



## Manhattan designer makes over NYC corporate apts. to benefit charity

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Gail Lowe Maidman, owner of Silk Purse Interiors, is putting a new twist on the business travel experience.

Instead of bland, cookie-cutter hotel rooms, corporate travelers can now stay in one-of-a-kind, dramatic themed Upper East Side rental apartments while at the same time helping homeless people in New York.

Maidman, an interior designer, is putting her own signature style on several short-stay corporate furnished apartments on the Upper East Side. Maidman decorates the small, cozy apartments with furniture, pictures, lamps, dishes and other accessories she finds in Housing Works, a vintage thrift store, which donates proceeds to homeless New Yorkers living with AIDS and HIV. Instead of decorating in traditional or even contemporary styles, as most short-stay apartments are done, Maidman goes out of her way to create a welcoming and unique theme for each apartment.

"These apartments are very funky and fun to stay in for the businessman or woman," said Celeste Trager, a broker at Fleet Realty, the brokerage company that rents the apartments owned by Townhouse Management.

One of Maidman's most dramatic designs is a one-bedroom on East 83rd St. that is transformed into a Tahitian island paradise, complete with straw and rattan furnishings, Polynesian statues and a floor-to-ceiling mural of a seaside scene.

In addition to the Tahitian themed apartment, she also has done a French provincial themed loft studio with Parisian knick-knacks on East 88th St. and an ancient Greek-themed basement studio on East 82nd St. complete with six foot high Roman goddess lamps, Greek warrior themed plates and martini shakers and a hand-painted mural of floating classical columns against a deep blue Aegean sky.

Maidman says she learned theme designs from her late mother, Jeanette Lowe, also a designer, who put a water wall of live fish in the lobby of Schwab House on the Upper West Side, back in the 1960s. Today, Maidman mixes in her own eccentric tastes and style, also getting some of her eclectic pieces at the Salvation Army and Opera Thrift shops.

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