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An amazing
New York apartment

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THE RIGHT NOTE

This stylish New York apartment is perfectly in tune with the fine sensibilities of its owners, as well as a harmonious reflection of its origins as the headquarters of a respected music publishing company.

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICHARD POWERS WORDS: JEAN WRIGHT

NEW YORK HOME

THIS PAGE The living area is flooded with natural light. B&B Italia black leather sofas, and '70s glass, lucite and brass coffee table by Charles Hollis Jones sit on a vintage Swedish rug. OPPOSITE PAGE Glass collection is mainly Italian from the '40s and '50s by Barovier & Toso, Seguso, Venini and Barbini.



Yacht designer Scott Kaufman and former Chanel publicist Harriet Ayre-Smith met in Sydney in the summer of 2000. A year later to the day, they were married on Sydney Harbour aboard the *M.V. Cosmos*. Scott, who represented Australia in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico, is a keen sailor who has competed in 13 Sydney to Hobart races. He moved to New York in 1974 after he was offered a job there. He is now very much a New Yorker and, after the wedding, the couple, and Harriet's 13-year-old daughter, Charlotte, set off to live in Manhattan.

Their first apartment was close to the World Trade Center and they were forced to abandon it after September 11. Their current 278-square-metre apartment is in a '20s landmark building, which was once the headquarters of a respected music publishing company, the Carl Fischer Building, in the Bowery on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The neighbourhood, once famous for its 'bowery bums' is quickly gentrifying. The New Museum of Contemporary Art and the Carlos Zapata-designed Cooper Square Hotel opened there this year.

The building was converted to condominiums in 2001 and the loft apartments sold 'raw'. "We started with a white box," says Scott. "It had good light, lots of space and three-metre ceilings. The floors were concrete and very thick." Space is paramount to Scott – every millimetre of yacht space counts and boat designers know how to use it.

Architect Stefania Rinaldi, whose father worked with Italian architect Gio Ponti, was commissioned to design the interior. "It was a wonderful team from architect to contractors," says Scott. "They punched out everything they could in the ceiling – any space where there wasn't a pipe was utilised."



THIS PAGE Collectors' items in the living room include a mixture of precious objects and flea-market finds. The glass sculpture on the coffee table is by Barbini. Glass lamp by Barovier & Toso and wooden lamp by James Mont. The painting leaning against the window was found at a flea market in New York and is unsigned. "We just found it and loved it," say Harriet and Scott, pictured opposite with dog Ferdinand. The floor lamp behind them was bought from Tyrone Dearing on one of their trips back to Sydney.



Ship joinery principles – that everything must have multiple purposes to save space – were applied throughout. Low, double-sided storage units filled with books become room dividers separating the bedroom/bathroom and kitchen/living areas. The Kaufmans also have a separate library in the apartment. “We read everything – fiction, nonfiction, design and photography books, art books,” says Harriet.

The high quality of finishes is evident: walls and ceiling, even the laundry, are Venetian plastered; kitchen benchtops are polished concrete poured on site; joinery is walnut; floorboards are 30-millimetre-thick American oak in varying widths. Scott went to great lengths to find the floorboards, even though a building regulation requires 80 per cent of the area of a timber floor to be covered with rugs – a good thing as a few musicians live in the 12-storey building.

Scott and Harriet share a love of fine things and the no-expense-spared furnishings and artwork testify to this. Scott’s desk is by the late George Nakashima, master woodworker/designer of “flamboyant free-edge creations” in the words of *The New York Times*’ Roberta Smith. Paintings are by Larry Zox, Willem de Kooning, Salvador Dali. Art glass is mainly Italian from the ’40s and ’50s – Barovier & Toso, Seguso, Venini, and Barbini.

“We work with a few dealers in the US and we buy at auction and find pieces on our travels,” says Harriet. “We’re not shy about packing things up and taking them back with us,” adds Scott, referring to the vintage lamps and desks from Sydney dealer Tyrone Dearing, and the New Guinea tribal art purchased over the years. Pieces from their collection that didn’t fit the apartment have gone to other houses, such as their weekend getaway, a shingled cottage on Long Island. They are also building a new house in Garzón in Uruguay, which is sure to be just as stylish. **13**

“WE BUY AT AUCTION AND FIND PIECES ON OUR TRAVELS. WE’RE NOT SHY ABOUT PACKING THINGS UP AND TAKING THEM BACK WITH US.”

THIS PAGE In the dining room, a table by Franco Albini is matched with chairs by Carlo di Carli which have been restored and the seats recovered. Chandelier by Venini came from a Madison Avenue restaurant, Sant Ambroeus, which closed down and has since reopened. Tribal art under the window is from New Guinea. OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Walnut and aluminium cabinetry in the kitchen was designed by architect Stefania Rinaldi. Vibrant geometric painting is by Larry Zox. Kitchen shelves display more of the couple’s collections: wooden bowls from Denmark and South Carolina; pottery by Glidden Pottery; Italian jug from the ’60s and a piece by Fantoni. Knoll ‘Bertoia’ stool.

THIS PAGE Scott's desk is by George Nakashima with a Hans J. Wegner chair. The bookcase is one of a pair of '60s Californian pieces bought in Sydney. Artwork is a drawing by Salvador Dalí, *La Grande Place des Vosges*, 1958. OPPOSITE PAGE B&B Italia bed with Barovier & Toso bedside lamp. Stools were found in Buenos Aires, as were the gilt palm trees. Painting behind the bed is by Larry Zox and the drawing to the left of the window is by Willem de Kooning.

"WE STARTED WITH A WHITE BOX," SAYS SCOTT. "IT HAD GOOD LIGHT, LOTS OF SPACE AND THREE-METRE CEILINGS."

SPEED READ This former Sydney couple relocated to New York and have a large, airy apartment in a '20s landmark building, which was formerly the headquarters of a renowned music publishing company. • The apartment was sold as a 'shell', offering the opportunity to configure it exactly as they wanted. • High ceilings and an abundance of space provided the perfect backdrop for displaying the couple's extensive collections of art and modernist furniture.

