



# ART AND LIGHT

*Forma Design fuses interior design with art to recreate holistic beauty.*

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**AFTER BUYING THIS PENTHOUSE** unit in the Metropole apartment building in the coveted Logan Circle area of Washington DC, owners Sid Stolz and David Hatfield realised that the interior finishing did not quite meet their expectations. Andreas Charalambous, the principle architect of Washington-based architecture and interior design firm Forma Design, helped them solve this problem. Charalambous, who has won several awards from the Mid-Atlantic International Design Association and the American Institute of Architects, is not only a Cornell-trained architect; he is also a painter and photographer. And his training in the visual arts helps him to bring the right interplay of light, texture and colour to his projects.

#### **REDESIGN TO MAXIMIZE**

One of the challenges in the previous design was that the rooms came with too many doors, and there was not enough storage space. Charalambous'

plan was to increase storage throughout the home, introduce more light to the second floor and open up more wall space for the owners' to display their dramatic art collection. To make the living room more functional, Charalambous, closed off two doors to the adjoining guest room, and built a new wall for shelving, cabinetry and a flat screen TV on a side of the room that was previously dead space.

The kitchen was not ergonomic because it was dominated by the pantry door and had a lot of dead space. Charalambous fixed this problem by concealing the pantry door behind a streamlined panel and adding extra quarter-sawn oak cabinets. He



used the same oak in the new entertainment area and the office on the second level for visual continuity.

The master and second bedrooms on the second floor were combined to create a suite that includes a sleeping area and a home office. The first-floor atrium offered lovely views through two-storey windows. Unfortunately, bi-fold doors and a drywall balcony obstructed the upper level view. So the doors and dry wall were demolished, and cable railing was used as the apartment's stair rail instead. This dramatically altered the amount of light that streamed into the space, thus creating a much better canvas for decoration.

#### ART INCORPORATED

To add more texture and character to the space, chiselled and striated limestone were added at the entrance, along the wall of the entertainment area as well as the kitchen and upper level.

As the owners are avid collectors of contemporary art, amongst them a custom-made Graham

Caldwell hand-blown glass sculpture, it was important that their apartment effectively showcase their artworks. Sculptural lights were also employed to give the place an aesthetically driven look. Lighting such as Foscarini Caboche suspension pendant in the dining room and a giant 60-bulb FLOS Taraxacum '88 Suspension in the living room offer functional illumination and a sculptural accompaniment to the rest of the owners' collection.

#### FINISHING TOUCHES

Floor-to-ceiling windows are known to cause overheating in warmer months, hence mechanised, two-storey double shades on the windows and daytime shades are used to filter out natural light and blackout shades for privacy.

And owner Hatfield added the final touches with furniture sourced from iconic design architecture furniture store Contemporaria in Georgetown. Some of the pieces included a sprawling Molteni & C Freestyle modular sofa in the living room, a sculptural Cappellini chair that added more character to one corner of the room and a pale calfskin rug that covered the dark wood floor. Yellow coffee and side tables and a light taupe coloured ceiling brightened up the space, while hand-woven black and white Italian upholstery added a chic urban vibe.

Stolz and David Hatfield were delighted with the results of Charalambous's work. "We feel like we live in a great location with a great view," Stolz says. "We have everything we wanted. We just love it here." **hc**

