

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

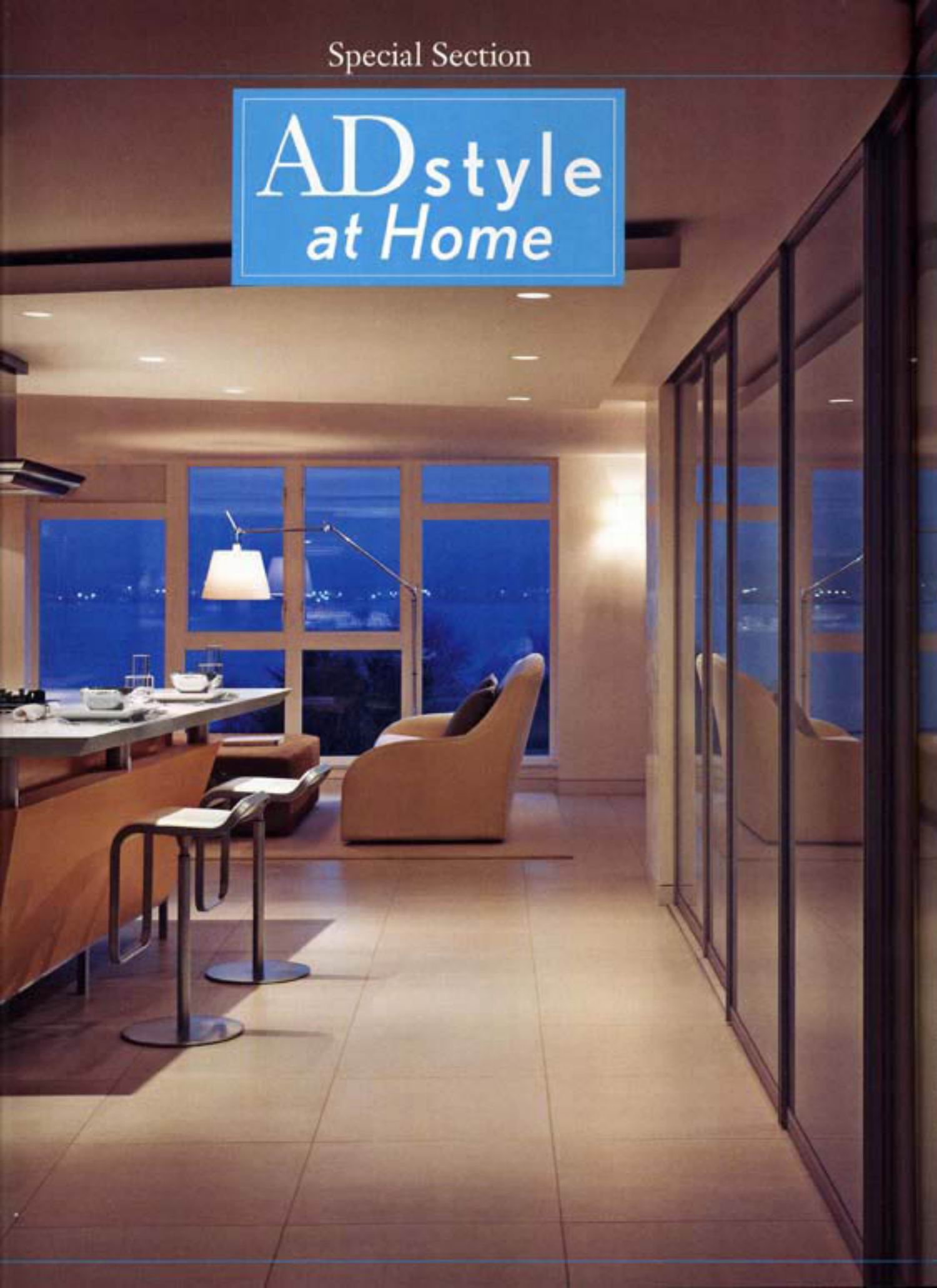
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# ADstyle at Home



BEFORE & AFTER

## Outside the Box in Vancouver

**A Designer Helps a Young Client Define Himself  
and His Surroundings in British Columbia**

Interior Design by Patricia Gray

Text by Kelly Vencill Sanchez/After Photography by Roger Brooks



BEFORE



AFTER

"Every single square inch of space had to be accounted for," Patricia Gray says of the small Vancouver, British Columbia, apartment she designed for Kevin Louie. **LEFT:** Stunning views draw visitors past the kitchen and into the living area. Michael Taylor sofa fabric. **TOP AND ABOVE:** Using rich materials, including rift-cut white oak, Gray transformed the living area.



BELOW: "Because of Kevin's lifestyle, a formal dining room wasn't required," Gray explains. Instead, an area that she dubbed the "flex space" can be used for dining or for extra seating. The paneling around the floating fireplace conceals additional storage.



As far back as she can remember, Patricia Gray was surrounded by beautiful fabrics, colors and textures. Her mother worked as a couture seamstress in Vancouver, British Columbia, where the designer grew up. "I was always rearranging the house and helping her sew," she recalls. "Every time we'd go to visit somebody's home, I'd come back and draw it all out—the floor plan, how the windows were, how the light came in."

Her early lessons in design

and detailing learned, Gray graduated from college with a degree in interior design and opened her own firm in Vancouver. Soon after, she traveled to Paris for a summer to study decorative arts and architectural history at Parsons School of Design. "I came back to Vancouver and interpreted what I'd learned there—the rich detailing and craftsmanship and the integrity of the architectural envelope, which is usually what I work on first. If the space isn't right, nothing works. Then," she adds with a

Paolo Rizzatto's witty take on the wing chair forms the room's centerpiece.

"Most people would probably get one."



LEFT AND ABOVE: Gray installed the cooktop in the island—which, like the counters, is three inches higher than usual to accommodate Louie's height—rather than against a wall. Now, she notes, the hood above "anchors the kitchen." CaesarStone island top. Sub-Zero refrigerator. Sink, Kohler. Telephone, Bang & Olufsen.





AFTER



BEFORE

ABOVE AND TOP: The bedroom and adjacent flex space can be separated via a pocket door, the track of which is recessed seamlessly into the ceiling and the floor. A 2005 bronze by Colin Kwok is on the bedside table. Telephone from Bang & Olufsen.

laugh, "it's just fluff and puff."

Getting the architectural envelope right in a recent Vancouver project required all the designer's ingenuity—and her attention to the minutest detail. An apartment in the historic Gastown district, it had been converted from two tiny units into one, and even then the new space measured just 1,375 square feet. But resident Kevin Louie knew it was for him as soon as he saw it. "You open the door and look straight out to a view of the harbor and the mountains. You're living in the city, yet you see seaplanes landing, ferries and cruise ships." A co-owner of Uppercut Apparel Products, a menswear company, the Vancouver native

saw the need for renovation, but the prospect of doing it alone was daunting. "I wanted it to be about my life and not fall into a cookie-cutter style," he says. "I wanted to do something different."

He found Gray through a "random" search on the Internet. "The thing that attracted me to Patricia as a designer is that she had studied feng shui. I'm Canadian Chinese, and my grandparents had talked about feng shui. I felt Patricia could guide me in maximizing the space."

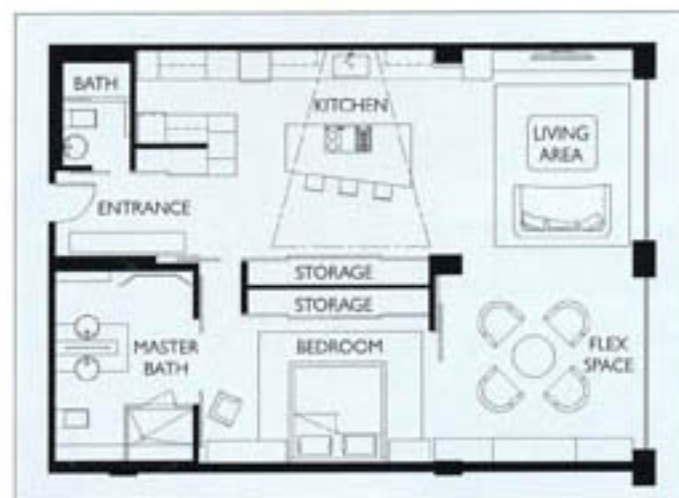
For Gray, to say that the apartment as it had been reconfigured didn't work is something of an understatement. "But," she says, "there was that

"I wanted it to be about my life and not fall into a cookie-cutter style," Louie says.

view. So I started looking at it as a wonderful shell. My only given was the ceiling-to-floor height restriction."

Managing an eight-foot height restriction in any residence is an engineering challenge, but here, with a client who is six feet seven inches tall, every millimeter counted. "We did a lot of things that had never been done before," Gray explains. Their first contractor told them they wouldn't be able to accommodate the recessed pot lights, ductwork, sprinkler lines and soundproofing (in his free time, Louie likes to DJ) without a dropped ceiling. "I was determined to keep a seamless ceiling and focus the eye toward the view," says Gray. The second contractor, with whom she'd worked previously, helped her chart new territory—moving the sprinkler, venting and mechanical systems to the party walls, using soundproof drywall and installing two-and-a-half-inch recessed pot lights. "I was fixated on using trimless pot lights," Gray remembers. "It's a drywaller's nightmare: They have to cut the holes out and finish them perfectly." She was

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AFTER



BEFORE

TOP: "I kept an open floor plan but allowed for the zoning of spaces," says the designer. LEFT AND ABOVE: A vanity "floats" in the center of the master bath, described by Gray as "a spa extension of the bedroom." The painting is by David Edwards.