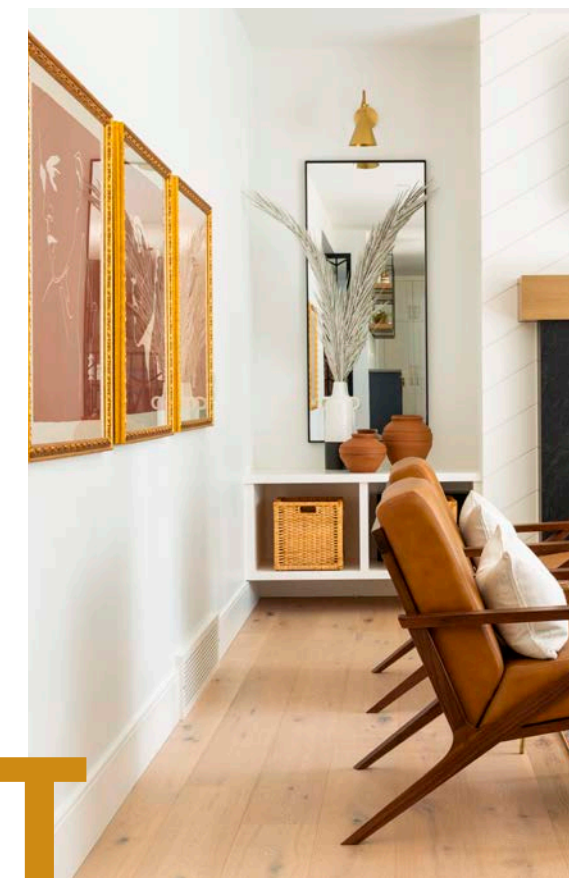


The NEW WEST

Design innovators Aly Velji and Katie Nelson take a home from empty to exceptional. **TEXT** BETHANY LYTLLE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** KLASSEN PHOTOGRAPHY



Though it looks like it was plucked from a lot in California or the Southwest, this desert-modern home with its railings, interior gate-work and metal chandeliers is comfortably situated in Lake Bonavista, Calgary. “The house is a new build, so the clients – a young couple with two little kids – contacted us to make it more personal-looking, and to furnish it top to bottom,” explains Aly Velji who worked in tandem with Katie Nelson on the project. Says Aly: “The big challenge was to ensure the home didn’t look like a showroom.” To this end, a medley of unexpected choices were made to combine iconic silhouettes, such as →

OPPOSITE & THIS PAGE “This is an everybody-in space,” says designer Katie Nelson of the newly furnished living room. “Cubby baskets hold the kids’ toys, and feel-good, wear-well textures like leather, linen and honed marble mean upkeep is stress-free.” Striking symmetry in the mirrors, sconces and armchairs is balanced with expressive task lighting. Katie and designer Aly Velji paired earth-toned vessels and a traditional rug with fun, graphic draperies.

SECTIONAL, CF Interiors. **LEATHER ARMCHAIRS**, Article. **COFFEE TABLE**, Crate and Barrel. **FLOOR LAMP, SCONCES, VASE** (on coffee table), HomeSense. **THROW PILLOWS**, EQ3. **ART**, Terran McNeeley. **RUG**, Wayfair. **DRAPERY**, custom (design), Tonic Living (fabric). **CUBBY BASKETS**, IKEA.



BELOW "The family often has company, so ample seating is key," says Aly. "But even when it's empty, sculptural chairs, a raw-edged table, and patterned drapery keep the room engaging to the eye." For guests who linger at the table, a warm glow is cast by the metal chandelier, which creates dramatic angular shadows on the walls.

Mid-Century-Modern furnishings, with hits of rich colour and graphic accents. "Rusts, mustards and olives are contrasted with bold prints in black-and-white," says Aly. And bedroom walls now hint at jungles and larger-than-life gardens. "Murals with flora and fauna are our absolute favourite room-makers right now! They've come such a long way," says

Katie. The design duo also harnessed the power of symmetry and geometry: matching mirrors, graphic palm fronds and sets of baskets may be stylish, but they also bring a sense of order. That's a definite plus for the parents of two busy young ones who are living life to the fullest – and sometimes messiest – in this modern family home.



ABOVE & LEFT A circular mirror installed above the brass-mesh sideboard softens the space, while the sharp shapes of palm fronds are graphic punctuation marks. A gallery wall provides another modern punch. "Throughout the home, there are graphic statements, and this one is a wall of prints from artist Elvia Perrin," says Aly.





“We wanted the entry to stay wide-open and roomy, so the only piece of furniture is the mid-century bench.”

LEFT Filled with meal-time chatter and noisy kids making a run for the backyard, the super-accessible kitchen nook is tucked between the living and kitchen zones. “The space has no walls and tons of light, so we grounded it with the black wishbone chairs,” says Aly. The desert-modern lines of a faux fiddle-leaf fig tree soften the metalwork railings and chandelier.

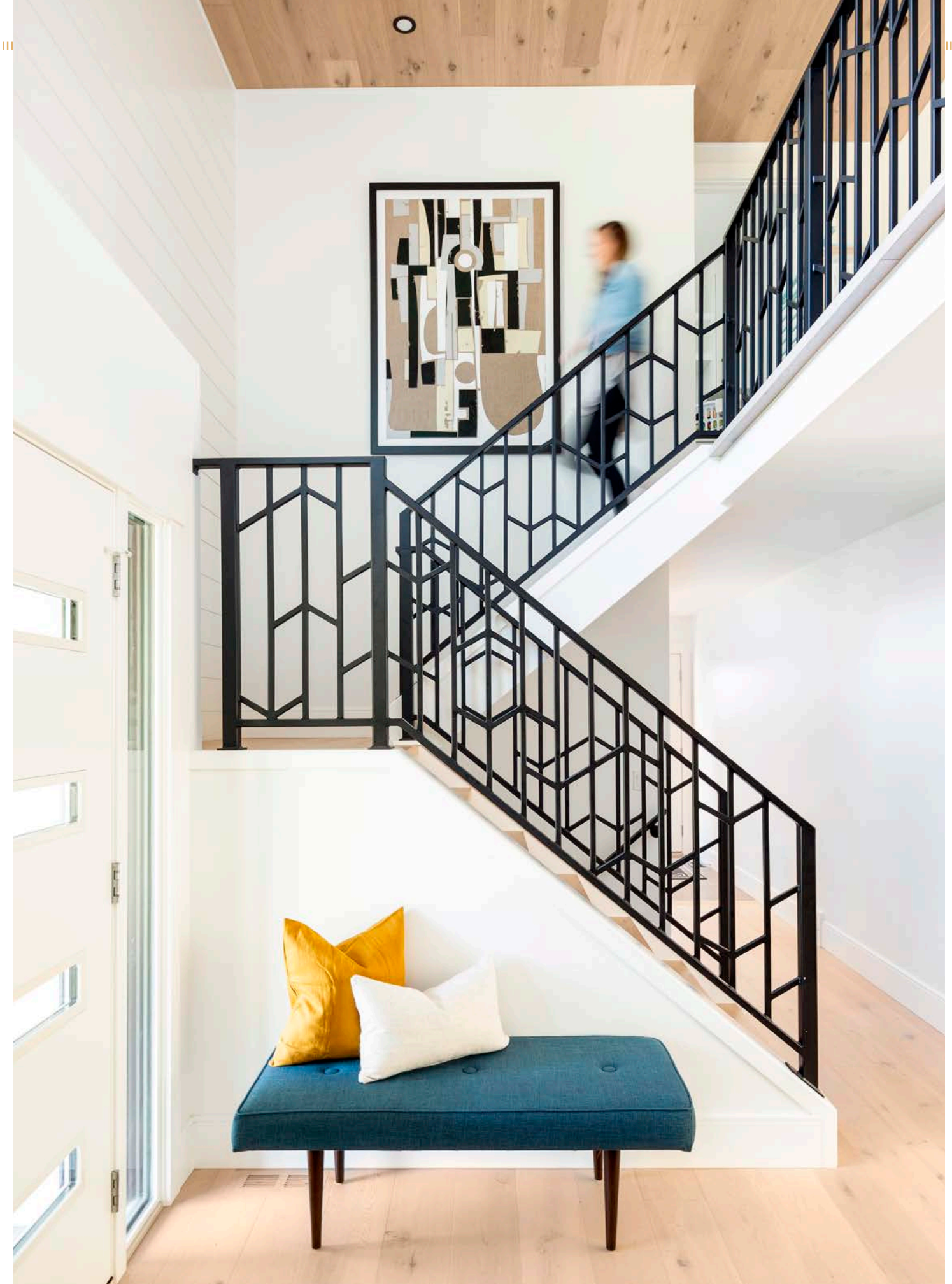
CHAIRS, faux **TREE**, HomeSense.

RIGHT Bursting indoors after a day of fun, lively kids and parents have ample room to drop bags before dashing upstairs or darting down the hallway to the fridge. “We wanted the entry to stay wide open and roomy, so the only piece of furniture is the mid-century bench,” says Aly. Its sapphire-hued upholstery and mustard-yellow pillows are bold, like the minimalist staircase railing and oversized graphic wall art.

BENCH, **RUG**, Wayfair. **ART**, James Wyper. **PILLOWS**, West Elm.

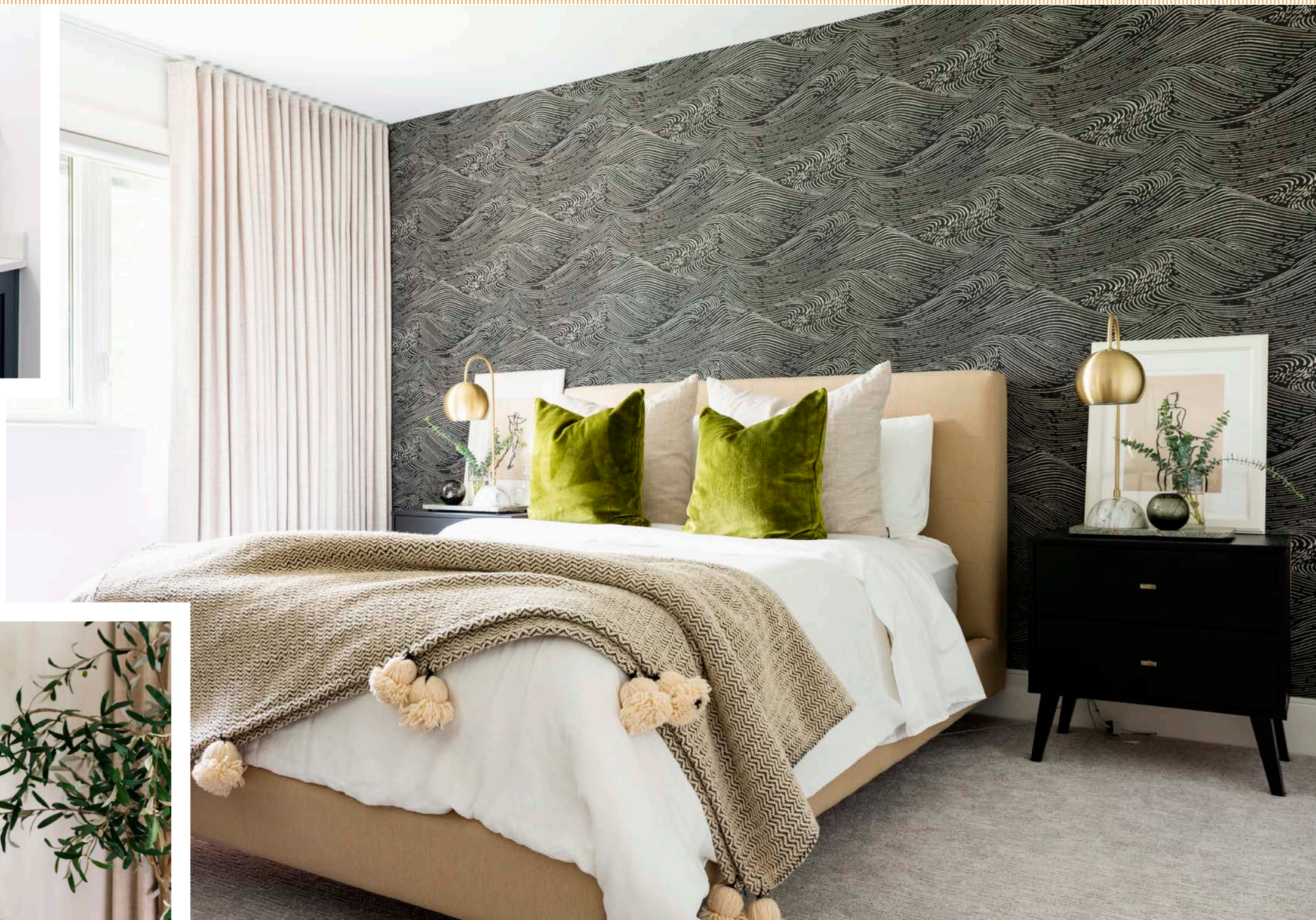


RIGHT An active family calls for plenty of tumble-space. “We didn’t want anything fussy,” says Katie. The sprawling linen sectional in the family room is paired with a marble coffee table. The table’s round shape means there are no sharp corners for little ones to crash into. The multi-hued wool rug is blended with a synthetic, so milk spills here are nothing to cry over.





ABOVE A vanity in dramatic blue looks rich and graphic. Even better, given this is the home's main bathroom, it's truly family-friendly. Smudges and dirt don't show up easily on the dark vanity, and the countertop is easy to clean. Aly and Katie complemented a pair of linear mirrors by adding in softer lines with the radiant gold vase and warm white accessories.



LEFT "Matching a dresser to a room's nightstands is a no-no in our books, so we wanted something that would coordinate with the rest of the pieces in the space," says Aly. This dresser with its walnut frame and leather-fronted drawers did the trick. It adds warmth, makes a statement, and provides extra storage for the couple, too. The curves of the mirror offset its angularity.
DRESSER, Crate and Barrel.

ABOVE "We wanted the couple's bedroom to have a boutique hotel vibe, so we started with moody dark wallpaper and a lush linen-upholstered bed," says Aly. A wall of ripple-fold drapery invites quietude and modern luxury. "Leaning the framed prints against the wall looks more casual," says Aly.
HEADBOARD, Crate and Barrel. **WALLPAPER**, JF Fabrics. **SIDE TABLE**, Wayfair. **LAMP**, HomeSense. Custom **DRAPES**, Aly Velji Design (design); Tonic Living (fabric). **ART**, Lauren McLaughlin. Velvet **PILLOWS**, West Elm. **THROW**, Aly Velji Design.



Thanks to a wall mural, the young daughter's room feels like a little tropical garden. And that delights her, whether she's perched upon the golden pouf, curled up on the swish mid-century rocker, or snuggling with her sleepy-cloud pillow.

BED, CHAIR, Wayfair. **WALL MURAL,** Rocky Mountain Decals. **SIDE TABLE, POUF,** HomeSense. **WALL ART, ETSY, RUG, PILLOWS,** IKEA. **BEDDING,** West Elm.



◀ Vito metal single **BED**, \$230, Southshore, southshorefurniture.com.

get the look



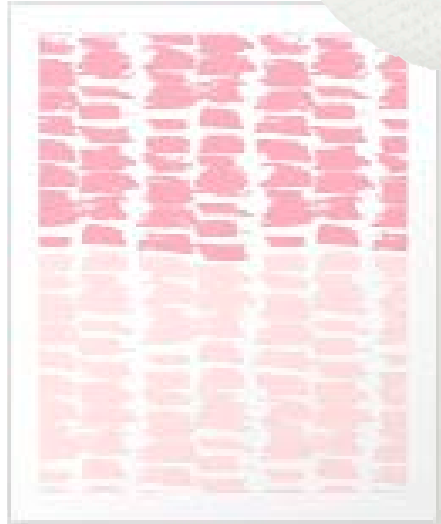
▲ Forest Fairies **WALLPAPER**, \$95 per 23.5" x 96" panel, Rocky Mountain Decals, rockymountaindecals.ca.

▶ Polyester **CUSHION**, \$20, Bouclair, bouclair.ca.



▲ Casablanca Market **POUF**, \$240, Amazon, amazon.ca.

▼ Ror **ROCKING CHAIR**, \$159, Must Love Furniture, mustlovefurniture.com.



▲ Graphic 3NC **POSTER** by NaturalColors, US\$42, Society 6, society6.com.



▶ Metal and Marble **SIDE TABLE**, \$100, Bed bath and Beyond, bedbathandbeyond.ca.





When this dinosaur-loving little boy climbs into bed at night, he climbs into a jungle, too. The mural conjures faraway adventures. The bed frame is house shaped, making it like a home within a home. The bedside table doubles as a stool and is handy when mom or dad come in to read bedtime stories.

BED, Wayfair. **WALL MURAL**, Maxwell Fabrics. **SIDE TABLE**, HomeSense. **PILLOWS** (on bed), IKEA and HomeSense.

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