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High-Stakes Design

Interior designer Ivan Medina transforms a pro poker player's stock condo into a hybrid West Coast-meets-Las Vegas luxury.

When a jet-setting pro poker player in his late 20s moved into a cookie-cutter condo in Coquitlam Town Centre, designer Ivan Medina of Medina Design House had his work cut out for him. "There was no charm, no charisma," he says—and, most crucially for his client, "no feel of 'metropolitan' whatsoever." The homeowner wanted to trade the plain stock interiors for a look more like the high-end hotels he'd grown accustomed to while travelling around the world playing in casinos; sumptuous penthouse suites where a grand piano or crystal chandelier wouldn't look too out of place.

Medina and his team had carte blanche for the condo makeover, with one stipulation: the designer had to make room for a 10-foot L-shaped Bensen sectional to accommodate the homeowner (who stands at six feet four inches) and his trusty 100-pound pup (Hodor, the Bernese mountain dog).

The Entertainer
A Mood Non-Random light hangs above the dining table, which is lined with Effiel chairs and a custom banquette upholstered in Designers Guild houndstooth fabric. It's the ideal set-up for dinner parties and poker alike. In the living area, a cushy, deep-set Bensen sofa offers a cozy spot to lounge post-game.



All That Glimmers
The custom oversized area rug in the living room (above, bottom left) is made from banana silk and wool, giving it a shimmer that subtly references Vegas bling. Floor lamps and side tables were all varnished, a strategy that made the whole condo appear more spacious and airy (even with 8.5-foot ceilings).

The requisite deep-set sectional was massive, but the designer kept things airy by strategically paring back the living room furniture to just three key pieces—the sectional, a side chair and a coffee table—to allow for generous breathing room in between. Medina banned space-stealing side tables and floor lamps to cut the clutter and preserve the open feel (and also to make husky Hodor less likely to bump into the furniture).

Medina also used a custom charcoal area rug—which has a slight shimmer for an extra dose of glamour—to make the place feel more spacious. Using area rugs to define the perimeter of a space is a classic interior design trick, but here, instead of opting for the usual six-by-eight, Medina went with an oversized option that visually pushes the boundaries of the room.

A coffee table made of gold wire (one of the few outward touches of Vegas-style bling) sits at the area rug's centre, but a glass top allows the eye to move through it easily. Similarly, the living room's only light fixture is a

thin black-wire Serge Mouille lamp with three robot-like arms that reach out in all directions. It's this wingspan that Medina says makes it feel big in scale without obstructing sightlines: "It has enough visual weight to go with everything else that's in the room."

On the wall, Medina's team mounted a custom-designed media unit with shallow shelves to display an edited list of accents (the golden hand statue throwing up a peace sign is a playful counterpoint to a macabre skull illustration) and to hide everything else. "We didn't want the TV to be the focal point," says Medina, who camouflaged a massive flat screen in plain sight by painting the wall behind it black. Taupe-coloured cabinets frame the black rectilinear shape top and bottom and act like a gradient to soften its presence in the room.

The designer took particular aim at the dining area to bring in the luxe factor. "He didn't want it to be a conventional dining room," says Medina, but liked the idea of a communal-table dining nook for entertaining



and playing exhibition games with friends and family. Instead of the traditional four chairs, Medina and his team designed a custom banquette for one side, with extra layers of seat padding for those long nights of Texas hold 'em—all wrapped in a sumptuous black-and-grey Designers Guild houndstooth.

Walls were kept mostly clear to allow for breathing room and the condo owner's growing global art collection, but above the dining nook sits one of the poker star's favourite pieces: six black-and-white photographs of the world's metropolitan cities, among them L.A. and New York. Closely mounted on a grid, they act as one unit, another trick for making the space appear larger than it is. A dramatic floor-to-ceiling mirror gives the illusion of doubling the dining nook's square footage, while Eiffel chairs complement the industrial black wire that repeats in the Moooi Non-Random light above.

In the bedroom, the most striking feature is the half-inch-thick Cultured Brick veneer installed on the back

Brick by Brick
Billowy drapes run the length of the bedroom (above), a clever optical illusion. "The windows are standard windows, but when the drapes are closed, it looks like they're the whole wall," says Medina. "Like you could be in Vegas." Another Sin City touch: the custom neon sign above the bed: "Who dares, wins."



wall. Medina says most people walk in and can't believe it's real: "They go into his bedroom and just start touching the wall," laughs the designer.

The predominantly neutral palette of warm greys and whites changes ever so slightly in the bedroom, with a pair of throw pillows featuring bright orange splashes. "We used the orange to bring in a bit of youth and sophistication and fun to the bedroom," explains Medina, who plays with tonality throughout the home to divert and draw the eye. Even orange is downplayed in the living room's burnt-orange U Turn Bensen chair, so subdued it acts as a neutral despite being one of the loudest colours on the spectrum.

The result is a space that transports visitors as soon as they walk in the door, "like you're in a city somewhere instead of suburbia. Walking in, you can't help but think, 'Wow, that's a big sectional,' or 'Wow, that's a big wall of drapery,' but it makes so much sense in a smaller space," says the designer. "It's not big, but it feels big." CONDO

High Life
Plush white towels and original artwork decorate the guest bathroom (right) for that high-end-hotel feel. Cloud wallpaper stays on the colour palette but adds visual interest. In the bedroom (above), a vibrant painting by Rob Nicholls adds a punch of warmth to the gray-and-white space.

