



Designer Q&A: Cliff Fong & Jason + Jenny Biggs

Take a tour of Jason and Jenny Biggs' industrial NYC apartment, designed by Cliff Fong of HGTV's *Ellen's Design Challenge*.



You recognize him as judge and mentor on HGTV's hit show *Ellen's Design Challenge*, and here you'll get a behind-the-scenes look at one of fashion and interior designer *Cliff Fong's* recent interior design projects. In addition to styling Actor Jason Biggs and his wife, actress Jenny Mollen's two Los Angeles homes, Fong is the creative mind behind their chic but cozy NYC apartment. The trio met through Jenny's sister and have been working together ever since.

Fong approaches new design projects by creating unique spaces with items that aren't commonly seen, rather than sticking to what is trending at the moment and try to replicate it. Take a look at how he made this industrial loft complement Jason and Jenny's style, that in Fong's words is: playful, quirky, and casual.

1. Describe your design philosophy.

My hope is to always create something unique and personal for each client.—*Cliff Fong*

2. Describe your design style in three words.

Eclectic, rebellious, comfortable.—*Jason and Jenny Biggs*

3. How do you start a room makeover?

I think it's always important to design within the soul of a room. I focus on the architecture or elements of the space as a departure point. From there, I look to my clients' personal interests. If there's something they love or want to explore, I want to use that as an aesthetic influence.

I start with whatever would be the dominant feature of the room, like a sofa or dining table. It's sort of like getting dressed in the morning. I think most people put on their pants first and then dress from

there. If you have a great pair of jeans, anything can look good with it: a cashmere sweater, a tailored jacket, etc. It's usually quite easy, adding layers, and accessories.—*Cliff Fong*



Photo: Laura Moss

4. Walk us through the design of Jason and Jenny's new home.

The exposed beams and brick gave us a lot of texture and architecture to work with. These finishes are also quite heavy and masculine, however, so there is a stronger use of color here than in other projects I have worked on for them. Jenny and Jason are also avid art collectors with an extensive grouping of work. I took cues from this artwork to bring colors into the space for upholstery and decorative pillows. They are also well-traveled so there are additional accessories from their journeys from Morocco and other parts of Africa, for instance.—*Cliff Fong*



5. What's your favorite part about your newly decorated home?

The way the new pieces perfectly complement our existing furniture and make the apartment feel much bigger.—*Jason and Jenny Biggs*



Photo: Laura Moss

6. Is there anything in your home that you splurged on?

Art. Also, Jason insisted on getting the biggest possible television for the space, and I still don't know how to turn it on.—*Jason and Jenny Biggs*

7. Did you encounter any challenges when designing this space? How did you overcome them?

It's actually quite an easy space, open and full of possibilities. The greatest challenge is lighting. Light comes from only one direction in the main living area. In an environment with heavier finishes, it can be difficult if light only comes from one direction. It can make things look backlit and difficult to see. So the use of floor and table lamps, in addition to ceiling lighting was key in making the environment feel balanced.—*Cliff Fong*

8. What's your best tip for designing a home for children?

I always think it's a great opportunity. I think a lot of people get too overwhelmed by the idea of things being practical and they forget that there are options for them to be stimulating and engaging as well. Once one has crossed off all the boxes concerning safety, I think everyone should look at what they surround their child with as a goal of making it stimulating and fun, and as an extension of the rest of the home.—*Cliff Fong*

9. How has life changed after having your son Sid?

Jenny's dream of having an all-white bedroom is gone.—*Jason and Jenny Biggs*

10. How would you describe your entertaining style?

Impromptu and informal. Because we have a kid and we're usually too tired to go anywhere, we try to lure people over here as much as possible.—*Jason and Jenny Biggs*

11. What is the one item in your home that you can't live without?



Photo: Laura Moss

The Moroccan rugs I brought back from the Atlas Mountains.—*Jenny Biggs*

My 1920's Parisian club chairs that have been with me in four different homes.—*Jason Biggs*



Photo: Laura Moss



Photo: Laura Moss

12. What's your favorite piece in the Biggs' new space?

I think it might be the Bertoia wire lounge (left).—*Cliff Fong*

13. Lastly, what are your top three tips for apartment living?

1. I think it's generally better to take it slow and find one thing you really love and splurge on it if necessary. I would always rather have one thing I really loved, than a house full of things I was ambivalent about.

2. Build an aesthetic around that piece of furniture and you'll have something that feels cohesive and personal.

3. Always be aware of proportions. As apartments come in all shapes and configurations that can't usually be altered, it's best not to try to cram a sofa from your parents' house into a one bedroom. Better to find something that you purchase specifically for the space. Additionally, I know it seems obvious, but make sure you check all measurements of something you're purchasing with your building's stairway, elevator, and doorway clearances. Some of us may have had to learn that, the hard way...—*Cliff Fong*

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