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* **Stylish in Seattle, p.116**





URBAN FABRIC

MOVING FROM AN ANTIQUE-FILLED COTTAGE
INTO A MANHATTAN LOFT TURNED TEXTILE
DESIGNER LORI WEITZNER'S FAMILY MODERN.

Architect Carol Vinci partitioned the huge living room with sliding glass doors to provide a guest room/den. Both rugs are by Lori Weitzner for the Endless Knot Rug Company; sofas are from George Smith, the large W from a fallen-down sign on her grandfather's old store on New York City's Lower East Side. The antique piano is her grandmother's, from France. Opposite: Weitzner covered her vintage Edward Wormley stools with another of her designs, Cypress for Bergamo.







LORI WEITZNER NEVER INTENDED TO GO MODERN. “I always thought coziness was my thing,” the textile designer says. It was her new apartment that insisted on the stylistic update, and now she feels she couldn’t manage her family life any other way.

It all began in suburban Madison, New Jersey, where Weitzner lived for five years with her husband, insurance executive Michael Parr. Their house was a century-old Dutch colonial whose many small rooms were crowded with antiques and surfaces laden with *objets*. They were happy there, but when Weitzner became pregnant for the first time, she felt strongly that she wanted to raise her children amid the ethnic diversity and cultural richness of a city and persuaded Parr to move to Manhattan.

The British-born Parr agreed about relocating but not with his wife’s initial desire to live in a brownstone. “If we are giving up the kind of charm we both love, I want something functional and convenient,” he told her. “We don’t want to be running up and down stairs

or worrying about maintaining an old building.” That meant modern, and it was Parr who found a newly converted 2,000-square-foot loft in Manhattan’s flourishing Chelsea neighborhood. He chose a corner unit with spectacular daylight.

After they tweaked the plan and some of the details, the couple moved in, along with their antiques. It was a big mistake. “The furniture was dwarfed. Right away we knew it had to go, except for some modernist things,” says Weitzner, who went shopping for bigger, less ornate pieces that would stand up to open rooms with 12½-foot ceilings and the meticulously clean elements added by their architect.

Above (clockwise from top left): A pillow made of an experimental fabric from Weitzner’s days with Jack Lenor Larsen; a cabinet from ABC Carpet & Home and chairs from B&B Italia covered in Weitzner’s *Rose for Bergamo*; Lori Weitzner—wife, mother, designer and convert to modernism. **Opposite:** Antique maps sit on cantilevered display shelves over a 12-inch-deep storage cabinet. The top of the dining table is a door from the Philippines.

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Making Modern Easy: When in Doubt, Take It Out

You can't think modern without thinking clean and lean. It's not that details don't count; the opposite is true. Architect Carol Vinci carefully unified all the forms and proportions on the storage and room-dividing elements she brought to the Weitzner-Parr loft and carefully color-matched them to the white surroundings. The joinery is as impeccable as that of a French-court *ébéniste*, but Vinci did not slap on distracting gadroons or flutings or fancy brasses. As she says of modern, "everything shows," and even the casual, nonprofessional viewer here gets the serenity (another indispensable word associated with the style) of such flawless simplicity. Lori Weitzner was equally disciplined in decorating her loft. No chintz window draperies here—just no-color silk shades inside the window frames to admit or temper dazzling daylight. Even displays of objects are curated. "How many framed family pictures do you have to display?" she asks. "A few of the best make a contribution: a crowd of them are clutter."



THE BUILDING IS

a typical New York City reincarnation: a 100-year-old structure first used as a factory and later for offices, which was converted in the year 2000 into a residential condominium where the couple live with their two daughters, now four and two. As soon as they owned it, Weitzner and Parr commissioned New York architect Carol Vinci to upgrade certain details and add another room.

Given the 41½-foot length of the living/dining room, Vinci easily set aside 14 feet for the den, but the detailing had to be perfect.

"Traditional is less exacting than modern: You can cover joints with moldings, for example. But in modern, everything shows. Your craftsmen must be perfectionists and your supervision must be constant," she says. Her divider is a handsome, room-high sliding wall of special low-iron glass (no green tint) delicately etched for privacy and translucence. The tracks are buried in the floor and ceiling. The framing of the glass, which carefully echoes the proportions of the existing windows, is quarter-cut oak veneer chosen for its superior graining. It is stained, not painted, so that it reads as wood.

Vinci designed numerous storage elements, coordinating the framing, mitering and paneling details throughout. The designer in Weitzner savors such subtleties. Living with modern has changed her, she says. Holding out an ornate Venetian glass box—something her mother found in Italy—she muses, "In Madison, this was standing in a crowd of other tchotchkes and I never looked at it. Now it's all by itself and I can notice what a treasure it is." ❀

See Resources, last pages.

Left (from top): The entrance gallery displays a Weitzner rug and handwoven abaca (banana-leaf fiber) panels (a soffit was added for Swidlux fixtures that wash the walls with light); Weitzner designed a pillow in her *Portico* fabric for her bedroom chair from Donghia (the Jerome Seguin wall hanging is painted bark). Opposite: Weitzner's *Sassafras* fabric for Bergamo on the headboard, her *Solace* for Jack Lenor Larsen on the pillow.

