



Blackwatch '68

"Thoroughbred Modern Style"
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Elan Peltz

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Elan Peltz's home isn't decorated, it's merchandised.
By Tate Gunnerson

Operating an urban antiques shop out of his home wasn't the plan when real-estate developer Elan Peltz bought his 3,000-square-foot Wicker Park condo in 2003. But he says it's no coincidence that the unit's corner location and large windows are so well-suited for his by-appointment shop, Blackwatch '68, which he launched in early November: "It was a paint store until the developer rehabbed it as a condo," Peltz says.

Peltz, 40, was attracted to the three-bedroom, two-bathroom space

because of its high ceilings and the spacious lower level, a windowless enclave that receives natural light from a skylight-like hole cut into a corner of the bright living room's floor on the ground floor (a metal fence reduces the threat of nasty accidents).

The Milwaukee native, who moved to Chicago in 1991 to attend the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, says the spacious bachelor pad gives him something to grow into when he has his own family. Until that day, however, all the room gives Peltz a place to store his midcentury furnishings, a passion since childhood when he spent time at his father's paper recycling plant in Milwaukee. "I saw a lot of great stuff come through," Peltz recalls.

"Everything from comic books, baseball cards, coins—you name it."

That's when Peltz realized that other people's trash could be his treasure—both aesthetically and financially. "I think that passion for understanding the value of something is fun," he says. So when Peltz—who has long worked from home—decided to make a side business out of his penchant for midcentury items, it made sense to kick things off from his own space.

"You can eliminate some of the contrivances of trying to stage something in a shop because you really do have a living room, bedroom and kitchen, so people can see how things fit together," Peltz explains. "It's a place where people can come to taste the ideas."

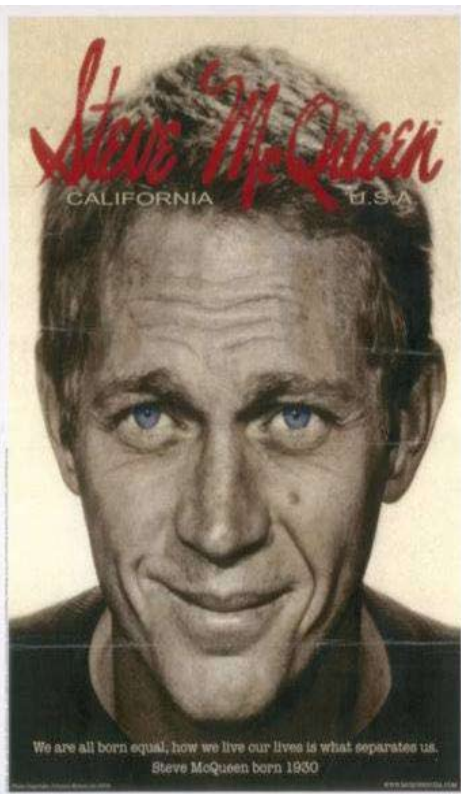




1 Peltz has a variety of furniture stacked in the living room, including a tall white storage cabinet (\$595) and a primitive yellow end table (\$495 restored) atop a metal Art Deco green-and-white dresser (\$575).

2 Peltz saves space—and creates displays at the same time—by stacking furniture on top of each other.

3 A trio of black metal wine glasses plays up the masculine vibe (\$145 set). “They have a terrific Parisian look [to them],” Peltz says.



While Peltz says everything in his home is for sale, that fact is most apparent in the first-floor living and dining rooms. In the street-facing living room, you'll find an armoire filled with a variety of masculine accoutrements, including a pair of brown leather cowboy boots, vintage men's wristwatches with new cloth straps and a black-and-white houndstooth-patterned blanket.

That manly vibe reverberates throughout the home in liberal doses of black and white with strategically placed punches of color: A grouping of mustard water pitchers (\$95) plays off a rusted metal American Express sign (\$575) that hangs next to the corner fireplace. Images of Steve McQueen, Frank Sinatra and President John F. Kennedy are sprinkled throughout, all men who Peltz says epitomized midcentury style. “Whether it’s iconography, furniture or fashion, they all kind of come together,” he says.

The living room leads either through French doors to a guest bedroom or

directly into a long, narrow dining area that Peltz uses to display clothing. Vintage clothing, such as a houndstooth trench coat (\$155) and U.S. Naval officers jacket (\$135), is featured throughout the room. “The shop is definitely a reflection of my personality, but I have to get broader than that, because I’m not the only customer here,” Peltz says.

Many of the furniture pieces have seen better days and need to appeal to a wider audience, so Peltz and one employee (who helps him source, refurbish and deliver merch) use the kitchen and narrow exterior gangway to refinish them.

Peltz says having the shop hasn't changed his life much. Working from home is old hat, and when he isn't selling the items by appointment, Peltz says he sells in the same way he lives: by throwing cocktail parties for friends, colleagues and customers.

Make an appointment to shop in Peltz's home by calling 414-248-7769 or emailing elanpeltz@blackwatch68.com.



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