



**WIDE-OPEN
SPACES**

**NEIL AND JAMIE GREGORY
BRING CHICAGO HOME.**

BY JESSICA RONKY HADDAD / PHOTOS BY TODD WRIGHT

↖ A funky mix of old and new, high and low, gives Neil and Jamie Gregory's Manchester loft a cool, bohemian vibe.

I grew up seeing movies with artists' lofts and this is exactly what I pictured.

Homeowner Neil Gregory



Jamie Gregory indulges his passion for vintage vinyl with a new retro-style record player that blends seamlessly with the loft's mottled plaster walls.

Every morning, Neil and Jamie Gregory get up as the sun rises above the James River. With the light streaming through the floor-to-ceiling windows of their Manchester loft, there's no way to avoid the wake-up call, but they don't mind. An early start gives them time to enjoy a leisurely walk along the flood wall with Lt. Dan, the couple's Lhasa Apso spaniel.

The newly married couple moved to Richmond from Chicago in January, returning to Jamie's hometown. They wanted to live in an urban environment similar to that of their beloved Chicago and looked at acres of properties before finding a 1,500-square-foot industrial loft at Warehouse 201. "We saw other lofts that were really just apartments with one wall of exposed brick," Neil says. "But this is what I've always

thought of as a true loft — a real artists' space. We were surprised to find this in Richmond."

Formerly a coffee warehouse for the Check Neal Coffee Company (which eventually became Maxwell House), Warehouse 201 was built circa 1920 and converted to residential lofts in the early 2000s. Joseph

F. Yates, Architects designed each space to highlight the building's industrial qualities. The lofts feature huge windows, soaring ceilings, concrete floors, exposed mechanical systems, and walls of exposed brick and crumbling plaster intentionally left unrepaired.

"I grew up seeing movies with artists' lofts and this is exactly what I pictured," says Neil, a graphic designer with her own stationary business, *Stuffed Prints*. "I love how open it is and how much light there is." As soon as they saw the space, the Gregorlys knew it offered plenty of room to both live and work.

With the help of Jamie's mother, interior designer Suelien Gregory, the couple tackled dual design dilemmas: how to divide the wide-open space into designated areas and how to merge their individual belongings. With the guidance of Suelien's expert eye, however, the process was easier



The Gregorlys have furnished their loft with traditional family pieces mixed with modern accessories. In the main living area, a wing chair is juxtaposed with an arc lamp and Lucite ottoman and table.

With love they've also added a few new finds, including a vintage record player that blends seamlessly with the loft's mottled plaster walls.



With help from Jamie's mother, interior designer Suelien Gregory, the Gregorays successfully divided 1,500 square feet of open space into smaller living areas. "Jamie's corner" features a comfortable chair for reading and listening to music and is adorned with sentimental items — a skull the couple purchased on their honeymoon in Santa Fe, and a collection of whimsical tobacco jars owned by Jamie's grandfather.



Neil Gregory uses a letterpress from 1886 to print all of her stationery. "I love the tactile quality of letterpress stationery," she says.

There is not a ton of storage so we've pared our belongings down to the essentials.

-Neil Gregory

than expected.

It helped that both Neil and Jamie came to the marriage with lots of family pieces. An Oriental rug that once belonged to Jamie's grandfather defines the loft's main living area. Neil's grandmother's Oriental rug defines the dining area, which features a funky combination of painted picnic table, apple-green upholstered bench and three metal bistro chairs. Somehow, it all works together and defines the loft's bohemian vibe. The mottled plaster walls and stained floor amplify the dishabille, giving it a timeless, romantic quality.

While living in Chicago, the Gregorys developed a passion for architecture and modern design. As a married couple, they have added contemporary pieces to their mix of traditional furniture. A sleek arc floor lamp was a wedding gift from the owners of Shades of Light, Gregory family friends. A Lucite table and ottoman were hand-me-downs from Jamie's mother, and Neil's utilitarian studio furniture is from Ikea.

Her art studio dominates the wall

opposite the main living area. A giant, vintage "stationery" sign hangs above a staggered arrangement of shelves that hold a color-spectrum of books, small works of art and decorative accessories. Neil's 1865 letterpress sits in a corner of the studio, a relic of a simpler time. She uses it to print all of her stationery. "I love the tactile quality of letterpress stationery," she says. "Anyone can print something digitally nowadays. This is special." Locally, Quirk Gallery on Broad Street sells her cards and stationery.

Living in an open space (the couple's bedroom is located behind the loft's only partition) has its challenges. "There is not a ton of storage so we've pared our belongings down to the essentials," Neil says. "We can't have as much clutter because you see everything." Not long after moving in, they realized that they needed more workspace in the galley kitchen. With the help of Jamie's mother, they added a large island that divides the space nicely and provides much-needed counter space and storage.

Soon, the couple will face another challenge — where to put a baby. Neil is expecting the couple's first child this summer. "We will have to rethink things when we set up the nursery," Neil says. "All of our friends have perfect, Pottery Barn nurseries. We get to be creative." ♦



At the suggestion of Suelien Gregory, the couple added the butcher-block topped island to the kitchen, providing extra storage space and an informal spot to gather.



The dining area features mismatched pieces that work perfectly in the artsy space. The loft's huge windows provide abundant light.



The sleeping area is partially hidden by the loft's only wall.

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