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Interiors *for* the Modern Man

Vicente Wolf creates comfortable spaces with textures
and "toys" that express one's identity. | By Michele Keith

Vicente Wolf says that men have a sense of freedom when it comes to interior design, often finding the design process “to be a road to self-discovery.”

“MEN TODAY,” SAYS NEW York-based interior designer Vicente Wolf, “are much more knowledgeable about interior design than they were even 10 years ago; it’s an exciting transformation.”

Why the change? “The world is smaller,” Wolf says. “People travel far beyond Paris and London. There are fewer boundaries between men’s and women’s interests. You can’t not be aware of design.”

Wolf is known for creating impeccable homes that reflect the owner’s personality by mixing shapes, scale and texture, eras and origins in singular fashion. He has designed the residences of financiers, royalty and entertainment moguls in places as diverse as New York, Bangkok, Sweden and the Caribbean.

He spoke to *Four Seasons Magazine* about designing for the modern man—who, by the way, can be any age—and, with his discussion of three recent projects, offers design possibilities that span the generations as well as varying lifestyles.

As would be expected, the relationship forged with a client and the environment developed for him, says Wolf, depend on many factors—his stage in life, is he a “sloucher” or a “suit,” is this his first home or his last to name a few. He’s found some traits to be quite pervasive: “Unlike women, who are rather emotional about their surroundings and look at details,” he says, “men are generally left-brained, logical.” Key among their concerns are function, comfort and how their identities are expressed.

He’s also found that they react more strongly to texture—accustomed as they are to the feel of their tweed jackets and crisp cotton shirts—than to colour. And the majority still insist on the “boy toys”—deluxe sound systems, huge televisions and spa-inspired bathrooms.



Function, Comfort

Wolf says men look at how their identities are expressed through design. Clockwise from top left: Clive’s, Fred’s and two views of Doug’s apartments

The New York apartments of legendary music impresario Clive Davis and his sons, Fred and Doug, reveal how Wolf translates modernity in three different ways. Clive knew how he wanted his Park Avenue duplex to be, says Wolf: “Wow, glamorous, yet comfortable.” It’s luxuriously done up in a rich brown palette, with shagreen-clad cabinets in the bathroom that features below-floor heating, lacquered living-room walls and polished wool-upholstered bedroom walls.

To underscore Davis’ iconic stature are such rare furnishings as the antique Syrian table inlaid with mother-of-pearl and his extensive art collection that ranges from a Fernando Botero oil to a Louise Nevelson sculpture.

Fred’s Upper East Side place is all about family. Wolf says his client “got it” when he explained why the pillow-filled, oversize daybed would work better for the kids than a traditional sofa; and he immediately saw how the sleek Saarinen table played off rustic Burmese accessories once they were installed. While child-centric, the apartment is also perfect for Davis and his wife, with the panelled library that can be closed off for privacy and a music room where friends often gather for cocktails.

Emphasising Doug’s wanderlust and passion for art, his loft in the Flatiron neighbourhood glows softly with mid-century and African pieces that stand out against a neutral palette. Cork walls, the dining room’s cowhide rug and several conversation areas frame an easy-going yet sophisticated background for the bachelor’s life.

“Men have a sense of freedom today when it comes to interior design,” Wolf says. “Beyond producing a beautiful, comfortable home, they often find the [design] process to be a road to self-discovery, which can provide a great sense of accomplishment.” **AS**

New York-based **Michele Keith** is currently working on a book that explores how interior designers in the United States decorate their homes.