Gray Area

Patricia Gray crafts some of the city’s most elegant interiors, but in her own Alberni Street townhouse, creativity is the freedom to make mistakes.

by Adrienne Matei | photos by Lucas Finlay

“This is a pretty skookum blade,” Patricia Gray says, brandishing a dagger in a convincingly menacing manner. Luckily, the interior designer/feng shui master returns the Ethiopian weapon to its silver sheath and resumes chatting about her love of fine craftsmanship and beautiful detailing. “My mother was a couture seamstress, and having grown up with fashion and fabrics helps a lot when I’m designing,” she says of her work creating luxe custom spaces (including False Creek’s Erickson project and John Travolta’s Vancouver pad). “I can literally remember being in my crib getting irritated that my teddy bears didn’t look right,” she says. Though her passion was steadfast, Gray recalls the necessity of taking a bookkeeping job to afford design school in her 20s: “I hated it. I’d wait until nobody would notice and run out the back down three flights of stairs in my heels to look at art galleries for a few minutes just to get me through the day.” Now Gray has a painting studio of her own, where art continues to provide liberation from professional structure. “With my design I can’t make mistakes, but in here there are no accidents,” she says. “I am completely free.”

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