

**D**avid Yustin first met David Zacharko in the early nineties at architecture school, but it wasn't until last year that they combined forces and founded their design firm in Vancouver. While each project is of course tailored to the client, a ZacharkoYustin-designed home always features a well-thought interior with a decidedly unfussy West Coast feel. The Globe asked Yustin to reveal his favourite colours, paint and materials, and the secrets behind his style.

**Most important element of a room:** Being able to control your lighting options, whether daylight or artificial, is the most important design element in any room. Not only is the placement of windows, skylights and transoms important, but also the choice of coverings.

**Favourite paint colour:** Benjamin Moore Cloud White has been around forever for a very good reason. It is a very livable white. When people say they hate white, it's because they think it is cold and lacks personality. I say, "Then you are using the wrong white."

**Favourite front-door colour:** My favourite door colour is a dark



**David Yustin favours designs with minimal clutter and clean lines.**

green that reads as almost black. We call it Zacharko Green around the office because it was the colour of David Zacharko's original business card. We loved the colour so much that we had it custom-coloured at Benjamin Moore. I love colours that reveal themselves slowly. At first you think, oh, nice black door, but then as you approach it, it becomes so much more interesting. It becomes one of those details that grabs people's attention.

**Best way to make a room feel more spacious:** Pull the furniture away from the wall. This seems counterintuitive, but pulling your sofa and chairs away from the wall gives the illusion that the room is larger than it really is. It creates a space where light and air can flow around the pieces. All you need is a minimum of four to six inches from the wall for the effect to start taking place.

**Your design rule:** Keep it simple.

Don't overcomplicate a space by trying too many ideas at once. Repeat colours, patterns and materials throughout your home so that there is a harmonious flow from space to space. Place yourself in the space before you even put pen to paper. How do you want to feel, what do you want to see, how is it going to function?

**Favourite lighting trick:** By lowering the perimeter of a ceiling and adding indirect cove lighting to the centre you can make even a low ceiling feel much taller. Quite often when we redo condos we'll drop the eight-foot ceiling to 7-feet, 6-inches in certain areas, which makes the main entertaining spaces feel much higher and more luxurious.

**Best DIY project:** Constantly edit yourself. Keeping your home clutter-free is the best design gift you can give to yourself. Living in a streamlined and simple environment doesn't mean you can't surround yourself with things you love and cherished family heirlooms, it just means have a critical eye. Take a day on a weekend each season and review what you have and want to keep, and things that no longer work should be recycled or given to someone who

will appreciate them.

**Best use of \$500:** There is nothing that transforms a space more than well-framed art. Whether it's your child's school art or an Emily Carr, a playbill from a memorable event or granny's portrait, throw away that inappropriate frame and spend some money updating by using a larger mat and interesting frame. You will be shocked to see how it adds to the overall effect of the room, but it might just breathe new life into something that has sentimental value, but stayed in the attic because you just never knew what to do with it.

**Signature room:** This room reflects our design style because the walls always hint at another space beyond, creating visual interest, but the colour palette and shape of rooms allows for not only an intimate conversation for two, but the disappearing glass walls open up the space for large social functions. Nothing is cluttered and lines are clean and minimal, but there is a warmth that shines through and resonates with the client's personality.

*This interview has been condensed and edited by Kathryn Hayward.*