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A glass stair rail, a Christian Astuguevieille chair and a painting by Thrush Holmes welcome guests into the foyer of a newly renovated Georgetown penthouse, featured on the following pages. Anthony Wilder Design/Build won a 2023 PRO Remodeler of the Year award in the category of Residential Interior over \$500,000 for the project, as well as *Home & Design's* Award of Excellence. See a full list of awards on page 137; three other winning projects are spotlighted on page 154.

Clockwise from this page: The designers offset the kitchen's Eggersmann island, clad in Arabescato marble, with Nero black marble fireplaces in the flanking parlors. The formal seating area boasts a curvy Moxie Interiors bench. In the dining room, cabinetry by SieMatic offers extra storage; the Best & Lloyd light fixture is encrusted in pearls.



A drab Georgetown penthouse is recast as a classic-meets-modern gem

ALL IN THE DETAILS

Text by Sharon Jaffe Dan | Photography by Anice Hoachlander



A couple downsizing from a stately home in DC's Foxhall district did not want to compromise on style when they acquired a Georgetown penthouse. They tapped Anthony Wilder Design/Build and Houston-based Benjamin Johnston Design to transform the abode's lackluster interiors into what would become a one-of-a-kind residence primed for entertaining.

Encompassing the third floor of a century-old building, the home hadn't been touched in years. Among its shortcomings: There was no sense of arrival when guests entered via the private elevator or stairs, both centrally located in the square-shaped home. An outdated kitchen was sequestered like an afterthought near an open living/dining space on the left side of the apartment while two cramped bedrooms, two baths and an office—all dark, drab and uninviting—occupied the right.

Principal Anthony Wilder, architect Sean Mullin and kitchen designer Shannon Kadwell collaborated closely with Johnston and the wife to take the property in a bold new direction. "We knew that converting this condo, which had previously been renovated, into their dream home would be a great challenge that we were ready to take on headfirst,"

Renovation Design & Contracting: Anthony Wilder, principal; Sean Mullin, AIA; Shannon Kadwell, CMKBD, Allied ASID, Anthony Wilder Design/Build, Cabin John, Maryland. Interior Design: Benjamin Johnston, Benjamin Johnston Design, Houston, Texas.

Q&A with ANTHONY WILDER
DESIGN/BUILD



DRAWING BOARD

How do you determine if there is potential in reviving an older condo?

Anthony Wilder: The most potential can be realized when a client has a vision for the project so that we know we’re on the same page. Challenges can be an opportunity for creativity. After all, limitation is the mother of invention!

What solutions do you recommend in homes with limited natural light?

Sean Mullin: Some LED systems mimic the sun and tune the light “temperature” of fixtures. You can program different settings for different times of day that can help enhance your mood.

Share advice on protecting marble kitchen surfaces from staining and wear and tear.

Shannon Kadwell: All white marble needs some kind of protection. In this project, TuffSkin was applied to the island to protect the surface. It’s a removable adhesive that resists scratching, heat and stains.



Designer Benjamin Johnston juxtaposed a heart sculpture by Damien Hirst with an antique chest in the formal sitting area (pictured here). Glass panels and a new lacquered railing (opposite) upgrade the stairway.

“Reflective surfaces make the rooms look much larger. Everything was about creating expansive views so the home wouldn’t feel crowded.”

—ANTHONY WILDER

BEFORE PHOTOS



Mullin recalls. Lofty goals included revamping the kitchen and two baths; adding gravitas with custom millwork and luxe finishes; and bringing in more light to accentuate the owners’ modern art.

Clever shifts to the floor plan better apportioned the 1,695-square-foot residence for 21st-century living. A sleek kitchen took shape in the middle of the open living area, flanked by parlors featuring black-marble fireplaces. Replacing the former kitchen, a new dining room boasts a chic wet bar sporting SieMatic cabinetry. By combining the two bedrooms into one, the owners gained a spacious primary suite; the office now doubles as a guest room. A revamped stair arrives at a welcoming foyer where glass railings keep sightlines open.

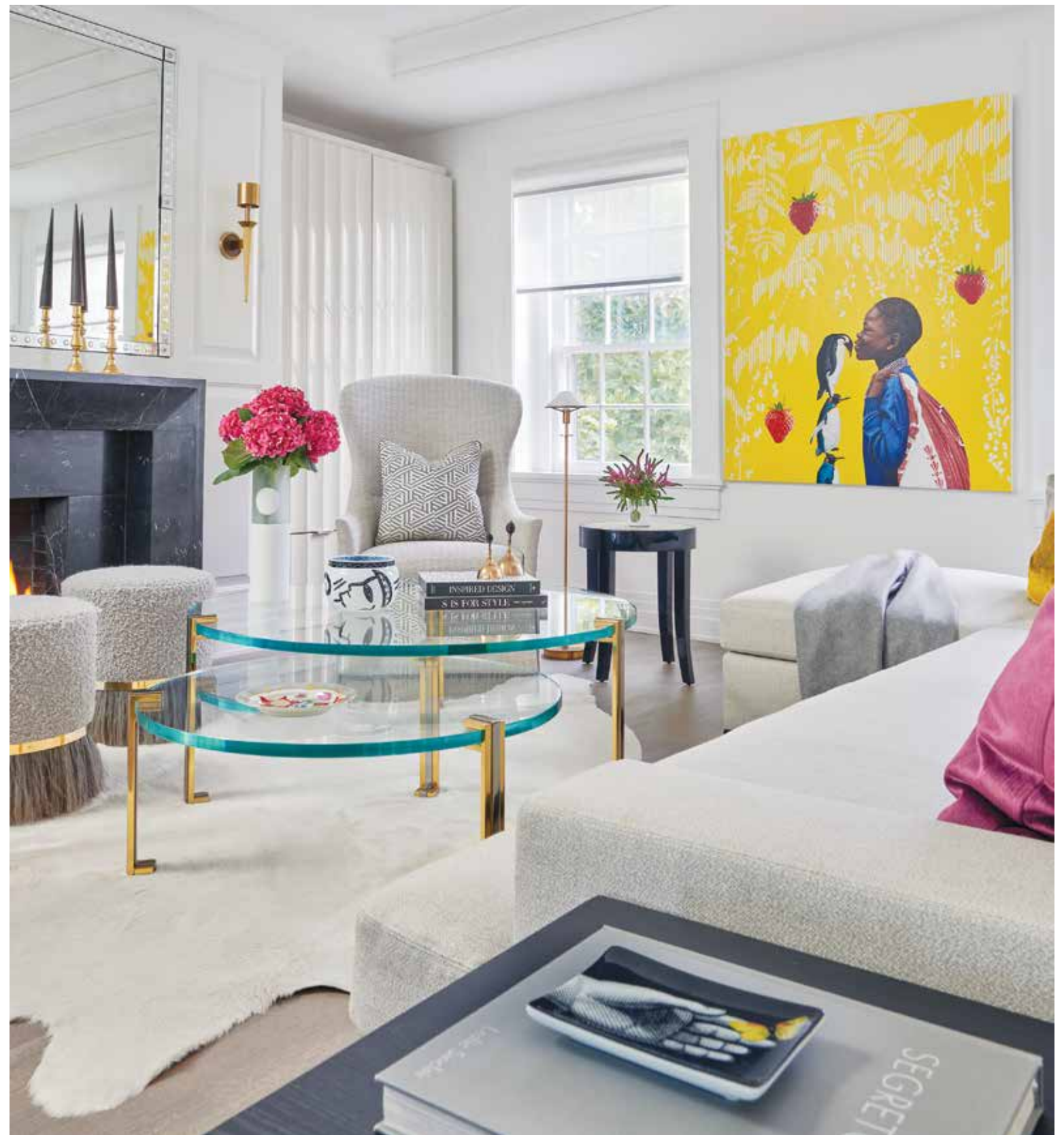
The team cast a wide net to land upon appointments, fixtures and finishes that would mesh with the wife’s vision. A trip to the Eggersmann showroom in New York led to the dramatic Arabescato marble-clad kitchen island, custom-made in the firm’s German factory. “Once we got direction that they were ready to change the floor plan, we knew that the island needed to be spectacular,” says Mullin. “That island, I think, is what drove the entire project. It was like dropping a Ferrari into the space.” A matching marble backsplash and a La Cornue range flanked by white-lacquered cabinets introduce further utility—and glamour.

From the 14-carat-gold Lohja Tornio fixture floating above the island to the bedroom’s vintage chandelier, statement lighting also bejewels the home. In contrast, LEDs smaller than dimes, manufactured by Porsche for Apure, illuminate interiors and artwork but virtually disappear in the ceiling when turned off.

Finely crafted details—think intricate millwork, bespoke fireplace surrounds and brass floor inlays—elevate every space. “All of the trim was reimaged. We created a layering effect to give you a sense that the ceilings are higher than they are,” notes Mullin. “The millwork has a very traditional feel, which I think balances really well with the contemporary island and fireplaces.” A flat-screen TV drops down from the ceiling near the fireplace in the less formal parlor.

Pale wooden floors and high-gloss lacquered door panels were employed to strategic effect. “We wanted as much light reflection as possible,” says Wilder. “Reflective surfaces make the rooms look much larger. Everything was about creating expansive views so the home wouldn’t feel crowded.”

Houston-based interior designer Benjamin Johnston worked with the owners to complement the architectural details with a sophisticated mix of contemporary and classic pieces, many from their previous home. “The family’s heir-



The team completely transformed the once-lackluster apartment (before shots, opposite), with fine millwork, redefined ceilings and a brighter palette. Guests gather on a Mattaliano sectional on the casual side (above), where a drop-down TV is concealed in the ceiling. Furnished with pieces from JANUS et Cie, a deck (opposite) off the entry hall takes in views of Georgetown.



looms and prized possessions were called upon to lend a dramatic, personalized touch to the mostly neutral furnishings,” he explains. “Pieces with mixed metals and finishes were chosen to accentuate the use of antiques throughout the home. The palette was kept classic and neutral to let the art provide color and drama.”

The entire project, from design through construction, was completed in 13 months—no small feat given challenges presented by the building’s infrastructure and the narrow streets of Georgetown (think road closures). Big-ticket items, from the La Cornue oven to giant slabs of stone, had to be craned in from the rooftop deck.

“We had a lot of faith in our client and her eye and vice versa,” Wilder reflects. “And we were passionate about this opportunity. Everybody involved was a joy to work with.” ■



Another marble fireplace awaits in the owners’ suite (top), where a vintage chandelier hangs above a Kravet table. Phillip Jeffries wall covering embellishes the guest room/office (above, left). The primary bath (above, right) features a porcelain-slab countertop and backsplash.