

ICE PALACE The legs of Ico Parisi's glass-topped lacquer table, from Troy, echo the worlds-apart arc of an Ethiopian stool from Craft Caravan. Gambrel designed the seven- and eight-foot sofas to ease his client's transition from traditional to modernist—boxy, but covered in soft velvet. Trained as an architect, Gambrel couldn't resist the grid on this Einstein Moomjy carpet.



SOME NEW YORKERS GROW UP BY MOVING UPTOWN, OTHERS BY TRADING IKEA FOR antiques. One of designer Steven Gambrel's clients, a bachelor banker, celebrated his maturity by abandoning the Upper East Side for TriBeCa. But he brought a decidedly Park Avenue gloss to his new downtown space: lacquered walls, platinum velvet, and ebonized mahogany. "One of the ideas of the apartment was the way materials reflected light," says Gambrel, of S. R. Gambrel, Inc. He picked fabrics and finishes for maximum luminosity—horsehair, glass, stainless steel, and silk—and kept all of the furniture low so as not to obscure any of the 2,500-square-foot loft's views. Most of the glow comes from the immaculate paint job—a labor-intensive process that gave the apartment old-world richness without detracting from the client's masculine, pared-down aesthetic. And to create the maximum number of highlights, Gambrel chose twentieth-century furniture with sinuous lines. "I wanted to make sure the items we chose were user-friendly," he says. "They had to have curve appeal." After all, no bachelor wants a frigid pad.

LACQUERED UP The walls and doors of the library are glossed with eight coats of blue-black Schreuder paint (Martha Stewart's favorite); the glossy floor is ebonized mahogany. "The color really enforced the intimacy of the space," Gambrel says, "and you can watch the changing light on the walls, especially toward sunset." He covered the custom-made ottoman in an orange leather; Clarence House's Izmir silk gives the sedate armchair, also his design, a pearly sheen.

CITY SLICKER

PARK AVENUE POLISH MAKES A MOVE DOWNTOWN, IN A LUMINOUS TRIBECA LOFT.



ALL THE RIGHT ANGLES Gambrel revamped this vintage chair from his client's uptown apartment, replacing brown suede with indigo horsehair and lacquering the mahogany legs platinum. The horsehair's soft glow bridges the gap between the glossy black library doors and the oceanic Angelina Nasso painting from the Silverstein Gallery. The Edward Wormley table, found at Donzella, also has lacquered wooden legs but in basic black.



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ANTIQUES, OR ANTIQUES USED IN GRAPHIC WAYS." —STEVEN GAMBREL

SLEEPING BEAUTY Even in the bedroom, Gambrel couldn't resist the sheen of greenish-silver paint and sheer silk curtains. He designed the bed, made of limed ash, which has a padded headboard made of rip-stop nylon. Gambrel found the cane chairs at Donzella and upholstered them in a textured cotton, soft as the nubby wool rug from ABC Carpet & Home. His client chose the Jose Picayo photograph at the Robin Rice Gallery for its sun-bleached quality.

SILVER LINING An up-to-the-minute Boffi kitchen is brought down to earth with a wall of Carrara marble tile from Waterworks. The lacquered stools, from Historical Materialism, are covered in wine-proof raincoat fabric, from Clarence House. "I liked the old-fashioned wood stool against the snappy kitchen, mixing the modern spirit with an earlier industrial feeling," Gambrel says, pointing to the Edison-style lights of his own design.



REN GAMBREL

Living space: The lobby of the Credit Suisse building on Madison and Park. It's this very beautiful, tall, 1930s-designed space with great fittings. The Dining Room of the Ministry of Culture in Rome, at the Palazzo Strozzi. Again, it's a fantastic 1930s space: There's a lot of polished wood, beautifully finished, very simple, and very clean-lined walls. I like the contrast between the matte black and the polished woodwork, and the tall doors.

Favorite details: Tall pairs of doors like the ones I built in this building. They separate two spaces but keep them in relationship to one another. I like the contrast they create. Also, they provide a great view.

Favorite color: Platinum. It's used as both a warm and a cooler color. That duality is exciting.

Favorite texture: Suede, because it's so light. But I would use it sparingly, perhaps on the seats of chairs.

What I hate: The seventies. I don't like that modern seventies furniture.

What I like: The combination of modern interiors and antiques, or antiques used in graphic ways.

Favorite shopping: Donzella in New York. They have a great eye for the combination of pieces they carry and the material they use.

Favorite interiors: The interior with Cary Grant and Lauren Bergman. The décor is all in Georgian, which makes a transition from traditional

