



NEW ANGLE

The strong horizontal lines of the sofa and dining table, and the open frames of the dining chairs and classic Bertoia chair, generate a sense of expansiveness and afford unobstructed views through the co-op's floor-to-ceiling windows.

MASTER REDO

MODERN VISION

Architect Vladimir Radutny re-oriens midcentury Mies, honoring the work of the master yet making it livable for today.

By Thomas Connors | Photography by Bill Zbaren

If you own a black and orange Rothko, you don't bring in someone to switch it out to yellow and blue. That argument might also be made if you live in one of the lakefront condos by iconic architect Mies van der Rohe, yet any number of his minimalist apartments have been tricked out with millwork, CONTINUED...



OPTIC FLOW

Clockwise from left: Radutny custom-designed the bed, which seems to float above the floor, and separated the sleeping area from the main living space by a partition of sandblasted glass; built-ins that keep everything visually tidy are a key element in the small space; the all-white bathroom is disguised behind a smart glass wall and wood panels that are part of the built-ins but serve as doors on either side.



...CONTINUED mirrors and country kitchens. But architect Vladimir Radutny (radutny.com), who has lived and worked in several Mies buildings in the city, knows the master well and executed a highly original yet extremely felicitous revamp of this one-bedroom unit at 880 N. Lake Shore Drive.

“Like most people,” relates homeowner Daniel Friedman, “I knew what I wanted, a more open space, but I didn’t know how to get there. Vlad knew how to get there. He had a vision.” Radutny wasn’t shy about reconfiguring the 750-square-foot unit, eliminating the few existing walls to create a fully free-flowing space. “You have to remember,” he notes, “that the layout of these apartments as built were not what Mies intended. They were not meant to be so compartmentalized; they were envisioned more like his Farnsworth House or Barcelona Pavilion, where planes and volumes define space, not walls and doors.”

Removing the existing walls between the bedroom and living space opened the home to the view and natural light. But Radutny went a step further, creating a sense of expansiveness by exploiting

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DESIGN LINES

From left: In the radically compact kitchen, the sink, dishwasher and cooktop are combined in one streamlined cabinet volume, while the stove and refrigerator are hidden behind hinged doors; Radutny's initial sketch that inspired the transformation of the floor plan.



...CONTINUED what is known as phenomenal transparency, which occurs when the mind and eye stitch together separate elements to create a visual continuity that does not physically exist. At one end of the apartment, for example, the glass wall of the bathroom and the two wood panels on either side read as one continuous surface, a seemingly unbroken line that helps make the apartment appear larger than it is.

When it came to furnishing the unit, Radutny specified pieces that play their own role in generating

a sense of openness: a dining table with a thin top, a classic mesh-frame Bertioia chair. “The idea,” he says, “was to create the least amount of interruption between the space itself and the outside.”

Friedman, who had never lived in a high-rise before, is loving the all-encompassing transparency of his new home. “At night, I look out and people do not shut their blinds. I don’t have the sense that anyone is staring at me, and I’m not staring at them. There’s just a vague sense of movement. Maybe it’s just me, but there’s something comforting about that.” ■