

homestyle

before
after

Mahogany paneled walls transform a cramped, cluttered living room into a mod gentlemen's club.



Submitted photo



GREG PAGE

the challenge

AN ART LOVER WANTED A SLEEK "MAD MEN" STYLE LIVING ROOM WHERE HE COULD WATCH TV — AND DISPLAY HIS COLLECTIBLES

By LYNN UNDERWOOD • lunderwood@startribune.com

The designer: Michael Rabatin, Michael J. Rabatin Design Studio, Minneapolis, 612-616-9685 (www.mjrdesignstudio.com)



From dated to dramatic: Homeowner

John Ollmann wanted to turn the dated peacock and rust-colored living room of his Minneapolis riverfront loft into a cozy gentlemen's club where he could showcase his art collection. "I really love wood and thought that would give it a clubby feel," he said.

Wall of wood: Rabatin worked with architect Tan Nguyen, who helped him remodel the entire unit. Nguyen redesigned the fireplace wall, covering it with rich ma-

hogany panels. He incorporated a new ribbon gas fireplace with crystal stones surrounded by a black granite hearth.

"The wood walls are a neutral canvas to show the artwork," said Rabatin. Other walls are painted white to contrast with the dark wood.

Functional furniture: To open up the living room, Rabatin removed a dining room table, and arranged two new sofas, upholstered in masculine gray wool flannel, into an L-shape to reveal the view of the Stone Arch Bridge. Ollmann's vintage chairs were moved closer to the fireplace.

Art adjustment: Rabatin rearranged and edited the artwork and accessories, relocating many pieces to a new "collectors gallery" created from a gutted bedroom.

"We decided to focus on a couple of good pieces. Less is sometimes more, especially in an open floor plan when you want to take in the view, the terrace, as well as everything else in the room," said Rabatin. "Removing pieces will let it breathe." He designed a spotlighted niche for Ollmann's 1920s Iannelli statue.

"Michael helped me figure out where to place my art so it feels more like a collection than a knickknack shop," Ollmann said.

Highlights: An arching lamp, moved from another part of the loft to over the baby grand piano, brings light to the center of the room and adds height. "Different levels of lighting — low, mid and high-level — create mood and ambience," Rabatin said.

Hidden assets: A flat-screen TV is con-

cealed behind a sliding wood panel above the fireplace. The art niche includes a storage cabinet for electronic audio/visual components.

The result: Rabatin said the revamped living room is a dramatic, classic space that should serve Ollmann for many years. It's also roomier for entertaining. "It's more fun giving parties," Ollmann said. "Now people can spread out."

Lynn Underwood • 612-673-7619

To submit before and after photos of a redecorated or remodeled room for consideration, please send uncompressed jpeg images to kim.palmer@startribune.com. Please include your name and phone number.