

# INNOVATORS

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## **RENOVATION**

# GLOW-UP

Jill Najnigier suffuses warmth into an all-too-white Cambridge condominium with well-placed wood accents and colorful art.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS BY JARED KUZIA**



**INTERIOR DESIGNER** JN INTERIOR SPACES  
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## SPARK WITH ART

Art played an extensive role in Najnigier's glow-up, steering the palette from top to bottom. She credits the atmospheric abstract by Kathy Buist from Galerie d'Orsay that hangs in the kitchen for kicking things off. "The painting's sophisticated palette blends warm yellows and greens with cooler shades of blue and gray that connect to the existing tile backsplash, making it feel intentional," the designer explains. Meanwhile, handblown glass pendants by Rhode Island-based Tracy Glover Studio nudges golden tones to the peninsula. A commissioned oil painting by Lisa Breslow picturing distant views of Harvard University, where the couple met, is an amped-up take on the color scheme and helps make the new condo feel like home. Other pieces, including landscapes by Louise LeBourgeois from Claire Carino Contemporary in the living room and Hannah Bureau from Libby Silvia in the den, also play with the palette. "The clients were enthusiastically engaged in the art selection process," Najnigier says.

**INITIALLY, JILL NAJNIGIER'S EMPTY-NESTER** clients intended to reinvigorate their single-family home. Then, they pivoted, purchasing a vertically oriented condominium in a Victorian near Harvard Square. "It would have been an enormous undertaking to achieve the open layout and modern aesthetic they desired in their other home," the designer shares. That said, the spic-and-span shell of the developer-scrubbed spec condo took the concept of clean a little too far. The home was sterile and lacked storage. Najnigier designed custom built-ins and freestanding pieces that not only maximized storage and square footage but also infused the spaces with character and coziness. Finally, her thoughtful selection of art, rugs, and lighting lend color and put forth a distinct point of view. "The condo felt generic and cold; it needed warmth and personality," Najnigier says.



## REFINE, DON'T REPLACE

Rather than scrapping the brand new—if uninspired—kitchen cabinetry, Najnigier partnered with local craftsman Adam Brandt of ArcArt to enhance it with walnut, transforming the ho-hum tableau into a compelling composition. A rich walnut upper that perfectly frames the microwave replaced a standard white cabinet with a way-too-large opening for the appliance. Stepped crown molding ties the new cabinet to its neighbors and closes the 7-inch gap to the soffit while flat walnut trim along the bottom further unites them. At the left, Najnigier capitalizes on the empty wall and abrupt end of the tile backsplash by adding open walnut shelves that display amber and mossy-green glassware.



## MARRY OUTDOORS WITH INDOORS

Color and shape ensure a cohesive flow between the interior and exterior spaces. The misty blues of the abstract art and backsplash tiles in the kitchen find their way to the third-floor deck, where gray-blue cushions top a curved Gloster sectional. A pair of petite ceramic side tables—gray and round—with teak tops follow the same formula. “Teak naturally weathers to gray, keeping the focus on the trees,” Najnigier says, noting that the outdoor dining table and chairs are also teak. The designer even went in reverse, bringing the green of the surrounding tree canopy into the office/guest bedroom with an emerald-green velvet sofa bed as well as a forest-green rug that weaves in the terra-cotta tones echoing the home’s clapboard exterior. “I think of it as art for the floor,” she says.

## MAKE STORAGE SING

Artisanal pieces make the most of otherwise empty space, providing practical, gorgeous moments. In the dining area, Najnigier floated a walnut bench under the window, which terminates at a lustrous pantry cabinet that touches the ceiling. The banquette provides plenty of seating while ensuring the dining chairs and counter stools have ample clearance. Aronson Woodworks made the ash dining table, redesigning the swooped base at the designer’s direction to increase leg room. Najnigier collaborated with them on the floating console in the entryway, too. Its multilayered walnut base and azure top fuse form and function, as does the custom curved walnut vanity that Brandt fashioned for the fluted concrete sink in the powder room. Finally, for the office/guest bedroom, Najnigier designed a white-oak wall unit with touch-to-open drawers and doors and a waterfall desk, both made by Brandt.

