

Chicago Proper

The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Chicago, tempts prospective tenants with top-of-the-line amenities and a custom-designed model suite that shows off the luxe life.

By Diana Bitting

Photography by Anthony Tablier



Every resident of The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Chicago, enjoys a premier address just off the Mag Mile complete with valet service.

The good life. What exactly does living it mean to most? Travel and tailored clothing? Philanthropic pursuits and collection-worthy art? Five-star hotels and enviable real estate? Then again, maybe it's all of the above. In fact, the folks behind The Ritz-Carlton Residences are banking on it, combining the brand's international hospitality collection with centrally located private condominiums from Lake Tahoe to Toronto—and raising the bar on living well that much higher.



An exquisite art collection and a butler-manned bar are perks of the Grand Salon on The Residences' 10th floor.

Formerly the dining room, Richman converted this space into a comfortable den featuring a fireplace with a hand-carved mantel made of Patera limestone.



Luckily, in Chicago, it's all still within reach. At The Ritz-Carlton Residences building just off the Magnificent Mile at 118 E. Erie St., a selection of covetable units are available. To entice potential buyers, who thus far have mostly consisted of professionals and jet-setters looking for a luxe pied-à-terre, Prism Development Company commissioned River North-based interior designer Michael Richman to create a model home in one of the sizable two-bedroom, 2.5-bath condos. In March, he revealed the finished product: a soothing, sophisticated scheme featuring notable artworks from local galleries, a cozy den in place of a formal dining room, and statement-making furnishings and decor. "This building is appealing for a specific lifestyle," says Richman of the 89-unit Residences. "It was important to me that the highest level of luxury come across in the design."

Aiming to speak to the globe-trotting, culture-conscious set—and show buyers the potential of the space (units in the building range mostly from about 1,400 to more than 3,600 square feet)—Richman chose a timeless, classic style with some conversation-worthy pieces sprinkled in. In the master suite, custom stone-colored silk drapery and a calming, creamy wall color set the tone. He clad the wall behind the king-size bed in ivory-colored shagreen that pops in front of a mirrored wall. The headboard is covered in Holly Hunt chenille in shades of stone and light blue. The second bedroom plays host to a

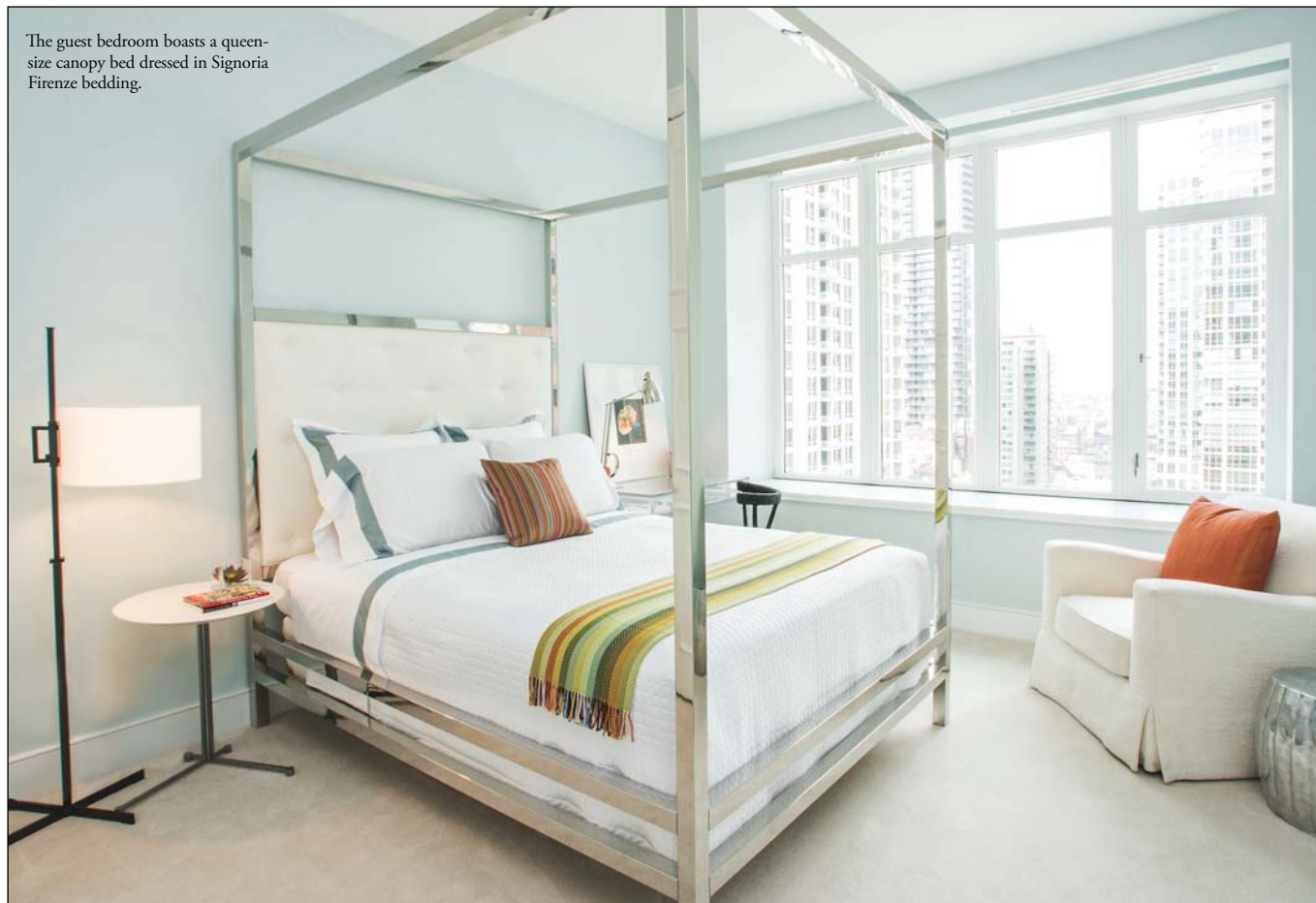
chrome canopy bed by Bernhardt at the perfect scale; next to it, a stunning Lucite desk designed by Richman and a felted wool chair by Mexican artist Tanya Aguiñiga (on loan from Wright Auction House) exist with playful tension.

In the main living area, a cobalt-blue Yves Klein coffee table is an unexpected and delightful contrast to the chocolates and creams of the upholstered furnishings and oversize abstract artwork (think an acrylic on canvas painting by Valery Koshlyakov and a sculpture by Richard Hunt). In one corner, a custom banquette sofa, chairs designed by Michael Richman Interiors and a Miró-inspired table with a gold-leaf base set a casual, open dining space. Richman decided to do away with the larger, originally designated dining room as there's also an eating nook in the kitchen. "There's no need for a formal dining room when there's one in the building on the 10th floor," says Richman, referencing the elegant private dining room off the common floor Grand Salon that residents can reserve. Instead, he introduced a den-slash-entertainment room, warmed up by a custom 9-foot-wide couch, a pair of vintage chrome and leather, Mongolian lamb hide-upholstered chairs from Ligne Roset and silver leaf tree trunk coffee tables from R Studio. "I envisioned a couple with grown children, who wanted to be surrounded by elegance and warmth," says Richman. "I chose unique pieces from different periods and styles to convey the sense of a well-traveled, cultured homeowner."



In the living area, a 2008 painting by Valery Koshlyakov overlooks an Yves Klein table.

The guest bedroom boasts a queen-size canopy bed dressed in Signoria Firenze bedding.



In the master bedroom, Erin Lauder crystal lamps flank the Holly Hunt chenille headboard.



A Robert Mapplethorpe photo and a felted wool chair complement a Lucite desk designed by Richman.





The master bath stuns with Bulgarian limestone, mahogany cabinets, Kallista sinks and Dornbracht faucets.



A custom Miró-inspired gold-leaf table and a starburst chandelier with Swarovski crystals add sparkle to the dining nook.



Chicago interior designer Michael Richman

The kitchen—designed by deGiulio with SieMatic cabinetry, Dornbracht fixtures, and Miele, Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances, not to mention appointed with a terrace offering views of the bustling streets below and a sliver of the western skyline—had fabulous bones, so Richman needed only add a round, Saarinen-style dining table and chairs upholstered in a striped Paul Smith fabric. “This is a world-class building, and the residential interiors need to be world-class,” says Richman. “The furnishings, the art... it all supports the image, and it lives up to the building’s expectations.”

Those expectations include not only a respectable address, but above-and-beyond service and amenities. During our

tour, Bill, the butler on call, acted as greeting committee and bartender. “Still or sparkling?” he asked, explaining that, for each resident, he keeps a personal liquor locker filled with whatever is their preferred poison. Climate-controlled wine cellar storage is available, too, as is a fully stocked, top-shelf bar in the lounge. Bill is happy to shake or stir any cocktail you can dream up. “We see ourselves as an extension of your living room,” he says. Only better—you don’t have to lift a finger. (The private 10th-floor Landmark Club also boasts a billiards and wine room with terrace, a screening room, a full kitchen, a state-of-the-art fitness center and spa facilities.)



Just outside the den, Diulio Barnabe's 1958 oil-on-canvas hangs above a Biedermeier secretary from Rita Bucheit, Ltd.

One particular fan of the Ritz's butler service, Tom, owns a one-bedroom in the building and admits to tapping Bill (or other on-duty staffers) for assistance with things other than bartending, like personal shopping, airport transportation and restaurant reservations. "There is literally nothing the staff and management won't do, so long as it's legal!" he says jovially. "When I first moved in, I had ordered nice wooden hangers for my closets. I was away on business when they were delivered. But when I came home, the hangers were already out of the box, in the closets, and all rubbish removed. Everyone here seems to have a sixth sense, always thinking one step ahead of you and your needs."

This fine tuning and attention to detail is part of the The Ritz-Carlton brand of course, and anyone who has had the privilege of staying in one of their many hotels the world over knows what lengths the managers and staff will go to make sure their clients are comfortable. Sure, other high-end hospitality groups come close, but the history of the company and the respect the name "Ritz" solicits is unlike any other. So, when the company decided to delve into the luxury real estate market, all those bells and whistles crossed over as well. "The genuine care for the owners in the building is unparalleled," says Director of Sales Jane Shawkey, a real estate broker at Coldwell Banker Previews International. "There's a personalization—the

staff connect with each owner's individuality and they deliver customized service to each person."

One recent example of this above-and-beyond accommodation: A couple of empty nesters were in the process of moving from a townhouse into the Chicago Residences. To ease the transition between locales for their five-year-old granddaughter, the Residences Concierge, Nathalie, arranged a very special day for the group. Upon arrival, Nathalie greeted them dressed as the character Elsa from *Frozen* and had the movie playing in the screening room. The great-grandmother decided to join them a little later, and a photographer, whom Nathalie had scheduled in advance, captured the four generations of females enjoying one another's company at their new address. Later, the entire family was gifted with a storybook slideshow of their special day stored on a flash drive shaped like the *Frozen* character Olaf. How's that for service?

It's no surprise, then, that as Michael Richman was a few weeks into the process of designing the Residences' latest model unit, he decided to move into the building. He's currently enjoying the perks: the prime location in the heart of the city, the hand-and-foot hospitality and the gorgeous, sun-bathed, top-of-the-line condominiums that a few lucky folks, those living the good life, are fortunate enough to call home. **sl**

Remaining units in The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Chicago, are priced between \$890,000 and \$4 million, with one penthouse priced at \$11 million. theresidenceschicago.com/contact