

# DESIGN CHICAGO

A modern interior featuring a curved wall with vertical wood grain. A large, white, stylized flower sculpture is mounted on the wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

**DINE IN  
STYLE**  
FROM CLEAN  
MODERN TO  
OPULENT GLAM

# HIGH DESIGN

A modern living room with a grey tufted sofa, a red blanket, and a coffee table. The room features wood-paneled walls and a large window. The lighting is warm and inviting.

**LUXURIOUS LIVING**

# MATERIAL MEMOIR

DESIGNER NICHOLAS MORIARTY TRANSFORMS  
A BLAND BUILDER CONDO INTO THE ULTIMATE  
HIGH-DESIGN LIVE/WORK SPACE.

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Moriarty replaced the original recessed high hats throughout with sculptural lighting. In the kitchen, the **Fisher & Paykel** refrigerator is concealed behind **Scavolini's** industrial-chic Stained Lacquer finish in the Stainless-Steel colorway. Triptych by Moriarty.



**Above:** Moriarty's art collection includes over 90 pieces. On the far right, *Still Standing* by Andrea Jensen cleverly hides the TV behind an art lift. Diptych by Roger Boulay. Artwork on left: *Ascending Church*, a work by artist Cheryl Molnar. A throw pillow in a **Zimmer + Rhode** textile ties into the artwork. **Opposite:** As drapery, *Medici sheers* by **Great Plains** through **Holly Hunt** complement the bold *Shikhara* textile from **Designers Guild** through **Osborne & Little**. Artwork is by Arnolds Andersons.

Most people house hunt with a checklist of non-negotiables, but when interior designer Nicholas Moriarty was searching for a live/work space to call home, he had more of a sledgehammer in mind. "Most developers throw soulless spaces together with little thought to how people actually live," says Moriarty. For some discerning designers, finding a great layout is the architectural equivalent of encountering a unicorn in the wild—with permits. Two years into his search, the designer finally snagged a preconstruction condo in Chicago's Ukrainian Village.

"They delivered your quintessential boring white-on-gray-on-beige, builder-grade 'luxury condo,'" says Moriarty. "It had zero personality, but what I cared most about was the delineation of space—and this had it." Moriarty, with the help of his firm, turned the three-bedroom shell into a one-bedroom home with a dedicated office and design studio rich in architectural detailing, material nuance, and art. The living quarters occupy the southern half of the unit, while the front two bedrooms were merged into a sleek, distinct workspace that houses his firm's team. "There's no visual overlap, no noise bleed. I just shut the door and disconnect" he says. "And we kept it simple—Dieter Rams shelving, flexible desks, a wallpapered ceiling. It's elegant, it works hard, and it represents what we do."

To build tension on arrival, Moriarty lowered the staggered ceiling in the foyer and gave the hallway a film-noir feel by cloaking it in a durable vinyl wallcovering and Deco-style moldings to guide the eye forward. Stepping into either the airy office or the great room—where gauzy sheers, deep blue tones, sculptural forms, and veined stone surfaces evoke a sense of fluidity—feels like an exhale, a moment of compression and release.

"I often joke that I'm a better cook than I am a designer," laughs Moriarty. "I approach cooking with a professional kitchen modality, so designing kitchens isn't just a personal passion—it's something our firm really excels at." The kitchen became his canvas—Moriarty flipped the island and clad it in Rosso Levanto, a visually arresting deep burgundy marble with crisp white veining. "It's my favorite stone of all time," he says. "It was everywhere in the 1920s and '30s, then it fell out of fashion—but to me, it's timeless." No less dramatic, a wear-resistant, non-reactive quartzite lines the perimeter backsplash and countertops—its hypnotic swirls of gray veining evocative of wind-swept sandcastles. To warm the space, the designer turned to longtime collaborator Scavolini, choosing a wood-like melamine for the cabinetry that can withstand heat and oil. To punctuate both sides of the kitchen—the designer created a custom bar he outfitted in the brand's dramatic Stained Lacquer,



**Opposite:** Phillip Jeffries Navy Night wallcovering creates an alluring ambiance in the bedroom. Moriarty layered a runner in shades of blue over a dark rug for plush comfort underfoot. Zimmer + Rohde Venue sheers, through Michael-Cleary, create a captivating interplay of light and shadow. Moriarty covered the shams in a vibrant Christian Lacroix textile for Designers Guild, available through Osborne & Little. **Left:** A pill-shaped medicine cabinet and Bergman vanity with aged-brass hardware from Robern define the bathroom's refined aesthetic. Through K&B Galleries and Ann Sacks. **Below:** Culinary function meets design in the kitchen, with a Brizo faucet, and sleek Scavolini cabinetry.

a metallike finish created through seven layers of hand-applied lacquer. On one side, it conceals a refrigerator; on the other; it defines a custom bar adorned with Mata Ortiz pottery and sculptures by Shane Snider.

"My team and I took a strategic approach to highlight the tension between true and functional luxury throughout," Moriarty explains. "The bar finish is Scavolini's most expensive, but it's paired with one of their most cost-effective. You can spend a lot on design," he says, "but you don't always have to, and it's a powerful way to show my clients in real time." In the dining area, a rug in saturated shades of blue grounds the space, while an anatomy triptych Moriarty created in college holds pride of place. Rooted in function and a crucible of culture, the salon-like living area reflects how he lives: Each morning begins in the window-facing armchair, watching the sunrise surrounded by treasured works of art and shelves of books, many of whose pages serve as a personal archive, unfurling memories of revelatory or soul-stirring exhibitions. "Art calms and grounds me—it's immensely

restorative," he expands. For the curtains, a sheer textile is paired with an unexpectedly vibrant one.

In the bedroom, Moriarty created a "cocoon of darkness," enveloping the room in a moody, atmospheric wallcovering depicting billowing, hand-painted clouds. He carried the inky palette throughout, saturating the space in deep tonal blues. Vintage slipper chairs reupholstered in poly horsehair, ethereal sheers, and Euro shams covered in a Christian Lacroix fabric add layered texture. A diptych by Jim Zwadlo—showing pedestrians from a bird's-eye view—references the artist's time working in Manhattan. In the bathrooms, Moriarty partnered with Robern to integrate Deco-inspired vanities and medicine cabinets he helped develop through market research.

"I hate the idea of accessorizing for the sake of it. Everything here has a reason—my books, my art, my tools," says Moriarty. "When you see a project photo in our portfolio, that's exactly how it looks in the client's house. That speaks to the authentic nature and intentionality in everything that we do." ■

