

MINIMALIST

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STEVE KADLEC

WHY WE LOVE HIM:

Like most architects, Kadlec has worked for a series of firms. But he realized early on that “small” and “residential” are the measures that count most in his mind. On size, he reasons “working with a small firm is more fulfilling because the project has a shorter life-span than say an entire high-rise or suite of offices. You can do more facets of a project, have better control over the process, experience more interaction with your clients and get to see the results of your efforts more quickly.” About residential work, he admits “the client relationships are more intimate and meaningful, and I like that...even those lingering or late-night phone calls and working through the personal problems design engenders.” Given such logic, it’s not surprising that Kadlec has chosen to focus on residential interiors, noting that “as a registered architect, I have complete perspective and scope. I can handle every part of a project, from its structural aspects to the furnishings, and look at all these components as a unified entity.”

WHAT HE’S DONE:

After earning a BA in architecture at the University of Cincinnati in 1989, Kadlec worked in London until a recession sent him packing to Chicago in 1991. He landed at Gary Lee Partners in 1995, where he was director of the firm’s residential studio. Yet he knew he always wanted to head his own practice, and two months before he turned 40 he struck out on his own. “I needed the artificial time frame to motivate me,” he admits. But he didn’t need any advice on how to do it; today, he alludes to his four-person firm’s reputation with clients for efficiency and service by quipping “we’re lean and mean.” They’re also creative and talented, as evidenced by a project he just completed that was featured *Luxe Magazine’s* summer issue.

KADLEC ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

411 N. LASALLE ST., 3RD FL.
CHICAGO, IL 60654
t.312.644.9270
www.kadlecdesign.com

