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NEWS:

Bamboo Surfaces Shape a Luxe Apartment in the Steel City

By Derek de Koff

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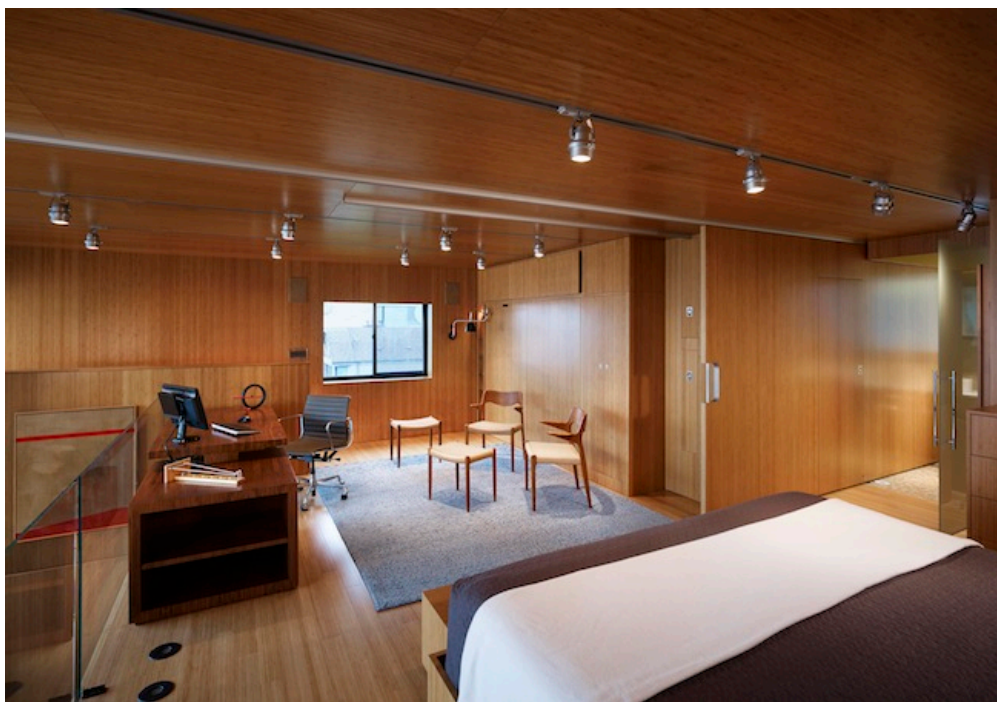


Image © Ed Massery

SLIDE SHOW

We still refer to Pittsburgh as “the Steel City,” even though steel hasn’t been made there in over thirty years. The metropolis once decreed “hell with the lid taken off” has cleaned up its act in recent years, establishing itself as a leader in environmentally conscious design for the 21st Century. Over 80 LEED-certified buildings have been erected there since 2000, and many of those are among the world’s first. Today, Pittsburgh has more green square footage than any other city.

SLIDE SHOW

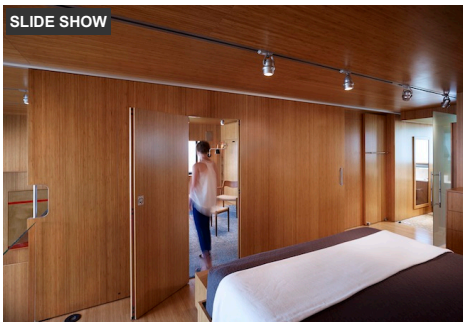


Image © Ed Massery

Founded by Gerard Damiani in 1996, architectural firm Studio d’Arc specializes in designs that bridge Pittsburgh’s industrial past with its eco-friendly present. “Making connections with the past is a way to keep our designs relevant to the city’s history and the city’s future,” Damiani says. He incorporates green elements into everything they do, whether it’s a high-tech office space, artist’s studio, or private apartment.

The firm recently transformed a 1,200-square-foot residence into what they call a “material monospace,” an environment that uses only one defining material throughout, making the apartment appear more uniform and spacious. In this case, that material was bamboo.

“Using all FSC-certified wood made sense for the amount of material we needed for the project,” Damiani says. “The bamboo was grown with little to no fertilizer,

pesticide, or irrigation. The structure itself was framed out of cold formed metal made locally from 35% post-consumer waste.”

Designed for a client as a weekday living area, the space is ensconced in a 70s-style brick apartment building overlooking the Mon Wharf, Pittsburgh's historic steamboat dock on the Monongahela River. "That's why we decided the interior should be like a steamer trunk," Damiani says.

Demonstrating how green design can be outré and exciting as well as functional, the apartment doesn't feature rooms per se, but rather a series of interconnected spaces that can be reconfigured according to whim. "The client is an engineer," Damiani says, "so I thought the whole place should resemble a machine-like container."

The second level has a large sliding door, with yet another door that quickly divides the area into a study or guest bedroom (complete with foldout Murphy bed.) SwitchLite glazing in the bathroom allows the space to be totally open or completely private when necessary. The star of the interior is undoubtedly the rotating sofa, which swivels around to offer tipsy guests a view of the Pittsburgh skyline and Heinz Field—stunning sights that are further emphasized by the neutrality of the bamboo interior. According to Damiani, "The mono material allows the view of Pittsburgh to become the apartment's primary event."

Keywords: [Pittsburgh](#); [Studio d'Arc](#); [LEED-certified](#); [bamboo](#)