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RECLAIMED CHIC

COLLECTORS' CATALOG OF ART FINDS A BACKDROP
AT THE REFURBISHED MONTGOMERY WARD BUILDING

When Eugenie and Lael Johnson bought their loft in Ukrainian Village, they were pioneers in a newly burgeoning area. That was 1993, at least five years before the neighborhood really developed, they say. ■ "It was a great duplex loft," says Lael, a corporate lawyer. "The downside was it was on the 2nd and 3rd floors with very high floors and no elevator. We always knew at some point we were going to move." ■ Three years ago the Johnsons became interested in the Montgomery Ward catalogue building, a commercial structure in River North that was being converted to residences. To satisfy their need for views and outdoor space—and "not just a little tacked-on balcony," says Eugenie—they decided to

BY KATHY KAPLAN | TRIBUNE PHOTOS BY BILL HOGAN

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Dining chairs copied from pine chairs in a small-town restaurant in New Mexico surround a table by Chicago designer Lee Weitzman. Opposite: Former Chicago artist Sherrie Fredericks designed this chest with dragonflies applied to its glass panels. In the background, Lael Johnson enjoys the view.