



Zipper's game room boasts a 1942 Brunswick pool table and a photographic homage to runway models and rappers. The floor is a dark wenge wood and the mod light fixtures, found in Paris, are from the 1950s.

A House for All Reasons

Investment banker turned entrepreneur Brad Zipper has a tricked-out townhouse that would make any guy jealous.

by Sue Hostetter

photographs by Marco Ricca



ABOVE: Sixx Design purchased the Boffi stainless steel kitchen off the display floor at half the original cost. Doors in the rear of the house lead to a charming garden. LEFT: Instead of queens and bishops, this chess set pits Christian pieces against Jewish ones.

THE LARGE FLAT-SCREEN TV IN BRAD ZIPPER'S LIVING ROOM IS, as usual, tuned to CNBC, and Maria Bartiromo is somberly detailing the beating the market is taking. "I'm getting killed," says Zipper with a slight chuckle. Of course no one likes to lose money on a stock (or anything else, for that matter), but looking around Zipper's townhouse, it's hard to muster much sympathy for the guy.

Just a few years ago, Zipper was living in the Mercer Hotel, recently divorced and unsure of where in the city he wanted to restart his life. "I've lived in every neighborhood in New York—Gramercy, Upper West.... When I was married we lived on Park Avenue, where you see everybody in the elevator, and the entire building knows your business. After that I decided I really wanted to live in a private house."

His wish came true when he was introduced to the partners in Sixx Design, Bob and Cortney Novogratz, who not only found the perfect dilapidated building (it had been a gun shop for years) on the eastern edge of Soho, but also re-created the space soup to nuts—or, in this case, Moroccan-

tile floor to pool table. It's not often that a client gives an architect or designer so much creative freedom, but this partnership appears to have been a huge success. "I just love their taste," Zipper declares. "We sat down early on, and in two hours I told them, 'This is what I like, this is what I don't like, don't even show me this.' After that I gave them a lot of latitude, and only the most important decisions were run past me," he recalls. "Look, we were partners; it's all about doing business with people you trust."

And though Zipper, a hedge-fund manager turned private investor, was not involved with the décor on a daily basis, it's clear that the designers "got" his top priority: having a good time. The house has so many cool guy toys and gadgets it would make Gordon Gekko proud. Game room? Check, complete with 1942 Brunswick pool table, *Playboy* pinball machine, and *Asteroids* video game. Photographs line the walls in homage to hot models and deceased rappers (think fashion runway shots on one, Eazy-E and Biggie on the other). Wine cellar? Check, and then some. The bottom floor is outfitted with a custom-made walk-in stainless steel wine cooler, a Hungarian butcher's table with French chairs and a bench, and a bathroom. Wondering about the bar? The fourth floor is designed to feel like Zipper's favorite hangout in Saint-Tropez, which includes a gorgeous zinc-topped bar from Paris, a fireplace, and two terraces. However, it's really the small touches, like the vintage cigarette machine and the coffeemaker rigged to dispense shots of tequila, that stand out.

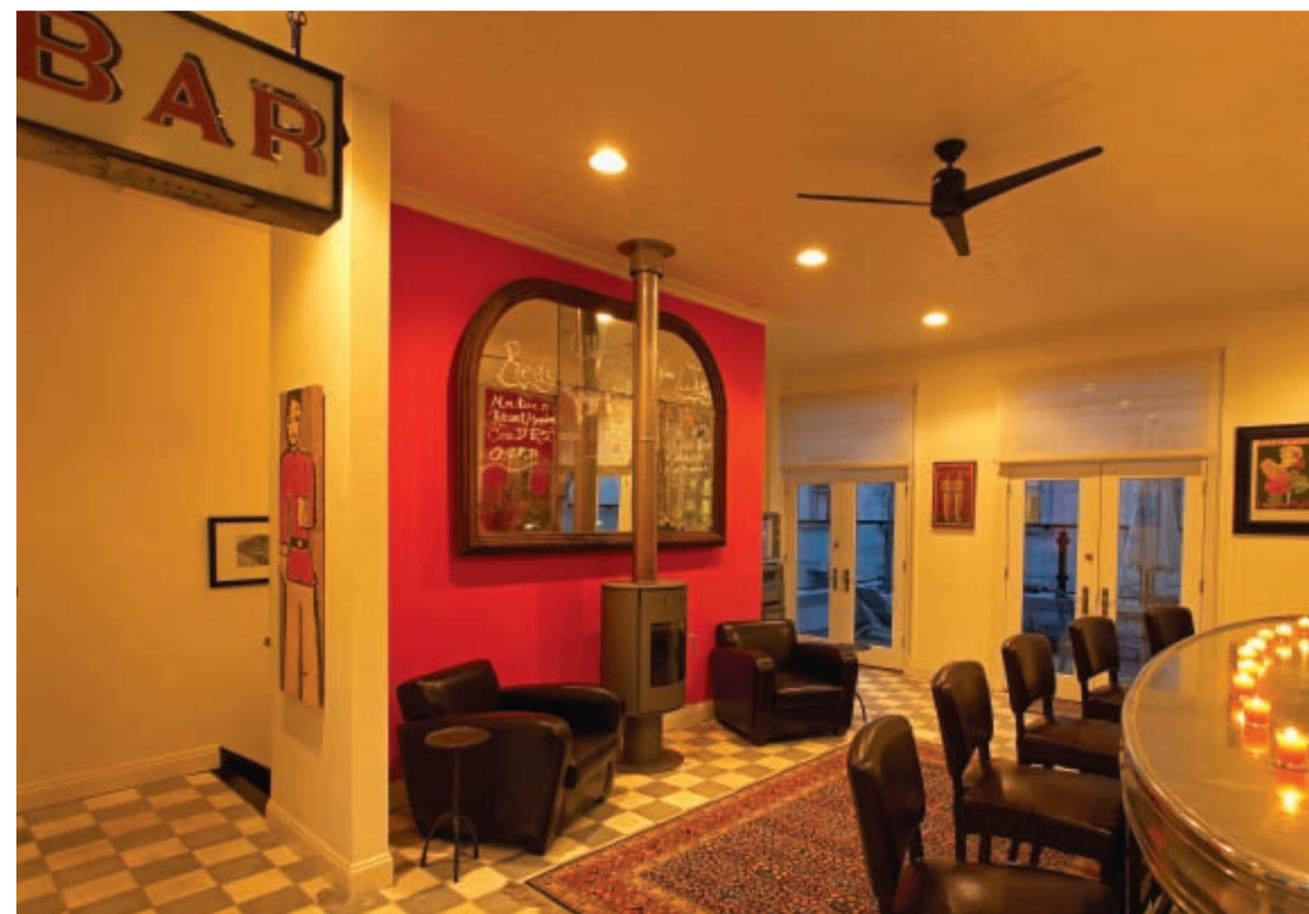
The vibe in the second-floor master suite is still south of France, but provides some critical balance to the over-the-top entertainment atmosphere of



Wood wine racks imported from Italy fill one wall of the subterranean wine cellar. A Hungarian butcher's table comes in handy for all of Zipper's impromptu tastings.

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CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Brad Zipper unwinds with a glass of wine from his own cellar; vintage candy jars from Argentina stock a supply of his favorite treats; the fourth-floor bar, complete with zinc-topped bar from Paris, fireplace, and two terraces, was designed to evoke memories of his favorite Saint-Tropez watering hole.



ABOVE: Sunlight streams into the tranquil second-floor master suite, where a cardboard re-creation of Paris by a Japanese artist hangs over the bed and a leather pommel horse is draped with ties. RIGHT: Doors made of stainless steel and frosted glass slide back to reveal the modern and airy master bath.



the rest of the house. The walls are a soft blue Venetian plaster, the furniture is very French country, and the sliding steel-and-frosted-glass doors that lead to the master bath provide a dramatic contemporary touch. The guest quarters have a similar feel to the rest of the house, though only temporary guests need apply. "I made the guest bedroom large enough for someone to feel comfortable, but not large enough for someone to want to move in," says Zipper.

To find the quirky, charming objects scattered throughout the house, the Novogratzes spent a month in Europe searching spots such as the Nice flea market while also working with private dealers to buy distinctive pieces—like the vintage Parisian train-station clock mounted on a wall in the first-floor living room, the oversize weather vane in the hallway, and the illuminated TISSUS COTON sign that hangs in the master bath. (The décor brings to mind Charles Eames' famous saying: "The details are not the details. They make the design.") Lining the stairway is a collection of framed black-and-white photos of iconic New York moments: the Beatles visiting Central Park, the Brooklyn Bridge obscured by fog, the Knicks returning home after winning their first NBA championship in 1970.

So, are there wild parties raging chez Zipper every night? "I don't really throw parties, they just kind of happen," he insists. "I'm not a guy who's ever sent out an invitation or made a phone call... it's all impromptu. And you have to remember, when you live in a hotel for two years, you never have anybody over, so I was overdue!" But what Zipper describes as his wildest party ever comes as a surprise: his father's 70th birthday party, for

which he bussed all his parents' friends in from New Jersey. (One can imagine the group of septuagenarians playing pool under the watchful eye of Biggie Smalls.)

But Zipper's party pad doesn't just please his pals; it's the perfect place to do business. "People loosen up more meeting in your house, as opposed to in a restaurant," he says. "You can establish a friendship and the information flow is greater." And he's got some pretty hip colleagues to powwow with: As a private investor he's backed a Hollywood movie with actors Marley Shelton and Christina Applegate, financially kick-started the career of up-and-coming singer Jenny O, and invested in the chic Lever House restaurant through John McDonald. "If you can't be a rock star or a professional athlete, private investing is the best career," Zipper advises.

But with all of those media investments, wouldn't it make more sense to live in Los Angeles? "No—I love New York and the energy here. It's the only place on earth where, when you go on vacation, you can't wait to get back."

Knowing you're coming back to this rockin' townhouse can't hurt, either. [G]