

FURNISHING THE FUTURE • GREAT DESIGNERS' GREATEST ROOMS

OCTOBER 11, 1999

NEW YORK

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HOME

HADLEY • DESPONT • ERTEGUN • BUATTA • STEWART

DESIGN

TSAO & MCKOWN • HARIRI & HARIRI • NORIEGA-ORTIZ • AHARI

2000

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Auld Lang Shine

The century will go out in a blaze of glory at Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz's silvery supernova of an apartment with its view of Times Square's crystal ball.

ELEMENT OF STYLE "After three or four trials, Gotham Painting Company came up with a mixture of aluminum paint and fixative and decided to spray the apartment," Noriega-Ortiz says, still chuckling at his folly. "They sealed all the vents and windows. These people came in with masks—they looked like astronauts." The entire process took three days and ten coats. Gray plastic chairs by Steen Ostergaard were purchased on eBay.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSON



CLEAR WINNERS Noriega-Ortiz fell in love with Lucite and designed a curvy bar-slash-breakfast table; Jack Lenor Larsen's "Moonbeams" fabric puts the sometimes messy kitchen behind it into soft focus. Steven Wine designed the lamp—a shower of glass pieces strung together with metal links—to look like a Paco Rabanne dress; it can be purchased online at www.andbobsyouruncle.com. Tractor-seat stools are from See,

"We're doing more and more monochromatic schemes because fashion is doing it. They tend to make **shapes stand out more** than colors, and here, the furniture is all pretty curvaceous." — Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz



WHERE WILL YOU BE SPENDING NEW YEAR'S Eve? For interior designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz, the easy answer—at home—is also the most spectacular. His forty-fourth-floor apartment, at 43rd Street and Eleventh Avenue, will have a view of the Javits Center festivities, Times Square's crystal ball, and fireworks in two states. And every millennial moment will be reflected countless times in this disco ball of an apartment.

"It had been very warm and casual, with wood floors and white furniture," Noriega-Ortiz remembers. "But now I'm in a new relationship, and I thought, New life, new *everything*. It's something a lot of my clients go through when they get a new wife." One day, staring at the tin ceiling of his boyfriend's store, he saw the future, and it was aluminum paint. "The metamorphosis here was astonishing," he says. "Everything was reflected; you could see the Hudson River in the ceiling."

Noriega-Ortiz was unstoppable, hunting down a fabric from the eighties called "Moonbeams" for the curtains, installing a transparently stylish acrylic countertop, building a glittery banquette out of his mirrored wall. Plastic furniture came from that exclusive showroom eBay.

"My boyfriend, Steven Wine, was in love with these seventies acrylic chairs, and I waited until the last eight seconds of the auction to put in a bid," Ortiz says. "Four chairs for \$551 and one cent, for God's sake. On Lafayette Street you can't get an acrylic chair for \$1,000!" To make the curvaceous seats comfortable, Noriega-Ortiz ordered up silvery cushions. Fabrics were inspired by a source any flat-screen-TV addict can relate to—"In *Star Trek*, whenever you'd see a bedspread, it was shiny," he says. "That was everybody's idea of modern."

Still is.

MOON UNITS Above, the repro Eero Saarinen womb chair and ottoman were upholstered in a Knoll fabric that's a good marriage with the wall-to-wall; it's the most comfortable modern chair Noriega-Ortiz says he knows of. Aibo, Sony's hot new robot dog, wants to get in on the eBay action. Donghia's silver-leaf "Paris" tray table serves up a Porthault egg cup and spoon. Below left, the harlequin martini glasses are vintage, purchased on eBay; the box-cum-ice bucket is from Troy.

SUNNY AND SHEER A flashy mobile fashioned out of Chinatown mirrors and fishing line functions as a cheap vertical strobe light. The dining table has an unexpected pedigree: It's Biedermeier, and when Noriega-Ortiz saw it at Greene Street Antiques, he says he asked them to chop it down by one inch before painting it silver, "and they were in shock." Wax paintings here and in the bedroom are by Japanese artist Hiro Yokose; they remind Noriega-Ortiz of the Hudson River School. The "Simon" candelabra is by Borek Sipek.



"We've been doing wood floors for so long that wall-to-wall carpet was actually a big decision. This one feels wonderful, so we're suddenly on the floor all the time. It **cleans the apartment visually.**" —Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz



MILKY WAY Above, Noriega-Ortiz takes a time-out from the glitz in his bedroom, painted a flat Benjamin Moore white; a wall-to-wall headboard furthers the illusion of space. The Sharp TVs on the plastic-topped Chinese altar tables are new toys: "We like to switch on movies late at night," says Noriega-Ortiz, "and one person can watch with earphones while the other is sleeping." (Eventually, he'll be attaching them to swing arms.) Wine devised these bedside lamps out of bicycle reflectors. A machine-embroidered polyester from Coraggio—more often seen in curtains—makes a cloud-light bedspread.