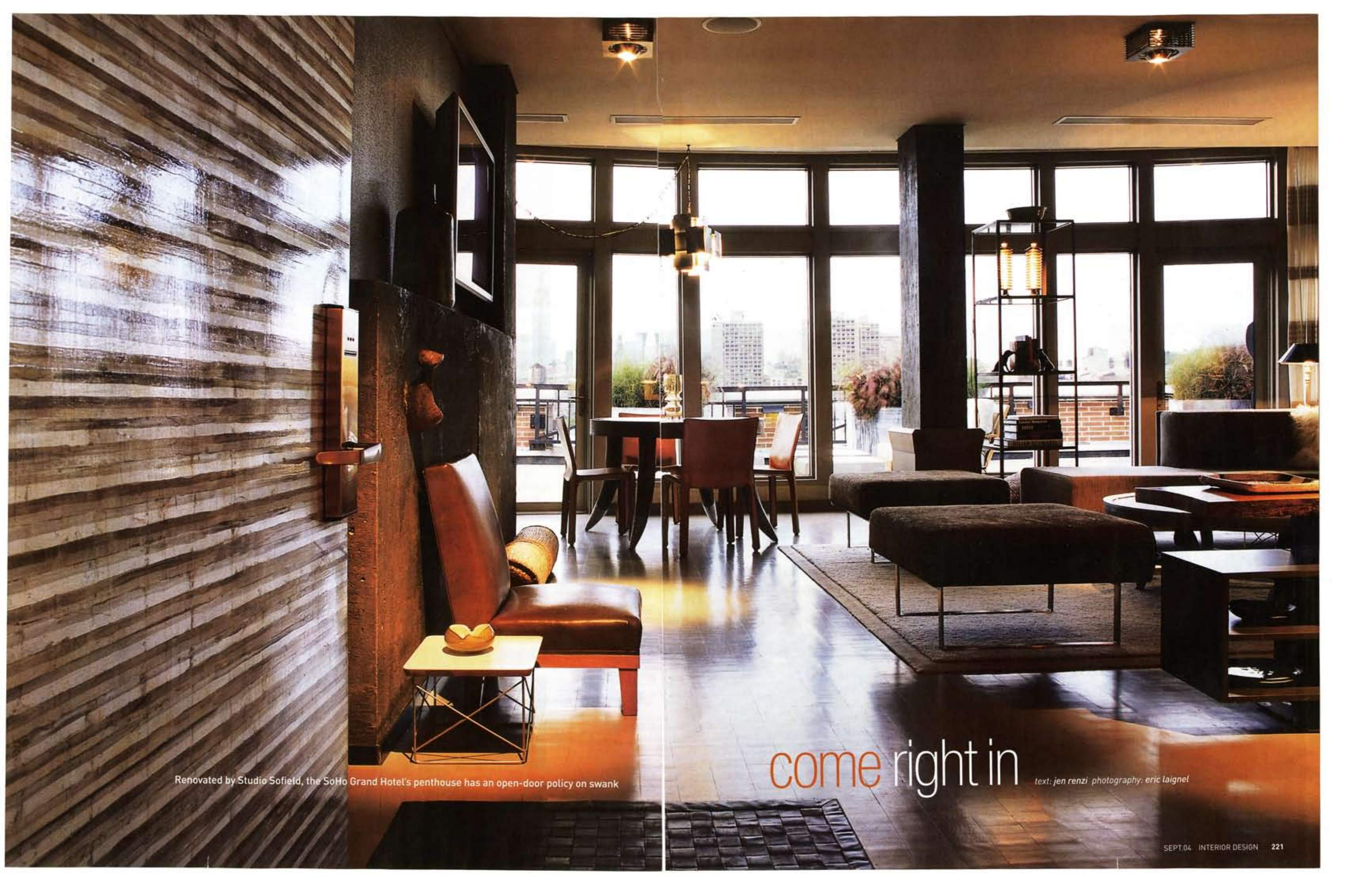


INTERIOR DESIGN

NUMBER 11

In the Mood: New York





Renovated by Studio Sofield, the SoHo Grand Hotel's penthouse has an open-door policy on swank

come right in

text: jen renzi photography: eric laignel

From manufacturing hub to artist's haven to shopping destination, SoHo has long embraced wholesale reinvention. And reinvention, as it happens, is exactly what drives high-end hospitality. "To appeal to the most discriminating guests, properties must continually re-create themselves," explains Hartz Mountain Industries president and COO Emanuel Stern. Stern's company opened the first SoHo hotel in 1996—and it's still the neighborhood's largest, at 363 rooms. What the SoHo Grand Hotel lacked, how-

ever, was a penthouse of suitable grandeur. To enact the transformation of five suites into two, Stern turned to Studio Sofield principal William Sofield, who oversaw the hotel's initial design and subsequent tweaks, from renovating the lobby to redoing soft goods. "Bill is a creative genius," says Stern. "He embraces the challenge and constraints of a developer's budget—and still wows us with the result." The 1,600-square-foot north penthouse is the larger, more flamboyant of the two. Its L-

shape floor plan centers on a living-dining area, flanked by a master suite on one end and a second bedroom on the other. In keeping with the neighborhood's past, Sofield set out to instill a loftlike feel—a challenge, given the 9 1/2-foot ceiling and quirky floor plate. "It's divided into these little nooks and ancillary spaces. Not what you'd design if you had a clean piece of paper, but it actually gives the space a more residential scale," says Sofield. "It's my fantasy New York apartment." To construct that fantasy,

Sofield chose industrial materials such as factory-style flooring of end-grain hemlock and door panels of ribbed glass. He also exposed existing concrete columns, balancing their visual weight with a cast-concrete faux fireplace. Walls are surfaced in a metallic-painted fiberglass substrate, an 11th-hour alternative improvised after deciding against the silk wall covering initially selected. "That's a classic example of Bill's problem-solving," says Stern. "The new material worked better aesthetically,



Previous spread: At the entry to the SoHo Grand Hotel's north penthouse, a Studio Sofield project, silver leaf covers the steel fire door. An inset woven-leather rug punctuates the end-grain hemlock floor.

Left: The living area's custom chaises and ottomans combine mohair upholstery and stainless-steel bases. The custom rug is wool. **Above:** Walnut tops the custom credenza. Upholstered furniture has contrasting back and side panels of cotton-rayon. **Below:** For the concrete patio's teak seating, William Sofield covered cushions in Sunbrella.

and it'll wear like iron." (No small consideration in a hospitality environment.)

Furnishings nod to the local vernacular as well. "We celebrated the 1870's and 1970's, the two great periods in SoHo's history," says Sofield. "It's probably a little more of the latter, with the living area's Vladimir Kagan-inspired chaises and the master bedroom's supersize drafting lamp. But it's a happy mix of things, not too determined or overdesigned."

Like the neighborhood, furnishings are a cultural melting pot: an Italian 1950's brass-and-aluminum chandelier, an American schoolhouse chair, a custom credenza topped by rough-hewn walnut in the George Nakashima mode. And what could be more idiosyncratic than an S-shape python lamp with light shining from the snake's gaping mouth?

In the wet bar, open glass →



Top, from left: Sofield's stencils on an existing concrete column. An art deco vanity in the master bathroom. Bottom, from left: A fragment of terra-cotta embedded in the living area's cast-concrete faux fireplace, which backs a leather-covered chair and a table by Charles and Ray Eames. The master bath's vinyl wall covering with New York scenes by the late Saul Steinberg.





shelves display stacks of Japanese salt-glazed ceramic dishes. "Yeah, they'll break," he admits with a laugh. "That's the great thing about having a track record with a client. We didn't need to be quite as safe this time." Similar risk-taking led to the master suite's sliding doors, allowing skyline views from the cast-iron tub. And, presumably, the reverse.

Fine art reminds guests of SoHo's 20th-century glory years. Original Berenice Abbott photographs hang in the living area; the patio's painted-steel sculpture by Stern's aunt Gloria

Kisch was previously on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "We involved artists in the property from the very beginning, and we're continuing that tradition," says Sofield.

Putting his paintbrush where his mouth is, he even made a little contribution of his own, stenciling signage on the penthouse's concrete columns. On a column in the living area, he sketched his Rhodesian ridge-back puppy in chalk. The drawing was executed when Sofield checked in to "test" his design for a night—and ended up staying for three entire days. 🐕

VICE PRESIDENT: **EMMA O'NEILL**. PROJECT TEAM: **MELISSA BOWERS; ALBERTO VELEZ; MAUREEN HOFFMANN; TSUYOSHI MA; FABIENNE KLOTZ LAMONT**.

DOOR FINISH (ENTRY): **NANCY LORENZ**. CUSTOM RUGS (ENTRY, LIVING AREA): **CREATIVE MATTERS**. BASKET (LIVING AREA): **HOME STORE**. CURTAIN FABRIC: **CHRISTOPHER FARR THROUGH POLLACK**. SEATING MOCHAIR: **BRENTANO THROUGH POLLACK**. SEATING COTTON-RAYON: **UNIKA VAEV**. PYTHON LAMP, ALUMINUM LAMPS: **THROUGH LOST CITY ARTS**. DECORATIVE PAINTING, FINISHES (LIVING AREA, WET BAR): **JOHN OPELLA**. CUSTOM SEATING, COCKTAIL TABLE, CREDENZA (LIVING AREA), CUSTOM TABLE (DINING AREA): **BENCHMARK FURNITURE**. SIDE TABLE, SHELVING UNIT (LIVING AREA), HEADBOARD (BEDROOM): **BAKER**. COWHIDE RUG (LIVING AREA), BENCH COWHIDE (BEDROOM): **DUALOY**. CUSTOM SHEERS, OVER-DRAPES (LIVING AREA, BEDROOM): **DFB SALES**. SEATING (PATIO): **SUTHERLAND**; **GLEN RAVEN** (FABRIC). SINK (WET BAR): **ELKAY MANUFAC-**

TURING CO. SINK FITTINGS: **50HO CORP.** CHAIRS (DINING AREA): **CASSINA**. CHANDE-LIER: **THROUGH HISTORICAL MATERIALISM**; **B&G ANTIQUE LIGHTING** (REWIRING). TUB, FITTINGS (BATHROOM): **WATERWORKS**. WALL TILE: **ANN SACKS TILE & STONE**. WALL COVERING: **F. SCHUMACHER & CO.** LEATHER-COVERED CHAIR (LIVING AREA): **SOANE**. SIDE TABLE: **HERMAN MILLER**. BED (BEDROOM): **BRITISH KHAKI FURNITURE**. BEDDING: **MUSE**. WALL-MOUNTED FIXTURE: **FLOS**. CUSTOM BENCH, SCREEN: **GARY BUXBAUM COMPANY**. SCREEN, WINDOW SHADE FABRIC: **BERGAMO FABRICS THROUGH ANGELA BROWN**. CHAIR: **CHERNER CHAIR COMPANY**. CUSTOM DESK: **CASAMIDY**. FLOOR LAMP: **SPAZIA**. DOOR DRAP-ERY FABRIC: **ZAX**. CARPET: **WOOLSHIRE CAR-PET MILLS**. CEILING FIXTURES: **MODULAR INTERNATIONAL THROUGH CONTINENTAL LIGHTING SYSTEMS**. FLOORING: **OREGON LUMBER COMPANY**. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **JGR INTERIORS**.