



If you loved opera so much that you would travel from one city to another to attend various opera openings, where would be the best place in Washington, DC, to live? Peter and Ingrid Willson are putting down roots right next door to the Kennedy Center at the Watergate, where they recently transformed two adjacent apartments into a single magnificent residence.

"Ingrid had a very clear vision of what she wanted this apartment to be, which is fairly rare with clients," says Architect Brad Mellor of Ponte Mellor Architects Ltd. Mellor, Rui Ponte, his partner and the lead architect on this project, and Sonia Lamas, the interior designer, formed the team that made this 2,850-square-foot apartment sing.

"We gutted the two apartments down to the mechanical systems," Mellor says. "We opened up everything back to the front door. From the moment you step inside, you see the view. We took down every interior wall except for walls that had plumbing." (The plumbing couldn't be moved because it connects to other apartments.) Now, almost every space, with the exception of the bath and powder rooms, has a direct view outside.

ABOVE: Ingrid Willson, who loves to cook, has an exquisite kitchen designed by Joe Currie of Jack Rosen Custom Kitchens. Neff cabinets in ash harmonize with Absolute Black granite countertops. The grain of the statuary marble top continues beautifully down the side of the distinctive Macassar ebony island by Atrium Interiors. Ingrid, who studied photography at the Smithsonian and the Corcoran, took the black and white still-life photos of kitchen utensils that adorn the backsplash.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: Peter and Ingrid Willson relax in their dining room, which includes an ebonized mahogany table by Stanley Jay Friedman from Brueton.

OPPOSITE LEFT: The dining area, with its Baker chairs, flows into the living area connected with handsome Brazilian cherry floors, installed by Atlas Floors Inc. with wood from a managed forest. Control 14, a system of motorized shades, can be programmed to operate even when the Willsons are away.