

MAR | APR 2021

MIDWEST

INTERNATIONAL  
INFLUENCE

# HOMIE







VIEWS OF THE DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS SKYLINE  
STEAL THE SHOW IN THE EXPERTLY CURATED DINING  
ROOM OF THIS LIGHT- AND ART-FILLED PENTHOUSE.



# FRESH START, OLD SOUL



A collection of art and artifacts is given new life in a Mill District penthouse

written by **LAURIE JUNKER** photos by **SPACECRAFTING**





## THE STATELY ST. PAUL HOME

Tom and Kathy Awe had lived in for 20 years took a while to sell, which didn't end up being a bad thing. "We raised our four children there, and it would have been harder if it sold right away," Kathy says. "I think we needed the mental and emotional time to let it go."

The Awes, now empty nesters, knew their next home would be temporary. Maybe. The couple's not sure what the next five, 10, or 20 years will hold, and they're OK with that—even giddy. "A friend of mine has a saying," Tom says. "'What you own owns you.' I like that notion. It's nice not to have that responsibility."

They plan to stay flexible depending on where their interests, health, and possible future grandchildren might lead them. For now, they're leasing a 2,400-square-foot, light-filled penthouse in downtown Minneapolis that overlooks Gold Medal Park. With panoramic views, two large balconies, three bedrooms, and a fireplace, the unit met the Awes' space and comfort requirements—plus the added fun of an amenity-rich building that includes a concierge, fitness center, storage units, heated underground parking, and rental suites for overnight guests.

The downside? The space had all the charm of a corporate rental—only slightly homier than a hotel. The Awes wanted to







CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: A NEUTRAL PALETTE IN THE MAIN LIVING SPACE ELEVATES THE CLIENTS' "TRADITIONAL WITH A TWIST" STYLE. OPEN SHELVING DISPLAYS THEIR EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF POTTERY, CERAMICS, AND ARTIFACTS AND CREATES A NEEDED FOCAL POINT NEAR THE SIMPLE, MODERN FIREPLACE. THROUGHOUT THE PENTHOUSE, FLOOR-TO-CEILING WINDOWS OFFER PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDING CITY.





LEFT TO RIGHT: A CUSTOM-MADE DENIM SLIPCOVER MAKES A WELL-LOVED FAMILY SOFA LOOK AS GOOD AS NEW IN THE COUPLE'S MEDIA ROOM, WHILE A STAR-SHAPED OTTOMAN AND LIVELY PILLOWS USHER ENERGY AND PERSONALITY INTO THE SPACE. ADDITIONAL DÉCOR PIECES, A LARGE, GOLD-FRAMED MIRROR, AND WOOD DRESSER ADD VISUAL INTEREST, TEXTURE, AND STORAGE TO THE HALLWAY.



# “THEIR STYLE IS TRADITIONAL WITH A TWIST— A LITTLE GLOBAL, A LITTLE WABI-SABI.”

create a more personal environment that would embrace the Mill District’s modern vibe and a handful of art and furnishings from their previous home. In other words, a fresh start with some old soul. They turned to their longtime friend and designer Maureen Haggerty of mint interior design, who had collaborated with them on their St. Paul home 20 years ago. Kathy had total confidence in her: “We gave Maureen free rein to reimagine this space.”

Haggerty approached the project with a practical eye, limited by both a firm budget and the constraints of the unit. Since she knew the Awes well, there wasn’t much of a learning curve. “Their style is traditional with a twist—a little global, a little wabi-sabi,” Haggerty says. “Kathy and Tom relish the time-worn furnishings that remind them of the days when their children were young, and wished to repurpose them—not only to save money but to bring their beloved memories with them.”

Merging a minimalist shell with the Awes’ more traditional pieces required a deft hand and thoughtful use of color, pattern, and texture. Haggerty established a white and gray palette throughout the apartment to showcase their artwork and the views, splashing in wallpaper and saturated color in a few strategic spots to add interest and punctuation.

Swapping out prosaic light fixtures helped to define and heighten the spaces. A hanging shade with leather and polished nickel accents adds a tailored touch to the living room while a sleek contemporary chandelier in the dining area offers a pleasing contrast to the Awes’ hefty round table.

Fabrics are a mix of light linens and nubby tweeds that update traditional pieces but don’t overwhelm the eye. Floor-to-ceiling industrial shelving mimics the verticality of the downtown skyline and displays the Awes’ extensive collection of pottery, ceramics, and artifacts.

Art is a common theme throughout the space. Although the couple brought over some favorites, they needed additional items that would complement and balance their collection with both Haggerty’s design and the open floor plan. Art consultant Nicole Kappus Solheid of NKS Artsource collaborated with Haggerty in curating the new pieces, carefully marrying color and form to create an engaging and cohesive display.

“Seeing all of our favorite pieces—furniture, art, rugs—in one place has been a nice surprise,” Tom says. “Before, they were scattered throughout the house. Now we get to enjoy them all the time.” A prime example is an elegant gilt bamboo Chinoiserie server with mirrored shelves. Once tucked away and purely decorative,

it’s now front and center as a bar cart and getting plenty of use during the pandemic.

A large painting by neo-expressionist Jamali is a worthy companion to the impressive views and adds color and sweetness to the dining area. “This piece looked amazing in the Awes’ historical St. Paul home,” says Haggerty. “Now, reframed, it transforms their new penthouse.”

One of the three bedrooms was converted to a media room, a more casual space starring the family sofa—comfortable from years of use but refreshed with custom-made denim slipcovers. A new star-shaped leather ottoman and vivid abstract painting add personality to the room. Another bedroom was reimagined as a home office for Tom. Haggerty hung a mirror behind his desk that reflects the world-renowned Guthrie Theater in the distance—an unexpected backdrop for video calls and a clever feature Tom particularly enjoys.

The Awes love their new neighborhood and look forward to it becoming livelier post-COVID. They don’t miss their former home’s maintenance or size, though they cherish the memories. Tom puts it simply: “We had a glorious time in that house. It was time to pass it along and let someone else have that experience.” ✕

