

Property Search

For Sale For Rent Min. Price (\$) Max. Price (\$) Bedrooms Property Type

Go

More In Real Estate

Great Homes & Destinations Commercial Real Estate

Help / FAQ Advanced Search »

Show Only: Open Houses New Developments

ON LOCATION | DUMBO, BROOKLYN

Colors to Make Dumbo Blush



Trevor Tondro for The New York Times

The Lawson-Fenning Griffin lounge chairs are covered in custom pink tweed. The credenza is by Julian Chichester. More Photos »

By TIM McKEOUGH Published: February 27, 2013

When Ryan Foster and Anne Maxwell Foster expressed interest in buying an industrial-style loft in Dumbo, even their real estate agent was surprised. "She was, like: 'Are you sure you like this place? It's very Brooklyn,'" Ms. Maxwell Foster recalled.

That's because Ms. Maxwell Foster is an owner of Tilton Fenwick, an interior design firm known for its fresh take on a traditional aesthetic. She likes tufted upholstery in brightly colored fabrics, vividly patterned wallpaper and other touches that create a sense of comfort and continuity. And the apartment was the antithesis of that: a newly constructed space with all the drawbacks you might expect (laminat countertops with exposed plywood edges, utility-grade lighting) and not much warmth or personality. It didn't seem like a good fit.

Multimedia



Slide Show

In Dumbo, Showing an Industrial Aesthetic the Door

Search for Properties in Popular Locations

USA

- AZ Phoenix » Scottsdale » CA Beverly Hills » Los Angeles » Napa » Sonoma » CO Aspen » Boulder » Breckenridge » Denver » Vail » FL Miami » Naples » Palm Beach » Sarasota » Tampa » West Palm Beach » MA Boston » Hyannis » Nantucket » NV Las Vegas »

INTERNATIONAL

- Canada British Columbia » Manitoba » Nova Scotia » Ontario » Quebec » By Country France » Mexico » Spain » All Other Locations Advanced Search »

Post an Ad Sell or Rent Your Home on Great Homes »



Pantogia Exclusive villa on two levels with 4,000 ...

Sotheby's INTERNATIONAL REALTY



231 Coggeshall Avenue Great location, steps to Bailey's Beach, ...

Sotheby's INTERNATIONAL REALTY



Bringing Great New England Properties to the Global Marketplace since 1968

LandVest



But Ms. Maxwell Foster, 30, and her business partner, Suysel dePedro Cunningham, 36, saw potential. They loved the big windows and the view of Manhattan, Ms. dePedro Cunningham said. “The things that we didn’t like about the space, like finishes,” she added, “were easily fixed.”

True, Ms. Maxwell Foster said, she “might be the most traditional person who lives in Dumbo.” But her husband was enthusiastic about the neighborhood — in part, he said, because “I couldn’t remove my finance cap.”

A credit trader at a hedge fund, Mr. Foster, 31, was convinced the area was on the rise. “I felt very strongly about the investment aspect of the property,” he said. “For me, that was the big factor.”

The Fosters bought the 1,200-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment last March for \$885,000. Then Ms. Maxwell Foster and Ms. dePedro Cunningham embarked on a two-and-a-half-month, \$100,000 renovation, softening the rough edges.

They tore out the countertops, most of the bath fixtures and fittings, and even the coat closet near the front door, to make room for a foyer. They transformed the windowless home office into a master bedroom (although it still has no windows). The old master bedroom became part of the living room, with a Murphy bed and a sliding barn door that allow it to function as a guest room. And the generous windowed walk-in closet became a nursery (the Fosters are expecting their first child in April).

Then they added the furniture, fabric, hardware, light fixtures and wallpaper that would create the warm, inviting feeling they wanted. In the new foyer, they finished a wall with red lacquer and added a console and a pair of vintage Lucite stools. In one of the two bathrooms, they lined the walls with a multicolored marbled wallpaper, replaced a pedestal sink with a marble-top vanity and covered the tile floor with woven vinyl that looks like carpeting.

And in the master bedroom, a canary-yellow headboard, floral bedding from D. Porthault and another wallpaper — this one a pattern called Lotus, from Farrow & Ball — create the illusion of a sun-filled room.

Wallpaper, Ms. dePedro Cunningham said, is one of their signatures. “We usually use wallpaper in multiple rooms,” she said, adding that they’ve had only one client who refused wallcovering of any kind.

In the dining area, they surrounded a zinc-topped table with vintage chairs upholstered in a graphic black-and-white pattern. Overhead, they hung a pendant lamp with a chain cover in hot pink, a color repeated in the living room’s fuchsia lounge chairs.

It’s an apartment with a decidedly feminine appeal, Ms. Maxwell Foster admitted.

“We’ve met men who would never go for hot-pink chairs in their living room,” she said, not to mention floral bedding. “But it still somehow works for a man, and Ryan feels totally comfortable. He’s a dream client.”

For his part, Mr. Foster seemed unfazed by the pink upholstery and florals.

“To be honest, I haven’t put much thought into it,” he said. “But I’m a fan of their aesthetic.”



1028 Gambelli Dr
Enter exclusive Lakeview Estates and discover ...

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



Through Flat - Malesherbes
Boulevard Malesherbes, close to Saint Augustin ...

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



4196 N 100th Way
Magnificent Old World Custom Home situated ...

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

The New York Times
UNLIMITED DIGITAL ACCESS INCLUDING FREE NYT NOW
4 WEEKS FOR 99¢ [Try it now](#)