



David Kroll's *Apples and Two Vases*, the owners' favorite painting, provides a focal point in the living room as well as a starting point for the choices of color, texture, and materials used in the room design. **FACING PAGE:** The low profile and neutral color of this chaise—a prized spot for reading and relaxation—does little to distract from the vistas of the Boston waterfront.



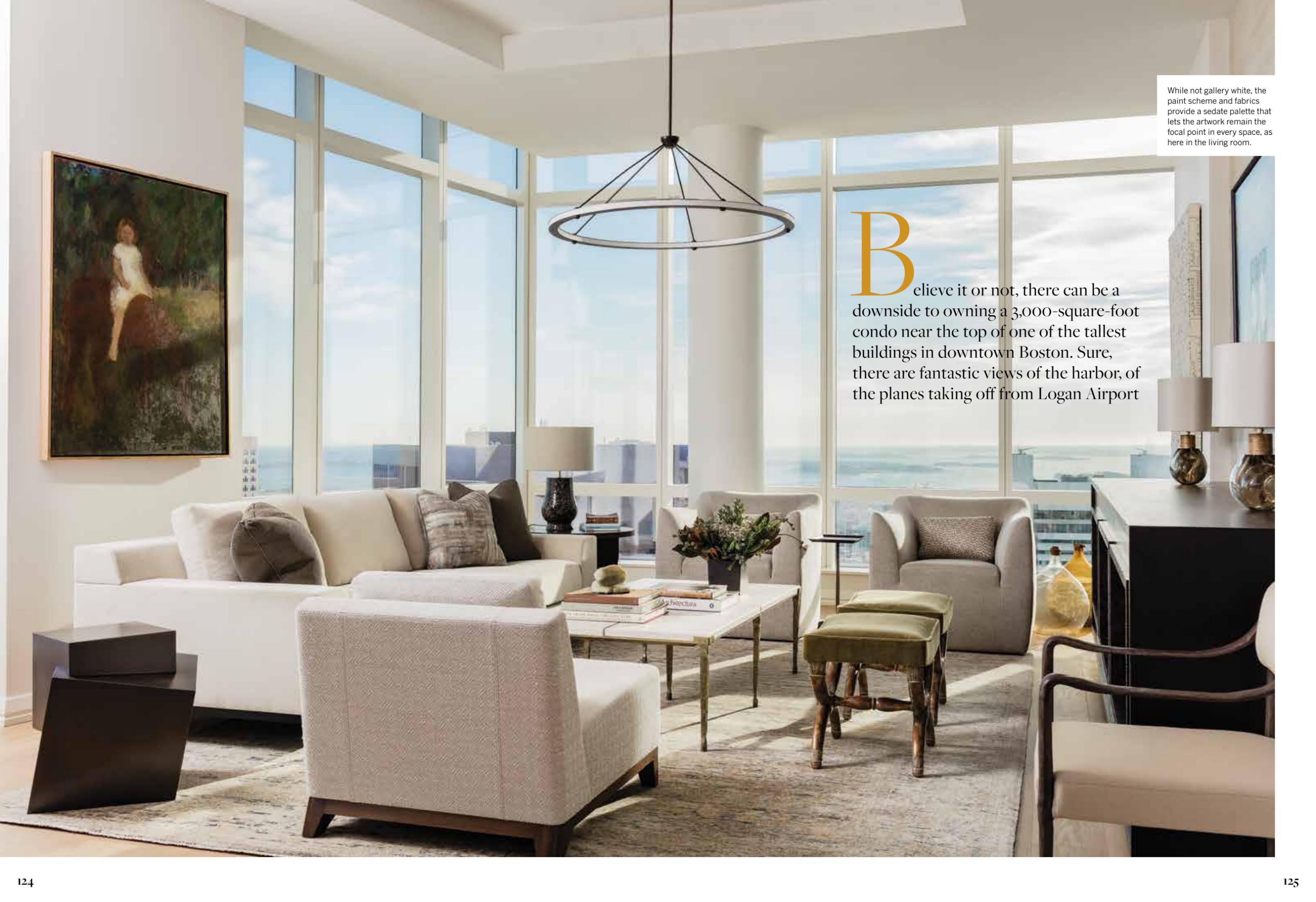
## ART & SOUL

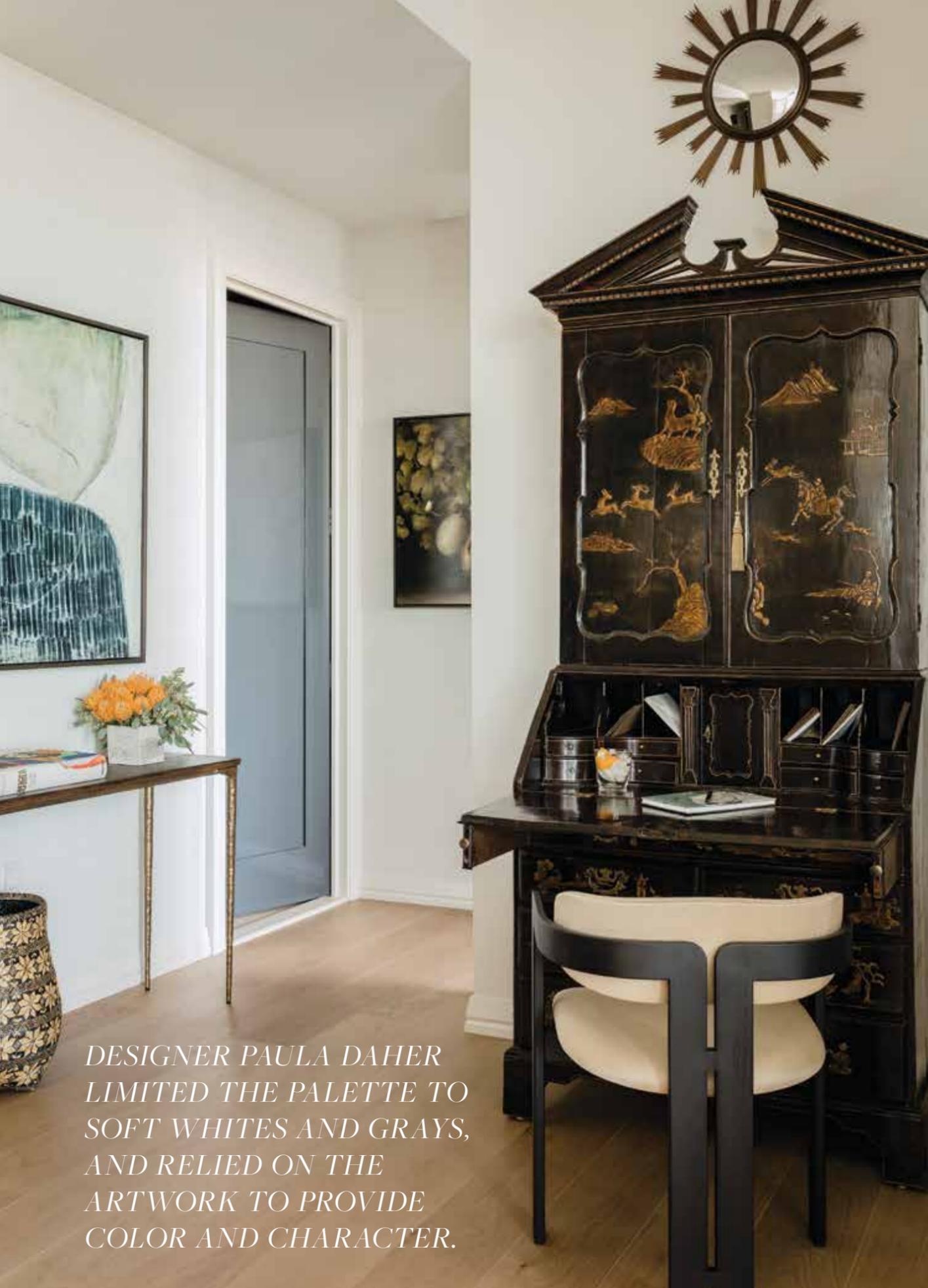
*A stellar collection of paintings and sculpture sparks the sophisticated warmth of a home in a Boston high-rise.*

TEXT BY BOB CURLEY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL J. LEE

While not gallery white, the paint scheme and fabrics provide a sedate palette that lets the artwork remain the focal point in every space, as here in the living room.

**B**elieve it or not, there can be a downside to owning a 3,000-square-foot condo near the top of one of the tallest buildings in downtown Boston. Sure, there are fantastic views of the harbor, of the planes taking off from Logan Airport





*DESIGNER PAULA DAHER LIMITED THE PALETTE TO SOFT WHITES AND GRAYS, AND RELIED ON THE ARTWORK TO PROVIDE COLOR AND CHARACTER.*

in one direction, and of the Charles River and Cambridge in the other. But the price you pay for all those acres of glass windows is a deficit of wall space.

Most people might not mind that. But interior designer Paula Daher's clients are avid art collectors who were downsizing from a large suburban home where their vast collection occupied nearly every available space. Needless to say, it could not all make the move.

"The challenge was to highlight the art but not take away from the views," says Daher.

The couple moved into what was essentially a "white box," Daher recalls, and gave her broad latitude to pore over their art collection, choosing pieces that seemed to work best given the layout and designing the rooms around the art.

She spent months going back and forth to the owners' home in the suburbs, taking photos of paintings and statues and inserting them into CAD presentations to demonstrate what each room would look like. "It was actually pretty easy because they had a fabulous



**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:** Part of the design challenge was displaying the art—such as the primitive statuary in the hallway—while retaining a flowing, functional, and livable space. The muted palette of whites and grays continues in the kitchen. A Chinoiserie desk from the eighteenth century paired with a transitional desk chair creates a quiet workplace in a niche between the family room and kitchen.





**ABOVE:** Art is sometimes used as a counterpoint to the room design, as with this dark but whimsical (yes, that's a pastry bag on her head) painting contrasted with the soft tones used in the master bedroom. **RIGHT:** The home's one large, blank wall was put to good use in the den, where the designer juxtaposed multiple works of art in varied styles in a gallery-like display.

art collection," says Daher, giving her lots to choose from, including traditional, modernist, and abstract, by artists drawing inspiration from New England to Asia.

Her clients had a few "must-have" pieces that provided a strong starting point for the design, notably the David Krill oil painting *Apples and Two Vases*, which found a home in the living room. The piece hangs above the new gas fireplace built into a low console of dark marble—a replacement for the white,

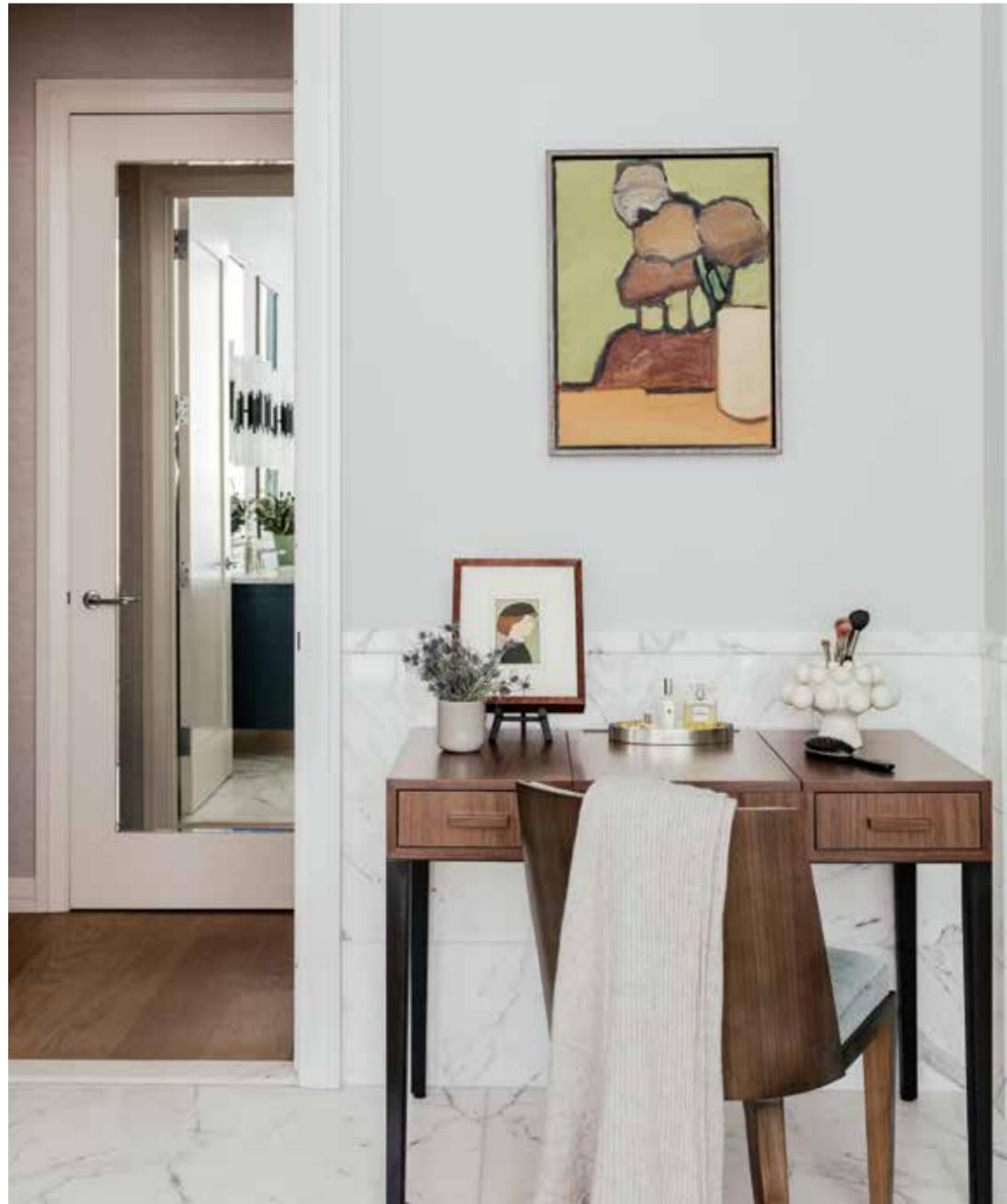
floor-to-ceiling fireplace and chimney the condo came with. A pair of avocado-colored stools plays off of the colors in the artwork's vases, while the pale-gray horsehair wallcovering provides a textured but neutral display space that nods to the organic nature of the painting.

Throughout the home, Daher limited the background palette to soft white, gray, and blue hues, and relied on the artwork to provide color and character. In a guest bedroom,





A pair of dervishes give the side-eye to the guest bedroom, where a bubble ceiling light reflects the playful spirit of the room. The queen bed splits in two when the owners' college-age sons are in town and need a place to crash.



a colorful painting of a pair of whirling dervishes, a reminder of a trip to Turkey, dances with a bold yellow stripe in the bedding and even picks up colors from some of the nearby buildings seen through the windows.

The art also played a role in managing scale. In the study, the designer's clever arrangement of pieces helps bring the twelve-foot-tall walls down to size. Nearly a dozen paintings of various sizes are displayed on a long wall; most all the pieces are graphically

simple and predominantly black and white, but a single moody, gilt-framed landscape joins them, catching and guiding the eye.

The aim—successfully achieved—was a home that honors the clients' passion while sacrificing neither style nor practicality. Each room is enriched by its focal artwork, but no space feels too precious to be an everyday living space.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For details about this home, see *Resources*.

**ARCHITECTURAL AND INTERIOR DESIGN:** Paula Daher, Daher Interior Design  
**BUILDER:** Eric Adams, Adams + Beasley Associates



An antique rug and bronze table add warmth to the master bathroom, an airy space where the owners can soak in the view of Boston Harbor. **FACING PAGE:** Custom designed to fit this space in the master bath, the walnut makeup table has a hidden mirror inside; the material choice takes its cues from the artwork hanging above.