

# New England Home

CELEBRATING FINE DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

## HIGH-RISE LUXURY FINE ART, FINE LIVING SPECTACULAR CITY VIEWS

PLUS *POLAR EXPRESS* AUTHOR CHRIS  
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### URBAN SOPHISTICATE

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high-rise home to his vision of  
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REPRINTED FROM THE  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008 ISSUE  
OF NEW ENGLAND HOME



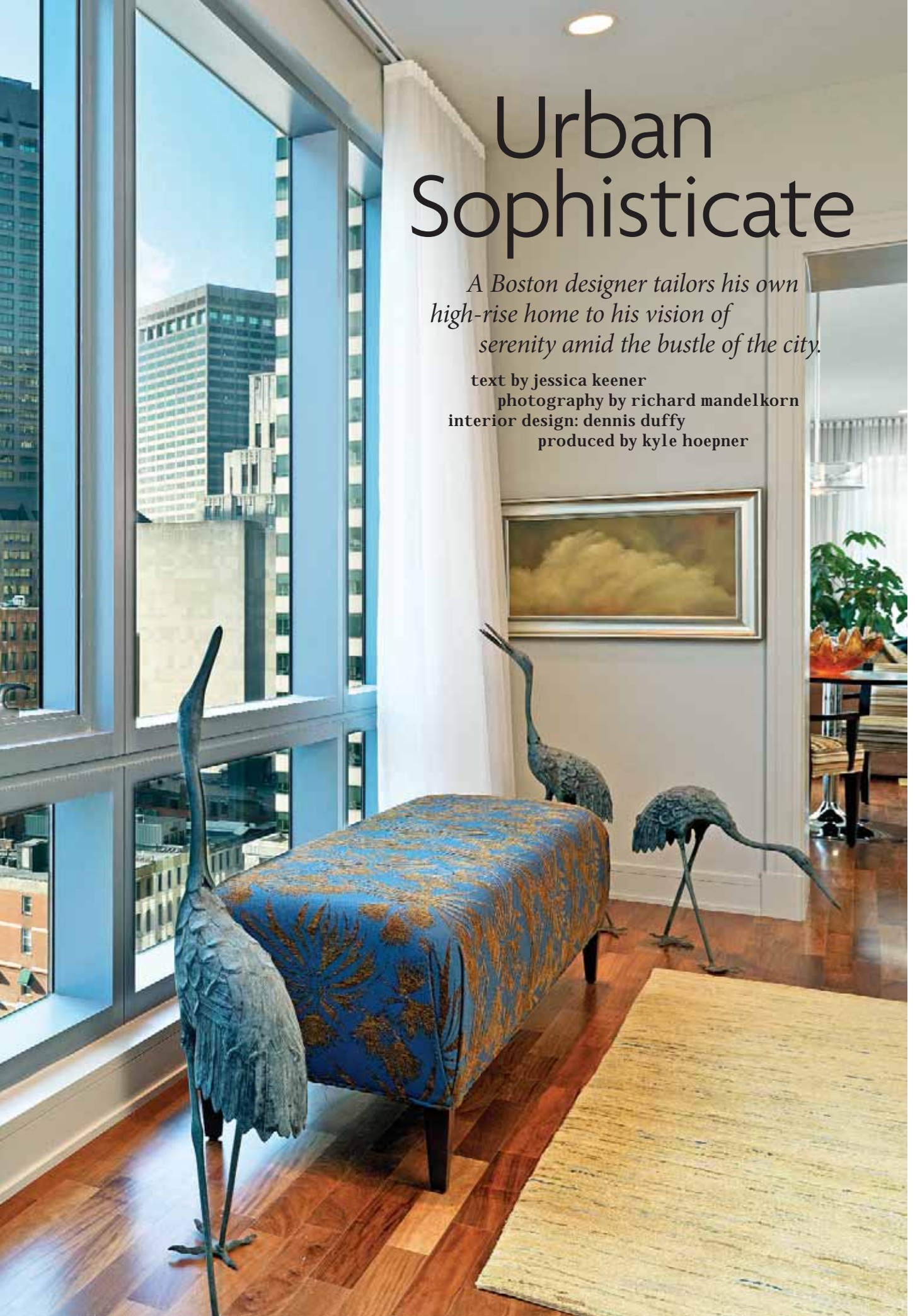


Designer Dennis Duffy laid out a master plan for his new home before it was built, working out room flow and assembling fabrics and furnishings to complement the spectacular city views.

# Urban Sophisticate

*A Boston designer tailors his own  
high-rise home to his vision of  
serenity amid the bustle of the city.*

text by jessica keener  
photography by richard mandelkorn  
interior design: dennis duffy  
produced by kyle hoepner



Duffy designed many pieces of furniture in his home, including the salon's sofas and tables, as well as the area rug, which he brought from his previous home.







Dennis Duffy never intended to move from the home in Boston's South End where he had lived and worked for ten years. The interior designer was simply answering a call from

Dinny Herron, sales director for the Residences at the Intercontinental Hotel in Boston. The twenty-one-floor luxury hotel that was to feature 130 condominiums was in its preconstruction phase in 2005, and Herron wanted Duffy to bring in his portfolio to show to potential clients. Duffy has been designing interiors and furniture since the mid-1980s, and recently opened D Scale, a home-furnishings store in Boston's South End. "Dennis arrived at the sales office and started to look around at models and floor plans," says Herron. One condo—a two bedroom, two-and-a-half-bath unit on the fifteenth floor—seized his attention.

"The floor plan was so cool," Duffy says. "The gallery space and split bedroom plan, the location—everything was here."

Originally from Florida, Duffy loved the future high-rise's urban environs. "It reminded me of New York," he says, where he lived and worked for fourteen years. Today, the 1,860-square-foot condo overlooks the new Rose Kennedy Greenway, a twenty-seven-acre strip of public parks along Atlantic Avenue that connects Boston's North End, the Wharf District and Chinatown. It was the first home Duffy had lived in that didn't require any structural changes. "All I did was finish it," he says.

And finish it he did with elegance, warmth and an ethereal touch that reveals itself the moment the door opens to the foyer, with its wide walls of glass and cloud-like sheer curtains. A bench in the entryway sits between three nineteenth-century bronze cranes, forming a meditative tableau for viewing the northwest skyline.

The foyer also serves as a transitional gallery space between the master bedroom in one wing, and the living and dining rooms, kitchen and guestroom in the opposite wing. South American hardwood floors flow into the living room, adding a dark contrast to the light-enhancing glass walls.

The dining area forms one of several intimate settings carved out of the large living room. **FACING PAGE TOP:** The casual kitchen peninsula holds twin bar stools by Ligne Roset. **FACING PAGE BOTTOM:** The designer relaxes on a bench he designed.





The designer painted the ceilings white so that they would “bleed into the white sheer curtains,” he says. But he chose a warm gray paint for the foyer and living room walls. “I wanted a cooler color against the warm floor, I wanted a smokiness to it,” he explains.

The small kitchen off the living room came equipped with espresso-stained rift-sawn oak cabinets, a countertop of polished granite in soft brown tones and stainless steel appliances. For sparkle, Duffy added a reflective backsplash using two-inch by one-inch stainless steel tiles, an effect that mimics sunlight flickering off nearby skyscrapers. Because the kitchen is compact and self-contained, Duffy added a four-foot-long peninsula that extends from the kitchen into the living area.

Along the wall opposite the peninsula Duffy added a buffet that matches the cabinets. “Originally, the dining area was where the buffet is, but that didn’t make sense,” he says. Instead, he moved it next to the window, where diners can savor the horizon. A light fixture of French Art Deco

glass from the 1930s floats above the round table like an aquatic vessel. Duffy designed the four dining chairs.

The spacious living-room area is completely glassed in on two sides. As in the foyer and master bedroom, Duffy chose sheer curtains. “I didn’t want heavy window treatments,” he says.

He centralized the seating area and geared the flow of space for cocktail parties. Two Duffy-designed couches square off the area, as does a square metal table with a patina of mottled champagne speckles. A couplet of marine-blue chairs, inspired by the blue facade of a fire station visible across the avenue, complements the picture. “I wanted the rest of the room to have the feel of a salon, a real living space that can accommodate eight or nine people.”

Duffy added eighteen recessed halogen lights to the salon area. Working long hours, he often doesn’t get home until dark, so he geared his design toward the night. “That’s when I see it,” he says. “It’s moving, living art at night. You can see shadows of people in nearby windows. It’s a beautiful space at night.”

From the living room, a small, L-shaped hallway leads to a guest bedroom and office, and a separate guest bath. The



A study that doubles as a guest bedroom has ample space for showcasing family photos and artwork. FACING PAGE: The study's soft window treatments, cushy leather sofa and textured carpeting and rugs play off the dynamic, streamlined furniture designs throughout the home.



office's sand-colored heathered wool carpet is corded, its thin lines repeating the rift-sawn oak pattern seen in the living room buffet and kitchen cabinets. "I like to keep consistency," says Duffy.

The office window treatments sport a coffee-toned batik pattern swirling against a cream background. "I waited nine months for them!" says Duffy. "Now I know what my clients go through."

His grandfather's early 1900s library chair, reupholstered in brown, is tucked in a corner. When a bedroom is needed, the brown leather B&B Italia couch converts to a bed. A Duffy-designed oblong coffee table on wheels moves easily to make room for the opened bed. Duffy also de-

signed the desk and built-ins for books, music and a laptop—all in matching espresso. In a nod to nearby Boston Harbor, a round sea glass table by Jack Lenor Larsen sits beside the library chair.

**W**orks of art, many by friends and local artists, add emotional and aesthetic poignancy to every room, as does a built-in music system. A face of David mounted on the wall above Duffy's desk is by Bill Evans, a sculptor based in South Boston. A landscape painting above the couch is by friend and artist Christos



A Barcelona chair by Mies van der Rohe expresses Duffy's appreciation for furniture as art without sacrificing comfort and function. The chair provides a resting spot in his master bedroom, pictured at left.

Hamawi, whose studio is in the South End.

In the master bedroom, Duffy chose the same patterned carpet as in the office, here in a luxurious dark-chocolate color. The king-size bed, two espresso-stained night tables and a dresser made of rift-sawn oak are also Duffy creations. A cream-colored Barcelona chair by Mies van der Rohe adds an iconic, mid-century flair to the modern but classically tailored room. Windows dressed in brown silk frame another spectacular sky view.

"Night is amazing," says Duffy, who lives alone with his two Abyssinian cats. "The cats love looking out. You can see the 'wow' above their heads."

Duffy chose artwork for all the baths, including a glis-

tening collection of glass floor vases in the guest bath, but he didn't change the original pale-toned materials that came with the sale. "He's lived in so many places," says Herron. "This is one place he said he wouldn't have to redo the baths."

The master bath has a cream Thassos marble countertop and St. Croix limestone floors and walls. The guest bath has a custom wood vanity and a countertop of Celador quartz agglomerate in oyster.

Since moving in a year ago, Duffy has never looked back. "I love it," he says. "Everything came together. It matched my vision." **NEH**

**NOTE** For more about *New England Home*, visit [www.nehomemag.com](http://www.nehomemag.com).

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200 Newbury Street, Boston • 617.267.3500