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BC HOME & GARDEN

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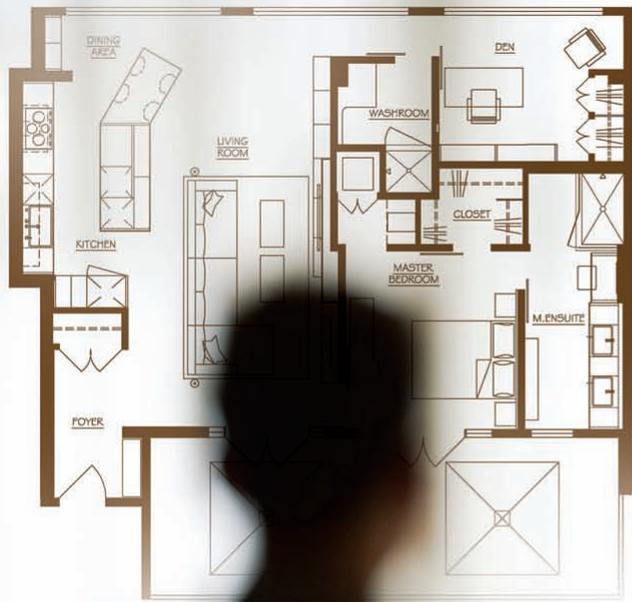
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STANDARD ISSUE

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A Place for EVERYTHING

AN URBAN COUPLE TURNS THEIR PENTHOUSE APARTMENT INTO A STREAMLINED SPACE DESIGNED TO KEEP CLUTTER AT BAY

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PHOTOGRAPHY ROGER BROOKS



Mark and Janet spent 11 years in their 1,061-square-foot Yaletown penthouse when they decided it was time to get organized, clear the clutter, streamline the space and have better lighting, especially for Vancouver's dreary winter season.

"When I first saw the space I was struck with the high ceiling and natural light that came in from windows on both sides, as well as a large patio and wonderful view," says interior designer Patricia Gray, who oversaw the redesign.

MAKING LIGHT All the home's lights are controlled by dimmers, including these custom crystal pendant lights. The height of the doors to the 300-square-foot patio is echoed in the height of the Venetian plaster feature wall, "executed in the traditional method using limestone as a base," says Gray.

Gray capitalized on the 38 feet of windows on the kitchen side and 29 feet of windows on the bedroom side as well as introduced multiple means of artificial light through crystal pendants, recessed task lighting, floor lamps, candlelight and flickering flames from the custom fireplace.



"I like to use a combination of different light sources all controlled by dimmers," she says. "By using different light sources the room can be changed to accommodate a variety of different functions by day or night."

To streamline the space, Gray started at the beginning. "The best way for me to reflect on a space is to examine the blueprint – in this way I connect with the space and envision what it could be."

Gray repositioned the entrance to the master bedroom, allowing for a larger seating area in the living room and an uninterrupted feature wall with a five-foot-long fireplace, a media and entertainment area and a major piece of artwork.

"I delineated the living room from the kitchen with a 16-foot recessed wenge panelled ceiling," she says of the contrasting feature that sits above the sofa.

All of the home's furniture, from the long media cabinet and coffee table to the sofa and bedside tables, was custom-designed using the same dark wenge wood as a contrast to the light-taupe coloured oiled-hardwood floors.

Custom furniture made way for everything in its place, especially in the kitchen. "The trick to a successful open-concept kitchen is to plan a place for everything to avoid the usual clutter on kitchen counter tops."

Gray removed the pre-existing overhead cabinets, installed a polished travertine feature wall with a single floating stainless-steel shelf and replaced the storage space with an adjacent floor-to-ceiling unit along one wall.

"Roll-out pantries are a more efficient use of space and allow everything to be more readily accessible," Gray says.

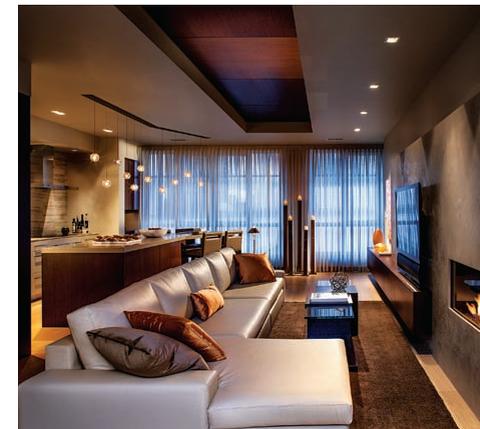
The seldom-used dining room table was replaced with a large asymmetrical island with bar stools at one end, perfect for the kind of entertaining that Mark and Janet do.

"Most gatherings are informal and casual," says Mark. "We often barbeque or cook Asian foods like hot pots, so people are milling about rather than sitting at a table."

In the couple's master bathroom, a bathtub flanked by a pair of sinks was replaced with a spacious shower stall,



ZEN ZONE Natural materials including wool, silk, leather and linen were used for furnishings to create harmony and variation, says Gray. **MASTER BATHROOM** Long vertical lights frame the makeup mirror to avoid casting shadows on the face. **FIREPLACE** Gray says the fireplace burner is "surrounded by bronze glass pieces that sparkle and glow when the fire is lit." **MASTER BEDROOM** The illuminated stool at Janet's makeup counter was imported from Italy. **MEDIA WALL** The brightly coloured artwork is by Vancouver-based artist Bratsa Bonifacho. **WHOLE MASTER BEDROOM** Swing-arm lamps are mounted to the floor-to-ceiling headboard, perfect for reading in bed.



elegant makeup counter and side-by-side sinks. "She removed a towel bar in the main bathroom, which gave us an extra six inches in the bedroom closet, which gave us an extra clothes bar for hanging," says Mark of Gray's eye for detail. All of the details came together to create what Gray describes as "a relaxed, contemporary but thoroughly glamorous look for this special penthouse." "Everything flows from room to room so there is continuity," says Mark of their new streamlined space. "Janet and I joke that it feels like we are staying in the Four Seasons penthouse every night," he says, clearly pleased with the end result. ■

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