

HOUSTON house & home

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Uptown Welcome

SPLENDID SKYLINE VIEW, LUXE FINISHES
FOR A NEW UPTOWN CONDOMINIUM

12th Anniversary Issue

FUN PARTY TIPS FROM
FUN HOUSTONIANS

GLAMOROUS POWDER ROOMS

SHIMMERING CHANDELIERS

AVANT-GARDE IN THE FIRST WARD

SPICY BITES FROM INDIKA

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:
INVITING TOWNHOUSE INTERIORS
BY SAVANNAH HOUSE AND
EMMET PERRY & CO.





Take in a view of the foyer, with its groin-vaulted ceiling, from the living room. ICM Marble & Granite crafted the stone around the inlaid marble in the floor; master craftsman Candalerio Zelaya fit together the various pieces of stone.



ICM Marble & Granite installed Visage Blue Granite in the kitchen to complement the shade of blue the couple chose for walls and woodwork throughout the apartment. The 19th-century stained-glass window from England had been in storage for years; the couple had it installed and backlit to bring cheerful light into the kitchen.

BY DONNA TENANT • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIRO DVORSCAK

The project was a dream job. The goal: to build out a 3,500-square-foot condominium on an upper floor of one of Houston's most exclusive high-rises for a couple who plan to make it their primary residence after raising their children elsewhere.

"We have done about four homes already," says the wife, who chose the interior finishes in collaboration with the architect and builder. "It was truly a labor of love for the architect and builder. They went far beyond just doing a good job."

Architect Robert A. Levy, AIA, agrees. "Everyone cared, and everyone worked well together. The homeowners are wonderful, easy-going people, and Kurt Lobpries, who owns Builders West Inc., is one of my two favorite contractors."

Builders West is celebrating its 25th year in business this year. The company started out small, but now specializes in custom homes in Houston's best neighborhoods. "I have spent years building a team of master craftsmen," says Lobpries.

GRAND ENTRANCE

The results of the collaboration during the past year are striking indeed. As you step into the octagonal foyer, you enter a world of neoclassical charm and luxury. Blue walls blend seamlessly with Visage Blue Granite floors surrounding an inlaid marble tabletop purchased by the homeowners on a trip to Rome. This and a band of Rajah Black Granite outlining the entry required the skill of master craftsman Candalerio Zelaya to fit together the various pieces of stone fabricated by ICM Marble & Granite.

Since both the homeowners and architect love all things Italian, they chose a pair of engaged columns and a shallow groin-vaulted ceiling for the entry. In the living room beyond, museum-quality art and furniture hark back to the age of enlightenment, and floor-to-ceiling windows open onto a dramatic view of downtown Houston.

"The condo was finished only to the studs, so the homeowners were able to customize everything," says Levy. "They knew exactly what they wanted, down to the exact granite and wall color." Working closely with the owners, Levy sketched every detail of the house. Then he and Lobpries worked together to make it a reality.



European antiques, fine art and masterful stonework complement gorgeous views of Houston



Classic European antiques and art coupled with fine Persian rugs bring a formal tone to the living room of the high-rise condominium. Generous windows offer views of the Uptown Park area.

Sky High





The master bath is a masterpiece of White Piracema Granite, which covers walls, tub surround, shower walls and countertops. Eighteen slabs of the granite, installed by ICM Marble & Granite, were required for the bath and master bedroom.

RESOURCES

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GRANITE GALORE

The kitchen is visible from the entry, so its granite countertops and backsplashes match the granite in the foyer, as does the vanity in the powder room. These also were fabricated and installed by ICM.

"This residence has at least twice as much granite as most luxury residences," says Dollie Martinez, co-owner with husband Ivan of ICM. "We used 15 slabs of Visage Blue, 18 slabs of Piracema White, three slabs of Riviera Gold and three slabs of Rajah Black granite in the home."

Granite — ancient, indestructible and beautiful — is as popular today as it has ever been. Its striking appearance is due to its quartz-crystal structure, which can appear speckled, veined or banded. Different colors emerge, depending on the angle and intensity of the light. Maintenance is simple; just a quick wipe with a damp cloth and no grout to clean. Prices remain comparatively low for several reasons: Raw materials are more plentiful, a skilled South American labor force keeps expenses down and automation is increasing in the industry.

Visage Blue granite also was used for the island in the kitchen. "We definitely wanted an island kitchen," the wife says, "and since there are no windows, we backlit a stained-glass window to create a light source." The kitchen is the perfect size for the intimate dinner parties that the couple prefers.

STUNNING THROUGHOUT

The formal dining room is part of a large rectangular room that includes the living room and an informal sitting area. A grand piano sits opposite a gilded Louis XV sofa and chairs covered in Scalamandré fabric, and Persian carpets cover the walnut floors, which were installed by Schenck & Co.

Next to the piano is a pair of dark-blue Louis XVI chairs, their unusual cutout backs inset with carved and gilded vases of flowers. Egyptian-style engaged columns separate the living room from the TV room, and two life-sized pear wood sculptures are thought to be St. Peter and St. Paul.

The finishing touch in this room is the crown molding, which was designed to highlight the paintings, some of which are 8 feet tall. "The owners knew where every



A collection of fine antique clocks is reflected in the Visage Blue Granite floor of a hallway.



White Piracema Granite covers countertops of the bookshelves in the master bedroom.

painting, sculpture and piece of furniture was going," says Levy, "so we planned the molding accordingly." Master trim carpenter Dave Penna measured, fabricated and installed it. Penna also built the lighted cabinet for the stained-glass window in the kitchen.

The wine room, which opens off the entry, houses a portion of the husband's extensive wine collection. Colored light from another stained-glass window illuminates bottles of wine, wine books and an intricate mosaic-tile floor. ICM fabricated the granite surrounding it, and Zelaya installed it.

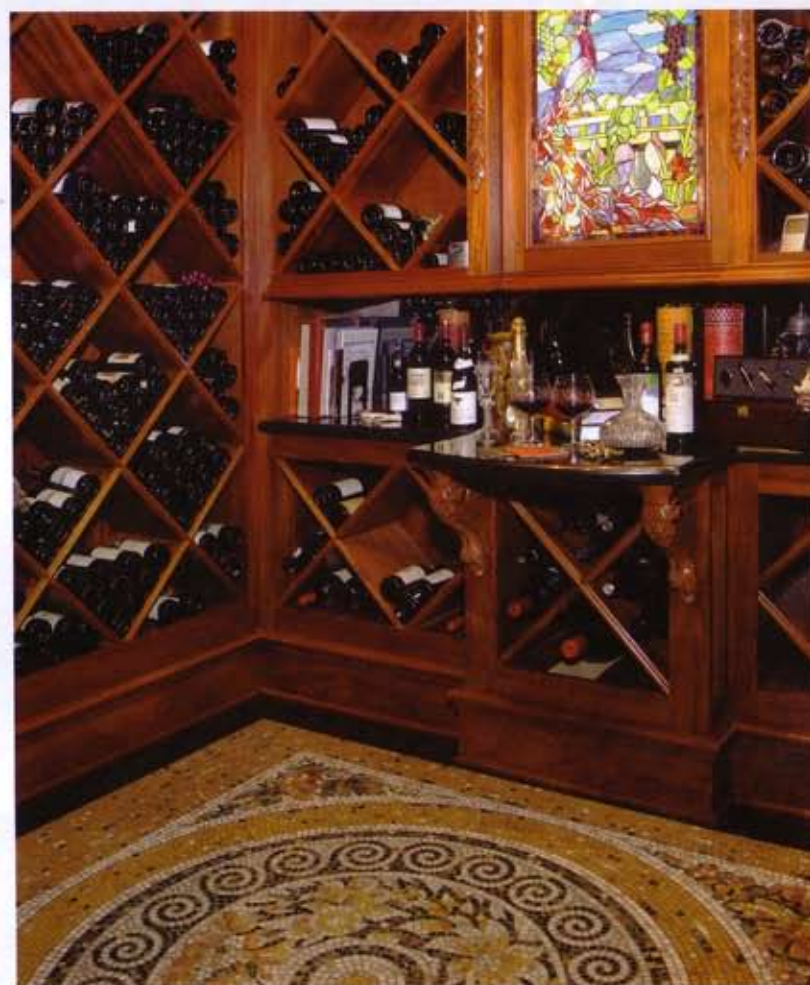
Penna built the lighted shelves at the end of the hall to display the husband's collection of unusual clocks, which he refers to as "moving antiques." A gilded clock in the living room features Asclepius, the god of medicine, holding his sacred serpent-encircled staff, the traditional symbol of the medical arts.

Both bedrooms and the husband's home office feature granite countertops above built-in cabinets. The homeowners chose the lighter Riviera Gold Granite for the office because it works well with the wood paneling. The White Piracema Granite used in the guest bathroom has an intricate crystal pattern that suggests flowing water. Both bathrooms feature built-in seats and the currently hot crystal and stainless steel fixtures.

The master suite has his-and-her armchairs upholstered in the same shade of blue used throughout the house. Surprisingly, they are not new but came from the previous residence. The wife so loved the chairs and a blue bathroom in her former home that she decided to use blue exclusively throughout the new home. It was a bold but successful move.

PERFECT FIT

Putting this residence together was like assembling a giant puzzle. So many factors came into play — designing around a large period art collection and furnishings, satisfying the owners' love of granite, creating an Old World ambiance — that it required the collective expertise of everyone involved.



For the wine room, Ivan Martinez of ICM Marble & Granite crafted mosaic tiles to complement the round mosaic piece in the center of the floor.