

WHAT I LEARNED AT JURY DUTY / EASY ONE-POT CHICKEN / HIS SWAN BOAT LEGACY

# Globe Magazine

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SPECIAL  
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**LEADERS IN  
DESIGN**

YOUR HOME

## Small Space Living

Ideas for  
getting the  
most style  
per square  
foot.

BY MARNI  
ELYSE KATZ





YOUR HOME \* SMALL SPACES

# URBAN ZEN

In South Boston, a scientist with a newly launched decorating career creates calm in the condo he shares with his husband. **By Marni Elyse Katz**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JARED KUZIA



**F**UST OVER A YEAR AGO, Hanwen (Evan) Bai and Evan Fowler-Guzzardo moved from a rental in the Seaport to a 1,273-square-foot condominium in South Boston. Along with a view of the Prudential, the couple gained almost 200 square feet of living space. It's their largest home yet, but they don't plan to accumulate more possessions. "Every piece we have is there for a reason," Bai says. "We're good at Marie Kondo-ing things."

Bai, who had been a nationally recognized calligrapher as a child in China, is a scientist and an interior decorator on the side. He founded Hanwen Interiors after decorating their new home. "The process reignited my passion for design," he says.

Bai's modern aesthetic is rooted in Eastern design principles, but Fowler-Guzzardo, who grew up in Michigan, favors a more Scandinavian style. Still, both are modernists. "We have slightly

**Above:** Bai (right), husband Evan Fowler-Guzzardo, and their rescue dog, Wilson. **Below:** The live edge table that sits flush against the kitchen island is from Crafted Glory Design via Etsy. Stools nestle beneath it and cherry pendants add interest above.



Homeowner/decorator Hanwen (Evan) Bai displays his father-in-law's creations on walnut shelves in the living room of the South Boston condo he shares with his husband. "He prefers darker wood tones, so I decided on walnut early on," Bai says.



“Lower profiles feel more grounded to the earth, keep the room open, and add to the Zen feel,” Bai says.

different aesthetics, but the feeling we want is the same,” Bai explains. “We both want a restorative, Zen-like sanctuary where we can recharge at the end of a bustling day.”

Bai worked diligently to preserve a sense of airiness throughout. Nearly-invisible roller shades maintain the scale of the windows and let in as much light as possible. Crisp white walls are a bright backdrop for low-slung furnishings that don’t obstruct the view. Such silhouettes are odes to the furniture Bai grew up with in China. “Lower profiles feel more grounded to the earth, keep the room open, and add to the Zen feel,” he says.

A collection of glass vases in deep blues, greens, and browns handblown by Fowler-Guzzardo’s father, Michael Guzzardo, informed the color palette and kicked off the scheme. “His pieces were included in the Corning Museum of Glass journals 45 years ago,” Bai says. “We found these tucked away in [my in-laws’] basement.” Bai displayed the collection museum-style on floating walnut shelves in the living area, including a label detailing his father-in-law’s career.



**Above, left:** The couple use the second bedroom as a shared office with side-by-side standing desks. “The rug with a Japanese wave pattern speaks directly to my design style while the chairs and lamps represent my husband’s style,” Bai says. **Above:** Beech table lamps by LZP remind Bai of Chinese lanterns, and the Louise Gray quilt was handcrafted in the Midwest. **Left:** Shoji-style baskets from Marie Kondo’s line for The Container Store hide socks and such above the Room & Board dresser.



Design Within Reach's leaning ladder shelves are a chic storage solution with a minimal footprint. The shelf on the left holds cookbooks and travel treasures, the middle shelf displays Bai's tea collection, and the shelf on the right functions as a bar.

To create a cohesive, streamlined look, Bai sought out accessible vendors that offer custom solutions. Floating shelves from Ultra Shelf perfectly match the length of the Room & Board media cabinets, which sit end to end for a built-in effect. The pieces anchor the art installation and provide a 10-foot-long stretch of storage for blankets, board games, and gardening tools.

Although the condo offers ample living and storage space, especially with Bai's enhancements, the kitchen layout presented a challenge. "There wasn't enough space for a separate dining table," Bai says. His solution — a custom, live edge walnut table that fits flush against the is-

## RESOURCES

**Interior Decoration:** Hanwen Interiors,  
hanwen-interiors.com

land countertop — is seamless. Not only does it up the functionality, allowing 10 friends to gather for the traditional Chinese feasts that Bai loves to prepare, it softens the room's hard, glossy surfaces with warm, natural texture.

It took a bit of thought to work out the

furniture arrangement in the bedroom, too. While many might be inclined to place the bed on the wall opposite the window to enjoy the view, Bai positioned the bed in front of it. "The other wall wasn't long enough to fit a queen-size bed and nightstands," Bai says. "Plus, circulation to the en suite bath would have been awkward." So, he chose a low-slung bed with integrated nightstands and looked on the bright (but not too bright) side. "The bed doesn't obstruct the view and the sun doesn't wake us in the morning." ■

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