

[DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT]

Whether Working Downtown or Upstate, New York Designer Todd Raymond Combines Old and New with Aplomb



A Hudson River Valley farmhouse and a pair of Manhattan lofts reveal the depth and breadth of Raymond's excellent taste — and the way his years in hospitality allow him to effortlessly manage, and exceed, client expectations.

BY MARISA BARTOLUCCI





Interior designer [TODD RAYMOND](#) began his professional life in restaurants, and he finds today that his hospitality experience serves him well when it comes to meeting clients' needs and exceeding their expectations (portrait by Daniel D'Ottavio Photography). Top: In the living room of a [FARMHOUSE](#) in New York's Hudson Valley, Raymond placed a [PAOLO CASTELLI](#) sofa from [CASA DESIGN GROUP](#), a [J.M. SZYMANSKI](#) coffee table, a [HANS WEGNER OX CHAIR](#) and a [PAOLA PARONETTO](#) ceramic vessel, on the pedestal (photo by Read McKendree).

[NOVEMBER 5, 2023] As a teenager, Todd Raymond aspired to be an architect. But a job in college waiting tables at New York's Michelin-double-starred restaurant Jean-Georges detoured him into high-end hospitality. He turned out to have such a knack for opening and managing restaurants that it wasn't long before he was prepping to open one of his own. And then, the global financial crisis hit.

His plans thwarted, Raymond thought again about architecture. At 25, he was still young, but now savvy. He recognized that what he loved most about the field was, as he puts it, "architecture's interplay with interiors."

So, he got a job at a furniture showroom and took night classes in interior design at Parsons. Then, after spending five years scaling the designer ranks at luxury contract and residential firms both large and small, he launched [STUDIO TODD RAYMOND](#). Once more, the moment was less than propitious, as the world had just gone into pandemic lockdown. This time, however, Raymond didn't waiver from his plan. He had found his life path.

Today, he believes that those early years in hospitality helped make him a more capable design professional. "I'm really good at anticipating people's needs and setting expectations for how a project will lay out," he says, adding, "You have to learn to work with different personalities and know when to let things go. There's a fine art to it."

Raymond's artistry is evident in some of his most interesting recent projects, like [A BACHELOR PAD](#) he designed in an old industrial building in Chelsea. The client had already lived in the one-bedroom loft for a number of years when he asked Raymond for a style upgrade to reflect the man about town he'd become.

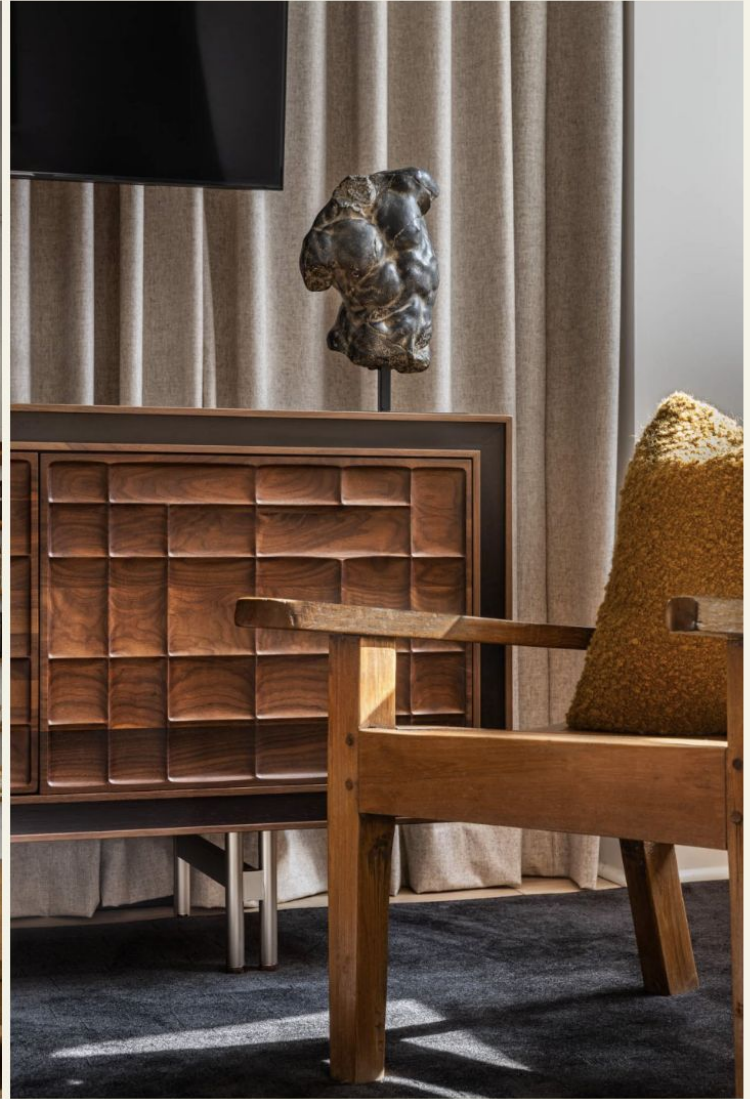
Raymond found that notion intriguing, even if the apartment — with relatively petite windows and small rooms — was not the most glamorous of spaces. Its one asset was its 14-foot ceiling

height, which offered ample opportunity for drama. Raymond's first idea was a wall of sandy-beige wool-sateen drapery for the living room along with a chic black rug, design moves that the client immediately rejected. But Raymond isn't one to be deterred.



In [A LOFT IN NEW YORK CITY'S CHELSEA](#) designed for a bachelor client, Raymond created a masculine look. He chose suiting-style herringbone windowpane-plaid upholstery for a lounge chair designed by [BRIAN PAQUETTE](#) for [LAWSON-FENNING](#), which he paired with a clean-lined vintage wooden armchair and a chrome, glass and leather magazine rack from [DRAKE](#). A gray carpet and richly grained walnut pieces complete the look. The artwork on the brick wall above the slouchy slipcovered sofa is by [KENNY NGUYEN](#). Photo by Pavel Bendov

“Everything he gravitated toward was a variation on what he already had,” Raymond remembers. Seasoned as he was at not just managing but surpassing the expectations of diners — and then clients — he soon coaxed the homeowner into accepting that elevating one’s taste meant exiting one’s comfort zone. Then, says Raymond, “the fun began.”



Left: In the kitchen and dining area of the Chelsea loft, vintage [CHAIRS BY JOHANNES ANDERSEN](#), found at [ZO GOED ALS OUD](#), sit at a [PARSONS-STYLE TABLE](#) from the homeowners collection. The artwork is by Ryan McMenamy. Right: Raymond placed a walnut [DALE ITALIA](#) credenza with carved doors in front of a wall draped in a sandy-beige wool-sateen fabric. Photos by Pavel Bendov

The fun was rooted in the client’s happy place — childhood memories of summers spent with his family in the Hamptons. Riffing on the idea of an inviting seaside house, Raymond chose a big, comfy linen-slipcovered sofa and the client’s own rustic-looking oak chair to anchor the living room. To signal the homeowner’s newfound urbanity, he selected a swanky carved-walnut [DALE ITALIA](#) credenza with a mid-century-modern vibe, placing it against the once-disputed draped wall. He then added to the mix an armchair by [BRIAN PAQUETTE](#) for [LAWSON-FENNING](#), which he upholstered in a handsome wool plaid. Finishing the space are some low tables with smoky glass as well as chrome and leather elements for a bit of 1970s bling.

Raymond used 1stDibs to source the bedroom's Belgian linen pillows, from [BLOOM HOME INC.](#), and to commission the contemporary nightstands, from [FULDEN TOPALOGLU](#) of [STUDIO KALI](#). A 1970s metal sculpture sits on a custom walnut pedestal. Photos by Pavel Bendov



Furnishings made of wood, especially walnut, prevail throughout the interior, imbuing it with a masculine warmth. Among the wood items are an *étagère*, in the living room; custom cabinets, in the kitchen; and, in the bedroom, a pair of simple nightstands and a pedestal for a small brutalist metal sculpture.

The client's sleeping space is a truly dapper affair. A gray wool herringbone fabric from Phillip Jeffries upholsters its back wall, a similarly hued wool rug covers the floor, and subdued suiting tones smartly dress the bed. All contribute to the loft's virile vibe.

Art heightens the apartment's air of sophistication, while also injecting some life and personality. A striking "deconstructed painting" by [KENNY NGUYEN](#) — composed of cut strips of silk soaked in paint and then placed on draped canvas — brings vibrance and depth to the expansive white wall above the living room sofa, while Ryan McMenamy's painting on plywood of a debonair man with a coffee cup adds a dash of wit to the dining area. Raymond crafted a six-foot-wide mobile of wood balls and black rods to hang above the table.

In another seating area of the Hudson Valley house, Raymond placed a Paolo Castelli sofa and a smoked-glass nesting table. Photo by Read McKendree



When a young couple, both lawyers, commissioned him to transform their recently built **FARMHOUSE-STYLE HOME** in New York's Hudson Valley into a sophisticated weekend retreat, Raymond had a far grander canvas with which to work. Still, the residence — which enjoys panoramic pastoral views — came with challenges. Chief among these was the need to create an interior where the couple could comfortably entertain 40 guests but that would still feel cozy and intimate when they were home alone.



Left: In the Hudson Valley living room, a leather [SWING CHAIR](#) by [JOANINA AND DAVID PASTOLL](#) hangs in front of a [NATHAN PADDISON](#) painting. Right: Raymond selected a [WARREN PLATNER](#) for [KNOLL WIRE COFFEE TABLE](#) and a Cigdem Aky artwork for the den. Photos by Read McKendree

Raymond's solution was to break up what he refers to as the "humongous" main room by arranging furniture to define smaller living areas that all flow together. He encouraged his clients to envision various scenarios for where they might serve cocktails to guests or curl up with a book by themselves. From their playful imaginings he created a layout.

But before he could select actual furniture pieces, he had to address the issue of the couple's taste, which ran toward sleek, [MODERN ITALIAN DESIGN](#). "I love that look as well," says Raymond, "but I didn't want to force a style and aesthetic on a home that it wasn't meant for."



The dining area's [ARNE JACOBSEN](#) for [FRITZ HANSEN DROP CHAIRS](#) sit at a contemporary walnut table. Photo by Photography: Raad McKendree

Managing expectations, Raymond found "a beautiful sweet spot." He painted the walls a bright white and ebonized the doors and floors to create the look of a downtown loft. He honored the clients' preference for furnishings that were sleek and modern but chose pieces made of wood, stone or metal, like the custom blackened-and-waxed steel coffee table by [J.M. SZYMANSKI](#) in the center of the room. For dramatic accents, he looked to the less-showy organic forms of the Danish masters: [HANS WEGNER](#)'s [OX CHAIRS](#) take center stage in the main living space; [ARNE JACOBSEN](#)'s [DROP CHAIRS](#) animate the dining alcove.



Raymond's studio designed the smoky acrylic nightstands in the bedroom, where they sit beneath pendants by [DUMAIS MADE](#). An artwork by Victoria Holly hangs over the headboard. Photo by Read McKandree

The couple weren't art collectors, but Raymond quickly recognized that art was important to them. "It's another reason why I kept the palette very neutral," he says. "I wanted to allow for big art moments throughout the house." In keeping with the bucolic surroundings, ceramic and wood works predominate, like [STEPANKA SUMMER's](#) *Horizon Silver* installation of ceramic disks above the mantel and [PAOLA PARONETTO's](#) ceramic vessel on the pedestal adjacent to it, plus Kat Ramage's wood installation in the hall.



For HIS OWN LOFT, in Manhattan's Soho, Raymond took inspiration from the design of TOM FORD boutiques. Here, a PAOLO FERRARI sofa, an OPINION CIATTI cocktail table and a velvet mohair armchair define a sitting area next to the kitchen, most of which disappears behind tall doors. Hanging above the marble-clad bar is a pendant light by JORIS POGGIOLI. Photo by Adrian Gaut

When you are your own client, managing expectations becomes more difficult, as Raymond discovered when he and his attorney husband acquired A DREAM LOFT in Soho that not only was expansive and light-filled but also had an old-world air, thanks to its seven sets of French windows opening out to a Juliet-style balcony.



For the loft's dining area, Raymond found a contemporary [L.A. STUDIO](#) table on 1stDibs, which he flanked with a set of six [LUIGI SACCARDO](#) Terrj chairs from [MORENTZ](#). An [APPARATUS](#) light fixture hangs above. In the foreground are a mobius-strip-like seat by Xandre Kriel, also sourced through 1stDibs, and a vintage sideboard by [VITTORIO DASSI](#). Photo by Adrian Gaut

Trying to decide on a decor left him flummoxed. "I like a lot!" he exclaims. Raymond's husband settled the matter when he quipped one day that it would be great to live in the residential version of a [TOM FORD](#) showroom.

And so, rather than a "style," Raymond went for more of a "scene," creating an atmosphere of rich, layered, sexy sophistication with millwork in a luscious chocolate-brown-stained oak and walls covered in sumptuous caramel-hued suede.



Another sitting area in the loft features a [PHILIPPE HUREL](#) sofa, a [CHRISTIAN LIAIGRE](#) floor lamp and a molded metal cocktail table topped with vessels by [ALISON LOUSADA](#). Photo by Adrian Gaut

As a nod to Tom Ford's exquisite men's suits, Raymond outfitted the living room with a pair of armchairs upholstered in a plaid suiting material and a geometric-patterned cut-wool and silk rug. He counterposed that manly formality with a curvaceous [PHILIPPE HUREL](#) sofa upholstered in a black-cream-and-sand speckled wool-and-linen jacquard.



Fabric purchased from Pauline Esparon, found on 1stDibs and custom dyed olive green, was hand pinned above the bed in the primary suite to create a unique bas relief. Raymond's studio designed the custom bed with integrated headboard and nightstands. Photo by Adrian Gaut

Similar plays of duality are in evidence throughout the loft, which Raymond laid out with one space opening onto another for easy entertaining of large groups. It's even how he designed the kitchen. When the couple hosts large parties, it disappears behind accordion doors, with only the kitchen island, a monolithic slab of Grigio Collemandina marble, visible. And a custom piece of millwork placed over the stovetop transforms the entire island into a super-glam bar — proof positive that Todd Raymond remains an ace at high-end hospitality. ■