

New England HOME

Celebrating Fine Design, Architecture, and Building

Seductive Sophistication

Cosmopolitan looks for stylish living—
both in the city and beyond






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The reconfigured foyer grew chicer with the addition of a limestone tiled floor, Venetian plastered walls, and a coffered wood ceiling. Smaller in footage, there's still ample room for a cast-resin-framed mirror, a custom console and small Holly Hunt bench. FACING PAGE: The prints lining the hall to the central living area are by Pennsylvania artist Emil Lukas.



SKY HIGH SURPRISE

A BOSTON CONDOMINIUM IS ALL ELEGANCE AND STYLE, BUT IT'S ALSO DESIGNED TO HOLD ALL THE ACCOUTREMENTS A YOUNG FAMILY NEEDS.



“MAKING THIS CITYCENTRIC RESIDENCE INTO A REAL HOME WAS CHALLENGING,” SAYS CONTRACTOR CHRIS RAPCZYNSKI

“A walnut ceiling provides a cool transition to the living room,” explains interior designer Dee Elms. Small details, like the silver base on the custom ottoman, bring lightness and sparkle to the setting. Atop a Hellman-Chang Xie cabinet, even the TV gains stature. And although, says Elms, “No one ever tires of the view,” motorized sheers afford privacy when desired.



LEFT: A waterfall edge on the kitchen counter is an elegant touch, as are the glass tiles along the backsplash, but, equipped with a full range of hidden organizational features, the room is also functional. BELOW: The painting over the bar cabinet is by German artist Matthias Meyer. BOTTOM: Nocturnal by nature, the family's pet chinchillas spend most of their days napping. FACING PAGE: To ensure plenty of seating in the dining area, Elms teamed the banquette with Elana chairs from the Bright Chair Company.



A grand building built of glass and granite and featuring a mix of luxe hotel suites and condos (not to mention a slew of upscale amenities and several acclaimed eateries) evokes empire-building executives and world travelers. A paparazzi-followed celeb swanning in and out wouldn't be surprising. What *doesn't* spring to mind? Baby paraphernalia and pets. As it turns out, though, the Residences at the InterContinental on Boston's waterfront are also ideal for a young family yearning for the perks of urban living along with traditional comforts.

The modern structure's unique design nods to the tall ships that once graced Boston's harbor. Its height represents the masts, while the curved facades are the wind-filled sails. Lured by the unending views and abundant natural light, the

owners chose a corner unit with a sharply angled living/dining space and recruited interior designer Dee Elms to help them build a nest that better reflected their lifestyle and refined aesthetic. The existing place, explains Elms, sported simple finishes and a layout that didn't quite meet the needs of the couple and their young daughter. "The foyer was huge, while the kitchen was tiny. I'm used to high-end condos, but I also have three young kids, so I get it," she says with a chuckle. "I put on my family hat and thought through every detail."

Contractor Chris Rapczynski, of Sleeping Dog Properties, was also captivated by the idea of forging a family base in one of Boston's most glamorous buildings. "We look for unique elements in each project to engage our staff," he says. "Making this city-centric residence into a real home was challenging."

In less skillful hands the task may have seemed impossible or, at least, improbable. But, as is clear today from one end of the stylish unit to the other, Elms and Rapczynski have successfully paired luxury





and efficiency. Case in point: Elms began by commandeering a slice of the oversized foyer and creating a mudroom—an invaluable addition not normally associated with posh apartments. The downsized entry gained a coffered wood ceiling and Venetian-plastered walls. And the baby’s stroller—along with coats and boots—acquired a walnut-finished, out-of-sight parking space.

As for yesterday’s tight kitchen, Boston-based kitchen designer Jodi Geran, who was at the time aligned with Downsview Kitchens and is now with Christopher Peacock, came on board to provide relief. Slicing a doorway to the previously closed hallway, Geran and Elms enhanced the layout and increased the unit’s flow. The old galley-like room, Geran says, “went side to side. The new doorway allowed us to design the room front to back for an open concept.”

Furthering the seamless marriage of kitchen, dining, and living areas, the high-end appliances (including four ovens, fridge, freezer, and microwave) tuck unobtrusively into their assigned spots. In fact, the overall elegance doesn’t miss a beat, even with the addition of what Geran labels the “chinchilla villa.” The chinchillas’ custom pad, complete with its own special ventilation and lighting system, slips discreetly alongside the bar cabinet as nice as you please. The adorable pets remain close but comfortably sequestered.

Of course, in keeping with the swank address, the kitchen’s roster of surfaces reads like a five-star menu: marble counters, a combo of gleaming high-

PROJECT TEAM

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN: Dee Elms, Elms Interior Design

BUILDER: Chris Rapczynski, Sleeping Dog Properties



TOP: A custom quilt from Denyse Schmidt Quilts and a stash of pillows in the daughter’s bedroom go a long way in making bedtime happy. BELOW: The powder room is clad in a Phillip Jeffries wallcovering. The Briolette Glass vessel sink atop the painted vanity is by Kohler. FACING PAGE: The office has built-in storage for books and mementoes while also leaving room for a set of prints by Jonathan Borofsky, a sculptor and printmaker in Ogunquit, Maine. A soft Stark carpet makes work more enjoyable, as does the Cardan office chair.



Leo's Luxe Linens, a Phillip Jeffries wallcovering with a hint of metallic, warms up the master bedroom, while pillows covered in a bright Quadrille fabric inject a splash of color. The inviting reading corner is outfitted with an armchair, ottoman, and lamp from Holly Hunt. The Stark carpet was selected for its antique look. BELOW: Marble tiles in a calming wave design cover the end wall of the husband's bath.



“WHEN I’M WORKING WITH A CLIENT, I’M CONSTANTLY THINKING ABOUT WHAT’S LIVABLE AND VIABLE,” SAYS ELMS, REFERRING TO THE APARTMENT’S THREE BEDROOMS.

gloss lacquer and walnut veneer cabinetry, and a Venetian-plastered ceiling. For Elms, textures are a critical component that bring not just visual interest but also a depth of richness.

Her clients liked it so much, Elms also swept the prime finish onto the dining area’s ceiling. Punctuated with a streamlined boxed pendant by Bone Simple Design, the pale ceiling appears to float upwards. The luminous surface throws back the colors of a large painting by Connecticut artist Ted Gahl and, at night, the flicker of candle flames. Indeed, guests stationed on the sumptuous banquettes flank-

ing the Bright Groups’s custom K3 table seem almost reluctant to move.

In contrast, a handsome wood ceiling defines the living room. Its warming presence is a perfect counterpart to the expansive windows. From the start, it was decided the TV would usurp the corner, but Elms cleverly softened the room’s sharp angle with a curved Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams sofa that breaks easily into sections, a circular ottoman from the Bright Group, and a round hand-knotted Stark rug. Swivel chairs go every which way, so the family can revel in the vistas or watch the chinchillas.

“When I’m working with a client, I’m constantly thinking about what’s livable and viable,” says Elms, referring to the apartment’s three bedrooms. Every space (including the laundry, with its twin washers and dryers) works as beautifully as it looks from the office *cum* guest room to the sophisticated master quarters. The office incorporates a Mitchell Gold sleeper, a versatile Holly Hunt ottoman, and a work-friendly desk racing along the entire window.

In the parents’ sanctuary, shades hidden behind the crown molding blot out the world on demand “It’s restful right down to the art,” Elms says, directing attention to William Ciccariello’s contemplative painting of bare trees and snow. Opposite the Holly Hunt bed, a sleek built-in provides endless storage and forges a niche for an additional television.

The couple opted for his and hers baths, but with similar three-dimensional wall tile in each, there’s a

soothing continuity. Both rooms also flaunt a neutral color theme, while his contains a glass-walled shower and hers holds a shower and tub.

Nearby, the daughter’s haven is as sweet as can be with a moon-patterned wallcovering by Bartsch Paris and a cozy custom bed that will grow along with her. Elms injected plenty of storage here, too, and there’s also a spot for a wee tea table and chairs. Still, all the designer’s stellar planning and stunning accoutrements probably don’t mean much to a little girl. For her, this is just home—her favorite place—and that’s the way it should be. •

RESOURCES For more information about this home, see page 179.