

Aloft from Afar

by Nancy Crotti
Photographs by Mike Krivit

HOW DO YOU FURNISH A NEW home from thousands of miles away? That's what the owners of this downtown Minneapolis condo wondered. Their answer came in short order as they relied on a trusted interior designer and put into place the treasures from their own world travels.

The owners were preparing for a short-term move to London from their Minneapolis townhouse when the wife decided to reserve a condo in a building under construction. "My husband said, 'Don't you know you're moving to a foreign country?'" she recalls with a laugh.

She knew, but she also realized they didn't want to return to a townhouse that was too big and required too much maintenance. Plus, they travel so often that security was a concern. Living in an upper-story condo would let them lock the door and leave without the unwanted attention an empty house can bring.





Termed "the international hallway," this space includes a Korean kitchen cabinet displaying celadon Thai pottery beneath framed Balinese coins. The rug, framed knife, and fossil above the cabinet hail from Morocco, while the mask on the adjoining wall is Navajo. Sliding shoji doors made of stainless steel and frosted polycarbonate allow ambient light into the windowless office.

That still left the long-distance design dilemma. They had worked twice before with Minneapolis interior designer Mary Dworsky, who understood their tastes and priorities. Plus, says the owner, "I came back fairly regularly. I was probably back every two or three months during that time."

During the interims, Dworsky worked

with a construction project manager. "I had Mary come in as my eyes," the owner says. "Most of this was done by e-mail and fax... I made a lot of the choices, whether it was the cabinetry or the fixtures, online." The owner even photographed an Italian bathroom sink and base so the construction manager could reproduce them.

After the construction phase, the owner researched furniture and accessories online and called Dworsky to report what she'd found. On her next visit (she made about a dozen in all), she and Dworsky would take their list to showrooms to see what they could find.

"She pretty much knew what she wanted, and I knew what she liked," adds



The owner and a friend both wanted the painting above the fireplace when they spied it at a contemporary art show in London, says the owner, who loves the painting's quirky angle. The faux suede side-by-side chaise is by Della Robbia. The custom-made limed-oak armoire acts as an entertainment center.

Dworsky. "It wasn't as difficult as you might think." The bigger challenge was creating a warm, comfortable home from a 3,000-square-foot space with a limestone floor, contemporary furniture, high ceilings (including some exposed concrete), and lots of windows. The owners also wanted to emphasize the city views. Muted colors, lots of texture, and an

eclectic art collection helped them achieve both goals.

An Egyptian rug in beige, rusty orange, and soft blue formed the basis for the color scheme. The owners chose sage for the living room walls to complement the sand-tone Christian Liagre leather sofas and woolen cushions. Dworsky found a tomato-red bench that draws the eye to

the red-framed windows and beyond to where the Stone Arch Bridge spans the Mississippi River.

A vibrant silk pillow that sits atop a pale-sage Della Robbia double chaise inspired the golden-caramel color on the master bedroom walls as well as the russet tone of the bed's silk coverlet.

Dworsky and the owners believe their

Contemporary teak furniture by Kingsley Bates gives the owners a restful place to view the Mississippi River and the courtyard of the Mill City Museum next door. That's live papyrus in the tall vases and waterproof exterior-grade tile on the floor to protect the living space below.

collaboration was key to their success. "It was just a combination of sleek contemporary with pieces that they've collected around the world to give it a sense of their personalities," says the designer.

"The whole space is kind of calming," adds the owner. "It is comfortable to be in. [It's] warm and inviting, and people feel at home in it." ■

Nancy Crotti is a frequent Spaces contributor.

