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RICHARD M. DALEY
ON HIS OLYMPIC DREAMS

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ARIANNA HUFFINGTON BLOWS INTO TOWN
CHRIS KENNEDY DRAWS INSPIRATION FROM ART
AND MORE

LIVING LARGE

A man with short dark hair, wearing a black button-down shirt and dark trousers, is sitting in a dark, modern armchair. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. Behind him is a dark wood-paneled wall. To his right, there are two dark wooden shelves. The top shelf has a stack of books, including one with 'JULIAN SCHN' on the spine. The bottom shelf has a book with 'BOB RICHARDSON' on the spine. In the foreground, there is a round, light-colored wooden table with a piece of clear, crinkled plastic or fabric on it. The overall lighting is soft and focused on the man.

Design of the Times

Up-and-coming designer Scott Heuvelhorst proved his mettle with one stylish shop.

BY LISA SKOLNIK

WHEN HOMEGROWN FASHION STAR Maria Pinto decided to open a 2,000-square-foot namesake boutique five floors below her West Loop atelier last summer, the design world was watching. Who would she choose to do her retail digs?

True to form, the prescient Pinto surprised everyone—even the young, relatively unknown designer she selected. “She just popped the question over dinner one night at Le Colonial,” says designer Scott Heuvelhorst. “I was elated.”

A freshman in the world of independent projects, Heuvelhorst had been working on his own for just a year and a half following a stint as a decorative painter and a gig at furniture showroom Orange Skin. He’d never completed a commercial project on his own, though he had experience working with Pinto. “I designed and built the sets for her photo shoots eight years ago,” he explains.

Pinto told Heuvelhorst, “I trust your aesthetic, so make me a beautiful store,” he recalls. But the designer, 34, gave the assignment a more challenging twist by “using intriguing materials and pairing pieces in unexpected ways,” he says.

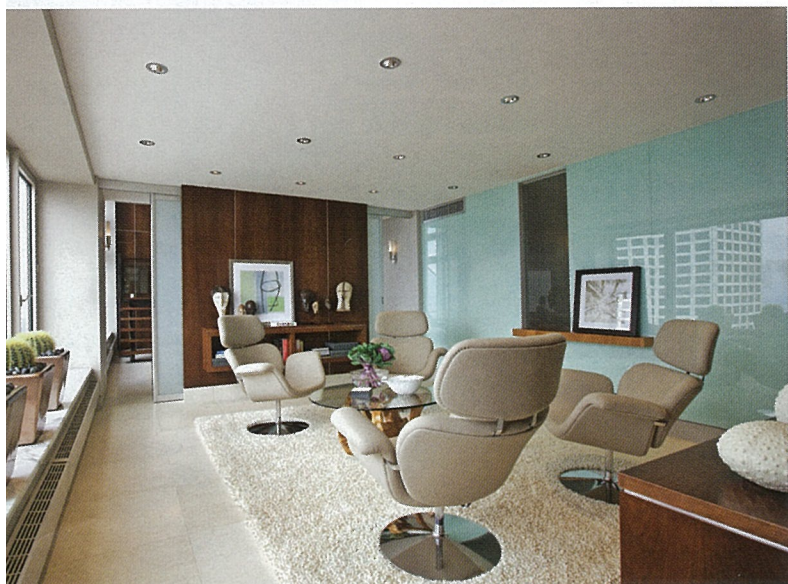
Mission accomplished. The most obvious examples of his success are a lustrous bamboo floor that’s custom-stained dusky charcoal (“It had to be stained six times to get right,” he says) and meanders straight off the floor to climb the store’s back wall, and a subtly decorative paint job he dreamed up for the boutique’s longest wall (“I blew up one of Maria’s lace patterns and had it painted on a matte gray wall in a high-gloss finish,” he explains). The combination of supersleek upholstered pieces with glitzy chandeliers and cheeky baroque mirrors suggest the designer has the mix-and-match thing down pat. *Scott A. Heuvelhorst Interiors, 773-987-5150; sahinteriors.com.*

Bachelor Padding

A young Chicago trader's Streeterville sanctuary is designed to handle personal chaos with sleek, professional style.

BY LISA SKOLNIK
INTERIORS BY SCOTT SHIGLEY
PORTRAITS BY ANTHONY TAHLIER

Five years ago Gennady Gertsman had one long-term goal. "I had to get out of the South Loop. All the construction there was driving me crazy," he confides via Skype from Singapore, where we caught up with him at the Ritz-Carlton.





Seating is designed to be mutable and smartly unmatched in the living room. Bright Chair Company's Sharon bench is the hinge that divides and unites two groupings—one anchored by the Havana Sofa from Design Within Reach, and the other by a custom-made split-apart love seat. A pair of Ralph Lauren Metal club chairs relate to both settings. The lounge (AT FAR LEFT) becomes an equally mutable space with four Arne Jacobsen Swan chairs. The lone clear glass panel in the wall allows natural light into the master bathroom behind it.



Sumptuous oversized limestone tiles from Chicago's Materials Marketing covers the floor and runs right up a wall in the dining room to become a sleek fireplace surround. Troscan dining chairs from Holly Hunt are paired with the Cross Extension Table from Design Within Reach.

The 31-year-old Chicago trader was on a six-month trip around the world, a treat he gave himself “after spending most of my life working outrageous hours and lots of jobs,” he explains. Yet his demonic work life is what enabled him to trade his prosaic South Loop condo for the home of his dreams, a 4,500-square-foot aerie in Streeterville.

Of course, the home wasn't so dream-worthy when he bought it in 2004. Back then it was two contiguous apartments that comprised 2,700 and 1,800 square feet and had too many rooms, walls, halls, and schmaltzy finishes to suit Gertsman's vision of a glam bachelor pad where he could live, work, and play. But there was no masking the potential or discounting the impact of a view, for the sky-high units had a bounty of floor-to-ceiling windows. And “one was a corner apartment, so the possibilities were endless,” says Jay Michael, Gertsman's close friend and trusted real estate broker.

Michael called Gertsman the minute he realized the units could be combined and acquired at a good price. “They were both duplexes in a quality building, so we had to move fast,” the

broker says. To make sure Gertsman could have his way with the place design-wise, Michael advised a consult and brought in James Dolenc and Thomas Riker of the design firm JamesThomas.

“I didn't want [my client] wasting any money on a place that wouldn't be perfect for him, and I had worked with James and Tom in my own place,” says Michael. Gertsman was duly impressed with the team's talent, but also particularly taken with their integrity: “Most designers make their money off markup, but [Dolenc and Riker] work on a set fee, so there's never any doubt that they're really picking the best pieces for the place,” he says.

Gertsman and his parents left the Soviet Union in 1989 and spent nine months as refugees in Italy before making their way to the United States. When Gertsman was 13, the family landed in Niles and the teen got a job—and he's been working ever since. “When you're an immigrant, you have to work all the time. In my senior year of college, I had 12 W-2s,” he recalls.

Ironically, it was while he was still in high school at Niles North in Skokie that Gertsman

“Gennady needed a place where he could work round-the-clock, sleep when he wanted to, interface with employees and clients when necessary, have privacy, and live comfortably.”

—James Dolenc



Gertsman returned from a trip just in time to be shot for this story (ABOVE LEFT). Design firm James Thomas warmed up the cool limestone floor and glass-and-steel curtain wall of windows with walnut built-ins in the foyer (ABOVE) and living room (LEFT), and a teak kitchen system from Arclinea Chicago. Oversize artwork called *Buddha Reflection* by Juul Hoes adds drama to the foyer, while a diptych by Mary Rousseaux from Chicago Art Source warms the living room.

picked up the skills that may have done the most to ensure his success as a trader. Back then the enterprising young student excelled at two endeavors: chess and dealing baseball cards. The former taught him logic (and earned him a state championship), and from the latter he acquired solid bartering and business skills. But what inspired Gertsman to trade for a living was a senior-year finance class at the University of Illinois at Chicago. “I studied equities then and they fascinated me, so I started trading while I was in school. I did pretty well right from the start,” he says.

Yet banish the notion of Gertsman screaming out bids in a pit and making fist signs. “I’ve never traded on the floor. It’s all electronic, and you can do it any hour of the day or night,” he says with a laugh.

This last tidbit explains why it was important to have a design team involved in the home-renovation project from the start. “Gennady needed a place where he could work round-the-clock, sleep when he wanted to, interface with employees and clients when necessary, have privacy, and live comfortably,” says Dolenc.

Though his social life took second place to work, Gertsman had a girlfriend when he started the project, and they loved to entertain. Gertsman, who’s now single, also wanted “the master suite to have a bathroom that

could accommodate two, a substantial dining room, small and large spaces to suit groups of different sizes, a state-of-the-art media room, and a guest suite,” says Riker, ticking off the items as if by rote. “The kitchen counted, too, but he usually orders in.”

Despite his emphatic and exacting demands, the intellectually driven Gertsman puts substance before style. “He gave us total creative power because he had no strong opinions on aesthetics and no time to devote to decorating,” says Riker. “He was always working.” And in lieu of any directives, “all he told us was, ‘Please don’t distract from the view or do anything too trendy or gimmicky,’” adds Dolenc.

That left the designers the freedom to create a style that would work for both the architectural assets of the space and Gertsman’s life.

The architecture of the space was not easy to tackle. Both apartments consisted of a long, relatively narrow space with 20-foot ceilings where the duplexed second stories were sited. Connecting them, and devising a layout that wouldn’t emulate those awful railroad-style flats of yore, was a true challenge.

Fortunately, they were gutting the place, and interior hallways and closets could be reconfigured. Thus the designers were able to craft a cunning



The designers, Thomas Riker (STANDING ABOVE) and James Dolenc (SEATED), are particularly proud of the tête-à-tête sink they devised in the master bathroom (TOP LEFT), which inspired a similar one in the Merchandise Mart's prestigious DreamHouse last year. In the two-story master bedroom (LEFT), a large wall visible from Gertsman's work loft holds a 16-piece installation by Chicago artist Diane Schroeder (Dianeschroeder.net).

floor plan that put the living room and kitchen at the end of the apartment with windows that wrapped around the building's corner, and the master suite at the other end, "far away from all the action, for total privacy," says Riker. The living room retained its high ceilings, but the bedroom got a stepped-back loft that serves as Gertsman's home office, complete with a battalion of computer screens, work stations, and a separate entrance for colleagues and clients who visit for business meetings.

Between these two anchors, the designers carved out space for an expansive dining room (with a dramatic hearth) and a sizable but snug study, giving them gracious wood-paneled partitions fitted with translucent-glass pocket doors on both sides; this created a circular access pattern to all the rooms and diffused the shotgun-style configuration of the space. A media room was tucked away behind the dining room, with glass panels in lieu of plaster walls and shades that can be lowered for watching films.

At their initial presentation, the designers came prepared to defend the architectural plans should they need to. "We anticipated a very long meeting," Dolenc says. Instead, "Gennady inspected our plans, approved everything on the spot, and said, 'Let's get going.' We were in and out of there in 45 minutes," marvels Riker.

As for choosing the interior accoutrements, that part was easy. "[Gertsman] has such a chaotic lifestyle that it was a no-brainer," Dolenc teases. They went for calm and tranquil. Riker agrees. "We knew that if the interior wasn't soothing and serene, it wouldn't meet his needs and be successful." They felt classics that ranged from mid-20th-century to contemporary, such as Arne Jacobsen's Swan chair and Trosca dining chairs from Holly Hunt, executed in calming shades of cream, taupe, and gray, would establish the right tone and vibe.

Gertsman was as decisive about his choices of furnishings and art as he was about the basics of the architecture. "We'd show him two or three things, and he'd know what he wanted immediately," says Dolenc. Despite his purposeful ways, it still took two and a half years to complete the project after Gertsman closed on the properties. Says the trader, "Hey, it's a high-rise and this is Chicago, so things are never as simple or take as little time as they should."

The designers and their client became close friends during the project, though Gertsman ended up living in the place only a year and a half before leaving on his six-month, around-the-world sojourn. But Dolenc and Riker look forward to his return. "He's been to so many exotic locales," says Dolenc, "we're dying to see what he's bringing home." **IMA**



The airy ambiance of the master bedroom is enhanced by a floating glass, steel, and walnut staircase custom made by Gentner Fabrication, while a broad walnut wall, shaggy Rasta Ottoman from Luminaire, and funky wooden *Chopper* motorcycle sculpture by Lee Stoetzel at Chicago Art Source warm up the spare space. The bed is by Ligne Roset and the linens are Calvin Klein.