

Lon my

magazine

An intimate look into the understated elegance of Susan Becher's Upper West Side home



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SIMPLE ABUNDANCE

With warmth and comfort, designer Jamie Herzlinger reinterprets minimalism in a light-filled Connecticut home

Written by Robert Leleux • Photography by Patrick Cline • Interior Design by Jamie Herzlinger



A window-lined hallway runs the length of the house, creating a sense of grandeur and symmetry while incorporating the property's scenic lawns into its decor.

o anyone who catches a glimpse inside one of her luxurious interiors, **Jamie Herzlinger's** sophisticated style becomes immediately apparent. Her urbane designs typically exude Fifth Avenue opulence rather than, say, streamlined minimalism. So when she was asked to decorate a modern house in Connecticut in a minimalist style, the project posed a fresh creative challenge. "I had the greatest time rethinking my assumptions about luxury design," says Herzlinger. "The clients wanted a minimalist decor, but they also wanted a warm, comfortable home. I had to ask myself, 'How do you make minimal warm and luxurious?'"

The solution, Herzlinger quickly realized, lay in color. "The default color for minimalism is white," she says. "But white can be cold, particularly in an interior where you can't rely on pattern. So, suddenly it occurred to me: taupe. Taupe is warm and goes well with chocolate brown, silver, and lavender. And it looked great with the house's natural elements, its wood paneling and marble countertops."

Although minimalism's roots are in Japanese and Italian design, Herzlinger turned to the work of legendary California decorator Michael Taylor for inspiration when incorporating the house's lush views into its interiors. "Taylor was so adept at bringing nature inside, while continuing to create warm, livable spaces," she says. "I knew that nothing in my design could interfere with the house's surroundings, but my driving question became, 'How can I keep the eye inside the house?'" Having found her color scheme, Herzlinger explored a range of textures to maximize visual interest. She designed a plush silk rug for the living room and upholstered two armchairs in mohair. She chose a richly grained walnut table for the dining room and covered chairs in Holly Hunt's supple, buttery leathers throughout the house.

A minimalist decor runs the risk of monotony, but Herzlinger avoided this potential pitfall by turning the inte-



The style of architecture reveals influences of legendary post-modern architects Frank Gehry and Richard Meier.

rior's solemnity to comic advantage. In the sun-filled entry hall stand two oversized bunny sculptures. On the gleaming glass coffee table rests a larger-than-life cluster of silvered grapes. "They're within the house's design vocabulary, but they bring a laugh," Herzlinger explains. By playing with scale and introducing unexpected moments of wit and humor, she prevented her design's rigorously crafted lines from appearing austere or too serious.

"I fell in love with minimalism while working on this project," says Herzlinger. "It taught me so much. You can't get away with anything. There are no piles of pillows, no tchotchkes. Every piece of furniture has to stand alone, with integrity. You have to choose your showstopping moments with incredible care. You're called upon to be absolutely true to your design." **L**

The living room is ideal for entertaining. Awash with soothing neutral hues, its casual elegance emphasizes the house's minimalist architecture. A larger-than-life sculpture of grapes playfully accentuates the glass coffee table. A silk rug, of Herzlinger's design, underscores the room's air of subtle luxury.





The woven burled-wood walls and blue marble fireplace create a powerful textural interplay, and the marble bench provides additional seating with an architectural flourish.





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Herzlinger's foray into minimalism is only one of the ways she's reinterpreting luxury design. This month, in addition to her traditional interior design services, she will launch Jamie, a new endeavor offering clients design assistance tailored to meet their particular needs at a flat, accessible rate. "With Jamie, you go at your own pace, your own budget," says Herzlinger.


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“**Today, there's a whole new range of market and design options.** Every client has different needs, and by meeting those needs ... **I get to learn fresh ways of reinterpreting the design principles I love.**”

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The master bedroom is a model of understated opulence, with gleaming linens, wall coverings, and wood floors that possess a luminous sheen. To give a bedroom the impression of height, Herzlinger recommends commissioning a tall tufted headboard. **Left:** Oversized rabbit sculptures by Robert Kuo add a post-modern twist to the hallway's refined style.



A photograph of a modern, minimalist house with white walls and horizontal wood slat accents around the windows. The house is built on a sloped lot, with a white retaining wall in the foreground. In front of the wall, there is a row of five white lounge chairs on a light-colored patio. Behind the chairs is a planter bed filled with tall, green grasses. A swimming pool is visible in the bottom left corner. The sky is not visible, and the background shows some trees.

The pool serves as a natural extension of the house's architecture and interiors. From the living room's cream-colored armchairs to the patio's streamlined cabana chairs, Herzlinger's design possesses remarkable continuity.



Herzlinger achieves an elegant pose in the unlikeliest of settings, unloading treasures she's collected for the house.

