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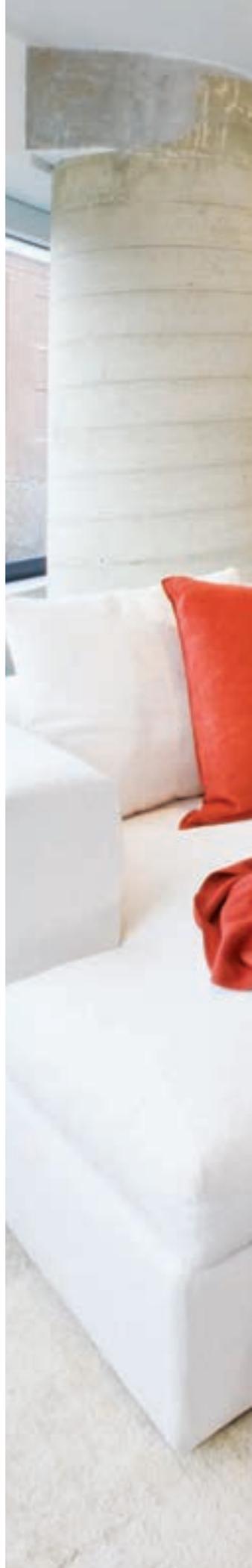


Architect Andreas Charalambous
redefines an awkwardly shaped
Georgetown apartment, creating
surprises at every turn



BY SHARON JAFFE DAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFFREY HODGDON

SLEEK + POLISHED





In the main living area (pictured here), lighter furnishings and textiles play off the ebony-stained, wide-plank oak floors. An accent wall is covered in braided hemp from Donghia. In the glamorous new dining area (opposite), mirrors expand the vistas.



Andreas Charalambous carved out a wider entry space (this page) near the dining room. When turned off, the beaded glass chandelier by Moooi disappears in its reflective cylindrical shade. The once-disconnected kitchen is now appointed with clean-lined Poliform cabinetry (opposite, bottom). An accent wall of wood and back-painted glass (opposite, top) divides the public and private spaces. Below the flat-screen TV is a built-in EcoSmart fireplace.



S mitten with an apartment in the heart of Georgetown overlooking the C&O Canal, a South America-based couple in search of a DC pied-à-terre decided to buy it on the spot. They saw potential in the residence despite its mundane interiors and awkward, triangular floor plan.

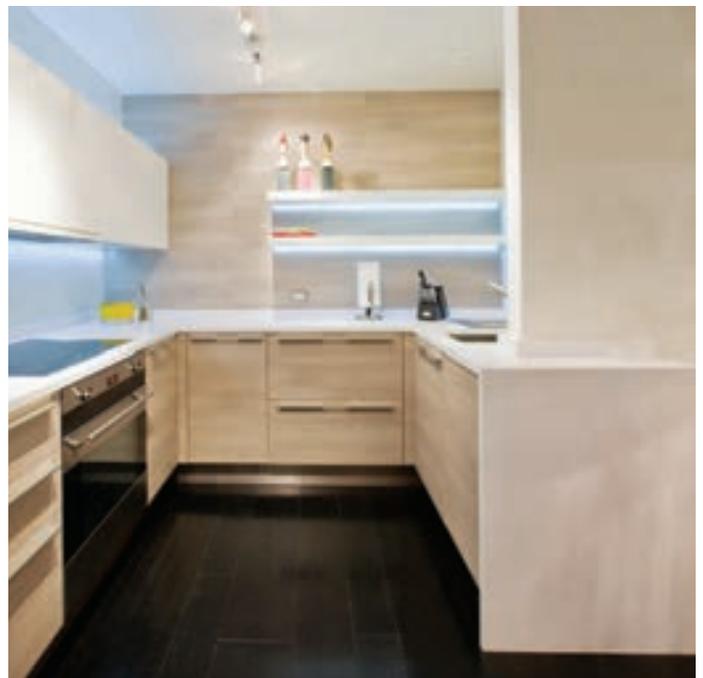
“We knew it was a bit old-fashioned for us,” says the wife, a marketing professional. “We needed to rearrange the space in order to better fit our lifestyle.”

She and her husband, a commercial real estate executive, turned to DC architect Andreas Charalambous to redesign and furnish the residence so that it could double as a luxurious home away from home as well as a stylish venue for entertaining friends and clients.

“Our approach was to maximize the vistas and make the apartment feel bigger than it is,” says Charalambous, who developed a plan that would open up and reorganize the space, give the once-dark and disconnected kitchen greater presence and update the finishes and furnishings throughout. “The major move was [to build] a wall that slices through the apartment from the front door all the way to the back. It separates the semi-private spaces from the public spaces,” he says. A perpendicular wall paneled in fabric separates the main living space from the guest bedroom.

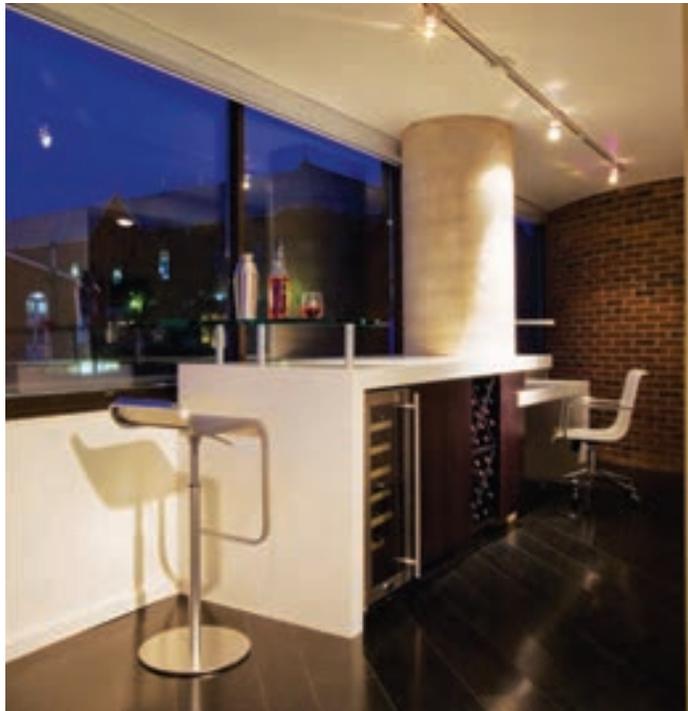
By deftly employing mirrors and other reflective surfaces, the architect made the apartment appear larger than its 1,500 square feet. In every room, a special feature awaits, from the ethanol-

INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE & INTERIOR DESIGN: ANDREAS CHARALAMBOUS, AIA, IIDA, principal, and JUAN GUTIERREZ, project architect, FORMA Design, Inc., Washington, DC. **GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** MCA Remodeling, Montgomery Village, Maryland.



burning fireplace on the main focal wall to the “floating” concrete coffee table. Ebony-stained floors, back-lit resin panels and even a “hidden” chandelier in the new dining area—carved out of space borrowed from ill-designed closets—increase the apartment’s “wow” factor. An elaborate lighting plan enables the residents to set a variety of moods, day or night.

To the left of the entry, guests encounter a sleek and inviting kitchen—a far cry from the original galley; the opening between



Top, left to right: A pocket door shutters the master suite from the main living area; mirrored closet doors reflect the private balcony overlooking the C&O Canal. The custom wood headboard and nightstands are lit from the back. The master bath features a custom, double-trough vanity and Thassos white marble floor. The guest room (right) can be screened off with sliding translucent panels by 3form; it overlooks the custom desk and built-in bar (above), sited on what was once a balcony.



the kitchen and the rest of the apartment was doubled to create a visual connection to the outdoors and flood the apartment with light. In the dining room, an obtrusive duct that could not be moved inspired Charalambous to create a dramatic tiered ceiling and recess for the chandelier. “You have to be able to play up the pluses and eliminate the minuses—or at least disguise them,” he says.

At the far end of the apartment, previous owners had enclosed a balcony, leaving an unsightly brick knee wall that bordered the guest room. Though it could not be removed, Charalambous concealed the brick and topped it with sliding translucent panels that admit light but provide privacy. Where the balcony once was, a functional desk and bar area now enjoy views of the Canal.

The master bedroom can also be screened off from the living area by a sliding pocket door. In this posh suite, the bed is anchored by an accent wall with an illuminated, cut-out niche. The room opens to a balcony—perfect for enjoying coffee and the morning paper in this private slice of Georgetown.

During construction, the owners were out of the country and did not visit the apartment until the makeover was finally complete. They were thrilled with the results. “What a change! We love the new finishes. The wooden floor, the lighting and the architect’s ability to brighten up and make the spaces look bigger really surprised us,” remarks the wife.

“Nothing is left from the old apartment,” Charalambous concludes. “Now the place is full of unexpected surprises, which is what the clients hired us to do.” ❖

Photographer Geoffrey Hodgdon is based in Deale, Maryland.

For before pictures, visit homeanddesign.com. SEE PAGE 184 FOR RESOURCES.