

AT HOME

# A Rescued 'Wreck'

By KATHARINE HERRUP

Some New Yorkers say they want to change their lifestyles, homes, and careers. Holistic interior designer Lee Wright actually did it.

In 2000, Ms. Wright quit her job as a senior executive at the architecture firm BDG McColl in London. "There's a place for grand architecture, but that's just not me," she said recently.

After 15 years of working her way up the corporate ladder, Ms. Wright moved out of her four-story row house with a garden in London and came back to New York to find herself living in a studio apartment.

But after three years of living in cramped space, Ms. Wright determined it was time to really begin transforming her life — and that meant buying a home she could build from scratch. "I had lots of requirements for the apartment I wanted to buy, but the one I wouldn't let go of was that it had to be a wreck," she said.

Last year Ms. Wright found her wreck in a pre-war former foundry on East 23rd Street. The apartment had high, undulating ceilings that Ms. Wright has painted in a bright gold that almost looks like silver in the daylight.

After studying holistic therapy — in a class the teacher warned would change her students' lives "irrevocably" — and feng shui, Ms. Wright decided to design a feng shui home for herself with a contemporary Moroccan theme.

Ms. Wright loved the high ceilings in the one-bedroom apartment, but she decided to drop the ceiling above the entryway to give a sense of transition into the apartment from the outside. "The entry is a vulnerable space," she explained. "It acts as a transition hallway."

Off to the left, the foyer opens up into a large space with dining and living room areas and a study that can be closed off with sliding doors. To the right of the hallway is a new open kitchen with a deep industrial-style sink and drawers that act

as a refrigerator and freezer.

Between the hallway and the kitchen are a bathroom and a laundry room. Ms. Wright installed large doors to both the bathroom and laundry. "Bigger doors make the space seem bigger," she said.

In the kitchen, Ms. Wright chose antique French chairs for an antique Moroccan table that had been in her garden in London. An antique French mirror that hung above the fireplace in her London home also hangs in the dining area, across from three colorful contemporary paintings by artist Hayley McCulloch, a friend of Ms. Wright.

Ms. McCulloch also painted the rounded gold wall that separates Ms. Wright's bedroom from the rest of the apartment. The room, painted blue, is divided up into various sections — "family," "prosperity," and "love and relationship." "My bedroom is a safe

haven," Ms. Wright said. "I wanted this to be cozy and more intimate." For feng shui design, she said, the master bedroom is the most important space.

Ms. Wright said the low-set bed is in the most commanding feng shui position because if the bedroom door is open she can see the front door while lying on the bed. "A low bed also makes the space seem bigger and more comforting," Ms. Wright said. "Lying in bed, I have a fantastic view of the gold ceiling." She also installed high windows in the Venetian wall.

In the living room, which shares a wall with the bedroom, Ms. Wright uses a mustard-colored L-shaped couch from her former office on the Lower East Side. A replica of the Arco floor lamp, a popular 1960s Italian piece designed by Achille Castiglioni, stands over the couch. Nearby are an Eames lounge chair, a contemporary Danish saw-back chair by Hans Wegner, and three nesting Vladimir Kagan side tables.

Though her own apartment is no longer "a wreck," Ms. Wright uses those transformational talents in her holistic interior design company, S. Lee Wright Ltd. "I'm not here to make a statement through architecture," she said, "but here to help people design a space they interact well with."



BALANCED  
Lee Wright  
at home;  
her living  
room, left.