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Transitional Design

If you are downsizing, how do you surround yourself with familiarity without overcrowding the smaller footprint? Conversely, if you are moving to a larger home, is it possible to not purchase lots of new furniture and still accomplish dramatic, unexpected style? Let me share with you how I accomplished unexpected, sophisticated yet functional design for homeowners in both of these transitions. Perhaps you can apply some of these design concepts when faced with making a change of your own!



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Transition Project 1:

FROM LARGE LAKE HOUSE TO CONDO

It's a difficult transition to leave a spacious lake house with a spectacular view. To do so requires assessing what the homeowners had embraced in their former home. A new place should honor familiar feelings yet still stand out on its own merits.

The solution? Reintroduce pieces and spaces in ways that make them look brand new. People often get habituated to seeing things a certain way. The art of designing is to see the multiple uses for

various pieces while keeping each room comforting and inviting.

In this situation, the homeowners' blue and white porcelain collection substantiated a color theory in the living room that feels fresh, clean, and open; similar to how a lake feels. Upholstery selections were the key to transitioning many pieces. An inherited, antique table was draped in fabric and crowned with a custom mirrored top.





The living room's sloping lines separated itself from the dining room's coffered ceiling thus defining two separate but connected spaces. The den was painted a deep, chocolate brown and features large gold mirrors and a sleep sofa in camel and cream linen stripe. The use of an existing leopard spotted chair was reintroduced.

The differentiation between the living room and den presented an

opportunity to create a third, niche space; a den library. A custom-designed wall bookshelf defines the niche while the sofa anchoring the space is surrounded by books and collectibles creating a throne of comfort, warmth, and hospitality.

The homeowners were out of town during the entire orchestration of the interior design. This provided an opportunity to let them experience the full splendor of their new interior the first time they saw it. An hour before they returned, I staged all the dramatic lighting throughout their condo for a spectacular homecoming. Upon entering they were overwhelmed and astonished with the beauty of their new home.



Transition Project 2: FROM A SINGLE CONDO TO A DOUBLE

Six years ago, a client had me design the interior of his condo. When a double condo, in the same building, with overwhelming city vistas overlooking two Buffalo views became available, it was too breathtaking to pass up.

At first glance the interior felt bland and ordinary. But the homeowner had an extensive collection of artwork, which played a pivotal role in the interior treatments. In this case, the interior had to create drama for the artwork.

All the carpeting was removed and replaced with hardwood flooring and area rugs. Crown molding was added everywhere. The kitchen was redesigned to open up to the dining room, which was continuous to the music room. A transparent, glass wall with glass shelving





separates the den and dining area. Transforming this convergence of space into the condo's high point of design and style punctuated the drama that the condo demanded to realize its full potential. This space makes its grand appearance from the living room, which was treated with soothing blue walls and creamy upholstery.

The music room's standard built-in bookcases were lacquered black. Walls were faux painted in oxblood red leather. These unexpected rich treatments allow the flavor of the room to bloom rather than be dominated by the grand piano. The room feels warm, masculine, and inviting; like a blanket wrapping you in comfort. A sliver of excitement – a zebra striped wallpaper accent wall peeks in from the den to the dining room through the glass display wall.

Because the homeowner had originally invested in some quality pieces years ago, he hardly had to purchase any new furniture despite nearly doubling the space! It's an excellent example where the use of color and texture, and the arrangement of accessories and art, are what make these spaces dramatic and inviting.

You can certainly experiment on your own. However, an experienced designer gives you someone with the creativity to accomplish the unexpected and do it well. And that unexpected is the key to successful, transitional design.