

AT HOME

Revamping a loft for a twentysomething entrepreneur

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
Special to *The Examiner*

Georgetown University student and entrepreneur Cole South, 23, bought his Logan Circle loft-style home nearly a year ago and immediately sought to redecorate. Lucky for him, he ran into neighbor Eric Kole in the elevator.

Kole, co-owner of Vatsu, a contemporary home furnishing and design store in Logan Circle, had redone the space for the condo's previous owners, with whom he had become close friends.

"I designed every single inch of that place and had strong affection for it," Kole said. "Then this kid moves in. I went from a sophisticated couple in their early 40s to a 21-year-old."

Armed with just one directive from South — "My girlfriend likes green" — Kole created digs cool enough to host the fellas, yet stylish enough to impress the colleagues. "I love it," South said.

Kole's challenge was designing a home practical for a college student, without it looking like a frat house. "I wanted more of a lounge feel," South said.

Even the Rat Pack would envy this place. The condo is filled with sleek but classic furniture from the famed Knoll design firm. Centered in the living room is a green, flannel-suede, U-shaped sectional that can seat 15. The cushions are wide enough to sleep four or five, perfect for when friends crash after a late-night party.

Across from the sectional, mounted on an interior bricked wall, is the must-have large black flat-screen television. The space between offers plenty of room for maneuvers while playing Nintendo Wii games. "I entertain friends a lot," South said.

Under the television is a free-standing, white EcoSmart fireplace that burns clean and is fueled by denatured ethanol, a renewable modern energy. It appears to be built into the bookcases but is pushed against the brick wall. "It looks great when its burning and you can see the brick behind the flames," South said.

Above the sectional hangs a Saturnia Pendant lamp, a halo light fixture, 47.25 inches in diameter. Suspended by nickel-plated cords, this stunning wood veneer light complements the caramel-colored bamboo floors. With double shades of white Plexiglas, this lamp emits such a glow that at night passers-by on 14th Street stop and point. "We've sold so many of these lamps that way," Kole said.

Across from the sectional is a beige leather Barcelona chair, another signature Knoll piece. Situated in front of the sectional and throughout the room are clusters of Saarinen coffee tables of various heights and sizes. These round tables with cast-aluminum bases



PHOTOS BY ANDREW HARNIK/EXAMINER

and an assortment of tabletops add a futuristic flair to the living room.

"These are perfect for entertaining," South said. Kole chose these because they allowed South to instantly transform his living room into a dining room. "The previous owners had a traditional dining room. But he doesn't need that," Kole said. "He rarely cooks and eats takeout."

South has a gourmet kitchen, however, for when he does choose to cook. The kitchen's ample cherry Italian cabinetry is equipped with more drawers than doors. A back splash of small rectangular glass adds a wow factor to already dazzling beige and black granite countertops. Instead of dishes, the top-tier cabinets, all with horizontal doors, store a cache of fine wines.

The master bedroom features a custom-made gray fabric headboard that stretches the length of the wall. Over the bed are two more pieces of modern art, one red and one off-white. In a corner near the windows is a green tweedlike Bertoia Asymmetric Chaise Lounge. This funky, ergonomically designed chair is another Knoll classic. "I love this chair," South said.

A long, white cabinet, designed as a dining room buffet, stands opposite the bed. The cabinet's face is made of a glamorous reflective surface topped with a lattice design. "I didn't want it to look like a bedroom dresser," Kole said. "He didn't really need more furniture. It's more to counteract the large headboard and balance the room."

The master bath is encased with rich brownish-red marble. Floor-to-ceiling glass encloses a spa shower, one of South's favorite features in the home.

The condo is filled with exquisite modern art, including a large fire engine-red metal sculpture. South

doesn't remember the name of the artist but thinks it's cool. "[South is] the only person I know who buys a piece of art based on a cell phone

photo," Kole said.

South said he trusted Kole's judgment. "He loves everything in there," Kole said. "But he gave me no direc-

tion. I had to guess. My approach was, if I were a wealthy 21-year-old who knew about design, what would I purchase?"

Mary seems quite satisfied with her remodeled kitchen.



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