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Katie's

by Joanna Powell

Harven

Settling in to her sunny new apartment, **Katie Couric** offers an intimate look at the life she is making for herself and her girls a year and a half after her husband's death

On any given night, Katie Couric's New York City apartment is filled with the sound of music. Some evenings, Couric and her girls—Ellie, 8, and Carrie, 3—put in a CD of their favorite show tunes, crank up the stereo, and dance and sing. The state-of-the-art sound system wired throughout the four-bedroom apartment is one of Couric's few big splurges in this new home that she moved into last April.

At other times, the living room comes alive with piano music, as Ellie practices for her lessons or Couric herself takes to the parlor grand Steinway to play a selection of Gershwin tunes.

"I think a home filled with music is a really happy place," Couric says, sitting in her newly renovated Tuscan-style kitchen. "It's very emotional, playing the piano, playing music. It reflects your mood. And it's really therapeutic."

Creating a happy, therapeutic home has been Couric's quest throughout the past year, as she rebuilds her life with her young daughters. But the music, like almost everything here, resonates with memories of her late husband, Jay Monahan, who lost a brief, brutal battle with colon cancer in January 1998.

Monahan and Couric picked out the piano together, and bought it as a present to themselves. Now Couric often longs for the sound of Monahan playing the ragtime tunes of Scott Joplin, or the beautiful Chopin lullaby he played so

often when she came home from the hospital after Carrie's birth.

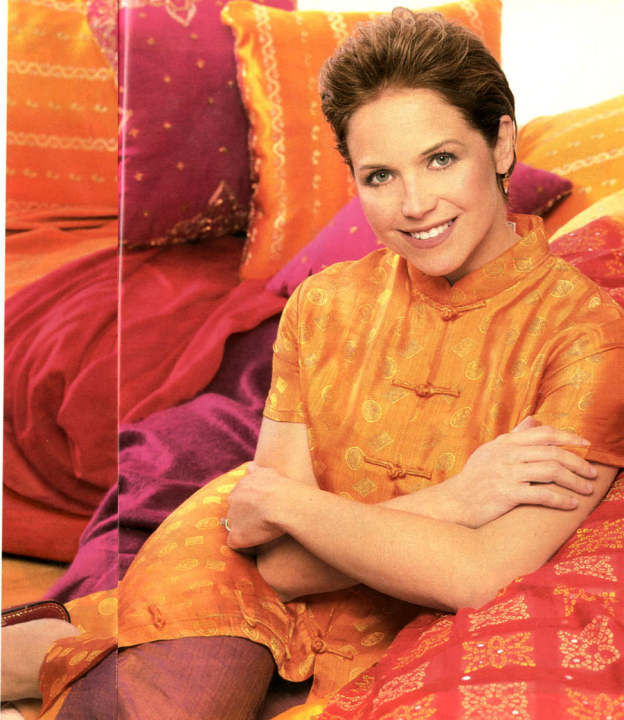
"He was really talented," Couric says wistfully. "He was very musical. He played the piano so much they used to call him Liberace when he was in the Navy. That was his nickname. It was printed on his T-shirt."

Talking about her late husband, Couric appears much stronger than she did a year ago when, in a rare interview, she spoke on these pages about his death and her bold campaign for colon-cancer awareness and testing, which continues today.

She can now speak of him without the persistent tears that erupted then. But recovering from the grief she had so well while she carried on her job as co-anchor of NBC's *Today* show has been a slow, difficult process.

The move to her new apartment appears to have had a healing effect, although Couric makes it clear the change was not of her choosing. She would have preferred to stay in the home where she and Monahan had built a family together and avoid any additional upheaval for Carrie and Ellie. But last summer, while still reeling from her husband's death, she lost the lease on their New York City apartment and was forced to move.

Couric had always been leery of buying real estate in New York City because the market is volatile and expensive. But she finally decided she should take the plunge. (After all, she had just signed a lucrative four-year contract with NBC.) "It was time to buy an apartment," Couric says. "But that was a very scary thing for me to do all by myself, without Jay." Eventually she found the place you see photographed on the following pages, and she knew it was right the first time she walked in the. (continued on page 169)



Passage to India "I'm a person who needs a lot of light," Katie Couric says. And her exotic sun-kissed living room with its warm color palette fulfills that need. "I love the bright pink and gold. And I love the rug. It was Jay's grandparents.'" Of special interest: colorful silk pillows sewn from antique Indian saris and a West Indies cocktail table from Milling Road, Silhouette window shades from Hunter Douglas.



"I love all the rooms, but the living room is my favorite. The gold is so bright and vibrant, it feels electric."

Welcome to *Katie's*

Light, Color, Comfort

Standing guard "Jay had an incredible eye for antiques," says Couric. Her husband collected bugles and memorabilia from the Civil War, but this soldier, bought only a month before he died, is Napoleonic. "I feel he's watching over us," she adds.



Blue heaven Pulsating walls and ornately embroidered drapes set the stage in the Anglo-Indian dining room. Couric and her late husband, Jay Monahan, owned the table and chairs together, as well as the parlor grand Steinway. "Jay would have loved this apartment," she says. Buffet from Thomasville's Ernest Hemingway Collection. Walls by artist Toby Nuttall.



Katie's Kitchen

Breakfast in Tuscany To re-create the warm, rustic pleasures of Italy, designer Neal DeLeon at Wood-Made made sure every detail—from the cabinetry to the antique wooden beam that holds Couric's bottle collection—fit the mood. Paint by Benjamin Moore; copper pans from All-Clad.

Family time It was important to carve out a space where everyone could eat together—and not worry about “dropping food on the floor,” she says. “In New York apartments, that’s difficult to find.” The solution: a cozy banquette where the girls can also do homework and art projects with their mom. On the wall: hand-painted plates by artist Gail Pittman.



Always practical Couric asked designer LouAnn Rothe at The Home Depot to outfit the laundry room with lots of shelves.



“I wanted a place where we could hang out... That’s my idea of heaven.”



Sliding board Art by Couric's daughters and postcards from friends are displayed on an ingenious bulletin board that slides to the right for access to the fuse box. The “shredded-wheat chairs,” as Couric calls them, are from Indigo Seas.



Private Places

“Carrie loves blue because Ellie loves blue. And Ellie loves blue because she loves blue.... We used a lot of blue.”



Girls' world “I love stripes—and that crisp, fresh look of blue and white,” says Couric, about the Laura Ashley wallpaper in Ellie’s room. Although the bed has sophisticated linens, a much-loved dollhouse is a sweet reminder that this is Ellie’s place, first and foremost. In Carrie’s room, inset, which adjoins her sister’s through a shared bathroom, Couric matched new linens and curtains to the existing wallpaper. Beds from Kid’s Supply; Sealy Kids mattresses.



Peaceful paradise The *Today* show couchner spends much of her time unwinding in this soothing “island room,” created by interior designer Karen Reider. In Couric’s retreat: an antique plantation bed from St. Croix in mahogany. A frothy palm, grasscloth wallpaper (by Roger Arlington), and sand-colored carpeting (from Victor Herschel Floors) underscore the breezy Caribbean theme.



Suited up “It’s hard to be a slob when you have closets like this,” says Couric of her new California Closets, designed by Ginny Snook Scott and Nina Leese. Above: the Provencal powder room, with a classic pedestal sink from Kohler and elegant Dombracht faucets.

