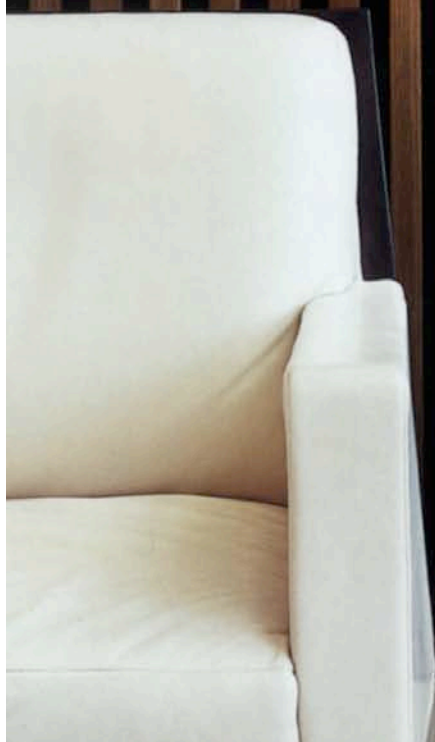
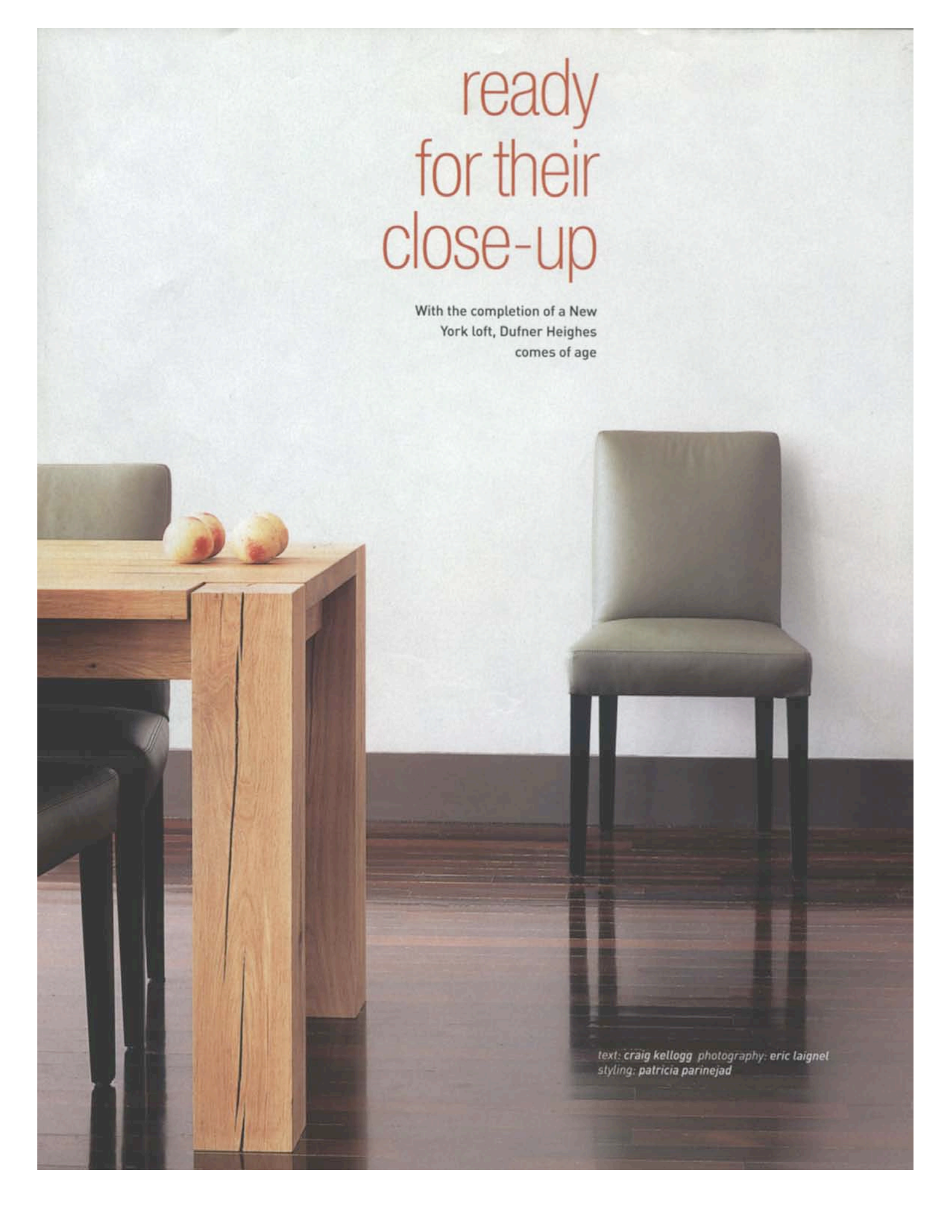


INTERIOR DESIGN

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on the edge

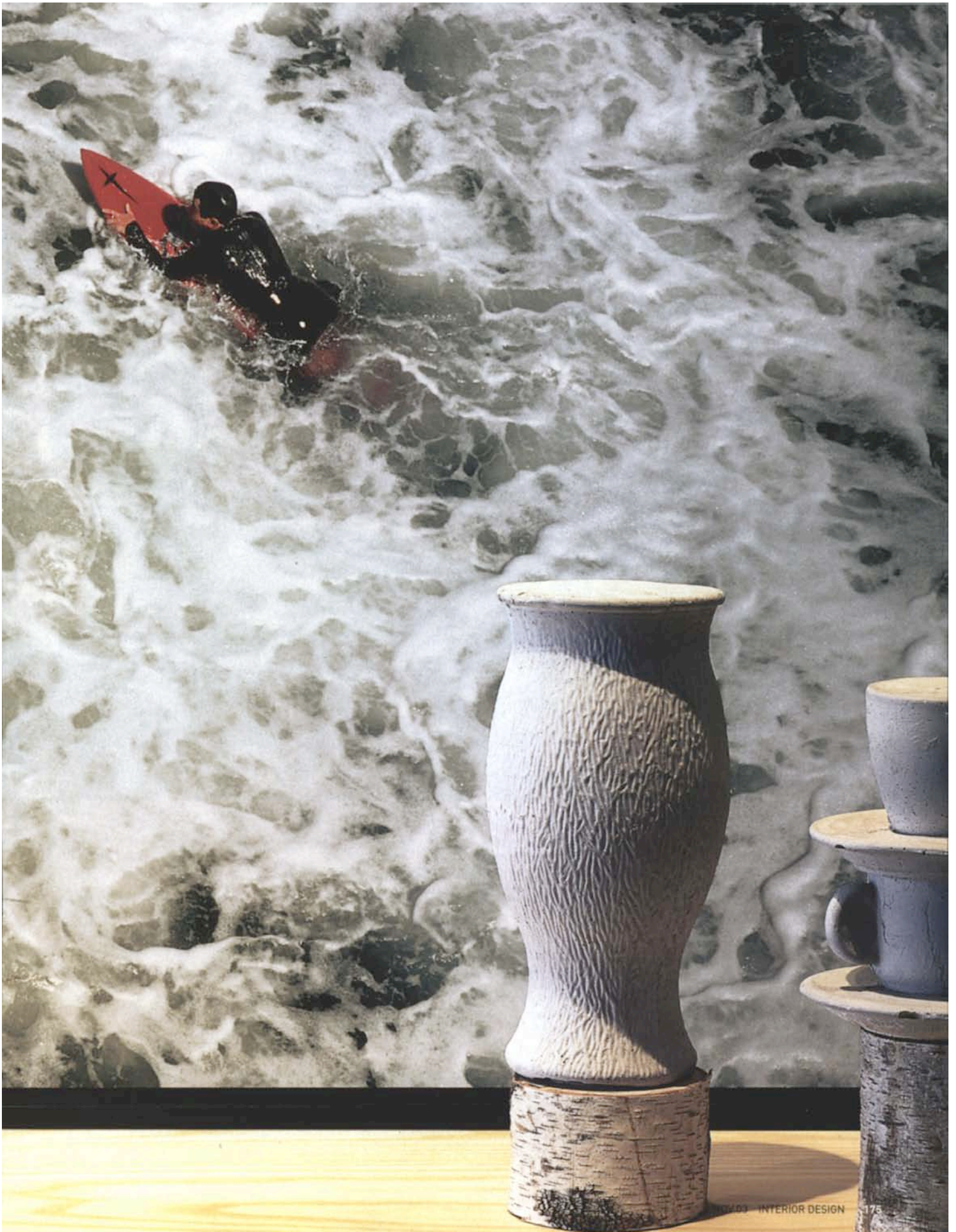


A minimalist dining room with a wooden table, a green upholstered chair, and two peaches on the table. The scene is set against a light-colored wall and a dark wood floor. The table is made of light-colored wood with a prominent vertical grain on the leg. The chair is upholstered in a light green fabric with a dark green seat. Two peaches are placed on the table. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the textures of the wood and fabric.

ready for their close-up

With the completion of a New
York loft, Dufner Heighes
comes of age

*text: craig kellogg photography: eric laignet
styling: patricia parinejad*





Design firm Dufner Heighes was not much more than a twinkle in the eyes of Gregory Dufner and Daniel Heighes Wismer in November 2001, when *Interior Design* published the partners' first New York loft project. (Wismer was still working 40-hour weeks for S. Russell Groves at the time.) When the article appeared, oil trader Julian Barrowcliffe and his wife, actress Beth Rogers, were living nearby—in a penthouse that once had World Trade Center views—and were looking for a place to make a fresh start. Even before signing the contract on a new apartment, in the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District, Rogers had been clipping images from magazines, and the

Dufner Heighes loft held her attention. She and Barrowcliffe gave the designers a call.

The deal sealed, they began by considering the building. Its creamy wedding-cake facade featured cast rosettes, paneled pilasters, and columns topped by leafy capitals; the apartments were standard SoHo, long and rectangular with oversize double-hung windows, 13-foot ceilings, and walls of exposed brick. But what appeared to be recently conversions turned out to be new construction, Goldman Properties's seamless replica of the 1879 building next door.

The developer had chosen cherry-stained flooring for the unfinished 2,700-square-foot apartment, but Dufner and

Wismer nixed installation almost immediately. To buck the trend of what Barrowcliffe calls "really pale, insipid floors," clients and designers "did a lot of obsessing about wood." Rogers asked for something "chocolate and hard" as well as cat-proof. The final choice was an oiled South American hardwood.

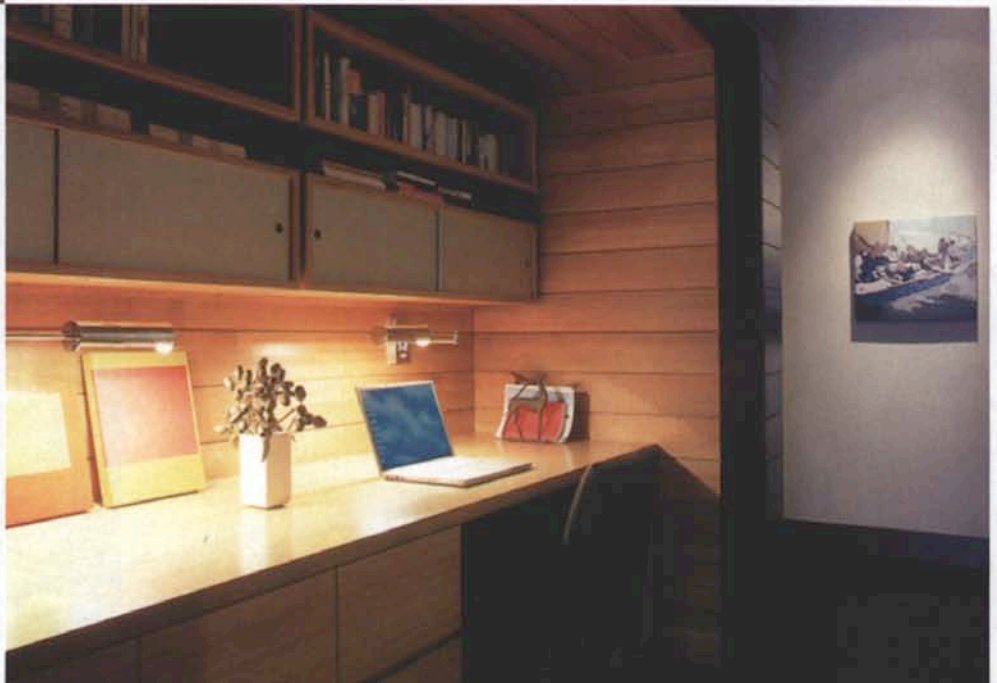
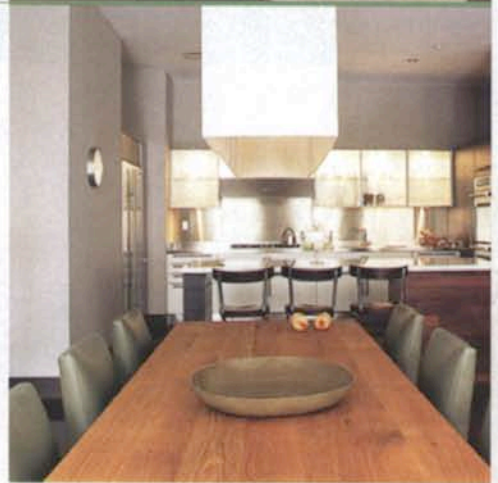
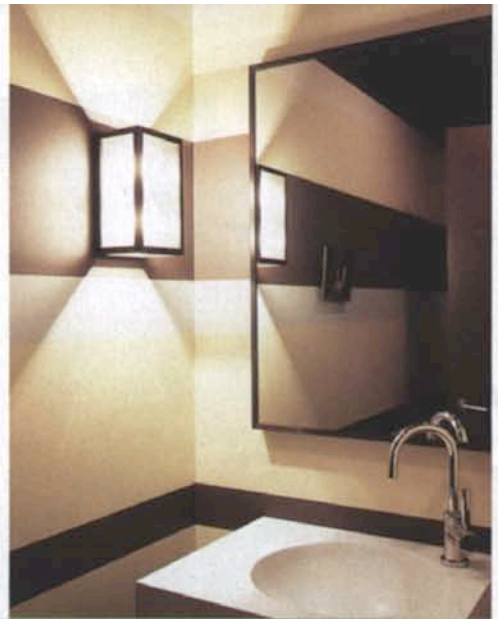
Identical oiled-hardwood strips now sheathe one wall of the entry hallway, wrapping to clad the base of the kitchen island. Given the designers' penchant for the horizontal, they rusticated the installation with a reveal at every other joint, and the result serves as an architectural anchor for the entire scheme. →



Previous spread, left: To streamline the dining area of a New York loft, Dulner Heighes drywalled an exposed-brick wall.

Previous spread, right: Near the entry, a custom ash credenza supports a framed Mark Wyse photograph and Linda Lee's sculpture in concrete and birch.

Left: With a reveal at every other joint, strips of oiled South American hardwood flooring wrap a hallway wall and the base of the kitchen island. The chrome bar stools are leather-covered. **Top:** For the powder room, the architects paired a cast-resin sink with Sieger Design's chrome fittings. **Center:** A pendant covered in linen tape hangs above the oak dining table and leather-covered custom chairs with saddle stitching. **Bottom:** Planks of oiled rift-sawn oak clad the walls of the office niche.





Top: After removing a colonial mantelpiece, the designers modernized the fireplace wall with courses of Kashmir slate floor tile—sawed to 1, 1.5, and 1.75 inches wide—and a cantilevering limestone hearth. **Right:** The apartment's main seating area features a Dufner Heighes end table and sofas, a custom black-walnut cocktail table, a junk-store lamp, and a hand-knotted Tibetan-wool rug. **Bottom:** Lulu deKwiatkowski's linen covers the cushions of the living area's vintage George Nakashima chairs.



Wall paneling changes to solid rift-sawn oak planks when it wraps into a snug office niche—formerly the location of a laundry room and coat closets. Dufner Heighes also commandeered the master bathroom's original bidet compartment, turning it into a powder room that opens off the public space. Elsewhere, walls were subtly shifted, bathroom fixtures replaced, and cabinets ripped out. In the living area, the designers dispensed with the colonial mantelpiece.

Since most interventions were cosmetic, the renovation wasn't as expensive as it looks. "We spent money where it shows," Wismer explains. Indeed, finishes and furniture are lavish. Kashmir slate floor tile,

16 inches long, was sawed to 1, 1.5, and 1.75 inches wide to sheathe the living area's dramatic fireplace wall. Underfoot, a giant chocolate-colored rug is hand-knotted Tibetan wool. "Subtle striations come from the knotting," Dufner says, adding that a broadloom "would have had a seam." In the master bedroom, Wismer says, the gun-tufted silk rug "adds a level of luxury." (As something so costly might be expected to do.) Economies came from revamping the existing solid-core veneer doors with putty and brown paint, rather than replacing them, and substituting white plastic laminate for stainless-steel where kitchen cabinets were concerned.

Dufner Heighes chose nearly all furnishings, including pieces by George Nakashima and George Nelson, as well as supplying custom sofas, a credenza of mid-century inspiration, and case goods in oak, stained walnut, and aluminum. The strictly controlled mix is leavened, however, by the occasional whiff of kitsch. In a spare bedroom painted lime-sicle, Dufner points out a ceramic Bambi statuette from Rogers's girlhood. In the living area, Wismer gestures toward shelves displaying a jumble of books stacked somewhat haphazardly by Barrow-cliffe. Apparently, though, the apartment is having an effect on him: Wismer has noticed the books getting more organized. →



Completing the job has helped the designers organize their own home life, too. Construction documents, materials samples, and binders were spilling out of the spare room that had functioned as Dufner Heighes headquarters, and the promise of steady income generated by the SoHo loft and a few other projects allowed the partners to lease a separate office. Wismer also felt ready to quit his day job and leave moonlighting behind. He and Dufner now work full-time in a recently converted warehouse building, at gray powder-coated steel tables set back-to-back. ■

TABLE (DINING AREA): **E15 THROUGH TROY**. CHAIR: **LEATHER**. **EDELMAN LEATHER**. PHOTOGRAPH (ENTRY): **THROUGH JEN BEKMAN**. SCULPTURE: **THROUGH HABLE CONSTRUCTION**. BAR STOOLS (KITCHEN): **DUANE**. CABINETS: **ARCLINEA**. REFRIGERATOR: **SUB-ZERO FREEZER COMPANY**. COOKTOP: **MIELE**. CLOCK: **AERO STUDIOS**. CAKE PLATE: **CRATE & BARREL**. CUSTOM MIRROR, LANTERN (POWDER ROOM): **NORIS METAL AND DISPLAY CASE CO.** LANTERN GLASS: **BENDHEIM**. SINK: **DURAT**. SINK FITTINGS (POWDER ROOM), SHOWERHEAD (MASTER BATH): **DORNBRACHT**. PAINTINGS (OFFICE): **THROUGH MARGARET THATCHER PROJECTS**. CUSTOM RUGS (LIVING AREA, DRESSING ROOM): **A.M. COLLECTIONS**. CUSTOM PENDANT FIXTURE (DINING AREA), CUSTOM LAMP SHADES (LIVING AREA, MASTER BEDROOM): **TRANS.LUXE**. BOWL (DINING AREA), BED LINENS (GUEST ROOM): **HABLE CONSTRUCTION**. READING LIGHTS (STUDY, MASTER BEDROOM): **NESSEN**. FLOOR LAMPS (LIVING AREA): **CAP-SUD**. LOUNGE CHAIRS: **THROUGH REGENERATION FURNITURE**; **LULU DK** (FABRIC). LOUNGE-CHAIR PILLOW FABRIC, SOFA FABRIC (LIVING AREA): **HENRY CALVIN FABRICS**. SOFA-PILLOW FABRIC: **LEE JOFA**. CUSTOM COCKTAIL TABLE: **GEORGE NAKASHIMA WOODWORKER**. CUSTOM WINDOW SHADES: **MANHATTAN SHADE & GLASS CO.** FRAMING: **BARK FRAMEWORKS**. STONE (LIVING AREA, MASTER BATH): **STONE SOURCE**. OTTOMAN FABRIC (DRESSING ROOM): **POLLACK**. HEADBOARD PLASTIC LAMINATE (GUEST ROOM): **ABET**. CUSTOM BEDDING (MASTER BEDROOM): **MARIE SAVETTIÈRE**. TUB (MASTER BATH): **KOHLER**. CUSTOM UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE: **LUTHER QUINTANA**. ARCHITECT OF RECORD: **JOHN FURTH PEACHY ARCHITECT**. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: **DETAIL GROUP**.



Top: For the dressing room of the master suite, Dufner Heighes designed the rift-sawn oak case goods and an ottoman covered in faux suede. *Center:* The guest room's George Nelson cabinet and vintage ceramic lamp stand beside a custom headboard faced in plastic laminate. *Right:* Vintage sketches by Vogue illustrator René R. Bouche hang in the master bedroom. *Bottom:* Paint-by-numbers art enlivens the limestone-tiled master bath.



