



The Grosses' renovated home showcases their art collection, collected over the past 30-plus years.

## the gift of art

A COUPLE STARTS A NEW CHAPTER HIGH ABOVE THE SQUARE AND SURROUNDED BY THEIR TREASURED ART COLLECTION. BY KATHLEEN NICHOLSON WEBBER

In 33 years of marriage, one thing Lynda and Larry Gross always agree upon is art. To celebrate their anniversary each May, they almost always buy an oil or watercolor painting, a bronze statue, or even a cultural artifact. So when their nest was close to empty, and they looked to move from a sprawling suburban home to the city, they didn't want to deny their beloved trove of artwork the square footage it so richly deserved. Their hunt began in earnest in 2006, and they had two caveats: they didn't want to build, and they didn't want to live on Rittenhouse Square.

A year later the couple offers a collective shrug when explaining that they live in a penthouse condominium in the Parc Rittenhouse, a place they built from a shell, thanks to a little nudging from developer Allan Domb. How did they get there? A few failed deals, including a floor-to-ceiling glass condo in a new building, led them to meeting Domb, who suggested constructing "what they really wanted," and who assembled a team that even

included his architect of choice, Spence Kass. The result is a spacious, airy space with many old-world details, and a perfect setting for their art.

In January 2011 Kass sketched out what he could do with the blank space after his wife, Laura, came to the Grosses' sprawling colonial in Lower Gwynedd to measure and inventory the collection. Project architect Michelle Colville listened to what they loved about their current home—and more plans were made. The apartment, which took just seven months to build, features three bedroom suites, a supersize kitchen, a media room, a library and office, and a living room/dining room/music room, which holds their grand piano and other beloved instruments.

There is a sense of peace and space the minute you walk into the apartment. Kass and Colville created a backdrop that fosters enjoying rooms where art can also be enjoyed, gallery style. The entrance foyer

*continued on page 126*





Oil paintings by Charles Dwyer and James Scoppettone hang in the foyer.



The Grosses used an acoustic specialist to soundproof the music room.



For Lynda Gross and her daughter, who love to cook, the spacious kitchen is a focal point of their home.

continued from page 125

features an ethereal portrait by Charles Dwyer, *Contemplating Blue*, one of their favorites and bought in Boston for their 25th anniversary. Also in the foyer is *Autumn Rain*, James Scoppettone's original oil of a meandering forest path the pair acquired in Hawaii for their 20th anniversary. Antique chairs complement the setting.

In the living room and dining room, art and instruments enjoy equal billing. Near the entrance to the kitchen is *The Blue Painter*, an original lithograph by Marc Chagall (acquired from Israel for their 19th anniversary).

**“Our home feels like a retreat.”**

—LYNDA GROSS

Kass and Colville fashioned the long hallway leading from the living spaces to the bedrooms into something of a gallery. “Their art is interesting. It brings life to the home,” says Kass, who chose moldings with enough detail to highlight, rather than distract from, the collection. He also gave the space arched portals and coffered ceilings to give it warmth. Floors are also artful: Decorative marquetry, using six different types of wood species, was installed in the foyer and outside the master bedroom.

Woodworker Victor Rossi did all of the apartment's millwork and built-ins, including

the rich cabinetry in the library, which doubles as an office. “We really live in the office and in the kitchen,” says Larry. Because Lynda and one of her daughters like to cook, the kitchen is a focal point and is as big as the one they left in the suburbs.

The kitchen opens up to the media room on one side and the music room on the other. They employed an acoustic specialist to soundproof the music room and other parts of the home. “We built essentially two walls near the piano,” says Larry, who has played since he was six (Lynda does, too) and loves to have his daughters and wife accompany him on vocals. “All of us sing with varying degrees of proficiency and play a variety of other instruments,” he says.

The couple toasted the move and their most recent anniversary by buying two period etchings—a map and a landscape of the city during the Revolutionary period. The Grosses' transition to the city has been seamless. “We can't believe how easy it has been,” says Lynda. “Our home feels like a retreat, and now we are part of this vibrant community.” **PS**

## ABOVE IT ALL

101 Walnut's bi-level penthouse, new on the market, has stunning views and plenty of star power.

Featuring just ten units, 101 Walnut is one of the most exclusive addresses in Philadelphia—and its \$3.495 million penthouse does not disappoint. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls throughout create an astounding 270-degree panorama of the city. The kitchen boasts custom detailing and state-of-the-art appliances, and the dining area features a dual-sided fireplace. A private glass elevator leads to the master bedroom and the private pool terrace with an outside kitchen. Eric Axelson, from Kurfiss Sotheby's International Realty, says, “This is simply one of the top penthouses in the city, if not the top. Where else can you be swimming in the lap pool off your master suite and simultaneously have views of the skyline?” The property even boasts a bit of star power: Jennifer Lopez used the home for interviews and a photo shoot while in Philly this summer. 101 Walnut St., 215-222-3000; pennoni.com