

# loftlife

THE LOFTSTYLE GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE CITY

- Intown Without a Car
- New Designs for Spring
- Walking Culture
- Is it Time for the BeltLine?
- Filling a Big Blank Wall

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Remembering Rich's

**ON THE COVER:** "Condo Stylist" Marae Simone's living room, The Stacks at Fulton Cotton Mill. Photograph by Jeff Herr.



**Jonathan Adler**

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# Board of Experts



To make certain that *LoftLife* is truly your "loftstyle guide," we've assembled a panel of experts to help guide us . . .



**Tim Ranney**

Creative Marketing Professional

For 20 years, Tim has helped launch fashion designers & develop books. He is currently creating home decor products with artists.



**Dr. Charna Mintz**

Behavioral Psychologist

Charna currently lives in downtown Manhattan with her husband & two cats. Her family has lived in Atlanta since the mid-80s.



**Dabney Doswell**

Interior Designer

A regular contributor to *Washington Life* magazine & a D.C. native, Dabney works for interior designer, Barry Dixon.



**Deirdre Zahl**

Graphic Artist, Web Designer

Specializing in web design & print media for fashion designers, Deirdre now resides with her husband in Charleston, South Carolina.



**Florent Morellet**

Restarateur, Activist, Urban Planner

Florent, a living NYC legend, was a major catalyst for the landmarking of the Meat Market & the development of the HighLine.



**John-Patrick McChesney**

Real Estate Consultant

The president of the McChesney Group, Inc., John-Patrick was named an "agent of choice for discerning clientele" by *Atlanta Magazine*.



**Katie Black**

Marketer, Real Estate Agent

Katie has called intown Atlanta home since 1983. She got her Master's from G.S.U. & currently works as a realtor for Keller Williams.



**Lydia Ivanditti**

Director, Atlanta Gallery Association

With a career that began in real estate, Lydia now handles the marketing & administrative duties for 22 of Atlanta's fine art dealers.



**Sherry Jo Williams**

Design Expert, Teacher, Author

Design Within Reach chose Sherry Jo as a key player in their first NYC store. Her extensive client list reads like a who's who in design.

Illustrations by Graham Smith

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SPEAKS TO THE LARGER ENVIRONMENT

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## Welcome to *LoftLife Magazine* . . .



Consider us an open space, a friendly neighbor, a map to help navigate the latest wave of urban renewal.

When the late, great Jane Jacobs (author of the seminal 1961 book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*) wrote, "In order for a society to flourish, there must be a flourishing city at its core," she could have been writing about the new Atlanta.

The city's efforts to develop better public transportation, create walkable mixed-use neighborhoods, and encourage the revitalization of its historic buildings and neighborhoods all attract and retain what Jacobs called the "intricate minglings of different uses" that make up a "successful city." We cover these efforts and measure their success with John-Patrick McChesney's "Is It Time For the Beltline?", Allison Weiss Entekin's "No Wheels? No Problem," and on our back page, My Downtown, where Sherry Jo Williams revisits the Rich's of her youth.

Whether out of necessity or deliberate choice, the decision to move downtown is more and more popular these days. The desire for open space, good design, and the cultural and community benefits of living in the city—as well as the rejection of sprawl, endless traffic, and the anonymity and seclusion of the suburbs—are the main reasons people are opting for a lifestyle of loft living.

In this premiere issue, *LoftLife* recognizes and salutes the number of "pioneers" who have decided to relocate, renew, and rejuve-

nate both their urban centers and their own lives. Writer Cindy Klinger visits one such group in her story, "Castleberry Hill Pioneers." Katie Black delves into the history and transformation of "The Stacks at Fulton Cotton Mills," a case study in adaptive reuse, a concept summed up in Jacobs' maxim: "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."

Lucy Sexton's "Live/Work" offers solutions to the problems—both physical and psychological—faced by those who live and work in the same space.

In every issue you'll find our Wanted section, where we offer great ideas for furnishing your loft while acknowledging that good design and ethics aren't mutually exclusive, and that form and function have nothing to do with price.

In our Walking Culture section, we survey the kinds of experiences once expected from small-town "Mayberry" America—which perhaps last existed around the time your mid-Century furniture was being designed. We define "walking culture" as the ability to get all you need from your immediate surroundings, minus the confines and headache of a car.

We hope you enjoy this first issue of *LoftLife* and look forward to continuing this conversation in future issues.

We also welcome your comments and invite everyone to check out our ever-updating blog any time: [atlanta.loftlifemag.com](http://atlanta.loftlifemag.com).



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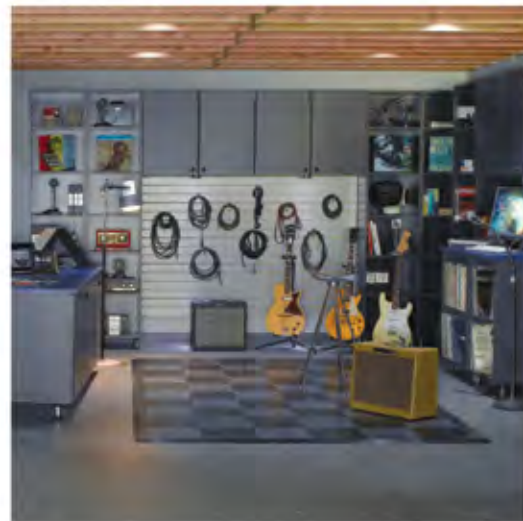
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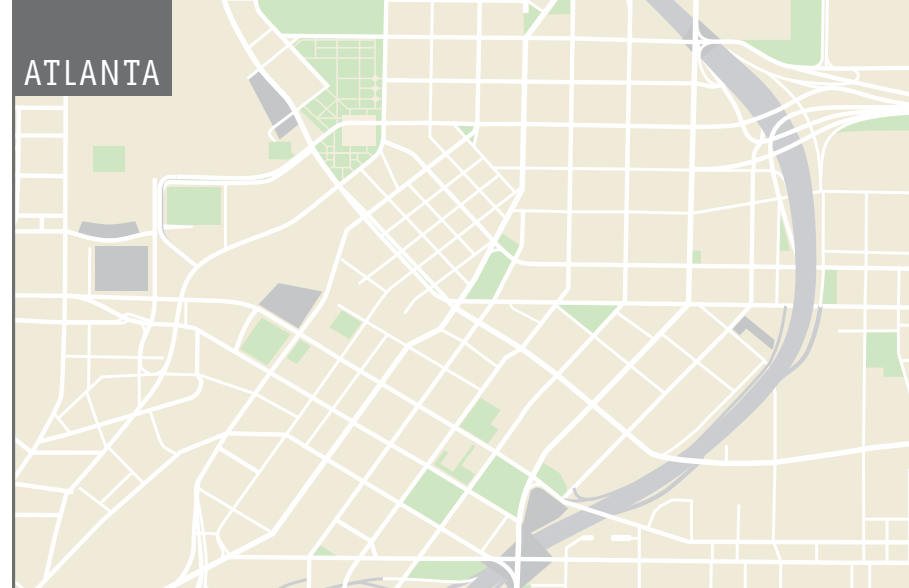
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WALKING CULTURE



## Underground Film Festival

August 20-24 Plaza Theatre and other venues

Tired of all the numbing summer blockbuster explosions? Break away from mainstream culture for a sec and find yourself a new cult classic at the Fifth Annual Atlanta Underground Film Festival (or AUFF). Specializing in films below other festivals' radars, you might catch a flick that your artsy friends in LA can't. The AUFF is packed with short and feature films, live music, demonstrations, discussions, and parties. For animation fans, there will be two nights of shorts with "Animation Attack!" Not into all that fiction? Check out the Third Annual Atlanta International Documentary Film Festival, running concurrently.

[auff.org](http://auff.org)



## Great Georgia Race

"Quest for the Giant Peach"  
May 24-25 Roswell, Savannah, and Atlanta

Ever watch *The Amazing Race* and think, *I can do that!* Well, pay your entrance fee, gather your team, then race against the clock (and fellow Georgians) in the "Quest for the Giant Peach." Starting in Roswell and ending in Atlanta, the trek will take skills, smarts, and savvy (but safe) driving. Be one of the top three teams and win a "racky trophy"—plus, the respect of your adventure-loving peers. After the race, kick up your heels at the afterparty and brag about your (winning?) strategy.

[ravenchase.com](http://ravenchase.com)

## Jackson Fine Arts Gallery

"Time of Change" and "East 100th Street"  
May 9- July 5 3115 East Shadowlawn Avenue

Focusing his lens on the civil disobedience and community building of the Civil Rights Movement, acclaimed photographer Bruce Davidson captured a moment in our history when everyday people became heroes. Exhibiting photographs from two of his seminal series of photos from the 60s, the exhibit delves below the surface of the movement and examines themes of ritual, work, home, and family, while challenging viewers to reinterpret what they know about history. Davidson's true talent was his refusal to show people as "subjects." Instead, his photos portray humans with determination and control over their collective destinies.

[jacksonfineart.com](http://jacksonfineart.com)



Great Georgia Race photo, Ravenchase Adventures; Bruce Davidson's "Untitled," "Time of Change" (c. 1963), courtesy Jackson Fine Arts





## High Museum of Art

"Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-1968" **June 7 - October 5** 1280 Peachtree Street, NE

The High Museum's "Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-1968" will showcase unforgettable photographs by Bob Adelman, Morton Broffman, Bruce Davidson, Doris Derby, Larry Fink, James Karales, Builder Levy, and Steve Schapiro. The exhibit spans the 12-year period between the Rosa Parks case and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, featuring photos of the Freedom Rides, the Birmingham hosings, and the Selma-Montgomery March. Archival documents and even Rosa Parks' fingerprint paperwork aid in demonstrating the importance of photography in shaping public opinion.

"After 1968: Contemporary Artists and the Civil Rights Legacy" **June 7 - October 5** 1280 Peachtree Street, NE

"After 1968" explores the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and the relevance of continuing social change. Inspired by work from the companion exhibit, artists Deborah Grant and Adam Pendleton created new work in direct response to the "Road to Freedom" images, while other artists like Nadine Robinson and Otabenga Jones, present new and recent work. The show will also be the premiere of Hank Willis Thomas' "Unbranded" series which includes advertising images stripped of their text, creating a work that explores history and stereotypes. Take a break from the heat and explore the tumultuous history of the South and the powerful imagery of these works.

[high.org](http://high.org)

## Atlanta Arts Festival

**September 12-14** Piedmont Park

Squeeze out the last bits of summer and spruce up your walls at the same time with a visit to the Atlanta Arts Festival. Spend a day, or two, maybe even three, gobbling up festival fare, fine art, and stage entertainment and help support a quality fine arts festival that consistently contributes to our cultural life. [atlantaartsfestival.com](http://atlantaartsfestival.com)

Jefferson Pinder's "Juke," Jefferson (Space Oddity)" (2006), High Museum; Jazz Fest photo by Robb Cohen; Atlanta Arts Festival, Tony Benner Photography; "Lost Once Again" (2007) by Joshua Jensen-Nagle

B\*ATL photographed by Courtney Bryant; "Dahlias" (oil on canvas, 2007) by Olena Zvyagintseva; Summer Shade Festival photo by Charles Lyon; GA Shakespeare photo by Bill DeLoach

## Alan Avery Art Co.

Joshua Jensen-Nagle "Lost Once Again" **May 16 - June 28th** 315 East Paces Ferry Road

Looking for a new scene? Check out Joshua Jensen-Nagle's "Lost Once Again," where the artist continues his knack for experimentation by adding layers of paint and resin to museum photographs. Like his past work, Jensen-Nagle's newest imagery challenges viewers to think thematically about humanity and our relationship to the environment. Jump on the fine art bandwagon and be "scene" at one of the hottest—and most haunting—shows of the summer.

[alanaveryartcompany.com](http://alanaveryartcompany.com)



## Jazz Fest

**May 1-31** Various Locations

Kicking off the summer on a smooth note, the Atlanta Jazz Festival fills May with events and musical performances all over the city. With past appearances from musical legends like Ray Charles, this year's roster of new and renowned artists will get your toes tapping. Memorial Day Weekend will send jazz fans off with a bang, as the festival culminates in Woodruff Park. [atlantafestivals.com](http://atlantafestivals.com)



## GA Shakespeare

Shake at the Lake Summer Repertory Season **May 7 - August 3** Piedmont Park/Conant Performing Arts Center

Don't let your summer be dominated by hot dogs and beer. Inject a little culture into your nights with GA Shakespeare's 22nd season of bringing centuries-old theater to the people. The season opens in Piedmont Park with *The Servant of Two Masters* by Carlo Goldoni, before the company begins bombarding with the Bard: *As You Like It*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*. Enjoy a picnic under the covered terrace and even some Elizabethan entertainments before the curtain rises. Starting in July, GA Shakespeare will host the world premiere of *Tom Thumb the Great* by Margaret Baldwin during their Family Classic Series.

[gashakespeare.org](http://gashakespeare.org)

Pop into TEW Galleries for the delightful colors and patterned textures of Ukrainian artist Olena Zvyagintseva's still lifes and figurative paintings, in all their "emotional poignant energy." [timothytew.com](http://timothytew.com)

## TEW Galleries

Olena Zvyagintseva **May 2-June 15** 425 Peachtree Hills Avenue



## Grant Park Summer Shade Festival

**August 30-31** Grant Park, 499 Broyles Street, SE

Why start your diet now when you can join fellow foodies at *Corks & Forks—A Fine Food and Wine Event*? With up to 10 chefs from Atlanta's top restaurants each day, a variety of vintage wines and high-end beers to sample from, an artists' market and live performances, this event will benefit the Grant Park Conservancy. So, fill up your belly to support a good cause. [gpconservancy.org](http://gpconservancy.org)

## B\*ATL

**July 19** 520 Flat Shoals Ave, SE

Come learn about a major event in Atlanta's history: the 144th anniversary of the Battle of Atlanta. To commemorate, the East Atlanta Village will host a Gala Dinner, a 5K Doublequick Run, tours of the battleground and neighboring Sylvester Cemetery, a living history encampment, films, art, Civil War memorabilia, shopping, dining, musket brandishing, you know . . . the usual. Confederate dollars will not be accepted.

[batlevent.org](http://batlevent.org)



# loft-like

[ lawft ▪ lahɪk ] -*adjective* 1. Living in a loft requires a certain fluidity, so, apparently, does its definition. By **C. Matt Newburn**

After living in a series of shoe boxes in D.C., I moved to Atlanta. With the change of locale, I decided it was time to change my lifestyle, so I began looking for a place that was different, maybe even “hip”—at the very least, bigger than a shoe box.

While the word “loft” appeared in many listings, I wasn’t really sure what “loft” meant. I had some preconceptions, but I wasn’t prepared for the various permutations of living spaces which designers, developers, and real estate agents were labeling “lofts.” Like Potter Stewart said of pornography, I assumed that I would know it when I saw it.

The concept of the modern loft seems to have its roots in post-industrialization. As storage warehouses, factories, and other old buildings fell to disuse, people began to take over the abandoned spaces for living and other purposes.

By the late 1970s, New York City had experienced the largest wave of adaptive reuse. Much of the construction and design of these early units were either substandard or suffered from the lack of appropriate building codes, which had not yet been written with the idea of converting industrial spaces into livable spaces.

In 1982, New York City incorporated Article 7-C into its Multiple Dwelling Law and created the Loft Board to enforce its regulations. Article 7-C was soon popularly referred to as the Loft Law, and indeed, many of the residential units had features commonly attributed to “lofts”: high ceilings, open floor plans, mezzanines, their situation in reclaimed buildings.

Of course, New York City’s Loft Board doesn’t cover Atlanta. Legally speaking, there is no binding definition of what constitutes a loft here, and arguably there may not be a real

need for one. For instance, Georgia State and Fulton County legal codes do occasionally use the term, but nowhere do they give any definition, the conclusion being that there is a tacitly agreed-upon usage.

What makes the use of the term even more confusing is its application to new construction. After most of the industrial building stock in prime locations around Atlanta were fitted out with residential spaces or mixed-use developments, new construction projects enticed the same demographic by incorporating some of the attractive aspects of conversion projects. This, along with the selling power of the term “loft,” has led to all sorts of spaces bearing the term where, one might argue, the validity of such usage is in doubt.

Does the essence of a “loft” lie in some aspect of the plan? Lofts can be found with open plans, free plans, and apparently random plans. Is a ten-foot-high ceiling enough to qualify for the title “loft” or does one need fourteen to make the cut? Does it need to be inside an old train station or can it just look like it is?

The ambiguous usage of the word points out that we are grouping together things that seem to be very different in some obvious ways, but may have some kind of underlying commonality. In the case of “lofts,” I would hazard to say that this commonality is a sense of “uniqueness.” Whether “new,” “soft,” “true,” or “loft-like,” these particular living spaces are special, challenging, and even controversial, questioning many assumptions about what we may call “home.”

EXIT

## Loft Lexicon

### TRUE LOFT

**ERIC DAVIS:** A property renovated just enough to be habitable ↑ Large square footage with high ceilings ↑ A few columns, concrete floors, exposed brick, a wall of windows ↑ No permanent dividers ↑ Adapted from earlier commercial and industrial applications.

**RANDY BRAZEE:** Large open space ↑ Kitchens and bedrooms may be divided but not necessarily by a full-height wall ↑ Concrete or old wood flooring, exposed concrete, beams, duct work ↑ An older, industrial building converted for residential use.

### NEW LOFT

**ERIC:** A new development constructed to be loft space; never a commercial building.

**RANDY:** A new building built with as many loft-type characteristics you’d find in an industrial building. Some examples are the buildings in midtown: beautiful concrete and glass buildings with concrete floors and ceilings.

### SOFT LOFT

**ERIC:** A ‘loft with walls’: a walled bedroom area, or defining walls for the kitchen. ↑ Use of commercial materials, exposed brick, concrete floors, large windows and a commercial feel to the property.

**RANDY:** A newer building with a loft feel on the inside ↑ Not quite as hard and industrial as a traditional loft.



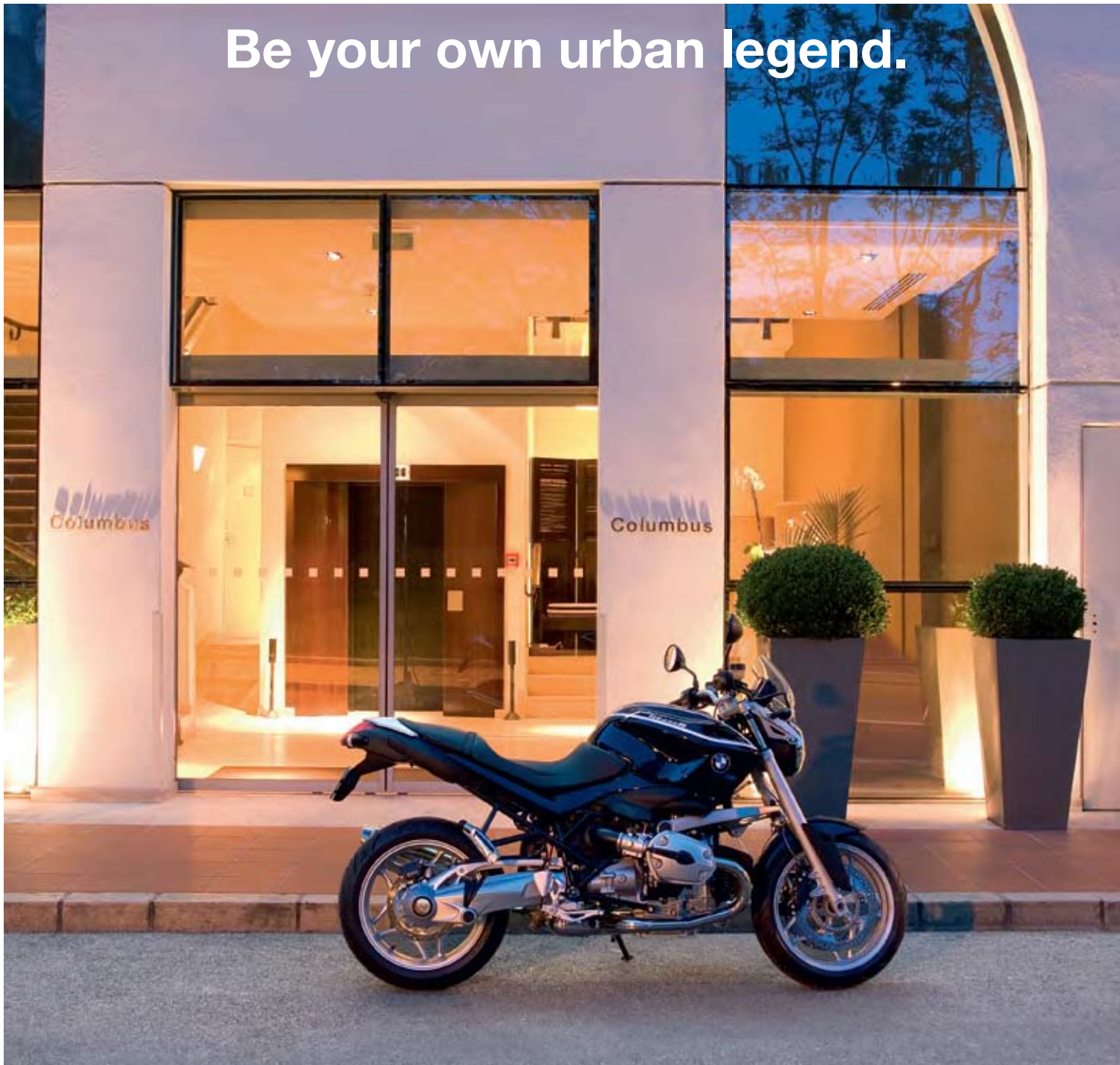
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The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, the ninth largest transit system in North America, provides service for more than half a million passengers each weekday.

## No Wheels? No Problem.

Allison Weiss Entrekin explores four carless ways to cruise inside the Perimeter

If you don't own a car in New York or Chicago, you're considered sensible. If you don't own a car in Atlanta, you're considered a tree-hugger or a weirdo. But as the city's average morning commute crawls past the 30-minute mark and gas prices (for the average two-driver household) pluck \$4,500 from drivers' wallets every year, more and more Atlantans are looking for alternative ways to get around.

### Carless Method No. 1: Bike.

**COST:** Depends on the bike; prices range from \$50 for a used bike to upwards of \$5,000.

**WHAT'S COOL:** You can exercise and get to work at the same time.

**WHAT'S A LITTLE TOO COOL:** Biking to the grocery store in 30-degree temperatures.

Oakhurst resident Byron Rushing spends a lot of time commuting to and from work on his bike, but then again, he doesn't spend a second at the gym: "Instead of wasting an hour every day in the car, I'd much rather take two

hours on my bike and get some exercise."

Rushing, a transportation planner with ALTA Planning + Design, actually owns a car but says he rarely uses it, instead preferring to hop on his \$100 Trek to get where he needs to go. This means he sees quaint neighborhoods that Interstate travelers rarely behold, but he also experiences how often Atlanta drivers forget there's such a thing as two-wheel transportation. "People just pull out of driveways without looking to see if anyone's there," he says.

Still, Rushing says he can't imagine trading his helmet for a seatbelt. "When I bike in the summer, I smell barbecues, and in the fall, I smell the chimney smoke when people light their fires," he says. "I live and work in the city, but I ride my bike, so it feels like an outdoor life."

### Carless Method No. 2: MARTA.

**COST:** \$1.75/trip, though many companies offer employees discounts or free passes.

**WHAT'S SMARTA:** You can catch up on your reading while you ride to the mall.

**WHAT'S DUMBA:** Unless you want to navigate the bus system, you'd better not try to shop outside the Perimeter.

Noel Mayeske, a communications manager with Carter, spends most of his days in an Atlantic Station office, his eyes glued to a computer. So when it's time for him to go home, the last thing he wants to do is sit and stare at traffic. "I take MARTA every day. It's a time for me to do crossword puzzles, write letters, or talk," the College Park resident says. "The short walk from the MARTA station to my house gives me a little time to escape an air-conditioned environment."

He may sound like a greenie, but Mayeske swears he's not. "The environment is one of the last reasons I do this," he says. "It saves me stress and it saves me money. I don't deal with gas, traffic, parking fees, or wear and tear to my car. Plus, my commute relaxes me."

Not all is grand in MARTA land, however. The trains only traverse a T-shaped section

Photography by Angela Morris





Nationally, over 30% of Zipcar customers have either sold their car or have decided against purchasing one.

of town, and there's no guarantee they'll run on time the morning of an important meeting. But Mayeske isn't phased. "To me, standing in a station and reading is preferable to clutching the wheel while I'm stuck in traffic," he says.

### Carless Method No. 3: Foot.

**COST:** If you have a pair of sneakers, you're set.

**COMMUTES WERE MADE FOR WALKING:** Because they'll get you in great shape.

**COMMUTES ARE GONNA WALK ALL OVER YOU:**

Because realistically, there's only so far you can go.

French women don't get fat—and neither does Ellen Miller, an independent senior-operations manager. Sure, she'll have a piece of cake with her coffee, but she's not going to pick it up at the drive-through window. "If I want a snack, I'll walk to Starbucks or Trader Joe's," the Midtown resident says.

So fond is Miller of walking, she rarely lets her grocery list accumulate beyond what two bags can hold. "I'd rather walk to get a few things than wait until I need a lot of things and drive," she says. "You notice stores and homes you wouldn't have paid attention to if you drove past them."

One thing Miller is forced to pay attention

to is drivers, many of whom think 'Yield for Pedestrians' means 'Yell at Pedestrians.' "Cars seem to consider walkers an impediment," she says. "They don't stop at stop signs or wait for us to cross."

The trials of living a walker's life have bonded Miller with other pedestrians. "There are so many people intown who walk more places," she says. "There are tons of shops to stop in if you want to take a break, and there are familiar faces you pass by. It's a very lively way to get around the city."

### Way to Go Carless No. 4: Zipcar.

**COST:** Rates start as low as \$7.65/hour.

**REASONS TO ZIP IT:** You can enjoy the benefits of driving a car without actually having to own one.


**REASONS TO ZAP IT:** The company operates on the honors system . . . and everyone in Atlanta ain't honest.

Lauren Davidson, a GreenbergFarrow architectural intern, rides MARTA to her Midtown office every day. However, her job often requires her to attend off-site meetings that public transit doesn't reach, so she uses Zipcar, a rental-car service that stations vehicles all over Metro Atlanta and allows

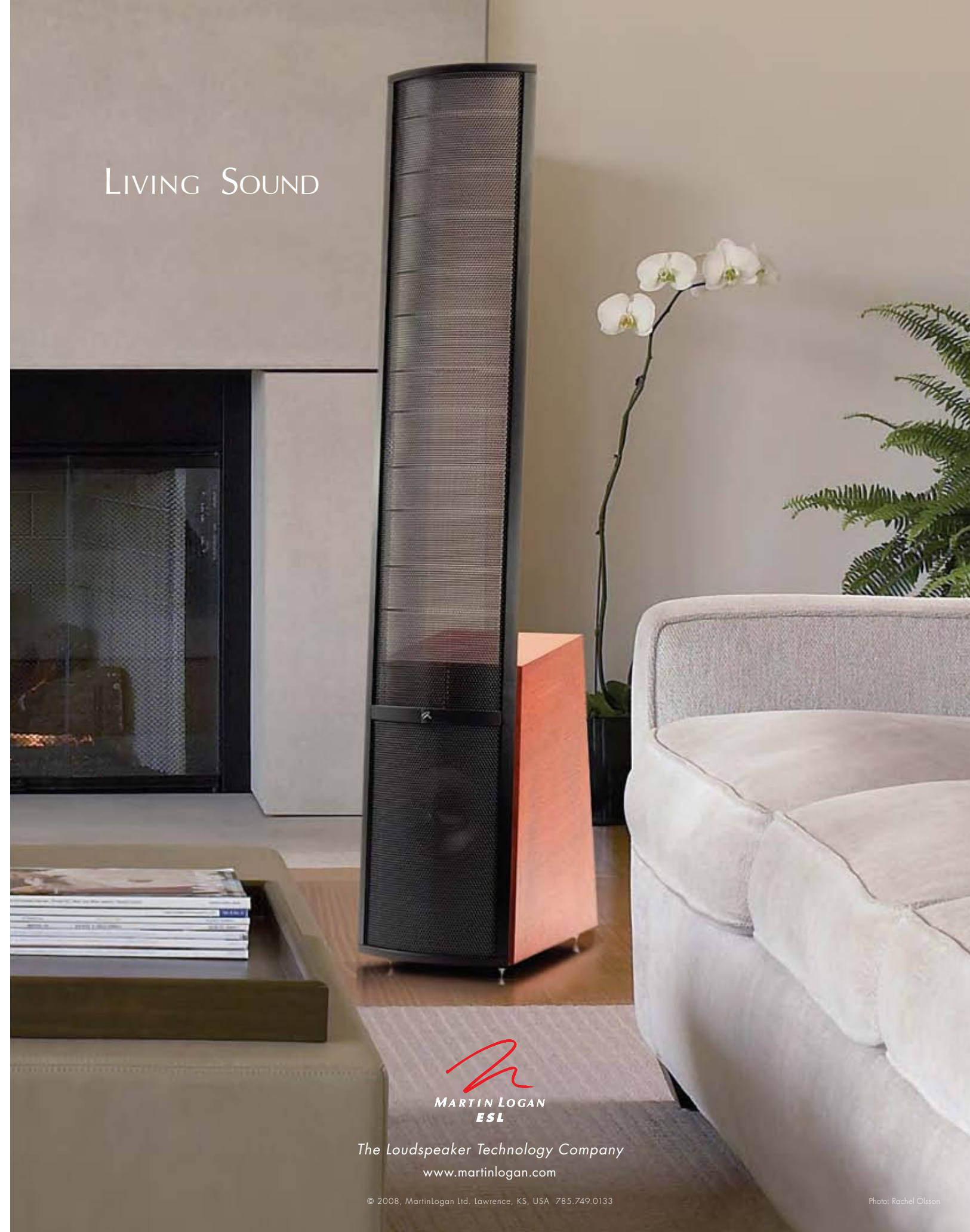
users to rent them by the hour. "Everything is included—insurance, parking costs, you name it," Davidson says. "They'll even reimburse you for gas."

Davidson, who lives in Poncey-Highland, says she owns a car but finds the Zipcar system more convenient than firing up her '91 Honda. "With Zipcar, I don't have to pay to ride MARTA back home to get my car, and I don't have to pay to park near my office when the meeting is over," she says.

While Zipcar makes life easier for people like Davidson, it can also make things a little too easy for the city's knuckleheads. Zipcar's reservation and pick-up/drop-off systems are handled digitally, so there's no supervisor around to ensure the person who drove the car before you didn't leave his McDonald's leftovers baking in the passenger seat. "If I call Zipcar and tell them the people before me smoked or left the tank on empty, they're very good about reprimanding people," Davidson says.

The way Davidson sees it, if using Zipcar is easier than driving her own car, then traditional rental-car companies are sitting in boiling water. "They're going to have to step up to the plate because of Zipcar," she says. "Zipcar just makes more sense." 

## LIVING SOUND



  
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Right, the reinvention of Peachtree Street, created by Urban Collage. Below, a map of the BeltLine by Alexander Garnins, Trust for Public Land.



Conceptual design of the BeltLine and its proposed walkways, created by EDAW.

## Is It Time For the BeltLine?

**John-Patrick McChesney** takes us on a tour of the BeltLine, the largest, most progressive urban redevelopment currently underway in the nation

Imagine yourself living in an amazing loft on the BeltLine. You walk out your front door and in no time are gliding along in a quiet electric train. The Atlanta skyline drifts by as you travel through stunning green spaces with beautifully landscaped features. People walk, bike, and skate along winding trails lined with public art projects. Regardless of your destination, you will have never spent a dime on gasoline or searched endlessly for a parking space getting there.

Sound too good to be true? Well, the BeltLine project is much more than a utopian concept. Once completed, the BeltLine will be a shining model for the way American cities are

redeveloped altogether.

Over the last two decades, Atlanta's vibrant inner core has become a magnet for thousands of new residents. The problem is that this new growth has been widely scattered, frustrating the ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life for the disconnected neighborhoods located within the Perimeter.

Exasperating the problem, of course, is traffic. Lots of traffic. It's been particularly painful because of the way the city first came into existence. Unlike the well-planned grid systems in place in New York and Paris, Atlanta (or "Terminus" as it was originally called) grew around the railroad. Our roads were not origi-

nally organized for the purpose of a cohesive urban core, but were mostly arteries linking an industrial center with warehouses, farms, and residential pockets. As the railroad system itself grew, a 22-mile oblong track (aka the "BeltLine") was added to relieve the congestion of trains coming in and out of the system. This barrier of tracks served to further dissect the city's residential areas and as the years passed, so did the trains. Once trucking became the prevalent means of transporting goods, the Beltline and a great many of the warehouses dotting its length became severely blighted property.

This is where the BeltLine project comes in.

In 1999, a young Georgia Tech student named Ryan Gravel laid out an elegant solution to Atlanta's growing pains entitled "BeltLine—Atlanta: Design of Infrastructure as a Reflection of Public Policy." He argued that Atlanta should transform the old railroads into a modern connective transportation system.

"The BeltLine is an urban growth strategy," says Gravel. "It will allow Atlanta to accommodate significant growth and maintain its quality-of-life in the process. If it is built right, it will further empower citizens to demand a better built environment and build even more transit, more parks, and more public spaces."

David Green, Visiting Assistant Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology College of Architecture and partner at the prestigious architectural and city planning firm Lord, Aeck, and Sargent, stresses that it "shouldn't be considered as a stand-alone project but part of a transit matrix, including MARTA, the Peachtree Streetcar, and other transit proposals."

It should also, according to Green, "work to stitch together currently disparate neighborhoods through the increased connectivity from both the street plan as well as the green space connections."

But, the BeltLine won't be easy and it won't happen quickly. It faces inherent challenges and will take years to be completely integrated into Atlanta's current infrastructure. Among the project's most significant and ongoing hurdles is funding.

Recently, a unanimous ruling by the Georgia Supreme Court said the city could not use an expected \$850 million in future school property taxes to fund the BeltLine. Supporters of the project, including Mayor Shirley Franklin, see the decision as somewhat of a setback. The allocated dollars were supposed to be stretched out over a 25-year period, the consensus being that the alternative sources of funding would be located over that period of time. However, the project has developed a momentum that is unlikely to be halted, so the city continues


to move forward as other funding sources are considered.

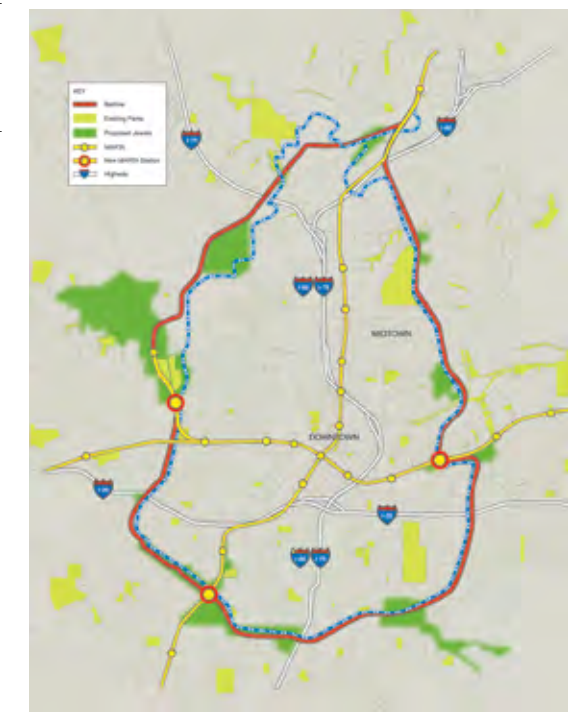
Gravel worries that the city has not put in the "adequate time and resources (concerning) the design and coordination of the project." He fears that "we are racing toward mediocrity with the BeltLine, and mediocrity will not achieve the vision that we developed over the last seven years. In 50 years it will not matter where the idea came from, how we paid for it, or who was in charge at the time. It will only matter if the BeltLine works, if it is useful, and if it contributes beautifully to the lives of Atlantans."

Gravel also believes "we must leverage the BeltLine to tackle another city-wide issue. The calculation of taxes for city residents punishes revitalizing neighborhoods by raising taxes on people who can't afford the increase, forcing many of them to leave. The BeltLine will only accomplish its goal to bring people together if everybody gets to stay."

Professor Green concurs, stating that what Atlanta needs is "a clear and strong vision for what the BeltLine can become." He thinks this is the year "when the difficult decisions need to be made," but warns: "if they are made in the context of short-term issues, it will be at the expense of the long-term viability of the project."

Can the type of transformation the BeltLine

promises really happen in Atlanta? Gravel is certain it can. "The best cities are places that embrace their own place in the world—their climate, geography, ecology, people, and culture. They express these things in the way that they grow and in the buildings and spaces that they build. They are healthy, sustainable, vibrant, and unique." Just like Atlanta. 





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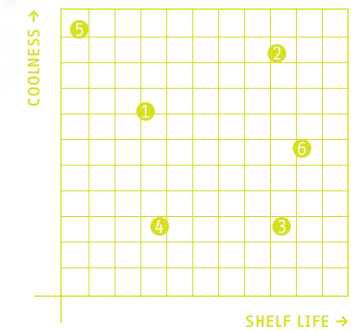


Skygarden pendant by Marcel Wanders for Flos. Chalk white interior decorated in relief, with liquid painted outside in white, black, rust or gold. Starting at \$1,940



## Mobile Home

① Scratches and dings are just part of the charm of Bordbar's refurbished **Airplane Trolley**. 40.5" x 12" x 16.7"; starting at \$1,225; [bordbar.de](http://bordbar.de) ② Industrial chic meets practicality with this mandarin orange powder-coated **Go-Cart Desk**. 47.75" x 23.75" x 29.5"; \$149; [cb2.com](http://cb2.com) ③ When closets are hard to come by, try this oversized and movable **Travel Studio Wardrobe** designed by Pagnon and Pelhaitre for Ligne Roset. 74.75" x 44" x 24.5"; \$3,320;



[ligne-roset-usa.com](http://ligne-roset-usa.com) ④ Ikea's **HELMER Drawer Unit** could be motivation enough to keep you organized. 11" x 16.75" x 27"; \$39.99; [ikea.com](http://ikea.com) ⑤ Made in 1937 for the Paris World Fair by Alvar Aalto for Artek, this **Tea Trolley, model 901** redefines an old tradition. 22.1" x 19.8" x 35.5"; \$2,184; [unicahome.com](http://unicahome.com) ⑥ Designed for Kartell, Antonio Citterio's high-tech **Gastone** trolley conveniently folds up and away. 26.7" x 24.4" x 27.5"; \$902; [hivemodern.com](http://hivemodern.com)

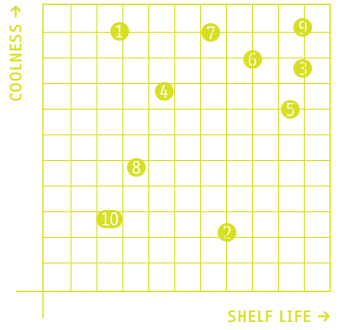




# Back to Black

① Upholstered in Varesse Moleskin, this grand **Francois Bed** was created by Tristram Mylius for The Conran Shop. 71" x 81" x 108"; from \$4,500; [conranusa.com](http://conranusa.com) ② Jeremy Pyles' **Binary Pendant**, made of tinted, hand-blown glass, is capable of holding two regular light-bulbs. \$425; [nichemodern.com](http://nichemodern.com) ③ How could we not include Mies van der Rohe's classic black leather **Barcelona Chair & Stool**, originally designed for Knoll in 1929? Chair: 30" x 29.5" x 30", \$4,083; stool: 16" x 24.5" x 22";

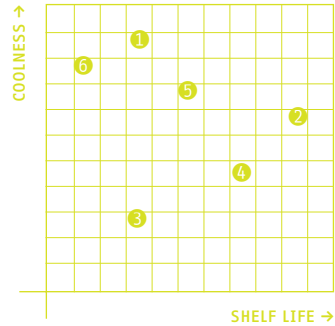
\$1,930; Both available at [dwr.com](http://dwr.com) ④ A futuristic take on this season's design accessory of choice, Replogle's "**Mikado**" **Black Globe** measures 16" x 12" x 12" and costs \$150; [replogleglobe.com](http://replogleglobe.com) ⑤ Swedish design firm Zerro's "**Can**" **Floor Lamp**, made of sleek, enameled steel, has an angular silhouette capable of illuminating large areas. 55" x 15"; \$580; [scandinaviandesigncenter.com](http://scandinaviandesigncenter.com) ⑥ London designer Tom Dixon's oversized **Wingback Chair** is luxurious down to the details, such



as the black lacquered legs and velvet mohair upholstery. 34" x 28" x 51"; \$8,000; [conranusa.com](http://conranusa.com) ⑦ In the age of mp3's, many are rediscovering the joys of vinyl. A good place to start: Pro-Ject's **Debut III Turntable** in matte black finish. 16.3" x 4.6" x 12.6"; \$299; for distribution options: [sumikoaudio.net](http://sumikoaudio.net) ⑧ Ikea's **KULLA Floor Lamp**, with its simple design, aluminum sheen, and black powder-coated finish, might be the perfect lamp for the perfect price. 59" high, 12" base, 20" shade; \$89.99;

[ikea.com](http://ikea.com) ⑨ True to the original designed in 1956 by the Finnish mastermind, this sleek **Saarinen Oval Dining Table** has a base made of molded cast aluminum with a black Nero Marquina marble top. 78" x 48" x 28"; \$3,499; [roomandboard.com](http://roomandboard.com) ⑩ Reasonably priced, this flip-out **Alden Secretary Desk** has square legs and a black veneer finish for a contemporary Asian look. 46" x 15.75" x 30"; \$199.99; [target.com](http://target.com)





## Go with the Grain

① Autoban and De La Espada joined forces on this solid oak **Ladder Bookcase**. 18" x 19.5" x 97"; starting at \$2,495; [autoban-delaespada.com](http://autoban-delaespada.com) ② Design With in Reach asked industrial designer Sean Dix to make something out of walnut, with tambour doors. The result? This gorgeous **Giulia Media Credenza**; 27" x 71" x 19.5"; \$4,000. [dwr.com](http://dwr.com) ③ California artisans Roost serve up the perfect **Acacia Oval Platters** made from unfinished wood, each uniquely

shaped. Starting at \$21; [roseandradish.com](http://roseandradish.com) ④ Japanese phenomenon MUJI created this serene **Ash Double Bed** from raw birch. 57.4" x 81.7" x 32.3"; \$556.75; [muji.com](http://muji.com) ⑤ Furniture company BDDW hand-crafted their **Tripod Lamp** from "claro walnut." 72" high, 26"-diameter drum shade; \$3,000; [bddw.com](http://bddw.com) ⑥ Christopher Delcourt's **Legend Bookcase** is made from sustainable Bourgogne Oak for Roche-Bobois. 77" x 15.7" x 82.6"; \$12,760; [rochebobois.com](http://rochebobois.com)

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BIG BLANK WALL

## Staring at the Wall

With ingenuity and vision, a big blank wall can go from barren to bold

A big blank wall can reflect the height of minimalism . . . or the depths of sloth. It can also be the perfect canvas for a unique piece of art. *LoftLife* issued a call to Atlanta-based artists, asking them to transform a 15 ft. x 15 ft. wall into something refreshing and unique. Here are the top five entries.

"A few small drops make an ocean" by **JONATHAN YOERGER** is excerpted from a mini-comic the artist penned about the importance of family, community, and communication.

Artist and designer for Dirty Linens, **AVRAM FINKELSTEIN**, engages in a little hero-worship, pairing his muted "SUPERSTAR," a digital "Superportrait" of 60s underground icon Nico, with

1 Jonathan Yoerger's "A few small drops make an ocean"; ink on clayboard.

2 Avram Finkelstein's "SUPERSTAR," a digital "Superportrait" of 60s icon Nico (left), and "COCTEAU HARLEQUIN," a digital illustration (right); both adhesive vinyl.







with a colorful digital illustration, “COC-TEAU HARLEQUIN,” an homage to the esteemed French artist, writer, and filmmaker.

Rather than submit one large piece, artist **BRANDON JONES** mounts 16 individual works made from common household goods and materials. Though each piece is dynamic on its own, collectively they’re a compelling study in abstraction.

**STEPHANIE SILVERA** believes “super-graphic wall designs will become increasingly pervasive.” She also likes to “juxtapose beautiful with dirty.” Her large-scale, untitled photographic ‘wallpaper’ evokes the message that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and the look is certainly appropriate for traditional lofts re-adapted from old structures.

Using stark black graphite directly on a white wall, a SCAAD graduate painting student who goes by the tag **1979**, claims “the message is (his) medium.” His simple and powerful text speaks for itself and serves as a daily meditation.

Don’t fear attacking that big blank wall of yours. If you make it personal and meaningful, as 1979 says, everything will be okay.



- 3 Brandon Jones fills the wall with sixteen of his 26" x 26" abstract paintings; latex spray, household paint on wood panels.
- 4 Stephanie Silvera's untitled work; printed on photographic wallpaper and applied directly to wall.
- 5 Inspirational graffiti by a SCAAD painting student known as "1979"; graphite applied directly to the wall.



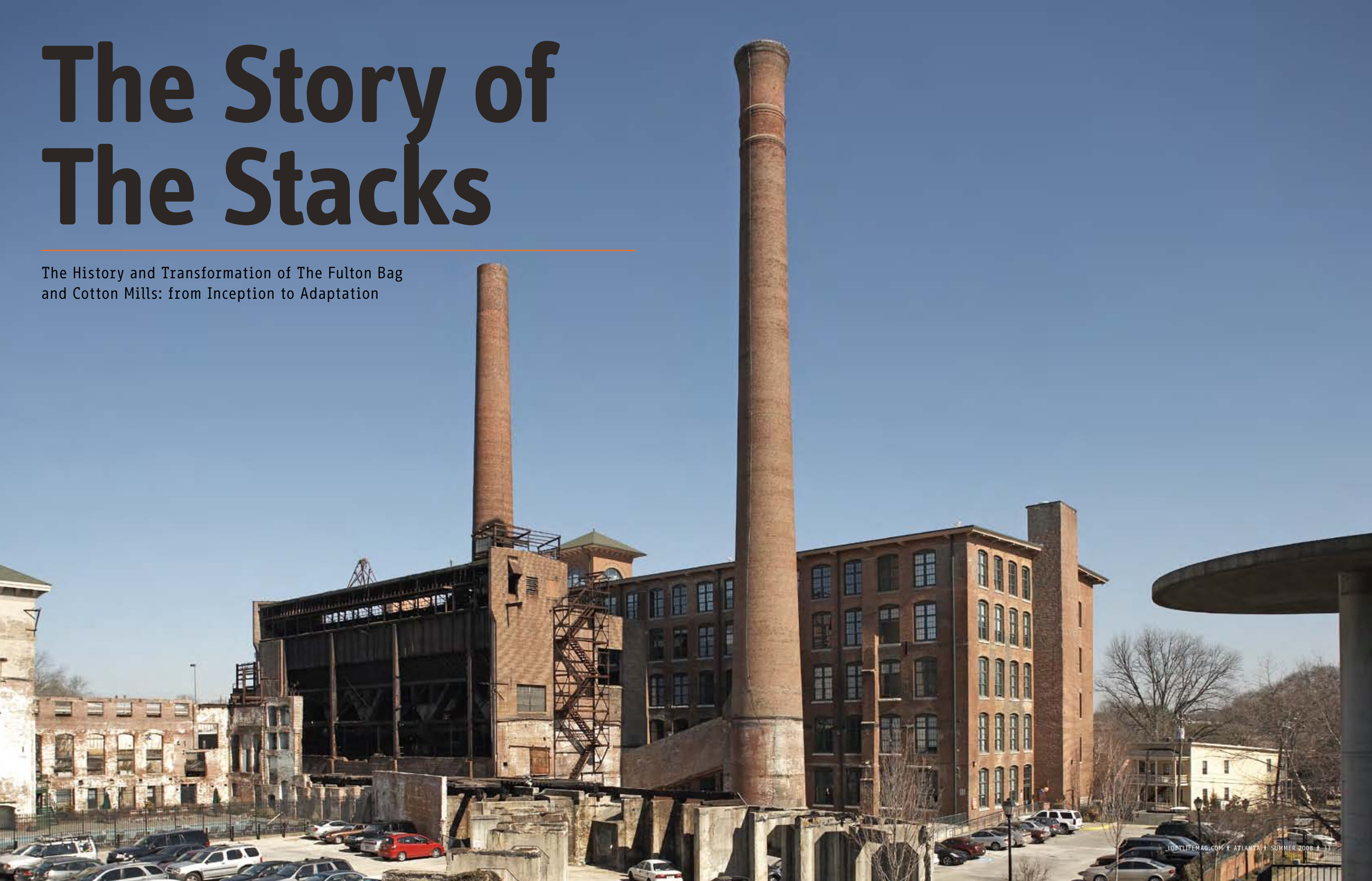
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# The Story of The Stacks

The History and Transformation of The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills: from Inception to Adaptation







Story by Katie Black  
 Photography by Jeff Herr

As the late 1800s merge into the twentieth century, the constant roar of America's Machine Age echoes against walls of brick. Bales of cotton are unloaded from railroad cars while almost 3,000 workers (many of them women and children) spin, weave, bleach, dye, and print the cotton, creating bags and tents. Thick plumes pour from tall, brick smokestacks and mingle with the aroma of cabbage cooking in the shotgun style wood houses lining the surrounding streets. A hot Atlanta sun shines overhead, illuminating The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills.

One hundred years certainly changes things.

Today, the buildings of The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills, purchased by Aderhold Properties in 1996 for conversion to lofts, are now commonly known as "The Stacks at Fulton Cotton Mill," and according to Tom Aderhold, President of Aderhold Properties, the ongoing conversion has been the "challenge of all challenges."

### From landmark to lofts

Nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, the buildings of the former mill had already started to deteriorate

when they were closed for business in 1977. Surrounding Cabbagetown was subsequently declared a Landmark District, but the neighborhood was dwarfed by the hulking presence of The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills.

In the early 1990s the Cabbagetown Neighborhood Improvement Association approached Louis Brown, then President of Winter Properties, and asked if he would be willing to purchase the buildings and adapt them for reuse. Brown subsequently left Winter and formed a partnership with Tom Aderhold and his father, John Aderhold, to accomplish this Herculean task. "It started off slowly," Tom Aderhold reminisces. "We bought the Mill in 1996, moved on-site in a trailer, and we're still here."

Brown (who died five years ago) was the one who "figured out how to make all this work," Aderhold says. "We had good architects and good engineers," but it was a daunting and expensive task. Historic guidelines dictate what must be saved, and as a result, elevated support trestles, the two mammoth smokestacks,

Originally the entryway to the tower, the Deardorffs' loft mixes antiques from their former home with larger scale pieces to fit the space. The view from the kitchen to the living room. Their bedroom, once the Mill's storage room, has 16-inch deep walls.





the water tower, and the old boilers are still standing. Current residents of The Stacks see them as a kind of art. Marae Simone, a “condo stylist” by trade, bought her loft partly because of the way the ghostly water tower’s metal stairways cast shadows on the old brick at night, framed by the tall windows in her living room. She likes to call The Stacks, “Industrial Chic.”

### Rising from the ashes of war

The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills complex was founded by a German orphan immigrant named Jacob Elsas, who came to America to seek his fortune when he was 18. Elsas soon found himself in a Union Army unit stationed in Cartersville to guard General Sherman’s supply lines. Once the war ended, he opened a general store and quickly discovered the region’s need for cotton bags. A smart businessman who seized opportunities in the resurrecting South, Elsas soon made his way to Atlanta and, in 1867, purchased a charter to build a cotton mill from hotelier H.I. Kimball. He then acquired a 16-acre tract of

↑ The wall behind Simone’s bed has a “reptile” faux-finish by Bridgit Taylor. Beside it: an installation crafted from a found tree trunk. → With help from Le Corbusier, van der Rohe, and a prized mirror too heavy to hang on the wall, Simone’s living-room reflects her signature style: minimalist drama.





land east of downtown Atlanta that had once been a Civil War foundry known as “The Rolling Mill,” Atlanta’s largest manufacturing plant before being destroyed during the war.

Elsas and his partner, Isaac May, began construction on the “Fulton Cotton Spinning Company” in the late 1870s. As was common practice at the turn of the century, the initial mill building was constructed with bricks made from clay found on-site. The Old Bleachery, the first mill building, was completed in 1881, just in time for the conclusion of Atlanta’s International Cotton Exposition and the subsequent rebuilding of the Southern textile industry.

According to an 1886 Sanborn map, originally created to help fire insurance companies with risk assessment, the complex consisted of the original Old Bleachery, a picking room, the engine room, plus a large cotton warehouse, waste house, lumber shed, water tank, and well and pump building.

In 1889, Elsas dissolved his partnership with May and rechartered his growing business as The Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills, Inc., which eventually included operations in New Orleans, St. Louis, Dallas, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and Denver.

In 1895, Elsas expanded even further with Mill #1, a building that housed 40,000-spindles. He also added one of the largest steam engines in the South. After a final mill addition (c. 1904), the Atlanta property’s configuration was similar to the way it stands today. A 1911 Sanborn map shows Mill #1, Mill #2, Warehouse #6, the Bag Factory, Office Building, Machine Shop, and water tower. The last significant building in use today, the New

Bleachery, was constructed in 1953.

At the time, it was a common textile mill practice for the owners to erect company housing for some of their employees. Records show that there were homes in the area as early as 1878, predating the Old Bleachery. However, Elsas and other owners constructed additional housing in the adjacent neighborhood which came to be known as Cabbagetown.

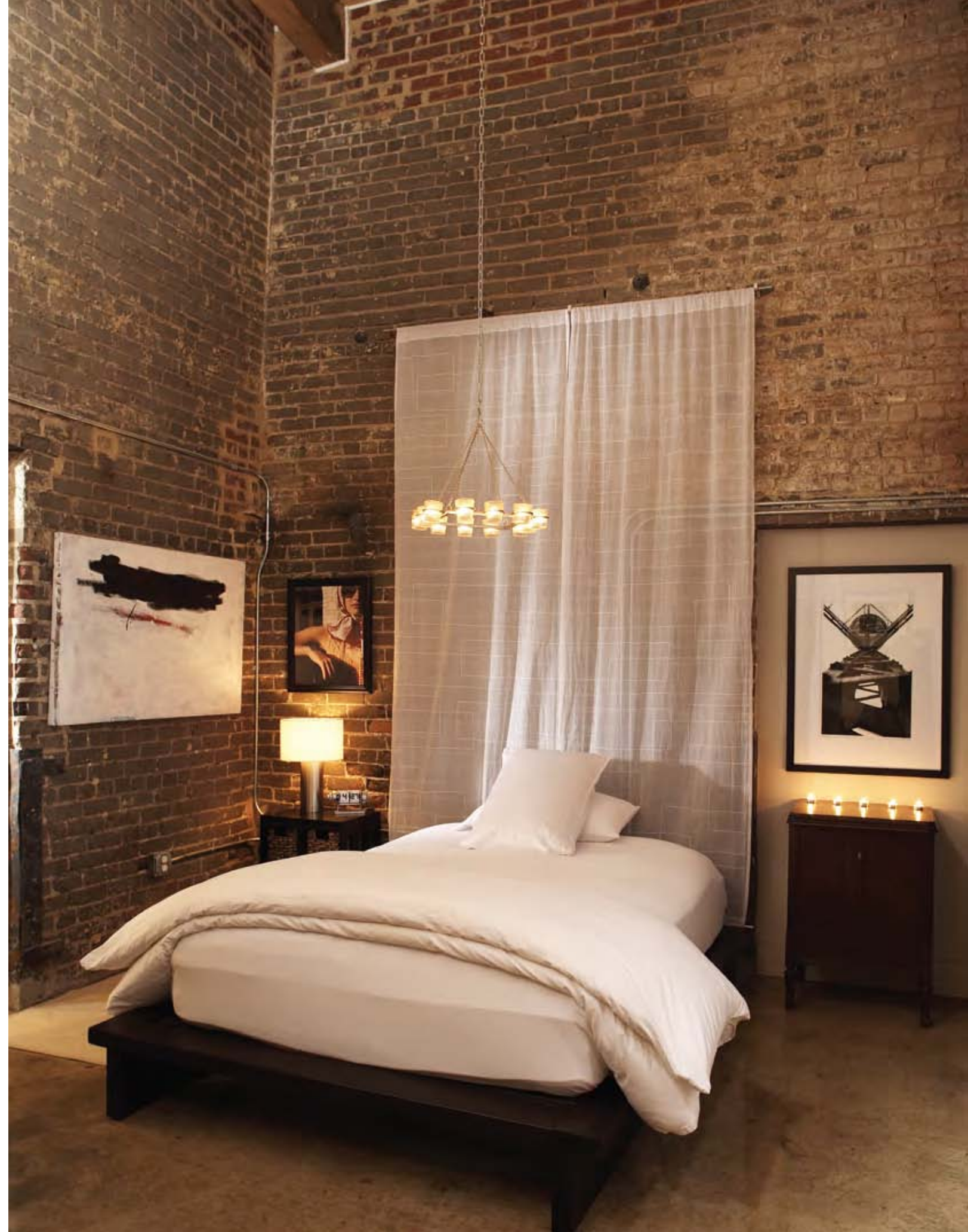
### Enter the residents

Once completed, “Phase I” of the transformation of The Stacks (the restoration of the New Bleachery, Warehouse #6, and the Bag Factory) was a \$50 million project. To fund the restoration, Aderhold Properties applied for a Section 42 Low Income Housing Credit. A requirement for acceptance was that 40% of the 206 Phase I units be set aside for low- to moderate-income renters. “We needed 82 units in the low income housing component,” Aderhold explains. “We have 84.” Section 42 is a 15-year project. “We started in 1998 so all of Phase I must remain rental units through 2013.”

Ben Morgan has been at The Stacks for 2-1/2 years, in two different apartments. “I really like living here,” he says. “The apartment I’m living in is wide open, with really cool, big win-

☑ This two-bedroom model loft features birdcages suspended from the ceiling and a painting by artist and Stacks resident, Dagmar Bruehmueller. ☑ Many newer units in The Stacks have spiral staircases; here, one leads from the living area to the upstairs bedroom.





dows and lots of brick,” Morgan says.

The unusual windows are a focal point—no two are exactly the same size. “We kept the window company busy for a year,” says Aderhold. Another draw is the large community pool framed by the ruins of the Old Bleachery. When they were trying to figure out where to put the pool, an architect suggested putting it *in* the building. “Everyone said yes!” says Aderhold. It is a stroke of genius: a sleek, modern pool within an old, brick façade.

Phase II of The Stacks began in 1999. On April 12<sup>th</sup> of that year a raging fire broke out in Mill #1. Flames leapt over the five-story structure and trapped a crane operator on top of his machine. A daring, televised rescue ensued as a helicopter plucked the operator off his perch. Aderhold says he was standing next to then-Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell when he asked the operator through a radio how he was doing: “He said he was fine but a little hot . . . That was a fairly long day.”

Historic guidelines dictated that 60% of the interior must be intact in order to qualify for rebuild. Fortunately Aderhold Properties was allowed to proceed with its restoration. Due to the high combustibility of cotton, Mill #1 and its companion structures were built to withstand fire, in what was commonly known as “slow burning construction.”

The restoration of Mill #1 proceeded, and Aderhold’s Phase

## The ongoing conversion of The Stacks at Fulton Mill has been the “challenge of all challenges.”

II was complete with the rentals of lofts in four other buildings. In April of 2006, Aderhold Properties teamed up with Jennings Partners Inc. and the Condo Store to market and sell new units. According to Wayne Anderson, Sales Manager at The Stacks, it took “barely over a year” to sell the 165 available lofts. They are now marketing Phase II of the condominium project, starting with Mill #2. Available lofts range in price from the high \$100,000s to the mid-\$300,000s.

Brandon Sutton was a renter in Mill #1 (known today as “Building H”), and moved into The Stacks in March of 2001. “I was one of the first to move in,” he says. “I had a one-bedroom loft on the first floor. In November 2002, I moved into the Tow-

➤ Sutton’s tower loft features a streamlined kitchen, seemingly suitable for roller skating. The height of his ceiling gives new meaning to “loft.” ➤ An abundance of headroom in Sutton’s bedroom doesn’t detract from its intimacy.





er. I had an increase in rent but it was worth it.”

Sutton loves the history of The Stacks, adding, “Aderhold Properties has done a phenomenal job of preserving it.” He comments that wandering the halls is like a treasure hunt: old photographs line the walls and original machinery is on display in the corners.

When the building turned condo, Sutton jumped at the chance to purchase his unit. He loves most that his loft is “unlike all the others.” In fact, many of the lofts at The Stacks are unique. Tom Aderhold reports that there are 90 different floor plans in the 165 converted units.

Most residents agree with Sutton when he says, “the people are great.” Aderhold adds, “This kind of living draws people from every walk of life. We rejoice in the diversity.” There are parties around the pool, movies shown on big screens, and other events to bring residents together. Unless you’re here, Aderhold says, you just don’t know “how much fun it really is.”

The Stacks residents also agree that the location is ideal. “I’ve seen Cabbagetown change so much,” says Sutton. “I’ve watched Carroll Street come alive.” And indeed, there are now numerous restaurants and watering holes within walking distance. Downtown is one mile to the west, plus more loft build-

ings and restaurants are transforming the adjacent Memorial Drive corridor. I-20, I-75, and I-85 are easily accessible.

Lyn and Tom Deardorff, semi-retired, moved from Decatur to their loft at The Stacks, where they helped start The Stacks Artist, Architect & Loft Tour in December of last year to “showcase artists and showcase the lofts.”

The Deardorffs knew The Stacks was “not the same as the other places; the diversity appealed to us.”

“We had ‘Empty Nest syndrome,’” they explain, joking that they bought a loft with only one bedroom, “so no kids could move back in.”

Marae Simone says the things that sold her were “the high ceilings, concrete floor, and exposed brick.” She is proud that her loft is “the first home I’ve owned. I have more friends in this building than in all my other homes combined.” Simply put, she says, “I love coming home.”

**EXIT**

Brandon Sutton’s living room features an impressive collection of artwork, complemented by a black leather Natuzzi sofa and sidechair from Italia furniture.



## Amazing Grace

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *The Story of The Stacks* was completed two weeks before the evening of March 14th, when an EF-2 tornado tracked through the heart of Atlanta, knocking windows out of skyscrapers, turning the Georgia World Congress and CNN Centers into public fountains, toppling hundred-year-old oaks onto many homes in Cabbagetown, and touching down at The Stacks. Katie Black revisited the scene ten days later for an update.

**MARAE SIMONE:** There’s no place like home—it’s a cliché, but true. I have always loved this place but I appreciate it so much more now. I’m lucky: I could have been in Building E. I feel so badly for them.

**LYN & TOM DEARDORFF:** We’ve shared several home disasters in the past: trees that fell on our roof, a hurricane; but we’ve never shared one with a community of neighbors like this one. We were home that evening but the strength of our building masked the severity of the tornado. It was only when we went outside that we witnessed its full impact.

**MARAE:** I had just gotten home 10 minutes before (the storm hit). I was at a friend’s on (floor) 5 and thought, “it sounds like hail, I should move my car,” but when we looked out the window, it looked like a tornado. We hid in the bathroom for a very short time, like 2 minutes. It was very loud and then it was over. When I went to check on my car I saw a neighbor bleeding from the head and I stayed with him until the firemen arrived.

**TOM ADERHOLD:** It’s like divine intervention that no one was killed. We lost the top to the water tower. Building D is still closed—its roof was lifted up and set back down. Building C

is damaged as well but Building E was hurt the most. Thankfully, most of those units had just been placed on the market, so they were unoccupied at the time. Aside from the roof and top floors, there’s varying degrees of water damage. All-in-all, the total structure is very stable except for a few areas. The Atlanta Fire Department did an incredible job. The assistant fire chief commented that any other building would have been flattened—that’s how well-constructed (Building E) was. The site was cleared of all debris sixty hours after the event. (Buildings) A, B, and H are back up and people moved back in one week later. We appreciate all the owners and residents being so patient.

**BRANDON SUTTON:** One of the most difficult things to absorb was the loss of the ruins by the pool. All our neighbors felt the same. I was one of the first to find out we could move back in. I was gathering things from my place and Tom Aderhold said, “You guys can come back home.” The whole experience brought people together. I already knew we had a strong community here but that strong connection has been amplified.

**LYN & TOM:** We take heart in the fact that we’ve built such a community in only a year, which has served us well as we begin the healing process. We’re extremely fortunate to have Tom Aderhold and his highly professional team on-site from the first night, committed to restoring our home—again! We know the Stacks will be here for another hundred years.

**MARAE:** When Donna in the sales center said, “You can go home,” we hugged. (Once I was back in my loft) it felt different because I was afraid to leave. I thought they wouldn’t let me back in—I didn’t want them to change their minds. I wanted to be home!

Photo of Building E taken March 17, 2008, by Stacks resident Terrell Clark.





# Loftstyle

Photography by Joe Oppedisano  
Hair and Makeup by Karlo

Anna Marie's dress by Ted Baker,  
shoes by Dior. Isa's suit, shirt, and tie  
by Ted Baker, shoes by Aldo.





Isa's suit, shirt, and tie by Ted Baker, shoes by Paul Smith. Anna Marie's dress by Carmen Marc Valvo.





Anna Marie's dress by **Carmen Marc Valvo**.  
Isa's suit, shirt, and tie by **Ted Baker**, hat by **H&M**.





Anna Marie's dress by Carmen Marc Valvo, shoes by 9 West. Isa's suit, shirt, and tie by D&G by Dolce and Gabbana.





# Live / Work

Finding your way through the pains and pleasures of living AND working in your open space

Story by Lucy Sexton

Photo Illustrations by William Joos

Maybe David Byrne was right: Heaven is a place where nothing ever happens. Which might explain why your loft can occasionally feel like hell. Something is always happening. Having a generous space means you can live there, work there, play there, and party there. But creating spaces in your loft that allows all those activities to thrive can be quite a challenge.

Thankfully, loft-dwellers tend to be a creative lot, finding a variety of interesting ways to navigate their multi-purpose homes. *LoftLife* takes a look at how some of them have made it work.

## Get to Work

The words “home office” used to conjure images of a stay-at-home dad trying to start his own business. These days, it’s estimated that a whopping 7 out of 10 of us have some sort of workspace in our home. No matter if you are a painter or a doctor, the volume and architecture of former industrial spaces offer the opportunity to create wildly interesting work environments. The term “home office” doesn’t really apply.

Steve Holley, a successful New York lawyer, moved into a loft that needed to be gutted and completely redesigned. He

Live/Work lofts provided by Urban Realty Group [www.urgsav.com](http://www.urgsav.com)







worked with top-notch architects who created a work of art, literally—it was recently featured in an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art. With an office downtown, his home didn't need a primary workspace. In keeping with the ultra-modern open design of the space, the architects carved out a sleek office that houses books and personal files. However, Holley generally prefers to do his after-hours work at the kitchen area's spacious round table.

Which points to an often overlooked home office consideration: comfort. "If you can find out what makes you comfortable, then you'll actually be able to work there," says Charna Mintz, a doctor of behavioral psychology. "You may need to be messy. People often wind up at the kitchen table because it offers them the space to spread out." So you may want to think about making that desk a bit less sleek and a bit more roomy. "In the end it's all about what works," Mintz concludes.

However, if you live with other people, it also has to be what works for them. Kay and Bill Garvey share a recently converted loft in Chicago—and they both use it as an office. "We kept the large living, kitchen, and dining areas all open and continuous," says Kay, "then beyond all that is our workspace."

The long thin office area is secluded behind a freestanding wall, with entrances on either side. The wall holds a long custom-built desk, divided at the center by a simple cabinet for files. Kay uses one side for her real estate work while Bill works

## These days, it's estimated that a whopping 7 in 10 of us have some sort of workspace in our home.

on the other side doing web design. The ends of the room are airy and the loft's large windows produce plenty of light. The wall provides a definite physical and visual separation from the living area.

Clearly defining the living and working spaces like the Garvey's did is crucial. Elizabeth Wilhide, author of *New Loft Living*, says, "It's a mistake to try and double up a workspace with an area that will be used off and on during the day." You'll not only end up getting distracted while you work, but wind up working when you meant to stop for the day. "Even if you're creating a work area within a large bedroom, rig a partition so you're not reminded that it's a sleeping area—and vice versa."

One solution Wilhide recommends, in spaces that have a mezzanine level, is to put the office upstairs, away from the main living quarters. Matt Newburn, an architect and designer, who lives with his partner Craig Hales in a dual-level loft in Atlanta, has done just that. They made the decision partly because, "the mezzanine being higher up means the ceiling is lower so it feels cozy, as opposed to the height of the main space downstairs."

The upper level has a walled-in room toward the back and an open area overlooking downstairs, which suited each of their needs nicely. Hales, a doctor, took the more traditional room, while Newburn colonized the open space to do his design work.





This accommodated what Wilhide calls, “the need to stare off and space out while you’re working.” Newburn likes letting his mind wander out into the rest of the open space and large windows of the main loft, while the smaller window overlooking the building’s courtyard is just the view that Hales enjoys while he’s working.

If your loft is one level, choose simple ways to denote your work area without compromising your space. Bookshelves on casters can set off an area without feeling too permanent and open shelves delineate an office without disturbing the loft’s sense of flow. One of Wilhide’s favorite solutions to the semi-permanent work area was a flippable wall she saw in a London loft. “There was a small nook that they fitted with a wall that on one side had shelf and desk space, but it could be flipped around when they didn’t need the office.” She cautions that this type of work must be custom-done, and done well, because, “if it doesn’t work easily, it’s a permanent vexation.”

### That’s Entertainment

If you have to meet with clients in your home office, the need for dividers becomes more pronounced. “You want it to look professional, though if your work is artistic a certain amount of creative clutter is O.K.,” says Wilhide. Still, while your client might not mind the interesting items decorating your workplace—say, your collection of thrift-store smiley-face mugs—they should not be subject to a view of your roommate’s unwashed coffee cups sitting out on the kitchen table. So, how to separate the office without compromising the inspiration your loft offers?

To start, try to locate the work area near the entrance so visitors don’t need to traipse through the main living space to get to you. Half-height walls can work well, as Wilhide says, “they at least leave you aware that you have volume and continuous space.” She also suggests non-traditional shapes, like curved walls which feel more dynamic, adding: “you don’t want to put up too many barriers or you could be living in a conventional space.”

Florent Morellet, a New York restaurateur, has been living in his loft for many years and is familiar dealing with different roommates. “Each of them used the space to work in, which mostly I didn’t mind,” he says. Then, a costume designer moved in. “When he was working on a show, he wasn’t aware of anything else,” Morellet explains. The roommate would have actors over for fittings and in his frenzy of designing and building the outfits, he’d leave the loft covered in fabric swatches and discarded mockups. “That was a little much,” Morellet admits.

Which is why some of the most important boundaries you construct when cohabiting are psychological ones. Says Mintz, “You need to set clear rules right at the beginning. Each person gets to name one or two things that are absolute ‘no’s.” For instance if dirty dishes—or fabric swatches—in the common area drive you nuts, state that clearly when you move in. Just make sure you don’t wind up restating it every time there’s a wine glass out of place. Mintz stresses that reinforcing good behavior—praising your cohabitor for times when he’s cleaned up, for instance—will go a lot further. “It’s human nature to pay



**A client might not mind your collection of smiley-face mugs. She should not be subject to your roommate’s unwashed coffee cups on the kitchen table.**

attention when things go wrong,” she explains, “but focusing on what’s working gives you something to build on.”

It also helps if you design your space in ways that make it easier to clean from the get-go. Straightening up a loft, whether to placate those you live with, or to make the space presentable for clients, comes with special challenges. “People don’t give enough consideration to storage,” says Wilhide. “We acquire things in a piecemeal way—especially if we have the luxury of a large space at home—but we don’t think about how to store them.” She recommends determining what you use everyday and what you use less frequently. Then you need to create space to hide things away, leaving the open lines of your space visible.



## Close Friends

Cohabiting a large untraditional space brings a host of special considerations. Tyrone Curtis lives in a former warehouse in Brooklyn's trendy Williamsburg. Describing it as a treehouse with several mezzanine areas, he says he's lived there with a variety of roommates with varying degrees of success. One constellation involved living with two sisters, who both soon had live-in boyfriends. "I felt like I was living in other people's relationships," Curtis says, "they were all over each other and not sensitive about living with someone else."

"In this situation, communication is even more important," Mintz advises. She recommends talking directly with your roommates, not only about everyone's comfort levels with displays of physical affection, but about more practical things like schedules and use of the common space. "If there are times when the couple want the living room for themselves, try setting up a schedule so they can ask for a night to make a private dinner for the two of them."

Privacy was precisely what Curtis took into consideration with his next set of roommates—who were also a couple. Liv-

**"It's a mistake to try and double up a workspace with an area that will be used off and on during the day."**

ing with one set of connubial roommates rather than two, meant the duo could use the additional bedroom as an office. Which in turn meant that they could conduct most of their lives in their own space. Now, he says when they all come into the common space to have dinner together, it's a choice and clearly a more social non-private time.

So while a spacious loft invites company, it's that very company that requires some compromise on the ultra-open aesthetic. There are many ways of making communal life work, from experimenting with materials and different types of dividers to inventing ways to give yourself some mental privacy. For instance, Kay Garvey dealt with Bill's need to listen to music while he designs his websites by buying an iPod for him and a pair of earphones for herself. To help with that difficult morning transition from the bed you just slept in to your workspace a few yards away, Mintz recommends getting out of the house. "Go out for breakfast or just for a walk," she says. "Give yourself that mental space to clear your head and get ready for work."

For all its challenges, loft living, solo or with others, comes with invaluable assets: light, space, history, and atmosphere. So when your work day is done, and your space sharers have returned, don't forget to let your roomy industrial-strength loft do the job it was born to do: host a party. And watch all those interpersonal tensions—and boundaries—melt away.

EXIT







# Castleberry Hill Pioneers

Loft owners in Castleberry Hill are not only breaking ground, they're rebuilding a community





**“When you come down to this part of Atlanta, we want you to feel like you’re on vacation,” Bilinski says.**

Story by Cindy Klinger  
Photography by Amy Herr

They might not be founders of a new world, but innovative loft owners in Castleberry Hill are pioneers in their own right. Their foresight and passion have newly incarnated their small section of downtown—formerly a factory warehouse wasteland—into a trendy, up-and-coming area that brims with possibility and promise (many compare it to New York City’s meat-packing district). Here, we profile five such visionaries who took a risk and settled into digs that, at first, were just shells of their present states—and in the process, helped shape the future of this sophisticated, offbeat corner of Atlanta.

### Getting more of No Más!

“No más” may translate to “no more” in English, but when it comes to gentrifying Castleberry Hill, Walt Bilinski and Steve MacNeil, owners of the No Más! furniture-import empire, can’t seem to get enough. The couple has been living in the neighborhood since 1998, when they recognized the community’s potential.

“We saw this as a canvas from which to build not just our business, but to work with the community to help make a difference,” Bilinski says.

The pair bought two adjacent buildings, one to be a ware-

house for their company and one to function as their living space, with units they could also rent out to others. Last year, they sold four units in their residential building and invested that equity in renovating their new restaurant, No Más! Cantina, and their successful shop, No Más! Hacienda.

The pair’s distinctive style and passion for handcrafted, high-quality furniture and artisanal wares has translated into a one-of-a-kind residence that blends Mexico’s melting pot of Mediterranean-influenced styles with a regal slant. Rustic-modern woods blend with bold statements and dramatic touches, like an oversized, extra-tall couch with salvaged piano legs from the Boston symphony, a 10-foot wooden armoire, and candles

dripping into niches in the brick walls. A large Moravian-star fixture, one of the couple’s most popular sellers, hangs from the kitchen ceiling, offering a touch of whimsy.

Their inspiring store maintains the same respect for handiwork. The front desk, which was supposed to be “simple,” is an intricately carved focal point surrounded by a seemingly endless array of fabulous Mexican-crafted finds. When visitors enter their spacious shop, Bilinski and MacNeil want them to feel as though they’ve left Atlanta and traveled to a small Mexican town. Inside, you’re transported to an old street where you wouldn’t be completely surprised if a mariachi band appeared. After perusing the pieces, you can head next door, which was also thoughtfully designed, for some authentic Mexican food.

“When you come down to this part of Atlanta, we want you to feel like you’re on vacation,” Bilinski says. The unexpected charm is entirely amazing—it’s hard to imagine all the work that Bilinski and MacNeil put into the place, because it feels like it’s been here forever. Their next project is going to be Escape, a small art gallery based in the large fire escape of the store.

“I didn’t come here to rebuild (the neighborhood),” Bilinski says. “But I feel good about making a difference in this small part of Atlanta.”

### Urban planning

Atlanta’s not the most pedestrian-friendly of cities, but Heather Alhadeff could have you fooled. Five years ago, she traded in her car for sneakers and a MARTA pass, considers Morning-side the most suburban of her most recent digs, and absolutely

☑ An indoor fire pit isn’t the only thing warming up Bilinski’s and MacNeil’s digs—bright colors and a rich mix of materials welcome them into their Mexican-influenced loft daily. ☑ Pennington’s simple but sophisticated taste makes for comfortable, stylish lounging.



**“Everybody’s always in the kitchen for parties anyway, so you might as well make the kitchen the center of the house,” Alhadeff says.**

adores the life she’s carved out for herself in Castleberry Hill, considering it an Atlanta melting pot.

The minute Alhadeff, a transportation planner, entered the space on Peters Street she now calls home, she knew she had to have it. “I walked in and I was like, this is it. This is definitely it,” she says. Just walking from the parking lot to the door is an experience—the narrow alleyways and peeling paint make it feel like a charming scene plucked from New Orleans or even Tuscany.

Inside, the open plan and well-designed layout solidifies the space’s homey feeling. The unit, which was part of the former department store on the property, retains its original brick walls and bead board ceilings, but has modern amenities like SieMatic stainless steel appliances, track lighting, and fabulously streamlined built-ins.

Another perk for Alhadeff are the three walls of windows, many beautifully arched, allowing light to flood the home.

Coral-colored cabinets and paint accent the brick walls, creating a cozy feel amid the large space. The sunken, spacious kitchen is the heart of Alhadeff’s home. “Everybody’s always in the kitchen for parties anyway, so you might as well make the kitchen the center of the house,” she says. “It works out perfect for gatherings.” Not only does Alhadeff entertain in her home, but friends and family members (including her grandmother and her walking buddies!) have used the place as a backdrop for bashes of their own. Pressed stainless steel countertops and frosted glass doors make for low-maintenance clean-ups.

The most radical part of the two-story loft is the open master bathroom—there’s no door there or to the large shower inside, which Alhadeff says isn’t a problem unless there’s a guest staying with her, in which case she simply showers in the guest bathroom. The familiar coral cabinets and frosted glass doors in the bathroom provide continuity throughout the loft.



The loft itself wasn’t the only thing that led Alhadeff to Castleberry Hill. “The thing that attracts me the most is the diversity, and it’s not just a racial diversity,” Alhadeff says. “It’s all ages, all incomes, all sexual orientations, all races. You can go to different neighborhoods and get diversity of one or two or three of those, but you usually don’t get all of those different groups. And it’s actually got a very active neighborhood association. I can walk into any one of these places and see someone I know, so it’s literally like an extended family. That’s extremely unique.”

### Renovating rampage

When Wynn Pennington moved into his current, modest loft, there was no heat, no running water, and not a window to be found. Maybe it’s in his genes—his brother is Ty Pennington of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*—but rather than get discouraged, he began renovating. “My parents were scared to death,” he says. “They thought I’d gone off the deep end.” Just 25 at the time, he moved in and eventually converted the whole building into a triplex.

Before hiring a contractor, Pennington recruited his brother and friends to help with the manual labor. With sledgehammers and chop saws (plus a keg of beer), they cut through three feet of brick to make space for windows and sliding glass doors, and to provide for air conditioning.

**Frosted glass, stainless steel, and modern fixtures and appliances are juxtaposed with warm brick tones and some of Alhadeff’s unexpected antique finds.**





**Years ago, things were different. Banks wouldn't lend in Castleberry Hill, and Pennington's car was vandalized 89 times in one year.**

These days, the loft is understated, yet livable. A true believer in “less is more,” Pennington’s taste is mid-century modern with a minimalist flair. He mixes Italian Minotti furniture with pieces from Space’s tent sale, as well as finds from the Lakewood 400 Antiques Market and his ex-wife’s artwork, although he still says, “I have too much crap here.” He stained the concrete floors green and installed his own broken tilework in the bathrooms. Outside, he paved the way for parking spots and a small seating area using pieces from the torn-up concrete.

The owner of the wine company Motovino, Pennington appreciates the new amenities cropping up in the area. Years ago, things were different. “When I first moved here,” he says, “it

was a living hell.” Banks wouldn’t lend in Castleberry Hill and his car was vandalized 89 times in one year. Since then, a lot has changed and he feels comfortable having his daughter live him half of the week (he shares custody with his ex-wife). “I knew it would happen eventually,” he says. “I like what’s happening.”

### From petroleum jelly to jaw-dropping

Kathy Honer’s 9,000-square-foot petroleum jelly factory-turned-office and living space is far from your average fixer-upper. First off, it’s a site on the National Register of Historic Places. When she moved in, the roof leaked, the elevator house

had to be replaced, appliances were falling apart, and the front side of the building peeled off after she tried to restore it. “It was like getting a cut and not being able to stop the bleeding,” says Honer, who lives in the loft with her roommate, Rich Pilger. Aware of the work ahead of her, Honer hired a contractor she found in Chattanooga to move in with her temporarily while the bulk of the major work was being done.

After living in her space for seven years, Honer finally feels that the renovations are complete. She saved the main level with the intent of using it for a business—which didn’t pan out—so now it’s the “party level.” The kitchen has become a bar area where drinks fill the counters and lights dance on the

walls creating a disco effect. An air hockey table awaits guests and funky artwork—including road signs friends give to Honer as gifts—adorn the living room walls.

One floor up from the party level is Honer’s everyday kitchen, spacious office area, open den, and all three bedrooms. The décor shifts from modern to mid-century modern to retro, while splashes of color make the rooms come alive. Small spots offer unique touches of creativity, with one of the stairwells functioning as a light gallery. Different colored blown glass bulbs hanging from the ceiling in a variety of lengths and shapes, infusing the small spot with a dreamy quality. Corrugated tin welcomes you into the entryway that has become a small art gallery and garage doors have replaced windows in the front to add to the industrial look.

Outside, an iron spiral staircase leads up to the roof deck, which boasts a Jacuzzi tub and views that rightly make you feel as if you’re in a true metropolis. Old sliding glass doors from the former tenant have been reincarnated as awnings for two windows that lead into a finished airshaft.

One room everyone gets a kick out of is the guest bathroom on the main level. Once an old meat locker, when you step inside, you feel like you’re going to be stored and served for dinner. Honer can also tell if guests wash their hands after using the “facility”: blue neon lights up when you turn on the faucet, so if there’s no comment about it made afterward, it’s a dead giveaway.

Honer was dedicated to the renovation for a multitude of reasons—more so than many neighbors who gave up and sold their places. Although she says she doesn’t think there’s an in-between—you either finish it or you give up, in her view—the main reason for her commitment was also one of the simplest. “It was such a neat, overwhelming place,” she says. And like so many others who have come to call Castleberry Hill home, she fell in love.

**EXIT**

**Honer’s loft used to be home to Cheatham Chemical Company, which produced goods like petroleum jelly, hair care products, lotions, and bubble bath.**



# Island of Design

Long the center of finance, media, art, fashion, and real estate, Manhattan is also one of the top design spots in the world



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Story by Tom Eubanks

Photography by Linden Hass

If you were to trace the last four decades of New York City's growth, from its near-bankruptcy and record high-crime rate of the 1970s to its present incarnation as a *Sex and the City*-meets-Disneyland theme park, you'd see first-hand the power of gentrification and the "nesting movement" of the 1990s. Today, the average price of a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan is \$1.7 million. Which means Manhattan's once legendary "bohemian fringe" has vanished because starving artists can no longer afford to live and work here.

Taking their place, it seems, are buildings. Not the New York skyscrapers of the past, but 20-story "boutique" hotels, *new* museums, and modern-looking yet quaint-seeming corporate headquarters. All made by name-brand architects, or "starchitects," a pejorative appendage that illustrates how far design has come in our consciousness, where architects are the new rock stars.

Just in the past year, Manhattan got its first Frank Gehry building (the IAC/InterActiveCorp headquarters on the West Side Highway; like a billowing sail made of curved, white-frosted glass), its first Renzo Piano tower (the grand, grey New York

Times building a block west of Times Square), its first Santiago Calatrava (a soaring white transportation hub at the World Trade Center site), and yet another free-standing structure to house art: **THE NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART** 1, designed by Japanese "starchitect" SANAA and situated on the Bowery. Yes, that Bowery, which shows how much things change.

In the wake of all this high-wattage real estate, a greater sense of design has followed. And sure enough, the starchitects have turned to mass-marketing pieces that design aficionados and starchitect groupies can't get enough of. You can't just have any old lamp in your \$1.7 million apartment. Obviously, for anyone interested in design, the city has become a breeding ground for exceptional furniture and home décor stores.

In fact, you could spend a month in New York and never find all the best spots. So we gathered our design experts, Dabney Doswell, Sherry Jo Williams, and Tim Ranney, and asked: "Keeping in mind that not everyone can fork over a million dollars for a place to live, if you only had a weekend to hit the best design spots in New York, which would make your list?"

Their answers ranged from obscure outposts in Williams-

burg, Brooklyn to the abundance of sleek **APPLE STORES** 3 to the usual suspects in SoHo, with the shops of MoMa, the Museum of Arts & Design, the Guggenheim, and the **COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM** 2 thrown in for good measure. We've winnowed their selections down to those spots most off the beaten path, distinguishing the high-end spots without diminishing those places where good design can be had on the cheap.

Not surprisingly, **moss** 4, at 150 Greene Street tops each of our experts' lists. Williams considers it a "must-do" for any visitor and considers Murray Moss, who opened the store in 1994, a design guru. According to Doswell the store is "arguably the best furniture and objects shop in the country." At moss, "the distinctions between production and craft, industry and art, and more recently, between industrial and decorative arts" are deliberately blurred. Looking for a set of whale-bone caviar spoons? A Hella Jongerius embroidered ceramic pot? Reproductions of 18th-Century Meissen porcelain dishware? A chair upholstered with stuffed animals? moss is the place for you. Says Doswell, "It's an inspiration and a lesson in design just to walk through the shop."

**Looking for a Hella Jongerius embroidered ceramic pot? A chair upholstered with stuffed animals? moss is the place for you.**

You'll even see moss' influence when you exit the shop and walk down what Williams calls, "the Greene Street corridor," home to places like Lush Baan, BoConcept, apt, and **CITE** 9 at 131 Greene Street, which carries Cecchini custom furniture, vintage Danish pieces, and Verner Panton lighting. Doswell considers CITE, "heaven sent for design enthusiasts."

While in SoHo, don't forget to pop into **AERO** 8 at 419 Broome Street and check out what Ranney calls, "the masculine warm modernism that owner Thomas O'Brien (the designer of the chic 60 Thompson Hotel) is known for." A short walk around the block to 455 Broadway will bring you to Manhattan's "long overdue" Japanese design store, **MUJI** 12, where





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you'll find items like minimal houseware objects, t-shirts shrink-wrapped in cubes, and disposable cardboard speakers. Williams sums up MUJI as "the quintessential source for Japan's version of 'less is more.' It's as friendly to the pocketbook as it is to the eye."

On the other end of the scale—yet just down the street—visit **PEARL RIVER MART** 6, at 477 Broadway. This Chinese home-furnishings emporium is "fantastic for inexpensive folding screens, bamboo chairs, paper lamp shades," says Williams, before adding this caveat: "The store may pose an ethical issue since we don't know the circumstances behind the manufacturing, and what we do know isn't good."

While you're downtown, both Ranney and Doswell suggest heading east (look for the New Museum to guide you) to John Derian Company at 6 East 2nd Street. "On the crafty side of design," says Doswell, "Derian employs artists who help create his charming *découpage* accessories" that depict famous works of art, botanical sketches, maps, and old documents. Besides *découpage*, Derian also carries "odd and lovely antiques, imports, quilts, table linens, and a line of stationery." Says Ranney, "I'm pretty sure the event stylist for the Mad Hatter's tea party created the tabletop with designs from John Derian."

A few blocks west at 39 Bond Street, there's **LOBEL MODERN** 11 with "furnishings that appeal to the James Bond and Tom Ford

in all of us," according to Ranney.

Another secret Ranney and Williams agree upon are the six **HOUSING WORKS THRIFT SHOPS** 10 scattered throughout Manhattan. You'll not only feel good about shopping at them since the profits fight AIDS and homelessness, but you'll also find amazing deals on 'pre-owned' art, furniture, books, and clothing. Says Ranney, "I know more people who have furnished their apartments with HW merchandise than from any other store. The reason is they get amazing donations from the best people (and inventory from design companies)." Ranney recounts that he bought an 80s desk with a sliding top for \$250—it was later appraised at about \$1,000.

Before you head uptown, there are two more spots on our must-do list: **ALAN MOSS** 5—not to be confused with moss—at 436 Lafayette Street, and White Trash at 304 East 5th Street. In the words of Ranney, "Last time I went to Alan Moss, Nina Garcia from *Elle Magazine* and *Project Runway*, was browsing, and a couple of distinguished European Royals were being fawned over while they decided on a very expensive lamp." (Next door to Alan Moss, Ranney suggests two other post-modern shops: DeLorenzo 1950 and Gallery 440.)

On the other end of the spectrum from Alan Moss but just a short walk to the east, you'll find White Trash, a tiny, warm East Village standard that's been a favorite of Ranney's for more



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than 20 years. Stuart Zamsky, the proprietor, is a well-known 'picker' who re-sells his treasures at amazing prices. There's always been a fantastic mix of Danish Modern, Knoll, Herman Miller, and brilliant obscure designers accented by random objects that seem to appear as if they were custom-made.

Doswell's next pick takes you uptown to the Museum of Arts & Design at 40 West 53rd Street (down the block from the refurbished MoMa and the stunning Folk Art Museum). The Museum of Arts & Design's shop, says Doswell, "is like a miniature and very colorful global market: vases from France, leather handbags from Italy, sleek tableware from Canada." The trip to the store is almost as educational as a trip to the museum: "each cluster of crafts, housewares, instruments, and ceramics are meticulously organized and accompanied by paper cards listing the artist's name and location."

The next stop is Williams' choice: **THE CONRAN SHOP** 7, nestled under the 59th Street Bridge and featuring modern furniture and household objects from London. Conveniently located near the Design and Decoration (or D&D) Building, The Conran Shop is surrounded by several antique and furnishing stores between 58th and 62nd Streets.

And just twelve blocks north of this uptown 'design district,' you'll find Doswell's final destination: Mariette Himes Gomez at 504 East 74th Street. Gomez, a world-renowned interior

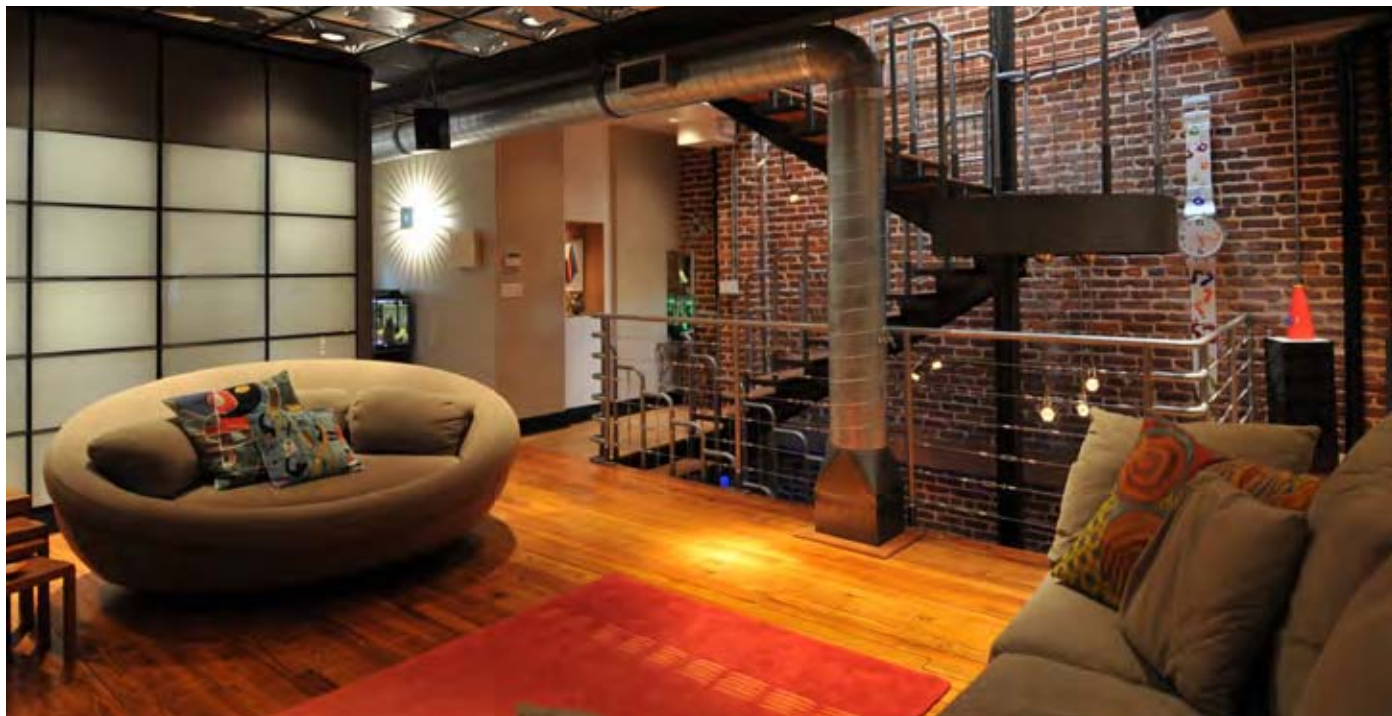
**Says Ranney, "I'm pretty sure the event stylist for the Mad Hatter's tea party created the tabletop with designs from John Derian."**

designer, "culls statement antique pieces from New York, Paris, and London to create a collection of transitional furniture that is neither too modern, nor overly traditional," says Doswell. "And her choices complete a study in design as they show a pure inclination towards the clean, simple, and elegant."

A good thing to keep in mind on your shopping journey is that many of the independent stores mentioned here will not charge New York state sales tax if you have your purchases sent out of state. So get yourself here and get shopping before the next unpredictable wave hits Manhattan.

EXIT





**Historic Castleberry**

Amazing opportunity to own a large loft in Historic Castleberry. The building encompasses four floors, plus a rooftop deck with hot tub that overlooks the city. Features include an elevator, 2 car garage, gourmet kitchen, huge owner's suite, multiple staircases, and great attention to detail. Zoning allows for mixed-use utilization. Hard to find this much space! Offered at \$2,900,000.

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"View of the Rich's Christmas tree atop the 'crystal bridge' over Forsyth Street," by Floyd Jillson, taken circa 1950s.

## "Rich's was the smartest spot in town."

Sherry Jo Williams goes back in time to Rich's Department Store, her childhood "beacon of civilization"

Although my southern childhood was steeped in suburban clichés—*Father Knows Best*, first job at Perimeter Mall, good schools, large lawns, even larger houses—I had a penchant for all things cosmopolitan. To many, I'm sure it appeared

as if I had been switched-at-birth with some city slicker. Don't get me wrong: growing up on the north side of Hot'lanta served me well and I knew it. We rode our bikes safely past dusk, played tag unfettered and fearless, and were far from bored. But, unlike my playmates,

I was drawn to the city's innards, a place filled with mystery and promise. My young fantasies always seemed to lean towards some unknown, urban address, busy and teeming with pedestrians.

This early yearning was nourished by the once famed, now defunct Rich's Department Store, the beating heart of downtown Atlanta, located at Alabama and Broad (and currently home to Macy's). To a kid with big dreams, Rich's enormous structure was filled with endless entertainment. It served as a beacon of civilization for me: all history and stones, unlike our modest, suburban dwelling. Mom treated us to a tour of this commercial bustle a few times a year. The department store's grand pavilion helped to make otherwise tedious trips to the dentist and the doctor worth the journey from the 'burbs. Our annual birthday luncheons in Rich's grand Magnolia Room, the smartest spot in town, and sitting on Santa's lap each Christmas, allowed me the additional pleasure of appreciating a more metropolitan viewpoint.

I reveled in the knowledge that it was always there, an illusion of permanence in a rapidly changing world.



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