

Making for a Colorful GRAND ENTRANCE

Photography By RYANN COOLEY



Noted New York designer Katherine Stephens had her choice of projects for the annual decorator show house fundraiser for the Bronx-based Kips Bay Boys and Girls Club. She opted for the one place every visitor would have to pass through, the main entrance foyer of a six-story Upper East Side town house. It meant high visibility, and high traffic — 14,000 visitors or more in the four weeks the house was open!

“For us, this is Broadway,” says designer Katherine Stephens. The best part of a show house production is that it benefits everyone.” Each year, prominent New Yorkers raise money for the Kips Bay Boys and Girls Club. (See Chairs for Charity FABULOUS FLOORS Fall 2004). This spring, the local design talent threw its skills and experience into a brick and limestone townhouse (just off Park Avenue) boasting two entrances and a garden, high ceilings and the upscale look of hardwood floors.

“I had to help establish the look of a house people live in,” Stephens says of her project. This is why the entrance of the house, selected as her project, is so important.

“I like a dark floor. Everything nowadays is a mid-century revival. The 1950s dark floors are popular again, something I haven’t really seen for a long time. I wanted dark, not black, for the medallion, almost a deep walnut. New colors mean so many choices, and also I don’t have to mix to get exactly the color I want.”

As she explained it, the floor was first stained. For the medallion look, Stephens opted to stencil a design in five colors to look like an inlaid ship’s box or wheelwright carpentry. After the medallion was stenciled, stain was applied by hand with a foam brush and finished by Joe Scerri of Scerri Quality Wood Floors.

The whole floor was done in Minwax® Wood Finish™ Red Mahogany. The medallion was achieved using five colors of Minwax® Wood Finish™ — Ebony, Dark Walnut, Puritan Pine, Provincial and Colonial Maple and finished with Minwax® Super Fast-Drying Polyurethane for Floors in satin.

In show house events, designers, Stephens says, get exposure to the media and the public, vendors who lend items get visibility and credit and owners of the home (which is for sale) get an immaculate makeover. Charities get proceeds from the price of admission and items purchased by visitors. 🏡



