

# POLISHING A GEM

On Lake Washington, a pied-à-terre with an architectural pedigree is refreshed for family gatherings.

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Interior Design: James Fung and Whitney Maehara, NB Design Group Home Builder: Steve Moeller, Schultz Miller  
Landscape Architecture: Paul Broadhurst, Broadhurst + Associates





The sitting room of this Kirkland condo opens to the main living areas and was given a playful spirit with a Gerrit Rietveld Zig-Zag chair from Bauhaus 2 Your House. Just beyond, the kitchen's new floating blackened-steel shelves were designed to complement the fireplace surround and create a more open feel.

They just don't make condos like this anymore," says designer James Fung. The Kirkland complex, designed by architect James Olson of Olson Kundig in the early 1990s, is a celebration of Northwest vernacular, a style that Fung and his firm partner, Whitney Maehara, eagerly embraced. "James and I both have an architectural background, so it was fun to honor the original design—but it also posed a challenge for us," adds Maehara. The homeowners, a couple with grown children in the Seattle area, wanted to create a comfortable vacation retreat where their family could gather, so it took a bit of clever thinking to turn the relatively compact, two-bedroom residence into a more generous and welcoming dwelling without completely gutting the space. "It's a quintessentially Pacific Northwest home with horizontal lines that are almost Japanese in their language, and a lot of the architectural details had held their own over the years," recalls Fung. "The owners trusted us to know what was important to leave as is and what we could update." Working with general contractor Steve Moeller and project manager Patrick Kerr, Fung and Maehara carefully preserved original stone and wood finishes. In places where they couldn't, such as spots in the ceiling they had to open for new lighting, they took extra care in matching graining and finish. "Our crew worked closely with several talented subcontractors who designed, fabricated and installed new paneling in fir and birdseye maple that seamlessly blends with the original woodwork," says Moeller. Noting that preserving the existing materials directly influenced the new color palette of warm maple tones, soft creams and grays, Maehara adds, "The intent was always cohesion, and to use the same language throughout."

Also key to their work was making the spaces look and feel larger. "Because it's an intimate size, maximizing functionality is essential," Maehara continues. A good case-in-point is the kitchen, where built-ins exude an almost yacht-like feel befitting the home's water views. "The clients

wanted a hidden induction cooktop, so that got us thinking about how to hide other things, like the bar," recalls Fung. As such, the cooktop is designed to work beneath the porcelain countertop, and the new integrated maple wet bar, fitted with a wine refrigerator and all the accoutrements a host or hostess could want, is tucked behind cabinetry.

In the adjacent living room, the designers added a glamorous touch with a gold onyx fireplace wall. "It ties into the woodwork and there's a lovely movement to the stone itself," says Maehara. "This isn't an everyday house, so we wanted to make it a jewel box," Fung adds. For the furnishings, the designers selected custom sofas and a pair of swivel chairs that allow guests to take full advantage of the terrace, which was refreshed by landscape architect Paul Broadhurst and now leads directly to the beach. Opposite the living room are the dining area, defined by a sculptural, ebonized table, and a sitting room. There, a reissue of Gerrit Rietveld's Zig-Zag chair and a painting by Britten create an artful retreat. "We wanted something with color that could also ground the space," says Fung of the painting, which was commissioned by the clients.

At the opposite, or inland, end of the condo are the bedrooms and bathrooms. "We redid our clients' suite but kept the original window wall and other details," explains Fung, highlighting the room's birdseye maple dado. Fung and Maehara designed the custom bed with integrated nightstands and an upholstered bench in a manner that echoes the yacht-like efficiency found throughout the abode. Adding to the main bedroom's sanctuary feel is a private terrace complete with comfortable seating and a fountain.

"There's something to be said for this kind of classic Northwest space," says Maehara. "The architecture is formal, but there's a casualness to the spaces—refined but comfortable." And while staying true to the home's original details was the challenge, it was also the reward. "We kept the history and blurred the lines between what's old and new" says Fung. "This project was all about paying homage to the existing aesthetic while creating an open and luxurious interior—and now it feels fresh again." ■





A sofa and loveseat by Kravet with cushions in a Perennials fabric offer plentiful seating options in the living room. The coffee table is from Kathy Kuo Home and the rug is by Driscoll Robbins. In the kitchen are Wolf wall ovens from Albert Lee Appliance.

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**Left:** A Ben Soleimani oak dining table serves as a dark contrast to maple-paneled walls. Sitting atop a rug from Driscoll Robbins are leather Holly Hunt chairs from Jennifer West Showroom.

**Opposite:** Armchairs from Room & Board swivel away from the living room to take in the views of Lake Washington. The fireplace's onyx wall was sourced from Lambert Stoneworks, and Benjamin Moore's Grant Beige coats the ceiling.







**Above:** The main bathroom features a new vanity fabricated by Norwegian Northwest topped with the original marble slab. It is accented by Top Knobs hardware and Hansgrohe faucets. The wool runner is from Driscoll Robbins.

**Opposite:** In the primary bedroom, a custom integrated bed fabricated by Village Interiors features a Giant chenille from Kelly Forslund, where the designers also sourced the Dedar pillow fabrics. The maple nightstand, made by Norwegian Northwest, holds a Palecek lamp from Designer Furniture Galleries.

