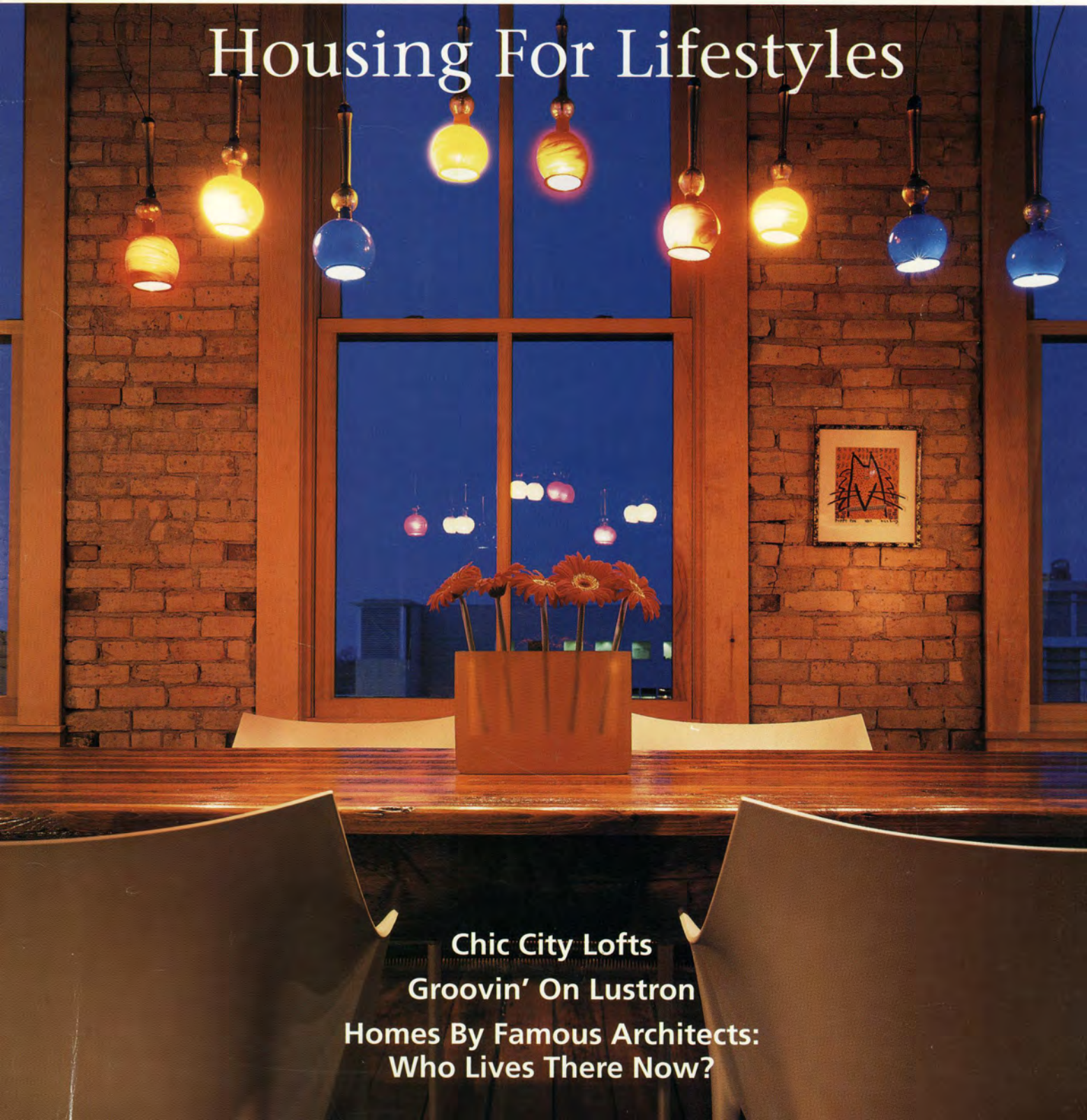


Architecture

MINNESOTA

Housing For Lifestyles



**Chic City Lofts
Groovin' On Lustron
Homes By Famous Architects:
Who Lives There Now?**



JEFF FREY

While the craze for loft living is pronounced in the Twin Cities, the phenomenon is beginning to be felt in smaller cities outside of the metro area. In Duluth, for instance, the recent creation of a loft-style residence in a downtown commercial building may be a harbinger of things to come.

In 1998, Damberg, Scott, Gerzina, Wagner Architects, Inc., Duluth, transformed the third floor of the 100-plus-year-old commercial building into a loft for a self-employed single man who owns the building and felt it was time for a new space that he could use as both residence and office. A retail store occupies the ground level; offices are on the second floor. The third floor was gutted to make way for the new 2,500-square-foot apartment. "We really used the existing building as a shell," says Doug Zaun, AIA, project manager, "and the residence was created within that shell."

In addition to an open-plan kitchen/living/dining area on the south end, the apartment includes a private master suite, guest bedroom and den. To create a lofted office space, the architects took off the building's roof and raised new exterior walls. Inside, a stainless-steel cable railing screens the loft from the living space below.

Instead of a typical loft palette of exposed materials such as concrete and brick, this loft features white-painted drywall, a Brazilian cherry-wood and slate floor and a fireplace clad in copper sheeting. The design team also used a clear-finished, vertical-grain Douglas fir to panel some interior walls.

According to Zaun, the project is already being cited around Duluth as a prototype for downtown living. "Duluth has commissioned studies and is working to promote this sort of urban development," he explains. "Sure, it's on a much smaller scale than anything you'd see in the Twin Cities, but these kinds of renovations are starting to happen here." Linked with Duluth's skyway system and featuring spectacular views of Lake Superior, the loft offers the owner instant access to all downtown amenities.

"The challenge with these older buildings is the cost of renovation and conversion," Zaun adds. "But it's starting to happen. More and more people are starting to look at downtown Duluth as a viable area for housing."

Superior Street Loft
Duluth, Minnesota
Damberg, Scott, Gerzina, Wagner Architects, Inc.
Duluth, Minnesota



Design team (from left to right): Doug Zaun, AIA, Randy Larson.

