



THE HIGH LIFE: Lisa and Matt Garrison in their light-filled Gold Coast condo.

## THE VISIONARIES

IN THEIR GOLD COAST DREAM HOUSE, A REAL ESTATE POWER PLAYER AND HIS WIFE BROKER ONE OF THE CITY'S SWEETEST WINDOWS TO THE WORLD

BY LISA SHAMES | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF SCIROTINO

Strolling around the home of Matt and Lisa Garrison, it would be easy to focus only on the stunning views of Chicago. Don't. Once you manage to tear yourself away from the floor-to-ceiling, 60-foot-long, wrap-around window that encompasses the office, living room, dining room and kitchen, you'll notice that the décor is just as breathtaking.

The process of creating the 3,350-sqaure-foot condo started a few years ago when Matt, 31, first heard of the yet-to-be-finished building at Oak and Dearborn (it's the striking glass, oblong-shaped structure that stands where the Dr. Scholl School of Podiatric Medicine once was located, and, yes, it's just as beautiful on the inside). Being an in-the-know real estate guy (Matt, who was named one of the top realtors in the country by the *Wall Street*

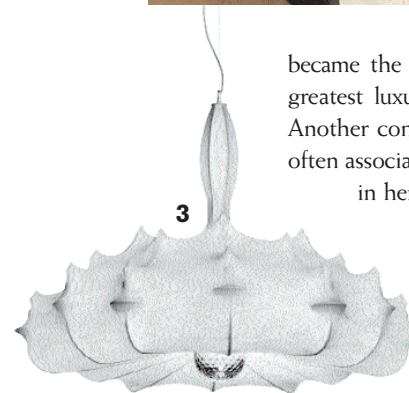
*Journal*, runs the Matt Garrison Group, a Coldwell Banker real estate entity with more than \$500 million in sales since its 2003 inception) definitely has its advantages.

Once the couple decided the Smithfield Properties building suited them to a T—Matt loves contemporary architecture, Lisa loves the area and they both loved the architectural plan—they needed to choose a unit. Face west and you have views of the sunset, while the east offers the lakefront area. Either way you couldn't go wrong, Matt says. They chose east.

While the couple know their Eames from their Noguchis, they opted to bring in interior designer Aimee Wertepny, 30, who had worked on their previous home in Lincoln Park and also on their wedding last year.

Lisa, who works in institutional fixed income sales at Citigroup, first fell in love with Wertepny's design work a few years back. "Never have I walked into a model unit before and felt 'that is my style and what I would like to incorporate in my home,'" says Lisa, 31.

As the building went up over the last two years, Wertepny, who owns Chicago-based interiors comany PROjECT, started planning. Matt knew he wanted flagstone in the unit, so Wertepny designed a stone fireplace with seating for two on the west end of the condo. "It brings a lodge-like aesthetic, so it's a total contrast to the rest of the space," Matt says. The chocolate brown and blue floral paper from their wedding invitations



became the inspiration for Lisa's private bathroom. "It's the greatest luxury and is what keeps us together," she laughs. Another concern was how to balance out the hard elements often associated with contemporary architecture. "The marble in here is beautiful, but it can also be cold," Matt says.

"I don't want to live in a museum." So Wertepny brought in a variety of natural-looking elements, from textured wall coverings—"I'm a big fan of wall coverings," says Wertepny. "I think they get a bad rap"—to a thick shag rug and the Penny Round mosaic tile on the kitchen sink backsplash. Then there's the tree-trunk coffee table that Wertepny had cut by a lumberjack in Northern California's Redwood Forest and had finished in Chicago by the same millworker who made the condo's custom cabinets and built-ins.

With their one-year move-in anniversary coming up after a string of frequent moves—Matt's lived in six homes in the past three years, Lisa's had three in the last year—the couple is starting to feel at home. "The longer we live here, the less we second-guess ourselves," Matt says. "At first you'd think, 'I should have done this and I should have done that,' but eventually we realized we made all the right decisions." ■



### MATT & LISA GARRISON'S MUST-HAVES

(1) The kitchen, which has a view of Oak Street, has Poggenpohl cabinetry with an Ann Sacks Penny Round, glossy tile backsplash. (2) The tree-trunk table in the living room was made from a tree in Northern California's Redwood Forest. (3) The couple's possible next purchase? The Zeppelin light fixture, \$2,760, which they plan to put in their master bedroom. [www.hivemodern.com](http://www.hivemodern.com). (4) The hallway has a piece from Stark Light's Coco collection, \$780. Available at Lightology, 215 W. Chicago Ave., 312.944.1000, [www.lightology.com](http://www.lightology.com). (5) An EcoSmart fireplace may eventually be added to the living room. The Element style is shown here, \$7,225. Available at Casamonte, 1355 W. Concorde Pl., 773.278.4100, [www.casamonteusa.com](http://www.casamonteusa.com).

