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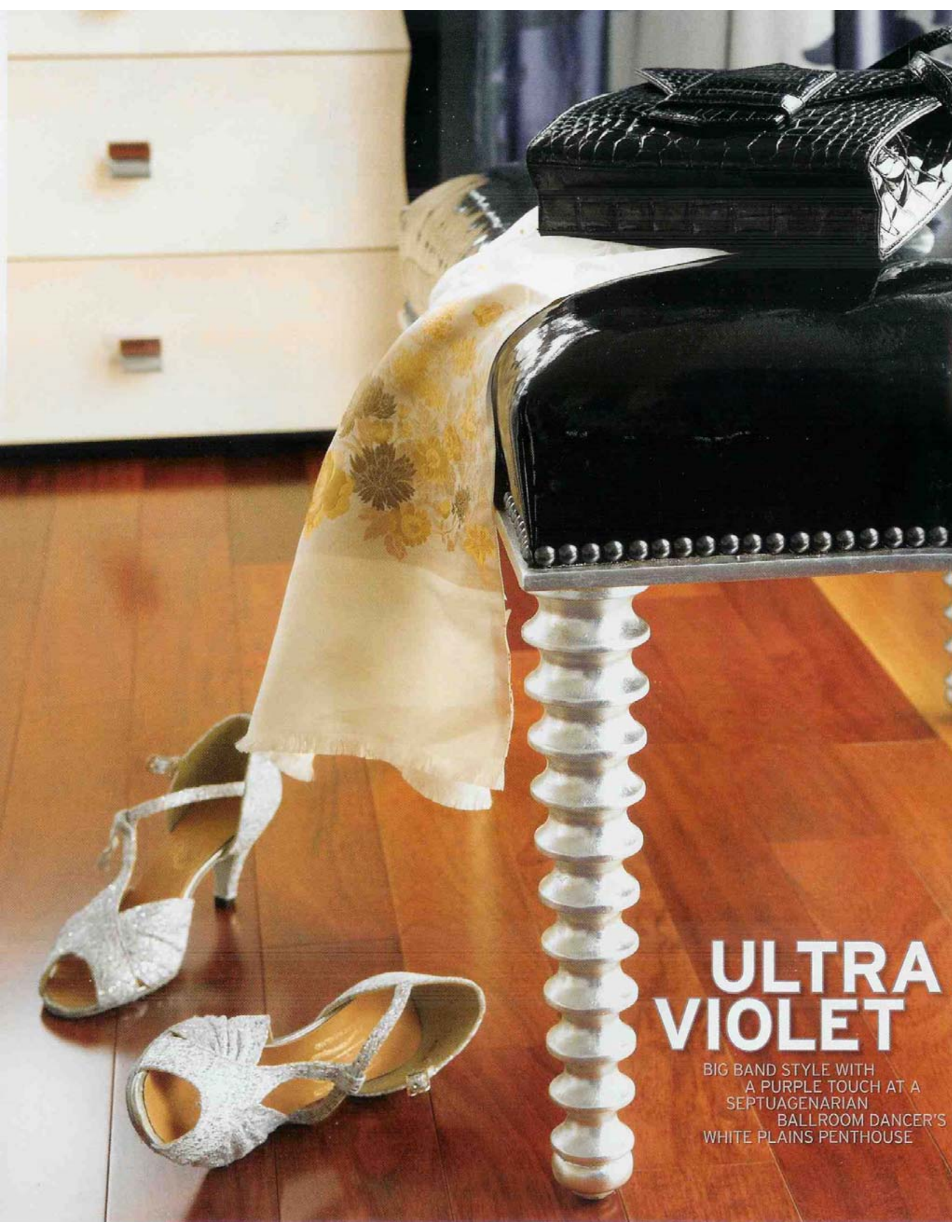
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PHONE: (212) 286-5700 FAX: (212) 286-4646

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ULTRA VIOLET

BIG BAND STYLE WITH
A PURPLE TOUCH AT A
SEPTUAGENARIAN
BALLROOM DANCER'S
WHITE PLAINS PENTHOUSE



BY EMILY LIEBERT | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANASTASSIOS MENTIS



Deco Dance | Homeowner Rowena B. Hoffman's dancing shoes sit next to a Lewis Mittman Spyro bench (PREVIOUS SPREAD LEFT) in the master bedroom of her White Plains penthouse. **Purple Reign** | While the apartment's color palette revolves around cream, black and silver, designer Phyllis Harbinger added purple accents throughout, including the rug, drapes and custom beadboard (PREVIOUS SPREAD RIGHT), which is covered in Beacon Hill violet velvet. At the foot of the bed is a trapezoid bench, also from Lewis Mittman. **Add On** | In the dining area of the common room, an Evanson dining table (LEFT) can be expanded to seat 12. The maple lacquer and chrome chairs (OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT) are covered in Kravet fabric. **Look Here** | Hoffman's treasured Venetian mirror (OPPOSITE TOP LEFT) hangs above a built-in vanity of bleached anigre in the master bedroom. **Just for Two** | In the living area, a Niedermaier tête-à-tête (OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT) faces the Macassar ebony fireplace surround, which is flanked by artworks by Victor Vasarely. The Cliff Young area rug echoes the apartment's cool color palette. **Lavender Waters** | The soothing, all-white master bath (OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT) is punctuated by lilac towels and a colorful artwork by Eric Waugh. See Resources.

When Rowena B. Hoffman hired Cortlandt Manor-based interior designer Phyllis Harbinger to decorate her new penthouse apartment—one of 29 in The Lofts at City Center in White Plains—she had two must-haves: a jukebox and a bar. “I saw myself standing behind a bar, listening to music and entertaining friends,” says Hoffman, a 79-year-old amateur ballroom champion who first set foot on the dance floor at age 72.

Unfortunately, the space couldn't accommodate her desires, and Hoffman's wish list went unchecked. “Design is like a puzzle,” explains Harbinger, who met Hoffman through Hoffman's daughter-in-law, an architect. “The dimensions on the blueprints did not match the actual ‘live’ dimensions. I also felt that a *Happy Days* jukebox would contradict the otherwise sleek ambiance,

although I would have relented for Rowena!”

Obstacles aside, Hoffman delights in every detail of the almost 2000-square-foot pied-à-terre she's called home since February 2006. (Her main residence is in Delray Beach, Fla.) “Every time I walk through the front door, I think to myself, ‘This lovely place belongs to me? I can't believe it!’” exclaims the self-proclaimed matriarch of the building, who decided to downsize from a three-bedroom Usonian-style house in Larchmont after her husband passed away in January 2003. “I wanted something with only one floor since I'm not getting any younger, but with enough space for my grandkids and friends to sleep over without forgoing luxury amenities.”

Hoffman got just that. The three-bedroom, two-and-





a-half bath apartment comes with a full-service concierge available in the neighboring 35-story Trump Tower. The two buildings also share valet parking, swimming pools, tennis courts, a basketball court, a fitness center and more.

Inside, Hoffman's home is the antithesis of the cookie-cutter structure she and Harbinger started with. "Rowena didn't want her apartment to appear old ladyish, so everything we did was fresh and glamorous," Harbinger says. "She may be in her 70s, but she lives her life as a younger soul with an exuberant personality." Together, they searched for fabrics and furnishings to create the Art Deco look Hoffman envisioned. Says Hoffman, "I wanted to touch every fabric and sit in every chair. I didn't want anything from a catalog."

The focus of the project—creating a sexy apartment for a sophisticated and mature single woman—revolved around a color palette of cream, black and silver, with Hoffman's favorite hue, violet, woven throughout. "Rowena loves color, but she tends toward a monochromatic scheme," explains Harbinger. So neutrals with gentle splashes of violet predominate except in the master bedroom, where Hoffman's purple propensities play a major role.

Said bedroom, Hoffman's favorite room, boasts a purple velvet headboard, a built-in vanity with a treasured Venetian mirror hanging above, a custom Tibetan oval rug in violet wool (with dainty silk flowers in cream and black) and cream-and-violet sheer drapes with a strong graphic pattern. "It's a hot bedroom!" Hoffman says. "Sometimes, at night, I leave the curtains open and sleep by the light of the stars."

As for the common areas, the foyer leads to a long hallway that gives way to an open living/dining/kitchen space, where the ceiling jumps from eight to 11 feet. Here, guests can sit on a tête-à-tête chaise and watch the large-screen plasma TV mounted on the wall—or, on quieter evenings, enjoy the fireplace under it, which is framed by a Macassar ebony mantel. Steps away, an antique crystal chandelier



High Times | The ceiling in the common area (OPPOSITE), which includes the living, dining and kitchen spaces, reaches 11 feet. A support column at the end of the hallway leading to the foyer is covered with Maya Romanoff mother-of-pearl tiles. **Silver Lining** | A stripe fabric by Knave covers the chairs in the living area (ABOVE). Another piece by Victor Vasarely is mounted on the wall near a glass and chrome cocktail table from Nicoletti Italia, which holds a Deco-like sculpture Hoffman has owned for 35 years. "It reminds me of Radio City," she says. "I love Radio City." See Resources.



Starry Night | The walls in the powder room (LEFT AND FAR LEFT) are painted black lacquer accented with spheres of gold and silver wash with a touch of violet. **At Your Service** | A painting by LeRoy Neiman (BELOW LEFT) hangs above a dark wood Kreiss bar cabinet with cream leather panels in the foyer. **Dancing Queen** | Perched on her tête-à-tête, Hoffman (BELOW RIGHT) speaks with Harbinger, standing, and Harbinger's associate, Elij Karacay-Sherwood. **High-End Craft** | In the kitchen (OPPOSITE) a reissued George Nelson Sunflower clock presides over a kitchen swathed in sapele wood. See Resources.



hangs over a 50-inch circular table with a mirrored top. (It can be enlarged to eight-and-a-half feet, enough space for 12) Throughout the apartment, built-in cabinetry was created using high-end woods such as bleached anigre and sapele, both from Africa. In the powder room, walls were painted with black lacquer and accented with washed gold and silver spheres. And yes, there are touches of violet here, too.

Hoffman brought with her a substantial art collection including prints by Fernand Léger, Op-Art pioneer Victor Vasarely and

the artist and designer Erté. A signed LeRoy Neiman, once part of the New York Stock Exchange collection, hangs in the foyer as a tribute to her late husband, a former trader and partner in a specialty firm. (He held his seat on the Stock Exchange until the company went public.) Perhaps her favorite find of all, though, is a piece depicting a bull and bear in a dance competition on the trading room floor bearing the slogan, "You Aren't Going to Dip, Are You?" "It's a nod to both of our passions," says Hoffman, who adds, "My dance card is open, but this apartment is all mine!" 🌟

