

SETH WILLIAMS:
SAVIOR OR SLEAZEBALL?
BY ROBERT HUBER

A (REALLY) DELUXE
APARTMENT IN THE SKY
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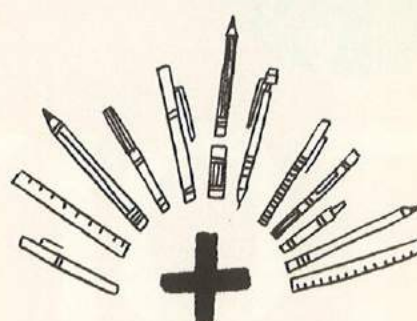
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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TAKE ONE WORLD-FAMOUS ARCHITECT, ONE ACCLAIMED INTERIOR DESIGNER, AND HALF A FLOOR OF A SOCIETY HILL HIGH-RISE? YOU GET JAMES TIMBERLAKE AND MEG RODGERS'S ECLECTIC SHELTER IN THE SKY.

THE VIEW IS INCREDIBLE.

The city, stretching out below Marguerite (Meg) Rodgers and James Timberlake's 31st-floor condo in the Society Hill Towers, seems to glow, especially as night falls. From this perch, cars look like blinking fireflies, and the Philadelphia we know at street level—noisy, frenzied—appears beautiful and calm.

The Rodgers/Timberlake home, with its serene tonal color palette and clean lines, is at once removed from the city's electric bustle and an intimate part of it, thanks to three vast walls of windows (which can be covered with motorized blinds at the touch of a button). The Asian-inspired aesthetic, muted color scheme and rich woods give the space an air of worldly sophistication, but there's levity to balance: A gas line in the dining area is layered with slate and exhibits loopy chalk drawings by the couple's 10-year-old daughter, Veronica; a life-size vinyl wall decal of a football player fiercely presides over 14-year-old Harrison's room.

The home was a labor of love. Meg, owner of interior design firm Marguerite Rodgers, and James, founding partner of internationally renowned architecture firm KieranTimberlake, combined three apartments into one space, linking them via a corridor that runs along the east perimeter of the house. "It was based on a Japanese teahouse," says Meg. "There's a calmness, a real serenity, to Japa-

nese and Chinese architecture and design. I like the simplicity, the proportions, the key elements of light."

The project was decidedly not easy. It took nearly eight years to accumulate all three apartments and another three to plan, gut and completely renovate them all; the family didn't finally settle in until 2009. Throughout the ordeal, Meg was pragmatic in her design approach: "I worked with James the way I would with a client. I pulled all my ideas together and scheduled a meeting with him to go over it." Getting two of the most sought-after design minds together in one spot can be difficult—even when these particular two design minds happen to be married to one another.

But now, up here overlooking the city at night, things are quiet. At least until tomorrow, when Meg and James and Veronica and Harrison leave the plush serenity behind and head downstairs to their busy lives in the buzzing, colorful city below.



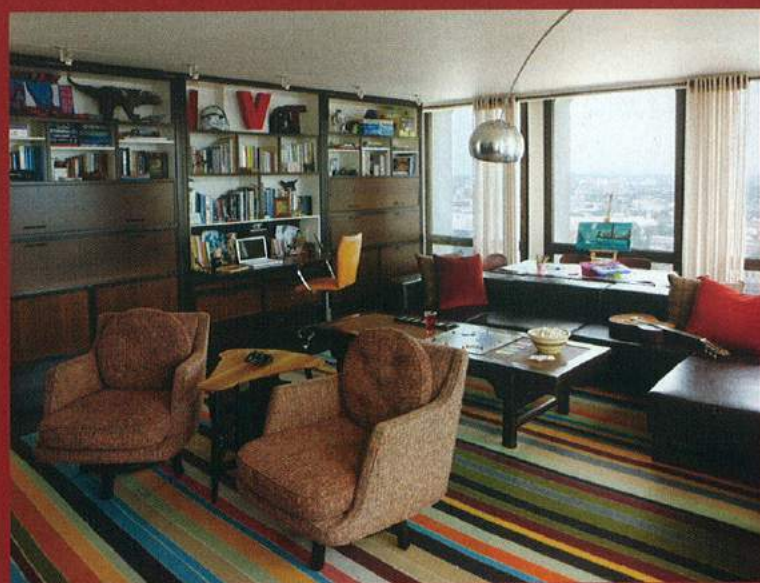
THE LIFE ECLECTIC

OPENING SPREAD: The great room is layered with low-profile furniture that doesn't obstruct the view. Small seating vignettes make the open space feel more intimate, they include sofas of Meg's own design, Edward Wormley for Dunbar leather chairs, Hans Wegner wood chaises, and John Hutton for Holly Hunt swivel chairs. The coffee table at left is a raffia-topped Chinese daybed Meg found at Callowhill's Liao Collection; the painted screen is from Lambertville's Rago Arts and Auction Center. **THIS PAGE:** A cozy nook in the den features a chair by Robert Venturi, an architect James worked with for nearly a decade. The globe is by Hans Wegner, and the pau ferro wood built-in bookshelf was custom-designed by Meg.



EASTERN INFLUENCE

Rather than break up the home's expansive view—which encompasses three sides of the tower, with walls of windows overlooking the north, south and east—the couple took design cues from Japanese teahouses and moved the living spaces to the center. They're joined by a long corridor that runs along the entire east side of the building, from the great room on the south end to the playroom and master bedroom to the north. Sliding shoji-style doors line the hallway and give privacy to the two kids' rooms and the den. The herringbone floors are dark-stained cork.



ANIMAL HOUSE

TOP: Meg's collection of animal art covers the walls of the den. Many paintings are of pets she's had over the years (the family currently has four cats); others are providential auction finds. "They're not the classic English portraits," she says. "Whenever I buy a new piece, I have to rearrange the entire wall." Walls are painted in Benjamin Moore's Copper Clay. Cane side tables flank a J. Robert Scott sleep sofa, and a dark rosewood trunk from Liao serves as a coffee table. The mid-century lamps are by Carl Auböck, and a Rug & Co. stitched-hide floor covering adds earthy texture. Woven leather chairs are by Jens Risom. **LEFT:** Harrison and Veronica spend most of their time in their light-drenched playroom. Meg designed the walnut-stained mahogany built-in shelving for ample storage; pull-down shelves offer additional desk space. A West Elm sofa is practical, the vintage Edward Wormley table and chairs are delightfully retro, and a felt Odegard rug adds a bright dash of color. The coffee table is an antique Chinese daybed; Meg had the legs shortened so it could function in the room.





SERENITY NOW

The master bedroom is a study in subtle glamour. Walls feature a custom Venetian plaster co-developed by Meg and hand-applied by Philadelphia's Faux-Fax; threads of gold and silver leaf lend the walls a warm luster. An antique Chinese desk is Meg's bedside table; the quirky set-up maximizes space. The bed and sconces are by Roman Thomas; the nubuck-suede upholstered desk chair is by Mattalano. A piece of moonstone from China hangs above the desk. "It's a meditative piece. It looks like a landscape," says Meg.



ART SHOW

TOP: Meg custom-designed the built-in wet bar, it was crafted by Philadelphia cabinetmaker Mark Jewett. As for the rich color choice, "That was something my husband wanted very much—places where there was a shot of color," Meg says. Roman Thomas sconces light the Macassar ebony countertop. To the right of the bar hangs what appears to be a fine art piece: It's actually three shelves from a Japanese lacquer shop. "We realized that every time the artisans put down the lacquer cans, they'd make these rings. It looks intentional, but it's repurposed," Meg says. She found a circa-1950s woodworking project by an RISD student at Old City's Mode Moderne. It hangs beside a Nakashima dining table, a quiet nod to Meg's former days as a woodworker. **RIGHT:** A hallway acts as a gallery of sorts for architectural drawings and paintings by James and his partner, Stephen Kieran. On the facing wall hangs MoMA's Rubber Stamp Portfolio and two paintings by Louis Kahn, one of Philadelphia's most influential architects. All artwork is hung on a rod display system for flexibility.





FAMILY STYLE

The open kitchen is simple and functional. Nakashima stools from the Mode Moderne line on a walnut-topped island, while a secondary island gets a more industrial look with a thick stainless steel countertop by Downsview Kitchens, through Philadelphia's Joanne Hudson Associates. "We wanted to have everything hidden," says Meg. Joanne Hudson installed a floor-to-ceiling wall of inconspicuous Downsview cabinets painted in a custom matte lacquer that softens the space. "We painted it to look like parchment," Meg says.