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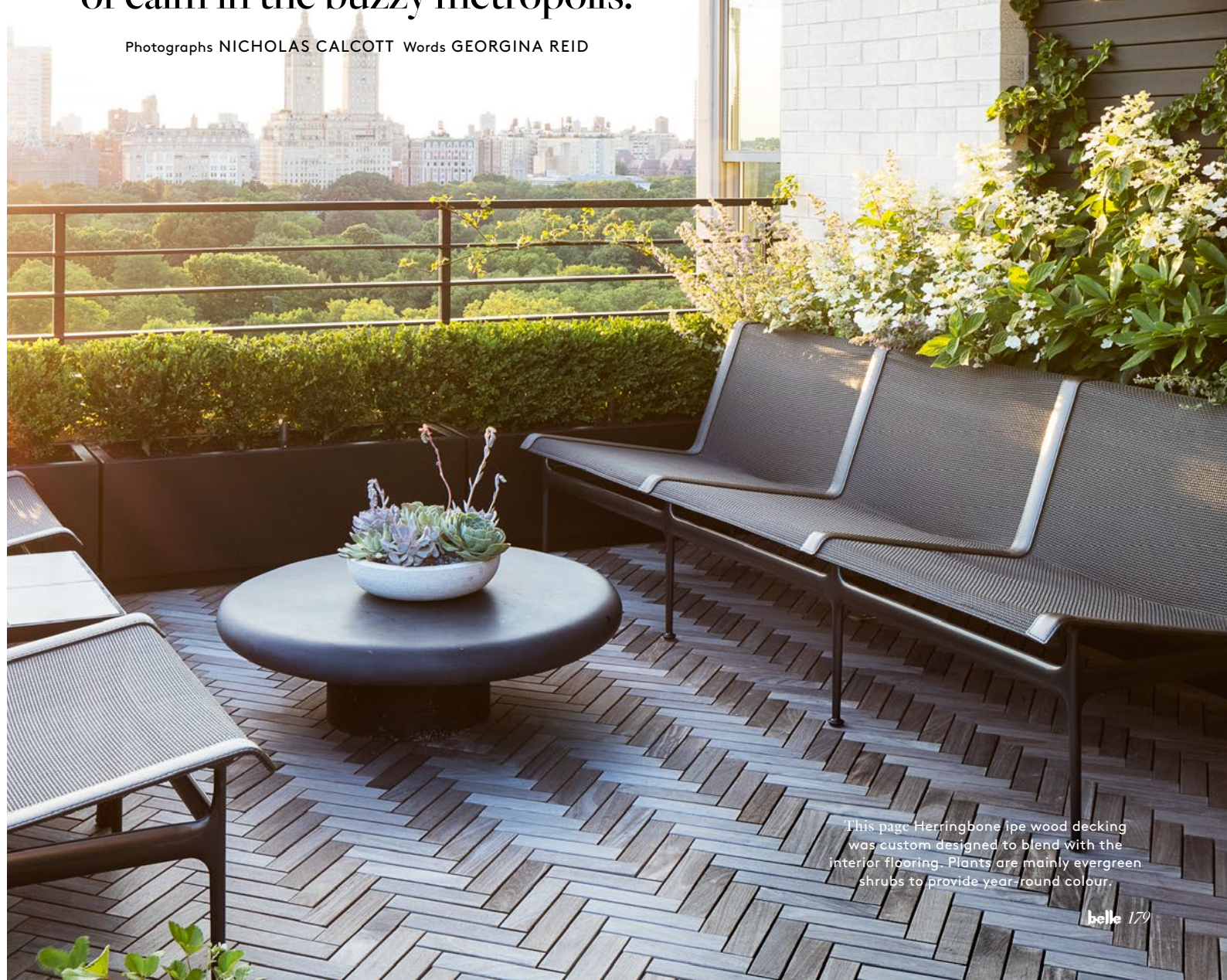
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UP ON THE ROOF

A glamorous terrace atop a Manhattan building offers an oasis of calm in the buzzy metropolis.

Photographs NICHOLAS CALCOTT Words GEORGINA REID



This page Herringbone ipe wood decking was custom designed to blend with the interior flooring. Plants are mainly evergreen shrubs to provide year-round colour.



Soaring high above the swarms of yellow taxis and pedestrians on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue is an outdoor oasis of calm, restraint and refuge. This small roof terrace was designed and installed by Jacqueline and Damien Harrison of Harrison Green, an Australian husband and wife design duo based in New York City.

The client's brief was to make the terrace feel like an extension of the interior. Given the small size of the project (just over 30 square metres), it was also important that the layout was open and flexible. The design, unsurprisingly, was inspired by the terrace's awesome location. "The terrace is perched just above the tree canopy of Central Park – it's the quintessential NYC skyline," says Damien Harrison. "We knew whatever we did needed to be rich enough to feel appropriate, but at the same time simple enough to not compete with the amazing backdrop."

The interior of the apartment was designed by Carol Egan Interiors and Andre Tchelistcheff Architects. "The apartment design is sophisticated and tailored, while still feeling rich and textured," says Damien. "It was very important that the terrace met the same standards." The pair achieved this with their refined design sensibility and incredible attention to detail – even custom designing ipe wood herringbone decking to seamlessly connect with the interior floors. "It was quite complicated to make it work, but we got there," Damien says.

Like the decking, much of the built elements used in the space were also custom designed. Powder-coated black aluminium planters blend seamlessly with the existing balustrade, concealing an ugly bulkhead; while a black-stained cedar trellis contrasts with the white brick and also provides a structure for climbing vines.

Plants play an important role within the design, of course. Part of the client's brief was for year-round greenery. "The client wanted to be able to look out the window in January and see green," says Damien.

"The bulk of the planting is made up of evergreen shrubs, with perennials and a deciduous tree providing seasonal interest." The terrace is also very exposed and windy, so the plants needed to be tough enough to cope with the extreme conditions.

The perimeter of the terrace is planted with tightly clipped box hedges (*Buxus sempervirens*). As well as giving a soft green backdrop to the space, the plants also provide a strong visual link to the tree canopy of Central Park. To create a sense of seasonality, a combination of climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala petiolaris*), Tardiva hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata 'Tardiva'*), white rhododendron (*Rhododendron 'Chionoides'*), catmint (*Nepeta 'Six Hills Giant'*), and white carpet roses were planted in a large planter backing the apartment wall – a considered palette of grey, white and green.

As can often be the case, the approval process was quite a challenge, according to Damien. "Every built element needed to be engineered and approved by the building's architect and engineer to prove it wouldn't blow off the terrace," he says. "Even the furniture is tied down with cables!"

Despite its challenges and size, this terrace really packs a punch. It's a great example of the beauty of simplicity, quality materials and finishes and great design. It has balance and connects seamlessly with the apartment's interior while celebrating the surrounding environment. "It has design integrity in its own right, and at the same time it doesn't compete or distract from the view," Damien says.

Damien and Jacqueline Harrison are really happy with the end result. As is often the case with successful design projects, the pair credit their client for their trust and openness. "It was a great collaboration," Damien says. "Strong client relationships make a huge difference, and always result in better built outcomes."

For more go to harrisongreen.com.

