

It's a Guy Thing

Call him the king of making a piece de resistance out of poor design luck
[FINAL Edition]

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Series: MODERN MAN

First of a five-part series on real men who can decorate. Back in December – on the heels of a story about The Ultimate Bachelor Pad, a showhouse penthouse apartment in New York to the tune of \$17 million, but with no actual occupant – we asked male readers to bring some reality to this Modern Man concept. He being: an enlightened guy who appreciates art, design, furniture, the latest electronics and a good game of pool. We invited men (bachelors living alone and married guys who lead the decorating decisions in their households) to show us the state of their enlightenment. We asked for pictures of the homes they have made for themselves and/or their family. And from those entries, we chose five real Modern Men to feature over the coming months.

(Document Intro)

Let no uneven plaster walls, no lackluster water pressure, no lack of time to repaint the living room, no big budget for furniture, no no-joke that a contractor actually wanted \$1,800 to do a mirrored wall over his bathroom sink, thwart Cary Zartman's zeal for assembling himself a home of high design and comfort. That's because Zartman is an Idea Man. He is the well-dressed guy next door with the power tools stashed in his buffet and the piercing gaze that lets him envision what might be – which also explains his obsession with rearranging the furniture in his two-bedroom vintage condo in Wrigleyville.

(Document Summary)

[Cary Zartman] "built" this "built-in" banquette and table in his kitchen (in a nook that was probably once was a pantry), using inexpensive furniture from IKEA as his raw materials. Specifically: two sofa tables and one wall-hung bar unit, all of which he cut down to size. His mother seed the red cushions. Only the table and the back cushions are attached to the wall.

To relieve the cavelike darkness of the hallway leading to the back of his condo, Zartman took on a significant excavation – one of the few he has had to endure in his vintage condo. He had the sidewall torn down and replaced with another sporting two windowlike cutouts. Light and air now flow freely from his home office (on the other side of the wall) into the hall. He also added the cable lighting.

The bathroom is Zartman's latest-greatest project. He shepherded a near total gut job that includes a new vanity, which he built with his father; a slate tile floor; and a faux slate tile back wall in the shower, which his sister helped him install.

To "fix" the uneven plaster walls in his entrance foyer, Zartman painted them a brilliant, mottled Chinese red color that does wonders for masking the old plaster. Note: The large framed photograph hangs from chains from the ceiling and not from the wall. It was another Zartman fix: His way of getting around a badly placed buzzer switch on that back wall.

Cary Zartman's next project is to remove the frame and glass from the interior window in his bedroom, looking out onto the enclosed sun porch. He plans to build a padded window seat here. His bed is from Room & Board. The linens are Calvin Klein and Banana Republic. And he says his mother taught him how to make a bed so crisply. The uplighting in Zartman's home office is Modern Man Thinking: He had mirror cut to line the ledge that runs atop the wainscoting and then strung a 24-foot expanse of Rope Light atop the mirror and plugged it into a new outlet he had installed high up. The desk is a vintage piece his father found on a job site, with a new leather top Zartman added.

More quick ideas from the Idea Man: Screw together wooden picture frames from IKEA and stain them light or dark – and you end up with a stunning grid. To inspire a color change on the walls, paint two large canvases in bold colors.

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