

# Central Park Tower

Text by SARAH BRUEGGEMANN Photography by SYLVIA MARTIN



**Annie Kammerer Butrus**  
Artist

**Michael Morrow**  
Furniture and cabinet maker  
mdm design studio

**Barbara Taylor**  
Seamstress

**Eddie Dobelstein**  
Installer  
install4you.com

**Thomas Paul Bates**  
Architect  
Thomas Paul Bates Architecture

**Mark Jordan**  
Upholsterer and  
furniture maker

**Bob Lehman**  
Furniture maker

**Jeremy Corkern**  
Architect  
Thomas Paul Bates Architecture

**Meredith Fuqua**  
Interior designer  
Thomas Paul Bates Architecture

This keenly creative team, helmed by Thomas Paul Bates and Jeremy Corkern, took tired Birmingham condos to a new level of **New York-style sophistication.**



Alabama artisans contributed greatly to Paul's décor. Bob Layman made a steel base for the coffee table, while Mark Jordan upholstered the coffee table top with cow hide. Michael Morrow built the tall metal shelves and the fluted oak console under the TV in Paul's living room, plus the console in his bedroom. Paul says, "Michael's adventurous. If you come up with an idea, he'll do it." Paul's white Labrador retriever typically cozies up on the master bed. "You should always choose fabrics that are dog friendly," the designer says. "Sully can get on anything he wants."

Paul's Condo

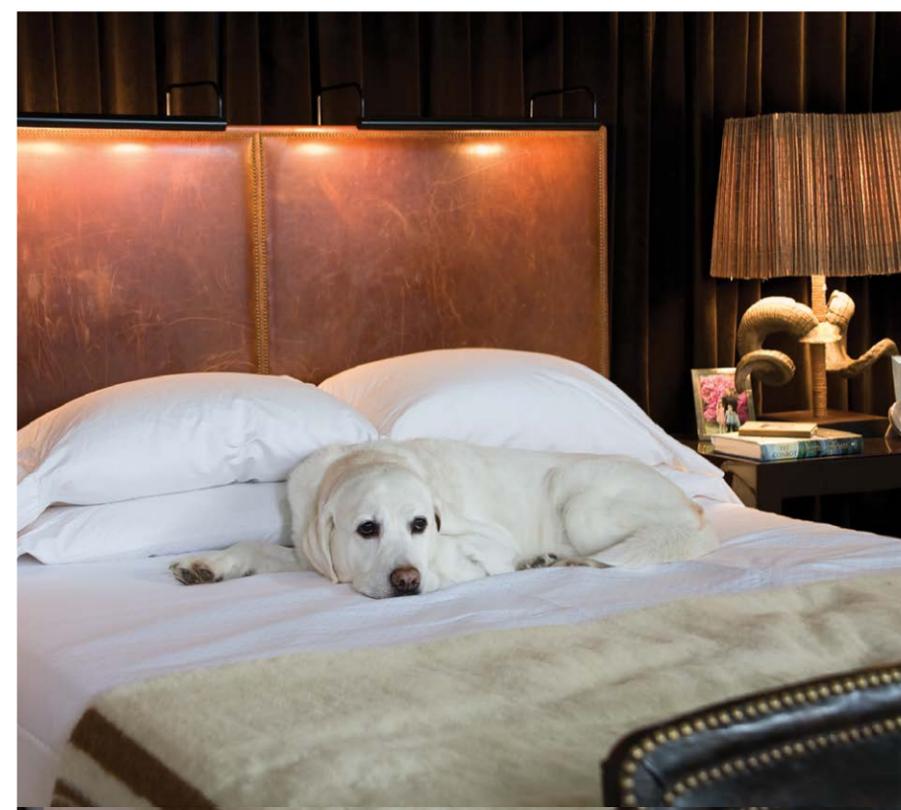


WHEN THOMAS PAUL BATES AND JEREMY CORKERN renovated Park Tower, they transformed its dated lobby into a space that rivals any posh boutique hotel in New York City. For them, Highland Park might as well be Central Park. Both architects own condos in the building, each perfectly tailored to their personal tastes. In comparison to New York neighborhoods, Paul would be Greenwich Village and Jeremy, the Upper East Side. "We complement each other," says Paul. "I'm a little more modern, Jeremy's a little more traditional. I'm a minimalist, he's a maximist. I like cleaner lines, he likes to layer things." Paul adds with a grin, "Here's another way to say it: Jeremy's style is old money, and mine is nouveau riche."

Park Tower, Birmingham's first condominiums, has an illustrious past but was in desperate need of modernization. "We wanted to do something sensitive to the building's history, but also raise the style bar," says Jeremy. The business partners did just that. Taking on the project pro bono, they preserved the lobby's original silver-plated chandeliers, rewiring them and adding new candlesticks. Sleek, sumptuous seating includes a mohair L-shape sofa, which measures 15- by 15-feet long. White linen drapery flows from the top of the 20-foot ceiling to the floor. "We didn't have a lot of money to work with, so we had to make big gestures," says Jeremy.

"We wanted people to feel transported, but still feel at home," notes Jeremy. "That's one reason we used so much local art." In the lobby, a large painting by Michael Marlowe represents Birmingham's verdant hillsides. Opposite that painting, four of Annie Kammerer Butrus' small pastels from her Peachtree Trail series are accentuated by oversize mats. "Alabama artists and artisans are a great source," Paul says. "Southerners traditionally want to please people. They want their clients to come away happy." It's a philosophy that Paul and Jeremy unfailingly apply to their own firm.

Paul's home showcases many of the same artists such as an Annie Kammerer Butrus painting above the couch and a smaller work by Michael Marlowe in the bedroom. The architect also collects Coast Guard maps, some purchased during trips to London and San Francisco. "Jeremy gave me the Manhattan map for my birthday," says Paul. He also prizes one of Grand Bay in Alabama, where he grew up.



**RESOURCES:** architects Thomas Paul Bates and Jeremy Corkern: THOMAS PAUL BATES ARCHITECTURE · 205.214.0123 · www.batescorkern.com  
 condominium: PARK TOWER · 205.322.2865 lobby: custom furniture and cabinetry: MICHAEL MORROW · MDM DESIGN STUDIO · 205.266.3905 · www.mdmdesignstudio.com installation: EDDIE DOBELSTEIN · 205.612.8296 · www.install4you.com custom upholstery and furniture: MARK JORDAN · 334.220.1056 · www.markjordan.com steel-and-limestone and steel-and-glass coffee tables: BOB LEHMAN custom drapery: BARBARA TAYLOR pastel art: ANNIE KAMMERER BUTRUS · 205.807.5093 · www.akbutrus.com painting: MICHAEL MARLOWE · 205.243.4240 fabrics: KING COTTON · 205.322.5878 Paul's condo: living room: painting above sofa: ANNIE KAMMERER BUTRUS bookshelves and console under TV: MICHAEL MORROW lamps: CIRCA LIGHTING · www.circalighting.com upholstered chairs: LIZ O'BRIEN · www.lizobrien.com sofa: RALPH PUCCI · www.ralphpucci.net bedroom: chairs and headboard: MARK JORDAN Jeremy's condo: living room: painting above kitchen alcove: ANNIE KAMMERER BUTRUS steel console with walnut top: MICHAEL MORROW upholstered chairs: RALPH LAUREN · www.ralphlaurenhome.com couch: MARK JORDAN coffee table: CRATE & BARREL · 800.967.6696 · www.crateandbarrel.com jars on top of bachelor's chest: HENHOUSE ANTIQUES · 205.918.0505 bedroom: drapery: KING COTTON bedside tables: CRATE & BARREL chair and kuba cloth: CIRCA · 205.868.9199



Jeremy's Condo

When Paul first moved into his condo, the rooms had blue shag carpeting wall to wall. It didn't take him long to overhaul the outmoded home. He unearthed beautiful concrete floors, which he simply scrubbed and sealed with Val-Oil. He topped the living room floors with a chic cowhide rug sewn into segmented squares.

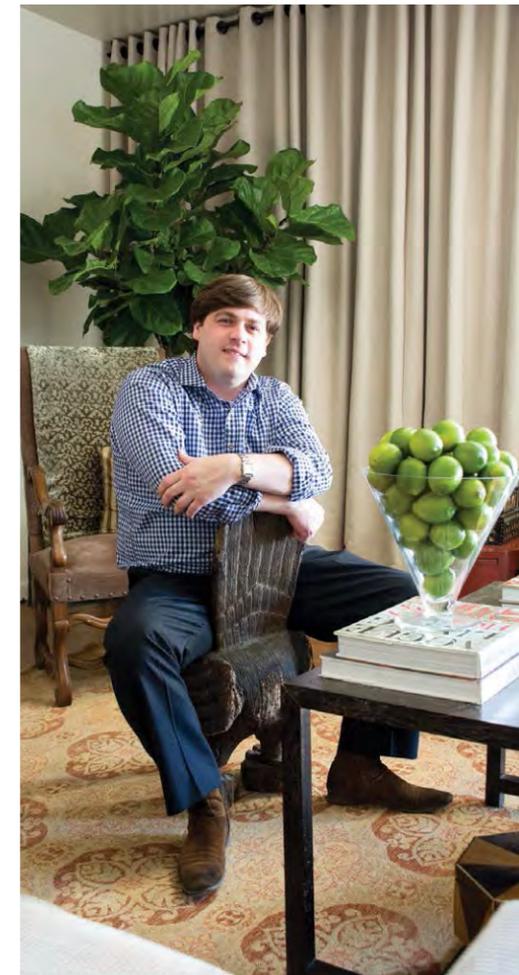
For seating, the cypress "smoking stump" Paul's mom used for years (before quitting) now takes a place of pride in his living area. The upholstered chairs are originally from New York's Seagram Building, one of the city's first cutting-edge skyscrapers designed by famed architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Paul has an exceptional eye for mixing high-end furnishings with fun finds from junk shops and flea markets.

With 8-foot ceilings and an open floor plan, the condo feels much larger than its 1,360 square feet. "So much happens in this multipurpose area," Paul says. "You get to live and play in this one room."

Jeremy lives just a few floors above his business partner. While looking for a house, he received a call from a friend who said he had to check out Fannie Flagg's condo, which had recently come on the market. "Once I saw the view, even though I had no idea how many bedrooms or baths it had, I said I'd take it on the spot," he recalls.

Jeremy moved in five years ago, filling his new home with family heirlooms and beloved furnishings. Atop a steel-and-walnut console by Michael Morrow are Santos figures Jeremy has collected since childhood. Behind a Sheraton-style sofa, there's a 19th century Beau Brummel chest beneath a faintly marred mirror. "I think the more beat down something looks the better," says Jeremy. "It's reverse snobbery. I like things a little torn up and tattered." Of course, he adds with a laugh, "Paul says it's just laziness."

But plenty of backbreaking effort went into renovating the 1,400-square-foot space. Jeremy removed wide casings and reconfigured the hallway. He added parquet flooring, already in the entrance, in the hallway and bedroom. Jeremy modestly says, "It was mostly cosmetic work, just a lipstick job." If that's the case, he must use some miraculous make up.





THIS PAGE, ABOVE: In Jeremy's living room, there are two huge architectural fragments from the First Board of Trade Building in New York. THIS PAGE, RIGHT: Above the master bedroom's doorway, Jeremy used a Greek key symbol to conceal the air supply. "It was inspired by a house I saw in Savannah as a child," he says. The Greek key design repeats in the lamps, formerly umbrella stands owned by Jeremy's grandmother. Opposite the bed, Jeremy conceals a flat screen TV and storage area behind floor-to-ceiling drapery for a clean look. FACING PAGE: Jeremy received two photographs by Eudora Welty as a college graduation present. Photos of jazz greats from the Preservation Hall in New Orleans surround open shelving in the kitchen.

