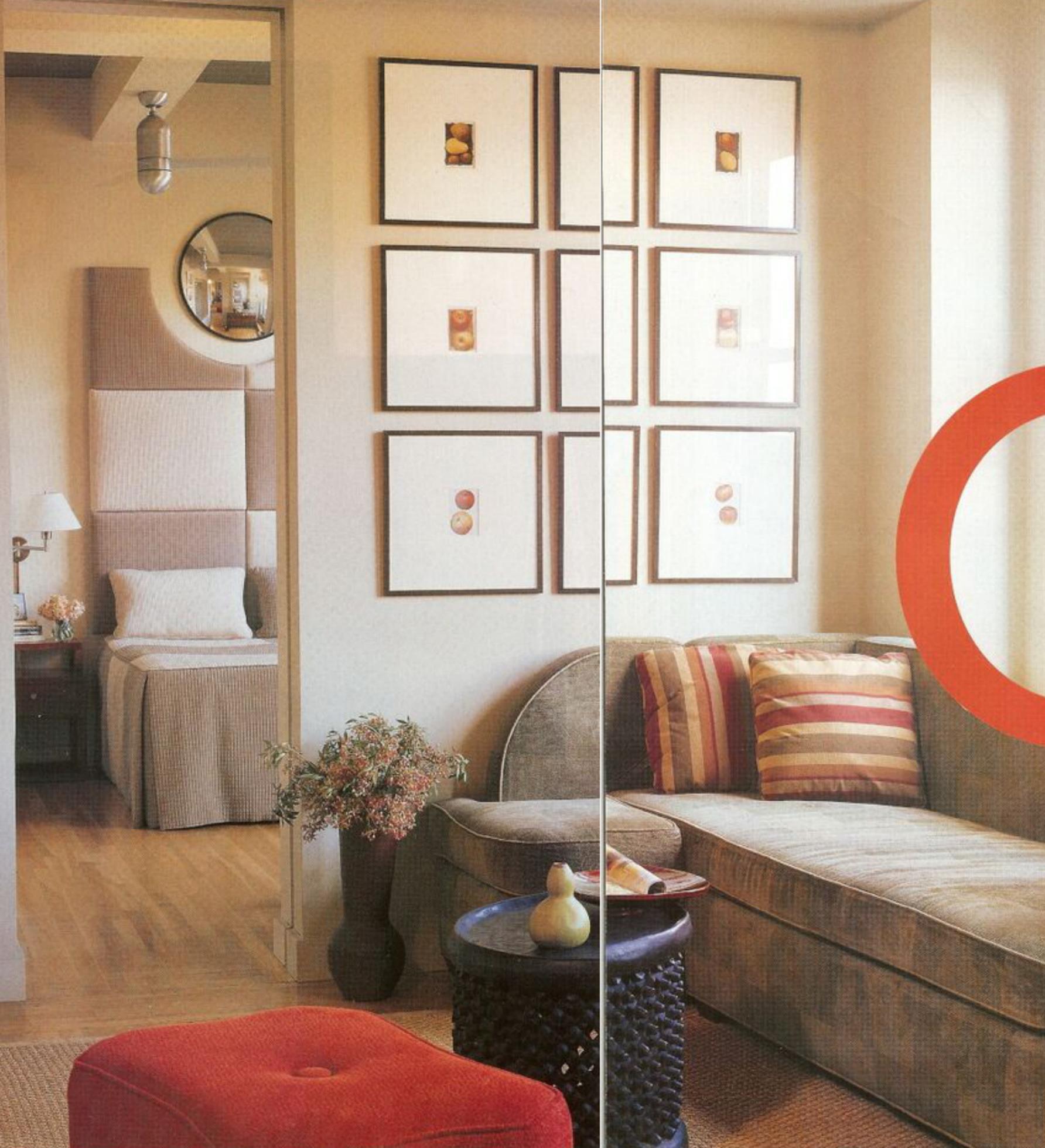
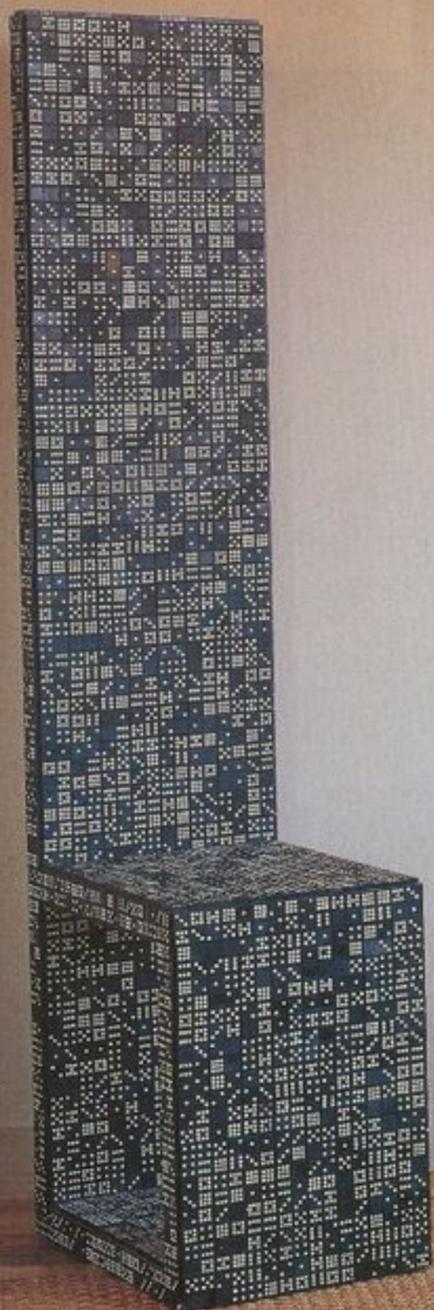


A foundation palette of light gray and celadon throughout makes the apartment feel like one large, unified space. It also provides a neutral background for sculptural accents: a chair made of dominoes, and a custom sectional by designer Matthew White. Nine overframed postcards of apples, circa 1920, work visually as a single piece of art (an inexpensive one, at that).



WELL SUITED

Designer **Matthew White** opens up a small apartment for a young professional.

In the website for *Sex and the City*, we glean these design insights about its main characters: Carrie Bradshaw mixes flea-market Russel Wright floor lamps with Calvin Klein bedding; Miranda's stereo is Bang & Olufsen; Charlotte favors the classic lines of Todd Hase. Clearly, the image of the professional woman has come a long way since Mary Richards, the sweetly daffy ingenue played by Mary Tyler Moore, moved into single-girl digs at North Wetherly Drive in Minneapolis. But though today's working woman is more style-conscious—or, perhaps, self-consciously stylish in the case of the HBO hit—the challenge of making a small space functional and elegant without going over budget is still part of her profile.

Kris Vickery, the 36-year-old president and COO of her own professional staffing agency, Strategic Workforce Solutions, faced this predicament when she purchased her first apartment in a renovated building in Lower Manhattan. The apartment's two bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, dining room and living room were tightly packed into 700 square feet. "I have a decent eye," says Vickery, "but I'm not great spatially." Needing a strategic plan, she did what good executives do: She called in a professional—designer Matthew White.

Fortunately, says White, the place had lots of windows and high ceilings, which gave it a measure of airiness. What had sealed the deal for Vickery, who enjoys entertaining, was a large outdoor terrace. "I also liked the foundation left by the previous owners," she observes, including Asian-inspired folding doors with mixed panels of clear and frosted glass.

PRODUCED BY ELANA FRANKEL. PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTOINE BOOTZ.
WRITTEN BY JORGE S. ARANGO.



The previous owners' iron-and-slate dining table was so heavy that no one wanted to move it—it was negotiated into the sale price of the apartment.

But Vickery wanted to replace the tiles on the dining room floor and the cabinets in the kitchen. Instead, says White, "I encouraged her to spend her money on individual pieces that would make her life there more comfortable." He had the tile regouted, and the wood floors cleaned and polished. The cabinets, which White says were washed in what he describes as a "driftwoody color," helped determine the overall palette of the apartment, which is tinted with green in the common rooms.

The first furniture purchase was a set of 1970s enameled-metal dining chairs, which White discovered at Pat McGann Gallery in Los Angeles. Their original finish, a strong cinnabar

red, so seduced client and designer alike that it became a running accent throughout. Shades of cinnabar show up on the double-sided portiere separating entryway and kitchen, on a chenille ottoman and a banquette designed by White, and on the ceiling—a bold stroke White admits he might not have attempted in a space with lower ceilings or less light.

Other furnishings were chosen based upon White's belief that "sculptural elements make a room more interesting." A chunky African stool turned coffee table, a sectional sofa he designed and a chair made by hand out of dominoes by Clare Graham, an artist in Los Angeles, all follow this dictum. Other pieces such as a Japanese *tansu* chest in the entryway and an obi hung as wall decor in the dining room echo the Asian sensibility of the folding doors.

V

vickery asked for a peaceful, serene bedroom, so White chose a gray that wasn't a "jarring departure" from the common rooms and jettisoned spicy accents in favor of muted mushroom tones. "Kris is very professional and dresses in ways that are modern and tailored," says White. He responded to this with curvy, deco-style lines, building an upholstered headboard around a circular mirror to resemble the cabin of an ocean liner. Contemporary custom cabinets solved the paucity-of-storage problem, and mid-century pieces—a dresser, nightstands, lamps—carried through the modern, tailored personality. Quilted effects (on the headboard, the living room ottoman and a paneled bedroom mirror) add subtle touches of luxury.

The result is hardly Mary Richards. Surely, though, she'd be pleased. ☛

See Resources, last pages.

WHAT THE PROS KNOW ABOUT SMALL SPACES

Conceal clutter. Matthew White hid kitchen equipment in baskets. Bookcases were equipped with matchstick blinds that can be rolled down to hide a jumble of books. **Unify with color.** Using a single wall color, or closely related shades in each room, emphasizes the openness of the plan. **Live large.** "Overscaled things expand the boundaries of a room," says White—for example, the headboard and the overframed apple postcards in the living room. **Take rugs (almost) to the limit.** "If you make them bigger, it makes the room look larger," says White. Just remember to choose a color close to that of the floor (here sisal blends into, rather than breaks up, the expanse of wood).



The Asian feel of folding doors directed purchases like the urn and a Japanese tansu chest in the entryway (opposite, left). The red of the 1970s dining chairs provided the cue for the strong color of the ceiling and fabrics on the ottoman and banquette (both White designs). Baskets in the kitchen (opposite, right) conceal visual clutter.



The bedroom has curvy 1930s lines—a chrome dresser lamp, a bull's-eye mirror (actually an inexpensive salvaged surveillance mirror). Quilted effects add luxury, as in the matelassé bedspread and upholstered headboard and the dresser mirror with inset medallions of Georgia O'Keeffe prints. California Closets provided an inexpensive solution for storage.

