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marie claire

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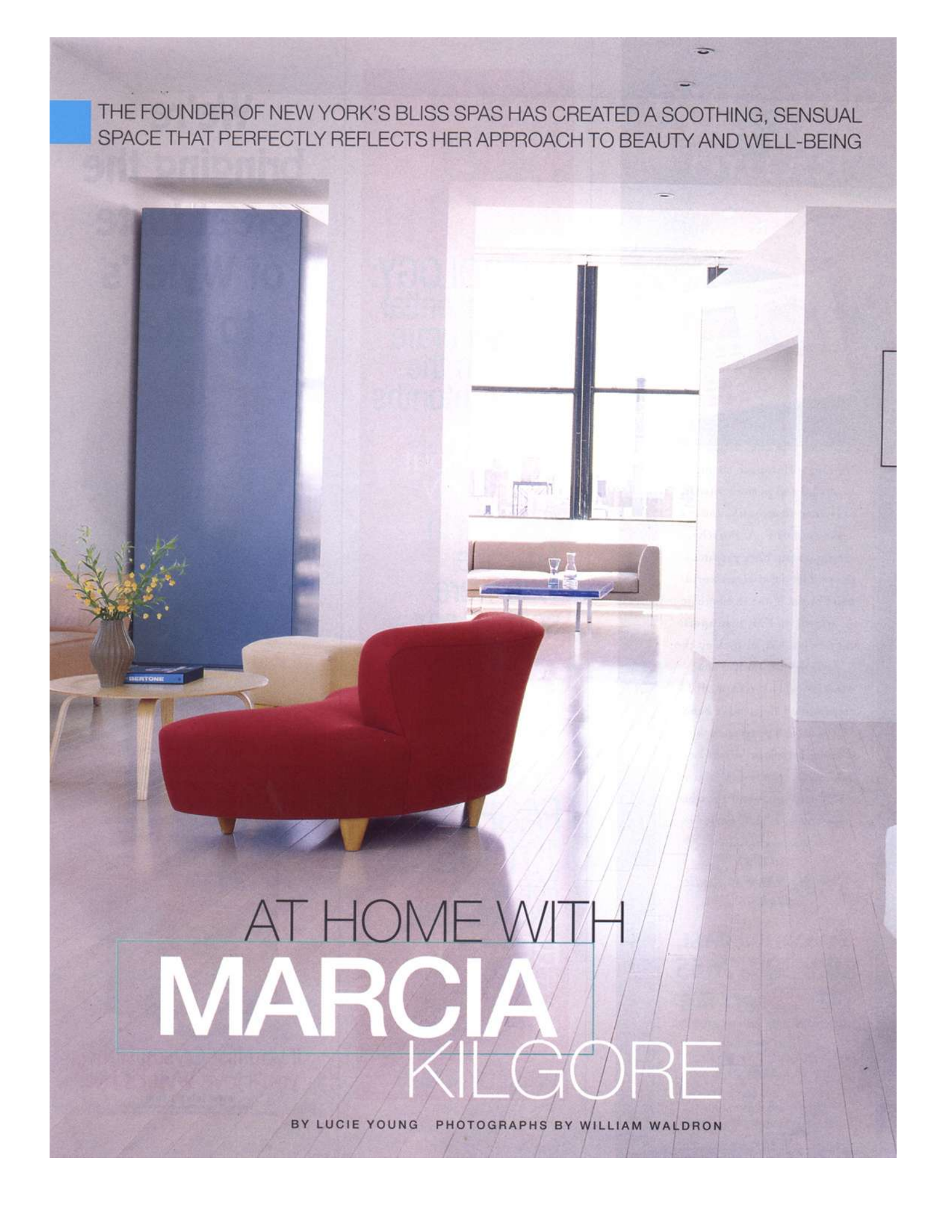
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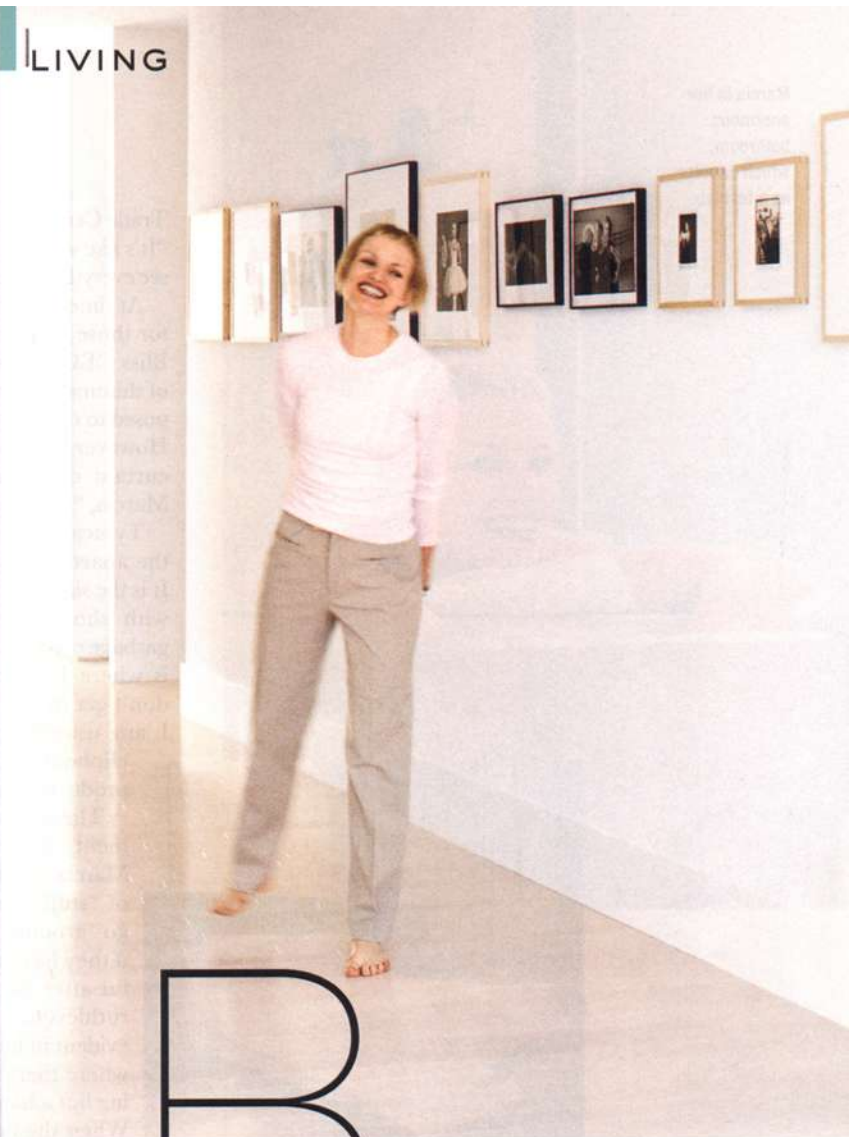
THE FOUNDER OF NEW YORK'S BLISS SPAS HAS CREATED A SOOTHING, SENSUAL SPACE THAT PERFECTLY REFLECTS HER APPROACH TO BEAUTY AND WELL-BEING

AT HOME WITH
MARCIA
KILGORE

BY LUCIE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM WALDRON



"You can't relax in a china shop," says Marcia Kilgore. Top right, the Bliss founder amid favorite photos; left, her sun-drenched living room.



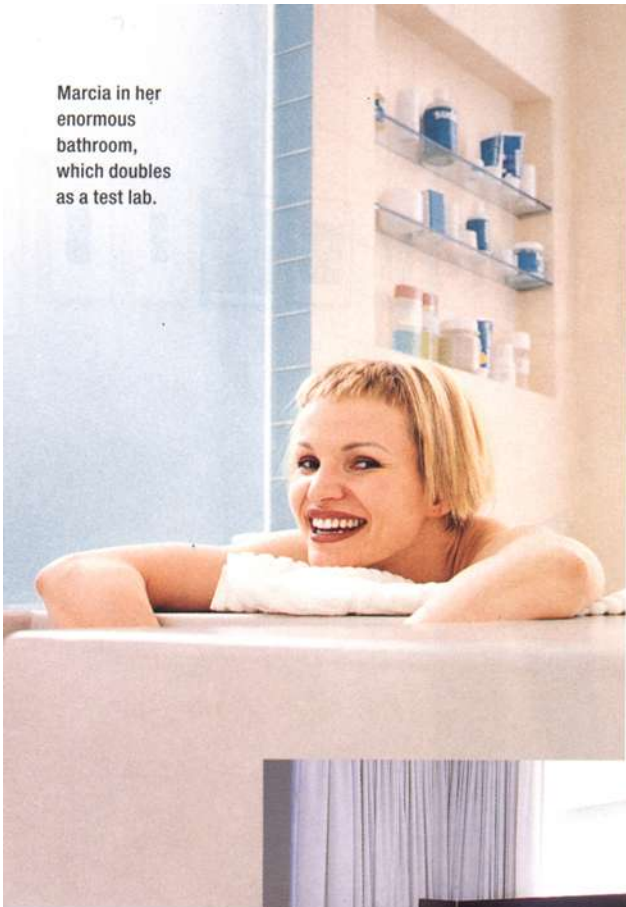
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efore meeting Marcia Kilgore for the first time, you're tempted to show up with a bag over your head. After all, this is the woman who scrutinizes the pores of Julianne Moore, Madonna and Jennifer Lopez. She is one of New York's foremost authorities on skincare and the owner of two of the most sought-after spas in the city, BlissSoho and Bliss57. Fortunately, Marcia readily admits to having committed her share of beauty crimes: She has gone for two years without a pedicure, and freely discusses her least-favorite body part ("my awful knees").

Suddenly, you don't feel so bad. Of course, putting women at ease is a skill that Marcia, 31, has in spades. On a recent tour of her vast Brooklyn apartment, she happily demonstrates how to fling yourself onto the couch, loll in her enormous bathtub and put your feet up on the furniture. "You can't relax if you live in a china shop," she says, wrinkling her nose.

Visitors are invariably taken with the view. The Empire State Building seems to be a part of the living room, while the Statue of Liberty and the World >

Marcia in her enormous bathroom, which doubles as a test lab.



Above, the master bedroom; below, the dining area with its spectacular view.



Trade Center surround guests at the dining table. "It's like watching a movie," says Marcia. "You see everything, but you don't have to deal with it."

At times, the view can be overpowering, and for those moments, Marcia and her husband, Bliss CEO Thierry Boué, have installed acres of shimmery light taupe curtains, which are supposed to open and close at the touch of a button. However, due to a gremlin in the system, "one curtain closes and the other doesn't," says Marcia, "so I just leave them open."

Typical of someone in the beauty industry, the apartment has a lavish master bathroom:

It is the size of a basketball court, with shower heads as big as garbage can lids. "The bathroom is where I work," she says. "I don't get in the bath and relax. I am usually in there with a clipboard, trying out new products," she chuckles.

Throughout the apartment, furniture is sparse. Marcia is not especially fond of "stuff," and is known to go around tossing things if they have not proven useful after two months. This ruthlessness is particularly evident in her walk-in closet, where there is almost nothing but a handful of T-shirts. When the couple moved in last December, Thierry recalls that she threw out 90 percent of their possessions.

"My parents are keeping all my sentimental things from childhood," he says wistfully.

While the apartment may look spare, the pair live in a very sensual way—indulging in good food, regular massages and gentle music. But it's the natural light which floods the apartment all day that is perhaps the most luxurious ingredient in the mix. "At 8 a.m., there is incredible light bouncing off everything. You feel like you are on a Greek island," Marcia enthuses. Tempting fate, however, the pair did install another gadget, so that when the sun goes down, they can create their own lighting display. "This thing is supposed to have 25 different light settings, but I gave up after five," says Marcia with a roll of her eyes. So nowadays, the couple just uses candles instead. □

MY HOME

■ What would you save in a fire?

Myself, my husband and my passport.

■ Do you collect anything?

I anti-collect stuff. Stuff drives me completely crazy. I'll throw out anything I don't like.

■ What's the most expensive piece of furniture in your apartment?

A shelving unit that the design firm, UT, purchased for me from B&B Italia.

■ What makes for a great bathroom?

Fluffy towels, a good foot soak and adjustable lighting—because you need strong light to put on makeup and see the condition of your skin, and low light when you're soaking in the bathtub. Pitch black with one candle is as bad as overlit.

■ How do you relax in the evening?


I don't really relax. I'll sit around on the sofa for 10 minutes or so, but I get bored. I like to be busy all day long.

MY STYLE

■ **What beauty tip do most women neglect?** Having the confidence not to be neurotic about what you look like. It's important to look the best you can, but you can't worry about eyebrows all your life.

■ **What's the most important skincare advice you can offer?** Don't smoke—it definitely shows. If you drink an enormous amount, that shows, too. If you exercise, your skin glows. And staying out of the sun helps. I try not to go in the sun, but if I do, I use a very light sunblock—SunBan SPF 30.

■ **What is your main fashion indulgence?** Pants. I buy Burberry, Dries Van Noten, Narciso Rodriguez and Jil Sander. At the spa, I always end up with wax or mudpack on my pants, and I am always sending them off to the cleaners.



Marcia and Thierry keep their living space simple and spare. Here, a 1960s glass table filled with blue pigment by artist Yves Klein and a Jasper Morrison sofa.