

# WESTERN Interiors & DESIGN

Glamour Issue!

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Architect Steve Hoedemaker and designer Garret Cord Werner updated the interior of a 1960s high-rise condominium in Seattle. A stacked-limestone-and-bronze fireplace is the centerpiece of the living area, which has walls and a ceiling sheathed in bleached black walnut panels. For the seating area, Werner grouped a B&B Italia chaise longue and armchairs around an Isamu Noguchi low table.



# Condo MAKEOVER

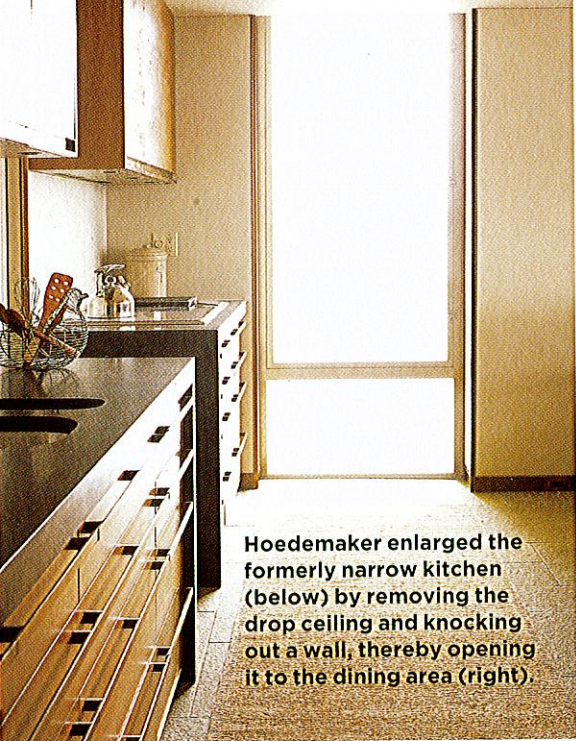
When a Seattle couple decided to downsize, they transformed dowdy high-rise interiors with materials and open spaces that reflect the natural world of the Pacific Northwest

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER DAVIES/TEXT BY PETER SACKETT

Through the telescope in their living area—a sleek, tailored lair twenty-two stories above Lake Washington—a Seattle couple has a bittersweet view into their shared past. The scope is fixed on the site of their former suburban residence across the water, designed for them decades earlier by architect David Hoedemaker.

Fond of that house as the two were, their appetite for travel outgrew their patience for battering down the homestead for





Hoedemaker enlarged the formerly narrow kitchen (below) by removing the drop ceiling and knocking out a wall, thereby opening it to the dining area (right).



BEFORE



BEFORE

ABOVE: A new kitchen island separates the dining area from the expanded kitchen. The architect replaced the hardwood floor with limestone pavers but retained the wall between the dining space and the living area (left).

**“The rooms were tiny and unfriendly,” says the architect. “We needed to reorganize a chaotic space and create clear rhythms.”**

extended absences. Downsizing to a condominium made all kinds of sense. The couple found a unit in a lakeside high-rise created in 1969 by the late Roland Terry, an architect considered a pillar of Northwest modern design. Evidence of the master’s hand, however, had vanished from the interior. The floor plan was a warren of incongruities and fussy details, with dropped fluorescent fixtures and striped wallpaper. Low ceilings compounded the cloying effect. For their new space, David Hoedemaker referred them to his son Steve, a principal of the Seattle architecture firm Bosworth Hoedemaker.

“The wife was feeling a little claustrophobic about the condominium,” recalls Steve Hoedemaker. “There were two imperatives: Open things up, and deploy natural materials that connect with the Northwest and convey a sense of the outdoors.”

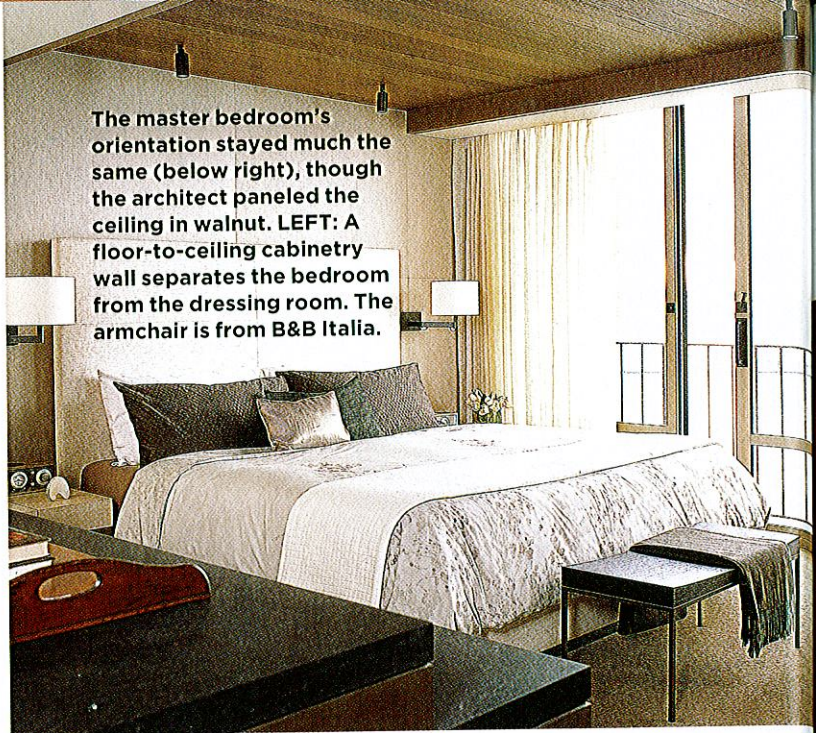
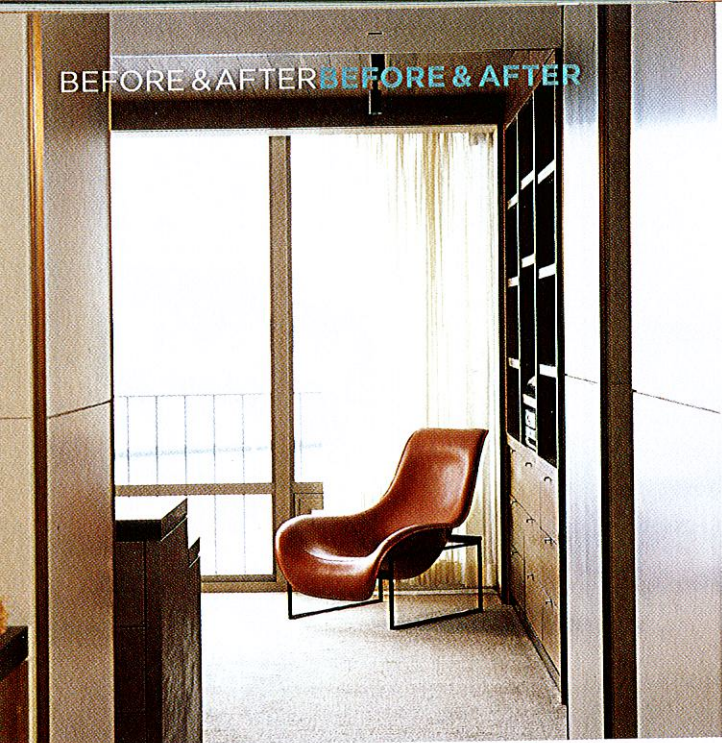
A series of framed spaces trimmed to the millimeter, the

remodeled condominium showcases hard surfaces and crisp edges in browns and ashy greens that possess an earthy, burnished luster. A soft blue-green panorama of Lake Washington and the North Cascades wraps the space at its outer edge.

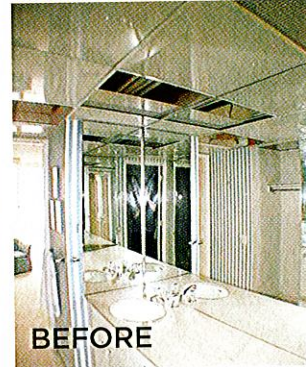
“This project was as much about interior design as it was architectural manipulation,” says Hoedemaker. He called on designer Garret Cord Werner, who specializes in the details of condominiums. “Garret’s talents overlap into architecture. He can assess spaces in terms of utility and function, not just limit his treatment to fabrics and pillows.”

The previous arrangement of rooms followed the traditional postwar convention of erecting walls around eating, sleeping, bathing and lounging. “The rooms were tiny and unfriendly,” says Hoedemaker. “We needed to reorganize a chaotic space and create clear rhythms so it didn’t seem so haphazard.”

BEFORE & AFTER BEFORE & AFTER



The master bedroom's orientation stayed much the same (below right), though the architect paneled the ceiling in walnut. LEFT: A floor-to-ceiling cabinetry wall separates the bedroom from the dressing room. The armchair is from B&B Italia.



BEFORE

BEFORE

ABOVE: A stacked-limestone wall defines the enlarged master bath. Two partially opaque glass doors open to the shower. Bronze accents, from Dornbracht faucets to recessed lighting fixtures, lend a sense of continuity. ABOVE, NEAR RIGHT: The original bath was a small, dark space.

The transformation began with broad strokes, by removing superfluous walls to erase visual clutter. The architect grouped the kitchen, dining and living areas at the unit's core. In private quarters, he linked separate bedrooms and baths to form luxurious master and guest suites without squandering precious square footage. The next challenge lay in devising a strategy that further downplayed the transitions from room to room. "In terms of the surface design details," says Hoedemaker, "we developed guidelines to understand exactly how materials would behave—how two materials would meet, how they would turn a corner and how they would shift from plane to plane."

Three materials jacket the condominium throughout: planks of black walnut, panels of bone-white fiberboard, and narrow channels of bronze. Werner attached the walnut to the ceiling and walls while lowering the fiberboard ceiling panels by several inches—a counterintuitive move that actually creates the illusion of more room as the darker black walnut recedes into shadow.

The focal point of the living area is Werner's driftwood-colored stacked-limestone fireplace. "You want to sit down there and toast marshmallows," says the wife. The same material in coarser dimensions covers a full wall in the master bath.

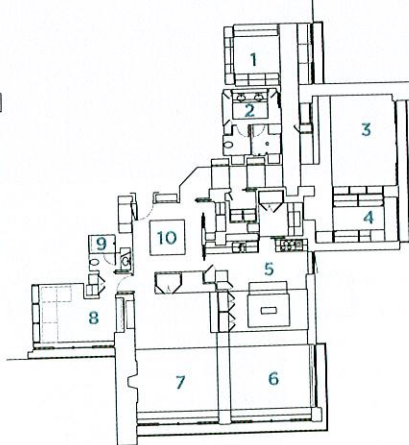
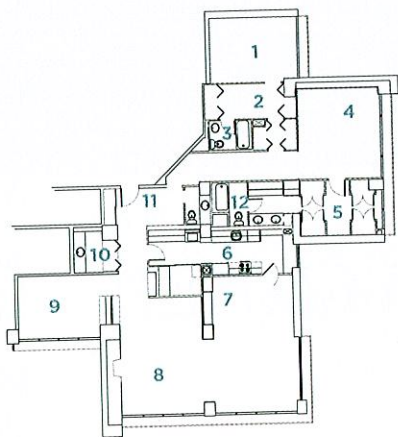
"This remodel is a completely new design, but it echoes their old home," says Werner. "I do miss my garden," the wife muses, "but not the maintenance. We just live closer to the sky now than we do to the ground."



The dining area, which is bordered on two sides by new sliding glass doors, is adjacent to the living space. *Rabbit Head*, a circa 2000 ceramic sculpture by Deborah Masuoka, is at right. "We had concerns about how we were going to adapt to a smaller space," says the wife. "But when you walk through the condominium, no matter what room you're in, you don't feel confined."

BEFORE

AFTER



- 1 Bedroom
- 2 Dressing room
- 3 Guest bath
- 4 Master bedroom
- 5 Dressing room
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Dining area
- 8 Living area
- 9 Study
- 10 Bar
- 11 Entry
- 12 Master bath

- 1 Office
- 2 Master bath
- 3 Master bedroom
- 4 Dressing room
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Dining area
- 7 Living area
- 8 Study/Guest room
- 9 Bath
- 10 Entry

CONDO REMODELING TIPS

Think like a boatbuilder—use every possible inch.

Surface decoration can't solve architectural deficiencies. Address the arrangement of rooms and larger structural components before pursuing interior decoration.

Even slight variations in the height and color of a low ceiling can provide visual interest and give the illusion of more headroom.

Changing the scale and surface treatment of the same material in different rooms makes a home aesthetically unified as well as visually interesting.

Don't take no for an answer from your condo association or contractors. A strong, thoughtful design can help others see the benefit in bending the rules. +