

Kara Mann's Minimalist Dream Apartment Inspired By Tom Ford

Her design melds textural richness with architectural starkness.

By [Vanessa Lawrence](#) Apr 23, 2019



Courtesy of Kara Mann

A clean, minimal approach to design doesn't have to result in austerity. Take for instance this modern, sprawling apartment [Kara Mann](#) created for a couple, Kitzia and Richard Goodman. Situated in a prestigious Chicago building in the Gold Coast historic district, the primary residence melds stark lines with textural richness from the marble, velvet, and even églomisé that Mann employed throughout the rooms.

The Goodmans were moving from a town home in the Lincoln Park area and as art patrons, they were keen on a gallery-like space with plenty of openness for entertaining. Mann, whose eponymous firm is based in Chicago and has offices in New York and Los Angeles, obliged, handling both the architecture of the gutted apartment and its decor. "Kitzia came to me with inspiration from Tom Ford," says Mann, who has also worked previously as a fashion stylist and therefore gravitated to her client's Tom Ford cue. Mann says she referenced not only Ford's clothing, but also his dramatic William Sofield-designed boutiques. "I always look to fashion when I'm thinking of design. It moves quicker than our industry and it forces me to think outside the box of interiors."

Take the Tour



The master bathroom.

Courtesy of Kara Mann

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

Master Bathroom

The master bathroom oozes glamour, thanks to the lilac marble floor, wall, and sink. "It's very sophisticated," Mann notes, "and it feels urban whereas Calacatta can feel softer." The bathtub was custom carved in Italy ("I thought I was going to get murdered by the contractors when it showed up weighing I don't know how much," Mann says), the tables are by Christian Liaigre, the faucets are by Fantini, and the vintage bench is topped with lavender shearling. The artwork (of Mick Jagger) is by Andy Warhol.



The master bedroom.

Courtesy of Kara Mann

Master Bedroom

Mann created a study of gray and white and texture in the master bedroom. The custom bed and bench by JM Upholstery are covered in Rosemary Hallgarten alpaca. The bed linens are by Frette, the throw is custom, and the bedside tables are in selenite. Mann created a tray ceiling for interest, which is crowned with a Paul Mathieu chandelier. "We wanted it to be just very, very simple, clean, and modern," she says of the room. The artwork is by Yayoi Kusama and Ed Ruscha.



A detail of the family room.

Courtesy of Kara Mann

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

Family Room

A locus point of nocturnal lounging and movie-watching, the family room

has fur carpeting, a smoky purple-gray custom U-shaped velvet sofa by JM Upholstery, and a stunning custom bronze cocktail table by Based Upon in London. "It has a texture almost like shagreen," notes Mann.



The dining room.

Courtesy of Kara Mann

Dining Room

Mann enlisted the artist Steven Hettrich to create a polished Venetian

plaster and waxed silver metallic finish on the ceiling above the dining table. Besides reflecting light beautifully, it helps differentiate the dining room as a separate entity in the open entertaining spaces (the dining room is bookended by two halves of the living room in an open plan). The custom chandelier is by Carlos De La Puente and the chairs are by Paul Mathieu.



One half of the living room.

Courtesy of Kara Mann



The other half of the living room.

Courtesy of Kara Mann

Advertisement - Continue Reading Below

Living Room

A cocktail table by Fran Taubman and armchairs by Todd Merrill Studios anchor one side of the living room, which gets a pop of marigold color from a rug by Miyabi Casa. The other half of the living room has a white Desede sofa—"I love how it wraps around the column," Mann notes—vintage collection Karl Springer side tables, a Pucci lounge chair, and a side table by Sam Orlando Miller. The floors—large-scale limestone tiles—are left bare. "It feels unexpected," Mann says.



The bar area and entryway.

Courtesy of Kara Mann

Bar Area and Entryway

A multi-purpose space (though as Mann puts it, “ridiculously elevated”) perfect for entertaining, a bar area has a beautiful custom bar by Christophe Come. The marble is Nero Marquina and the custom glass paneled doors are églomisé. The neon artwork in the entryway to the left is by Tracey Emin.

[Vanessa Lawrence](#) Senior Editor, ELLE Decor Vanessa Lawrence, the Senior Editor at ELLE Decor, writes about home, design, style and the arts and was previously at W Magazine and WWD.

Watch Next