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# A Place for Everything

An architect devises a thoughtful plan for his own Cambridge condo that leaves nothing to chance. BY ALYSSA BIRD

**C**all it the twenty-seven-year itch. After more than a quarter of a century living in the Cambridge home he had designed for himself, architect Jacob Albert started craving something new—and with less maintenance. The wheels started turning, and a 1924 candy-factory-turned-condo-complex only a few blocks from his home caught his eye.

The Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects founding partner and 2015 New England Design Hall of Fame inductee was immediately taken with the southern light pouring into a 1,250-square-foot two-bedroom unit with ten-foot ceilings. He also appreciated the fact that the space, which was converted to residential use in 2007, was essentially a blank canvas. “The basic organization was good, but the front door opened into the kitchen, which I didn’t like,” recalls Albert, who conceived an entry hall to funnel



In the primary bedroom of architect Jacob Albert's recently renovated condo, he painted the shelving Benjamin Moore Brookside Moss. A vintage chair sits beside a nineteenth-century French wine-tasting table, and Albert purchased the dhurrie while traveling in Jaipur, India.





**ABOVE:** Custom built-ins line the combined living and dining area, which Albert furnished with vintage and antique pieces, such as the Moroccan side table and an upholstered bench; newer pieces include an Afghan kilim from Landry & Arcari Rugs and Carpeting and side tables Albert designed himself and had constructed in Maine by Tidewater Millwork. **RIGHT:** The paneling and shelving in the guest room/study are painted Benjamin Moore York Harbor Yellow.

guests into the living area instead.

The kitchen, meanwhile, received a complete revamp. “The original kitchen was bland and had very little storage,” says the architect. “I kept its footprint, which measures just eight by nine feet, but I now have three times the amount of storage and counter space.”

To help with these changes, among others, Albert tapped Burlington, Massachusetts-based builder JW Construction. “This wasn’t a full gut renovation, but it did require some major planning to get everything to fit,” says JW Construction’s John Hand,





A pendant from Barn Light Electric Company hangs above a vintage table and chairs in the dining area, which is painted Benjamin Moore Stone Harbor and features a mix of tall wainscoting, built-in cabinetry, and drawers. The lamp post style lights are from Hi-Lite Manufacturing Co., and the sconces are from Circa Lighting.



who notes that adding infrastructure to the kitchen and installing new wiring in existing walls and ceilings with minimal damage was a challenge.

Paneled wainscoting and shelving in the living room, primary bedroom, and guest bedroom/study arguably created the most dramatic transformation. “I know exactly how much space my stuff occupies down to the number of inches, so I knew I needed shelving that would accommodate 250 linear feet of books,” says Albert. “The ceilings are tall, and this wainscoting makes them feel even taller.”

Each room has a different palette: gray in the living room, green in the primary bedroom, and ochre in the guest bedroom/study. “The colors are based on memories I have of traveling in Sweden. Even the new matte white-oak flooring



**ABOVE:** One of the biggest changes Albert made to the condo was closing off the kitchen from the entry and reorienting it to open into the living and dining area. He kept the kitchen’s petite floor plan but “tripled the storage capacity by wrapping all three sides with cabinetry,” explains Albert, who chose an Ann Sacks tile as a fun accent. **LEFT:** In the living area, a collection of pottery from Albert’s parents joins an etching by Giovanni Battista Piranesi.



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—Architect Jacob Albert

reminds me of the country,” says Albert. He decorated the condo with vintage and antique finds, rugs from his travels, artwork by friends, and even a couple of his own furniture designs.

Most important, though, is a collection of pottery from his parents, who once owned a dinnerware factory outside Atlanta. “This place is a good reflection of Jacob himself,” says Hand. “It’s thoughtful, efficient, and sophisticated.”

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**ARCHITECTURE:**

Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects

**BUILDER:** JW Construction



**TOP:** The guest room/study features a side table designed by the architect, a vintage rug that he purchased in Morocco, and a coverlet from a trip to Sri Lanka. **BOTTOM:** Albert also designed the primary bedroom’s headboard, which is inset with a mosaic crafted by his mother. Additional mosaics of hers flank the headboard, and she is also the artist behind the oil painting above the bed.

