

# Living LARGE

Movie mogul **Meryl Poster** feels right at home in her Upper East Side prewar abode.

BY SUE HOSTETLER PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN LEI

To get a taste of how the character Betty Suarez on *Ugly Betty* must feel around the cool fashion editors at her fictional *Mode* magazine, spend some time with Meryl Poster at her Upper East Side apartment. The ultimate alpha female, Poster succeeded in the shark-infested waters of the movie business, spending 16 years at Miramax Films producing blockbusters like *Chicago*, *Chocolat*, and *The Cider House Rules*. She also survived Harvey Weinstein, famously sending him to anger-management specialists while working as his head of production.

Photographs chronicling her glamorous life—Poster with leaders of the free world (Clinton), Oscar winners (Streep, Zellweger), and icons (Madonna)—mix with prestigious awards like a Golden Globe and a platinum record. It's enough to make a reporter a bit self-conscious about her own residential shrine of success (somehow a framed YOGA CAMP PARTICIPANT certificate and photo with William Shatner don't pack the same punch).

But even more impressive than Poster's accomplishments is her straightforward, down-to-earth nature. A born New Yorker, she holds a genuine appreciation for the life she's built and the city she calls home. "I never take for granted that I live in the greatest city in the world," she says. "I come from a long line of Manhattan women. My great-grandmother came here from Russia in 1904 and settled on the Upper West Side, where my grandmother and mother then also lived."





Interior designer Julie Hillman created a fresh and modern look for the den, matching bold colors with a patterned wallpaper.



## IN FAVOR

Upper East Sider **Meryl Poster** lets us in on her neighborhood favorites.

**GIFT STORE:** "I love **EAT Gifts**. There was a time when I knew almost every item in that store." *1062 Madison Avenue, 212-861-2544; elizabar.com.*

**WORKOUT PLACE:** "I spin and train at **The Studio**. Owner and instructor James Park is inspiring." *147 East 72nd Street, 212-744-6667; thestudio-nyc.com.*

**PIZZA:** "We all love a good slice—mine comes from a favorite haunt from high school, **Mariella Pizza**." *965 Lexington Avenue, 212-249-2065.*

**SUSHI:** "**Ko Sushi** is delicious and has incredibly fast delivery service." *1329 Second Avenue, 212-439-1678.*

**MOVIE THEATER:** "My secret movie theater (until now!) is the **AMC Loews Kips Bay**—it's clean and never crowded." *570 Second Avenue, 212-447-0638; amctheatres.com.*

**SALON:** "**Paul Labrecque** is where I go for massages, manicures, and waxing." *171 East 65th Street, 212-988-7816; paullabrecque.com.* "I also love **Gita Gabriel Salon and Spa** for eyebrow work, facials, and spray tanning. [It's] very private and I recommend her to my celebrity friends." *30 East 60th Street, 212-486-1539.*

**HER KIDS' FAVORITE STORE:** "**State News** has everything from magazines and candy to baking products, toys, and Halloween costumes." *1243 Third Avenue, 212-879-8076.*





- 1 The kitchen's open layout makes the spot a family favorite.
- 2 Seven-year-old Jed's impressive collection of Pez dispensers.
- 3 The Nancy Corzine mirrored dressing table adorned with family photos in Poster's bedroom.
- 4 Poster has received many awards and accolades for her movies over the years.
- 5 Shelves in daughter Ava's room house an array of snow globes from around the world.
- 6 Star treatment for a kid's room.

THIS PAGE: The elevator up to the apartment opens to a private foyer.

Poster's involvement in the entertainment business seems to have been predestined. When she was young, her grandmother would let her skip school and accompany her to the movies (rather astonishing, considering that she was a New York City public school teacher). "When I was young, instead of taking my brother and me to the park, she always took us to the theater or a movie double feature," says Poster. "She told us all about Clark Gable and Shirley Temple. Somehow it was inevitable that we'd both end up in show business." (Her brother is noted music supervisor Randall Poster.)

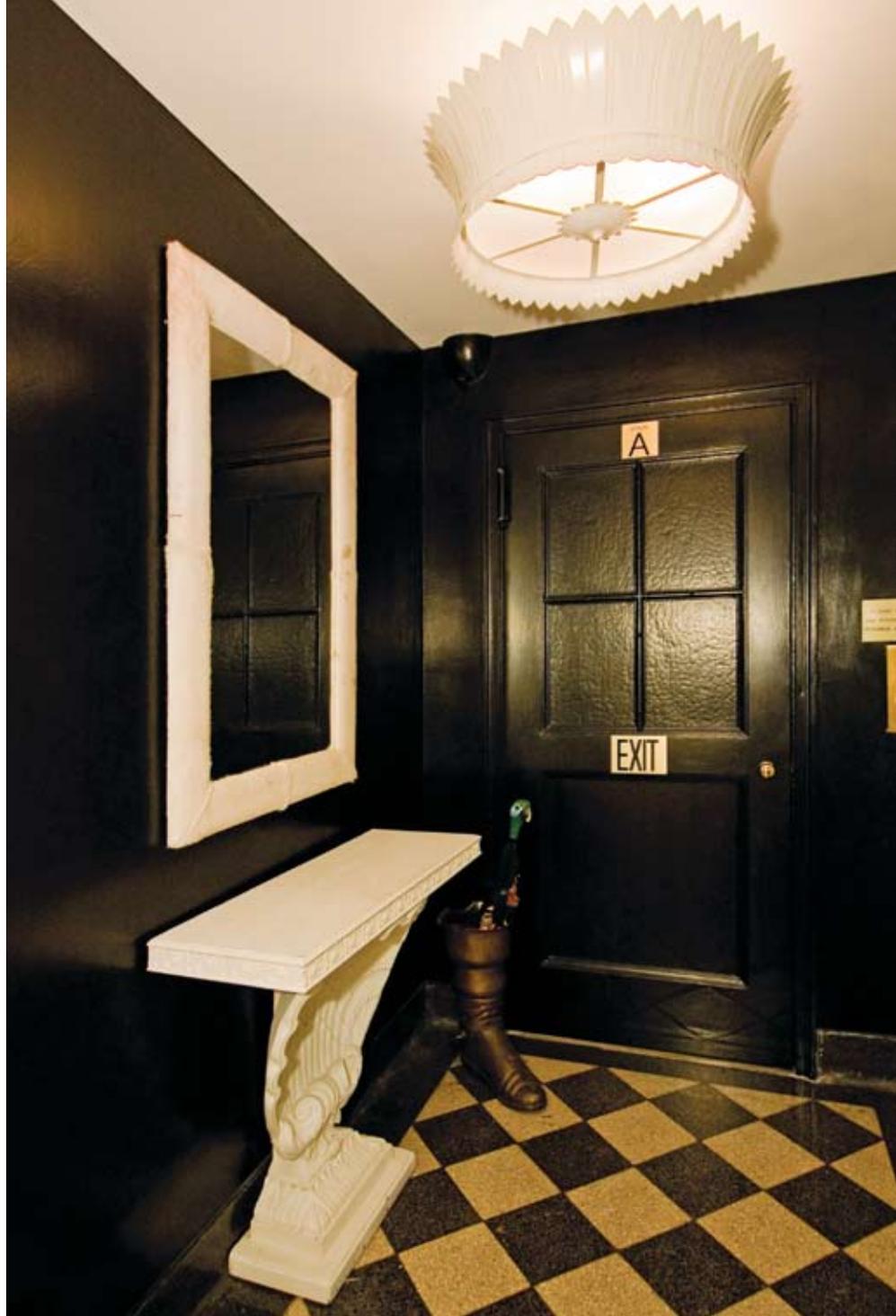
The renovation of her expansive prewar co-op has evolved organically—a room or two whenever inspiration strikes. Popular interior designer Julie Hillman recently helped transform the guest room, entry foyer, and sprawling kitchen and den into chic modern spaces. "Meryl let me know from the beginning that the movie business is her forte and decorating is mine," she says. "Her only criteria was that each room have its own style." The bright and inviting kitchen seems to be the heart of the home for Poster and her two children, 10-year-old Ava and seven-year-old Jed. "It's our favorite area, where we spend the most time," says Poster with a laugh. "It's where homework is done, art projects are made, take-out is eaten, and yes, where TV is watched."

The apartment is warm with a casual elegance and old-school charm. Instead of trendy, status-worthy furnishings, the space features antique pieces (like the sycamore commode that graces the formal entrance) and items with important personal history. "I would definitely call my style eclectic," Poster says when discussing the tossed-off, authentic aesthetic of the home. "I love collections, so the apartment is stuffed with stuff!"

This passion has clearly been passed down to her children. Ava's pink room features more than 100 snow globes; Jed's room boasts his collection of comic books and Pez dispensers. Poster's own bedroom serves as a serene refuge where she can retreat from a dizzying schedule. A particularly delightful touch is a feminine Nancy Corzine mirrored dressing table overlooking an enchanting terrace that wraps around the west side of the apartment.

The private sanctuary will be needed more than ever now, as Poster faces the challenges of producing television programs for NBC and films for Universal Pictures. "I saw the Broadway show *In the Heights* a little over two years ago and loved it," says Poster. "I was able to secure the film rights, and now we're talking to directors and actors. I also recently produced a pilot for Bravo called *Fashionability*, about everything fashionable in pop culture. I'm very excited about this show and the fact that it would shoot here in New York, right near my apartment."

One can't help but wonder if Poster ever dreams of a less frenetic lifestyle, maybe outside the city? "That's funny," she says. "I recently asked my daughter if she'd like to move to an actual house in the suburbs, and she replied, 'No way, Mom, I'm a city girl.' I guess that about sums it up." **G**



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—DESIGNER JULIE HILLMAN