

Form & Function

A VANCOUVER HOME'S ARCHITECTURE IS A WINNING BACKDROP FOR THE BRIGHT, BUSY FAMILY LIFE WITHIN.





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Like so many clever storage elements in this new home by David Zacharko Architect, the open shelving behind the living room's big sectional was designed with beauty *and* brains: it houses loads of books, puzzles and games, plus cubbies to show off select vases. Lightweight bamboo shelves add a natural touch and keep the white from looking sterile, while bright pillows add colour.



The living and dining areas join at one corner and share the fireplace. On warm days, the accordion-fold patio doors tuck right out of the way, creating a real indoor-outdoor vibe. **Throw, pillow fabric, Marimekko Vancouver; pillow sewing, Fabulous Furnishings; art by Isack Kousnsky; contractor, Trasolini Chetner.**



Architects and designers — like hairstylists — are used to being handed magazine images torn out by homeowners trying to define what exactly it is they want. It's just that usually, those images depict actual interiors. Not in this case: "I sent them a photo of a young woman in bare feet, wearing a cool skirt and reaching up high for something. That's how I want people to feel in my house," laughs the owner of this newly built home in Vancouver.

"I sent them all kinds of random stuff," she adds of the images she tore from magazines to help articulate her new-home wish list. "I wanted a really colourful home. And I knew I wanted the house to be clean-lined, fresh, inviting — styled but not formal."

She not only got exactly what she wanted — breezy style with bright, playful accents — she also got things even she didn't know she wanted, most notably organizational nirvana. With three kids under 12, she and her husband, both lawyers, understood that storage was one of the keys to their plan for an open scheme. They also insisted on spaces designed to hold large family gatherings. Beyond that, they admired a friend's home designed by Vancouver team David Zacharko and David Yustin, and hired the pair to bring their ideas to fruition.

Being an architect or designer is something akin to being a diviner: they're asked to consider homeowners' desires, needs and taste, and transform them creatively into something that is beautiful, functional and personally meaningful. The result here

is a high-ceilinged, white-walled contemporary house, as refreshing as the breeze that blows in from nearby English Bay — but also comfortable and welcoming.

"The owners were clear about wanting an open interior space," Zacharko explains. "They wanted it to be even more open than it is. There's this notion of 'loft living,' of how one big room gives a sense of freedom of space. I guided these owners to break that apart so there's a better sense of each room here." By individually lighting each area and subtly "zoning" the spaces, he created an understated sense of separation. So, the kitchen is divided from the dining area by an airy peninsula-wall with cabinets below and open shelves above, so that any kitchen clutter is hidden from diners but the cook can still be in on the action. Similarly, by jogging the living room slightly off one corner of the dining room, it feels like a separate space, but is clearly connected — even sharing a fireplace. "We're conscious that it isn't a formal living room. The TV is here. There's Lego on the floor. But I never wanted to have anything more formal than this," explains the owner.

Here, the priority was to create inviting living spaces — and pivotal to that was storage. With a bustling family of five, the homeowners, and the architects, understood the role of storage in containing and organizing the chaos, and maintaining an atmosphere of casual sophistication.

"Anywhere we could 'program' a space as

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ABOVE: Bamboo lower cabinets add rustic contrast to the white uppers in the airy, open kitchen. David Zacharko and David Yustin's clever design for the space includes a rolling library ladder for easy access of the highest cupboards, as well as a window with transom (echoing the room's other windows) tucked in behind the cabinets. A window seat gives the owners' three kids a cosy spot to hang out. **Cabinet design, David Yustin; fabrication, Hi-Design; stools, lights, LivingSpace; tea towels, Marimekko.** FAR LEFT: The kitchen design left room for a compact work station in one corner with open shelves up top to showcase kids' crafts and house cookbooks. LEFT: The modern, cedar-shake exterior possesses an unmistakably West Coast sensibility.



TOP LEFT: A wall of vibrant blue mosaic tile adds a splash of colour in the all-white principal bath. A wide ledge at the end of the tub provides space for towels and soaps.

Tiles, Olympia Tile.

TOP RIGHT: Zacharko wrapped the bathroom vanity in bamboo, creating a delineated wash zone. He also built in a variety of light sources, including a set in the kickplate and under the adjacent bench for atmosphere.

BOTTOM, LEFT AND RIGHT: The home office doorway is a conversation-starter: two pocket doors, one purple and one orange, slide out to meet, creating a piece of architectural sculpture. Along with providing access to the highest shelves, the sliding library ladder adds an old world decorative touch. The office opens onto the front garden.



OPPOSITE, TOP: The hefty reclaimed-pine dining table is a perfect spot for kids to do their homework. A bamboo "sideboard" with open shelves overhead separates the kitchen and dining areas without blocking views. **Chair, LivingSpace; table, Restoration Hardware.**

BOTTOM: Low lights recessed into the wall illuminate the thick white oak stair treads at night.

