

MODERN EASE

Tall Order

Sleek wall-mounted designs and clever use of vertical space help keep every inch of an urban apartment organized.

GLASS & GOLD The gold-leaf finish on the cork wall adds a warm contrast to the tourmaline blue columns. The boomerang glass table is both visually open and easy-to-manuever around in a tight space.



1,680-SQUARE-FOOT PENTHOUSE

- ▶ **MY STYLE** Contemporary
- ▶ **RENOVATIONS** Added large built-ins for storage
- ▶ **DESIGN CHALLENGES** Not the best views, especially for a penthouse apartment; small master bedroom
- ▶ **SOLUTION** Redesigned the master to look like a main salon on a yacht
- ▶ **FAVORITE ELEMENT** The vibrant color
- ▶ **BIGGEST INDULGENCE** The custom-designed media unit with fireplace and drawer storage
- ▶ **TOP ADVICE** Take full advantage of whatever available opportunities you have to create vertical storage
- ▶ **GREAT SOURCES** CB2—it's especially good for contemporary spaces

A floor lamp with a large shade makes a subtle and useful room divider in open layouts



Color Your World

Richard Gacek used tourmaline blue as an eye-catching accent hue. Here are his tips on fitting your favorite bold hue into your design scheme.

- ▶ **Make a Stand** Highlight architectural elements such as structural columns, half walls and built-in units with the color. Paint just one wall in your vibrant shade for eye-catching emphasis.
- ▶ **Laying the Groundwork** Incorporate at least one rug in the saturated hue into your design to build color from the floor up.
- ▶ **Accessorize** Accent with color throughout the space using throw pillows and other accessories as well as small furnishings, but be sure to keep larger furniture pieces in neutral shades.
- ▶ **Pattern Play** Show off your feature color in patterns as well as in solids. Carry the theme from room to room to maintain a sense of unity in tight quarters.
- ▶ **Strike a Balance** Balance saturated hues with neutral shades in both large areas and small vignettes.

PARTY TIME (Left) The transition from living to dining area is rendered smooth by palette. A chrome-and-glass bar on wheels can slide around as needed, and there is ample seating between the chairs and barstools.

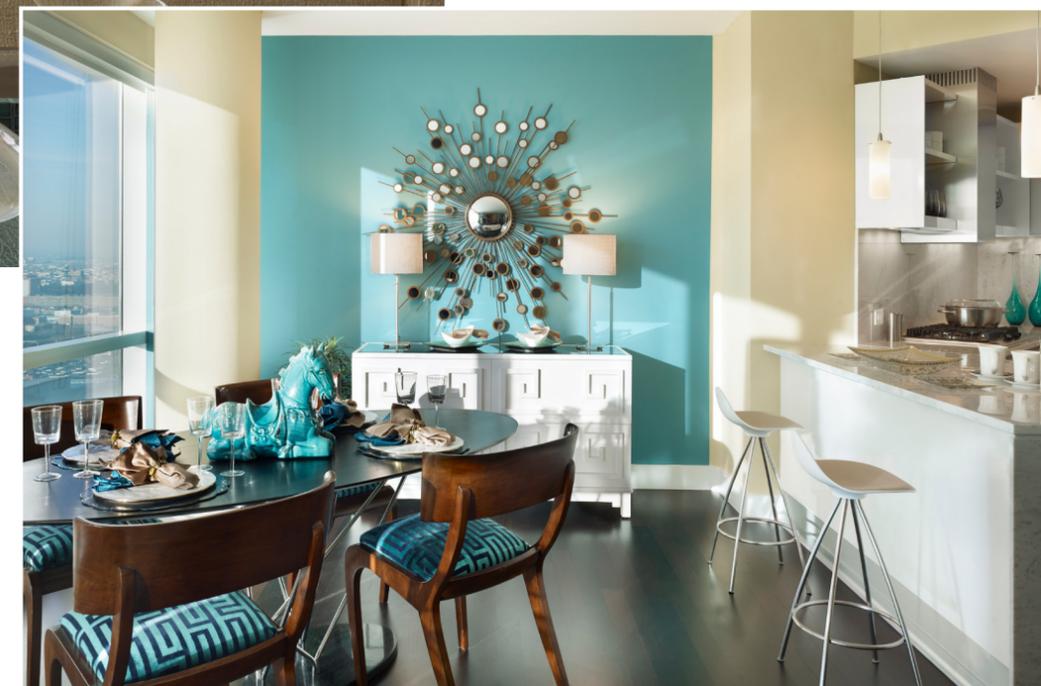
Recalling the Jersey City, New Jersey, apartment on these pages, interior designer Richard Gacek says, “The biggest challenge in this penthouse was that it didn’t have the best views!” However, the brightly lit two-bedroom did have great design features, including chocolate-brown wenge wood floors and crisp white lacquer kitchen cabinets. Gacek—the owner and principal designer of Gacek Design Group (gacedesign.com)—needed inspiration to start. Ironically, he

found it outside the apartment’s picture windows.

“For my palette, I ended up choosing tourmaline blue because of the neighboring building, which is made entirely of glass in blues and greens,” says Gacek. Tourmaline blue is such a brilliant color that Gacek wanted to use it as an accent but balanced it out with neutrals. As complementary hues, he layered in blacks, browns, ivories, whites and taupes, as well as golds and silvers. With respect to materials, he favored wood, reflective glass and chrome.

ROOM TO BREATHE (Right)

The dining table has a black glass top and an open steel-and-marble base. Other leggy (and therefore visually space-expanding) elements include the dining chairs, barstools and lamp bases.



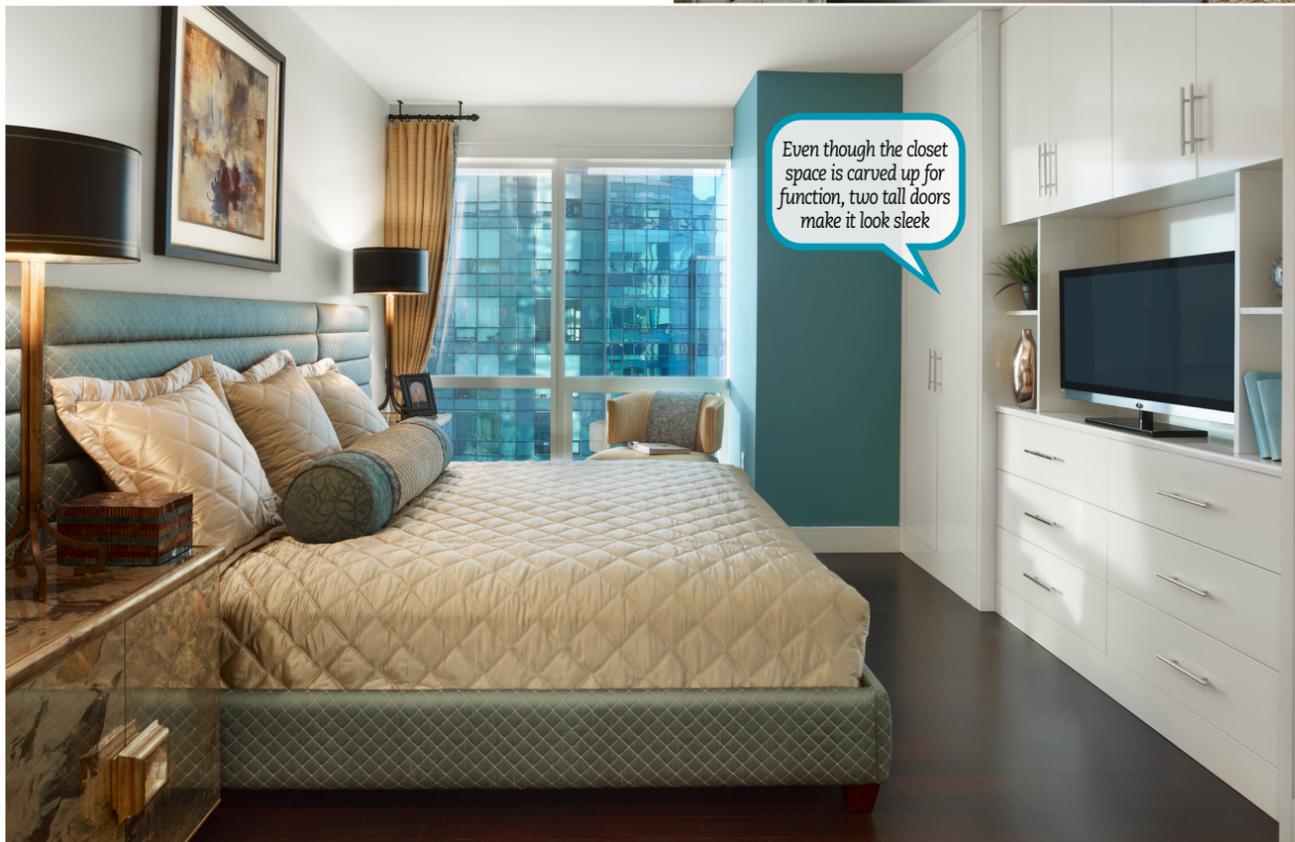
“Making the interior connected to the exterior is a way of making a small space feel much more expansive.”

COUNTRY IN THE CITY (Right) The guest room has an island retreat feel, with its bleached-wood bed, nightstand and chest, as well as with a seagrass rug. Because the room is larger than the master bedroom, a full wall got the bright blue paint.

BLUE ALL OVER (Below) The inspirational building sits outside the narrow master bedroom. Gacek chose to saturate the structural column, creating a wall of blue; the rest of the space is painted cream to make it feel wider.



By allowing side tables to sit on the bare floor, the area rug's walkable surface is maximized



Even though the closet space is carved up for function, two tall doors make it look sleek

Vertical Design Elements

Next Gacek set about creating storage: a wall-mounted media unit with a fireplace in the living room; and in the master bedroom, a full closet wall with drawers, cupboards and shelves.

“Next, I developed an open floor plan. The apartment needed to be functional for one-room living,” says Gacek. The media unit serves as a focal point in the living area. Beneath it, a patchwork rug grounds the seating—two blue-and-gold patterned armchairs and a neutral Belgian linen sofa, which has a low profile so as not to block the through-view to the dining area and kitchen. To draw the eye deep into the eating quarters, Gacek painted the farthest wall tourmaline blue and added a sunburst mirror, with a white

lacquered buffet beneath it. The oval dining table is arranged at an angle to maximize the narrow space.

In the master bedroom, which is much smaller than the guest room, Gacek hit another design glitch. “To compensate for its scale, I took inspiration from yacht design—from vertical built-ins to wall-mounting the headboard and floating the bed in order to lend the illusion of space.” Meanwhile, the guest bedroom also serves as a home office area. Gacek achieved this by the simple addition of a clean-lined desk and chair by the window wall. “I’m very happy with how it turned out,” he says. “It’s clean, fresh and young, yet also sophisticated and timeless.”