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Opalescent curves give this condo sophisticated allure

BY SUZY FRISCH | PHOTOS BY GREG PAGE

rene Bartram lived in Tyrol Hills for more than a decade in a lovely old Tudor home. The problem with her 1933 jewel box of a house: Its tiny rooms made entertaining large groups all but impossible. Tired of the chopped-up spaces and lugging suitcases up and down stairs, Bartram wanted one-floor living and big, open spaces. When she saw a ninth-floor unit in the Cobalt building in northeast Minneapolis, she liked the space, the perfect location overlooking the Mississippi River, and the floor-to-ceiling windows on the downtown skyline. But Bartram had no intention of living in spare, square rooms. She hired a team to transform her condo: Erotas Building Corp. in Excelsior; architect Jeffery R. Sweitzer of UU Design in Edina (then of Sharratt Design, also in Excelsior); and Laura Ramsey Engler of the eponymous design firm in Minneapolis. Together, they created a very personal space for Bartram, carefully built to accommodate her penchant for entertaining and traveling.

Though Bartram lives much of the year in Florida, this condominium is no second residence. Minneapolis is home—in her head and heart—and this is her haven for enjoying it. "The space to me is a big exhale. It's so open to the city, but you are viewing it from the inside out," she says. "I was concerned that it would be cold with all the glass and windows, but it's anything but that. The color and the soft surfaces make it very quiet, and it feels very embracing to me."

Panorama Literally surrounded by the Minneapolis ed spot for Bartram to work. Two artfully concealed doors allow skyline, the dining room table, custom banquette, and plush chairs nestle into the condo's southeast corner, creating a relaxing place to linger over coffee with guests. The racetrack oval table easily expands to accommodate larger crowds, yet the corner is cozy enough to dine alone. Sweitzer reconfigured the condo's original design so that Bartram's bedroom would also enjoy the downtown panorama. She can lie in bed, and take the view of the Hennepin and Third Avenue bridges, the river, and the downtown lights.

Versatility The condominium is full of hidden doors that allow Bartram to change up the space depending on her needs. "I didn't want my home to feel like I'm always waiting for the



company to arrive. I wanted the space to feel more human," she says. A sliding wall of wood and translucent mica panes between the kitchen and living room lets her partially or fully separate the prepping and entertaining spaces during catered events. A pocket office tucked behind the kitchen provides an accessible yet secludboth bedrooms to be closed off from the main living space. But when all the doors are open, the vistas of the Mississippi River and the Minneapolis skyline, stretching from the Guthrie Theater to the Hennepin Avenue Bridge and beyond, provides a bustling backdrop for the sleek interior. And a perfect entertaining space. "I love the fact that I can easily have 30 for a seated dinner in my dining room, and we can all be together," says Bartram.

OW Luscious curves and entwined circles are the recurring themes of the architecture and the décor of Bartram's rooms. Circles in shades of periwinkle and lavender in the lush rugs softly echo the shapes of the furnishings. Curved walls flow from one



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room to the next, defining a space that is luxe and glam, yet soft and feminine. A curved wall upholstered in lavender velvet draws visitors from the foyer into the living room. Architect Sweitzer and Mark Bouchard of Islero Fabrication in Minneapolis designed the unique two-sided fireplace with a curving hood that separates the living room from the adjacent den. It sits over an in-floor hearth of slate with a linear flame that emerges from a bed of rocks. Another curved wall in the den makes the space embracing and inviting, while a trio of brightly colored glass grapes and a polka-dot sofa add whimsy.

Palette Bartram wanted color that wouldn't overwhelm, and the glamorous neutrals used throughout her home—shades of opalescent cream, silver, lavender, and periwinkle—hit all the right notes. The platinum and periwinkle palette, or "platiwinkle," as Engler calls it, radiates an aura of sophisticated allure. The kitchen's gently bowed island, painted with automotive lacquer, leans toward the platinum end of the spectrum, while the backpainted glass backsplash is a more vibrant lilac. These pearly shades and bleached sycamore cabinets contrast with the rich walnut floor. Even the light fixture over the island, resembling an upside-down wedding cake, glows in a periwinkle hue.

SUZY FRISCH IS A WRITER WHO LIVES IN APPLE VALLEY.

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