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## LOFTY NEST

With a bird's-eye view of Water Street beneath a dusk sky, the vantage point from the mezzanine of this rooftop condo guest house is a unique experience. Turn the page to see how this mood-lit, leather-and-chrome-swivel-chair nook exemplifies a spectacularly crafted Historic Third Ward residence. *Photo by Mark F. Heffron*



# URBAN OASIS

A custom-designed Historic Third Ward condo combines sleek lines, high-end amenities and endless city views.

BY RICK ROMANO  
PHOTOS BY MARK F. HEFFRON

There's something for almost every taste on this well-appointed rooftop terrace: cozy furniture groupings, a fire pit, stunning art, and, oh yes, those views.





**IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING**, Richard Sherer appreciates the perfect topping to a cool treat on a summer day — or on any day, for that matter. The design principal of Milwaukee-based Deep River Partners recently placed the proverbial cherry on top of an existing Historic Third Ward condo building, creating a delicious urban oasis.

Sherer has experience designing top-side residences, which is why a suburban couple looking for a multiview, city domicile called on him to design a new home for them and an adjoining space for visitors.

The first phase of the project — an 18-room, 5,000-square-foot residence — features high-end amenities, including a private elevator entry, multistory ceiling height, a water-feature wall, dual linear fireplaces for the living and dining rooms, and floor-to-ceiling windows with access to a rooftop terrace and sculpture garden. An open-concept floor plan marries the kitchen, dining and living rooms for maximum entertainment value.

To accompany his clients' modern art collection, Sherer designed the interior as a sleek, pattern-less, monochromatic canvas with dramatic hues sprinkled throughout in materials and lighting. The kitchen sports high-gloss white cabinets and a metal tile backsplash. Floors are manufactured from natural stone with radiant heating.

"It was important to create a lot of clean edges that were easy on the eyes — and that the engineering could support," Sherer says. He points to customized shapes within the main living areas, such as curved volume ceilings with suspended canopies, fabric and wood panels, and shaped gypsum panels, as examples. The shapes are joined by residence-wide customized lighting, providing a variety of mood-altering illumination as well as task options. The key to making the design work, Sherer says, was to "use materials in an honest way, not tainted or manipulated with coatings or stains — a true expression of (the material) itself."

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An array of materials lifts this kitchen-into-dining room view beyond the ordinary. The raised counter at left is bluish recycled glass that steps down to a silver/white granite level. Cabinets range from high-gloss acrylic just beyond the range to tigerwood veneer covering the large column, rear-left storage.



The curved fabric ceiling panels framing this open-concept dining and living room space provide accessible definition to the room and an acoustic balance to the surrounding hard surfaces.



Colorful modern art plays well against the mostly monochromatic clean lines and signature curved ceilings.



Careful selection of soft interiors, including leather furniture and wool area rugs, helps express the sleek design.

On the rooftop, a jigsaw pattern of sedum and pavers is part of a green system, which also boasts specialized wayfinding and environmental lighting.

While this two-bedroom residence is roomy for almost any function, Sherer's clients also wanted a second-phase guesthouse, primarily for visiting family. Dubbing it the "little brother" to the main condo, Sherer says it was designed for a "stepped-down," elegant-retro look.

The smaller, 3,000-square-foot unit also has two bedrooms, each with en-suite baths. Its main space includes a vaulted and curved tongue-and-groove wood ceiling. Showing a fun side, an entertainment room sports a ping-pong table and a full beverage bar with beer dispenser and curvilinear seating.

The project, Sherer says, demonstrates shoreline-existence potential.

"There are challenges with building these types of units because construction is going on around existing and occupied residences," Sherer explains. "The payoff, though, is evident. The tops of buildings are generally undervalued. They offer gorgeous views and the opportunity to customize beyond the original building." **M**

## RESOURCE CENTER: HOW TO RE-CREATE THE LOOK

- » Customized mood and task lighting throughout the residences is by Klein Lighting in Fox Point, [kleinlighting.com](http://kleinlighting.com).
- » The dual linear fireplace features in the living and dining rooms are by Montigo Del Ray Corporation in Washington, [montigo.com](http://montigo.com).
- » The kitchen counter stools and living room couch are sourced from Roche Bobois, a French furniture retailer with a Chicago distribution center, [roche-bobois.com](http://roche-bobois.com).
- » The master bathroom sink and electronic shower controls are Kohler products, [kohler.com](http://kohler.com).
- » Door hardware throughout the condo can be found at Valli & Valli, [vallievalli.com](http://vallievalli.com).
- » Area rugs were sourced from Morlen Sinoway in Chicago, [morlensinoway.com](http://morlensinoway.com), and Kashou Carpets in Milwaukee, [milwaukeekeerugs.com](http://milwaukeekeerugs.com).



Above: The master bedroom features custom-made furniture, a cast glass privacy wall, and a tray ceiling with an inlaid plaster design.

Right: Programmable ceiling lighting floats from the master bedroom to the master bathroom, where sleeker lines are defined by a vessel sink and warmed by natural tones.

