



NEW VIEWS
Clockwise from far left: The penthouse has 180-degree city and mountain views; viewed from the living room, the kitchen features Lake's images of desert plants; a small bedroom was transformed into a dressing space, with a chaise for lounging.

AIRY AERIE

Views and an urban lifestyle inspire interior designer Lawrence Lake's new penthouse digs.

By Nora Burba Trulsson

“Come over here and look,” interior designer Lawrence Lake says. He’s standing next to the floor-to-ceiling windows in the breakfast area of his new fourth-floor penthouse. “From here, I can see planes landing at Sky Harbor, the downtown Phoenix skyline, Camelback Mountain, the Papago Buttes, the McDowells and all the way to Four Peaks. And, Tempe Town Lake, Tempe Center for the Arts and the Mill Avenue bridge are right in front.”

It’s no wonder the designer keeps a bottle of Windex handy for the numerous face and handprints that land on the glass from frequent gazing. These

spectacular 180-degree views from the corner penthouse are what inspired Lake and his partner, Miguel Madera, to sell their Scottsdale house and move into a more urban setting in downtown Tempe, as well as to relocate Lake’s design firm, Lawrence Lake Interiors, from Scottsdale to the ground floor of the same building.

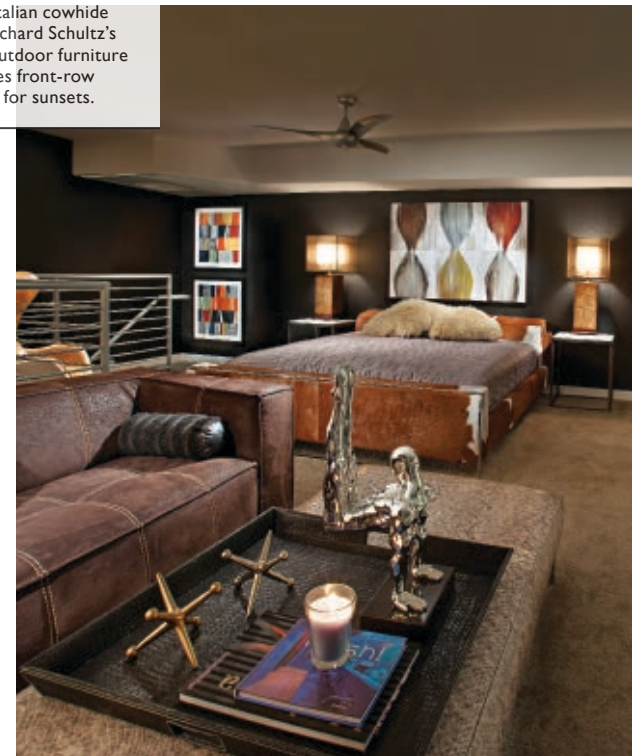
It all started in early 2014, when Lake, known for his residential, hospitality and multifamily design projects, was working on the interiors for the public spaces and models of the 328-unit, \$65 million SkyWater project on Tempe Town Lake. “I was on the job site, and the construction supervisor asked me if I wanted to see the penthouse,” recalls Lake, a member of the American Society

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LIVE/WORK/PLAY
 Clockwise from left:
 The home office
 overlooks the pool
 deck; the master suite
 in the loft is anchored
 by an Italian cowhide
 bed; Richard Schultz's
 1966 outdoor furniture
 provides front-row
 seating for sunsets.



...CONTINUED of Interior Designers. "It was just framed out, no windows, but I took one look and said, 'I could live here.' I've never really said that before."

By fall, Lake, Madera and their three dogs had moved into the 1,600-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath penthouse, using the second-story loft as a master bedroom and the three bedrooms, respectively, as an office, storage and dressing room. Lake's design firm moved into the street-level commercial space earlier this year. "We simplified our lives here," explains Lake. "We took a few things we wanted from our Scottsdale house, sold the rest and then bought a few modern pieces that fit the contemporary architecture of this space."

Working with a backdrop of pale flooring, two-story window walls and espresso-hued cabinetry, Lake chose a palette of charcoal and chocolate brown, accented with deep blue and pale green. He furnished the living room with a simple, sleek sectional and a leather bench, then placed an iconic Eero Saarinen Tulip table and classic Mies van der Rohe-designed Brno chairs in the adjacent breakfast area. Adding drama to the kitchen are close-up photographs of desert plants—Lake's art business, Nature's Elements—including one large image printed on canvas that's wrapped around the base of the kitchen island. Upstairs is an Italian cowhide bed and a sitting area with a deep, comfortable leather sofa and ostrich-patterned chaise.

Modern art, contemporary pendant lights and large pop art-style sculptures

of fruit detail the interior, as do a few chew toys, courtesy of the four-legged roommates. The balcony off the living room boasts more classic designs in the form of Richard Schultz's 1966 outdoor seating. Large pots contain succulents like specimen aloe. "I had a little trouble giving up my garden in Scottsdale, so we brought some of the plants here," says Lake. "Along with the big photos of plants, we've created our version of an urban garden."

The new setting has many benefits—for one, it's a short commute via stairs or elevator to the design firm, where Madera oversees purchasing and installations. Another work-related benefit is that Lake actually lives within one of his design projects. "I do a lot of work on multifamily projects such as condos and apartments," he explains. "And I think that my designs work for the public areas, like the lobbies and club rooms. Here, I get to see that the designs do work. It's like a living design lab."

Then there are those views. "All our friends suddenly want to come over for drinks at sunset," Lake says. "On the Fourth of July, we could see five fireworks displays from our balcony, and there were 10,000 people in the park below. ... Last December, we craned in a two-story Christmas tree over the balcony and put it in the corner of the breakfast area. You could see it from the Loop 202 freeway." ■

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—Lawrence Lake, interior designer »

