



PHOTOS COURTESY PIERRE JEAN-BAPTISTE INTERIORS

Dr. Vanessa Elharrar, the owner of a once-boring 1980s Bethesda condo, hired designer Pierre Jean-Baptiste to get her space ready for entertaining friends.

'80s condo gets glamorous update for entertaining

By Merlisa Lawrence Corbett
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Stylish and outgoing, Dr. Vanessa Elharrar enjoys entertaining friends. "I have something going on practically every week," she said.

So when she moved into a Bethesda condo in September she was eager to get the place party-ready and asked interior designer Pierre Jean-Baptiste to turn her boring 1980s home into a glamorous bachelorette pad.

She recently unveiled her newly done digs at a housewarming party — and her friends were amazed.

"I like elegance and glamour. I didn't want something too casual," Elharrar said.

Too casual is too boring for a woman who never needs an occasion to host a soiree. But faced with limitations, such as low ceilings, poor layout, original parquet floors and no architectural details, Jean-Baptiste had to create the illusion of opulence with high-gloss finishes, glass and glittery fixtures.

"I like to use splashes of an element when I design," he said. "Here I used splashes of crystal and metal to take the eye off of standard architectural things that might not be as pleasing."



Faced with limitations in Elharrar's condo, such as low ceilings, a poor layout, original parquet floors and no architectural details, Jean-Baptiste had to create the illusion of opulence with high-gloss finishes, glass and glittery fixtures.

In the dining room, Jean-Baptiste contrasted soft neutral gray walls with shiny glass and metal fixtures. A shimmering chandelier with a sheer metal shade and dangling beads sparkles over the center of a simple oval dark wood table. Light bounces from the chandelier to chrome and crystal elements, including a pair of glass-based buffet lamps on a sideboard, two tall glass vases on the dining table and

chrome accessories on the floor and wall. A frequent traveler, Elharrar loves the lavish yet orderly atmosphere she finds in luxury hotels. Jean-Baptiste captured that look in the living room. Naturally split by the traffic path leading from the entrance to the hallway, the living room is divided into two seating areas. In one, Jean-Baptiste arranged two large

microfiber chairs around a round rug with a starburst of colors. Six framed Picasso prints on a large wall give the space the upscale hotel lobby look. "I wanted something nice that had visual interest," Jean-Baptiste said. "I love it. I think it's funky and I like funky," added Elharrar. "It feels inviting yet fun." In the other part of the living

room, Jean-Baptiste placed bold print pillows on two beautiful button-tufted sofas. A brown leather ottoman that serves as a coffee table also has button tufts, one of Elharrar's favorite design elements.

Glamour gives way to global in a quaint den decorated to reflect Elharrar's travels around the world. A large framed antique map hangs over a beige sofa with clean lines. A modern wall unit displays items collected from around the world, including a vase from Greece, carved giraffe from South Africa and various souvenirs from South America.

Jean-Baptiste managed to mesh glitz and glamour with soft and serene in the master bedroom. The star of this Hollywood regency room is a faux canopy design around the bed.

Jean-Baptiste trimmed space on a wall behind and the ceiling above the bed. He used metallic paint inside the trim to provide a focal point around the bed. He punctuated the space with a regal crystal chandelier that complements the shimmer in the metallic paint.

"I wanted to do something different," he said. "It was a nice bed, but it needed something else."

"I love coming home," Elharrar said. "It's a nice retreat."