

# ART AND SOUL

It's the perfect design match for the team at Alykhan Velji Design and an art-collecting, colour-loving family of four in Calgary.

By Anicka Quin / Photos by Joel Klassen



#### Fine Dining

The custom millwork piece in the dining room wraps around to the living area on the other side of the wall. Here, it frames a piece from Cathy Daley. Vancouver's Lock and Mortice designed the dining room table; the dramatic forest photo is from artist Karen Maiolo.



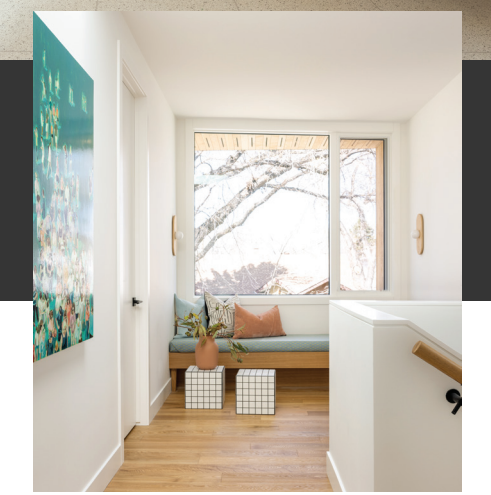
**Great Divide**

In the entry (top right), the team had explored a few options to separate the stairs but narrowed in on simple painted partition spindles in the same pale blue that's seen in the mud room.



**The Living Is Easy**

A painting from artist John McKee is framed by an asymmetrical fireplace mantel in the living room. The sculptural coffee table is from Crate and Barrel.



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hen designers Alison Connor and Aly Velji of Calgary-based Alykhan Velji Designs started looking through photos of their new clients' previous home, they quickly realized that the design process ahead of them was going to be seriously fun. "Their old house was filled with lots of colour, playfulness and pattern—and we didn't want to lose that," says Velji. "They wanted something that had loads of personality, but that also felt inviting and warm."

So the designers set out to create a space that would find that balance of delight and comfort, colour and calm—and that would work for a busy family of four. The home



**Bold Display**

The kitchen (above, right and opposite page) was designed with open storage to showcase the clients' great collection of objects and accessories. The pendant lights over the island and the chandelier over the eating nook are custom from Luminaire Authentik.

**Clean Living**

The laundry room (left), with its boldly floral wallpaper, may be one of the most fun spaces in the house. "You can never go wrong with Marimekko," says Velji.



**Rock It**

Both kids were involved in the design of their bedrooms (right and below). One was a fan of '80s and '90s music, so the design team incorporated a custom record shelf over his bed to showcase some of his favourites (below).



“They weren’t afraid of colour, of mixing patterns and textures—which we’re all about, too.”



### Making a Splash

In the primary ensuite (right), an overscale terrazzo tile brings a little drama without overdoing it. “It still feels calming and neutral, almost spa-like,” says Connor. “An elevated mid-century.”





**Blue Mood**

The mud room is just off the kitchen, making load-in for groceries easy. The custom millwork is painted in a pretty powder blue—Benjamin Moore’s Iceberg—that’s also seen throughout the home, with leather pulls making for an unusual accent.

itself was built and designed by Alloy Homes, but the homeowners—along with their two boys, aged 13 and 15—were also very much partners in the design process. “It was a full collaboration with the clients,” says Connor. “We pushed them, and they pushed us, too.”

The main living area is a perfect illustration of how that dance led to an elegant space with plenty of wow. The striking fireplace, with its custom concrete tiles, evolved out of months of debate and plenty of drawings: should it be brass, concrete, ceramic tile or something else?

Then, one day, the perfect concrete tile sample arrived at AVD headquarters. “It was one of those things that was almost serendipitous—as soon as they saw it, they loved it,” says Velji. “And we were so glad we waited.”

Playful hits of colour layer in a sense of fun: a vibrant Maharam fabric on the vintage chairs, sunny yellow stools that pull up by the fireplace, pretty pops of pink on the throw pillows. And that asymmetrical, whitewashed coffee table from Crate and Barrel brings in an unexpected, sculptural moment.

The kitchen was designed to be all about family time: from the spacious island where everyone can pitch in with meal prep to the nearby eating nook with its multicoloured fabric bench. “They really wanted

a casual seating moment where they could have breakfast and dinner with the kids, and not have to sit at the island,” says Connor.

Upstairs, the primary bedroom is suitably soothing, with layers of linens on the bed in pinks and blues. “It’s a mix of mid-century style with an updated, modern feel,” says Velji. “They weren’t afraid of colour, of mixing patterns and textures—which we’re all about, too.”

The homeowners also have an incredible art collection, and so much of the design focused on positioning each piece so it could be properly showcased. The fireplace mantel was elongated so that a piece from John McKee would be framed with millwork rather than just left to float in the space. In the dining room, a quiet design lets works from Cathy Daley and Karen Maiolo take centre stage.

The unique collaborative process has created a space that reflects the clients’ own passion for design. “I love that each room has this unexpected moment, whether it’s the wallpaper, a textural moment or a bold colour,” says Velji. “Each room you walk into has soul.”

Most importantly, it’s a space that truly works for the family that lives here. “Right before Christmas, the clients were sending us selfies of all of them cooking in the kitchen, enjoying their house. It’s not one of those homes that’s just pretty—it’s truly utilized,” says Velji. “And I love that so much.” *ML*