



Finding Balance

Traditional and modern elements combine with bespoke artwork in a young couple's reimagined high-rise apartment.

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Interior Design: London Walder, London Walder Interior Design
Home Builder: Greg Szlachta and Marek Bajkowski, MK Construction & Builders Inc.

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hen it comes to a style, the tastes of a couple don't always converge—even when they have been together for a long time. Such was the case with designer

London Walder's clients, who recruited her to spruce up their new apartment on the 66th floor of a posh high-rise building near the Magnificent Mile. He envisioned a more masculine, traditional space—think moldings and wood paneling. She preferred a more modern milieu punctuated by glam moments. "Trying to design on both ends of the spectrum was an interesting challenge," admits Walder, "but I think we did it."

To start, she took advantage of the space's proverbial good bones. Walder enhanced the classic details of what was already there, recruiting builders Greg Szlachta and Marek Bajkowski to refinish the oak herringbone flooring and create built-in cabinetry and moldings in key areas. New marble windowsills throughout add to the elegance. But then the designer upped the ante, incorporating dramatic, often boisterous wallcoverings. "We took some chances," Walder says. "I like the combination of elements that are a little unexpected."

The mix can be found in the front foyer, where a painting by Van Hoang, a vivid contrast between bold, bright colors and true black, holds court. A plush velvet bench with antique brass legs—one of many brass elements found throughout the home—plays off the silver grass-cloth wallcovering and silk ribbed rug, adding "that glam element," Walder says.

Creating a sense of cohesiveness, the wallcovering flows throughout the hallways and into the great room, which offers breathtaking views of the skyline. Taking advantage of those vistas, Walder placed the dining table near the windows and surrounded it with comfortable host chairs that encourage lingering over a long, intimate dinner (and—hopefully—larger dinner parties once it's safe to host).

After dinner, a night might be capped off in the serene sitting area, where the city vistas can still be enjoyed. While Walder chose to keep most of the hues cool and subtle—furnishing it with a charcoal sofa and a pair of tailored off-white

chairs—a custom cocktail table with a red-veined Calacatta marble top, brass-framed art and a pair of brass side tables create warmth and nod to a city sophistication. As does the adjacent lounge, which emanates the old-school vibe of a cigar club. Flanked by alabaster table lamps, a contemporary sofa in light fabric pops against the walnut paneling. In the corner, a sculptural wing chair is paired with a delicate black metal side table and a metal reading lamp. It's a place where a book or a cocktail should be enjoyed (simultaneously if one's in the mood). "It's complementary to the family room space but a little more masculine," Walder explains.

The designer changed course in the comfortable living room off the kitchen, where she steered away from the typical formality. There, a chaise sectional invites lounging and walls are covered in an unexpected floral-patterned wallpaper that adds to the cozy feeling and plays well with both the traditional kitchen cabinetry and a vintage brass-and-beaded-glass chandelier.

While it makes an undeniable statement, the wallcovering is tame in comparison to the one in the office. It's so striking that when the client sneaked in for a peek before the furnishings and artwork were installed, she felt a bit overwhelmed by the pattern. When she immediately called the designer to express her misgivings, "London said it would look great once the furniture was in," she recalls, "and she was right."

Perhaps fittingly, the mood is more subdued in the bedrooms. In the main suite, a creamy textured wallcovering with a striped effect creates a soothing backdrop for an upholstered headboard flanked by streamlined side tables and a pair of alabaster table lamps. But, as with the rest of the home, Walder couldn't resist adding a bit of the unexpected. An organic mixed-media wall sculpture by Jill King plays off the geometry of the newly added ceiling moldings. "We surprised the clients with this piece as a last-minute addition, and they love it," Walder says.

The result speaks to the owners' wishes for a home that's both comfortable and luxurious, without an ounce of pretense. It was a lovely backdrop for the owners' fifth anniversary, when a private gourmet chef prepared them dinner while they enjoyed their new digs. "Everything just flows so nicely," Walder says. "What a lucky life." ■



A vibrant artwork by Van Hoang from Daniel Kiriakide Fine Art adds a splash of color to the pale gray silk wallcovering by Area International in the front foyer. The two-tone cerused-wood console is from Universal Furniture and the mirror is from Antieros.



A neutral palette awash with texture emphasizes the skyline views in the comfortable great room, where a plush sofa from Kravet and armchairs by Century Furniture surround a cocktail table with a custom, red-veined Calacatta top from Cala Stone Boutique.



Above: The great room flows into a walnut-paneled lounge furnished with a Kravet sofa atop a hand-loomed wool-and-viscose rug from Loloi Rugs. The giclee print is by Guseul Park from Leftbank Art.

Opposite: A bold backdrop for a lacquered faux horn desk with brass legs and hardware from Made Goods, the office walls are covered in a floral wallpaper by Cole & Son from Kravet. The artwork by Flora Borsi is from Daniel Kinkade Fine Art.

Neutral pieces, such as a Kravet sofa and a charcoal chair and ottoman from Bernhardt, complement the more traditional floral wallcovering in the living area adjacent to the kitchen. Gilded island pendants from Visual Comfort & Co. and counter stools from Fabricut create an elegant transition into the kitchen.





Above: Century Furniture nightstands with satin gold accents flank an upholstered headboard with zinc nail-head trim from Vanguard Furniture in the guest bedroom. The textural charcoal wallcovering is Thibaut and the rug is by Surya.

Opposite: A mixed-media wall sculpture by Jill King from Daniel Kinkade Fine Art pops against the horizontally striped Ivory wallcovering by Maya Romanoff in the owners' bedroom. The Kravet bed is dressed in Fino Lino linens from Bedside Manor.