



VANTAGE POINT

NEUTRAL HUES, LAYERS OF TEXTURE AND A FLOWING, OPEN LAYOUT CREATE A SERENE CHICAGO APARTMENT WITH DYNAMIC VISTAS OF THE LAKE AND CITY SKYLINE.

WRITTEN BY TATE GUNNERSON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE SCHWARTZ



INTERIOR DESIGN / ELIZABETH KRUEGER, ELIZABETH KRUEGER DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE / JEAN DUFRESNE, SPACE ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS
HOME BUILDER / ANTHONY DIVITTORIO, T&T CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

This is a visually calm space that draws the outside in," says designer Elizabeth Krueger about the Chicago apartment she fashioned for a professional couple seeking a tranquil aesthetic. Rather than competing with the ever-changing colors of the lake and sky, Krueger adorned the apartment with a multitextural palette of earthy hues. "The owners are incredibly warm yet very hip," she says. "So, we wanted to create a cozy, layered space with an edgy note."

To begin the project, architect Jean Dufresne and associate Maria Contreras made several modifications to the original floor plan, which had a traditional layout featuring smaller closed-off rooms. "The entry had an oval hall that didn't fit the look or feel of the space we envisioned, which was an open flowing layout," Dufresne says. Adds the wife: "I wanted a calm, spa-like environment with a simple, uncluttered floor plan. It was important that every room be used and have a purpose." Originally, the entry didn't have a relationship to the dining room, and the kitchen was completely shut off from the living room. With the changes made, "the space now has a much better flow while affording views of the city," Dufresne says. "It feels so serene and inviting."

One of the most glaring problems with the original unit was its galley-style kitchen. Eliminating the wall between the kitchen and the living room "allowed us to let more natural light into the entire area," says the husband. "It also provided unobstructed views of the lake, which has a different personality and look every day, as well as compelling views of the city." Furthermore, a custom waterfall-style table that attaches to the kitchen's island bridges the gap between the island's iceberg quartzite countertop and the sumptuous finishes in the living room. "We wanted the kitchen to feel like it was part of the living room," Krueger says. "It's as beautiful, open and airy as it is utilitarian." In that same spirit, upper cabinets have been tucked out of sight from the living room in favor of floating steel shelves.

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To emphasize the seemingly endless blue water horizon, Krueger had the formerly white window casings painted a dark shade of bronze. "It's almost like an eyeliner that accentuates the colors of the outside," Krueger says. "It makes the lake seem that much bluer against the dark window frames." Grass-cloth wallpaper with a warm wood-toned color in the kitchen reinforces that effect and plays off the studded wallpaper that defines the open dining room. The dance of textures continues in the master bedroom, where a Moroccan-inspired rug and a woven wallcovering foster an enveloping ambience. "I love working with natural materials," Krueger says. "It was all in service of that layered visual story we were telling."

At the wife's request, concrete columns in the living room were uncovered, adding another layer to the ensemble. "They were never meant to be exposed, so we didn't know what we'd uncover," says builder Anthony DiVittorio. "We used grinders and chemicals to clean them up, and they turned out to be a really dynamic element." One column, which is positioned between the living room and kitchen, anchors a comfortable seating space with a built-in bench and a pair of contemporary chairs. "We really tried to create a variety of seating areas within one cohesive space," Krueger says. To that extent, another built-in bench in the living room's bay window resides with petrified-wood side tables and a rocking chair, while a pair of tête-à-tête sofas takes center stage, as does a grouping of custom armchairs surrounding an ottoman with nailhead trim. "We kept a majority of the seating off the windows because we wanted people to walk up and take in the view," Krueger says. Adds Dufresne: "Elizabeth managed to make the large living room feel intimate and welcoming. Every element is so well-connected and plays off each other."

In contrast to the cavernous living room, the master suite was deliberately scaled down to create an intimate retreat—its extra square footage allocated to a larger closet and master bathroom, which was reoriented toward the windows. "We reorganized the master bathroom to maximize the views," Krueger says. The tub, for instance, was placed on a raised platform that cleverly conceals plumbing while taking advantage of the panoramas. Displayed like a piece of art beneath a glass pendant, it cuts a modern profile against an oak-paneled accent wall. Furthermore, an oversize mirror helps to reflect the outdoor colors that change throughout the day.

Although renovating the apartment was not without its challenges, the owners are pleased with the outcome. "The things that were so frustrating turned out to be the greatest joys," says the wife. "It was nice working with people who stayed creative throughout the process." During the final stretch of the project, while the owners were away, Krueger coordinated the installation, staged the home and placed all the details. Once every piece of furniture was arranged to perfection, the couple came home for the big reveal. "It was a very special treat," says the wife. "The lights were dimmed, the music was playing, and every item was in place. We've moved a lot over the years, and it feels very comforting to be in a home that we could stay in forever." ■



Designer Elizabeth Krueger created a beautiful yet functional vignette in the entry of this Chicago apartment. Benjamin Moore paint provides a neutral backdrop for a mirror from RH, which hangs above an existing metal-and-wood console. The custom ottoman is covered in Holly Hunt's Great Plains fabric. Hickory planks from Northwestern Hardwood Floors run underfoot.

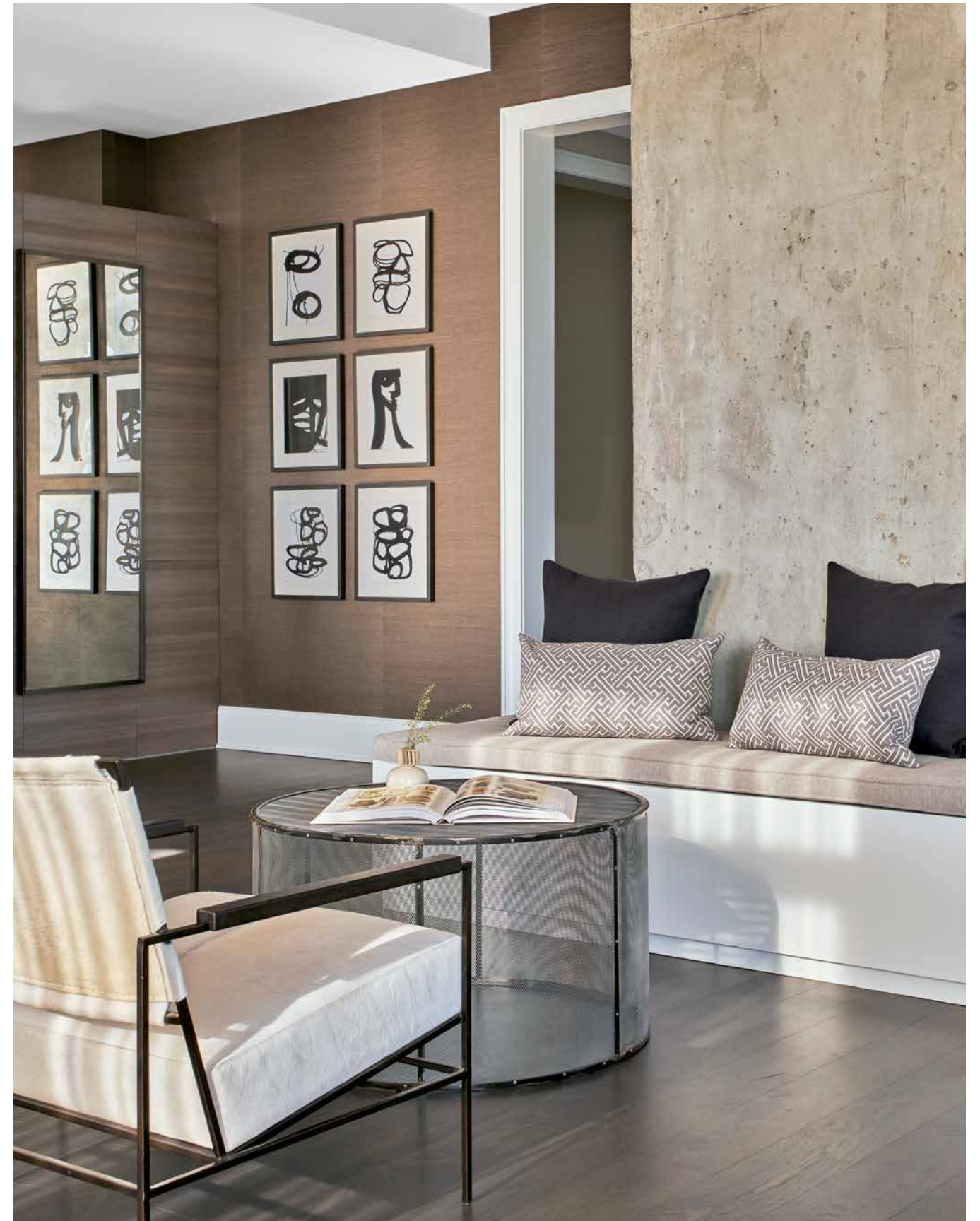


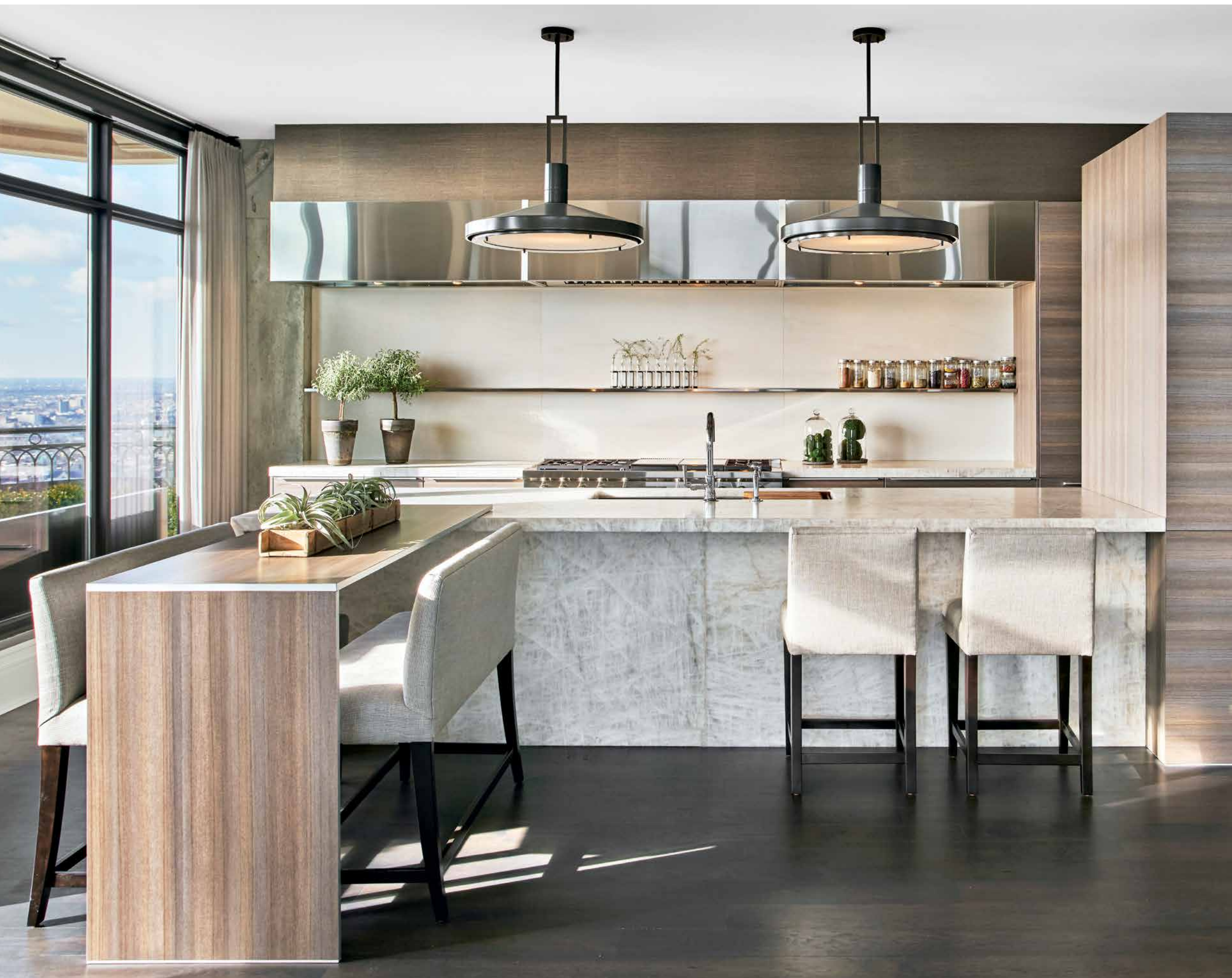
A pair of linen-covered tête-à-tête sofas from A. Rudin and a Gregorius Pineo coffee table from Holly Hunt rest on a J.D. Staron carpet from Oscar Isberian Rugs in the open living room. Floor lamps from RH brighten the scene, while a Jason Lewis Furniture rocking chair swathed in Schumacher fabric and Jayson Home petrified-wood side tables create another seating area.



A sitting area between the kitchen and living room features Oly chairs covered in white cowhide and a coffee table from Casamidy in Mexico. Artwork by Lynn Basa is from Daniel Kinkade Fine Art; Mimsie O'Hara Fabric Designs fabricated the draperies, which were made from a Holly Hunt Great Plains material. Builder Anthony DiVittorio helped expose the concrete columns in the home.

Prints from Jayson Home add contrast to the wall of the sitting area and are reflected in a custom hinged mirror from Armand Lee & Company that conceals additional storage. DiVittorio constructed the built-in bench, which includes Holly Hunt's Great Outdoors fabric, as well as pillows from both Jayson Home and Classic Remix Chicago.





Above: Architect Jean Dufresne opened up the kitchen to the living room in order to create a flowing entertaining space with spectacular views. Custom cabinetry from Poggenpohl pairs with countertops purchased from Terrazzo & Marble Supply Companies and fabricated by Stonecutters. Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances were also purchased through Poggenpohl.

Left: Phillip Jeffries wallpaper from Holly Hunt helps the reconfigured kitchen feel like an extension of the open living room. The space also features custom barstools and benches, and a backsplash fabricated and installed by Stone Shop. Bronze pendants from David Sutherland illuminate the scene.



This page: A textural Phillip Jeffries wallcovering from Holly Hunt adds interest to a set of custom metal-framed doors fabricated by Engineered Iron Works that lead into the media room. Intended to be a cozy space for large gatherings, the room includes a hemp-and-sisal carpet from Oscar Siberian Rugs.

Opposite: In the media room, a grass-cloth Schumacher wallcovering and wool-sateen draperies fabricated by Mimsie O'Hara Fabric Designs create an enveloping backdrop for a custom sectional fabricated by Anees Upholstery. Jayson Home stools, as well as an RH floor lamp and clock, finishes the space.



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Above: RH's Moroccan-inspired rug plays off the Gregorius Pineo console from Holly Hunt in the master suite. Table lamps, also by Gregorius Pineo, light the space. DiVittorio fabricated the built-in window bench, which includes a Holly Hunt Great Plains material fabricated by Baird's Drapery Services.

Right: Liaigre sconces from David Sutherland reflect in the custom mirror from Hooked Up installs in the master bathroom, which was moved from its original location to capitalize on the views. Cabinetry fabricated by Modern Millwork Innovations includes Häfele America Co. hardware and complements a Corian countertop that features Dornbracht faucets.



The cocoon-like master suite includes woven Larsen wallpaper from Cowtan & Tout that creates a textural backdrop for a custom bed fabricated by Eli-Wyn Upholstery and covered in RH linens. An existing nightstand from A. Rudin was re-covered in a Holly Hunt Great Outdoors fabric. The Porta Romana sconce is from Donghia.



A wood-paneled accent wall and Fiandre porcelain flooring from TransCeramica create an artistic frame for a sculptural Barcelona tub by Victoria + Albert that's outfitted with a Dornbracht filler. A Larmes pendant by ET2 Contemporary Lighting from Lightology is suspended above.