

# LONG LOFT LOVE

*The vast expanse of a former factory in South Boston is transformed into a comfortable, contemporary home with a decidedly masculine feel for a young, single professional.*

TEXT BY REGINA COLE / PRODUCED BY KYLE HOEPNER / INTERIOR DESIGN: NICOLE HOGARTY



Kosta Ligris's sixth-floor condominium is a loft in the true sense of the word. Countless new units on the real estate market call themselves lofts but are, in fact, partitioned sections of new buildings. Ligris's home, however, is the real deal—the top floor of a factory not so long ago, part of South Boston's storied industrial past. >>



Among the pieces of furniture Nicole Hogarty designed for Kosta Ligris's loft is a one-piece unit, facing the entry door, that features mirrors and shelves and holds a shoe rack within.



This loft gets its architectural character from its mellow brick, arched windows, gleaming floorboards and exposed beams and systems. The comfort and style come from neutral-hued furnishings that introduce texture and soften the industrial ambience.



One of the few pieces of furniture the homeowner already had is the steel and glass dining table, a perfect match for the minimalist yet muscular style of his new home.

It certainly has all the sought-after hallmarks: wide open spaces, irregular floorboards whose gleaming, refinished splendor still speaks of years of industrial use, massive joists supporting a ceiling high overhead, the soft reds, pinks and maroons of aged red brick walls. From the vast living room, a long row of tall, arched windows looks out over other nineteenth- and twentieth-century factory buildings, some still sooty. The city skyline rises up behind them.

Ligris, a real estate attorney, knew he wanted to live in the city and considered Back Bay before looking for a younger neighborhood where real estate would be a good investment. "When I first saw this building, I fell in love with its historic character and with the sense of creativity in the area," he says. "There's a thriving artists' community, restaurants and clubs are moving in. And from here I can be anywhere in the city in minutes."

When Ligris bought his unit in September of 2005, he looked for help turning the 2,200 square foot space into a comfortable abode. "When I moved in, I only had a sofa, a dining table and a headboard. I'm busy—if I tried to furnish the interior, it would take forever. I knew I needed a professional," he says.

He found Providence-based interior designer Nicole Hogarty when she transformed the home of friends. "Actually, their space is in the suburbs, very traditional, not like this at all," Ligris says. "But I liked what I saw, and the way they

Everything is kept tidy and neat with built-in closets. The frosted glass sliding doors add textured variety.

FACING TOP PAGE: As in the rest of the loft, the master bedroom's design emphasizes a variety of textures.

BOTTOM: The birch branches that screen the master bedroom from the vanity compose a work of art in themselves.

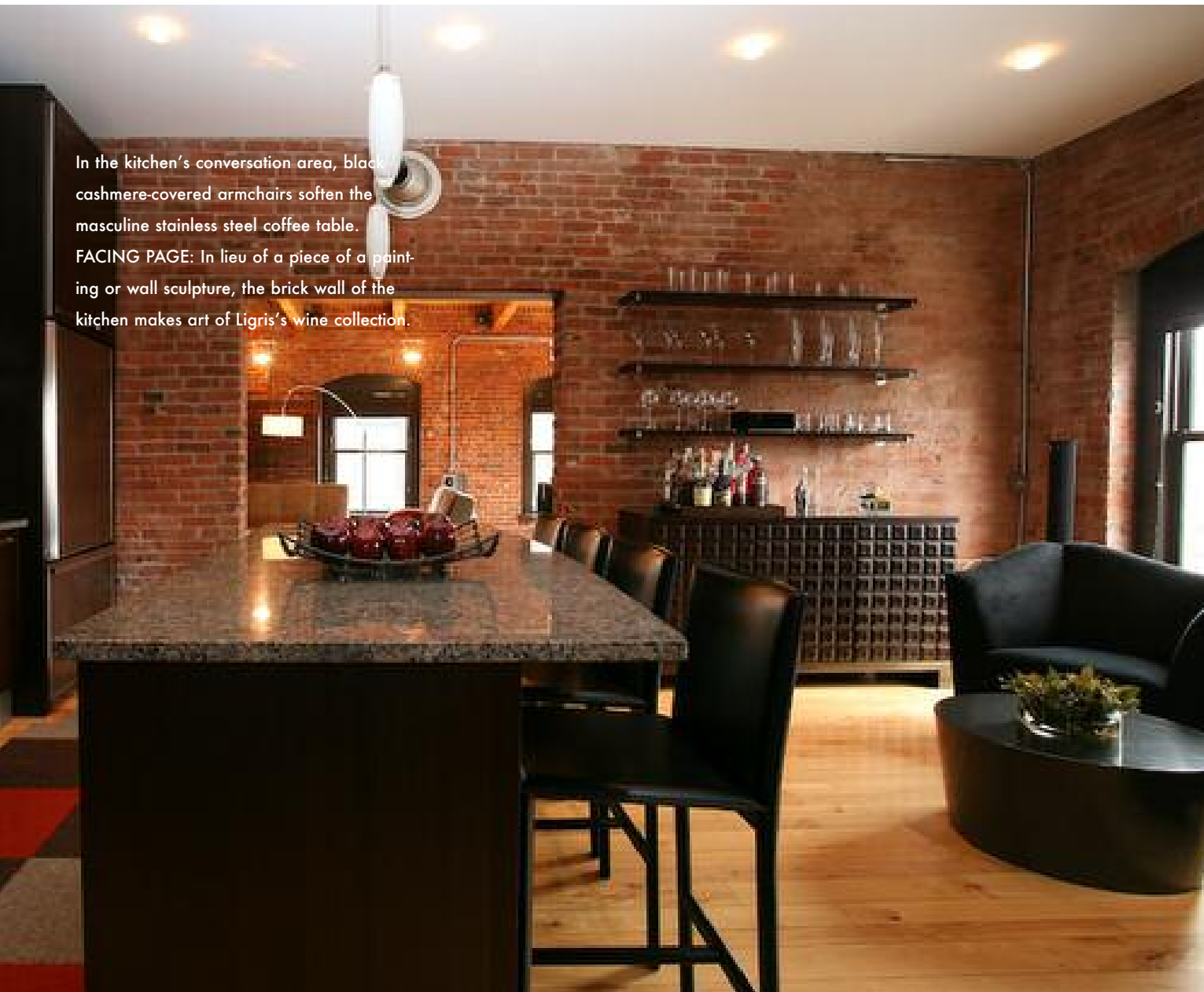


described the process was fun and appealing instead of the stressful experience you sometimes hear about. Then Nicole and I had an initial meeting, and we both knew that we could work together.”

**H**ogarty created an interior that perfectly suits her client's lifestyle. “He's a single young man, and the space reflects that; it's very masculine,” she says. “We didn't try to hide technology like the stereo speakers or the TV; they're important parts of his life. The loft itself has exposed conduits, ductwork and wiring. A key element of the design is the honest acceptance of things that, in more traditional homes, are usually hidden. You either love a loft and embrace the fact that you can see the steel beams and the systems, or you're living in the wrong place.”



In the kitchen's conversation area, black cashmere-covered armchairs soften the masculine stainless steel coffee table. FACING PAGE: In lieu of a piece of a painting or wall sculpture, the brick wall of the kitchen makes art of Ligris's wine collection.



She does believe that Ligris's great expanses of brick required some augmentation. "Brick is harsh, so we used a lot of mohair, silk, grasscloth and bamboo—softening materials that also introduce texture and warmth." She applied black grasscloth to several wall, including the entry wall, and covered furniture with tactile materials including black cashmere, taupe leather and gray suede. "I didn't want the upholstery colors to jump out at you; I wanted the colors to be muted and the interest to come from surface finishes."

"I like a sophisticated palette and an uncluttered, timeless aesthetic," she continues. "The furniture should be neutral and functional, but I like to have fun with the wall coverings, rugs and art."

Hogarty augmented Ligris's nascent furniture collection with sympathetic pieces, including several of her own design. To partition the master bedroom from the living areas, she designed a

new stainless-steel rolling door that hangs from a steel bar, reminiscent of the loft's industrial roots. To further create intimacy in the sea of open space, she placed a rectangular planter between the bedroom and the bath and filled it with an unexpected and beautiful stand of birch branches. "Every room needs life," she notes. An artistic focal point in itself, the birch stand is an unexpected and effective privacy screen.

**H**ogarty treated the tall windows, which flood the rooms with light, to flat Roman shades woven in dark walnut with red threading. "A very masculine color" she notes. They draw down from the arched tops and up from the sills and are backed with

blackout lining. "One of the things Kosta likes to do is to have friends over to watch sports events," she explains. "He can see the TV picture during the day because the shades block out all the light and cut the glare. But he can draw them up or down for views of the city skyline at night."

In the kitchen she created a cozy eating area rounded out with a pair of audaciously curved asymmetrical armchairs upholstered in black cashmere. "I wanted to make a relaxed clubroom instead of an old married feeling." On the long kitchen wall, where a more conventional design scheme might have dictated a piece of art, Hogarty placed four vertical wine racks, the bottles forming their own abstract design against the brick.

This room is a special favorite for Ligris, partly because of the spiral staircase lead up to a roof deck that provides wonderful views of the city. "I don't cook much," he says with a grin. "but I do like to put things on the grill up there when friends come over. I

entertain a lot. I have friends in for drinks, to gather before going out and for video watching. One of the things I like best about this place is the flow. It's easy to congregate here."

He says that, in retrospect, the loft felt cold before Hogarty transformed it. "I've always loved color, but didn't realize the importance of texture. The earthy, natural theme she developed works well with my lifestyle and with the space," he says. "But best of all, I like seeing all my friends walk in here, stop, look around, and say 'wow!'" **NEH**