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RAVISHING REVISION

Updating the traditionally styled interiors he crafted for a 19th-century London rowhouse some 15 years ago, designer Veere Grenney fashions a suitably modern showcase for his clients' growing collection of A-list contemporary art

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In a London rowhouse renovated by Veere Grenney Assoc., canvases by Bridget Riley overlook one end of the drawing room, where lamps from Pascal Boyer Gallery stand atop Gabriella Crespi tables from Bernd Goeckler Antiques; the wing chair at right is a Grenney design, the lacquer cocktail table is a 1953 piece by Jean Royère, and the carpet was custom made by Veedon Fleece. For details see Sources.



THERE IS A GRAND, CINEMATIC QUALITY TO THE SWEEPING BLOCKS OF NEOCLASSICAL ROWHOUSES THAT LINE REGENT'S PARK IN LONDON.

Many were designed in the 1820s by John Nash, the architect of Buckingham Palace and much of Regency London, and the crisp, columned stucco residences are among the most delightful and desirable addresses in the city. With open views into the park—home to a boating lake and Queen Mary's Gardens—there's an almost bucolic charm to the experience of living here.

Interior designer Veere Grenney knows the Nash houses well and greatly admires not only their sense of scale and proportion but also their rich history (past occupants include writer H. G. Wells, composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, and the Duchess of Windsor). Recently Grenney and his London team completed a dramatic update to a five-story, four-bedroom keystone house—the term for a dwelling directly behind the portico at the center of the row—that he had previously decorated in a very different manner for the same clients about 15 years ago.

"We originally did the house in a more traditional genre, quite chintzy, with a Colefax and Fowler feeling," Grenney says. "Now it has a contemporary edge. In a way it was like starting again, but it helped that we were already familiar with the space and the clients and understood what they needed."

Grenney and the homeowners are firm friends, their relationship dating from the period just after the designer launched his eponymous studio in 1996. He also worked on a Tel Aviv apartment for the philanthropist couple, who have three children. The pair bought the home on Regent's Park right before their first child was born, and over the years their needs have changed, as have their tastes.

"Since I've known them they have become major collectors of contemporary art," Grenney says. "So the decoration had to be more pared down. The house's architecture became more important, as did the quality of the finishes. All of those things allow the art to shine." →



Damien Hirst butterfly paintings flank a bespoke mirror by Veere Grenney Assoc. above the drawing room's fireplace; the 1960s Italian chandelier and vintage French stools below it are from Gordon Watson, the armchair is by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings from Alan Moss, and the side table next to it is a midcentury piece by Georges Jouve. **Opposite, from top:** The central portico of the John Nash-designed building where the residence is located. A Tracey Emin neon work animates the entrance hall, which is paved in polished black granite inset with white marble.



Clockwise from left: A Sean Scully painting presides over the library, where Jacques Adnet lamps top circa-1940 tables by Marc du Plantier; the late-19th-century leather library chairs carry a Rothschild provenance, and the gold artwork near the window is by Lucio Fontana. The kitchen is crowned by a circa-1955 Gio Ponti light fixture; the cabinetry and marble breakfast bar are by Boffi, the stools are from Design Within Reach, and the oven is by Gaggenau. In the study, a midcentury Adnet leather desk and armchair are grouped with a René Prou stool upholstered in a Manuel Canovas silk; the artworks are by Philip Guston. **Opposite:** A '60s Gaetano Sciolari chandelier hangs above a lacquer table custom designed by Ciancimino Gallery and a set of Prou chairs in the dining room; the large artworks are by Heinz Mack, and the red mirrored cabinets are midcentury Italian pieces from Gordon Watson.





Works by Damien Hirst, David Hockney, Bridget Riley, Sean Scully, and others are displayed amid a mix of vintage and custom-made furnishings, with original elements such as fireplaces, cornices, and a soaring stairway (all protected by the building's Grade I heritage listing) providing a graceful backdrop. In the entrance hall a Tracey Emin neon piece casts a pink-and-green glow across gold-leafed walls and a glossy new black-and-white floor, hinting at the eclectic character of the reinvented interiors within.

The ground level is shared by the dining room, a study, and a modestly scaled kitchen, the latter featuring pristine white cabinetry and a breakfast bar in arabesque marble lit by an arresting 1950s ceiling fixture by Gio Ponti. The study is a softer space, its curved walls clad in a pale-pink cotton with artworks by Philip Guston overlooking a lissome leather desk and armchair by Jacques Adnet. In the generously proportioned dining room, Art Deco components—including a set of sinuous René Prou chairs—combine with midcentury touches such as the '60s Gaetano Sciolari chandelier. Vintage Italian light fixtures are a particular fascination of Grenney's. "They look fantastic," he says, admiring their ability to deliver sophistication and drama. "And that's part of what we do."

One floor above, the piano nobile is a free-flowing L-shaped layout that encompasses a library as well as a drawing room where art plays a prominent role. Bold abstract canvases by Riley and a pair of Hirst butterfly paintings preside over sitting areas outfitted with shapely sofas and chairs devised by Grenney as well as select vintage pieces, among them a T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings armchair. Another '60s Italian chandelier serves as a striking focal point. "This great spider," Grenney says of the fixture, "is like a piece of sculpture on the ceiling. If you put an 18th-century crystal chandelier there instead, think how different it would look."

Farther up the Nash-designed staircase—illuminated by amethyst-color 1920s Venini lights—the home's top two stories contain the bedrooms. The elegant master suite carries echoes of the Deco period, especially in the bath, whose lacquered walls, polished-nickel fittings, and mirrored chest evoke the glamour of a prewar ocean liner. A pair of Matisse drawings adds to the refinement.

Throughout the house there is a continuity and confident ease that Grenney attributes to his close connection with the owners. "If you work for a client for a long time, you evolve together," says the designer, noting that this renovation spanned nearly five years. "You walk from floor to floor and room to room and there's a harmony. That's what pleases me most—the way it all hangs together." □



In the master bedroom, a 1970s Gaetano Sciolari light fixture from Galerie Yves Gastou joins a Veere Grenney Assoc. ebonized four-poster and a Francis Sultana daybed; the curtains are made of a Zimmer + Rohde silk, and the carpet is by Tai Ping. **Opposite, from top:** Gracing the stairway are a '20s Venini light from Bernd Goeckler Antiques and a Tai Ping carpet. A Matisse drawing is displayed above a 1960 Jacques Adnet chair in the master bath, while a neon-and-mirror work by Brigitte Kowanz surmounts a '40s chest.

