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## ERA CONDITIONED

In a high-rise condo, it's out with the mauve-and-teal '80s vibe, in with creamy-modern elegance

BY LISA CREGAN



"That wonderful blue Yves Klein coffee table is the star of the living room," says decorator Michael Richman. The foyer's silver leaf cone ceiling (opposite) shines above reproduction Gerrit Rietveld Zig Zag chairs and a photo by William John Kennedy of Andy Warhol holding up a sit-screen portrait of Marilyn Monroe.



**WHEN IT COMES TO DECORATING THEIR OWN HOMES,** interior decorator Michael Richman and his partner, art consultant Harrison Parker, have a problem. Every time they show off one of their chic little nests, someone wants to buy it. The place in these photos? Sold. Richman and Parker made the mistake of "throwing a party, and one of their guests made an offer they couldn't refuse.

They're getting used to it. Five years ago they sold their Old Town townhouse so fast, they had to scramble madly to come up with somewhere else to live. Luckily, Richman's business, Michael Richman Interiors, gave him some insight into what his next move should be. He actually fell into this 38th-floor, two-bedroom condo high above the Mag

Mile when he was consulted on whether it could be rescued for resale from its unfortunate disco-era doom.

Richman took one look at the mauve and dark teal palette and the high-'80s-era pickled floors and decided that rather than give up his trade secrets, he'd buy it himself. In no time at all, he and Parker managed to exorcise the ghost of Donna Summer, introduce a range of creamy hues, and turn the place into an invitingly warm yet modern space.

Richman began by dreaming up a nuanced architectural plan for

the apartment, with bold crown moldings tapping off most of the rooms. He admits he had two purposes for designing such deeply grooved cornices, a style he calls "stepped-up Deco": "I wanted to reference the Art Deco facade of the building. But frankly, the moldings also hide cracks."

The kind of crack he's talking about is not unusual in modern high-rises like this one, which can sway a little in heavy winds. The buildings are constructed to allow for some movement, which makes them structurally safer but also results in the occasional

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALAN SHORTALL STYLING BY BETTY BARQUIN





In the dining room, "the slipper chairs pull it all together," says Richman. "It would have been boring if they were all one style." Dark teak walls in the den (below) make a pleasing backdrop for David Meisel's aerial photos of chemical fields. Richman stands alongside his all-upholstered Mies, displayed in the living room (opposite).



crack or gap between wall and ceiling—hence architectural trim as cover-up. Plus, these moldings are simply good-looking. "They're not cheap," Parker says. "They're substantial. I didn't want to live in a white box."

And let there be no doubt about it, Parker's opinion mattered, too. He and Richman, both style obsessives, have very different tastes bridged (fortunately) by mutual respect. Parker says he appreciates Richman's strong architectural background, his ability to pare down beauty to its essence. In turn, Richman loves Parker's knack for what he terms "elegant luxury—not gilt or fussiness. Just good taste grounded in the classics."

Both men's strengths are on display throughout this 2,000-square-foot apartment, but their aesthetic rapport is best demonstrated by the Mies daybed in the living room. Not just another white leather incarnation of this iconic piece, it's upholstered in a silk fabric that satisfied Parker's need for lux. "I find it so much softer and easier to live with than leather," he says.

"Some Mies devotees might not be so glad to see this chair

done in silk, but at the very least they'd be surprised," Richman says. "Plus," Parker adds, "this was about us, not about what anyone else thinks."

**T**HERE ARE OTHER UNEXPECTED COMBINATIONS on view here, as well as a finely calibrated sense of restraint ("It's all about editing," Richman says). Take the living room's low-slung Deco armchairs. They're paired with a lively, almost surly, Phenakia coffee table by post-war French artist Yves Klein that might have overwhelmed a lesser room.

"People are always drawn to that table; it's a work of art," says Parker of the limited-edition beauty, which is lined with cobalt-blue powdered pigment and sits at the center of the living room like some killer adult sandbox. Richman says he likes how it picks up the blue in the Oriental carpet and holds its own against the Mies daybed and the views of the skyline outside the windows.



In the master suite, the headboard was designed to make for comfortable reading in bed. In one of the suite's two bathrooms (below), a charcoal draining by Malise sits on a Chinese chest. Gleaming Philippe Starck stools pair with a tall Ligne Roset table in the kitchen (opposite).



"People are always surprised by our love of color," says Parker. "I guess they think of us as more conservative."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS WILSON FOR CHICAGO HOME + GARDEN

Both Richman and Parker like to spin the color wheel, and they came up with some shrewd juxtapositions for this apartment. The cream-to-sand tones Richman favored for everything from wall treatments to sofas to draperies keep the bursts of kaleidoscope color in check. "People are always surprised by our love of color," says Parker. "I guess they think of us as more conservative."

In the kitchen? There's enough chromatic energy here to make you feel a little giddy—that intense blue in the Kohn coffee table; oranges, blue, and lime-green seats in the dining room; a chartreuse lacquered end table and burnt-orange throw pillows in the den. The pops of hot colors add a sense of fun to the place—especially

when they bump up against all the tailor-made modern pieces.

"I love creating things in Lacite," says Richman, who designed the oval dining table with a Lacite pedestal base and a steel top. "The thing I love most about the table," chirps in Parker, "is the way the steel was sanded in a triangular starburst pattern. It feels to me like a wonderful inlaid antique."

Serial entertainers, the two gave the dining room lots of attention. Stripe-upholstered slipper chairs were paired with armless wood-frame chairs that Richman drew up after seeing some 1940s French Art Deco pieces by design icon André Sornay. Richman says he especially admires Sornay's craftsmanship approach.

"I love the way the skeleton, the mechanics, of those chairs are exposed. I think it adds a carabosse," he says. An eye-popping chair-drawer that Parker designed in collaboration with a protégé of glass-blowing guru Dale Chihuly finished the scheme.

After all this vivacious color, the monochromatic bedrooms is a soothing surprise. "It's the color of parchment and I find that restful," says Parker, whose life has been anything but restful lately.

"We sold this place literally overnight," he says, contemplating life in a rental while he and Richman look for a new pad. "But I know we'll do it again. We'll create something great somewhere else." ■

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