

# Bathed in Light

AN AIRY PENTHOUSE WITH THREE FLOORS AND A THREE-WAY VIEW

Architectural and Interior Design by  
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It's quite simply the snappiest bath in New York—a place to bathe, lounge, talk, put on your make-up, take in the view, open up your heart. “We really like living in our bathroom,” admits James Fifield, who shares a Manhattan penthouse with his wife, Betsy, and eight-year-old daughter, Allison, “so we made it a focal point instead of something usually hidden from the public eye.”

The former president of EMI Music pauses, musing over his expansive *salon de toilette*, with its floor-to-ceiling windows boasting panoramic views of downtown and the Hudson River. “People always ask how it feels to be surrounded by windows. There are blinds for privacy, and at night you can see the river and skyline. I love it. It's actually very relaxing. We have a sofa, an ottoman, a fireplace, a great sound system and, of course, the Japanese-style tub that holds almost 300 gallons. It's fun,” he chuckles, “the most extravagant bathroom you can have.”

To say the least. “It's like a living room,” Stephen Sills says of the bath that he and partner James Huniford, who goes by Ford, designed for the Fifields' sleek and modern pad. “When they told us they spent most of their time in the bathroom in Aspen”—another Sills Huniford concoction, featuring sofas and side-by-side marble tubs (see



**ABOVE:** Design team Stephen Sills and James Huniford reworked a Manhattan apartment for James and Betsy Fifield. “The stair was inspired by a visit to Pierre Chareau's private house in Paris,” says Huniford. The prints at the stair landing are by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa.

**OPPOSITE:** The living room's design is based on architect Robert Mallet-Stevens's “clean, open spaces flooded with light,” says Sills. The pair of Italian sling chairs “set the tone for the whole apartment—modern, simple, beautiful,” says Betsy Fifield. Edelman leather on chaise and floor.



"When I see other designers' work, I find myself wanting to remove things from the tabletops and clean it up," says Jim Fifield. "Ford and Stephen understand how I feel." **BELOW:** The sitting room's ottomans are by Frank Lloyd Wright. Scalamandré pillow silk. Stark carpet.



Bringing the outdoors in was a major goal in the design of this jazzy urban tree house.



**RIGHT:** “The family-size concrete tub is the focus of the master bath,” says Huniford. “We tend to give our baths the best views,” notes Betsy Fifield. “This tub creates a certain attitude and is a wonderful place from which to enjoy the scenery.” Near the tub is an Eero Saarinen table.



**ABOVE:** “This room is used all the time—we just sit here and read,” says Jim Fifield. “It’s more a community space than a bath,” adds Betsy Fifield. Sills and Huniford designed the polished-concrete island, which holds his-and-her vanities. The Lucite chair is 1960s.

bronze, are lighted inside,” says Huniford, “so at night it gives the illusion that the staircase is floating off the walls.”

When it came to the furnishings, both Fifields knew what they wanted—or didn’t. “This is a new-beginning apartment,” says Betsy Fifield. “I liked the idea of not having any baggage or furniture from the past, so the only things that we brought with us were the Jaime Plensa and Terry Winters prints and the two André Dubreuil Spine chairs in the bathroom.” Adds her husband,

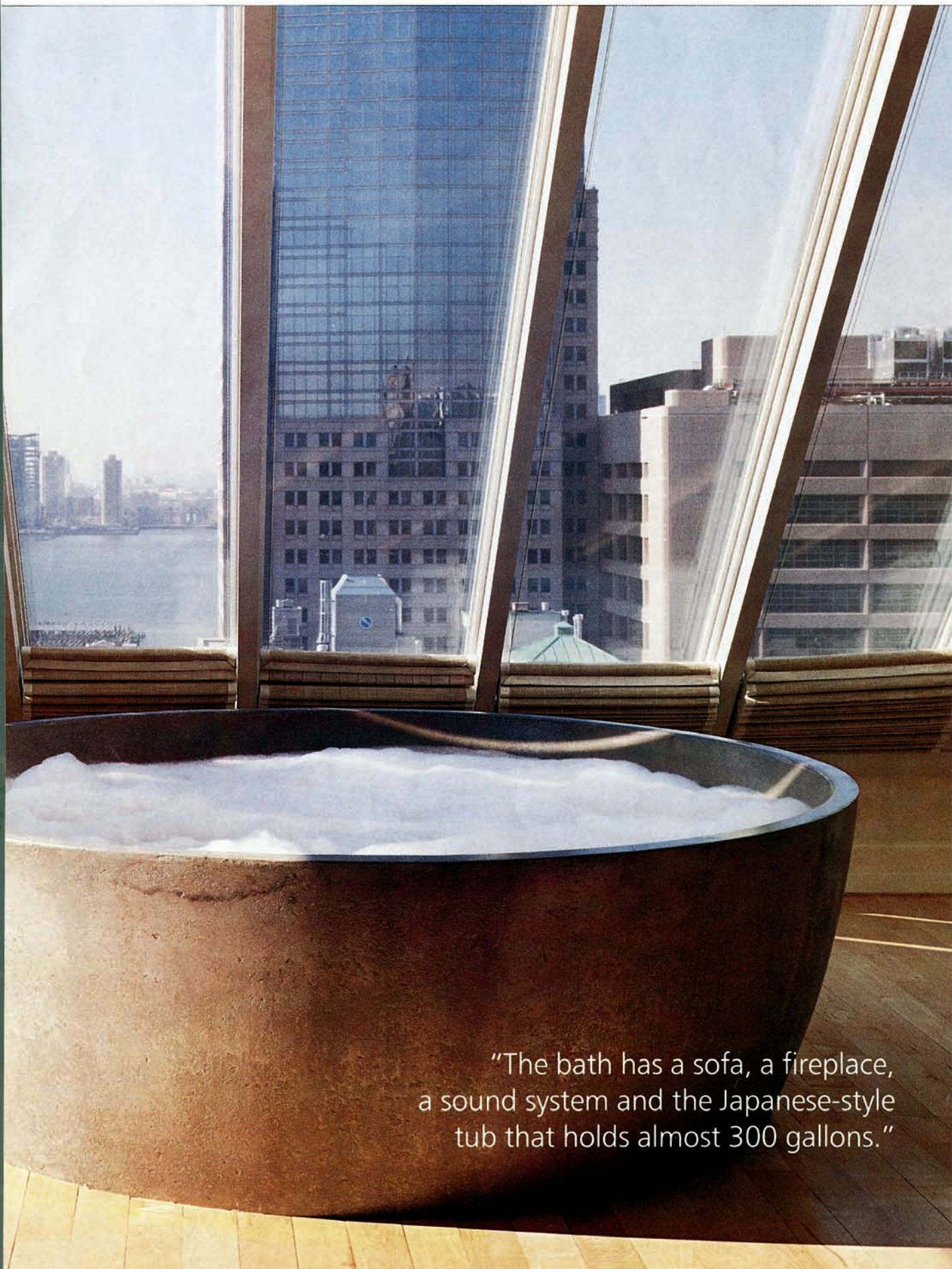
“Being fond of architecture, we wanted to minimize the conflict between architectural lines and furniture. Because we want the architecture to show through, we don’t have a lot of paintings or accessories. To me, furniture is more interesting than art. I get much more aesthetic enjoyment out of seeing a great-looking chair than a picture.”

The sentiment is shared by Sills and Huniford. “This apartment is a story about chairs,” says Stephen Sills. “It’s subtle, but throughout the space are modern and quirky chairs used as decorative pieces—there’s a pair by Frank Lloyd Wright and two by Paul Dupré-Lafon.”

However, what the Fifields wanted most—and got—is an apartment as simple and hassle-free as their lifestyle. “They wanted to be able to

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