

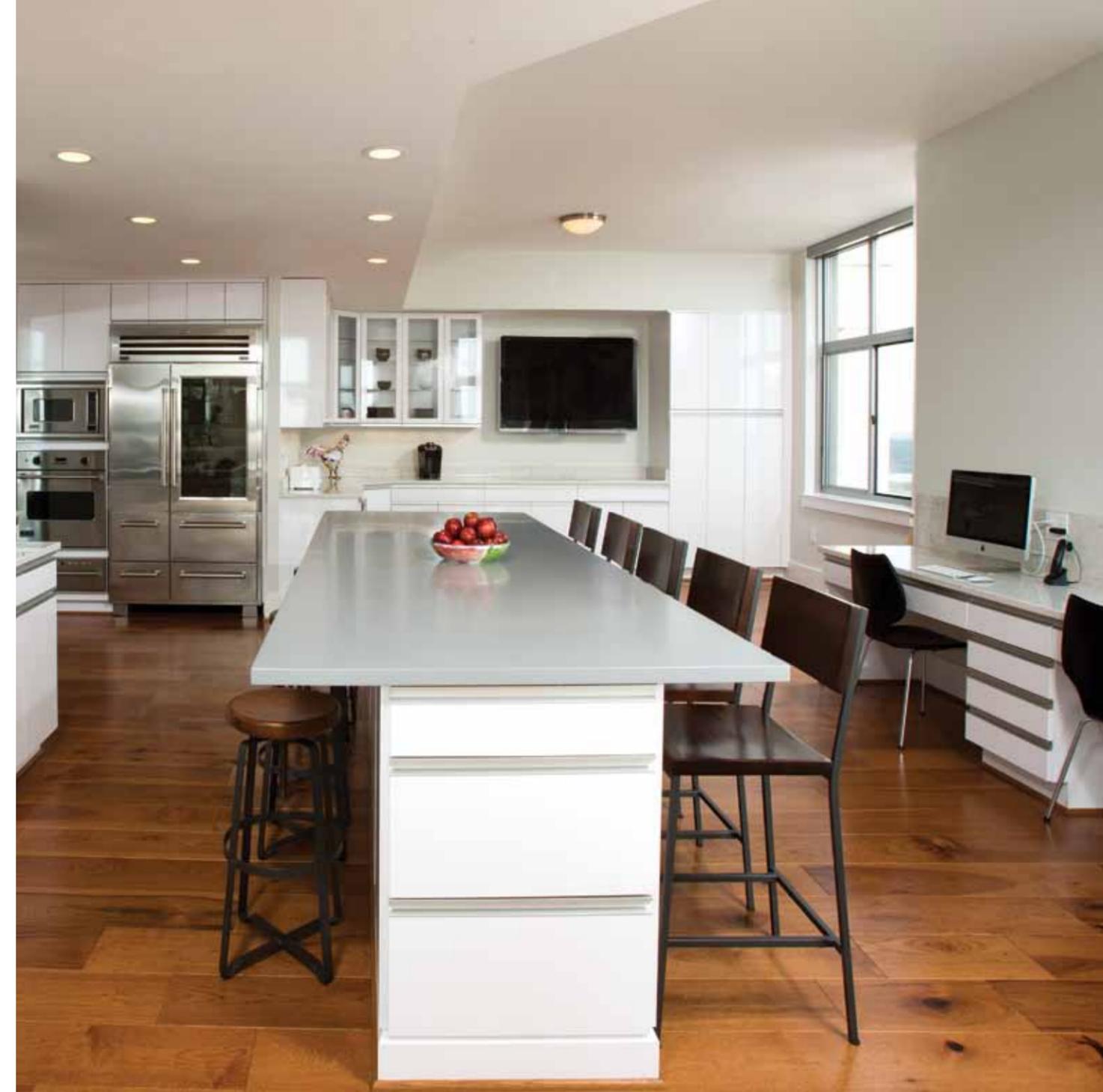
PENTHOUSE APPEAL

Architect John Heltzel imbues a sleek bachelor pad with a family-friendly vibe

BY JULIE SANDERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG HADLEY

In the light-filled, contemporary kitchen, architect John Heltzel selected Corian to top the island and Silestone for the peripheral counters; both were re-seamed on-site to look like intact slabs. Golden-hued, engineered-wood floors unify the kitchen and living room, visible beyond the doorway.



A penthouse apartment in Reston Town Center had seen its share of changes. Owned initially by former Washington Redskins defensive tackle Albert Haynesworth, it was a chrome-and-leather playground awash in mirrors and TVs. When a single father of three purchased the property, it sorely needed an update that would reflect a more understated style. The technology executive wished to combine a sophisticated bachelor's sensibility with a welcoming, family-oriented layout. He hired architect John Heltzel to overhaul the 21st-story abode.

RENOVATION ARCHITECTURE: JOHN HELTZEL, AIA, P.C.; CURT ZIESE, project manager, John F. Heltzel AIA, McLean, Virginia. CONSTRUCTION: Heltzelhaus, McLean, Virginia.

The first task was to reconfigure Haynesworth's two-bedroom layout to accommodate bedrooms for the owner and each of his kids—twin girls and a boy, all under 10 years old. However, “the project grew once we established a level of comfort and the client started to realize the potential of the space,” Heltzel says. “My client was going for family-friendly but cool—a kind of New York City loft-conversion look.”

A far cry from the original, the finished apartment is still contemporary but with a softer, subtler edge. Honey-colored engineered-wood floors have replaced glossy black tiles, while the overall aesthetic marries clean-lined modern with rustic elements for an industrial vibe. “It was really dark,” the owner recalls. “I

wanted the space to feel warmer, brighter and happier.”

Prior to the renovation, the main floor encompassed a kitchen, living room, master suite and spare bedroom. An upper-level loft was used by Haynesworth for entertaining, with a full bar, pool table and powder room. With the owner's kids in mind, Heltzel and his team removed the master suite from the main floor, gutting the space and dividing it into two small but comfortable girls' bedrooms that share a roomy bath and walk-in closet. The son took over the spare bedroom, which also has an attached bath.

Upstairs, the loft now houses the master suite, complete with a catwalk that overlooks the living room below and leads to two separate, spacious balconies. While



Heltzel gutted the original kitchen (left) to create a spacious new one, complete with a built-in desk space and a TV (above), as well as a breakfast nook that takes full advantage of panoramic vistas (opposite). The backsplash is clad in a darker shade of Silestone.

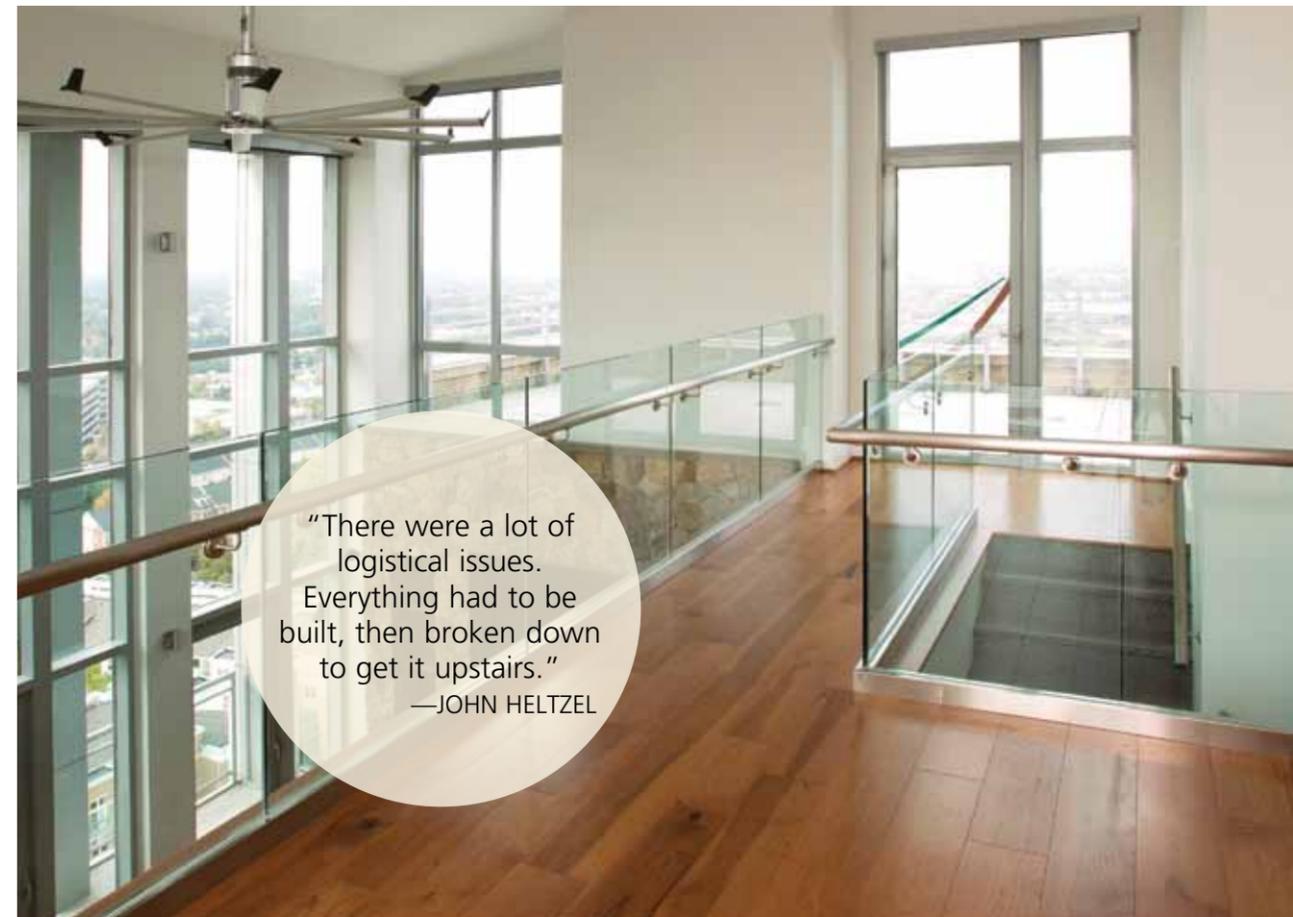


Heltzel maintained a sense of openness throughout the residence, he ended up enclosing the bedroom to give the homeowner more privacy. “He wanted to be able to have parties on those killer decks,” the architect recalls, “but he didn’t want them to be accessed through the bedroom. So we pushed the bedroom away from the deck entry.”

Heltzel and his team separated the bedroom from the rest of the loft with a set of barn wood doors made of oak that were ordered through Old Barn Reclaimed Wood Co., a Richmond-based firm. The doors allowed privacy for the homeowner while also adding a rustic element to the space.

To make the smallish master bedroom feel more open, Heltzel and his team sought permission from the condo board to push through the flat ceiling to the sub-roof above. In doing so, they discovered attic space above the bedroom. “So we built a room where we were able to stuff all the mechanical systems—heating and cooling, humidifier and dehumidifier—and free up space for a large master bath,” he explains.

In the open, two-story living room, another set of barn doors and a fieldstone fireplace wall impart a sense of rustic style and warmth. Two wide doorways open into the clean-lined, spacious kitchen, which features custom cabinetry, Corian and Silestone countertops and Viking and Sub-Zero appliances. Heltzel gutted the original kitchen to create a space with a breakfast nook surrounded on three sides by windows with panoramic views. “Everything in the kitchen has been redone,” he says. “The breakfast nook was isolated



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—JOHN HELTZEL



Once a blank slate (opposite, far left), the two-story living room (left and opposite) now boasts floor-to-ceiling windows, a fieldstone fireplace wall and barn doors on a track that separate it from the kitchen. Above the living room, a loft (top) features expansive views and access to upper-level balconies. In a sleek kids’ bathroom (above), porcelain tile and a floating vanity complete the picture.



from the rest of the kitchen. We opened it up and made it more family-oriented.”

For Heltzel and his team, the greatest challenge was completing a large-scale renovation in a condo that was only accessible via a small passenger elevator. “There were a lot of logistical issues,” the architect remembers. “Everything had to be built, then broken down to get it upstairs. The 10-by-10-foot barn door, which was fabricated in Richmond, had to be dismantled with all parts labeled and put back together in the apartment.”

The owner is more than happy with the remodeled space, which won a Grand Contractor of the Year award in the category of Interior Space over \$500,000. “It’s the perfect balance between modern and warm,” he notes. “I’m really pleased with how it’s worked out.” ❖

Photographer Greg Hadley is based in Fairfax, Virginia.

The master bedroom (above) is closed off by a 10-by-10-foot sliding barn door; the room opens into the master bath (below), for which quartz pieces cut into wall tiles were fabricated by Mosaic Tile Company.



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