

THE LONG VIEW From a window seat framed by textured jacquard curtains, Brian Kelly can see across the Charles River to Cambridge. Right: Kelly with one of his Harley-Davidsons in front of the Ritz-Carlton Towers.



VROOM WITH A VIEW

SUBURBAN AUTO DEALER BRIAN KELLY SHIFTS GEARS IN HIS DOWNTOWN DIGS.

BY ESTELLE BOND GURALNICK

To the discerning visitor, Brian Kelly's glamorous apartment in the Residences at the Ritz-Carlton Towers is intentionally and deliciously autobiographical. The clues are everywhere: a classy vintage motorcycle positioned as sculpture; a grand piano juxtaposed harmoniously opposite a window seat that overlooks one of Boston's all-time best views. It all adds up to a man about town whose zest and enthusiasm for both work and play are in complete balance.

Kelly's entrepreneurial edge surfaced early. At the tender age of 8, he packed cold drinks in ice in his little wagon and took his wares to potential customers instead of waiting patiently at a lemonade stand. Today, he's president of Kelly Automotive Group, a consortium of eight dealerships, all located north of Boston, where he grew up; he still has a house in the Prides Crossing section of Beverly.

Four years ago, ready for some diversity and excitement, he decided to move to Boston. "I think that ideally everyone should live in the city, either in their 20s or in their 50s, preferably both, if possible," he says. "Living here, I've made a whole new group of business associates and friends. I love the city lifestyle."

What's admirable is that his early roots are also intact. "My family is a big part of my success," he says. "My mother has a strong work ethic, and my father has a good business mind. Hopefully, I learned from both of them." Two of his three grown children from an early marriage work with him, as do his brothers and sister. He is hoping his youngest child, still in college, will join the other Kellys. His parents still live in Danvers, and the rest of the family is nearby, so it made sense to keep his Beverly home as a weekend and summer retreat.

Since his early teens, Kelly has been hooked on cars and motorcycles, a passion that has led him to display a cycle as art in every house he's ever owned. Through travel, he developed an eye for design, color, and quality. Even before his first consultation with Andrew Terrat and Dee Elms, Boston interior designers who worked with him on his Ritz condo, he knew he wanted the living room to be a combination of aqua, silver, and chocolate and done in a clean and contemporary – but not hygienic – style. Terrat recalls that, from the start, they

had the same vision of what the place could be.

"He'd bought the best floor plan at the Ritz Towers," Terrat says. "It wraps around corners to views of Boston Common, the Public Garden, the State House, Zakim bridge, Old Ironsides, the Charles River all the way to Fenway Park. It faces west, so the sunsets are superb. He was great, because he knew what he wanted. When we'd give him choices, he'd have a quick response. He was part of the process, which we enjoy. It was definitely a total collaboration."

At Kelly's request, Terrat and Elms tweaked the floor plan of his four-bedroom unit, combining two bedrooms into one large master suite with a dressing room. They made another bedroom into a den that now opens

via French doors into the living room. The fourth bedroom, in a privately situated guest suite with its own entrance, was left intact.

In the living room, the architectural alterations included adding what Terrat calls "the world's most dramatic window seat" by building it into the corner with the most sweeping views. Teamed with Kelly's own classic modern Noguchi coffee table and a new low-backed curved sofa, the combination creates a conversation area. The designers also were able to recess new mahogany bookcases into spaces between the floor-to-ceiling windows, which anchor the room and give it warmth. The main seating area floats in the center of the room, with Kelly's Harley-Davidson silhouetted against the central window. The satisfied cli-

ent says it all looks just the way he hoped it would.

These days, he exercises early at a gym in the building; then, "when everyone else is driving into the city," he does a reverse commute to his dealerships. (Not surprisingly, a favorite stop is his Kelly's House of Harley-Davidson in Billerica.) He's generally back in Boston by 8 p.m. and usually goes out to dinner with friends, often walking home across the city.

"It's perfect," he says. "Every night when I drive over the bridge and see the lights of the city, I feel like the luckiest guy in the world." ■

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IN PRAISE OF THE GRID

Designers Andrew Terrat and Dee Elms are big fans of the grid pattern and relied on it in multiple permutations to bring a subtle, masculine, unified look to Brian Kelly's luxurious living room. "Look closely," says Elms, "and you'll see the way we used the grid to add pop to all the textures, on the floor, on the fabrics, even the diamond-patterned latticelike pattern of the entry's demilune table (above). The grid is really the undercurrent of the room. It creates a symmetrical movement that ties the space together."

For the window seat and facing low-back sofa, they used a small-grid sable-colored velvet. For the room's major seating area, the sectional sofa is in smooth leather; the facing slipper chairs are covered in the same leather sewn into oversized blocks, creating a grid on seats and backs. Underfoot, small squares recessed into the carpet pile create a grid-within-a-grid pattern. And in the entry, the grid is turned on its side, in the form of the carved diamond pattern on the base of the demilune table.

"The grid is so versatile," says Elms. "Its great strength is that it offers both boundaries and freedom. It gives the eye some subtle diversity." — E.B.G.

SETTING THE TONE Facing page: Kelly's vintage turquoise and chrome Harley-Davidson inspired the unit's color scheme, from the silvery-gray leather sofa to the aqua walls to the chocolate-and-aqua curtain and pillow fabric. Above: The hexagonal mirrored table catches light on every surface; the sterling-silver chandelier was selected for its small scale, which doesn't compete with the view.