

New England Home

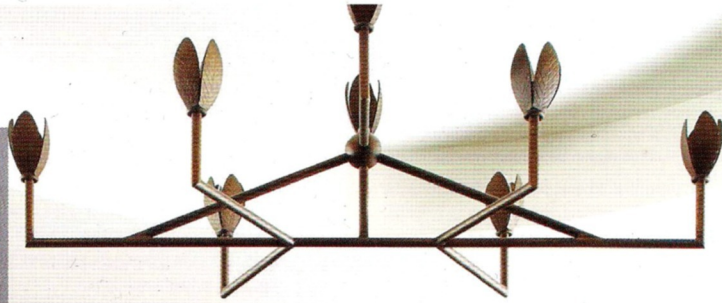
CELEBRATING FINE DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

January/February 2012

Cold Weather Style

Recasting History on Lake Champlain
Colonial Warmth in the Berkshires
Understated Luxe High Above Boston

PLUS:
FURNITURE FOR A NEW GENERATION



January/February 2012 Issue

\$5.95US \$6.95CAN



Display until March 26, 2012

WWW.NEHOMEMAG.COM

Winter Warmer

For a couple who enjoys city life during the cooler months, Boston-based designer Meichi Peng creates a space to keep them cozy through the chilly season. TEXT BY ERIN

MARVIN • PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GREG PREMUR • INTERIOR DESIGN
AND INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL
DESIGN: MEICHI PENG •
PRODUCED BY KYLE HOEPNER





A stainless-steel fireplace sits within a travertine surround. On either side, custom walnut millwork offers plenty of hidden storage and open shelving for the owners' collections of books and antiques. Living room furniture is arranged for easy conversation.

Meichi Peng designed the circular oak dining table, which expands to seat eight. *Facing page top:* A custom mirror and lamps hang above a V-shaped dresser that Peng designed for the foyer. *Facing page bottom:* A floating red lacquer cabinet brightens up the kitchen area.



For many New Englanders, dropping temperatures send a signal to head south for winter, toward second homes tucked away in warmer climes. The return north happens only after the first crocuses have crept up through the melting snow, their soft yellow and lavender heads heralding spring.

Of course, not everyone flies south for winter. Though they spend much of the year splitting time between houses in Rhode Island and Maine, the owners of this modern condo especially enjoy Boston during the cooler months. They don't like to miss the city's transformation into a winter wonderland, when tiny gold lights sparkle from the treetops along Commonwealth Avenue and bundled-up ice skaters spiral around the Frog Pond. Even the Pub-

lic Garden, bereft of its usual riot of color, is breathtaking under a blanket of snow, the statue of George Washington standing taller than ever when topped with three inches of powder.

Craving the comforts of a full-service luxury building, the couple bought into The Residences at W Boston soon after development began. With construction still in its early phases, they were able to combine a two-bedroom, two-bathroom unit with an adjacent studio space. This would allow room for a dining area, a large dressing room in the master suite and a small study off the second bedroom. One of the bathrooms would become a laundry room/pantry area, and the kitchen layout could include a peninsula. A gas fireplace would be added to the living



room, giving the couple a place to snuggle on those cool winter nights.

The owners knew they would need more than just a fire to keep the chill out of the contemporary condo, so they brought in Boston-based designer Meichi Peng to warm up the interiors. Known for her almost Zen-like, sophisticated but eminently livable aesthetic, Peng fashioned a floor plan that would fit the owners' lifestyle, incorporate plenty of storage and take advantage of city views.

A neutral palette in the open living/dining area is set off by pops of color.



Gray-on-gray sets a serene tone in the guest bedroom. *Facing page top:* Peng designed the upholstered bench with its subtle herringbone-patterned fabric. *Facing page bottom:* Taking advantage of every square foot, Peng designed custom cabinetry to create a small study across from the guest bedroom.



Downsizing from a residence that was twice as large meant space to put things was at a premium. Peng met the challenge by adding beautiful millwork throughout the condo, concealing an impressive amount of storage with rich wood accents that also add warmth and depth to the off-white walls. Lighting was another key element, and Peng incorporated square recessed trimless lights into the ceiling—for ample downlighting during the day and dramatic illumination at night—as well as LED cove lighting in the built-ins.

Four windows stretch across one wall of the apartment: on opposite ends of the condo, they open to the master suite and guest bedroom, respectively, while the two middle windows flood the open living/dining area with light. Snow-covered Boston Common and the Public Garden shimmer in the distance.

A neutral palette in the open living/dining area is set off by pops of color—hues of orange and lavender—and sensual textures—slick lacquer, plush velvet, soft chenille. Gorgeous dark-stained wide-plank floors of ipe wood anchor the space. In the living room, sofas and chairs are clad in a natural taupe linen. Seating is arranged for easy conversation, catching a favorite TV show or just relaxing in front of the fire. On either side of the travertine fireplace surround, walnut shelves hold beloved leather-bound books and ancient artifacts. “When you’re working in a small space you want to make sure that everything is the right scale and proportion for the room so it’s not overcrowded,” explains Peng. “I tried to keep a balance of light and heavy, while still getting the look and comfort the clients wanted.”

In the adjacent dining room, the curved armchairs gathered around a circular table wear the same linen as the living room furniture. Peng designed the table so that it can expand to seat eight, customizing the chairs so they slide underneath to take up less space. She also designed the built-in bar with its large mirror and two vertical sliding glass

doors that open to reveal cabinets for glassware and plates, with felt-lined drawers to protect silverware. A red-lacquered bamboo pillow from the Chin Dynasty sits atop the bar. “The client has a lot of Asian boxes and an-

“My clients wanted it to be modern but not cold, elegant with a warm palette,” says Peng about the design.



In the master bedroom, soft chenille pillows and crisp Frette linens invite sweet dreams; motorized blackout shades ensure uninterrupted sleep. *Facing page top:* Floating shelves hover above a writing desk against one wall of the master bedroom. *Facing page bottom:* Even with space at a premium, the master closet doesn't feel cramped.



tiques and African pieces from her travels, and we just tried to tie it all together," says Peng.

The kitchen mimics most of those in the building, with top-of-the-line appliances resting among gray lacquer cabinets and granite countertops. Sleek camel-colored leather barstools pull up to the U-shaped peninsula. Across from the kitchen, a fiery red floating glass cabinet brightens the space.

In the master suite, taupe tone-on-tone stripes of Venetian plaster wrap one wall like an unexpected gift. A purple chenille headboard and matching pillows soften the hard edges of the custom-made wood-and-metal canopy bed, and a striped plum area rug cushions bare feet. Window treatments are motorized sheers, with retractable

blackout shades at the ready when bedtime grows near. A built-in writing desk spans one wall, with room above for a flat-screen TV and floating shelves for family photos. Heavy velvet drapery in a lavender-gray adds a feminine touch while separating the bedroom from the master closet. Behind the curtain, a half-moon walnut desk, perfect for applying perfume or checking makeup, sits flush against a mirrored wall. Shelves, cubbies and hanging racks add order to the wardrobe.

Across the condo, the guest room maintains a more masculine feel with a textured gray Venetian plaster accent wall and gray bedding. Though a similar smoky color, the velvet headboard and footboard, waffle-weave throw and silk area rug add depth with their light-reflecting textures.



A camel-hued leather chair holds court in a corner, and twin wall-mounted lamps free up surface space on bedside tables for books and personal mementos. “The clients wanted it to be modern but not cold, elegant with a warm palette,” says Peng of the overall design aesthetic.

Here, temperatures have already started to rise: with its perfect mix of dark and light, simplicity and sophistication, this Boston condo feels anything but frigid. •

Tone-on-tone stripes of Venetian plaster wrap one wall like an unexpected gift.

Resources For more information about this home, see page 132.