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VOLUME I, 2021 \$5.95



BY THE PUBLISHERS OF MODERN LUXURY CS

PROJECT INTERIORS
LUXURIOUSLY
SOFTENS NEW
CONDO BUILDING
ILLUME'S INDUSTRIAL-
CHIC BONES IN A
WARM, WELCOMING
FAMILY RETREAT.

BY J.P. ANDERSON
PHOTOGRAPHED BY AIMÉE MAZZENGA

Illuminating Interiors

Layered textures—
including salvaged
wood stumps from
Pagoda Red—add
serious coziness to
the open living area
of this 1,900-square-
foot condo in the West
Loop's Illume building.



From left: The kitchen is a visual feast, with white cabinets, marble countertops and the clients' own Lucite stools offset by an earth-toned ceiling covering by Phillip Jeffries and a pair of oversized pendant lights by SHO Modern; an inviting nook in the living area.



THE CLIENT

Call it kismet: Already “obsessed with” design studio Project Interiors’ work, Melissa Erke and husband Ken became intrigued by new West Loop luxury building Illume—only to find out that Project was designing the lobby and helping select finishes in the units. That’s the only sign they needed: The pair jumped at the chance to work with principal Aimee Wertepny and team again, becoming the first to buy in the new property. Says Melissa of the project, “It all happened pretty serendipitously.”

THE PRIORITY

Notes Melissa, “Since we were in a new industrial building that was mostly concrete, our first priority was figuring out how to make it into a home. How can we add certain touches so it doesn’t just feel like another apartment? We wanted to make sure it felt special with a warmth and luxe feel to it.” Adds project lead and studio design director Lauren Warnock, “We picked up on that goal immediately, aiming to evoke something representative of Ken and Melissa’s personality, and ended up creating a space with a sophisticated, luxurious but livable vibe. And because we had worked with them in the past and that trust was there, we were given a lot of creative liberties as a designer.”



From left: Handsome custom display shelving designed by Project Interiors and fabricated and installed by Demeter Millwork runs the length of the space; artwork by Gary Weidner stands out in the master bedroom.

THE DETAIL

Says Ken, “One moment I really enjoy is the dining nook with the custom circular banquette and brass chandelier—it’s one example of how they created more intimate moments within an open, industrial space.” Melissa is all about the art wall (“a gorgeous way to display our collection, and the lights are super sleek”) and the wallpapered bathroom. And for Wertepny, the living space’s floating Lucite bench is a highlight. “Aesthetically, it’s this wicked piece we had custom upholstered by Amanda Morrison of Colorblind Creative with black leather fringe that pools onto the floor. Functionally, you can sit on it and face the living room or the dining room depending on where the party’s at.”

THE OUTCOME

“We absolutely love everything about this home,” enthuses Melissa of the finished product. “It’s hard to believe how Project turned this blank-space canvas into a warm and welcoming, yet very luxe, home. It’s a true testament to their work.” ■

THE CHALLENGE

“We had this beautiful concrete ceiling with exposed mechanicals that was part of the industrial, urban appeal of the unit,” explains Warnock, “but it provides some logistical and aesthetic challenges for the design where it dropped in height in some places. We had to get creative with the lighting system and how to disguise some of the mechanical elements. Once we established that we wanted to do the entire wall of built-ins in the living room, we used the lowest portion of the wall to create this datum that became integrated into the millwork.”



DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE

Condo design and build

LOCATION

West Loop

ARCHITECTURE

Pappageorge Haymes
pappageorgehaymes.com

BUILDER

LG Development
lgdevelopmentgroup.com

INTERIOR DESIGN

Project Interiors
projectinteriors.com

MILLWORK

Demeter Millwork
demetermillwork.com

PAINTING

Konrad’s Paint Effects
708.246.1768

GREENERY

Sprout Home
sprouthome.com

RESOURCES

ARTERIOS

Kitchen and dining room lighting, bedroom furniture
arteriorshome.com

CARNEGIE

Window coverings (made by Basia Frossard Projects) and dining room banquette
carnegiefabrics.com

MODLOFT

Dining table
modloft.com

ONE KINGS LANE

Living room coffee table
onekingslane.com

PAGODA RED

Living room salvaged wood stumps
pagodared.com

RESTORATION HARDWARE

Living room rugs, linen sofas
rh.com

SCHUMACHER

Living room wallpaper
fshumacher.com

VERN + VERA

Vintage chrome swinging arm sconce
vernandvera.com

GARY WEIDNER

Living room and master bedroom art
garyweidner.com