



In renovating her client's townhouse living room, Connie Lindor (opposite) opted to retain built-in shelving by the home's original architect, Mark Mack of Venice, California, then added some judiciously arranged chaos. Taking center stage are a pair of black-lacquered chairs from Colombo USA that pose Hamlet's existential question across their backs. The sofa is from the Apta collection by Maxalto and the *Running Creek* coffee table from Mimi London in Los Angeles; the carved and polished side table is made from Joshua Tree forest wood.



uncommon woman

A Minneapolis architect with an expansive design vision and a modernist eye is all about keeping it personal, one room at a time.



If you could draw a map of the making of Connie Lindor's career as an architect, the route would be circuitous. The dots can be connected now, but the end point would have been hard to predict looking forward. She grew up in a series of small, mostly unremarkable Minnesota towns. For amusement she did things like creating miniature hotel rooms from cardboard boxes. As a young woman, she studied science and then worked in London for two years before joining the Peace Corps to teach high school biology and chemistry in Fiji.

"I began to see how differently we all live," says Lindor. "In Fiji, they live communally, in one room with four doors. In England, everything is stacked, with small, private spaces. But wherever, however we live, we want it to be personal. I noticed how the volunteers in the Peace Corps all brought their stuff from home to make the environment their own."

This observation, combined with an intrinsic sympathy for simple, modern design in the classic modernist styles of Mies van der Rohe and his contemporary torchbearers (like Renzo Piano), led her to develop an

approach to design that is pure Lindor. "The ultimate environment is personal," she says. "If the architecture is simple enough, you can personalize it."

In 2001, after earning her architecture degree from the University of Minnesota, Lindor opened Redflured with partner Scott Muellner. The home furnishings shop featured a thoughtful mix of modern pieces that were informed by Lindor's nuanced appreciation of 20th-century design. Although the pair have both left retail for full-time careers as architects (Lindor with Julie Snow Architects, one of the country's best young firms), some of Lindor's retail customers became design clients, including the woman who lives in this 1996 townhouse by the California architect Mark Mack.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN GILMORE
Above: The home's small foyer opens into the spacious living room; visible over a cabinet that serves as a pedestal for a Nicholas Africano sculpture. Right: The gauzy chain mail drapery, custom from Cascade Coil, was on the client's short list of must-haves. The spidery Three-Arm lamp is a new production version of Serge Mouille's iconic 1953 piece; the book-on-stand is Helmut Newton's *Sumo*.

PRODUCED BY LINDA O'KEEFFE AND ALECIA STEVENS. PHOTOS BY SUSAN GILMORE. WRITTEN BY ALECIA STEVENS.







The three-story stucco-and-glass complex, a project designed by Mack to bring a bit of the West Coast lifestyle to Minneapolis, seemed progressive for the Kenwood neighborhood in the mid 1990s. The upscale area is filled with stately formal homes from the early 20th century. Yet, perched just up the hill from the contemporary Walker Art Museum, the Mack complex, with its modest scale and modernist roots, seems right at home. The units were a perfect fit for homeowners seeking light and open space, and Lindor's client, a former real estate agent, was among the first to buy.

A fan of Redlured, the client called Lindor when she was ready to embark on a transformation of the 3,000-square-foot home. It was a mutually respectful meeting of the minds. Lindor brought to the table a sixth sense for the marriage of the intellectual and the aesthetic. The client and her former husband had been avid art collectors and travelers, and she had developed

a keen sense for the capacity of design to express a point of view. The soft-spoken, reflective Lindor seemed to offer everything she wanted.

"I immediately appreciated Mack's original work," says Lindor. "My approach was to neutralize the palette of the architecture so that we could let the client's strong, colorful art and personal collections be the featured objects in an essentially white volume." She resourcefully allowed the existing blue window frames and cherry kitchen cabinets to remain by cooling down the rest of the space. Maple floors were washed in pale gray, and local artist Darryl Otto finished walls in silky white Venetian plaster.

Above: In the Lindor redesign, the kitchen got only a face-lift with new hardware and a honed limestone countertop. Opposite: The dining room features tailored VIP chairs by Marcel Wanders for Moooi and an oxidized maple Tobi table from BDDW under vintage teardrop pendant lights. The Rainbow chair by Patrick Norguet for Cappellini is part perch, part sculpture; the photo is by David Byrne.

Connie Lindor's Inspirations

"I'm precision, repetition and control. She's rock and roll," says Connie Lindor, pointing out the differences between her own style and that of her client's. Did that make the collaboration challenging? Lindor says no. "It made it fun. After shopping all day for furniture in L.A., we would shop for clothing. I enjoyed watching her pick out sunglasses! She has such a sense for the artistic, the slightly off, the organic." Lindor's own tastes reflect her minimalist, machine-made aesthetic, including Jil Sander clothing, the classic lines of a BMW, 1960s op artist Bridget Riley, painter Agnes Martin and contemporary architect Thomas Phifer. By contrast, her client's preference for sometimes edgy, handmade forms shows up in a painting by Talking Heads lead singer David Byrne and the sensual handblown pendant lighting, hung "precisely" off-balance in the dining area. "Our inspirations are a contrast, and that," confirms Lindor, "is what developed the richness in this project."



Main Floor

happily, both Lindor and her client love shopping because they had a lot of space to fill. They began their furniture spree in Los Angeles, starting at Diva Furniture, a favorite of the homeowner's. On the first day, they chose a sensual mohair sofa for the living room; for the bedroom, they selected a bed and bench that are covered in matching high-sheen faux leather. A bit of latter-day wit was stirred into the silver-screen mix with Ingo Maurer's fanciful *Bird, Bird, Bird* chandelier and *Mille* pendant lights from Baccarat.

Next, Lindor suggested Twentieth. "For someone who loves innovation in design, this was her place. It is almost curatorial," she says. The homeowner buoyantly admits, "I was so excited. It all spoke to me." Here they found the couturelike *VIP* chairs by Marcel Wanders for the dining room and Ross Lovegrove's *Lovegrove* chairs for lounging on the patio. They also found the handblown pendants that hang over the dining table, African ladders and the reproduction Serge Mouille floor lamp.

"This was an evolutionary project," says Lindor. "With a client as sophisticated as this, you work as partners." As the highly involved client recalls, "Where we started is not at all where we ended up. It is totally different from what I thought it would be. In the end, I got exactly what I wanted."

"What I most love about her," Lindor says of her client, "is that she lives so casually and intimately with such beautiful things. They aren't 'precious' to her. They are personal." ❖

See Resources, last page.

Hollywood glamour inspired the master bedroom. Above left: The curvy *Alesha II* chairs from Mimi London are upholstered in Mongolian lamb, while "parachute silk" makes theatrical floor-to-ceiling draperies. Right: The reflective headboard and bench from the *Apta* collection by Maxalto (covered in Suddler, Maraham's faux-brushed-steel fabric) change color with the light, from silver to lavender.



