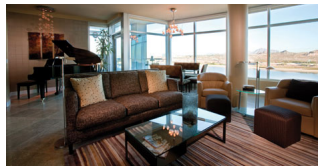


High-Rise Haven

Written by Written by Amy Strand / Photographed by Cassandra Tomei

When you walk into Scott and Barbara Nelson's sixth-floor condominium, breathtaking views of the shimmering lake below abound—and yes, we are still in Arizona. This couple's home is a part of the luxurious Bridgeview building at Hayden Ferry Lakeside, located on the ever-popular Tempe Town Lake.



Bridgeview, a development that began building in 2006 and opened in 2008, joins fellow condominium tower Edgewater in the mixed-use community, Hayden Ferry Lakeside. Set to be a complete 43-acre development, Hayden Ferry Lakeside already includes office space, dining options and high-end residences, and once finished will also offer additional retail outlets and a hotel.

Designed by SunCor Development Company and architectural firm IBI/HB Architects out of Vancouver, British Columbia, in collaboration with Callison Architecture from Seattle, Bridgeview includes 104 units, which range from 1,100 to 4,900 square feet. According to Jim Hancock, architect for IBI/HB Architects, two goals prevailed throughout the project. One was that each unit had a view of the lake, and the other was to shield the units from the sun, which was achieved by placing solar shield overhangs on the roof of each building.

"It's really a response to the environment as we perceived it to try and deal with the heat and reduce the need for air conditioning as much as possible," Hancock says.

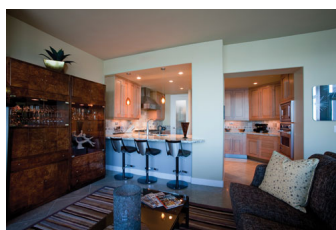
After living in McCormick Ranch for 20 years where they raised their three children, Scott, C.E.O. of Biotech Cyclotron and Barbara, a fiction writer, moved to Bridgeview in June 2008. "We're definitely on an adventure here," Barbara says.

Not only did they gain a new view and new furniture in their three-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bathroom unit, but the Nelsons are also pleased about their lifestyle change. "It seems like either you settle in at this point...or maybe there's a chance for turning a corner and making a change; trying something you haven't done before, and we opted for that," Barbara says.

Scott, who has 30 years of experience in the construction business under his belt, was also drawn to Bridgeview for the quality in the development process. "SunCor is a great company and there are lots of projects right now that are half sold and that people have to be very worried about...and we're not. We have the greatest developer you could ever imagine," he says.

Originally from Minnesota, Scott also admits that he has always considered a life outside the suburbs. "Growing up in a relatively small town in the Midwest I've always thought that I would be intrigued with an urban lifestyle...so this is about as close as I think we're going to get to it and it's pretty close," he says.

Although spectacular views are prevalent throughout the Bridgeview building, it appears the Nelsons' abode embodies it all. Enter the living room through the expansive entryway (an unexpected feature in a high-rise condo building) adorned with abstract artwork and a grandfather clock, and you cannot help but notice that the glistening lake below is in perfect proportion to the majestic mountains that sit in the background. Look to your left out the floor-to-ceiling windows and you'll spot the Mill Avenue bridges, which are lit up in a spectacular manner at night.



These views are certainly not wasted by the Nelsons. When making your way onto the private balcony (if you can get around the couple's strategically-situated baby grand piano, that is) you'll find a cozy outdoor sitting area. A comfortably modern sofa sits along the back edge of the balcony, while a character-lending coffee table that doubles as a chess and scrabble board rests in front. Relax on the couch or love seat and you might never leave—the furniture looks straight out to the bridges and Tempe Town Lake. Look down at the pool on a warm evening and you may even find Scott there. "I love to go down at night and sit by the pool and read; they've got these wonderful lights that are soft and they've got these great chairs," he says.

Despite the elaborate nature of many high-rise condos today, it is common to experience a twinge of disappointment in the realization that each unit resembles the next in layout and structure. However, visit the Nelsons' home and you might just forget that there are five stories below you and a penthouse above. The Nelsons purchased many of their furnishings from Laura Benton of Robb & Stucky, while Interior designer, René Summers of Studio 12 Design, LLC, helped create the comfortable ambiance.

Summers insists that the finished product is a collaboration of both her and Barbara's ideas and preferences. "She's probably one of the most ideal clients you could have as a designer because she's so open to what your feedback is and what you think is going to work and look good, and at the same time she is great at knowing what she likes and doesn't like," she says. Summers describes the interior as an "elegant,

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livable, contemporary space,” which is first realized through the overall color scheme.

The easy mix of warm and cool tones coordinates well with the rest of the modern Bridgeview building, but also establishes a style all its own. “The color palette was pulled from some of the hard surfaces and materials that we had selected early on, knowing that those were some of the colors [Barbara] liked,” Summers says.

Despite the Nelsons’ plentiful room to roam—about 2,500 sq. feet overall—it was important to make sure excess space was not sacrificed during the design. The living room is what Summers calls a “great room,” due to its expansive feeling. The limited space that often comes with a condo was managed with extreme precision. To save room, a space was cut out of the wall above the fireplace to house the television instead of a traditional wall-mount. In addition, Summers says that she and Barbara searched far and wide for furniture pieces that were comfortable yet small enough that they would not take over the room.

Not only is the Nelsons’ condo decorated in an immaculate manner, they have also added some customized personal touches. Some of the pieces transferred from the Nelsons’ home to the condo were the entryway grandfather clock and the piano (which technically is new—the Nelsons’ 8-foot grand piano was too large to fit in the limited space, so they gave it to their daughter and three grandchildren and purchased a 5-foot baby grand piano).

The office (originally intended as a third bedroom on the blue print), creates a lived-in-for-years feel, rather than the eight months that the Nelsons have actually occupied the space. Walnut wood cabinets and shelves line the walls, which in turn are stacked with books of all sorts. The cabinets, as well as the work desk flaunting a gorgeous inlaid granite finish, were custom-made and installed professionally by Scott Long of Scottsdale Cabinets and designed by Summers. Impeccable and luxurious, yes, but the Nelsons’ fun-loving attitude is expressed through the wallpaper—an abstract design of browns and blues. Just when you think you’ve seen all there is to this home office, Barbara pulls down her husband’s full-size maps from the ceiling—just as if you’re in an elementary school classroom—a classroom with granite desks and to-die-for views, that is.



The impressive office-shelving fixtures aren’t the only spaces in the condo that have been customized. Half of their very large and spacious closet and storage space was originally meant to be a den. Instead of accepting what would have been a cramped and window-free work space, the Nelsons had a door sealed off and a walkway cut to adjoin their new His-and-Hers closets. By making these adjustments, the Nelsons now have an organized closet any girl would envy and a home office any executive would drool over.

It’s easy to become fixated on the closet space, but one must not overlook the luxurious master bedroom and bathroom as these areas are large enough to be housed in a full-sized home rather than a condo. Here, lush (but not excessive) details abound, such as the television that seamlessly slides into the bedroom dresser and the marble vanities and warm coloring in the bathroom.

Clearly pleased with their new home, the Nelsons are even more enthusiastic about their neighbors and lifestyle shift. “I didn’t come here expecting [great neighbors],” Barbara says. “It’s a bonus and it’s a great bonus because it is really fun living here.”

Whether using the fitness center, attending events in the community and club rooms or swimming in the pool with their grandchildren, when the Nelsons do decide to leave their lavish quarters to explore the rest that Bridgeview has to offer, they’re never disappointed.

“The smartest advertising slogan that SunCor has is ‘Get away from it all in the middle of it all,’” Barbara says. “That describes the lifestyle here.”

At Bridgeview, the Nelsons clearly have the option of maintaining an active social calendar with urban action just a stone’s throw away. But with the regal views and all-around comfy-chic pad, the decision to stay in for a night is never a difficult one to make.