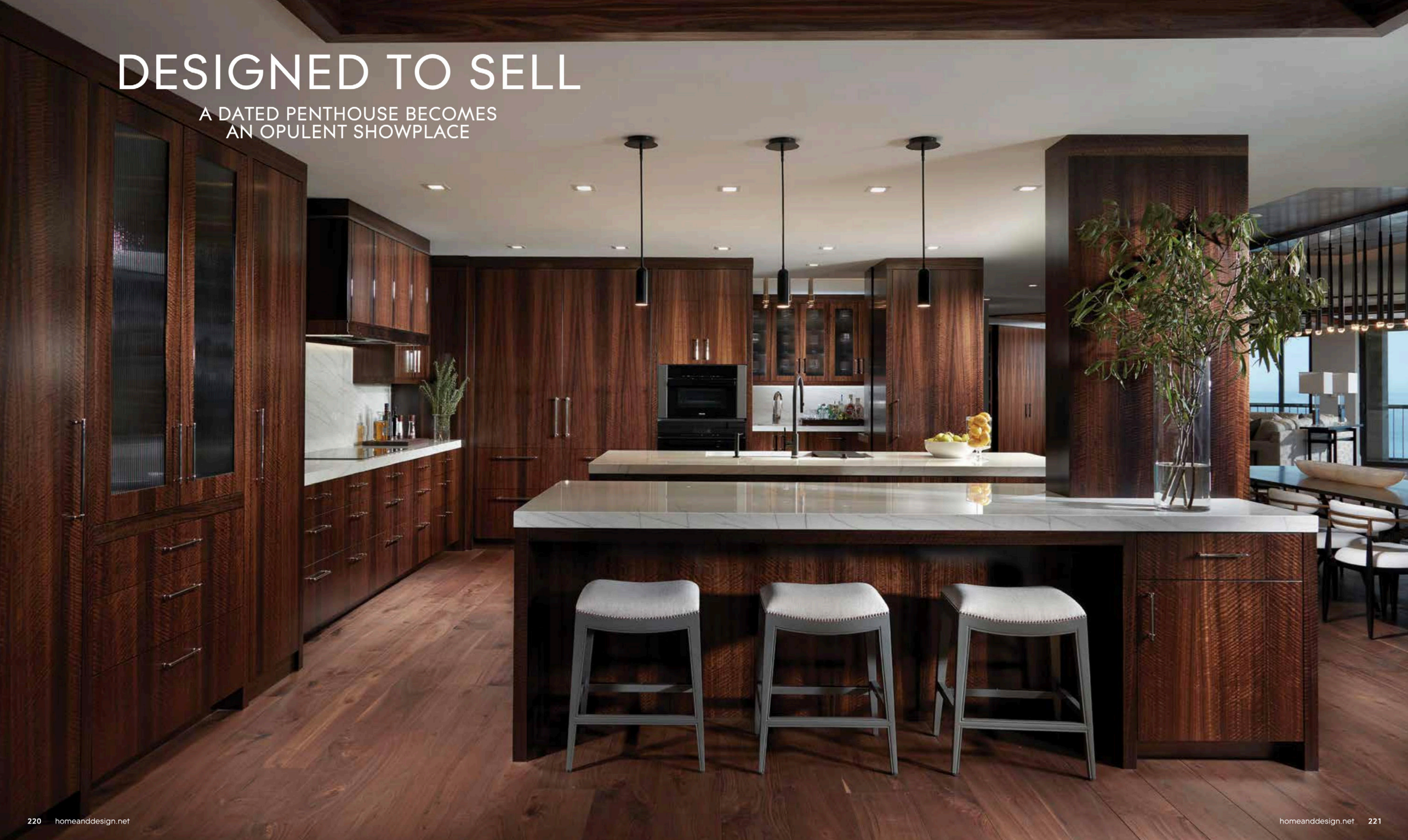


DESIGNED TO SELL

A DATED PENTHOUSE BECOMES
AN OPULENT SHOWPLACE





Designing a luxury condominium for a couple of homeowners presents its own challenges — some designers will tell you they often feel like therapists trying to help their clients come together on design decisions. Luckily for Ruta Menaghlaoui, Vice President of Design for Theory Design, much of her work is speculative design and model homes, which means she enjoys designing with a bit more freedom.

“You always want to be able to appeal to who your target market is — who the target buyer is,” Menaghlaoui says. “We try to stay on the more classic side without going too trendy. For this project, we didn’t want to go overboard and be too edgy so the clients could visualize themselves living in the house. We opted for high-end finishes with a timeless, classic design.”

Although she’s a 25-year veteran in interior design, this is Menaghlaoui’s second career — but not her first creative venture. She comes from a graphic design background, and after working in interior design in Southwest Florida starting in 2000, she ventured out of state and worked at the Aria Resort & Casino in Las Vegas. Then she moved to Morocco to work on villa and hospitality projects before looping back around to Theory Design in Florida, where she’s been for five years. ▶

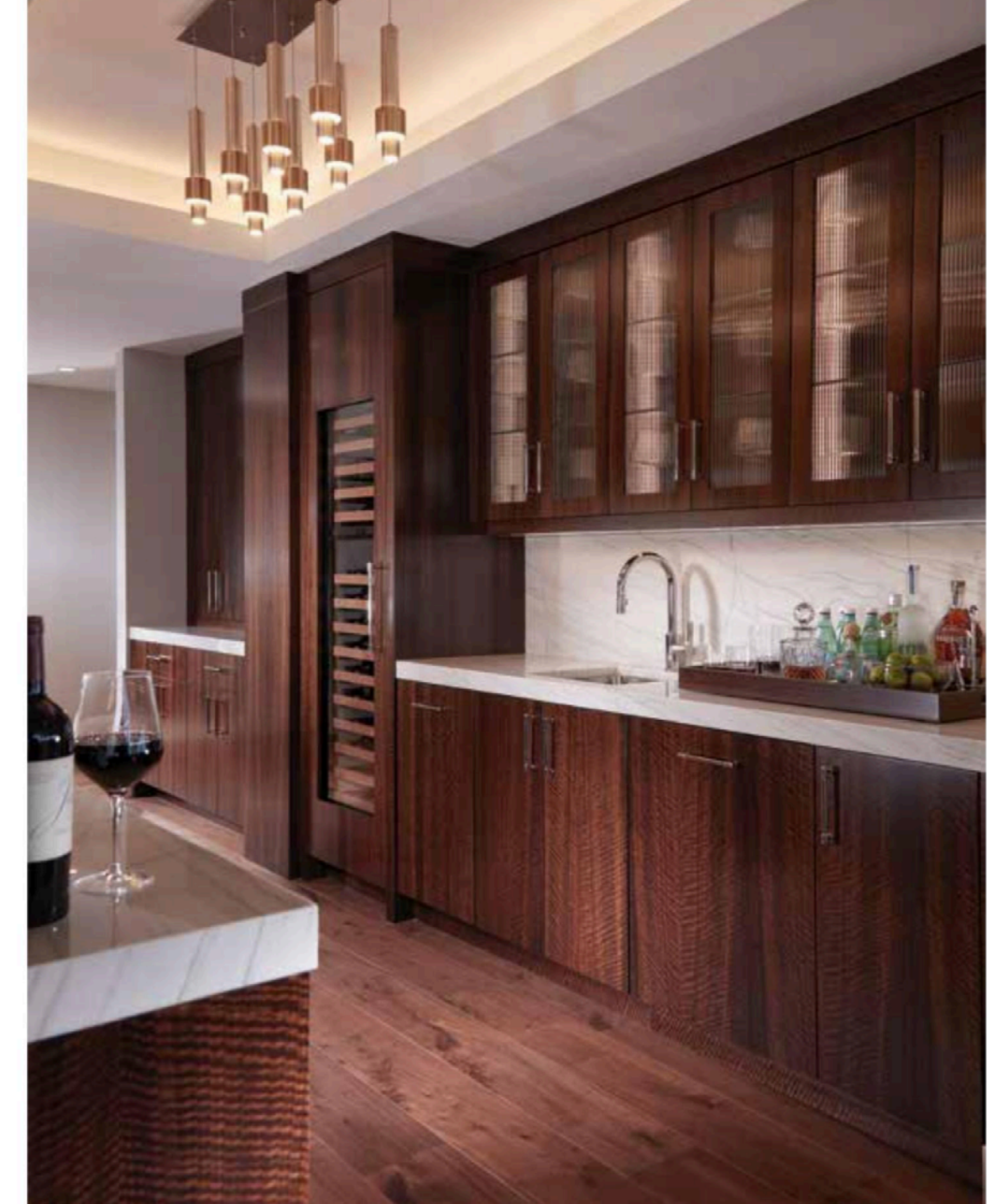
Family Room: Although the main living area is wide open, the family room is in close proximity to the kitchen — when standing at the kitchen sink, the family room is straight ahead — so Menaghlaoui set out to create a strong connection between the two spaces by bringing the kitchen countertop material into the family room in the form of the book-matched slabs that make the fireplace surround. Instead of sofas, she selected four armchairs by Interlude for the seating area.



Living Room: Because you look directly into the living room from the foyer, Menaghlaoui selected similar rugs from International Design Source for both spaces to create a cohesive visual connection. “These are very large rooms, including the foyer,” Menaghlaoui says. “As you walk in, you want to have a little bit of softening in there.” The recessed ceiling details help delineate individual spaces within the sizable open-format floor plan. Gamma Tech Services created a high-end home entertainment system to serve the entire condo.

Foyer: The condo’s original design required meandering down a hallway before seeing the magnificent views. Today’s design draws the eye directly to the view upon entering the space. The design team added reverse soffit ceilings with wood detailing to many areas throughout the condo. Wide plank flooring in a rich walnut from Legno Bastone Wide Plank Flooring, sourced through Naples Flooring Company, graces most of the floors throughout. The fumed eucalyptus walls immediately introduce the luxurious, timeless design.





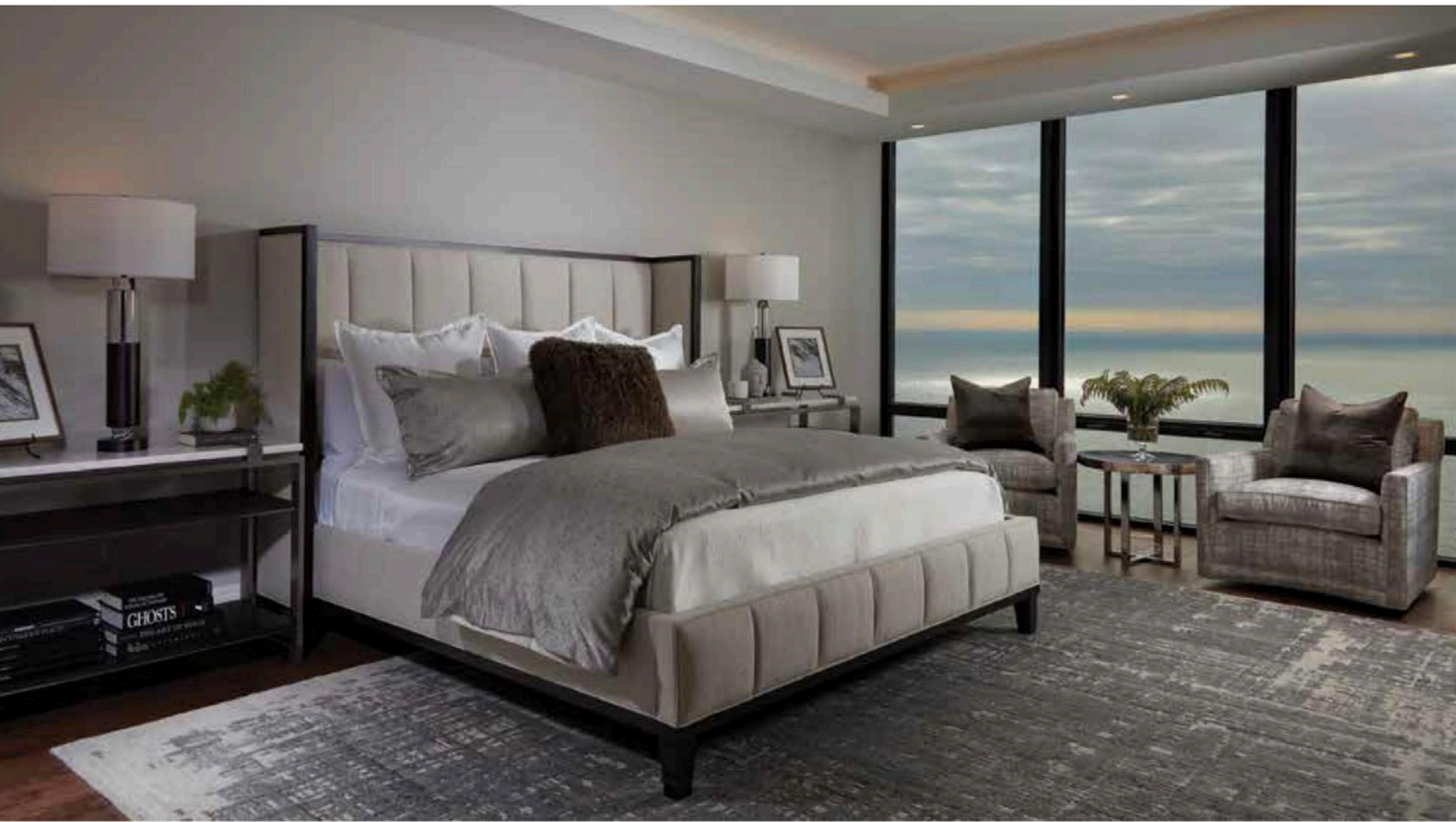
Menaghlazi and remodeling contractor Chris Covelli pulled together a beautiful — and successful — renovation of the 5-bedroom, 5 ½-bathroom, 5,798-square-foot Le Parc penthouse. “It’s typical for these older condos to be a bit cut up and awkward with long hallways,” Menaghlazi says. The new design opens the main foyer and the kitchen to capture the views. It also includes luxury elements such as custom ceiling details, rich oak flooring, custom fumed eucalyptus cabinetry, and an art gallery-style background to highlight art and collectibles. ▶

Bar: A wet bar with ample storage and a full-sized wine refrigerator is directly behind the kitchen and adjacent to the dining area. The open space allows for mingling and easy entertaining. An understated — yet radiant — fixture from Wilson Lighting adds elegance and sophistication. Menaghlazi was thoughtful about the lighting selections because of the expansive windows. “A lot of times in these condos, you’re looking at a big black mirror at night,” she says. “Because of that, we were very conscious of the reflection in the glass at night. These fixtures almost look like candlelight reflecting in the windows.”

Kitchen: “The kitchen originally called for one island,” Covelli says. “Upon demoing the unit, we discovered a plumbing stack in the middle of the kitchen, so we decided to introduce a second island and wrap the plumbing stack in the fumed eucalyptus wood paneling.” In addition to the wrapped column, shallow cabinets resourcefully hide other plumbing and electrical elements. The kitchen layout provides ample views and ensures seamless entertaining. “We wanted whoever is in the kitchen to be able to have multiple views and share that space with guests,” Menaghlazi says. High-end Miele appliances are hidden mainly by custom wood panels.

Primary Bedroom: The focus for the primary bedroom was to create a plush, relaxing environment that highlights the stunning views. The lit recessed ceiling lends an ethereal glow without drawing attention away from the view. A large rug adds softness to the space while anchoring the bed and adjacent seating area. The swivel chairs provide a comfortable seating option for reading or watching television, but also encourage turning to the windows to watch the sunset.

Primary Bathroom: Menaghlazi notes that the original layout of the primary bathroom was cumbersome and put the shower behind a structural column. A creative reimagining of the floor plan hides the column in the closet, leaving the shower open and bright. Dual vanities flank the corner tub pedestal with a luxury soaking tub from Kallista. Calcutta marble and stone from floor to ceiling provide an opulent contrast to the warm wood.



The primary bedroom suite was reconfigured for better flow, while most guest suites retain their original footprints. Menaghlazi's original plan didn't call for such extensive use of the fumed eucalyptus, but the developer loved it and wanted more. Some of the guest bathrooms feature painted cabinetry, but the warm, welcoming wood was used liberally throughout the design.

To accomplish this complete transformation, the entire unit was taken down to the studs in the beginning. "At the time, there hadn't been many condominiums on the beach that had been renovated to this extent," Covelli says. "And for the client, I think he was concerned about whether or not he was making a good investment."

When the condominium was completed, it provided its owners with incredible panoramic views of the Gulf, Clam Pass Park, Venetian Bay, and the city of Naples. The investment paid off handsomely when the condo was put up for sale and sold quickly for a record-breaking price of over \$14 million.

"Between the eucalyptus cabinets and the walnut floors and trim details, it was just an extensive list of beautiful finishes that mesh together," Covelli says. "It confirmed that the team that we have in place — our designers, cabinet guys, and subcontractors — does great work together. And we're doing several other projects with the same team and so far, we are having a lot of success." ■





Office: The office, which connects directly to the primary suite on one side and the living room on another, features a wet bar and beautiful views like many other spaces in the home. Several elements contribute to the sophisticated feel of this space, including the wooden beams on the ceiling, the graphic rug from Lolo Rugs, and the taupe leather oversized swivel chair in conjunction with the same fumed eucalyptus woodwork as seen throughout the condo.

Main Seating Area: Menaghlazi says although this seemed like an unnatural place to insert swivel chairs from Henredon — between the living and dining areas — the view from that particular spot made it necessary. “Of the visitors that have gone through the condo, this is absolutely their favorite place to sit because you have that long view of the beach,” she says. “It faces north, so you don’t have the daylight in your eyes. And it’s just a nice place to lounge and look at the scenery and people walking on the beach.”

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