



LIFESTYLE > ENTERTAINMENT

Loretta's Apartment in *Only Murders in the Building* Steals the Show

It's dotted with Easter eggs that nod to Meryl Streep's career.

BY KELLY ALLEN | PUBLISHED: AUG 29, 2023 1:31 PM EDT

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“Art,” Oliver Putnam says upon entering Loretta Durkin’s apartment during the third season of *Only Murders in the Building*. “It’s art!”

That it is. While the Hulu show’s grand filming location **The Arconia** consists of big units—each with fascinating interiors that reflect the personality of its inhabitants—the latest apartment to enter the scene steals the show despite its size. It’s the tiny home of struggling actress Loretta, who is played by none other than Meryl Streep (the irony!). When Oliver (played by Martin Short) visits her apartment for dinner during episode five, we get an intimate look at the residence in all of its pattern-filled glory. The home is a **grandmillennial’s cottagecore** dream with **New York City** flair—and it’s dotted with Easter eggs that nod to Streep’s distinguished career.





PATRICK HARBRON

“It was important to convey that Loretta lives very modestly, in the same small apartment for the last 40 years,” production designer Patrick Howe tells *House Beautiful*. “There’s a backstory to Loretta that besides her constant drive to audition for theater roles to become a professional actress, she has an artistic eye from some of her side jobs as well as a caring nature to keep a nice apartment.”



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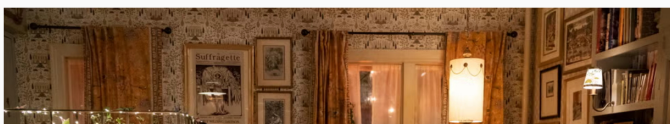
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Howe’s goal was to create a small studio apartment “full of charm, almost magical for its size” that also looked organized and space-conscious. That meant multifunctional furnishings were used wherever possible. A gate-leg side table extends into a dining table and has built-in storage for chairs. The **Murphy bed** allows for quick room transitions. A raised platform for the reading nook has built-in dresser drawers below, while the steps are hollowed out and act as storage cubbies. Howe selected a pull-out bookcase to host Loretta’s library of play scripts not only for its space-saving nature but also because it has “the right quirky and savvy tone for Loretta.”



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The strategic maximalist design fuels the apartment's cozy atmosphere while preventing it from feeling overwhelming. "A lot of charm, wit, and warmth comes from my choice of presenting almost a quilt of wallpapers throughout the apartment," Howe says, noting there are seven different patterns in the four-walled room (including [this 18-century French farmhouse pattern](#) on the window wall and [this 1960s picnic pattern](#) in the kitchen). "Likewise, there are more than 15 practical incandescent accent lamps and sconces—no such thing as too many!"



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The quintessential New York City elements amplify the apartment's character, including the ironwork railing that's typical of post-war apartments in the city. "A fire escape outside the windows speaks to a classic New York look—typically signifying a smaller, older building—with a very plain view of more apartments across the street," says Howe.

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Extra touches play up the city escape. The vintage headboard was reupholstered in a New York City skyline toile fabric by Genevieve Gorder, which the design team had dip-dyed by Dynemix Inc. to get its final pink shade. Broadway show coffee mugs, sourced from the Applause Shop, enforce Loretta's love for theater.



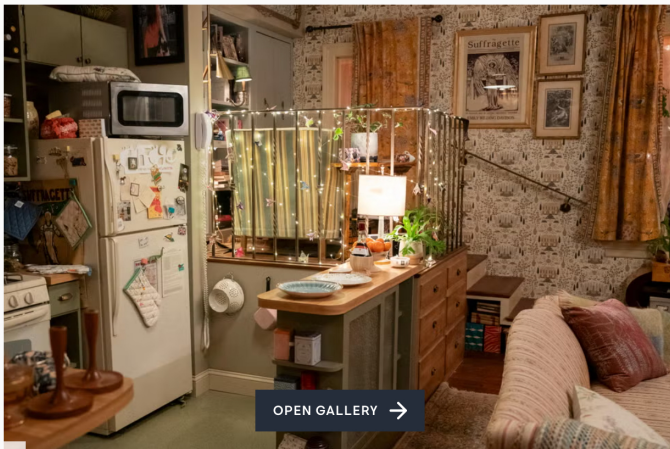
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Throughout the apartment, a decorative ode to Streep's acting career sings. A suffragette tea towel framed as art naturally nods to her role in the 2015 film *Suffragette*, while an Irish painting has ties to the area where she filmed the 1998 picture *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Other paintings include one of the 2020 production *The Prom* by artist Katie Woodward and one of the Belvedere Castle above the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, where Streep has performed. In the kitchen, there's the same model refrigerator as in the 1979 movie *Kramer vs. Kramer*. The custom ottoman features a fabric related to the 1985 drama *Out of Africa*.



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Loretta's apartment may not compare to the elevated unit Mabel (played by Selena Gomez) renovated, or Oliver's eclectic home that has enough room for a makeshift theater, but it certainly makes a compelling case for living in a tiny apartment thanks to smart design that also mimics the comfort of a warm embrace.

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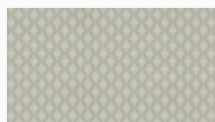
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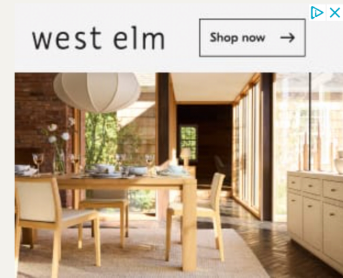
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