

make it better

Sophisticated Living in the City

SEPTEMBER 1, 2013

BY TATE GUNNERSON



A Glencoe couple assembles an elite design team to transform their Gold Coast pied-à-terre.

“Our vision was to create a beautiful space that would be elegant for entertaining clients and friends, yet casual enough to have all the children and grandchildren feel comfortable to stay with us,” explains the owner of a two-level penthouse in Chicago’s Gold Coast neighborhood.

The owners, who have resided in Glencoe for 30 years, purchased their urban pied-à-terre so they could be closer to their children and grandchildren, who live in the city. To help them customize their home, they engaged the help of an elite design team that includes interior designer **Michael Abrams**, who created a luxurious environment that emphasizes the view.

“There isn’t a lot of color,” Abrams notes, pointing to the white walls and warm gray palette with black and silver accents. Custom furnishings upholstered in luxurious materials, such as leather and mohair, create interest without detracting from the spectacular skyline views. “The view provides the excitement, while the interior is soothing, relaxing and a good backdrop for the owners’ collection of fine art, sculpture and books,” Abrams says.



According to Abrams, creating the gallery wall was a team effort. “These were all pieces that she brought from her home,” Abrams says. “I placed them above the sofa to create a salon wall. The simple black lamps anchor that wall and give it a great pop.”

Indeed, the white walls create a gallery-like feeling for the owner’s extensive art collection, which includes pieces by Renate Wolff, Mike Andrews and Matthew Rich. For help, the owners turned to art consultant **Patti Gilford**. “Patti visited our primary home to get a feel for who we are and what we collect and then joined in the task of adding to the artwork that we had already acquired for our city apartment,” the wife says, noting the collection of 75 black-and-white works by Andres Bally, which they display in the two-story stairwell.



Their collection also includes a glazed ceramic mask by Asger Jorn, which is displayed in a Lucite box in the living room—one of several modernist pieces from **Arts220**, the Winnetka design gallery owned by **Fern Simon**. “Her store reflects her global perspective and is filled with both fine and decorative arts,” says the wife.

The owners also have high praise for architects **Stuart Cohen** and **Julie Hacker**, whose contributions include redesigning the master bathroom, reconfiguring the master bedroom closet as an office space, and designing built-in cabinetry (made of rift-sawn white oak with a dark stain) for the family area. “We contacted this team as soon as we purchased the apartment, as we have completed many renovation projects with them during the past 20 years,” the wife says. “They are truly visionaries in the field of architecture.”



According to Abrams, the owners are dream clients who know what it takes to complete a home. “It’s that last 10 percent—art and accessories—that make all the difference, and these clients get it,” he says. “They surrounded themselves with the right team to make that happen.”



For the owners, every visit is an unforgettable experience. “Each and every time we walk into the apartment it takes our breath away,” the wife says. “The view is outstanding, but it is also the renovation, furnishings and artwork that make the picture complete.”

Photos by Scott Shigley