

SEATTLE'S BEST RESTAURANT DESSERTS

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Open House



An Alden Mason painting dominates the chartreuse dining room (right) in the Capitol Hill condo owned by David Updike and Michael Nelson (above).

AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE of living in turn-of-the-century homes, Realtors Michael Nelson and David Updike craved a lifestyle free from small closets, ill-fitting doors, constant renovations and unwieldy gardens.

As they toured lower Capitol Hill's burgeoning urban neighborhood, they longed for the loft lifestyle they were selling to their clients. "David and I were going through them, looking at them, debating them, and fantasizing about living in them," says Michael. Unfortunately, they couldn't see their way past the million-dollar price tags.

Their fantasy of living near downtown edged toward reality in the spring of 2000. Michael and David purchased a tired 1905 four-plex west of Broadway and began wrangling it into a handsome rental property that included a custom-designed town house for themselves on the second and third floors.

"We've always liked older buildings and homes," David says. "This marked the first time we had a chance to do something modern within the framework of an older home."

Architectural designers Joe Schneider and Rachel Conly of J.A.S. Design-Build, Inc., drafted plans turning two equal-size apartments into a 2,200-square-foot home for David and Michael and a 1,000-square-foot rental unit.

"Michael and David were ready to go down a more contemporary road—but at the same time, this was a big old box, and we avoided moving into a totally contemporary look," says Schneider.

Brightly colored walls frame contemporary Northwest art amid 19th-century French antiques and Eames-style furnishings. Schneider added punch to the original architecture with maple plywood wainscoting, metal detailing and frosted EtchMatte glass doors.



Lofty ambitions inspire a Capitol Hill condo

By Deirdre Allen Timmons
Photographs by Steven Young

"We lived in a 4,000-square-foot house with doors and closets everywhere. I was doored out," says Michael. "In this house there are six doors, and if I could have fewer, I would."

Tansu chests and armoires replaced bedroom closets. Public areas open onto one another. And 52 feet of western windows showcase stunning downtown views, capitalizing on every ray of light.

"Seattle Real Estate 101," says David. "Light. We tried to have window space focused on western walls, and then we cut back on the other walls."

The large master closet, formerly the apartment's salon and now the owners' "greatest indulgence," lost most of a bay window for enhanced privacy. Windows abutting nearby buildings were replaced with art-accommodating walls. And the master bedroom's street-side bay window was refitted with double-paned glass, blinds and blackout curtains.

"The noise can be loud and bizarre," says Michael, lamenting the area's early-morning truck deliveries and late-night drunken revelers. "Not only does this blacken the room completely, but it blocks a lot of the street noise."

Michael and David reclaimed the building's old light well for the bathroom's walk-in shower. Mosaic glass tiles in varying shades of shimmering green cover the floor, shower and tub platform. Because the room is in the center of the building, light became a critical issue.

"We thought about glass block, but then we thought that would have been like a bad '80s movie," says Michael. "So we installed an EtchMatte window next to the tub and a few feet away from an exterior window, allowing us to get natural light in."

They gutted two kitchens to make way for a laundry room and a double

The top floor opens onto a panoramic 1,100-square-foot deck shaded by a cedar trellis. Vines trained on an industrial mesh screen (right) will afford privacy for the owners and their pets, Calvin and Inga.





home office with striking blue and orange walls that frame an expanse of bookshelves illuminated by Michael's retro collection of TV lamps.

From the foyer, coffee-stained oak stairs lead up to the penthouse kitchen and dining room. Here, fluorescent chartreuse walls surround an ornate Venetian chandelier that hangs, ironically, below exposed ceiling rafters.

"Some of the things in this home are pretty refined," says Schneider. "This ceiling added a more industrial, utilitarian feel."

The industrial element carries over to the adjacent kitchen, which houses commercial appliances, simple apple-ply cabinetry, a quilted-steel backsplash and 38-inch-tall terrazzo counter tops.

"They're 'man height'—built for guys," laughs Michael.

On warm days, Michael and David can slide open the stackable glass doors and enjoy their 1,100-square-foot Trex deck, much of which is shaded by a cedar trellis.

CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: The industrial-style kitchen features plywood cabinets and terrazzo counters.

Calvin guards the stairway to the lower floor.

Shimmering glass tiles blanket the bathroom, which borrows light from the adjoining home office. The master bedroom (opposite) is linked to a sitting room; heavy drapes baffle noise and light.

Rock screen, an industrial mesh used for sorting gravel, forms a lattice along the north edge of the deck.

"Wisteria and kiwis are growing on it now, so that eventually you won't be able to see the rock screen, and there will be complete privacy at that end," says Schneider.

Though Michael and David have a second home in Palm Springs to escape the city's hustle and bustle, while they sit at the dining room's large pine table watching the sun set behind the glistening stand of buildings, they are content.

"I love walking out and seeing downtown," says Michael, who appreciates living in a smaller space built for how they live. "On the weekend, there's nothing I like more than being here."

Adds David, "I think of it as my urban Manhattan experience. We're very happy with this place. It's been a great success." ■

Contributing Editor Deirdre Allen Timmons is a Seattle freelance writer.