



At the home's entryway, a wenge wood table anchors a sunburst mirror from Oly Studio and displays a Buddha head Bartz found in a New York antiques store, a hand sculpture he brought back from Greece, and a vintage street lamp cap from Jenkins Baer Associates.



A FEDERAL HILL ROW HOUSE PREFERS ITS ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY  
STIRRED NOT SHAKEN AND SERVED UP WITH A MODERN, ARTISTIC TWIST—  
A REFRESHING COCKTAIL FOR ONE OF BALTIMORE'S HIPPEST 'HOODS.

# MODERN HISTORY

BY ANNIE SCOTT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON BEALL

Like most residents of Baltimore's historic Federal Hill, Howie Bartz was drawn to the neighborhood for its quaint charm, vicinity to the Inner Harbor, access to dog parks, and the ability to step out his front door and walk to just about anything. Having already lived in Federal Hill for a few years, Bartz had his eye on a gray row home on one of one of the neighborhood's cobblestone streets, so when he heard rumors of a sale, he approached the former owner and closed the deal before the property went on the market.

Before Bartz, the owner of a medical device company, could sit down and enjoy his new digs, he knew a renovation and redesign of the space was crucial. Although he was happy with the general layout of the rooms and no major structural changes were made, he enlisted the help of Michelle Miller, interior designer with Baltimore's Jenkins Baer Associates, to conceptualize and execute a plan for the interior spaces that reflected his urbanite lifestyle and personal taste. "I travel a lot and stay in quite a few boutique hotels, and I wanted to create that kind of feeling, but I didn't want it to be ultramodern," says Bartz.

What Miller loves most about historic urban architecture is the unique spaces it offers. And since Bartz made few changes to the interior structures, this gave her an opportunity to get creative with the design. "I like figuring out how to make the most out of all the small spaces like the alcoves and hallways," says Miller. "I like the challenge of opening row houses



Homeowner Howie Bartz and designer Michelle Miller in the newly designed kitchen with Bartz's black Labrador retriever, Kelly.









A custom-finished open tread staircase in the center of the home separates the chicly casual living room from the kitchen and dining areas. Olive green mohair chairs and a Tibetan rug custom designed by Miller with Greenspring Carpet strike a muted contrast with the vivid art print she and Bartz found in New York, while the honey-colored bamboo floors and fireplace surround unify outdoor and indoor elements.

up and making them more airy." This spaciousness—accomplished, in part, through a dining room addition off the back of the house—is exactly what Bartz enjoys most about his home. "I love the flow of the first floor, especially the transitions between space," he explains. "The kitchen opens to the dining room which opens to the outdoor patio via French doors. This makes cooking and grilling convenient and allows for comfortable entertaining inside and outside, which is hard to accomplish in the city."

The walkout garden feels like another room in the house. Originally just dirt and rubble, Miller cleared away the debris and installed a soothing fountain and slate patio, selected furnishings, and planted bamboo around the perimeter to add privacy and color to the area. "A lot of people don't have that kind of outdoor space in the city," says Miller. "And it's a green outdoor space in the city, not just the cement and wood of another deck." Bartz can also enjoy panoramic views of the harbor and Baltimore's skyline and entertain guests on his double rooftop deck.

Miller unified the outdoor space with the indoors through her use of honey colored bamboo flooring and other bamboo accents in the living room. She also installed bamboo for the fireplace surround, running the grain on the vertical, giving height to the room and visual interest to the fireplace without detracting from the room's focal point: the open tread staircase. Originally painted a stark black, the stairs stood out, but didn't exactly sync with the home's new look. Repainting the steel with a warm bronze color and replacing the carpeted treads with custom hand-cut, ebony-stained wood, "the effect is sleek and modern; just beautiful," Miller offers.





The dining room addition at the back of the house opens up the floor plan. A hardy table from Boca Grande is paired with Mitchell Gold chairs and benches to provide ample eating and entertaining space, while IKEA lighting and Osborne & Little wallpaper add a graphic punch to the room.





**TOP:** Bamboo floors, IKEA cabinetry, and honed black granite countertops outfit this minimalist kitchen with panoramic views. A custom designed teak bar with green onyx shelving gives Bartz sleek storage for barware.

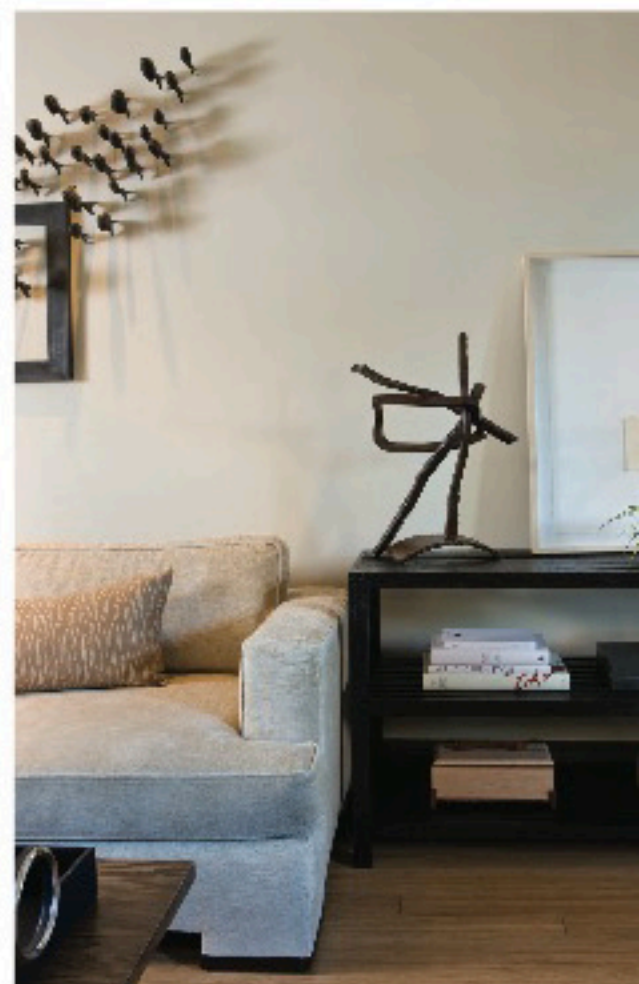
**RIGHT:** A linen velvet sofa from Hickory Chair provides comfortable seating. A Yorgos Kypris bronze fish piece Bartz brought back from a trip to Greece and a Marilyn Kusht sculpture he acquired in San Francisco make bold statements in the living room.

Although Bartz will be the first to tell you that Miller almost immediately understood his style and what he liked, there were a few things that took some convincing on her part. The first was a grospointe embroidered chaise lounge from Bolier & Co. "I thought at first it was going to be a little too modern," Bartz admits, "but after some convincing, I saw that it was perfect—I couldn't imagine anything else there. It's kind of the piece that ties everything together." The minimalist chaise gently anchors a large, vibrant art print of Central Park that they purchased together from a street artist in SoHo. Bartz was immediately captivated by its colors, "and just how the artist translated all of the grays into blues...and Central Park is one of my favorite places in the world."

Making his way upstairs and into the master bedroom, Bartz is immediately greeted by a dramatic black chandelier he found at Porte de Clignancourt, a Parisian

flea market, on a trip to France. To make this fixture really pop, Miller flouted convention when she convinced Bartz to paint the exposed brick wall white. "In Federal Hill, it's all about the exposed brick," Miller says. "That [wall] was a tough sell, but it just opened up the space and made it more modern." The result is a contemporary space that's fresh and unexpected—just what Bartz was looking for.

Conceiving the space as more than just a chic bachelor pad, Miller incorporated artwork and furnishings Bartz had collected on his travels around the world, creating a warm and deeply personal home. Each piece tells a story or brings a memory of his tours of faraway places to life around him. He found a distinctive yet playful wall sculpture by Yorgos Kypris at the Mati Gallery on Santorini Island in Greece. "They wanted to charge an exorbitant fee to ship them back to the US, so I just have these





For the first level patio, Miller installed bamboo to create a nook with Restoration Hardware seating outfitted with pillows from Bliss Studio and Van Cleve ceramic tables from Jenkins Baer Associates.





The guest bedroom is furnished with Thomas O'Brien bedding, an espresso Oly Studio nightstand, Jonathan Adler lamps, and embroidered Dransfield & Ross pillows that work together to give the space a modern, yet earthy, feel.

memories of myself in Greece, lugging these heavy bronze fish around in my bags," Bartz remembers with a smile.

Pieces like the simple oak coffee table—built by his father, a hobbyist furniture maker—invoke a feeling of home to Bartz, who grew up in a small town in upstate New York.

And where there were still blank walls, Miller and Bartz took time and care to find pieces that were "innately Howie." "We collected the artwork together," says Miller. "It was a great process to choose pieces that really meant something to him; we didn't just outfit the house for the sake of outfitting the house. The pieces are very personal, and you can see that."

When asked to define Bartz's style, Miller described it as somewhat modern—with a twist. "He hates clutter and prefers clean lines; he is a person who likes structure and order but finds interest in the unusual." This is exactly what is expressed in the little details of his home. Turning the corner into the bright and airy kitchen, guests are greeted with artwork in keeping with the minimalist approach, but are a bit quirky, also. Miller acquired a print by artist Lauren Simonutti titled "Short Eared Rabbit and the Devil," and thought it would be perfect for the space. Bartz agreed.

And on the counter, as a finishing touch, Miller placed a silver Harry Allen Reality piggy bank she happened upon at Shine Collective, a boutique in Baltimore's Hampden neighborhood. "It's funny because you eat and prepare pork right next to it in the kitchen, so it's a piece of art that makes people think. That's the kind of art I love, and Howie's not afraid of that—he embraces it." ♦

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