

MODERNLUXURY

Work of Heart

Laura Hine

Deciding to jump in and buy a duplex penthouse in the building where they already lived was a leap of faith for a stylish couple.



The penthouse's new custom kitchen is now on the home's main entry level. Builder Jane Levy and designer Leah Phillips led the extensive two-year complete renovation.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARGARET RAJIC »

Newlyweds Katie and Mehmet Tasci quite obviously love their River North building. Mehmet and Katie bought a two-bedroom condo in the building, but when one of the building's four penthouses came on the market, they jumped on it, even though it was, as Katie says, "in dire shape." The duplex condo hadn't been updated in years and needed a lot of love to turn it into the modern, warm space the couple knew it could be.



*The lower-level living room includes a sofa by Article and a pair of black leather chairs by Cisco Brothers
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARGARET RAJIC »*

A few things convinced the couple that they were up for the challenge. First, they had already worked with Leah Phillips, partner at Phillips + Gilligan Interiors, on their two-bedroom apartment and knew she could help them figure out the design. Second, they had Jane Levy on board as their builder. “She makes the impossible possible,” Katie says. The impossible included relocating the kitchen from the lower level to the upper level, which is where the home’s main entry is located; closing a portion of an open stairwell to make a dining space; and getting multiple permits and approvals for the whole project.



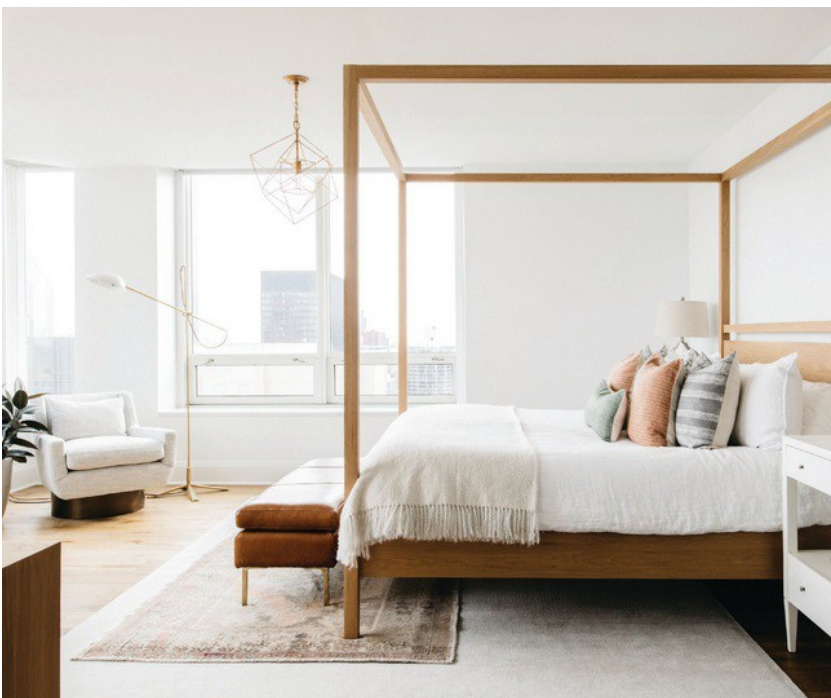
*The upstairs seating area has one of the home’s many Turkish rugs. This one has meaningful symbols handstitched into the rug.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARGARET RAJIC »*

“We were brought in to help them figure it out,” Phillips says. “They asked us to make every room feel like it’s telling the same story, and also to marry their two styles.” The couple describe Mehmet’s style as modern, while Katie’s is understated boho with a minimalist feel. They also had the advantage of knowing what they didn’t want. “We met with a few other designers and they all had very elaborate plans—pearl wallpaper, velvet everything and bold colors—despite us saying we want something that’s more inviting, inclusive and approachable,” Katie says. “I felt like everyone was thinking that we must have drapes.” Instead, Phillips helped them focus on what they were passionate about, which is their art collection. The couple work with Erica Barrish to collect art they love and they wanted their home to reflect that passion. Impressively, one of their paintings by Toyin Ojih Odutola is currently on loan to the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago for its exhibit *Duro Olowu: Seeing Chicago*.



Phillips gave them white walls that accentuate their art, and added texture and color in other clever ways. “My husband is Turkish, so he really wanted Turkish rugs,” Katie says. “But when we looked in Turkey, everything was too vibrant.” Phillips brought in Yoruk Rug Gallery to find vintage and custom rugs for most of the rooms in the condo. “In their own way, rugs are art too,” Phillips says. “The look we were going for was more muted and faded, but still lush.”

Rest & Repine made the husband’s custom desk to hide an oversize computer monitor
 PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARGARET RAJIC



Rest & Repine also made the bed and dresser in the serene master bedroom.
 PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARGARET RAJIC

Other details that give the home great personality are all the custom built-ins that Phillips designed and Levy's team— working with Roecker Cabinets—made possible. The white kitchen's finishes and fronts reference the alder wood bar without exactly matching it. And while the staircase is original, Phillips refinished it and changed out the stainless steel hardware for new wood railings. Each bathroom has custom vanities, and other ingenious touches include a custom desk in the office made by Rest & Repine that hides Mehmet's large-screen monitor he uses when working from home. When the workday is done, it only takes a touch of a button to lower it into the desk.

In all, the project took two years to complete—the outside terrace is this summer's project—but the ability to pop upstairs whenever there was a question definitely made the process easier. "When it was all done, we left for a trip to Japan and Leah styled the whole house while we were gone," Katie says. "We came home and it was like a dream come true. They unpacked everything; we just had to bring our clothes upstairs."

DESIGN DETAILS

TYPE: Duplex penthouse

LOCATION: River North

BUILDER: Levy Custom Homes, levycustomhomes.com

INTERIOR DESIGN: Phillips + Gilligan Interiors, phillipsandgilliganinteriors.com

CABINETRY: Roecker Cabinets, roeckercabinets.com

RESOURCES CISCO HOME: Downstairs black leather chairs, ciscohome.net

DESIGN WITHIN REACH: Dining room table and chairs, dwr.com

EAB FINE ART SERVICES: Curator for most art in the common areas, eabfineart.com

THE FINE LINE: Tile for most of the bathrooms, finelinetile.com

LAWSON-FENNING: Upstairs living room sofa and wing chairs, lawsonfenning.com

MADE GOODS: Bedroom nightstands, madegoods.com

MILLS TECHNOLOGIES: Motorized shades, mills-technologies.com

REST & REPINE: Master bed and dresser, custom office desk, [@restandrepine](https://www.instagram.com/restandrepine)

SPROUT HOME: Indoor plants, sprouthome.com

VISUAL COMFORT: Bar and master bath lighting, visualcomfort.com

YORUK RUG GALLERY: Turkish rugs, yorukruggallery.com