

# New England HOME

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## *Enduring Charm*

Timeless elegance meets present-day panache



METROPOLITAN  
LIFE

# Here & There

DESIGN DISCOVERIES FROM AROUND NEW ENGLAND

## Comfort Zone

With a nudge from their designers, a couple who appreciates traditional style branches out in the Back Bay.

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A conversation-starting chandelier from Sean Lavin for Visual Comfort & Co. hangs in the condo's formal dining room. The barrel chairs are from Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, while the artwork above the fireplace is by Flora Borsi.

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hen a firm works with the same client once, twice, or, in this instance, three times, its designers get to witness a style evolution—or even instigate it. “In previous projects together, this couple gravitated toward a more traditional aesthetic,” says interior designer Michael Forman. “But this time around, they trusted us to push them outside of their comfort zone. They’re a cool young family with great style,

**RIGHT:** The building’s elevator opens into a redesigned foyer. Its new two-foot-deep wall (right) separates the entry from the kitchen and dining room and gives the family a much-needed coat closet. **BELOW:** Sliding glass doors behind a living room sofa conceal a workout area without obstructing any natural light from either space’s abundant windows.



Interior designer Michael Forman sought to highlight the condo's molding, some of it original to the early 1900s, by painting it a darker shade than the surrounding walls. "Doing so can make a space feel more formal, but we balanced it with contemporary elements," he says. Case in point: the chandelier from Aerin for Visual Comfort & Co. and artwork by François Bonnel.



and we felt their home should reflect that. Juxtaposing this home's traditional bones with modern touches created a chic and timeless setting that complements their new urban lifestyle."

Those bones belong to a three-bedroom

2,800-square-foot condo in a prewar building in Boston's Back Bay. A renovation fourteen years ago included a sleek kitchen that Forman and the team at Eleven Interiors left as is, but the rest of the home needed updating, starting with the lighting plan.



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—Interior designer Michael Forman

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** The powder room near the kitchen is wrapped in a bluish-black Zak+Fox wallpaper. The graphic reeded-glass-and-steel sliding doors that separate the workout space from the living room act like artwork when they are closed. The Poggenpohl kitchen, installed during a prior renovation, boasts lacquered greige cabinets around the range and light wood cabinetry on the parallel islands.



The designers clad the breakfast nook banquette in wipeable vinyl and outfitted its base with storage for crayons and construction paper.





**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** The walls, trim, and ceiling in the daughter's room are painted a dusty rose. The son's bedroom is a lesson in contrast with its gray-black wood bed and bright blue molding. The kids' hallway features an Arte wallcovering; "This time around, we were definitely more adventurous, especially with wallcoverings," says the husband.

When the couple purchased the condo, the rooms were each lit by sixty or seventy puck lights recessed into the ceiling, something Forman admits he'd never seen before. Thoughtful task lighting, striking sconces, and graphic chandeliers replaced the head-scratching Lite-Brite effect.

The husband says a new lighting plan was priority number one. Priority number two was "space within a space," as he describes it. Witness the custom floating bed in the primary bedroom. The back of the headboard conceals a built-in stone-topped standing desk that serves as the husband's home office with nary a computer monitor in sight. In the living room, a wall with reeded-glass-and-steel doors created a room within a room that corrals workout equipment. "They can shut





**ABOVE:** The husband never has to leave the bedroom when he works from home: the channel-tufted headboard conceals a desktop and workstation. Artwork by Tim Forbes hangs above the console. **RIGHT:** The design team gutted the primary bath and gave it some drama with a dual vanity topped in Calacatta Viola marble.

the doors, and the living room is ready for a cocktail party,” says Forman.

In fact, those partygoers might not even realize there are two small kids—and a dog—living in the condo. Off the kitchen, Forman reimagined a long corridor as a kid’s zone. The hallway’s existing built-ins provide storage for books and action figures, while one end acts as a cozy TV corner and the other leads to the kids’ bedrooms and baths.

In terms of palette, Forman describes it as being sophisticated without being too safe. Rooms are grounded in warm neutrals with punchy black accents and unexpected moments of color, like the green lacquered table base in the breakfast nook. The couple appreciates the mix of classic and cool and the nod to where their style has been—and where it might be going.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** For details, see Resources.

**INTERIOR DESIGN:** Eleven Interiors  
**BUILDER:** Future of Construction

