

MODERN LUXURY

Interiors

PREMIERE ISSUE

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INSPIRING
LANDSCAPE DESIGN

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KITCHENS & BATHS
TO INSPIRE

Georgetown

A DC COUPLE
DOWNSIZES TO
A GORGEOUS
GEORGETOWN
PENTHOUSE WITH THE
HELP OF ANTHONY
WILDER DESIGN/BUILD
AND INTERIOR DESIGNER
BENJAMIN JOHNSTON.

*By Michael McCarthy
Photographed by Anice Hoachlander*

MODERN



Two living rooms flank the kitchen in this Georgetown penthouse—the less formal space boasts a nesting coffee table designed by Benjamin Johnston and a Mattalano sectional.



A sofa from Gallotti&Radice, a palazzo-style mirror from Julian Chichester and art from Damien Hirst grace the formal living room.





THE PROJECT

Historic properties are always tricky, and a penthouse in Georgetown was no different for a couple who bought the 1,695-square-foot home before the pandemic. Originally constructed as two townhomes in the late 19th century, the spaces were reimagined in the 1980s as seven private residences. A DC couple, who have grown children, a condo in New York and an extensive art collection that included everything from Russian contemporary pieces to Werllayne Nunes, wanted to downsize into a place that offered versatility and endless options for entertaining.

THE TEAM

Knowing that a complete 16-month renovation was in order, the couple chose Cabin John, Md.-based Anthony Wilder Design/Build (anthonywilder.com) for the architectural design and construction of

the penthouse. “I listen viscerally and find a way to connect with clients,” says Wilder. “Once we connect, we’re on the same path throughout the process. For this project, the clients had a vibrant, adventuresome energy with great ideas. Working together was so enjoyable.”

For the interior design, Houston-based Benjamin Johnston Design (benjamin-johnston.com) was called in to help merge the old bones of the building with a decidedly modern aesthetic. “I love blending modern with classical architectural details found in historic buildings like this one,” says Johnston, who often uses 2D and 3D drawings and photorealistic renderings to convey his team’s vision to clients. “From the Eggersmann kitchen and blend of modern and vintage lighting to the use of classic stone features throughout the home, the interiors achieve a harmonious balance between classic, contemporary and comfortable.”



THE GOALS

The home, which features lovely views of the Potomac and its bridges, hadn't been updated in many years. Wilder says the team needed to "turn old-school into brand-new" by replacing the elevator, stair entry and stair rail, and by moving the kitchen in the penthouse's floor plan.

Johnston had equally daunting marching orders. "Our clients brought noteworthy art and other sentimental pieces to the project, so we focused a great deal of attention on finding the perfect spot for those pieces," he says. "They also entertain, so it was important for the penthouse to feel open, inviting and sizable enough to hold any number of guests, despite the limited square footage. Finally, both the husband and wife frequently work from home, so we were tasked with creating spaces that serve dual purposes comfortably."

THE CHALLENGES

Talk about an epic challenge made even more daunting during the pandemic. "In order to get materials in and out of the historic building, we needed to construct scaffolding to get large delicate sheets of marble—all with metal backs—up to the top floor via a lift. In some cases, a crane was also needed," says Wilder.

THE LIVING AND DINING ROOMS

The kitchen is flanked by a double parlor; one side is formal, and one side is more intimate and comfortable, perfect for long, leisurely nights. For the latter, Johnston chose a sectional from Mattaliano (mattaliano.com), which is a perfect vantage point for watching movies via the projector system cleverly hidden in the millwork. The sofa pairs wonderfully with a nested coffee table—crafted with mixed metals and glass—and designed by Johnston.

The kitchen features an Eggersmann island and lighting from Cameron Design House.



A built-in bar from SieMatic anchors the dining area, which features a Wiggers Custom Furniture table and Best & Lloyd lighting.





Romance pervades the vibe in the primary suite, with a Chad James Group canopy bed and a sofa and dining table from Wiggers Custom Furniture. Opposite page: Side tables from Cameron complete the bedroom's look.



The more formal space features a curved Audrey sofa by Gallotti&Radice (gallottiradice.it) via DDC New York (ddcnyc.com), a Federal-style bench from Moxie Interiors (moxie-interiors.com), a Palazzo mirror from Julian Chichester (julianchichester.com), a vintage lamp transformed by a Bella Figura (bellafigura.com) shade and a painting by Damien Hirst (@damienhirst).

Adjacent to this space sits the dining room, providing a continuation of the largely neutral color palette. "The dining chairs are upholstered in a luxe Pierre Frey (pierrefrey.com) fabric, which is contrasted by the custom cerused dining table from Wiggers Furniture (wiggersfurniture.com)," says Johnston, who notes a Pearl flush-mount fixture by Best & Lloyd (bestandlloyd.com) provides both ambiance and style. A built-in bar by SieMatic (siematic.com) anchors the room and offers exceptional storage.

THE KITCHEN

Bring on the parties. Wilder's team relocated the kitchen to the rear of the home, enabling it to become a focal point for entertaining.

As guests walk up the stairs to the penthouse, the kitchen quickly comes into view with its massive marble Eggersmann (eggersmannusa.com) island and Lohja Tornio lighting by London-based Cameron Design House (camerondesignhouse.com).

"Even the drawers on the island have marble fronts, so that it appears almost as if it was carved out of a single massive block," says Johnston. "The appliances are largely hidden away via clever cabinetry solutions also from Eggersmann. Our clients also wanted the kitchen to be within conversational distance of both adjacent parlors. Now the hosts can prepare drinks or put the finishing touches on a dinner, while still feeling like they're part of the party."

THE PRIMARY SUITE

Beginning with an oversize fireplace, the primary suite has a more traditional feel than the rest of the penthouse. Johnston's team selected a vintage metal and globe chandelier to establish a romantic vibe complemented by a Chad James Group (chadjames.com) canopy bed upholstered in Holland & Sherry (hollandandsherry.com) fabric. "Our clients also wished to also work in this space, so we paired a sofa and a dining table from Wiggers Furniture at the end of the bed to add an additional layer of functionality to the space," says Johnston, who also included lovely bedside tables from Cameron (cameroncollection.com).

HOW THE HOME IS LIVING

"The clients were ecstatic with the end result," says Johnston. "Historic renovations often come with their share of challenges, and this project was no exception. But in the end, the apartment is a true reflection of our clients, their interests and the life they had shared together up to this point."

"They're very happy," adds Wilder. "They're creative risk takers and allowed us to do our best work and transformed every nook and cranny." ■

DESIGN DETAILS

HOME TYPE

Penthouse

LOCATION

Georgetown

ARCHITECT AND BUILDER

Anthony Wilder Design/Build
anthonywilder.com

INTERIOR DESIGN

Benjamin Johnston Design
benjamin-johnston.com

RESOURCES

MATTALIANO

Informal living room sectional sofa
mattaliano.com

GALLOTTI&RADICE

Formal living room Audrey sofa
gallottiradice.it

MOXIE INTERIORS

Formal living room bench
moxie-interiors.com

JULIAN CHICHESTER

Formal living room Palazzo mirror
julianchichester.com

BELLA FIGURA

Formal living room lampshade
bellafigura.com

DAMIEN HIRST

Formal living room painting
@damienhirst

WIGGERS CUSTOM FURNITURE

Dining room table
wiggersfurniture.com

BEST & LLOYD

Dining room light fixture
bestandlloyd.com

SIEMATIC

Dining room bar and cabinetry
siematic.com

EGGERSMANN

Kitchen marble island
eggersmannusa.com

CAMERON DESIGN HOUSE

Kitchen Lohja Tornio lighting
camerondesignhouse.com

CHAD JAMES GROUP

Primary suite canopy bed
chadjames.com