

# NEW YORK HOME

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# 50

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# CLEAN SLATE

LEE STOUT GETS FREE REIN TO CREATE A MINIMALIST BACHELOR PAD



In the living room, designer Lee Stout juxtaposed the low, weighty volume and neutral tones of a B&B Italia-inspired sofa (customized to suit his client's big-boned frame) with the tall, lithe proportions and vibrant yellow-chartreuse of Harry Bertoldi's Bird chair. Translucent scrim shades at once filter and enhance the brilliant light that floods in through the south-facing windows.



ABOVE: Stout partially enclosed the kitchen in 3form's cast-resin panels embedded with wild grasses. An original line drawing by Richard Serra, bought by the client, looms over the dining area's Florence Knoll table and Mies van der Rohe armchairs. OPPOSITE PAGE: Richard Sapper's Halley lamp for Lucesco illuminates the Bertioia chair and a Jasper Morrison Op-La tray table. A plasma screen on a scissor mechanism lifts into the alcove.

DESIGNERS COVET NOTHING MORE ZEALOUSLY than a *tabula rasa*—they dream of clients like the single, 40ish Wall Street executive who hired Lee Stout to design this Chelsea loft. “He wanted a space that would impress and yet was minimal,” says Stout. “But he had nothing except clothes. He just told me to show him what I thought was right for him.”

“It was my first apartment in New York,” adds the client. “I had moved from San Francisco and had sold everything there. I wanted a new look, and I didn’t want Lee to have to design around anything I already owned.” The client envisioned a stark red-and-black space, but, he recalls, “Lee knows my crazy schedule, and said, ‘You’re going to want an environment that will be more soothing and relaxing.’” Stout’s solution: neutral, earthy tones accented with flashes of brighter color.

Typical of mid-block loft buildings, the apartment was long and narrow, with windows at either end. “The way to create a sense of space and luxury,” Stout determined, “was to maximize the light,” which he accomplished by painting the walls light in front (where living room, dining area, and kitchen are located) and back (which houses two bedrooms and two





bathrooms). Because the connecting hall lacked windows, the designer opted for warmth and depth with a coat of chocolate-brown paint.

Stout partially enclosed the kitchen with four-foot-high cast-resin panels from 3form. The translucent partition, embedded with grasses, creates separation while retaining the loft's airiness. He deployed the same cast-resin material—in plain chartreuse—as window screens in the eating area that can be alternated with other textured or colored resins.

"I suggested that classic modern furniture would be a good investment because it would age well," continues Stout. "The time span is almost 80 years of modernism—from Breuer's 1925 Laccio tables in the den to a small Jasper Morrison table next to the Bertoia Bird chair in the living room." Rich, supple materials like brown Ultrasuede and blue silk boost the luxury quotient in both master bedroom and guest room-office. The latter performs its dual function with the aid of a custom banquette that can both seat and sleep.

A delay-plagued construction process added the requisite soupçon of friction to the project. "The client expected to come back from vacation and have it 100-percent done, with soft music playing and candles flickering," recalls Stout with a laugh. But the collaboration was smooth overall. The proof? Stout's client still says, "It was a very good process for me." And hearing that is probably the second thing a designer covets most. **SEE RESOURCES**

OPPOSITE PAGE: In the den, a custom banquette in brown Ultrasuede serves as seating as well as a guest bed. With portable Laccio tables by Marcel Breuer, the room converts easily to serve various functions. The Ará lamp is Philippe Starck for Flos. ABOVE: Sparse, simple furnishings in the master bedroom get a dose of softness from gold-tinted beige walls, an upholstered headboard, and quilted silk bedding.