

# S I L O P O I N T

## **Dream home: Silo Point is urban base for ex-military man Mark Romero finds his dream station at development in Baltimore's Locust Point**

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For Mark Romero, showing off the communal areas of the Silo Point condominium where he lives is just as important as touting his own place. As he walks toward the front desk in the lobby, the concierge greets him by name. Romero then moves toward an open art gallery and sitting area encased among huge concrete columns. Ambient light comes from fixtures dropped from the concrete ceiling, and metal duct work snakes along the periphery.

Thirty-foot windows emit the daylight that throws shadows across a polished concrete floor. In the elevator to the "Sky Lounge," Romero agrees that the Locust Point complex appears to fit the description of "urban chic" and "industrial modern." The view from this 19th-floor club area adds "breathtaking" to the list. A 360-degree bird's-eye view of Baltimore cradles visitors, rocking them around the downtown skyline, harbor and over rooftops of streets of rowhouses.

Back on the sixth floor, the entrance to Romero's unit reveals that his personal living space is a mini version of the public areas. In one long rectangle with 10-foot-high concrete ceilings, the hall, kitchen, living and dining areas are open, propelling the eye toward two walls of windows positioned at a 90-degree angle. The jaw-dropping view makes the term "wow factor" seem a trite injustice. "I was standing here, in an empty cement box," said Romero, a 52-year-old consultant for the military, reflecting on his decision to purchase the condo in 2009.

He was living temporarily at the Harbor View condominiums after three years stationed at Fort Meade in the Air Force. When his daughter graduated from high school, she returned to her mother in California. Romero was now free to explore city living. "I had three grown children, and of my 25 years in the military, 20 were spent overseas," he said. Having lived in Japan, Germany, Hawaii and England, he was ready to call Baltimore his home.

Romero paid \$407,000 for his 1,332-square-foot unit with an owner's suite, including a full bathroom and powder room. Included in the purchase price were kitchen appliances, a washer and dryer in the laundry room, dark laminate flooring, track lighting and floor-to-ceiling window shades, which he paid extra to have electronically raised and lowered. Romero added additional laminate to the bedroom suite area, tiles over the kitchen backsplash, hanging fixtures over his granite-topped island and a wall of brick in his bedroom.

Going for a minimalist but lived-in look, he bought only furniture pieces he needed to entertain his friends in comfort. Beyond the kitchen island with four leather and chrome stools pulled up to its counter, a sectional sofa sits in the center of the room with a round zebra wood coffee table before it. A large mahogany built-in wall unit holds books and mementos. A mahogany dining room set, at the rear of the unit, is modu-

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lar in style with eight mahogany chairs. Wicker furniture with upholstered fabric sits on the covered patio. In his bedroom, light wood contemporary pieces add contrast to the brick wall. A large window looks out onto the balcony.

done when they were young, his sister's paintings, a large painting of Berlin that he calls "street art" on a free standing easel and a koa-wood framed and signed "Wyland 1994" giclee (made on ink-jet printer) print of small kids riding an orca.

He also had a built-into-the-wall aquarium installed in the hallway. In a corner of his dining room, a shadow box hanging on the wall is an encapsulated presentation of his 25-year military career. Its contents include a folded American flag, medals, ribbons, name badges and dog tags. In his home overlooking the multicultural city he has come to love, Romero said that Baltimore is a perfect fit for his new lifestyle. "I'm going to turn 60 here".

Making the dream

**Dream element:** Silo Point condominiums sit at the tip of the Locust Point peninsula and are within walking distance of restaurants, pubs, wine markets and food markets. Latrobe Park is across the street from the complex. From his sixth-floor residence, Mark Romero enjoys spectacular views of the city skyline, and the harbor. "Fort McHenry is practically in my back yard," he says.

**Dream design:** A 24-story fusion of steel, glass and concrete, Silo Point projects a modern industrial look on the site of the former B&O Railroad grain terminal. At a height of 300 feet, it was once the largest and fastest grain elevator in the world. Ten miles of conveyor belt moved the grain from the railroad cars to be sent the world on cargo ships. The silos have been incorporated into the design of complex.

**Dream interior:** Romero's 1,332-square-foot residence has one bedroom and 1 1/2 bathrooms. It is, in essence, one large rectangle composed of concrete ceilings and two walls of windows perpendicular to each other. Kitchen, living room and dining room are all open. Romero has given the living space the appearance of being on two different levels by positioning the tallest pieces at the far end of the room in front of the windows. Strip lighting hangs from the ceiling, and exposed metal ductwork adds to an industrial feel. "I call this 'urban chic,'" Romero says.