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Stop the Presses

ABC news correspondent, mom and New York resident
Sharyn Alfonsi gives us a tour of her newsworthy home



A dining table meant for a party. Left: Sharyn and baby Wyatt.

BY REBECCA MORSE / PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE LIEBERMAN

It's the kind of loft that makes people move to New York, before they realize that lofts like that really only exist in the movies—or, in some rare cases, nestled in the very epicenter of Chelsea. Wide-plank walnut-stained floors, original cast-iron columns, oversize windows. A wood-burning fireplace with an industrial-feel aluminum frame. A sprawling, pristinely white kitchen. A master closet the size of a hotel room.

Breaking news: Sharyn Alfonsi's loft apartment is spectacular.

Whether on *Good Morning America*, *Nightline* or *World News*, Emmy-winning ABC news correspondent Alfonsi is beamed into homes nationwide from dawn until dusk. Her millions of viewers just might not mind being beamed into her home instead, just for a night, to snuggle up in the jumbo arm chairs that are built for two and await a little Southern hospitality from their Ole Miss alumna hostess, served up on her massive, reclaimed-wood dining room table. "When we bought it," Alfonsi remembers of the table, which seats 14, "the salesman asked me if we

planned on hosting the Last Supper. I LOVE to have friends over for dinner. [It's] never anything fussy. We're more likely to watch football, drink beer and eat a big old pot of gumbo. Our friends bring over Carvel ice cream cakes ... not Chardonnay."

A magnolia grows in Chelsea at the loft where Alfonsi and her husband have lived since moving from the Upper East Side in 2006. College sweethearts who met—like something from the plot of a Tom Cruise movie—when undergrads at the University of Mississippi and the Naval Academy, respectively, they fell in love at first sight with their downtown digs, too. For Alfonsi, it was the loft's "big windows, tons of light and killer closets" that did it. "I also thought it was so open I could probably roller-skate inside if the mood hit." Add to that residential-roller-rink-to-die-for Chelsea address a master bath that would make a spa feel self-conscious and super-high ceilings, and the result was perfection.

Or was it? "I always thought something was missing in the apartment. It turns out, it was a baby!" Four years after they purchased the loft, the real headliner arrived: Wyatt Kristensen Eby. Now 10 months



Here, a cozy spot to see mom on the news. Below: Wyatt's nursery.



old, baby Wyatt's the top story of the day, every day, and according to his Emmy-winning mom, much more entertaining than anything on television. "Wyatt just warms up the whole house. His wild laugh, his toys all over the floor, the splattered food and cheerios around his high chair—it's made our apartment into a 'home.' I think the chaos is the good stuff!" Now, Saturdays are spent hanging on a cozy rug in front of the fireplace and playing with Wyatt. Early-evening dinner parties are hosted by the high chair in the kitchen. And the most used part of the apartment? The door. "Really, we don't spend much time inside," says Alfonsi. "We meet friends for brunch and then hit the parks till we pass out." The family loves roaming in their hood, which "is charming, a little funky and very laid back. It has a small town feel. I know so many people in our neighborhood. We speak to each other, we say hello. Our dry cleaner used to run out of his shop to help me with my grocery bags when I was pregnant. It's very 'neighborly' ... I love that. And like any small town ... we have lots of eccentric characters in the neighborhood."

It's a touch of the South in the west—west of Fifth, that is. Alfonsi grew to love that kind of small-town feel, and those kind of eccentric characters, at college in Oxford, Miss., and in Fort Smith, Ark., where she began her career in broadcast journalism at the local ABC affiliate the day after graduating. Her meteoric rise to national news has since made her a Yankee—but that's not to say she's left those eccentric Southern personalities behind. Some have been brought home from above the Mason-Dixon line. "I fell in love with Southern art when I was at Ole Miss," Alfonsi explains. "I re-



Sharyn in the kitchen, and with the happy family (below).

ally love the photographs we have of Johnny Cash from the early years. I also love the photographs of Mick Jagger and Dolly Parton taken in the '70s. I love that her wig is a little crooked, her fake eyelashes are a little off but she's still smiling, thinkin' she's looking cute! We've all been there ... smiling, thinkin' you're looking cute, but you have a big old hunk of food in your front teeth or toilet paper dragging from your heels. It's the story of my life!" Each piece of carefully chosen art tells a story, creating an eclectic, personal collection with provenances from Southern galleries to—gas stations? "I bought a chain made up of thousands of old bottle caps that a guy working at an old gas station in Mississippi collected over the years. Every time he opened a soda for someone, he added the cap to the chain. It's one of my favorite finds."

Such one-of-a-kind, personal touches provide shots of personality to



a space that is, above all, uncluttered. "I hate clutter," Alfonsi admits. "I wanted to be able to put everything away." The loft's multitude of custom built-ins and closets allow her to do so. That streamlined, edited look provides a visual respite from nonstop New York City—and the 24-hour-a-day

news cycle in which Alfonsi spends her days (and often, nights). When the cameras are off, a home awaits that is the design equivalent of a steaming mug of tea in a thick white mug. Her vision? "Simple. Nothing too fussy. No fabrics that can't be washed, no tables people can't sit on, nothing too precious. I want it to feel like a really good pair of Levi's. Classic, comfortable, versatile and perfectly suited for bare feet."

But at the end of the night, it takes her into Wyatt's room. "Like all good New Yorkers, we waited until I was about six months pregnant to begin work on a nursery," laughs Alfonsi. "Our architect, Jeffrey Povero, was amazing. He carved out three bedrooms for us, but kept the giant pocket doors, columns and details so it still feels like a loft. It was perfect. And, amazingly, done by the time Wyatt arrived." The Southern gentleman in training presides over his own little homestead where "energetic" and "boyish" are the bywords.

Making your living on the evening news is hardly a 9-to-5 job; neither is being a new mom. "I've been to Iraq, to Israel and Lebanon [to cover] the war. To Gaza ... it was terrifying." All the same, "none of it compares to the challenge of raising a child. I just want to make sure Wyatt knows me as "Mommy" and not "Sharyn Alfonsi."... It's my priority. Being a working mom is a struggle. I don't have it figured out. I think anyone who says they've got it all figured out ... is probably lying. I just try to laugh my way through it with good friends and pray Wyatt doesn't have enough material to write a book yet!" If he did, we know it would be a smash hit.

Chelsea Life

NEIGHBORHOOD VIBE Stylish family living for downtown tots. The High Line, Chelsea Piers, funky galleries and great restaurants make Chelsea a chic home for cool kids. A small-town feel on the townhouse-studded side streets allows nonetheless for big-box convenience on the avenues (Whole Foods, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Home Depot, Buy Buy Baby, and a brand-new Trader Joes). Starchitect-designed new developments with family-size apartments are rising on every corner, making Chelsea even more accessible for life with little ones.

SCHOOLS P.S. 11 William Harris (PK-5), P.S. 33 Chelsea (PK-5), P.S. 3 Charrett (K-5), M.S. 104 Simon Baruch Middle School (6-8), Corlear's (PK-4th Grade)

ALFONSI'S PAD Over 2,600 square feet of the ultimate in loft living. Three bedrooms, three and a half baths with tons of light and every modern amenity. Original industrial loft details paired with Southern art—and hospitality—makes for down-home comfort in a fabulously stylish New York loft.

FAMILY FAVES IN THE HOOD Chelsea Market (check out Posman Books' children's section), weekend walks on the High Line, sports at Chelsea Piers, Brunch at Petite Abeille or City Bakery.