



HIGH LIFE

WARM COLORS AND CONTEMPORARY FURNISHINGS CREATE A SOPHISTICATED URBAN RETREAT WITH SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF DOWNTOWN.

By Tate Gunnerson
Photography by Tony Soluri
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"This space is not hard-edged modern; it's a cool, casual, comfortable modern," says Linda Searl of the 2,100-square-foot condo unit she designed in collaboration with Greg Howe of Searl Lamaster Howe Architects. The owner, Daniel Affetto, father of a 10-year-old boy and senior vice president of a financial services company, had lived in a smaller unit in the same building since 2006. When a larger, three-bedroom residence on a higher floor with views of the lake and downtown became available, Affetto traded up and hired the architects to completely redesign the space. "I felt very comfortable with Greg and Linda, and I was thoroughly impressed with their previous work," says Affetto. "They had a vision for what they hoped to accomplish, and within a couple of weeks they had developed some great ideas."

Their work began in the entry foyer, where a wall of custom American walnut cabinetry now conceals a hallway leading to the master bedroom. "We intentionally hid it for those instances when [Affetto] wants to screen off the private spaces," says Howe. The cabinetry includes built-in storage, as well as lighting and display niches. "All of the light sources are concealed and come from gaps between elements, rather than from wall sconces or pendants," says Howe, pointing out that,

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URBAN OASIS

For the redesign, architects Linda Searl and Greg Howe selected small-scale furnishings and built out a long, narrow windowsill to create a bench for additional outdoor seating. Owner Daniel Affetto's 10-year-old son likes to sit on the balcony and watch the fireworks from Navy Pier.



LIGHT HOUSE

Clockwise from top: The living room with a B&B Italia sofa; kitchen with lacquer cabinetry and marble countertops; architects Linda Searl and Greg Howe.



...CONTINUED likewise, the concealed door is created by two panels coming together, the pull being the gap between the two. "It creates a sense of distinction, not by adding elements, but by deleting them," says Howe. "We weren't adding a bunch of jewelry."

A major feature of the redesign, the cabinetry wraps into the living room, where a TV has been mounted on it, and then makes another right angle into the kitchen, where it serves as storage in place of traditional wall cabinets. "We wanted to make it look as little like a kitchen as possible," says Searl. The sink is discreetly housed in a lacquered base cabinet. If it weren't for the cooktop on the sleek island, the space might be mistaken for a posh wet bar.

The island sits between the kitchen and living area, and can be used for additional seating when Affetto entertains. There's also plenty of seating on the large sectional sofa that Searl and Affetto selected for the living area. "It's a B&B Italia sofa, but it also has a high-end blue jeans look," says Searl. On the far end of the living area, the architects

eliminated a wall, joining the space with what was formerly the third bedroom. Now an office, the space includes custom metal sliding doors with smoked glass panels that can be shut for privacy. "By opening up that wall, it really made the living room feel more comfortably scaled," says Howe.

As his confidence in the architects increased, Affetto felt more and more comfortable leaving the final call about finishes and furnishings to them. "They told me that they could do the interiors down to the very last detail, but that if I wanted to play a bigger role in the decorating, I could," says Affetto. "As we started, I realized that I was in great hands, so I got out of the way. I wanted to upgrade the place, but it turned out way better than I expected." ■

