

Balancing ACT

DESIGN ELEMENTS
BLEND TO BRING AN OPEN,
INVITING FREEDOM AND A
STYLISH FLOW TO THESE
MODERN SPACES.

By **Kristin J. Webb-Hollering**

Photography by **Eric Roth**

Design and styling by **Jonathan Cutler**

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legance and simplicity go

hand-in-hand when it comes to design, while the sister concepts of scale and utility bring it all together to help a home function. Boston-based architect and designer Jonathan Cutler understands that details matter and arranges his projects accordingly.

“A home is a refuge for the body, mind and spirit,” he says. “The balancing of light, color, texture and form are what transform spaces into comfortable homes. Especially in modestly sized condominiums, the energy of spaces needs to flow, extending beyond the thresholds of each room.”

Accent on Space

Designing smaller homes is an art that takes reflection and dedication to ensure that style isn't compromised by size. On two particular projects—condominium renovations in Massachusetts (shown throughout) and New Jersey—Jonathan opened up the homes with looks that added purpose and usefulness while remaining elegant and stylish.



The modern sofa and beachy artwork celebrate warmth and the owner's memories of Florida.

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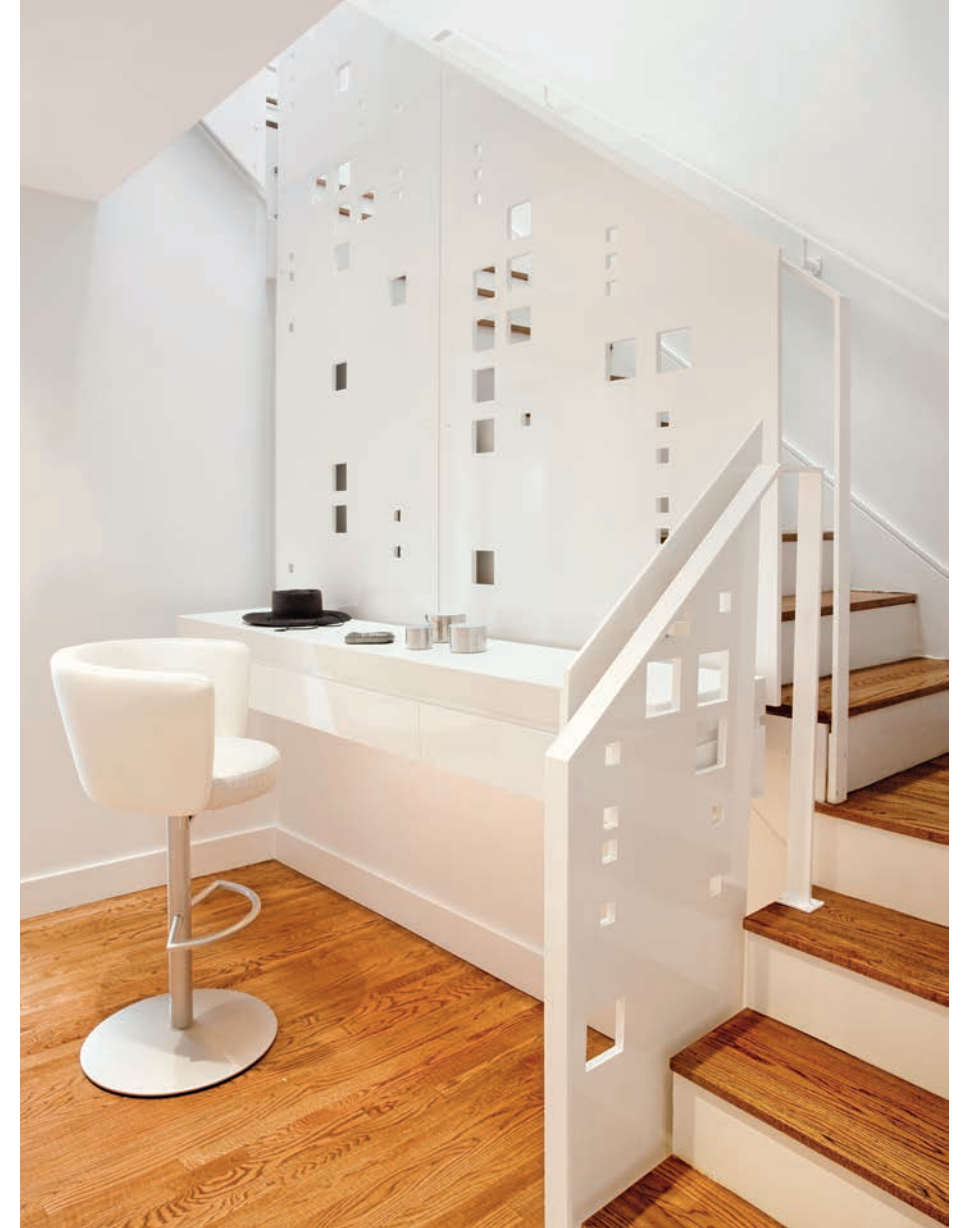
ABOVE | Bench seating is functional and fun in the kitchen. The rich brown tones and unique light fixture warm the gray-and-white backdrop.

OPPOSITE | A modern staircase doubles as a desk area with a modern stool and built-in desktop.

"Rooms come to life when they are active and used, and I always advocate that spaces have multiple functions," the designer says. "While I strive to create sublime spaces, they must also be functional and feel accessible. In both these projects floating walls and built-in cabinets allowed the spaces to be uncluttered while still providing lots of storage and function."

As Jonathan expertly focuses on the needs and lifestyles of his clients in regard to his designs, the spaces reflect his inspired process. The neutral backdrops beckon openness and allow the rooms to flow effortlessly into one another, giving the impression of much larger homes and keeping the focus on the owner's art collections and treasures, as well as the condo's views. Light and function became integral parts of the whole.

"In Back Bay, the client wanted spaces that would be intimate for her alone, but also work for parties and entertaining," Jonathan says. "In New Jersey, the display of the client's modern art collection informed how light was controlled and where walls were placed."



DESIGN COMPOSITION

TEN TOP TIPS FROM BOSTON ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER JONATHAN CUTLER.

- **BEAUTIFUL LINES CREATE** harmony, balance and flow.
- **ONE STRONG ACCENT WALL** is often enough. A whole room may be too much, but one wall can be a showstopper.
- **PAINT WINDOW FRAMES** a dark color rather than white, it helps bring the window frame to the background and highlight the view. Deep blues or gray-browns rather than black give warmth and interest.
- **EVERY SPACE IN A HOME SHOULD** have multiple functions. Space is too precious to be only used occasionally.
- **FLOATING WALLS CREATE** a sense of greater space and lightness.
- **BUILT-IN CABINETS** are a chance to create sculpture.
- **RESTRAINT CALMS** the eye and gives everything a purpose.
- **DOUBLE YOUR VIEWS** with large panels of mirrors.
- **ALWAYS LOCATE THE REFRIGERATOR** so that it's not a focal point.
- **MAKE SURE THAT THERE IS** plenty of light and always use dimmers.

Pops of color come from the throw pillows and artwork in the calming bedroom. The pastel tones evoke the owner's childhood in Florida.

"ARTWORK IS THE KEY FOR ME. SPACES NEED TO HAVE POWERFUL EMOTIONAL CONTENT THAT ONLY ARTWORK CAN BRING."

Viewing the Landscape

Overlooking the Charles River, the Massachusetts "Back Bay" condo embraces a palette of grays that enhance the "spectacular views" and "calm the mind," according to Jonathan. The warmth felt throughout with the dashes of lavender and pastels are in deference to the fond memories the owner had of her Florida youth.

The designer used built-ins and floating walls to "minimize distractions" and integrated mirrors "to reflect the spectacular views from all angles of the room and make the space feel larger, playing with the sense of space depth and infinity spaces," according to Jonathan. Simple tones and inviting textures abound, while the large windows invite the landscape to be part of the design—a retreat in the city.

Art and Soul

"The condo in the clouds," as Jonathan calls it, the space in New Jersey centers on one of his primary design focuses—art.

"Artwork is the key for me," Jonathan says. "Spaces need to have powerful emotional content that only artwork can bring."

The 90-year-old owner—"an artist herself who studied with Hans Hoffman at Yale, [she] had an incredible art collection that was displayed throughout her previous home," according to Jonathan—wanted a glass house to replace her previous home. The designer instituted glass walls instead, allowing the homeowner's art to shine while enabling her to fully enjoy the high-rise.

Soft hues, dramatic views and an open concept celebrate the art and the artist. An infusion of past and present is at the heart of both designs.

"I believe that memory is an important element in the design of living spaces," Jonathan says. "I tried to create a feeling in the new spaces that would be reminiscent in feel to the old space, not by mimicking elements, but by understanding the feel of the spaces."

See Sources, page 128.



“ROOMS COME TO LIFE WHEN THEY ARE ACTIVE AND USED, AND I ALWAYS ADVOCATE THAT SPACES HAVE MULTIPLE FUNCTIONS.”



ABOVE | Light encases this living space with a great view of the river. The simple template is radiant.

OPPOSITE | Mirrors add depth to the smaller space and the clean, refreshing palette help create a trendy little spot to enjoy dinner, entertain and relax with drinks.

For more on **Jonathan**, visit jonathancutlerarchitect.com.