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Stylish City Living from New England Home

Points of View

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in Design

The Lush Life

A Private Garden
in the Sky



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Designer Dee Elms crafted sophisticated scenes and sightlines at every turn in the ninth-floor condominium overlooking Boston Harbor. The dining room features a banquette of her design and a Branching Burst chandelier by Lindsey Adelman. **FACING PAGE:** The entryway extends a dramatic welcome with its midcentury bench and a large abstract painting.



Empty nesters find the perfect perch in a modern Seaport District condo.

Text by MARIA LAPIANA | *Photography by* MICHAEL J. LEE



The open living and dining area offers a lot of flexible seating options that are great for entertaining. The space is large enough to accommodate a show-stopping back-to-back sofa and a versatile coffee table that provides storage and surface area in equal measure.

It was going to be the couple's pied-à-terre, a toe-dip into city living, a test to see if they liked the empty-nester lifestyle. Who knew that the condo in a luxury high-rise overlooking Boston Harbor would, in no time at all, feel so completely, inexorably like home?

After raising their family in coastal Marblehead, Massachusetts, Judi and Joey Karas decided, a little hesitantly, to give city life a try. "We knew the building, and we knew what we wanted," says Joey. "Our family home was beautiful—I think you'd call it French Country—but we wanted

Interior design: Dee Elms, Elms Interior Design
Builder: Sleeping Dog Properties



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AND ENERGY.*

A white kitchen has been jazzed up considerably by the backsplash of custom smoky mirrored glass tiles. **FACING PAGE:** An alcove was transformed into a cozy office with the addition of steel-and-glass doors.

something different: a modern, sophisticated place that felt to us like 'new' Boston."

They had every confidence that Dee Elms could make it happen, as did she. "We met and walked through the space," remembers the Boston designer. "It was plain, but they were excited to put a stamp on it. They asked, 'How can you help us make this our home?'"

Judi and Joey were starting fresh, so it was a soup-to-nuts proposition, the designer explains. They told her they wanted a polished look with a vibe inspired by industrial design, with touches of glam. Then they gave her carte blanche.

There wasn't a lot they were able to do structurally to the three-bedroom, 2,100-square-foot condo, so Elms let the furnishings do the talking, defining spaces throughout. She found a practical solution to the dilemma of opposing views (the TV and the harbor) in the open living/dining room space, designing a two-sided sofa with one straight-run side that overlooks the goings-on outdoors, and one (with a chaise) that faces the TV. "We love how good Dee is with space, and how she made everything fit perfectly and yet feel flexible," says Joey.

A tufted banquette makes the most of the dining area, along with a marble-topped table on a metal base; surrounding the table are four eye-catching three-legged chairs. The backsplash in the adjacent kitchen has special meaning for the Karases. Designed by Elms, the subway-style tiles are made of diamond wire glass and fabricated by craftsmen at Joey's architectural glass company, Karas & Karas, in South Boston.

A small room off the main living area

became an intriguing office space with an Elms-designed metal and glass multi-pane door that looks as though it was reclaimed from an old factory. Smart storage solutions include built-ins and the installation of a Murphy bed in the guest room/den, a welcome feature for the couple's grown daughter who enjoys staying over.

The palette is neutral and serene, especially in the master bedroom. Elms chose textures and finishes that feel cohesive and restful: wood wall panels, a custom headboard, a silk rug, and crisp bedding.

Shots of color along with subtle and not-so-subtle industrial touches give the apartment movement and energy. Show-stopping light fixtures add glimmer and shine. Elms describes the overall look as "fun, upbeat, and a little bit rock-and-roll." Joey says, "It's exactly what Judi and I were hoping for." 🎵

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details about this home, see Resources.

A restful palette and rich textures, including silk wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries, give the master bedroom its serene aura. Elms designed the platform bed and the nightstands, as well as the upholstered wall behind the bed.