

SOPHISTICATED LIVING

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BIG APPLE IN THE BLUEGRASS

A cosmopolitan penthouse
designed by Ron Wolz of Bittners

Written by Bridget Williams / Photography by Andrew Kung

For a brief moment, upon entering a sleek penthouse designed by Ron Wolz of Bittners within a landmark Kentucky building, you might wonder if the doorway was actually a portal to a big city highrise. The polished panache, Wolz says, was the culmination of a three-year collaboration between him, the homeowner, architect Ed Krebs, and builder Kiel Thomson that turned a shell into a showstopper. Wolz and the homeowner did quite a bit of traveling to source ideas and furnishings, adding to the project's uniqueness.

The wow factor begins just inside the front door. A dramatic floating staircase winds its way to the second floor, entirely dedicated to the primary suite. Centered in the arc at the base of the stairs is "Helena," a nearly life-sized bronze sculpture by Tom Corbin. Highly polished stone floors are tempered by defining architectural aspects in wood, such as the mahogany archway that separates the living and dining rooms. "The wood tones add masculinity and warmth," explained Wolz.

The homeowner's keen interest in American and Native American history is deftly interwoven among the contemporary environs. In the study, a beautifully framed tattered American flag is given prominence in the space between a pair of bookcases. The historical artifact was saved from a sinking ship off of Omaha Beach on D-Day. Near the circular Bittners-made rosewood dining table, a centuries-old Navajo blanket is draped over a modern Holly Hunt daybed with sinuous legs. Across from this vignette is a Frederic Remington bronze cowboy, a gift from a friend, that rests atop an Italian console surmounted by a mid-century Venetian mirror. These personally significant pieces add palpable warmth and personality when juxtaposed with contemporary materials rendered in chrome, leather, velvet, and glass.



Wolz found the Brett Lethbridge' painting in Palm Desert. The symmetrical seating area is outfitted with pieces from Holly Hunt, Ralph Lauren, and Baker. The 900-pound light fixture was custom made for the space.



A centuries-old Navajo blanket draped across a Holly Hunt bench in the entry. Painting by Jeaneen Barnhart.



A Frederic Remington bronze cowboy rests atop an Italian console surmounted by a mid-century Venetian mirror



Art and architecture define the entry. Painting by Joan Miró. Sculpture by Tom Corbin.



In the dining area, a Languedoc vase from Lalique is centered atop a custom rosewood dining table made by Bittners.



A mahogany archway separates the dining and living rooms. Furnishings on the terrace are from Minotti.



The rosewood canopy in the primary bedroom was created by the Bittners woodworking shop.

In a room full of superlatives, an original painting from artist Brett Lethbridge's "'Red Drape" series that Wolz found in Palm Desert steals the spotlight. Suspended above the symmetrical seating area—outfitted with pieces from Holly Hunt, Ralph Lauren, and Baker—is a custom 900-pound crystal chandelier on a lift that required a great deal of engineering to make it work. An expanse of windows frames the treetop views. There is ample access to multiple terraces, which are furnished with pieces from the Italian company Minotti.

This project kept the artisans in Bittners' custom woodworking shop amply occupied in creating custom furniture, a waterfall bar in the kitchen, and the striking rosewood canopy in the primary suite. This architectural element rises from behind and then over the bed before terminating at the opposite wall's floating fireplace. Adding to the opulence of the primary suite are cashmere rugs in his and her baths.

Seeing a project of this scope through conception to reality was particularly gratifying for Wolz, even more so because it was the first time he'd worked with the homeowner. "It was amazing to watch the evolution and how this residence fully encompasses the client's passions and interests in such a beautiful way," he remarked. **sl**

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