

THE HOMECOMING

The right project (and the right clients) brings a pair of architects back to their hometown of Calgary.

by JACQUIE MOORE
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Room to Breathe An open design plan in the house extends to double-height ceilings in the living room. A concrete side table from local designer Sumer Singh of Mtharu adds an architectural accent to a custom sofa and cozy Kravet chair.





For architects Jesse Hindle and Laura Alvey, the adage that all lasting business is built on friendship has proven exquisitely true. In 2011, the work/life partners were charmed by a friend to return to Calgary from London, England, to start their own firm. “I was walking along Carnaby Street when I got a call from an Alberta number,” says Hindle. “It was an old friend I’ve known since we were teenagers.”

The friend told Hindle that he’d recently purchased a home in southwest Calgary’s Lakeview Village—a tony enclave of the larger circa-1960s Lakeview neighbourhood adjacent to North Glenmore Park. At last, he (now married with three daughters) was able to hire Hindle to design a house to his heart’s content. Hindle and Alvey said

an enthusiastic yes to the project. “Around the time my friend called, we’d been considering moving back to Calgary,” says Hindle. “So this was a meaningful job for us.”

As it turned out, it was also a bigger job than intended. Originally slated for an extensive renovation, the original two-storey house was situated less than ideally on its pie-shaped lot. “It had a really tight front yard and a big backyard—it was awkward,” says Hindle. They tried various ways to preserve the house but, in the end, “it just didn’t make sense.” It was razed, and a new plan was tailored to the lot, stretching deeper onto the site yet maintaining a facade that respects the scale of other homes typical to the cul-de-sac.

Inside, the homeowners desired “fewer, better-quality spaces” than what they’d seen in many newer Calgary homes that were, to them, overly abundant with bonus rooms and unused bathrooms and bedrooms. “They just wanted a room for each of them, one guest room and good, simple flow throughout the rest of the house—no bagginess,” says Hindle. The architects refer to the home’s configuration as a “free-plan” arrangement, with few walls and a focus on light and ventilation. “We wanted to create a feeling of seamlessness from inside to outside,” says Hindle.



Warm Modern Designer Alykhan Velji came on board when the white oak millwork was in process. “The goal with every space is that it has to be different from anything else we’ve ever done,” he says, “and it has to reflect the personalities of the clients.” In the living room (opposite), cushions from Kelly Wearstler add a hit of pattern and colour. In the kitchen (this page), pale grey Caesarstone counters pick up on the veining in the porcelain, marble-look backsplash.



To Dine For In the dining room (above), a light fixture from Vancouver's Matthew McCormick Studio hovers over a dining set from B&B Italia—complete with eggplant-coloured chairs.

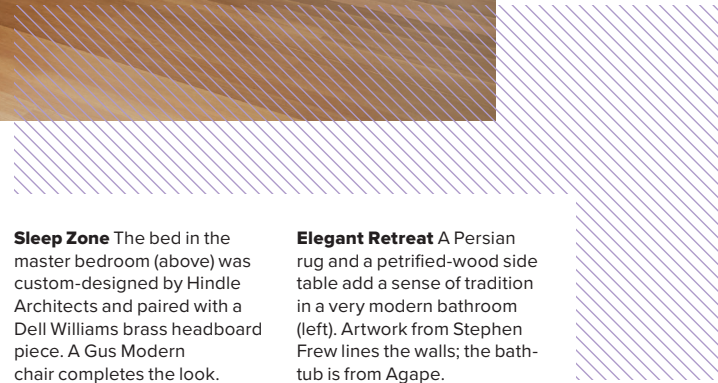
Under Cover Even the hallway (left) gets a smartly designed nook. A table from Mtharu is paired with elegant brass-and-steel Marx stools from Montreal-based design team Gabriel Scott.



Indeed, there's a buoyant sense of the house being peeled away as it levels off from two storeys to one, allowing natural light to flow through, even at basement level.

Once the plentiful (white oak) millwork was in process, designer Alykhan Velji came on board, approaching the home with his signature intuition and novelty. "The goal with every space is that it has to be different from anything else we've ever done, and it has to reflect the personalities of the clients," he says. "These homeowners," he adds, "are not boring—they're amazing and fun—so we wanted finishes and furnishings that were streamlined and modern, but also warm and interesting." Not only that, architect and designer were also laser-focused on the home's essential function: to house a bustling family of five with no patience for preciousness. "This is a family home—it had to be durable," says Velji. That informed the choice of resilient Caesarstone countertops, a porcelain marble look-alike backsplash and stain-resistant fabric on the furniture.

Everything in the home was purchased new (including the



Sleep Zone The bed in the master bedroom (above) was custom-designed by Hindle Architects and paired with a Dell Williams brass headboard piece. A Gus Modern chair completes the look.

Elegant Retreat A Persian rug and a petrified-wood side table add a sense of tradition in a very modern bathroom (left). Artwork from Stephen Frew lines the walls; the bath-tub is from Agape.

all-Canadian artwork throughout) or custom-made, as with the sofa and master bed, the latter of which was worked into the build. Collaborating with the architects and homeowners, Velji sought out a combination of textures and patterns that would add “loads of personality without being overwhelming.” Deep aubergine chairs in the dining room ground the large space, and the art (by the architects’ friend, artist Jasmine Wallace) above the built-in sideboard was chosen for its subtle textural quality; the custom-made light fixture is thusly set up to steal the show. Likewise, Velji’s take on the living room—a simple, unique mix of modern and traditional pieces with emphasis on personality—allows a striking copper Martha Sturdy bowl on the wall to shine bright.

Hindle and Alvey have since been shaping Calgary’s residential and commercial landscape, designing a community centre, a church and housing projects Altadore 36 and the Henry in Parkdale; currently, they’re developing 12 floors of downtown Calgary’s anticipated Telus Sky building—presumably with the same warmth and light they’d bring to a friend. *ML*