

Up in the Air

A suburban couple's new roost in
the city hits all the right high notes.

By Sarah Francis Photography By Nat Rea



PREVIOUS PAGE: A balcony off the bedroom. THIS PAGE, ABOVE: The living and dining areas offer panoramic views of the Providence skyline. BELOW: The dining table by Bradley has a painted iron base and concrete top. The chandelier is Visual Comfort. FACING PAGE: The powder room mirror is by Electric Mirror.

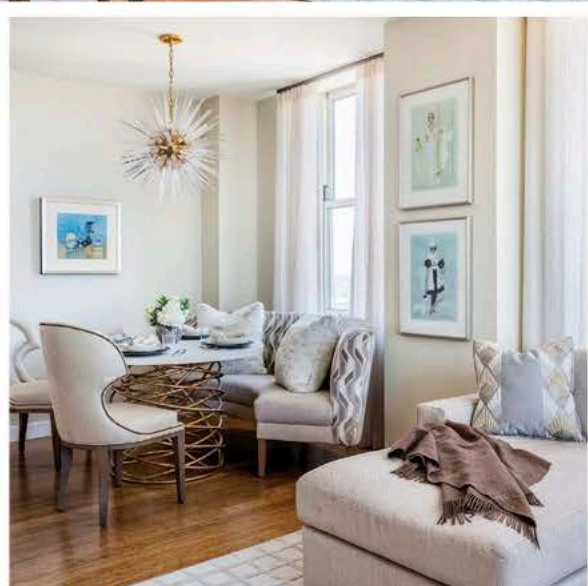
Rooms with a View

Some empty nesters pack up and move someplace warm. That's not the story of Robyn and Ted Smalletz, who headed north to Providence, leaving behind their traditional Colonial in the leafy 'burbs of East Greenwich for something more contemporary. "We love the energy of living in the city," says Robyn.

In fact, their latest chapter is a valentine to city life. "Ted and I were ready for a lifestyle change. We'd talked about moving downtown for several years," she says.

They were familiar with the Residences, an amenity-filled high-rise with views of the State House that beckoned with a maintenance-free life. The couple checked out several floor plans in the building, but nothing clicked until the very last unit they visited, on the twenty-third floor. "We were ready to call it a day, but we saw this and right away, with its spectacular views and light, we knew it was the one."

With plain white walls and no furnishings, the unit, a lease with option to buy, was a blank page. The first time the couple met there with interior designer Kelly Taylor, it was sunset and the lights of the skyline were starting to twinkle. "The timing was serendipitous but this was the dimension we need to capture, we told her. We want the city to be the centerpiece."

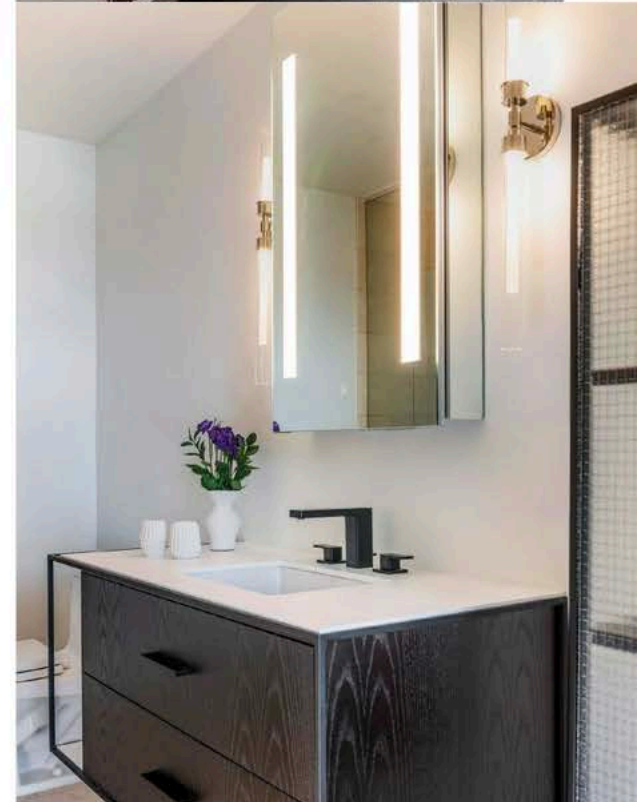
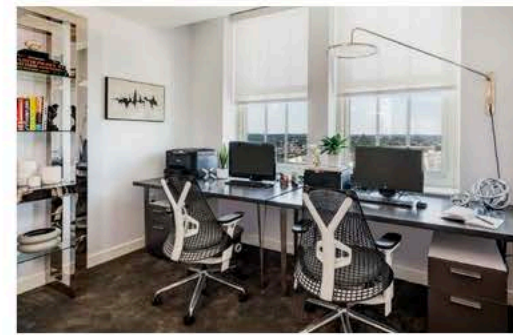
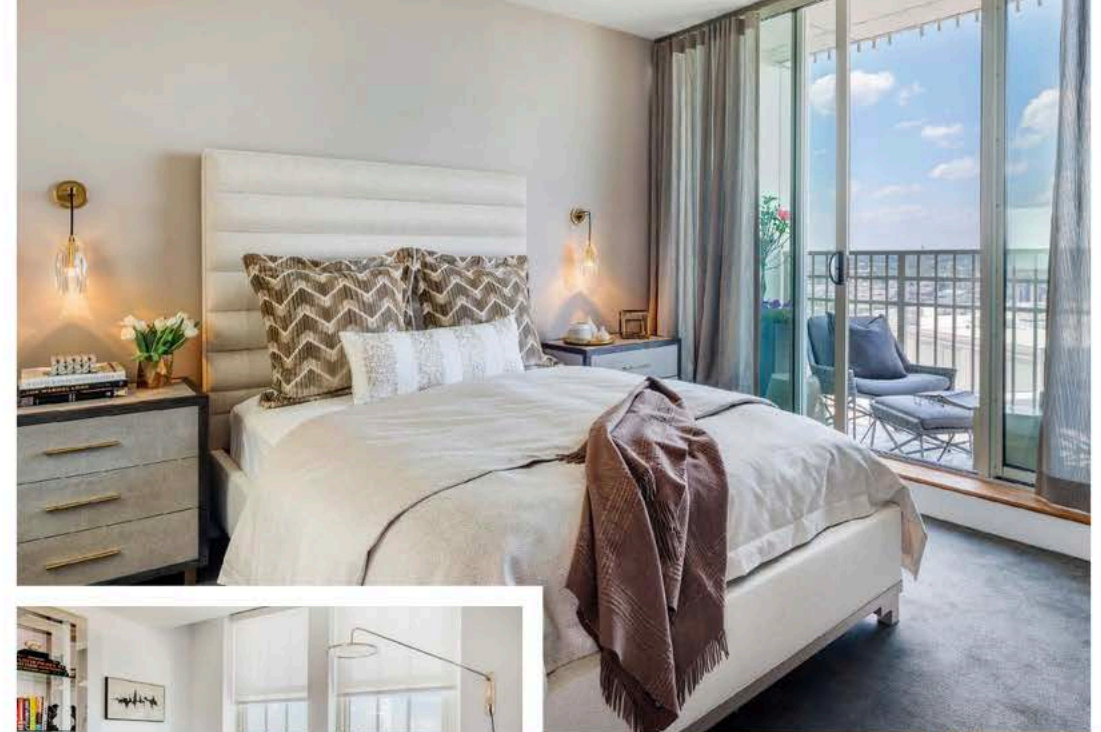


Seeing the Light

In designing the 1,200 square feet of interior space, the couple's ask was simple. Make it glam. They also wanted comfortable and chic, with a neutral color palette. Despite being a rental, the designers went all out. Taylor and staff designer Lauren Collard pulled in dozens of different finishes and textures to create layers of interest. Contrast was important and the two pros accomplished that with golds and silvers, three-dimensional fabrics and custom wood finishes. The living and dining areas nod to a loft-like open

space with soft lighting, all new furnishings and gauzy sheers that frame views of the state capitol. Robyn instantly fell for the crystal starburst chandelier, with its echoes of evening stars, that hangs above the dining table. (It was a splurge, she admits.) The retro London bar stools complement the curved custom banquette with its hint of a cozy Parisian bistro. The luxe look extends to the powder room with its Osborne and Little geometric flocked wallpaper and gold ceiling.

THIS PAGE: The oval tables are Erinn V; the smaller angular table is by Vanguard; the vase in the window is West Elm. FACING PAGE, ABOVE: The master suite bed linens are custom. INSET, HOME OFFICE: Ergonomic chairs are Herman Miller. FACING PAGE, BELOW RIGHT: The master bath vanity of stained oak veneer surrounded by a matte black frame, along with the faucet, are Lacava. The condo's design is by Kelly Taylor Interior Design, ktid.net



Prep Talk

The couple sold their E.G. house in a whirlwind three days and moved into the condo without much furniture. “We felt like college students,” Robyn says. Then COVID hit with its delays; the couples’ vacation and family visits were temporarily out. Fortunately, all the design and ordering were done but the renovation still presented challenges. The building’s doorman had to be notified if there were deliveries, using the service elevator required coordination, and contractors were limited to working nine to five (not typical contractors’ hours, Taylor points out).

The five-month facelift was straightforward compared to the bigger E.G. redo they’d done twenty years earlier, so the couple was prepared. What wasn’t ready was the home office. “It needed help,” says Taylor. “They didn’t have a real workspace and you had two people there at the same time.” Again, the designers opted for a contemporary vibe, using black, white and chrome (case in point, the polished metal bookcase); Alpine Kitchens custom built the ebony double desks.

When not camping out on the balcony with morning coffee or an evening glass of wine, the couple whisks down to the street to recharge on the urban energy, where the romance continues. “We’ll walk along the river sometimes all the way to Wickenden Street,” Robin says. “We feel renewed.” ☺