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moving on down

How many square feet would you like to live in a Midtown high-rise? Tom Pats and Donna Ricci, the husband-wife team behind her namesake women's fashion label, used to live with their three children in a stately prewar co-op. Then, with only one kid out of the nest, the couple decided to downsize a little early—inspired by the concept of a deluxe condo in the sky. “Opening up in Wisconsin,” Pats says, “I’d seen pictures.”

The change meant squeezing into 2,100 square feet, plus balconies, on the 23rd floor of a Ser Scout Architects tower opposite the United Nations. Originally two units, the place had been consolidated by former owners but never completely reconsidered. Pats and Ricci hired **BBB/Architect** principal Robert Berkowitz for the job after seeing him on television, and he brought in **Robert Kauer Interior Design**.

For the “Case Study feeling” Pats requested, the first order of business was to demolish non-essential walls. When the existing parquet floor proved unsuitable, the team substituted a similar one at a slightly larger size. The oak is stained a custom shade that “is



At a Midtown apartment, the dining area's design (from Ser Scout Architects, opens [George Nelson product history](#)), and photograph by [Thad Wilder](#) are visible from the table.

pulls back a touch from absolute, in the direction of espresso.

To camouflage a central concrete structural column and simultaneously define the public space, Derbekov came up with a divider clad in furniture-grade crossed oak "without that 'raw' quality," he explains. The partition serves as storage while separating the snug den and study from the living and dining areas, which offer cooler and bolder palettes.

Blue accents in the living area acknowledge a frankly spectacular view of the U.N.'s glass facade.

Most variegated is a rug based on an abstract painting by William Berra, brother of Time Style & Design editor Rafe. Berra himself helped select the wool yarns. "It would have been really easy to do an approximate version, but this one matches very faithfully," Rane reports.

To fine-tune the apparent dimensions of the master bedroom, the team eliminated a wall of closets in favor of a built-in credenza that features a medium of width to the narrow space. That change did away with the need for a facing wall of mirrors, now replaced by



From top: A simply rendered in a natural recycled bamboo composite defines the dining area. In the living area, hand-carved custom chairs flank a smoked table and an oversized lamp, circa 1960.



...and the living area, with hand-carved custom chairs and a smoked table and an oversized lamp, circa 1960.



lightly polished Venetian plaster, applied to burlap for enhanced texture.

The boys' suite is even more unusual. Three amicable brothers, one away at boarding school, share a tiny "bunkhouse" with beds by Dierkeritz. The attached lounge—a place for homework, watching movies, and parties—boasts significantly more space. Last anyone wonder what locale a trio of teenagers could cook up at home, here's Pulo's say in the matter: "You can walk into the lounge without feeling you're intruding."

The family's old apart-

ment had a rarely used dining room and an eat-in kitchen, but here there's only one place for all-clear meals. Above the dining area's resin-topped table and vintage white Eero Saarinen chairs, a canopy recessed in an eco-friendly wood composite houses recessed halogen spotlights—their trim is a custom-painted coffee color, match. Great debate ensued about how to supplement the downlights: several, pendants or just one? It was Pulo who finally suggested a pair of George Nelson's Pear Lanterns and —

From top: A recessed-wall room divider creates a den and catwalks for a massive abstract wall sculpture. Over the living area's custom sofa and Roger Pevsner chairs, flexible recessed-crown lighting allows the photography to be swapped around; the image above the sofa is by Richard Beatty.



PHOTO: JEFFREY MAYER

