



## One Smart Condo

*Clients' second home receives a connected update with a nod to industrial style*

A COUPLE WANTED THEIR VACATION property in Milwaukee to be the perfect place for weekend visits and lots of entertaining. A friend of theirs who is a commercial designer recommended Deep River Partners, and senior project architect Nicholas Blavat and interior designer Natalie Erickson got started upgrading the 90s-style condo.

The clients also wanted a smart, connected home, which is a sweet spot for the firm. Blavat says Deep River Partners has always led this discussion, even before integrating homes with technology was top of mind.

"There are not many homes we work on that don't have some aspect of smart technology included," he added.

### MAKING A CONNECTION

The clients wanted all the bells and whistles when it came to technology in their home. They

**ABOVE** Clients in this Milwaukee condo wanted their updated space to be fully automated with mood-setting lighting controls, automated roller shades and zoned speakers. The existing ceiling had the industrial vibe the clients loved, and the lighting designer created a rectangular track lighting system there in place of cans.

By CHELSIE BUTLER





also wanted the ability to manage the systems even when they are not visiting that particular property.

Because of the home's orientation, a good amount of heat comes through the windows, so automatic shades were a must. Those are set to close at certain times of the day, and they also provide privacy. Sonos speakers are integrated throughout the home, including in the primary bathroom, outdoor area and office, with the ability to expand into other spaces. Reasonably priced smart thermostats can be controlled remotely, and "Vacation" mode saves on energy when the homeowners are away.

The lighting system can create different levels and scenes and can simulate occupancy when no one is home. All illumination throughout the home is dimmable and operable via user-friendly keypads. The clients installed a security system as an addition to the building's offering, and the fireplace is app driven with a remote.

For this project, the design team chose a tried-and-true integrator. They have developed several of these valuable relationships over the years, and all the smart home professionals with whom they work are accredited.

#### **KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL**

The clients wanted a modern and industrial look for this space, and it was important for some of

**ABOVE** Designers Nicholas Blavat and Natalie Erickson chose energy-efficient, commercial-grade appliances from Sub-Zero/Wolf, and some are integrated to look like the cabinets. The countertop and backsplash are Arabascato polished quartz with marble-look veining.

**RIGHT** A hidden bar cabinet with a beverage refrigerator fulfills the clients' desire for entertaining.





## TECH SAVVY

the appliances to be integrated and disguised as the custom cabinets. There is also a full-height wine refrigerator and a hidden bar area perfect for entertaining. The color palette of black, white and natural wood supports the clean, crisp look.

The existing ceiling gave a nod to the industrial look the clients desired with its warehouse aesthetic. The lighting designer created a black, rectangular track system with dimmable up-lighting and downlighting that is used as a drop element to define the space. Two large pendants provide more illumination in a space that used to have none.

**BOOSTED BATHROOM**

This primary space was so small, the design team said one could barely fit in the shower, but the toilet room was massive. Blavat and Erickson reworked the bath to include a larger shower, double vanities, a makeup area and a freestanding tub.

They used the black, white and wood palette in here as well, and the showstopper is the floating black marble-look wall behind the tub with dimmable LED lighting surrounding it. The large-format porcelain tile used for the shower walls and the overall bathroom floor also channels real marble.

The smart elements in the primary bath include tunable white light that can create various levels for relaxation. A remote-controlled TOTO Washlet offers multiple settings and features, including an automatic open/close lid, a nightlight, an auto clean of the wand and bowl and a premist of the bowl before use.

As this project took place during the peak of the pandemic, there was concern over everyone's safety, including the design and construction team and building tenants. The work was shuttered for a few weeks, but because they had ordered everything ahead of time, the project stayed on track. The clients love their new condo and gave Blavat and Erickson a glowing review ●



**ABOVE** The clients desired a modern, clean look in the primary bath, which was created with the black, white and natural wood palette also in the kitchen. The large-format porcelain tile throughout the space resembles real marble.

**RIGHT** The highlight of this space is the floating black porcelain wall that looks like marble behind the freestanding tub, which is surrounded by dimmable LED lighting.



**SOURCES:** **DESIGN TEAM:** Nicholas Blavat, AIA, Senior Project Architect & Natalie Erickson, Interior Designer, Deep River Partners **LIGHTING DESIGNER:** Steve Klein, Klein Lighting **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Ryan Hainey ● **KITCHEN APPLIANCES:** Sub-Zero/Wolf & Zephyr (hood) **COUNTERTOPS:** Vicostone **FAUCET:** Waterstone **FLOORING:** Reward Flooring **LIGHTING:** Arteriors & Finelite **SINK:** Kohler ● **PRIMARY BATH ACCESSORIES:** Kallista & Kohler **COUNTERTOPS:** Wilsonart **FLOOR & WALL TILE:** Ariostea Marmi Classici **HARDWARE:** Emtek **LIGHTING:** Kuzco & Visual Comfort **MEDICINE CABINETS:** Robern **SHOWER FIXTURES & TUB FILLER:** Kallista **TUB:** Victoria + Albert ● **TECH ELEMENTS LIGHTING CONTROL & SHADES:** Lutron **SPEAKERS/AUDIO:** Sonos