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# Carson Kressley's New York City Apartment Boasts Regency and Rustic Flair

The former *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* star's Manhattan abode is equal parts cozy and elegant.

BY KELLY ALLEN AND STYLIST: JOHN DITTRICK | PUBLISHED: MAY 18, 2023

SAVE ARTICLE

"I'm always like, it's the poor part of Park Avenue—it's not the fancy part," Carson Kressley quips, referring to his primary residence in New York's Murray Hill neighborhood. "I fell in love with it because it looked and felt like apartments that I saw in old New York City sitcoms in the 1970s, specifically *The Odd Couple*."

While not immediately flashy, the prewar building has a storied history and ample character. Built in the 1930s, it was owned by a church before it became a hotel. Now, it's a co-op with a striking lobby (think black-and-white checkered floors and handsome molding), and there's even a vegan restaurant in the former chapel. In 2003, the Emmy-award-winning TV personality and former *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* star purchased a one-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bathroom unit in the building. After renovating it, he moved in the following year. And for the past two decades, he's been filling it with design details that make the place a true reflection of his style and personality.



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Carson Kressley poses in his New York City kitchen.

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"It's a cozy little space, just under a thousand square feet," Kressley says. "What I love about it is that it has so many nooks and crannies and so many moments happening throughout the apartment that it really feels like it's much bigger."

As a self-proclaimed "amateur interior designer," especially when he moved in during the early aughts, Kressley always takes cues from the building and location when designing interiors. For his city abode, Regency felt like a solid starting point. "But because I'm a real country bumpkin and I love horses and farms and spend a lot of time in Kentucky, it has a lot of those elements," Kressley says. **"So I call the design style Kentucky Regency."**

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The renovation involved turning the breakfast bar, with an open serving window through to the kitchen, into a built-in bar flanked by bookshelves. In the kitchen, black-and-white checkered flooring was added—an ode to the building's lobby. The kitchen and the bedroom share a wall, so he had the interiors of the kitchen cabinets knocked out—keeping the fronts as faux cabinets—to make space for built-in drawers in the bedroom. "I have more clothes than I have cookware, so I was like, *Let's jigsaw puzzle this space and get me some more clothing storage.*"

While Kressley knew the vibe he was going for, he didn't have a fleshed-out plan when it came to furnishings and decor (which he notes is "very naughty and designers frown on that"). As someone who travels often and shops frequently, Kressley has collected items he's loved over the years that "somehow miraculously and magically seem to work together," he says.

Mirrored surfaces and chrome accents mix with animal prints and horse-themed wall art. Some pieces were sourced from resale shops, like the 1960s Broyhill dining chairs that "looked like the chairs the Brady Bunch had." Others are treasured gifts and a mix of high and low items, from the Jonathan Adler credenza in the sunken living room to the T.J. Maxx equestrian prints in the bedroom.

Filled with character, the apartment remains an excellent urban base for when Kressley—a longtime competitive equestrian—isn't off earning a world title for horse breeds or escaping to his farm in Pennsylvania. Not to mention, the dolled-up dwelling is fit for the endless parties he loves to host, with as many as 100 guests at a time. "Interior design is very autobiographical for me," Kressley says. "It really tells my life story."

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## Gallery



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Near the sunken living room and along the built-in bar, a small hallway is lined with a wrought iron railing that's original to the apartment. Framed wall art, a bust, a chair with print upholstery, and a zebra rug tie the passageway to the balcony together. "I have a degree in fine art; I've always loved art," Kressley says of the pieces throughout the apartment.

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## Living Area

*Pictured above.*

Right at anyone's footsteps upon entering, the sunken living room is the focal point of the apartment. It's anchored by a rug from Old World Weavers. "It has the glamor of leopard, but it's not too slick and not too in your face," Kressley says. "Because it's been distressed by sandblasting, it feels a little bit more masculine, a little bit more lived in." Not to mention, it shows no dirt and wears well.

A custom chocolate brown sofa in silk velvet upholstery and a mirrored console from a Neiman Marcus outlet store, found while Kressley was filming for *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* in Dallas, enhance the room's elegance. On

For quiet eye for the bright city in Dallas, enhance the room's elegance. On the console are two Brazilian horns mounted in lucite, a gift from a dear friend.



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To modernize the space, Kressley added two white boucle chairs from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams. Kressley explains: "I saw them in their showroom in High Point, North Carolina, and I was like, I think I told Mitchell, *I have to have those*. And they very graciously gave those to me. So they're modern. They're organic. I think they really freshen up the space and make it feel current."

## Bar





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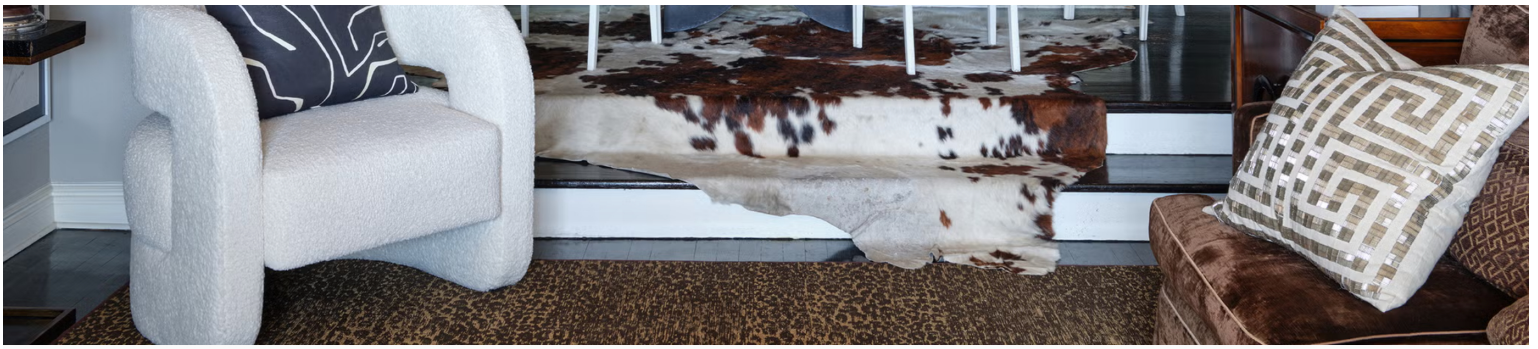
Antique mercury glass lines the built-in bar to make it look bigger and boost the abode's Regency style. Back lighting spotlights the area, and a glass shelf holds drinkware for easy cocktail-making. "It's where I keep my Emmy, so in that mirrored corner it looks like I have three instead of just one," Kressley says. "It's a good optical illusion."

Built-in bookshelves are filled with coffee table books on Kressley's favorite subjects: fashion, architecture, New York City, and horses. Other trophies and horse photos sit on the shelves. The oversized nailhead trim on the bookshelves matches the nailhead trim on the dining room banquette.

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## Dining Area





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A custom banquette in a camel-back shape is upholstered in linen and features a nailhead trim. It easily seats 14 with the help of vintage Broyhill dining chairs. "The table was custom made, and it has the double C base that is a nod to Chanel, but it's also a nod to my monogram as well for Carson," Kressley says.



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Kressley jazzed up a Murano glass chandelier with leopard print lampshades from Ballard Design. On the walls are family heirloom horse prints and a modern screen print by the artist Joe Andoe.

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## Kitchen



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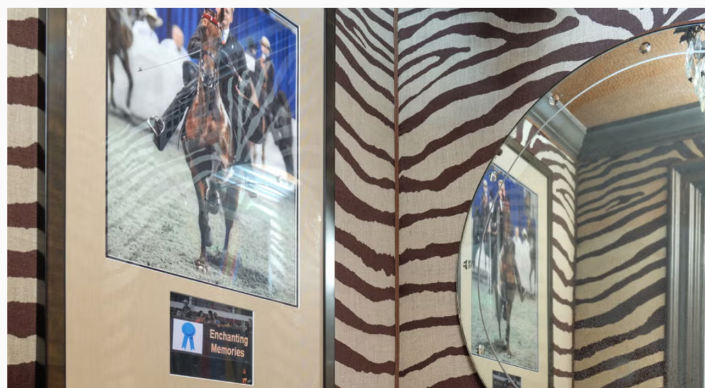
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"I do a lot of takeout, and I do a lot of reheating," Kressley says. With not much actual cooking going on, he gave the kitchen a mini makeover. Glass front cabinets show off some china and serving ware. A pink illy espresso machine pops against the clean, white cabinetry. A lively plant brings energy to the casement window, which overlooks the East River.

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## Powder Room





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Walls upholstered in a linen zebra print fabric from Ralph Lauren make the powder room stand out. Ostrich print wallpaper on the ceiling and a leopard print hand towel round out the space. The vanity and floors are brown St. Laurent marble, and the sink is hammered nickel.

## Bedroom





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The custom headboard with a nailhead trim features gray and brown silk, which informed the color story for the primary bedroom. With a mix of gray and brown paint and sand, the wall was made to look like it's covered in linen fabric. A high gloss lacquered ceiling, mirrored nightstands, and chrome and brown sconces elevate the space. "A favorite piece of artwork is above the bed by Janet Crawford Hicks and is of some of my favorite horses," Kressley says. "Those are flanked by T.J. Maxx, equestrian prints found in the '90s that I've had in all of my apartments, and they were probably \$39."

## Primary Bathroom



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The primary bathroom pops in a bubblegum pink lacquer. "I think it makes

the primary bathroom pop in a sage-green paint scheme. "I think it makes everybody's complexion look so good in there," Kressley says.

Scones from Urban Archeology, a Venetian mirror, and a silver leaf ceiling play up the jewel box room's glamour. The custom vanity with a Carrera marble counter and fretwork design adds more shine without being overwhelming. The monogrammed towels from Waterworks have lasted Kressley 20 years. "They're such great quality," he says. "I love them."

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## Balcony



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"It's such a treat to have an outdoor space in a New York City apartment and for many years, that was my only residence, so it was a lifesaver to have that space to get outside, get some sun, feel the temperature, enjoy a coffee or champagne," Kressley says.

The terrace also acts as an entertaining space. An awning allows for shade, while a metal equestrian-inspired settee from Twist and Turn Manufacturing with a custom cushion provides cozy seating. "It's quite simple," Kressley adds. "When you're out there you don't need a lot of stimulation because you have views of the East River and the Chrysler building; it's just an iconic New York cityscape."

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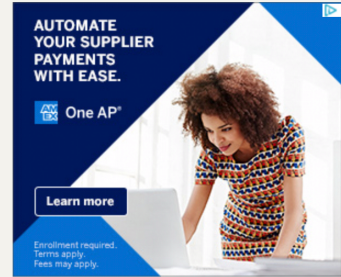
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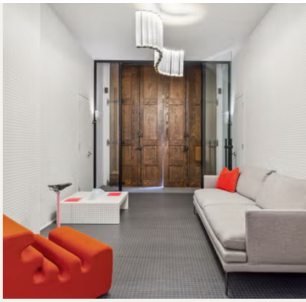
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