

Project Category: Residential Interior Element

Residential Interior: \$30,000 and Under

Completion Date: November 25, 2019

Location: Madison, WI



This couple was referred to us by the company that originally did the build out of their high-rise condo unit. They loved the unit, but there were several things that were not planned to their liking, and were improperly positioned.

BEFORE: VIEW OF EXISTING FIREPLACE



First was the fireplace, which was in an unusual position near the dining table. It was not well utilized or well seen within the unit.

BEFORE: VIEW OF EXISTING MEDIA AREA

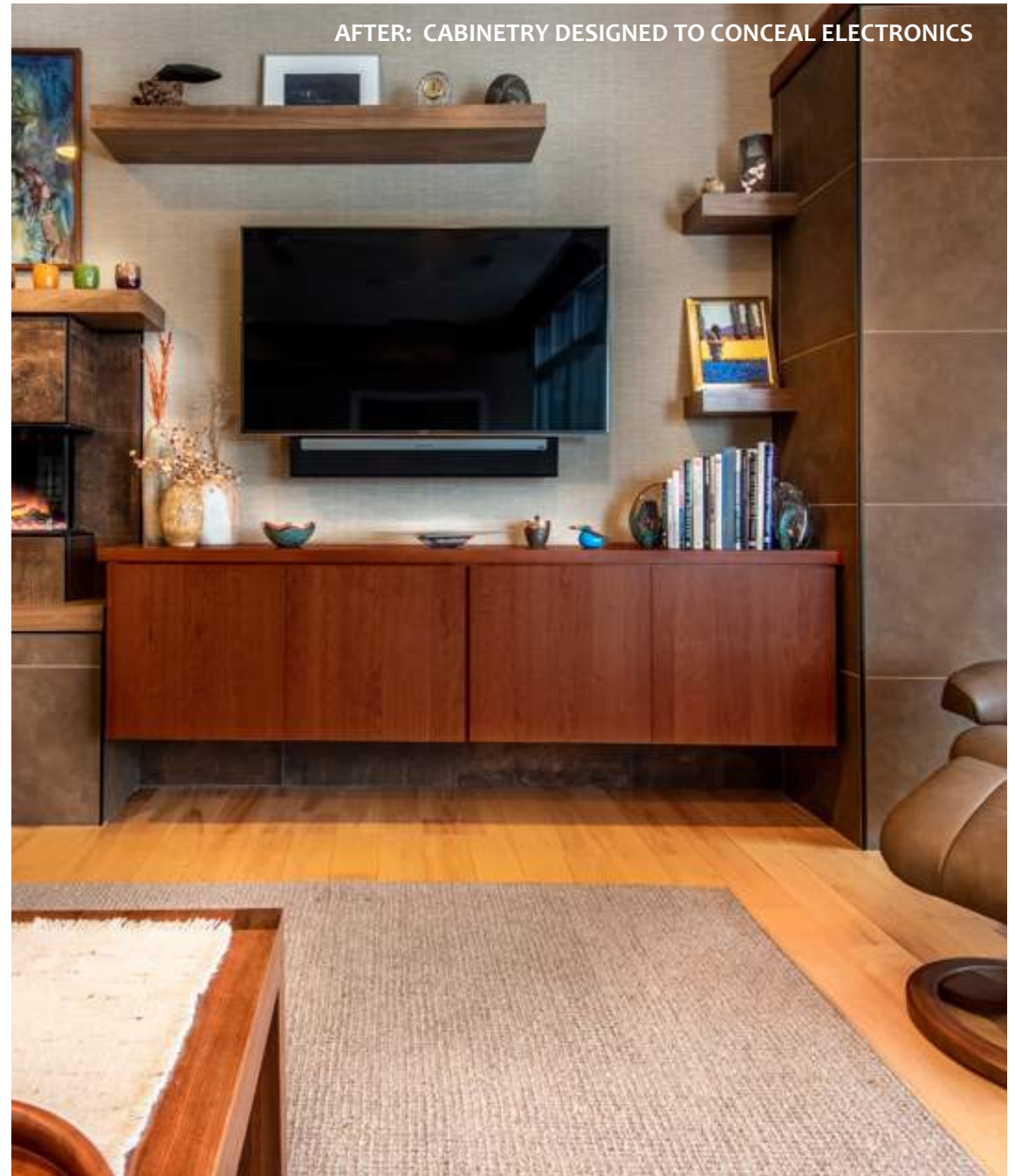


Second was the media area. While centered within the available wall space, it did not work out with the furniture layout. It was off-center from the ideal viewing position, and to move it so that it could be positioned with the furniture would leave it off-center in the space.

AFTER



Thus a design solution was required.



The electronics for the TV were well hidden in the pantry (left), but this was not ideal, as it took away valuable space. The requested cabinetry and shelving (right) was integrated to accommodate the electronics that support the TV and audio.

AFTER: VIEW OF ELECTRIC FIREPLACE



Our clients had begun some research on their own and discovered an electric fireplace that they were pleased with. It simplified the process since the gas did not need to be routed, and it also gave design flexibility since the size and constraints were very different from a gas fireplace.



AFTER: THE ELECTRIC FIREPLACE CREATED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A MORE UNIQUE AND ARTISTIC DESIGN



AFTER

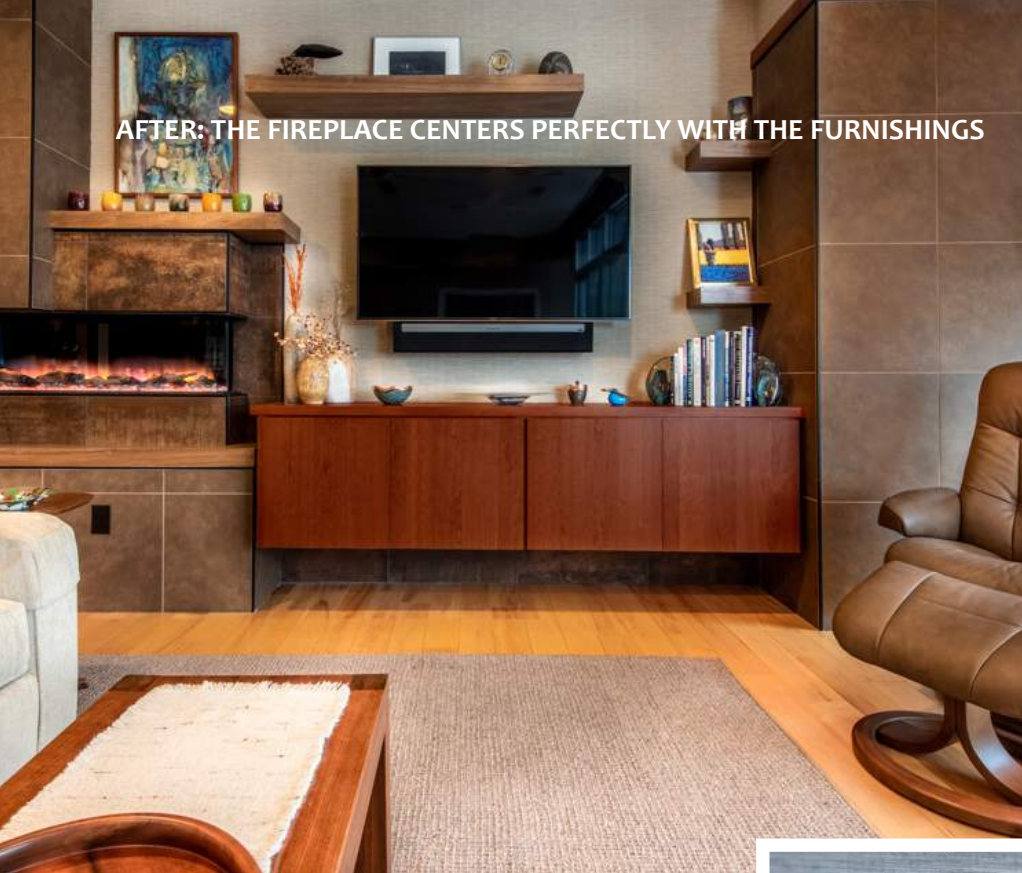


Having remodeled several homes in prior cities, our clients had a good feel for the design aesthetic that they were looking for. Our interpretation was a visually compelling, modern look, using products such as tile, wood, and wallpaper that provide visual and textural interest.



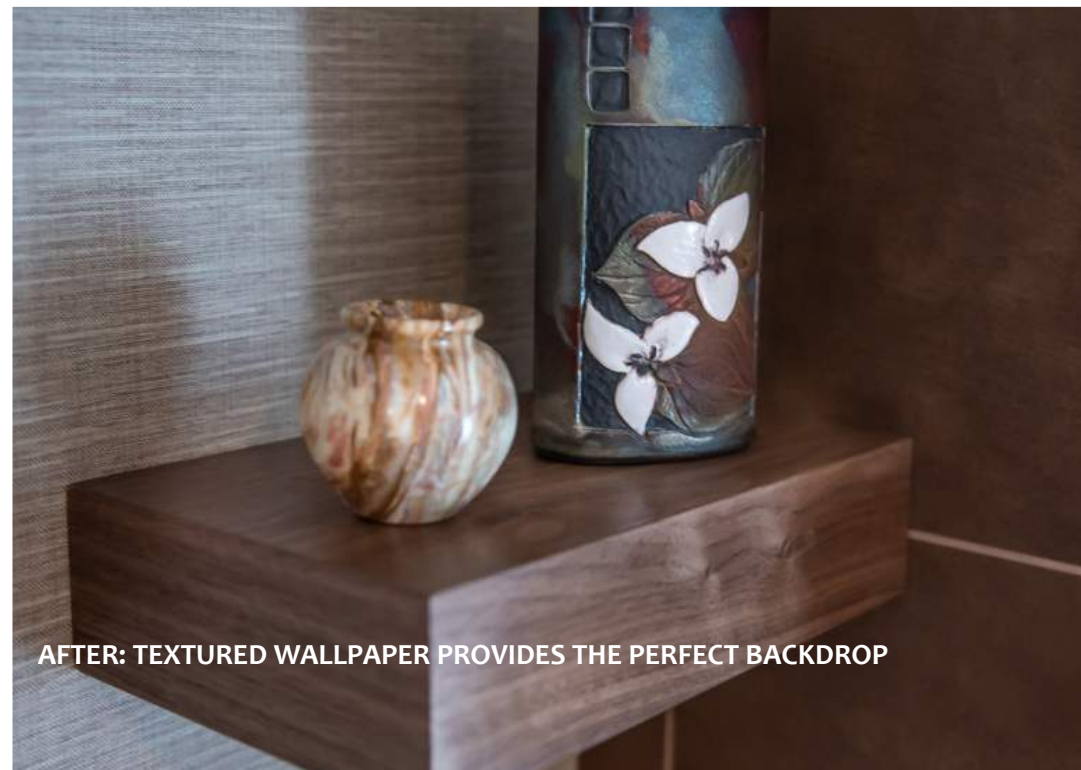
AFTER: THE RESULT WAS NOT AN ORDINARY ENTERTAINMENT WALL

AFTER: THE FIREPLACE CENTERS PERFECTLY WITH THE FURNISHINGS



AFTER: FLOATING SHELVES PROVIDE PLACES FOR SCULPTURAL PIECES

The design choices were narrowed down to a single option, with integrating volumes intersecting around the fireplace, and a balanced sense of asymmetry. Two different tiles contrast each other making the volume stand out. Thick pieces of wood form a non-traditional hearth and mantel, which match with the floating shelves, and wallpaper provides visual interest and texture, tying the whole wall together beautifully.



AFTER: TEXTURED WALLPAPER PROVIDES THE PERFECT BACKDROP

AFTER: THE ENTERTAINMENT WALL WAS NOT THE ONLY AREA THAT WAS REDESIGNED



AFTER



Across the way, where the fireplace used to be, now there is space for an art wall. But like the entertainment area, it is not just an ordinary art wall. It is a plane that extends just beyond the hallway in order to provide visual interest as you walk in the main entrance of the condo.



AFTER: THE PERFECT LOCATION FOR AN ART WALL

The same wallpaper is used on a niche within the area, and borrowed light windows were added above the art wall, bringing natural light in to the client's home office.



AFTER: WALLPAPERED NICHE ADDS TEXTURE AND INTEREST

AFTER



The result is a condo that is a contemporary take on mid-century modern aesthetics. It ties in with the client's furnishings, their decorations, their artwork, and their lifestyle. There is symmetry where it is needed, balance in every case, and asymmetrical visual interest. We achieved the goal to provide texture using tile, wood, and wallpaper. The condo is no longer a standard build out, it is now a one of a kind home.



AFTER



AFTER

CRITERIA RESPONSES

To what degree were the expressed needs of the client met?

We met the following goals of the client with what was designed and built.

- The TV needed to move closer to the window wall in order to provide a better viewing angle that fits with the position of the prime viewing area of the sectional.
- Shelving and cabinetry was required to accommodate the electronics.
- A gas fireplace located on the other side of the room, in the wrong location, was eliminated so that an electric fireplace can be installed as part of the feature wall.
- The design of the wall was to be visually compelling, creating a modern look using products such as tile and wood that have visual and textural interest.

To what degree does the project enhance the existing structures functionally?

A key functional improvement is that the viewing location for the TV is now ideally located relative to their furniture. Before the TV was centered in the available wall space, but, was off center from the furnishings. By inserting the fireplace to the left side of the arrangement, the TV now becomes centered in its ideal viewing location.

To what degree does the project enhance the structure aesthetically?

The condo is a high-rise building with contemporary aesthetics. The clients choice of furnishings and decor enhances this, with mid-century Scandinavian influenced furnishings throughout the home. So, this contemporary, sculptural, textured, and colorful entertainment wall ties in with the goals of the clients, serving as a key feature rather than a bland painted wall.

Is there evidence of superior craftsmanship?

Yes, because the materials tie together, and fit together precisely in the following ways.

- Tile built around existing boxed-out structural column on the right integrated with the new box-out and fireplace at the left side.
- The way that the left side ties in the existing kitchen cabinetry.
- Hand-built floating shelves constructed by our team from walnut veneer plywood.
- The tile around the electric fireplace is not all in one place. Extremely careful planning was needed in order to frame this detail and to execute the tile work so that it all ties in precisely, with all reveals matching just as designed.
- Perfect tile work: the grout lines are precise, and the tile faces align perfectly.



CRITERIA RESPONSES (continued)

We installed an electric fireplace in the process of building this feature wall. But, typically, a fireplace surround is uniform in plan where it meets the fireplace. It's flat. A mantel and pilasters might add depth, but that depth is separated from the fireplace by several inches. In this case, we went about it differently. The fireplace is part of a sculptural element. The fireplace is inset inside an L shaped column on the left side, and the different tile planes that properly intersect the finished edge of the fireplace. All this required extra study of the fireplace specifications and planning to properly frame, yielding this innovative end result.

Did the contractor overcome difficult obstacles?

Yes, there were several difficult circumstances involved in this job that make the work more difficult than average.

- Working on the 10th floor of a post tension concrete high-rise condo with limited parking, storage, and staging area.
- Cutting of many materials was prohibited inside the condo or on the balcony. Tile had to be cut in the parking garage, but we were able to negotiate to cut tile in an adjacent, unfinished unit instead.
- Routing of electric was complex because there is no basement or attic space as there is in conventional single family residential spaces. We were able to minimize drywall patching to only a few areas such as the pantry ceiling, instead of the main room areas.
- Protection of existing conditions: Furniture remained inside of this modest living area, and we needed to protect it from dust, and yet, also have enough space for us to work. Items were moved around the condo.
- As noted above, this is a very compact premise to work with. Additionally, the homeowners lived in the condo during a portion of the remodeling process.