

CALIFORNIA HOMES

The Magazine of Architecture
The Arts & Distinctive Design



events & affairs

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Kips Bay, New York City

What's not to like when you're flitting through a 20,000 square foot 50 foot wide showhouse—that's twice as wide as a typical Manhattan townhouse—on East 75th Street. That's just east of Fifth, thank you. The limestone neo-French Renaissance mansion that housed the annual 34th Kips Bay Decorator Showhouse this spring was built by shipping tycoon Nathaniel M. McCready in 1896. It's owners have been IBM founder Thomas J. Watson, Mrs. William Fox—whose husband founded 20th Century Fox—and Rebecca Harkness, the Standard Oil heiress who founded The Harkness School of Ballet here in 1964. Current owner is Jaqui Safra of the international banking family, and longtime companion Jean Doumanian, theatre and film producer. Our kind of history. And as fashion is to New York City, so is interior decorating, and it all adds up to \$55 million via Douglas Elliman.

Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club is one of the most prominent youth-development agencies in New York City and a "flagship" for boys and girls clubs everywhere. The annual showhouse revenues of \$1.5 million supports ten locations in the Bronx. New facilities include a new dance studio, dental clinic, refurbished educational center, and a 9,000 square foot auditorium.



Indisputably the decorators invited into Kips Bay spend more per space than anywhere on the planet and conversely reap enough exposure to last for years. There were some familiar headliners and glorious rooms, but what stopped our very own ballet slippers with their gazillion dollar tissue-thin "street" soles, was right inside the front door. Red Branch Decorative Imaging of Columbus Ohio,



ambitiously but tenderly, touched every surface of the foyer with their theme of the work of British architect Robert Adam. We mean every square inch had been designed and created by this firm using digital technology and traditional painted techniques. The floor, doors, and radiator cover are digital prints on wood veneer, custom designed for the space. A neo-classical figurative mural is painted by hand. The *tromp l'oeil* architecture, wall and ceiling decorations, are digital prints on canvas, applied on-site like wallpaper. Red Branch's "digital marquetry" had not been seen anywhere before Kips Bay. Now see them run. www.decorativeimaging.net