

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE

Taking a bite out of the Big Apple, a savvy New Yorker has combined two Midtown apartments into one outstanding duplex

Words Louise Smithers **Photography** Brad Dickson



ed's fave

THE WAY THE STAIRCASE CHANGES ITS APPEARANCE DEPENDING ON THE ANGLE FROM WHICH IT'S VIEWED



"I wanted the stair to feel like origami that is placed just so, touching the walls and floors"

— Andrew Mikhael

Andrew Mikhael Architect is the brains behind the beauty of Trapeze Stair Apartment. The man behind the brand, Andrew Mikhael, kindly allowed us to gush over his latest project and ask all the questions we've been desperate to have answered. Like *how on earth did you come up with that mind-bending, gravity-defying staircase?*

Turns out, the answer involves ice-cream. "Being an architect is a stressful path," Andrew muses. "As a professor once told us in undergrad, you think it's all design and fun, but actually design is the

ice-cream of the project. So much of any project is politics, budget, logistics of all sorts, etc. One night, once I was alone in the office and the phone stopped ringing, I designed the stair in a couple of hours. Just having that focused 'ice-cream time' was a luxury and made all the difference."

The steel staircase is the indisputable centerpiece of the three-bedroom, three-bathroom duplex, built for parties down below and business up top. The lower level is equipped for entertainment while the sleeping quarters are located upstairs.



Wallace Creek black limestone wall tiles provide subtle shifts in tone, streaks of gold and a moody lustre verging on sexy



we love

THE SQUARE SHOWER WITH DARK STONE AND TEAK

Contrasting light and dark materials emphasise shifts in form. This is obvious when appraising the white oak floors and black accents. The result is a masculine and spare atmosphere that feels light and inviting.

The owner requested a luxurious ensuite and he wasn't left wanting for anything when the new master bathroom suite was unveiled. Standing in what was once the upstairs kitchen and bathroom, the two-part suite is entered via the bedroom and enjoys a custom vanity and freestanding Wetstyle tub that sits opposite a large square window. A pocket door separates this space from the toilet and oversized shower with Axor Shower Heaven rain head.

The shower floor and niche are lined in teak, offering a comfort and warmth underfoot that tiles simply cannot deliver. Wallace Creek black limestone wall tiles provide subtle shifts in tone, streaks of gold and a moody lustre verging on sexy. "I was thinking of the Japanese book *In Praise of Shadows* when I



CONTRASTING LIGHT
AND DARK MATERIALS
EMPHASISE SHIFTS IN FORM



designed this space," Andrew shares. "I wanted that softness and warmth in a room that isn't traditionally known for those particular traits."

Walnut Creek vein-cut stone floor tiles ooze masculine luxury, and custom light coves with LED tape make this a throne room worthy of a crown.

But enough about the bathroom and back to the stairs. "I wanted the stair to feel like origami that is placed just so, touching the walls and floors," Andrew explains. "One way we achieved this is in the handrails that die into the wall and the connections buried behind plaster."

Despite its seamless appearance, the staircase's design and build was a labour-intensive exercise. Incorporating an elegant, clean element into an old structure is never easy, particularly when bulky connections and structural members were to be minimal. Jordan Griska is the talented artist responsible for twisting, turning and contorting the steel into the completed staircase we see today.

There's a lot to love about this Manhattan apartment, but it's the stairs that have stolen our hearts. And it seems we're not alone. "I love the stair," Andrew enthuses. "I can stare at it (no pun intended) and walk around it all day." **HD** andrewmikhael.com

