



Hakan Swahn
 Location: Midtown
 Style: Midcentury modernist
 Object of desire: 1953 Hans Jørgen Wegner valet chair
 Square feet: 2,000



Modern taste seasons home of restaurateur

BY LANA BORTOLOTT
 Special to amNewYork

When Aquavit owner Hakan Swahn wanted to move seven years ago, he didn't look far: He just went down the block. Seeking more space for his family, the restaurateur bought a three-bedroom, three-bathroom apartment on Central Park South for himself, his wife, their 7-year-old son and some 25 modernist chairs.

They all fit comfortably in the sun-filled, 2,000-square-foot space, mostly because the chairs look like pieces

of art placed here and there. Indeed, all but a few have a notable provenance—whether inherited, bought at auction or sourced online (eBay is a favored haunt).

"Chairs are very beautiful objects," Swahn said, adding, "We try not to accumulate too much stuff."

Swahn and his wife, Catherine, renovated the apartment, taking down walls to create an open kitchen and dining area that informs the rest of the residence. The apartment centerpiece: a Super Ellipse table by Danish designers Piet Hein and Bruno Mathsson, ringed by eight vintage Dux leather and chrome chairs. A '60s mother-of-pearl shell chandelier, aptly named the "Fun Lamp," by Verner Panton, hangs above the sleek teak table—perhaps an unconscious but sly nod to the entertaining that occurs beneath.

As a Finlander turned New Yorker, the décor comes naturally for Swahn. Some objects are family treasures, such as the antique wooden hutch and sofa—typical of what you'd find in a Swedish home (the sofa is a trundle bed to be unfolded before the hearth).

Other Scandinavian furniture and objects, such as the oversize Dansk teak chess pieces, he simply has an affinity for. He's a modernist by birthright, not by trend.

"I like minimalist, clean lines and not a lot of ornamentation," he said. "I would say this [apartment] is inspired by midcentury modern, not by antiques from 50 years ago."

His favorite chairs are an elegant wood valet chair from the 1950s and a buttercream leather club chair his father gave him as a child, and in which he likes to sit and read with his son.

He favors art with a graphic quality and layers of warm wood tones throughout. Noted artists hang near a signed Keith Haring poster promoting safe sex.

"It doesn't have art value, but it's fun to have," he said.

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1.) The dining room table, which seats eight, is called the Super Ellipse. It's by Danish designers Piet Hein and Bruno Mathsson.

2.) The modernist living room many purchased on eBay, by designer Jens Quistgaard

3.) Teak ice buckets and chess-player salt and pepper shakers, find in a Swedish home

4.) His favorite piece, a 1953 Hans Wegner valet chair

(PHOTOS: KATYA PRONIN)