

SMALL SPACES



WALL SMART Building a walnut divider in an open studio created a dining room and a bedroom. The new wall, which includes a banquette alongside the dining table and a floor-level bookshelf in the bedroom, saves space.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Margaret and James Vira carved an entire home out of a tiny studio apartment. **Rumaan Alam** admires the ideas behind the big transformation.

As architects, first-time home buyers Margaret and James Vira were drawn to an apartment tower designed in 1961 by renowned modernist I.M. Pei. Initially, the soon-to-be parents were daunted by the prospect of life in a studio of a mere 565 square feet. But the opportunity to live in the New York City landmark was too much to resist, and the couple set about reimagining the open studio as a showcase for their contemporary aesthetic—and as a home with distinctive living, dining, and sleeping areas. “No matter how well you get along, it’s best to have separate, private zones,” James says.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY POUL OBER

STYLING BY LAURENT LABORIE



Margaret and James Vira in their dining room two weeks before son Santiago was born.