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CALGARY HERALD SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2022

SECTION D

A TREETOP RETREAT

Custom-built contemporary Kensington home cocoons in a lush canopy



The great room in the Treetops house by Alloy Homes is part of a continuous space that runs the length of the house, and includes the kitchen and dining area. **JOEL KLASSEN**

ANDREA COX

Patti Duddridge Riegert always knew that she wanted to build her forever home in the vibrant inner-city community of Kensington.

"I just love the area — the trees, the quietness; it's just got this really nice vibe. Plus, I can walk to everything — the grocery store, my bank, the river and there are just so many wonderful trails," she says.

The community is situated in Calgary's northwest, just north of the Bow River and Calgary's downtown.

She also knew that she wanted to build a contemporary-styled home, one that was low-maintenance and brimming with thoughtful features that would allow her to age-in-place gracefully — features like an elevator that runs from the lower level to the third-floor owners' loft, with the ability to stop at each floor along the way. She explains that although right now she only uses it as a freight elevator, the goal was to provide a stop gap if her health or mobility declines over the coming decades.

She had already downsized considerably, moving from a large family home in Edgemont, where she had raised her kids, to a downtown condo, so she was ready for a fresh start. She wanted a new build home and a garden (growing things and playing in the soil is one of her greatest joys) was top of mind.

So, when a 38-foot lot came on the market on a curved and treelined street in Kensington, she jumped at it, putting in an offer and taking possession in November 2019.

"The home was in need of too much work. It was a tear down for sure, which made the decision easier," says Riegert, who brought on the design and build team at Alloy Homes to collaborate on the new build custom project. She had fallen in love with one of the firm's signature contemporary custom designs in the city's northwest.

The intent was to create an urban oasis, a home designed to maximize the potential of its tight urban site.

"We really wanted to pay attention to the context in which we were building," says Christopher Lemke of Alloy Homes.

The site graced an old river bed, so the team had to consider the unstable gravel soil base, and, with the neighbour's home set only six inches from the property line, the parameters for excavating were restricted to mitigate a collapse, which influenced the entire design of the home.

"We didn't want to have any issues underpinning the neighbour's foundation as we excavated, so we pulled the setback five feet on the south side of the property instead of four and cantilevered the second floor out."

SEE TREETOPS ON **D3**



The 17-foot tall front foyer and wood-carved staircase provide a clean look, but with lots of warmth and texture. **JOEL KLASSEN**



The front of the Treetops home includes a floor to ceiling window in the kitchen that allows for street-level interaction. **ALLOY HOMES**



The treetop-level master bedroom is on the third floor and features floor-to-ceiling windows and a private rooftop deck. **JOEL KLASSEN**



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'We all had such a passion for making it perfect'

TREETOPS FROM **DI**

The resulting three-storey design features a contemporary flat-roofed aesthetic with plenty of vertical and horizontal elements and dynamic massing. Despite its modern sheen, it's a home that blends well with the historic elements of the streetscape.

"The massing is consistent with the two-storey designs on the street. It's approachable, with a humanistic element and it's pleasant to be next to," says Lemke.

The almost 3,000-square-foot home was named a finalist in both the BILD Calgary Region Awards and the CHBA National Awards for Housing Excellence.

Riegert, who is retired, wanted to create a retreat-like feel — she's an avid yoga enthusiast and enjoys spending time at home. The main floor features an open-concept design with a 17-foot tall entrance foyer flanked by a custom wood-carved staircase on one side and a hand-carved mid-century modern steel and wood wall-screen on the other. Riegert says the screen is a nod to a similar feature in her childhood home, and was designed in conjunction with the entryway to set the tone for the home. "I wanted a clean look, but with lots of warmth and texture. The idea is that as you come in the front door, everything opens up to tell a story."

The open-concept main floor features a stylish kitchen at the front of the home with a counter-to-ceiling wall of glass that overlooks that front yard and allows Riegert to interact at street level.

"The window really becomes the backsplash," says Riegert, who had very clear ideas about how she wanted the kitchen to look. She chose integrated Fisher & Paykel and Miele appliances and, with the help of the interior design team at Alykhan Velji Designs, she picked a stunning two-toned, two-inch thick slab of granite for the island,

THE DETAILS

BUILDER AND DESIGNER: Alloy Homes

INTERIOR DESIGN: Alykhan Velji Designs

COMMUNITY: Kensington

HOME: Treetops, a three-storey, 2,970-square-foot contemporary, custom-designed home with floor-to-ceiling glass walls, a stylish kitchen, enclosed rear garden, and third-storey loft-like owners' suite with private deck among the treetops.

INFORMATION: alloyhomes.com

while pairing it with white quartz on the countertops.

"The granite is a show stopper. We all fell in love with it," says Aly Velji of Alykhan Velji Designs. "The warm tones and angular patterns in the stone work perfectly in the home. The island, with its mitred edges and waterfall, needed to have something that would be dramatic."

Velji notes that granite is making a big come back, especially now that it is available in more abstract patterns.

"I love using natural stone in a home; it just adds such a luxe factor," he says.

The kitchen flows into the dining room which extends into the family room, a private and more secluded space at the rear of the home. The entire rear of the home is a folding wall of glass, which opens to an enclosed garden.

The main floor is designed to be contiguous with the second level, which houses two guest bedrooms and bathrooms and Riegert's yoga studio and office.

The entire third floor loft, accessed via a separate staircase, is devoted to a private owners' retreat, with floor-to-ceiling windows and a sliding-glass door that extends to a private rooftop deck in the canopy of the 100-plus year-old trees.



The dining room is in the centre of the ground floor, between the kitchen and family room. *JOEL KLASSEN*

Punctuating each space are antiques and family heirlooms, as well as newer mid-century modern designs, such as the custom walnut table and chairs in the dining room, designed by Mobius.

"The key for us was to ensure that all of the client's pieces worked seamlessly together, while also creating a timeless and curated appeal," says Velji.

Throughout the home, thoughtful details abound — all of the doors have been customized with grooved detailing. Custom-shelving in the living room with built-in mood-lighting adds to the warm and welcoming ambience of the home.

"There are such incredible moments in this home, because we all had such a passion for making it perfect," says Velji.

Riegert, who moved in at the end of October 2021, would agree.

"I love this home. I've got everything that I want, and it's such a magical place," she says.

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