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# Houzz Tour: Unboxing a San Francisco Condo

Feminine glam replaces boxy and boring in a remodeled luxury condominium with a view



**Mary Jo Bowling**

Houzz Editorial Staff; writer, reader, serial remodeler.

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There's a reason the words "cookie cutter" and "condo" are often found in the same sentence. Even the most luxurious of units often has a boxy, sterile feel. When a client approached San Francisco designer Eche Martinez about making her newly purchased home in the city's Millennium Towers an art-filled, feminine retreat, he quickly realized her needs went beyond new furniture and finishes. He brought on Peter Englander of The Englander Building Company to help him create something outside the box.

### Houzz at a Glance

**Who lives here:** A single woman

**Location:** San Francisco

**Size:** 2,000 square feet; 2 bedrooms, 2½ bathrooms


*Photography by Angie Silvy*




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Martinez quickly figured out that he and his client shared the same taste. "She showed me a portfolio of her newly purchased art, and I couldn't believe it," he says. "We had both been at Art Basel in Miami at the same time, and she had purchased many of the pieces I fell in love with." They determined that her new home would be designed around the budding collection.

Club chair: cotton velvet, custom, Coup d'Etat; art: Cassandra Blackmore



From the start the owner made it clear she wanted a space designed in her distinctive feminine style. "She had been living in the suburbs with her husband and, sadly, he died," says Martinez. "She wanted a place to start over, a place of her own." He developed a palette of purples, pinks and soft grays. "But when she kept pushing me for more, asking for structural changes, I called in Peter Englander," says Martinez.

Rug: custom, Mansour Rugs; oval table: Layla Grace

The fireplace is one of the prime examples of out-of-the-box-thinking. The client wanted one, but fireplaces are not allowed in the building. The designer found an LED-electric fireplace with amazingly realistic "flames." The contractor built a surround that adds to the effect, while Martinez applied a reflective, crystal-studded wallpaper.

Wallpaper: Elitis

One of the first orders of business was to drop the ceiling to accommodate art lighting. "She wanted to illuminate the art and call it out," says Englander. "The ceiling was painted concrete slab, so the only way to make way for the electrical work was to lower the ceiling a bit — we dropped it by less than 2 inches."

Sofa: Donghia

Timing was another challenge. "She had sold her previous home, so we had to hurry to finish the job," says Martinez. "We met on a Friday and picked out everything. The next Monday we went around to the stores and showrooms and ordered everything. We said, 'We have to have this in 12 weeks — can you do it?' Surprisingly, most of them could work within our time frame."



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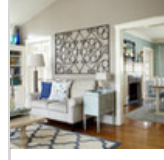
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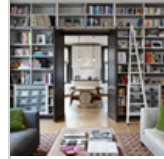
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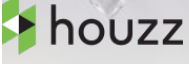


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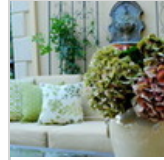
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The Englander Building Company

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Many elements in the home have a reflective quality: the mirrored coffee table, the silk rug, the chrome lamps on the console. “The client is young, smart and glamorous,” says Martinez. “I wanted to give her a home that reflected her personality.”



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*Art above console: Paule Marrot*



The bursts of strong color are meant to build character. “Her main issue with the condo was that it was too beige, too generic,” says Martinez. “Elements like the bright art and hot-pink chair give the space an identity.”



The Englander Building Company

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The dining room table, custom made to fit the tight space, is completely covered in pieces of mirrored glass. The white chairs with thin chrome legs and the effervescent bubble chandelier give the area an almost ethereal feel.

*Table: custom, Coup d'Etat;  
light fixture: Anthropologie*



The Englander Building Company

At the advice of her designer, the owner chose more masculine trappings for the office. "I told her, 'You can't make it a femme castle. You might meet someone someday, and he will need a place to be,'" Martinez says. For a luxe feel, the wall is upholstered in a wool fabric with a herringbone pattern.

*Desk, pendant lighting: Room & Board; chair: Design Within Reach; cabinetry: California Closets; rug: Jonathan Adler; wall covering: Philip Jeffries; art: Greg Haberny*



The Englander Building Company

<http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/21025908/list/Houzz-Tour--Unbo...>  
But the hot-pink goat-skin runner leading to the master bedroom is a more Carrie-Bradshaw-before-she-married-Mr.-Big move. For an extra hit of sexy, Martinez had it trimmed in metallic leather.

*Carpet: custom, Stark Carpet*



The Englander Building Company

In the bedroom all is quiet. “She is a yoga instructor,” says Martinez. “She wanted a peaceful space.” The name of the paint color — Mouse’s Back — says it all. To position the bed so the client could wake up every morning to a view of the Bay Bridge, Englander had to reposition all of the electrical work.



*Slipper chairs: Donghia; wool curtain, velvet headboard fabric: Holland & Sherry;*

*nightstands: Coup d'Etat; large painting: Katina Huston; bolster fabric: Sandra Jordan;*

*headboard lighting: Artemide; paint: Mouse's Back, Farrow & Ball*



By positioning the bed just so, the design team gave their client a room with a view.

The nightstand is covered with parchment dyed in an ombré effect. The curtains are made of alpaca wool. "Texture and pattern were very important to her," says Martinez. "She cares about how everything feels."

*Nightstand: Coup d'Etat*

Martinez introduced his client to the Dolby Chadwick gallery, where she discovered artist Gonzalo Fuenmayor, who created the artwork above the bed in the guest bedroom. Although the piece is done in black and white, Martinez picked up its flamboyant nature with bright punches of turquoise.

*Bed: Room & Board; lamp: vintage, Coup d'Etat*

A small desk gives visitors a place to work at or set their belongings on.

*Desk: Jonathan Adler; chair: Room & Board with Christopher Hyland fabric*

Englander calls the remodel of the master bath a complete gut job. Now it's outfitted with marble tile and a voluptuous tub topped by a bubble-like light fixture designed by Martinez and built by Englander. "Code makes it tough to put any kind of light fixture over a tub," the contractor says. "It required a lot of engineering."



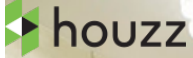
*Tub, fixtures: Waterworks; tile: Ann Sacks; marble: Integrated Resources; side table: Donghia; art: Bill Armstrong*

The Englander Building Company



Englander had to create a box to house the new plumbing, making the perfect opportunity for a tub on a platform.

The Englander Building Company



The Englander Building

<http://www.houzz.com/ideabooks/21025908/list/Houzz-Tour--Unbo...>  
The client needed more storage, so Englander converted one of the showers to a closet, transforming a full bathroom into a powder room. "I kept an eye to the future," he says. "I made it so that if she ever decides to sell it, the closet can be easily reconverted to a shower."

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**beattieboggs**

Beautiful! Great job and hope the lady is really happy in her new home.

December 21, 2013 at 11:53am Like 12



**Karolinka**

Very beautifully done. All the best to the lady! It's a beautiful home.

December 21, 2013 at 3:00pm Like 4



**susanintoronto**

Such a beautiful home!

December 21, 2013 at 9:12pm Like 4

Gla Mour



Very good designed and wonderful art pieces out there! The colors and spirit are just



December 22, 2013 at 12:53am Like 4



**jessiebes**  
Wow this is so beautiful.

December 22, 2013 at 1:17am Like 2



**charleee**  
Wow. Amazing! I would need window coverings, though, or I'd feel like I was living in a fishbowl. Let me guess....\$2 million? \$3 million?

December 22, 2013 at 3:08am Like 2



**lasa**  
Very Cool. My favorite place is the study. Good job bringing in color. Needs something to bring in that "soul".

December 22, 2013 at 4:10am Like 2



**bruinette**  
Wow, just how much does a yoga instructor make in san francisco?

December 22, 2013 at 4:52am Like 15



**wendy985**  
A Google of LED fireplaces revealed bazillions. Care to share the mfg and model featured here? It's lovely.

December 22, 2013 at 5:54am Like 1



**nicki777**  
I love the finishes on both bathroom walls. Can you please give details?

December 22, 2013 at 7:02am Like 1



**Amecia**  
Absolutely Stunning!! Fantastic job!! I wish I could live there! The furniture , the artwork , the placement!! Wow!! I wanna come work w the designer - please!!

December 22, 2013 at 8:39am Like 2



**techchick**  
Amazing job, Mr. Martinez! Not only are you very talented in terms of design, you related brilliantly to your client's needs - both now and in the future. Kudos to you and your team!

December 22, 2013 at 8:42am Like 3



**lianae**  
alpaca wool curtains?! i die.  
would love more details about the art over the fireplace!

December 22, 2013 at 8:48am Like



**Studio NOO Design**  
This lady is lucky, her condo was really well designed, simply beautiful !

PRO

December 22, 2013 at 1:48pm Like 1



**galyoungin**  
Beautiful!!!!

December 22, 2013 at 3:58pm Like 1



**fefie**  
.....and another place for the ones who have a cleaning-lady coming every day. I wish I would be in the same shoes. (admitting my envy here :-)) ! )

December 22, 2013 at 6:22pm Like 1



**Sherri Webber**  
She most likely does not have pets...or DOES have a daily cleaning person come in!

December 23, 2013 at 4:42am Like



chateaumichel  
Beautiful!

December 23, 2013 at 6:33am Like 1



rickndm

The electric fireplace is the Dimplex Dusk Linear. Can be found here:  
<http://www.electricfireplacesdirect.com/products-accessories/wall-mount-electric-fireplaces/Dimplex-Dusk-Linear-Wall-Mount-Electric-Fireplace>



December 23, 2013 at 6:53am Like 1



Dura Supreme Cabinetry

I love this color combo for the living room! This is one of my favorite designs that incorporates the pinks and Purples of an orchid with a beautiful white a gray backdrop.

Entertaining the Masses - Living Room 1  
Entertaining the Masses - Living Room 2  
Project: Entertaining the Masses - Entertainment Center



by Dura Supreme Cabinetry



by Dura Supreme Cabinetry

Entertaining the Masses - Living Room 1 Entertaining the Masses - Living Room 2



by Dura Supreme Cabinetry

Project: Entertaining the Masses -...

December 23, 2013 at 10:30am Like



katelyn1953

What would you like to say? Could you give more information on the "LED electric fireplace with amazingly realistic 'flames'"?

December 23, 2013 at 6:09pm Like 2



Laurel Ennis

I would like to have a lilac sofa. I love the pink and purple room. So wonderful.

December 23, 2013 at 9:27pm Like 1



marcinha0802

Does anybody know the name of the rug in the living room? Its fabulous



December 25, 2013 at 8:20am Like 2



Jessica Hasten

I'm absolutely in love with this space. So gorgeous!

December 26, 2013 at 4:11pm Like 2



ModernistLighting.com

This woman's pad has got to be my favorite on houzz. It doesn't miss a beat.

PRO

December 27, 2013 at 12:10am Like 1



akidd

Love it!

December 29, 2013 at 7:28am Like 1



bauri

Umm yea, a house in this caliber obviously has a cleaning person :)  
Too feminine for my taste but since it's a single lady that lives here, it is actually lovely!  
Modenistlighting is right, doesnt miss a beat! :)

January 3, 2014 at 1:52am Like 1



Joanne Cannell Designs

Beautiful job in general. But I really question the tub. Getting in these types of tubs can be a challenge, & it looks like it would be even more difficult because the platform doesn't give enough room to stand on the same level. I could see even more danger getting out of the tub. I would have liked to have seen the kitchen & the rest of the bathroom.

January 6, 2014 at 10:01pm Like



Sherri Webber

I agree with Joanne's previous comment: "I would have liked to have seen the kitchen..." Me too! I want to live there regardless of the challenging bathtub...

January 7, 2014 at 4:00am Like 2



stevedenver

What I love about this HOME is that it feels "collected," not at all like they went out in a few days and acquired everything. I commented on the piece "Sweetening The Penthouse Deal" on how that place felt like a high-end airport sky lounge or top-drawer lawyer's office. This place feels like someone has lived here for a while and acquired things they like. I like that the designer kept an eye on the future, so the closet can be converted back into a shower down the road.

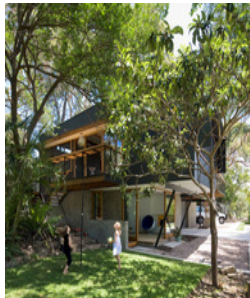
Please add me to the list of those wanting to see the kitchen.

February 6, 2014 at 8:20am Like 1



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