

# AT HOME

## Fort Belvoir condo gets simple, yet elegant transformation

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett  
Special to *The Examiner*

As the wife of a Navy admiral, Rosalie Mow spent many years traveling the world and collecting furniture, artifacts and knickknacks. Widowed for 10 years, Mow decided to downsize last year, moving from her single-family home in Mount Vernon to a small two-bedroom condo near Fort Belvoir.

Before moving in, Mow enlisted the help of interior designer and Classical design expert Claudia Powell to transform the humdrum condo into a stately home befitting an officer's wife.

"We wanted to make it simple, yet elegant," Powell said.

"I love it. It's really nice to pare down and get rid of a lot of stuff and keep only the things that mean the most to you," Mow said. "You gain a sense of freedom."

Faced with low ceilings and a series of soffits that created a cave-like feel, Powell focused on creating the illusion of more vertical space.

"In classical architecture, vertical represents life, man while alive. Horizontal represents man at death," said Powell, who serves on the board of directors of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Institute for Classical Architecture and Classical America.



PHOTOS BY ANDREW HARNIK/EXAMINER

Design expert Claudia Powell focused on creating the illusion of more vertical space.

Powell mounted faux cornices over the soffits and above all window treatments, drawing the eye up. She also extended window treatments beyond the window frames, allowing silk fabrics to soften rooms.

Royal blue and gold tones are used throughout the house. "Navy colors," Mow said.

The living room exudes regal ambience. Stylish blue silk pillows with chinoiserie-like patterns complement a comfortable saffron-colored chenille sofa, which appears large

and oversized, yet is actually smaller than a standard sofa.

"It's important to use the right scale of furniture in a small space," said Powell, who added that before starting the project, she measured the entire condo to get accurate floor plans.

Two beautiful, roomy blue velvet chairs across from the sofa create an intimate setting. "The two chairs are comfortable, but have a small footprint," Powell said. Between the sofa and chairs is a petite brass-framed



dressed in a gold satin tablecloth, a great spot for reading.

The condo's guest room, in lavender and cream, blends the lavish with the practical, incorporating the necessities of a home office. A French day bed sits under silk fabric that flows from a faux canopy mounted from the ceiling. White wooden end tables, which conceal file cabinets, are on each side of the bed. A trundle underneath converts it to a queen-size bed, perfect for guests.

The elegant master bedroom is dressed up with custom-made linens that coordinate with bold blue- and gold-striped silk drapes. Just off the master bedroom, separated by French doors, is a cozy sitting area with a light-blue settee and cream-colored ottoman that also doubles as storage.

"I lived in New York for 20 years, and as a rule, if a piece of furniture doesn't bend and serve at least two functions, it's out," Powell said.

On one wall is a tall portrait of Mow's late husband, Douglas F. Mow, handsomely decked out in full Navy dress; sword, ribbons and gold oak-leaf cap. Tiny, yet majestic, the sitting room is the perfect setting for Mow to spend time with the loves of her life — her late husband and longtime, leather-bound friends like William Shakespeare and James Fenimore Cooper.

table topped with black granite.

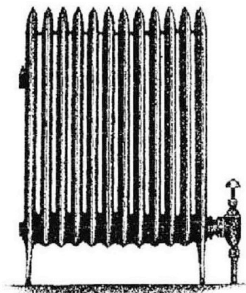
A member of three book clubs, Mow collects fine leather-bound books. In the living room, large wooden bookcases filled with leather editions flank an opening to a narrow sunroom. The sunroom includes a pair of blue and gold plaid dining chairs cuddled up to a round table

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