

The Art of the View

Stern McCafferty creates an urban oasis for a family with minimalist tastes and a spectacular array of artwork.

By Marni Elyse Katz

MR chairs by Mies van der Rohe for Knoll surround the dining table; an aerial photograph of a parking lot by German artist Andreas Gefeller is mounted on a column in front of the window.



Clockwise from left: In the family room, a shaggy Moroccan-style rug reflects the owner's Iranian heritage; a natural birch pendant by Secto Design hangs over a Saarinen dining table with a Vetro Bianco top; Flavor Paper Cuben wallpaper makes a bold statement.



In an expansive downtown condominium with sweeping views across Boston, the last thing anybody wants to focus on is a sea of stainless steel appliances—especially when there is a world-class art collection and dazzling sunsets to highlight. So when a family of four decided to recommit to their 3,500-square-foot three-bedroom apartment rather than build a house in the suburbs, a massive redesign was in order.

Enter David Stern and Diane McCafferty of Stern McCafferty Architecture + Interiors, a husband-and-wife team who first worked with the homeowners eight years prior. High on the priority list: Expand the back entry with mudroom, laundry and storage; redesign the kitchen; and redecorate throughout, highlighting the views and contemporary art collection.

An elegant kitchen was key. Working with Herrick & White Architectural Woodworkers, Stern McCafferty designed a wall clad in rift-sawn white oak with a whitewash stain that both defines the space and allows it to practically disappear. “The functional aspects are concealed, but everything works effortlessly,” Stern says.

Horizontal bands of glossy white lacquer cabinetry seem to float, thanks to the combination of the white glass backsplash and strips of mirror that run above and below

the cabinets. A striking Z-shaped stretch of Bianco Calacatta marble runs down a wall, across the peninsula and to the Italian soapstone floor. “It’s a moment of drama in a minimal space,” say McCafferty.

A cozy family room was tucked behind the kitchen wall, with oak wrapping around to the back side, tying the two spaces together. Over the sofa, a photo of Hong Kong skyscrapers by Michael Wolf echo the view through the window on the adjacent wall, while a drawing by Tara Donovan reinforces linear rhythms.

The star attraction: Floor-to-ceiling windows and a gallery wall of abstract artwork serve as focal points in the living room. Two panels of white oak, bisected along the lower portion by a floating steel bench, are the backdrop for an extra-large television. A mocha velvet Flexform sofa hovers on a metal frame above the dark herringbone floor.

Just beyond sits a 10-foot-long dining table with a Bianco Statuario marble top by Progressive Marble on a base fabricated by Rich Duca Designs that Stern McCafferty designed for the clients in 2006. A photograph of a crumbling Oreo cookie by Soojin J. Kim hangs in the background, and Bocci lamps suspended from a custom steel panel descend from above.

“They wanted clean, simple and classic so that the personality of the art remained the focus,” McCafferty says. “With their commitment to minimalist living, it was easy to achieve.” ■

