



AT HOME AT EVERY AGE Starting Out

For a woman in her 20s, Lilly Bunn designs a
sophisticated New York *apartment*

Interior design by LILLY BUNN Interview by CHRISTINE PITTEL Photographs by MAURA McEVoy

Designer Lilly Bunn relaxes in the Manhattan living room she designed for a young client. Glossy walls painted in Benjamin Moore Aura in Bittersweet Chocolate create a sophisticated backdrop for simple, clean-lined pieces like the Parsons coffee table, wrapped in lacquered grass cloth, from Bungalow 5. **OPPOSITE:** Dinner is served on an acrylic table by Kartell that seems to take up less space because it practically disappears. Bar table from West Elm.



A custom sofa, covered in Pindler & Pindler's Ghent, is flanked by a pair of Chippendale armchairs by Jonathan Adler. "The chairs are light and easy to move around," says Bunn. Throw pillows from Wolf Home and Madeline Weinrib add color and texture. Curtain fabric by Kravet. Anjelica lamps and Anton side tables from Bungalow 5. Sisal rug from Country Carpet.





Words of Wisdom MOVING INTO YOUR OWN PLACE

"Buy only what you love. The things you yearn for, that were a stretch to buy, that you saved for, become a lasting part of your story."

— ALESSANDRA BRANCA

"Start collecting now. Go to galleries, art shows, antiques shops, and flea markets. When you travel, pick up a watercolor or drawing or some interesting object. Collections give a place depth and history. They represent your adventures, your passions, and how it all ties together." — SARA STORY

"Know when to call in an expert. Certain jobs require a pro, and hanging wallpaper is one of them. Please don't try it yourself! You might think it's easy, but it will never, ever look like that picture you clipped from a magazine." — BETSY BURNHAM

"Look for pieces that are versatile. Maybe you fall in love with a desk, but you don't have an office in your starter home. Use it as a dining table for now and know that you can take it with you to your next apartment or house." — SUYSEL CUNNINGHAM AND ANNE FOSTER

"Even if you have small rooms, don't be afraid of bold, vibrant colors. A shock of color makes your home interesting and also allows you time to find art for your walls. Unless you're a modernist, an empty room without art feels cold. So use wallpaper or paint to make a room welcoming." — NANCY BOSZARDT

INTERVIEWS BY BARBARA KING





CHRISTINE PITTEL: This is definitely *not* your mother's living room, with those deliciously dark chocolate walls. Who lives here?

LILLY BUNN: A young woman in her 20s. This is her first grown-up apartment, and we wanted to make it glamorous and also comfortable, because most of the time she'll be here alone—she's single. Hmm. This isn't sounding so glamorous, but let me keep going. Think of Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

But Holly Golightly never got around to decorating her apartment.

I know. I was thinking more about that time in a young woman's life. You're living and working in New York. You're going out to dinners and parties and having fun. You're decorating your first apartment, and you can go a little bit overboard if you like, because it's all about you. Later on, you have to think about other people—family, children—but right now, you're not held back by anyone. You can do the things you've always wanted to do.

Like painting it the color of chocolate. Exactly. We thought that if there was one place where we could do something fantastic, it would be the walls. **Is that because paint is relatively inexpensive?**

Well it is, but we wanted a shimmer, lacquered look, and for that you really have to prep the walls and skim-coat them about a hundred times. It wasn't easy.

Was the dark color a hard sell?

No. It's a small room that doesn't get a lot of light, so we tried to turn a negative into a positive and make it feel like a dark, dramatic jewel box—but not too dark. There's a big window, and we added white curtains to offset the color of the walls. And once you put books in the bookcase, it doesn't look so dark. If she had a million things to hang on the walls, I might have left them white. But she doesn't own a lot of artwork yet. So the dark walls were a way to make the apartment feel special, and they seemed like the best place to put the money. She couldn't really



afford to buy 10 amazing pieces for the living room.

So how did you handle the furniture?

We bought a lot of it at Bungalow 5. This is the one room where she's really going to live, so you want it to be a mix of everything. You want it to be casual. You want it to be glamorous. And if you're working within a budget, it makes sense to put the glamorous part on the walls and go for comfort with the other furnishings. You want to be practical when it comes to the rug and the sofa because you're going to be using them all the time. You'll be drinking red wine and eating in front of the TV.

The rug and the sofa are both big items and both neutral. How come?

Actually, the whole room is neutral. I like to get color in with the accessories—pillows, lamps, throws, all the stuff you can change. But on a major piece, like the sofa, the fabric is a camel-color linen that could work anywhere, so she can take it with her when she moves. And it's a sofa that can survive a bit of a beating,

ABOVE: The existing kitchen cabinets were painted Benjamin Moore Aura in Black. "I wanted it to look less boring and more like a smart butler's pantry," Bunn says. Roman shade in Holland & Sherry's Belfour linen.

OPPOSITE: In the entry, a Romano mirror from Bungalow 5 picks up the purple in Phillip Jeffries's Juicy Jute grass cloth on the walls. Jacqui desk and Collette stool from Bungalow 5. Zanadoo hanging light by Arteriors. Faux-zebra rug from ABC Carpet & Home.

with cushions that could be flipped over if one side gets stained. I would never tell a soul to buy something with a tight seat.

What's the plan for entertaining?

At this age, she's probably having people over for drinks before going out. She's not cooking a big dinner. The bar table was something she already owned, and I thought it was kind of lounge-y and fun. If she did want to do a sit-down dinner, she could put four people at that acrylic games table and bring out more of those folding bamboo chairs. In a small apartment, everything has to be multipurpose. The console in the entry doubles as a desk.

What's on the walls in the entry?

It's a purple grass cloth from Philip Jeffries that I use all the time. It's dressy yet youthful. And it's a great neutral. Any color goes with it.

Most people would not think of purple as a neutral.

Well, every time I bring it into a scheme, it just works. And you know why grass cloth is so good? It hides everything. You don't have to skim-coat old walls. You just put it up.

Where did you find a purple mirror?

Bungalow 5. Isn't it amazing? It reminded me of an amethyst ring.

The light fixture looks like another piece of jewelry.

It was the one place in the apartment where we had a hanging light, so you might as well make something of it. It's feminine and flirty.

What's the concept for the bedroom?

Light, pretty, and relaxing. White walls and a cornflower-blue headboard. It's like a breath of fresh air. Since the living room is dark, we deliberately made this light in contrast. It's nice to have two options.

The bed linens become an integral part of the decoration.

White walls give you a lot of leeway with linens. She has a few sets she can change around. And always buy a duvet cover. You can make the bed in an instant and run right out to do all those things that are way more exciting than tucking in sheets.

PRODUCED BY DORETTA SPERDUTO



"I like a classic blue-and-white bedroom," Bunn says. A Madeline Weinrib pillow adds a splash of orange to the Gloria chair by Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. Vintage lamp on Bungalow 5's Frances side table. Carpet from Country Carpet. Roman shade in San Marco by China Seas from Quadrille. **OPPOSITE:** The client's bed was reupholstered in a soothing shade of blue from Gray Line Linen. Mirasol bed linens by Matouk. Walls in Benjamin Moore Aura in Decorators White. FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES