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EXTREME MEASURES

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THE DEVIL, AS THEY SAY, IS IN THE DETAILS. AS IT TURNS OUT, THERE'S PLENTY OF ANGST IN THOSE DETAILS, TOO—ANXIETY WITH WHICH THE TEAM THAT PUT TOGETHER THIS DUPLEX PENTHOUSE IN SEATTLE IS INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED. The apartment's sense of serenity is deceiving, says designer Gregory T. Carmichael, principal of Seattle's Gregory Carmichael Interior Design. "It looks calm and simple," he admits. "But knowing what went into it is nerve-wracking." It was an experience that culminated in having to shut down an entire street so the team could crane a hot tub onto a 24th-floor terrace. But we're getting ahead of our story.

Carmichael remembers getting a call from a childhood friend, a software engineer who'd found success when he sold his search technology company to Google. Though this friend lived in San Francisco, he wanted an apartment in Seattle near his family, and he asked Carmichael to help him find one. This penthouse, on the top two floors of a luxury condominium, "had the most unobstructed views of all the high-rises we looked at," says Carmichael. "Unfortunately, it was also the one that required the most work for what he wanted."

For starters, "it looked like it had been done by a set designer for *Star Wars*," explains architect Richard Sundberg, who completed the project with Seattle's Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects (now Olson Kundig Architects) and currently heads his own firm, Richard Sundberg Architect. The layout was a series of circles (the client wanted clean, straight lines) outfitted with a preponderance of industrial materials that gave the interiors a hard, high-tech modernity at odds with the luxury and comfort the client desired. Additionally, the place had to be conducive to entertaining while also offering areas for more intimate retreat, which necessitated a complete reconfiguration of rooms. And, of course, the team's design had to optimize the 270-degree views.

INTERIOR DESIGN Gregory T. Carmichael, Gregory Carmichael Interior Design		
ARCHITECTURE Richard Sundberg, FAIA, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects		
HOME BUILDER Terry Miller and Paul Vassallo, Schultz Miller, Inc.		
BEDROOMS 3	**BATHROOMS** 5	**SQUARE FEET** 7,000

WOOD MOOD

The custom-designed kitchen showcases afromosia wood cabinetry by Interior Environments, rift-cut white oak floors from Elliott Bay Hardwood Floors and Quarry S/E's Plaza Gray limestone countertops fabricated by Lambert Marble & Tile Works. Viking, Vent-A-Hood, Sub-Zero, Miele and Bosch fixtures are from Albert Lee Appliance.

HALL PASS
The master suite's gallery hallway leading to the bathroom features an antique Oushak runner from Michael Folks Showroom and Rena Bass Forman's gelatin print, from Winston Wächter Fine Art. Behind the shoji screen-inspired wall lies the bedroom.

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"We took it down to the shell," recalls Tony Giaquinta, project manager for Seattle construction firm Shultz Miller, owned by Terry Miller and Paul Vassallo. In this state, it became glaringly apparent that the floors had sagged since the building went up in the early 1980s. Since the client wanted no baseboards—preferring a quarter-inch reveal where walls met floors—those floors had to be perfectly level. So the entire space had to be hand-troweled and evened out. There were other challenges: To replace the entry's circular stair with a lighter "floating" version, the concrete slab between the two floors had to be reinforced. And the client wanted a complex Crestron home-monitoring system, which "required miles and miles of cable," says Giaquinta, who collaborated on the build with superintendent John Kindblade.

DESIGNER'S TOUCH

Gregory Carmichael custom-designed the living room sofas—with upholstery fabricated by Village Interiors using materials from Holly Hunt and C.C. Leathers, teak arms and base fabricated by Jonathan Pauls, and pillow fabrics by Dedar and Lulan. He also designed the cocktail table by Company K. Richard Sundberg designed the cantilevered fireplace made by Montigo.

STYLE SELECTION
In honor of its 33rd anniversary, LeavittWeaver presents the LeavittWeaverONE collection, which includes this intricately designed side table crafted by hand and showcasing years of innovation. *Zig Zag, price available upon request; leavittweaver.com*

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All that cable, as well as a lot of rerouted ductwork, had to be hidden. It was eventually concealed behind walls veneered in afromosia, a teak-like species Carmichael says he selected for its "really straight, simple grain." This served two purposes: It warmed the modern interiors, providing a contrast to Seattle's gray weather, and it did not compete with the spectacular views. Carmichael also custom-designed furniture in other rich woods—teak sofas, oak dining chairs, mahogany dining table bases—to ramp up the luxury quotient.

Some of the cable and ductwork was also encased in Milestone, a hybridized concrete product invented locally, which covers some of the walls and also composes the extensive system of ledges and benches lining the windows. The latter were devised as an antidote to the extreme horizontality imposed on the spaces by the semi-open plan and the ribbon windows.

OPEN MINDED
Carmichael designed the dining table with a glass top made by local artisans at Peter David Studio. The chairs were fabricated by Jonathan Pauls and upholstered by Village Interiors using Hunt Leather fabric. A sculpture by Ann Gardner is visible through Distinctive Glass panels and rests on a Milestone bench by Cirvell.

SHOJI MOJO
A wall with Asian flair serves as a backdrop in the master bedroom. The bed, custom-designed by Carmichael and Sundberg, is upholstered in J. Robert Scott fabric and dressed in linens by Rob Folendorf, Fortuny and the Calvin Klein Home Collection. A FontanaArte lamp from LightForm rests on the suspended bedside table.

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By lowering soffets right to the tops of the windows and dissimulating the bases with the ledges and benches, it appears that the windows actually stretch from floor to ceiling.

The client, then a first-time homebuyer, was surprised at the extraordinary measures it took to get everything just so. But, even after a year-long design process and another year and a half of construction, he says, "I can't imagine myself ever having said, 'Oh, that's all right, it doesn't have to be that exact.' You just have to have that level of precision. Now I get it." L

VIEW FINDER
The limestone bath, with fixtures by Dornbracht, has a spectacular view of the landmark Space Needle. Countertops and tile were installed by Lambert Marble & Tile Works, and the cabinetry is by Interior Environments. Mirrors and glasswork are by Distinctive Glass.

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ARCHITECTURE Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

HOME BUILDER Schultz Miller, Inc.

INTERIOR DESIGN Gregory Carmichael Interior Design

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Albert Lee Appliance
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