

GARDEN GIRL IS THE NEXT MARTHA BLOOMING IN ROXBURY?

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CURTIS KEMENY DEVELOPED AN ICONIC BUILDING ON NEWBURY STREET. THEN HE KEPT ONE OF THE PENTHOUSES FOR HIMSELF. BY ANNA KASABIAN

Ask Curtis Kemeny why he chose to live in a penthouse in the Back Bay, and he'll say it was for the views. His two-bedroom, 3,000-square-foot condo has soaring windows that offer breathtaking vistas of the city, the Charles River, Cambridge, and beyond. Interior designer Meichi Peng says the views are the 46-year-old Kemeny's "living art," since they change with the time of the day and the seasons.

Kemeny, a local real estate developer, worked in the landmark building at 360 Newbury Street (at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Newbury Street) long before he moved into a pent-

house there last year. In the 1980s, he was a project manager for a real estate group overseeing the building's transformation into office space. He grew fond of the architecture, particularly the look imposed by Frank Gehry's renovation in the mid-'80s, which added two floors and distinctive lead-coated copper struts that hold up the top floor's canopy. "The architecture reflects the building's industrial past," says Kemeny, "but Gehry gave it a modern interpretation that still fits today. It's iconic."

When he had the chance to buy the building, which once housed Tower Records and the Virgin Megastore, he did. In 2004, Kemeny, who grew

up in Brookline and is the CEO of Boston Residential Group, decided he'd transform the eight-floor building into 54 luxury lofts – and that he'd save a penthouse for himself. The space was hard to resist. It had two levels and 24-foot-high ceilings in the public space, and, better still, it could be designed to suit his taste and lifestyle. "I wanted a feeling of openness that had an easy flow between living, dining, sleeping, and work," says Kemeny. "At the same time, I like having some division of space. I didn't want to feel like I sleep in my kitchen."

With the help of an architect and a designer, Kemeny decided to introduce a long entry hall. Not a



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ROOM WITH A VIEW Curtis Kemeny (left) and his designer kept the dramatic vistas in mind when decorating his space, choosing neutral furnishings and white walls that wouldn't distract the eye. He loves entertaining in the sleek kitchen, then moving the party into the living room for its up-close city views. Upstairs is the office and master suite, including a full bath with double sinks.



bad thing, he says, because it offers a sense of unfolding drama. As you walk down the hall – a guest bedroom and bathroom are off to the left – the natural light from the principal space is ahead and gets brighter and brighter until you step into the two-story living room. Sleek furnishings sit back from floor-to-ceiling windows. Peng, who helped decorate the home, says Kemeny wanted to incorporate the dramatic vistas into the design. They chose a neutral palette and furnishings that were functional, but also reflected the loft's contemporary sophistication. There are couches and chairs from B&B Italia and Knoll, lighting from Foscarini and Flos, and rugs from Steven King – all popular items on the modern aesthete's checklist.

Chocolate-stained walnut covers the floors, providing a rich contrast to the snow-white walls and all that glass. Design accents like an antique wood-carved Buddha, an ivory Indian headdress, and tribal

currency speak to his appreciation of different cultures, and as Peng notes, let you get to know the person who lives there. A stairway with a glass-paneled railing leads to Kemeny's private perch – an office, tucked upstairs to offer peace and quiet, and the master suite, with a full bath, two walk-in closets, and a glass-walled seating area overlooking the living room.

But it's the kitchen where Kemeny spends most of his time, cooking for friends and then moving the party to the living room for those up-close views. After developing so many other homes, Kemeny feels like he's finally found his own sanctuary. "The space was designed specifically for me. It reflects my taste and sensibilities and my lifestyle. When something fits that well, you really appreciate it."

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