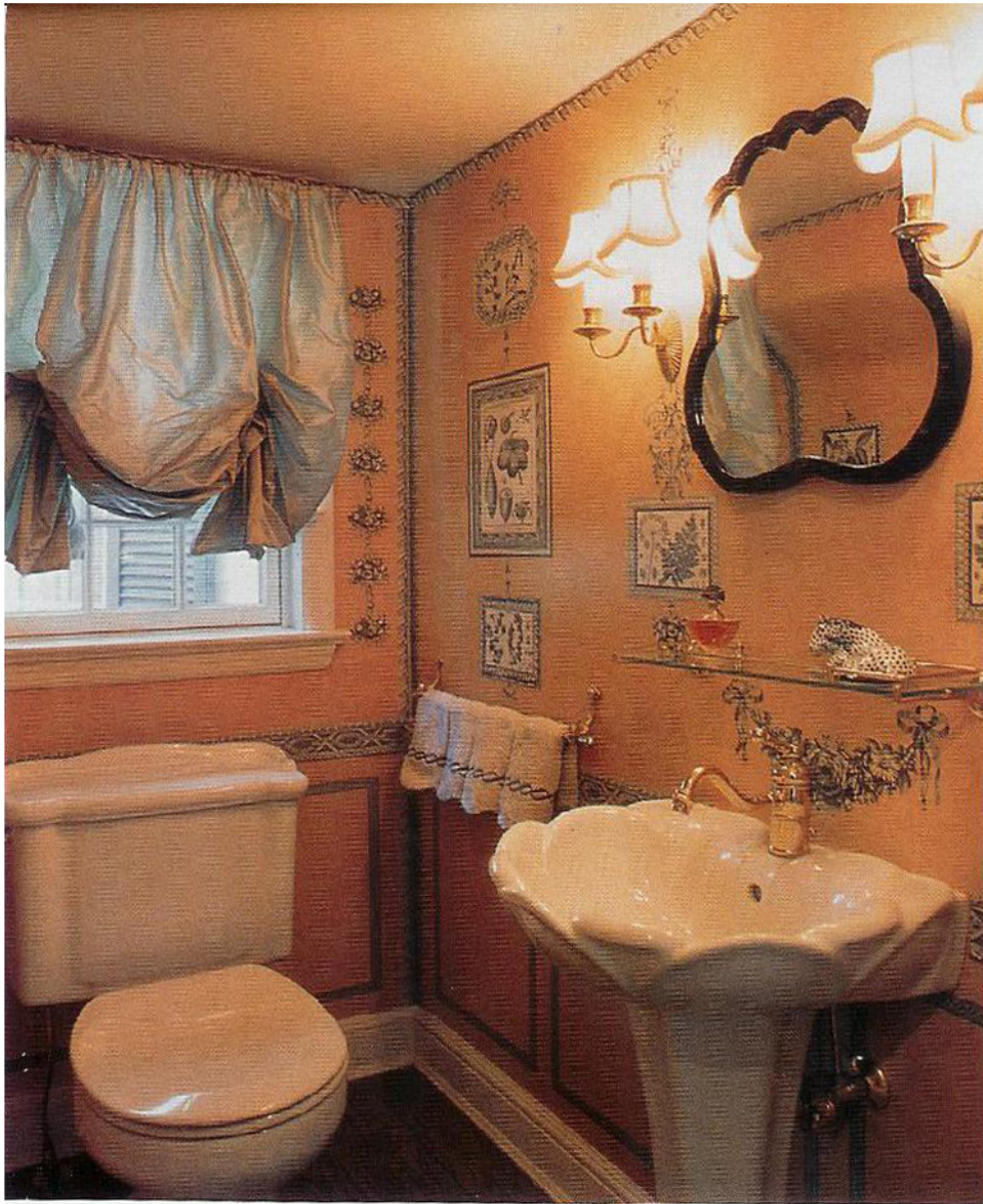
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MAKING THE CUT: This powder room, squeezed in under the stairway of a Short Hills residence, is only about 3½ by 5½ feet. The embellished walls mimic eighteenth-century Irish print rooms, which were decorated with cutouts of printed paper. The homeowners chose a botanical theme for the papers in this bath, says interior designer Ann Lind Bowers, but available alternative themes include architectural details, maps, and animals. A protective glaze covers the paper and the sponged, pumpkin-colored walls, adds Bowers, an allied member of the ASID. **Sources:** design, Ann Lind Bowers Interior Design in Far Hills; decorative paper application, Carol Mara in Bernardsville; toilet and sink, Imaginative Hardware in Bedminster; light fixtures, Christopher Norman in New York City.