

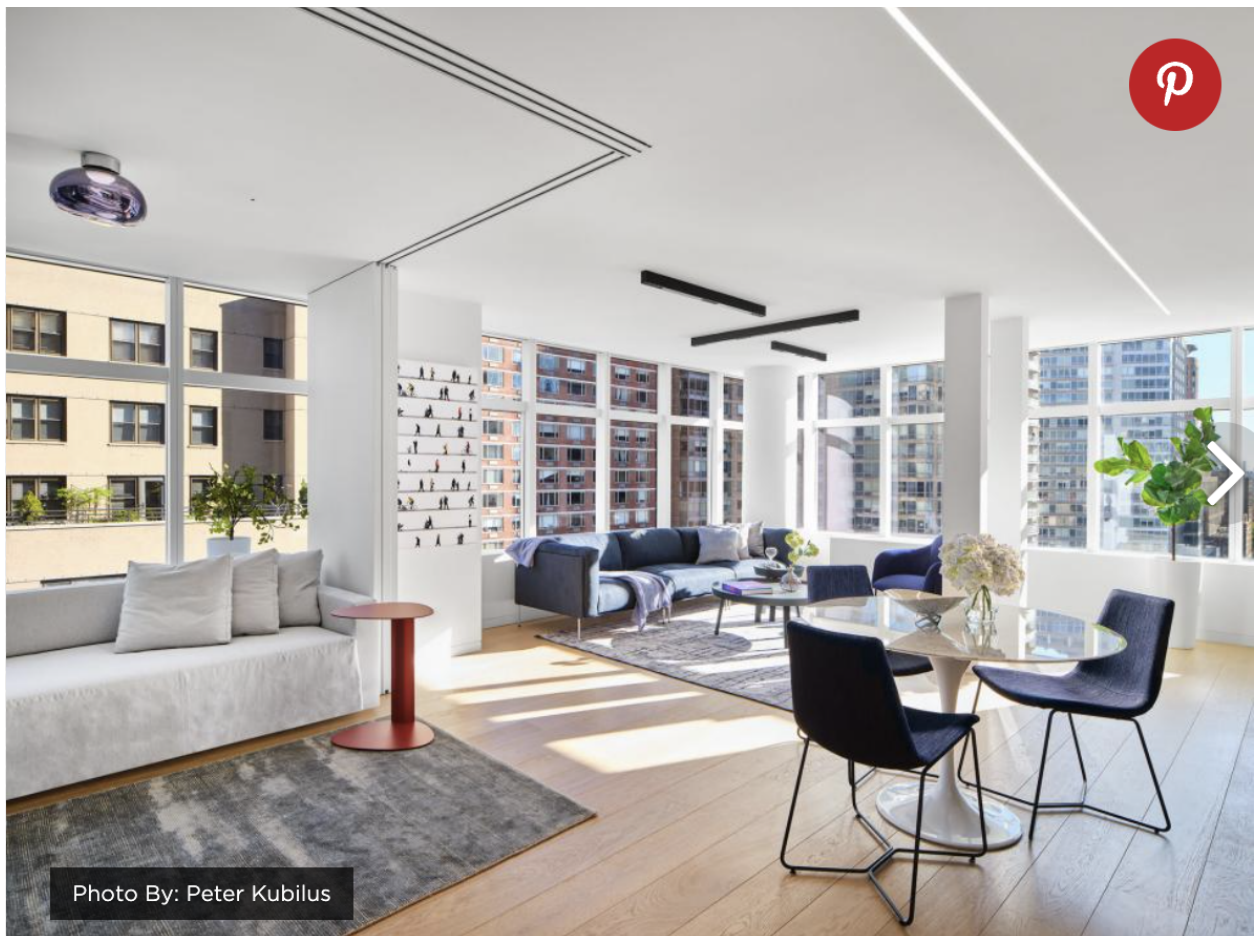


This Open-Plan NYC Apartment Is the Ultimate Live-Work Fantasy

Known for their innovative designs in the Bay Area, Maydan Architects helped their California-transplant clients recreate that contemporary West Coast cool back East. The open-plan, infinitely adaptable results are a work-from-home paradise.



By: Lauren Oster



Bringing This Home Into the 21st Century Meant Starting From Scratch

Built three decades ago when cutting-edge tech still meant suitcase-sized desktop computers and flip phones, this 1,087-square-foot apartment on New York City's Upper West Side wasn't exactly on the level when its current owners decided to purchase and make it their home. Literally — the floors and walls weren't straight and level — and the existing layout closed off the sweeping city views that made it special. It was time to go back to the drawing board.

“My clients are a young couple in their twenties, both building their professional careers,” says [Mary Maydan](#), founder and principal of Silicon Valley-based [Maydan Architects](#). “Our goal was to design a modern, stylish, minimalistic apartment that will be sophisticated, warm and comfortable.” Both their life stage and the city's life stage informed Mary's approach. “Since COVID-19 was still pretty dominant when we were designing the apartment, we aimed for a floor plan that allowed both of them to work from home, although we were hoping of course that they would eventually not have to work from home full-time,” she recalls. The sleek “home in the sky” she and her team created is packed with flexible, high-concept features that will adapt to their needs for decades to come. This is what the future of apartment living looks like.



Photo By: Courtesy of Maydan Architects

Before: A Dated Layout Stifled the Main Living Space

When it came to overhauling this apartment, “versatility was a major requirement,” Mary explains. “Back in Silicon Valley, where they are both originally from, houses are very large. Our main objective was to create a space that feels large and airy. Given that it is a New York apartment of only 1,100 square feet, we relied on multifunctional spaces to achieve this. We eliminated several walls to create a big open space that includes the kitchen, living room and dining room as well as a library and work area.” Bid that boxed-in, shadowy vestibule farewell; this is the last you’ll see of it.

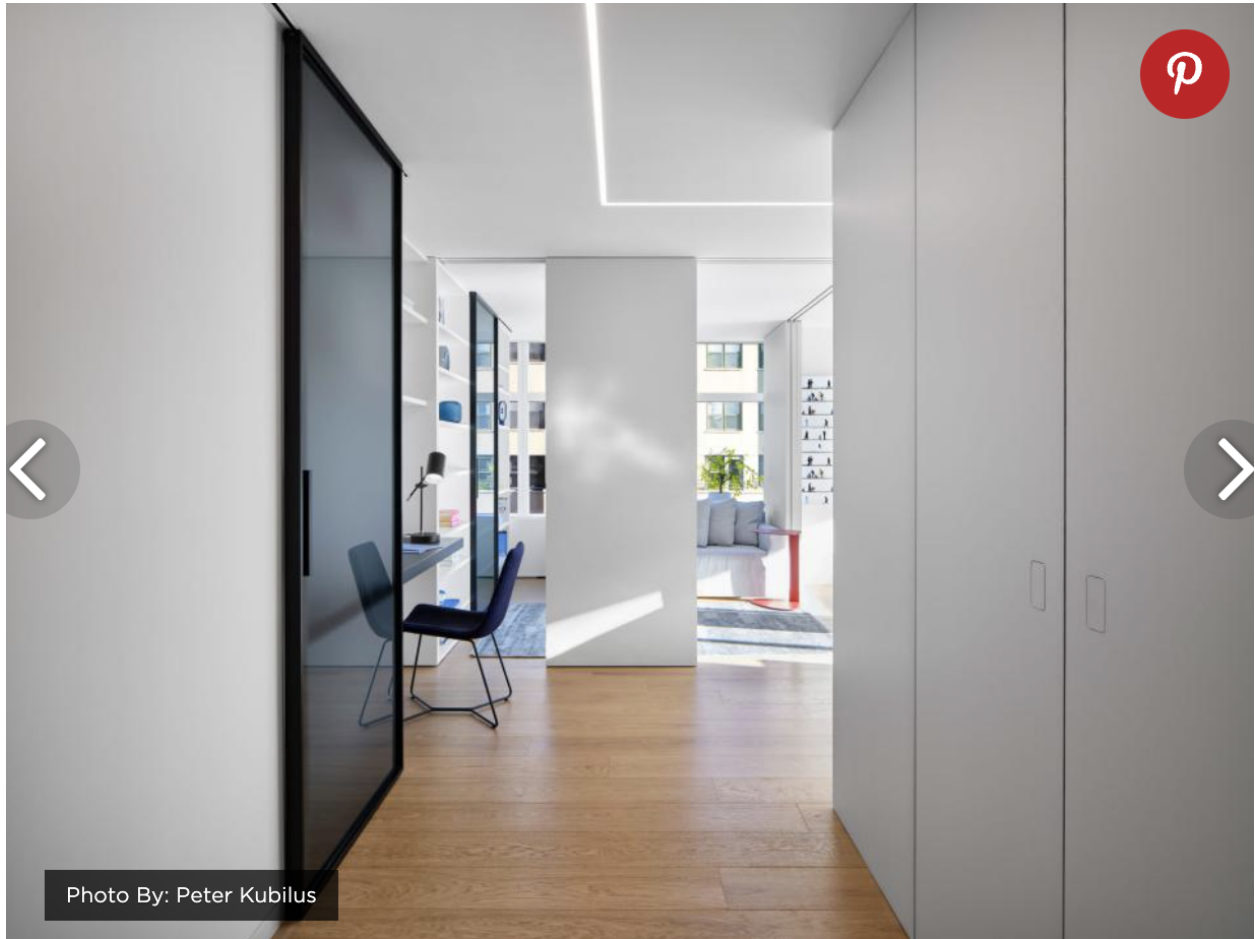


Photo By: Peter Kubilus

In Close Quarters, Every Wall Should Meet Homeowners' Specific Needs

In reconfiguring the apartment and starting all over, Mary had the opportunity to create a bespoke material experience for her clients. "This apartment is the first apartment that they own, so we pretty much started from scratch," she says. "Having a carte blanche is wonderful. It gives you the opportunity to dream together."

In this reimagined entryway, every feature contributes to their comfort. At right, a sleek bank of floor-to-ceiling cabinets creates near-invisible storage. To the left, a smoked-glass panel slides to conceal work materials (and creates a lovely contrast with the white walls while doing it). Straight ahead, more sliding panels create a guest room that can appear and disappear at will.



Before: Uneven, Dark Flooring Felt Dated and Concrete-Slab Ceilings Limited Lighting

Mary's team had their work cut out for them, especially given the streamlined redesign they had in mind. "Nothing in the building was plumb or flush, which rendered the execution of precise, trimless minimalistic details difficult," she says. "The project's phenomenal general contractor handled these imperfections by rebuilding and leveling everything."

The overhauls didn't stop there: "For electrical upgrades, we had to rebuild the ceiling (which was originally just a concrete slab) to fit lighting in the ceiling," she explains. "It's a huge upgrade." Get ready to see much more of the neighborhood that once played peekaboo here as well; the eventual views from the main living space are worlds away from these glimpses.



Photo By: Peter Kubilus

An Open, Versatile Common Space Makes a Smaller Footprint Feel Expansive

This 570-square-foot area functions as a kitchen, living room, dining room, library *and* office. When a space plays so many roles, every surface has heightened significance. Consider, for instance, the sculptural pieces now installed overhead. “The look of the ceiling is really important in our design,” Mary says. “I selected a dark fixture intentionally because the apartment is washed with light and the walls are white. I wanted to add something distinct that will be powerful and interesting.”



Photo By: Peter Kubilus

Linear Lighting Creates a Visual Welcome From the Vestibule to the Living Room

Mary's lighting design also features a futuristic detail that beckons visitors into the home. "In the apartment, we designed a continuous LED run, which starts at the entry and turns into the next room," she explains. [You can see that turn in the upper left of this photo.] "The light leads you into space. It creates a beautiful effect of continuity and interest."

You'll be seeing more tech like this in years to come. "In recent years LED, and in particular linear LED lights, have been real game-changers in the way we illuminate spaces and even think about them," says Mary.



Photo By: Peter Kubilus

This Guest Room and Office Features Retractable Walls for Seamless Privacy

Parallel to that continuous LED, Mary's team installed gliding panels that can sequester a corner of the main living space as needed. "We added high-end sliding doors that can enclose the corner of the living room and transform it into a separate room, to serve as an office or a bedroom," she says. "A second bedroom was high on our list of priorities. The goal was to create a home that will grow with [the clients] — starting as a young, hip couple, but also fitting when they have a small baby or are hosting their parents."



Photo By: Peter Kubilus

This Guest Room and Office Features Retractable Walls for Seamless Privacy

Parallel to that continuous LED, Mary's team installed gliding panels that can sequester a corner of the main living space as needed. "We added high-end sliding doors that can enclose the corner of the living room and transform it into a separate room, to serve as an office or a bedroom," she says. "A second bedroom was high on our list of priorities. The goal was to create a home that will grow with [the clients] — starting as a young, hip couple, but also fitting when they have a small baby or are hosting their parents."



Photo By: Peter Kubilus

Bright Accents and Wide Built-Ins Create a Warm, Collaborative Atmosphere

A [Lema](#) desk and shelves span 16 feet along the wall beside the enclosable office space, which enables one person to work here and for their "officemate" to establish themselves nearby. Asked to pinpoint a favorite part of the home, Mary picks this one. "It is such a welcoming space and it's nice to have a large work area where two people can sit comfortably and work next to each other," she says. "I love that this apartment makes you feel so connected."



Photo By: Courtesy of Maydan Architects

Before: A Galley Kitchen Gobbled Up Valuable Space

Like generations of city dwellers before them, this apartment's young owners didn't expect to spend a lot of time in the kitchen. "My clients are not big on cooking, especially when there are such great restaurants in New York, which they love to try," Mary says. A new recipe was in order.



This Minimalistic Kitchenette Offers Cooking Without Clutter

Deep gray, inset [Poliform](#) kitchen cabinets pair with barely there panel-ready appliances and seamless storage to deliver cool functionality without visual noise. A long Silestone countertop extends that dark, ripple-free surface. Who needs cabinet hardware when your coffee-prep space can feel like a piece of modernist sculpture?



Pantry Cabinets Disappear Into the Wall and Bask in Natural Light

As in both the entryway and along the kitchenette, these pantry doors tuck necessities away without spoiling the mood. They also happen to rub shoulders with a massive window that faces Central Park and gets full eastern exposure. As the sun climbs over and across the city, a series of spectacular shadows makes its way across these surfaces.



An Underperforming Powder Room Was Due to Be Recast

Though the home had an impressive pedigree, it was decidedly timeworn. “It is a very prestigious building in Lincoln Center” — Manhattan’s performing arts hub, a destination that attracts more than five million visitors a year — “that was built in 1990,” Mary explains. “The apartment was in its original state. The toilet was making noises nonstop. The fridge was Sub-Zero but over 20 years old and barely freezing while making grumpy noises. Everything was in desperate need of a major upgrade.”



Photo By: Peter Kubilus

Dark Stone and Feminine Curves Develop the Bathroom's Contemporary Character

Mary's team installed natural stone with high-tech chops behind the floating vanity in what's now a full bath. "The tiles are cut in three different sizes, and between them is a black metal insert," she says. Its Italian supplier is one of her all-time favorites. "[Salvatori](#) is the most innovative company in the stone industry," she explains. "It has introduced new ways of cutting stone, new processes and treatments, to create the most stunning textures and designs."



Before: A Wall of Windows Offers Infinite Possibilities in the Principal Bedroom

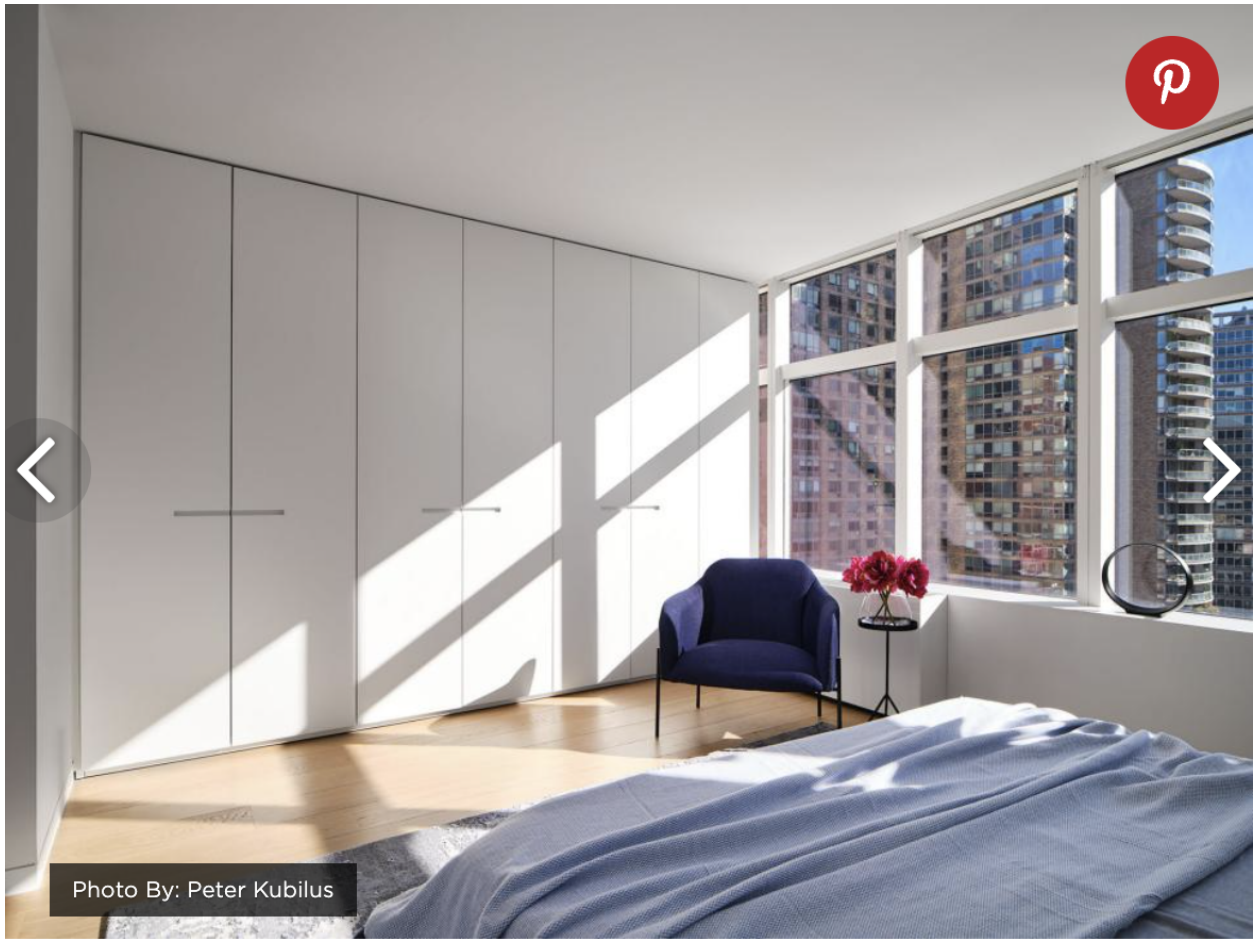
Though this was Mary's first residential project on the East Coast, she knew just how to deploy modern design principles in her clients' home. "With skillful planning and spatial design we want to transform apartments into open, uncluttered, light-filled spaces," she says. "While an important element in our design in California is seamless indoor-outdoor flow, in New York it can be achieved either with balconies or by making the most of uplifting skyline views through large glass windows."

Outside is a dazzling view of the West Side and Central Park. "I wanted the apartment to be a stylish, bright and uplifting space," she continues. "I wanted the design to be timeless and above all a space that is comfortable and not trying too hard."



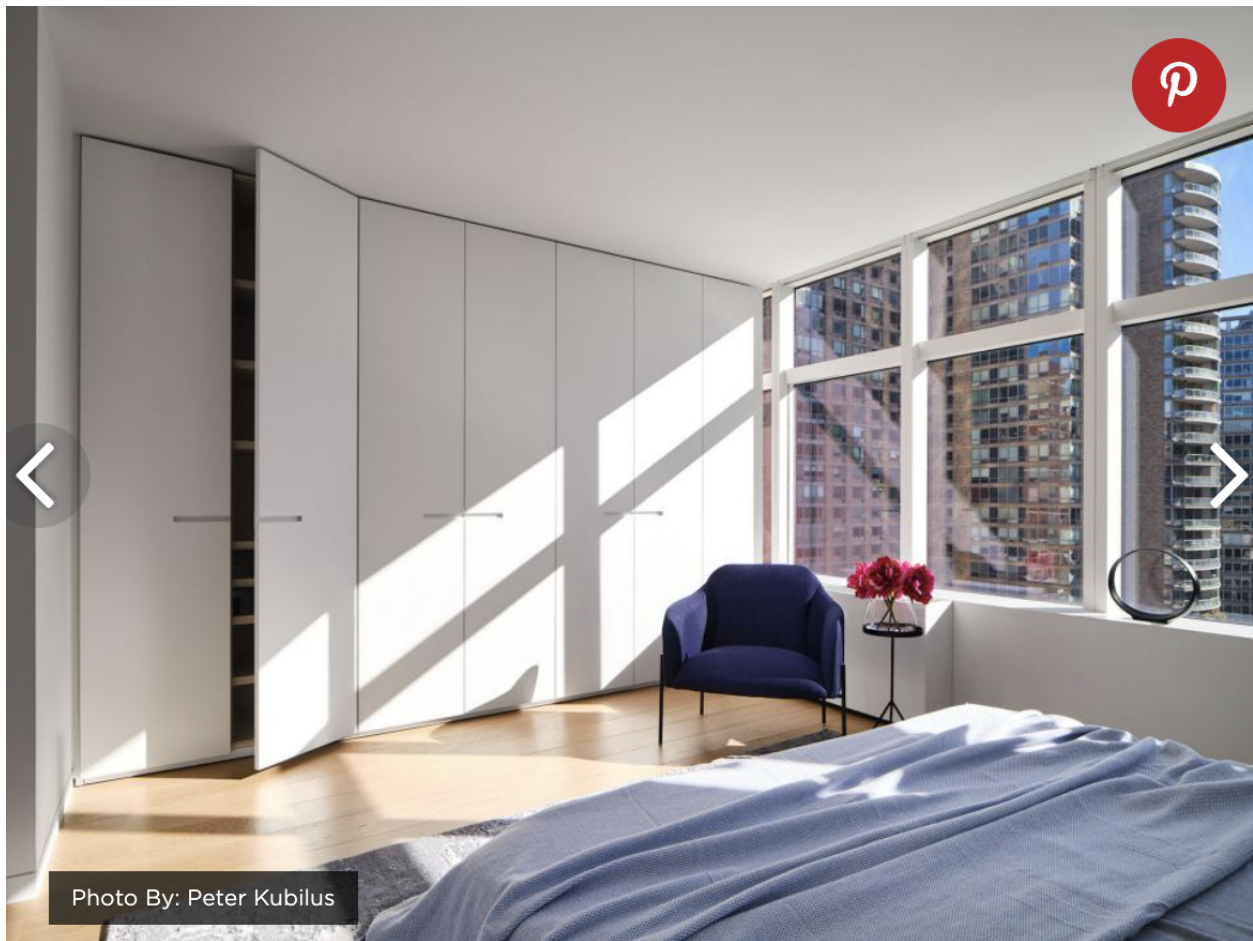
Layered Blues and Evocative Art Partner With the Bedroom's Spectacular View

A hand-knotted silk rug from Restoration Hardware and an [upholstered Blu Dot bed](#) anchor the revitalized space with dimensional, luxurious blues, and a curvaceous armchair and moody accent linens deepen the impression of a late-afternoon sky deepening into dusk and twilight. The headboard-spanning photo of pigeons taking the air entranced Maydan at first sight: "I came across this photograph and fell in love with it," she recalls. "We had it printed on a large canvas and selected the black floater frame. I love the calmness and motion of this photograph."



Floor-to-Ceiling Cabinets Double As Canvases for Splashes of Light

Speaking of art, consider the golden-hour magnificence of this bedroom storage. “I love this symphony of light and shadows,” Mary says. “At the beginning of each project, I always spend a lot of time in the space or property at different hours of the day and take note of how the sun hits the house, and how the surrounding nature or buildings cast their shadows. In this New York apartment, I was fascinated by the light streaming through the large glass wall and decided to design a continuous closet along the entire wall, which will serve as a screen for the sun to cast its shadows on.”



Making Sleek Spaces Feel Cozy Is All About “Organized Mess”

The closets are also essential to the warm minimalism Mary had in mind for this home. “The key is to design plenty of storage space where you can hide everything that makes the home cluttered and messy. However, I also love to include in my designs shelving or displays where you can add personal objects that make the space feel cozy and livable,” she says.

“If you ask my eldest daughter, she would probably tell you that organization is bad for the soul and stifles creativity. I am still trying to negotiate with her and reach some midpoint. I even had a name for it. I used to tell her: ‘It’s good to be messy in an organized way, which means charming, livable messy, not out of control messy!’”



Photo By: Courtesy of Maydan Architects

Before: Impractical Cabinetry and Unflattering Light Add Up to an Awkward Principal Bath

With the exception of the rectangular stone floor tiles that also climb up the side of the tub, none of the features in this space spoke to one another. There was little to mourn when Mary's team removed it all.



A Generous Floating Vanity and Sumptuous Tiled Backsplash Create Crisp Contrast

Enlarged to accommodate this massive, 90-inch vanity and a six-foot shower, the reimagined principal bath is confident and cohesive. The graphic art on the wall is a design-industry souvenir. Mary encountered it while visiting Poliform's headquarters and factories near Lake Como in Italy. "Poliform has a few prints which they use for decoration in their showrooms," she explains. "I fell in love with one print in particular. My hosts were extremely gracious and offered to give me the print. We framed it and it is such a wonderful fit for this bathroom."



An Architectural Shower and Tub Share Space in the New Principal Bath

With apologies to the toilet that had been perched between the principal bath's previous tub and vanity, *this* is how features should interact in a well-designed space. A smoked-glass door into the wet room sets a private mood without obscuring the shower completely, and Italian porcelain ceramic tile creates a feature wall. "We added wall wash light fixtures (placed in a recessed cove in the ceiling) to shine and accentuate the texture," Mary says.



When Looking for Renovation Candidates, Keep Your Eyes on the Horizon

Compared to its original state, “the apartment is actually unrecognizable,” Mary says. “The existing apartment, before the remodel, was designed in a way that the greatest view was mostly blocked from the living room area. The kitchen wall hid the best view.” That was tragic, of course — but it meant that a designer with vision had the world at her feet.

“I went to see the apartment with my clients, when they were considering buying it, and fell in love with it,” Mary recalls. “My clients weren’t sold. It was really not that attractive, and it was difficult for them to understand my excitement, but I knew that the apartment had amazing potential and once all these walls would be taken down, we would have a large open space with a panoramic view visible from everywhere. It was a dream.”