

BC Home

MAY/JUNE 2011

DRESS WHITES

kid-proof decor

SOFT FOCUS

nature & art at home

ONE
BOUQUET
4 ways

serene
STYLE

+ 4 FRESH
SOPHISTICATED
PALETTES

ALOFT IN THE BURBS

TEXT **BARB SLIGL** PHOTOGRAPHY **TERRY GUSCOTT** STYLING **HEATHER CAMERON**

Sophisticated meets suburban in a tailor-made reno that suits a family's lifestyle

palette 4 URBAN mode

TRIM
Aurora
(CI 1274 D)
General Paint

ACCENT WALLS
Grassroots
(CI 1913 M)
General Paint

WALLS, CEILING
Space Station
(CI 1922 W)
General Paint

To achieve a streamlined loft-like appeal, colours are kept to a minimum. The accent hue emulates the warmth of sunshine streaming through the windows.

Walking into this 3,200-square-foot house in Coquitlam is not what you expect. It's as if you're aloft, perched on a southern slope of Eagle Mountain, with expansive views of the enclave of Westwood Plateau towards Port Moody. And that feeling of being above it all – as if in a highrise penthouse despite being in the midst of the burbs – drove the design of this reno.

The active family (four plus a pooch) had lived in the house for 16 years and become stuck in the same traditional style since moving in. They wanted a change. So, interior designer Valerie Edwards uncovered their style through a “complete gut” and tailor-made renovation that took just three months.

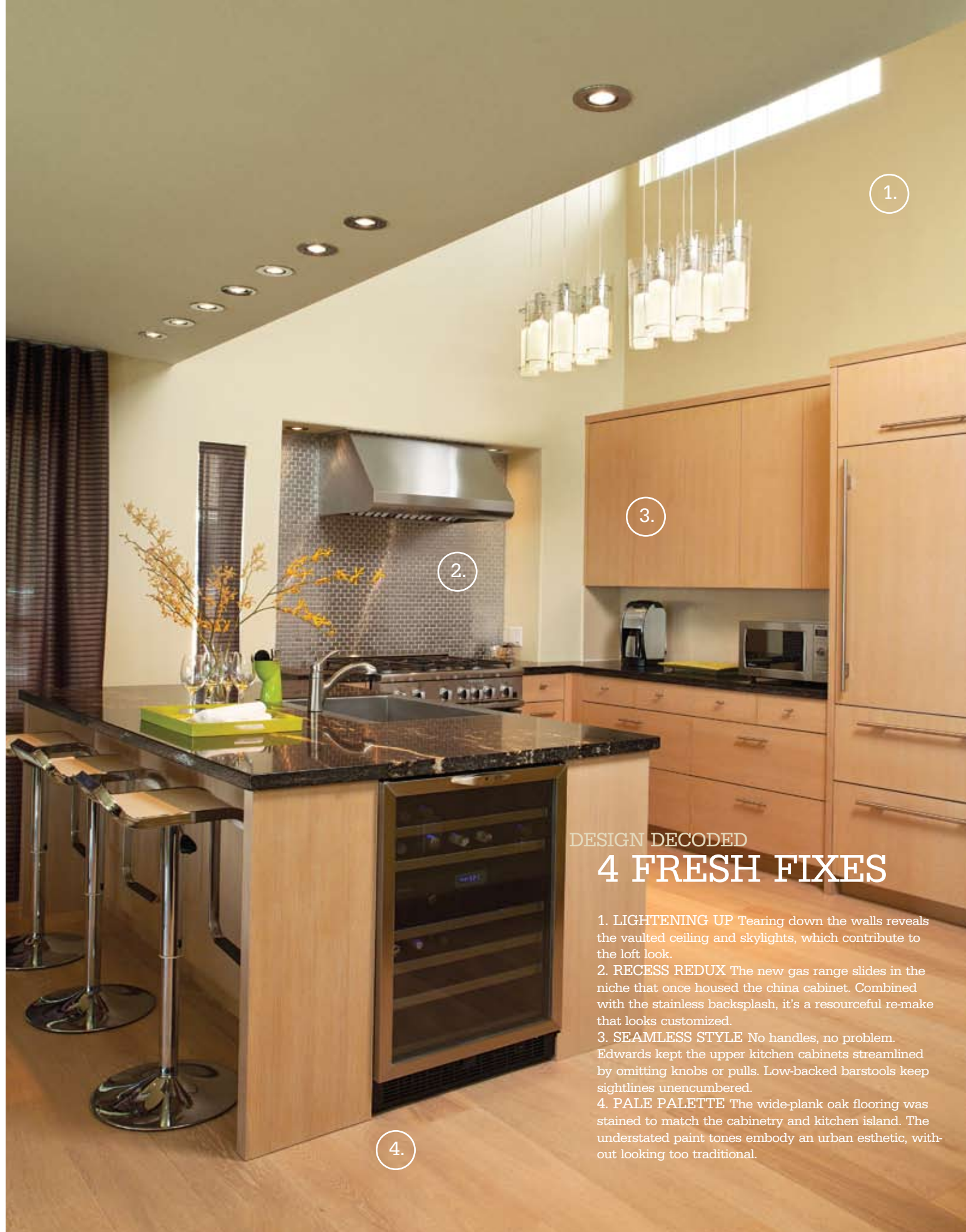
LOFTY PLAN

First up: Discovering the home's – and the owners' – inner loft sensibility. Homeowner Michele Serraglio wanted a Yaletown crash pad for the family's forays to downtown Vancouver for Canucks games and events. But they were also happy where they were, with a prized pool in their roost. “If they want that look, that feel, that comfort and level of [downtown loft] sophistication,” says Edwards, “then they can have it right here.”

To achieve a loft's signature openness and expose the view, Edwards' number-one recommendation was to tear down the walls separating the rooms in



HIGH DRAMA With the bold staircase that snakes upwards, a cluster of pendant lights and the stainless steel backsplash, this suburban home's style can rival any Yaletown loft. **ARTFUL STYLE** Homeowner Michele Serraglio (opposite) relaxes in her living room. The armless sofas help “section” off the space, while the rooms still flow together. A wall-mounted fireplace is edgy and makes good use of vertical space.



DESIGN DECODED 4 FRESH FIXES

1. **LIGHTENING UP** Tearing down the walls reveals the vaulted ceiling and skylights, which contribute to the loft look.
2. **RECESS REDUX** The new gas range slides in the niche that once housed the china cabinet. Combined with the stainless backsplash, it's a resourceful re-make that looks customized.
3. **SEAMLESS STYLE** No handles, no problem. Edwards kept the upper kitchen cabinets streamlined by omitting knobs or pulls. Low-backed barstools keep sightlines unencumbered.
4. **PALE PALETTE** The wide-plank oak flooring was stained to match the cabinetry and kitchen island. The understated paint tones embody an urban esthetic, without looking too traditional.



the 1,200 square-foot main-floor space. The original outdated kitchen – and its salmon-pink laminate countertops – was smack in the centre of the living space and had to go.

Edwards moved the kitchen to the space that once was the formal dining room to create an open living area centre stage. Off of this space is an intimate seating area (it was an eating nook in the old kitchen). Another cozy conversation spot flanks a new wall-mounted gas fireplace. Seating possibility so far? Twelve or more. And the now-open, more-casual dining area adjoins the scene, with an oval table ideal for socializing (a marble-topped Saarinen knock-off) next to a big island that transitions to the new kitchen.

KITCHEN AID

The kitchen is the room that the Serraglios initially approached Edwards about upgrading. Dennis, the family chef, wanted new appliances and a gas range. The “upgrade,” of course, turned into a full-on reno: by moving the

MATERIAL WORLD Stainless steel and stone give the kitchen (opposite) drama befitting a loft look. Sleek accents also abound in the ensuite (above), where dark stone and chrome accents are balanced with white porcelain fixtures. **AMPLE SEATING** (top) Custom dining chairs can be moved about to accommodate a crowd, as can the bar stools and pair of chic chairs.

kitchen, the entire main floor was transformed.

After the structural work was completed, including running plumbing and gas lines in the basement, the new kitchen footprint seemed destined – the previously tucked-away vaulted ceiling and skylights became a stunning feature and a spot for dramatic pendant lights. Another old idiosyncrasy advantageously reinterpreted: the former dining room's china-cabinet alcove as a very apropos recess for the range and a slick stainless-steel tile backsplash.

The kitchen now blends in with the rest of the main floor. Upper cabinet doors have no handles for a seamless look; “I didn’t want any interruption,”

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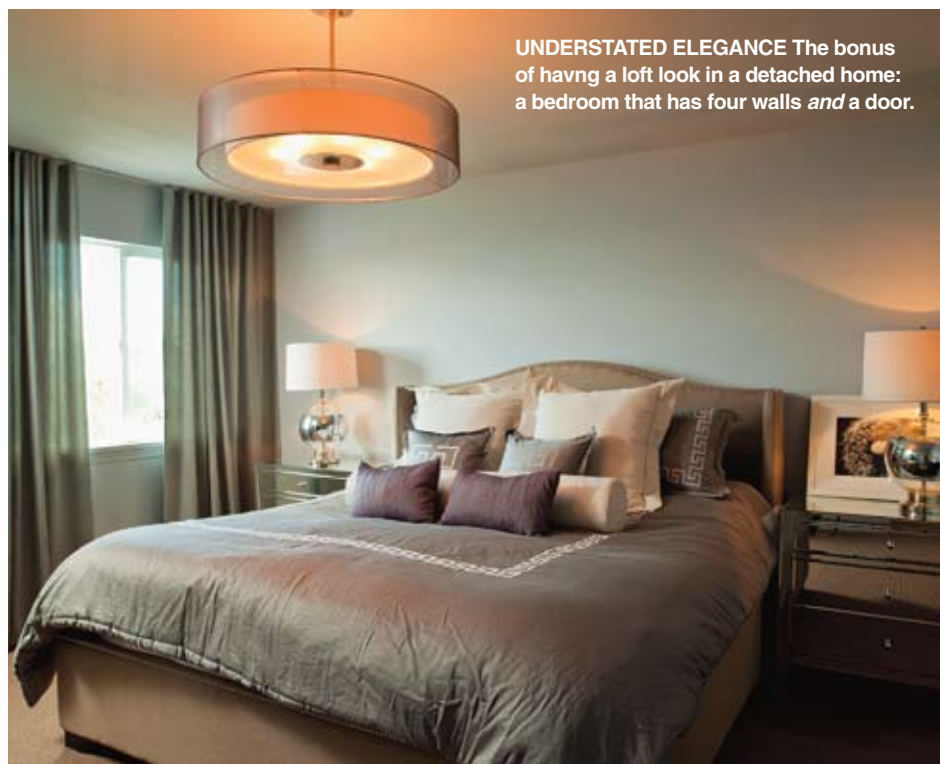
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HOURS OF OPERATION

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Sat. 8am to 6pm

Sun. (Mar.-Sept.) 8am to 5pm



UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE The bonus of having a loft look in a detached home: a bedroom that has four walls *and* a door.

says Edwards. And the oak cabinets were stained to match the floor that grounds the overall colour palette in the kitchen and beyond.

GOING GRASSROOTS

The colour palette hadn't changed since the house was built – think builder beige and brass. To achieve that loft look, the home needed a unifying palette to take it from traditional to contemporary. So Edwards went grassroots to a stripped-back urban style. A punchy paint colour – called Grassroots, of course – contrasts easy-to-maintain neutrals, such as chocolate and charcoal, but is so subtle, says Edwards. “It’s more like sunlight being filtered into the house.”

That scheme is also incorporated in the reupholstered chairs and furniture. Each dining chair is different but complementary, making it easy to pull out the chairs and use them in different parts of the room – another advantage of the single palette in an open space. And the colours are even reiterated upstairs in the master bedroom (along with a taupe-tinged blue) and ensuite bath, where a granite countertop, and mosaic and plank-like tiles all pick up the chocolates, caramels and charcoals from below.

FRESHLY FLOORED

The wide-plank oak floor used throughout the house's main level was a key feature for the homeowners (and the budget at \$14 per square foot before installation). It reflects, perhaps more than any other element, the family's sensibility of easy living.

The modern wire-scraped finish has the industrial feel of loft living and no sheen, meaning less

care and worry. The pooch can pounce and guests are welcome to leave their shoes on. “They’re very casual, come-as-you-are people,” says Edwards of the Serraglios, and such a floor “hides the worst of not having time to take care of the house because you’re busy with your life, the kids, the dog and everything else.”

And that also goes for all the other elements of the decor, from the leather sofas to the mixed and muted palette: “There’s nothing in here that a kid can’t touch with sticky fingers that you can’t fix, wash off or wipe down. There’s nothing that a puppy can’t jump up on,” says Edwards. “And that’s really their lifestyle.”

SIGNATURE STYLE

With this reno, Edwards revealed the family's style identity. She knew they wanted an open, loft-like space, something more modern. Her job was to design “something that was going to go with their lifestyle and not something that was going to make them upkeep a lifestyle.”

And that's the crux of Edwards' mantra. The job of a good designer is to leave clients with a space that they feel confident adding to and personalizing. “There's a psychology to design,” says Edwards, “If you understand your clients, get their personalities and their lifestyles ... you can get the essence of someone.”

So, when Michele asked Edwards about purchasing a pair of chairs for the new space post-reno, the designer's response: Go for it! After all, the hilltop house was already this family's interpretation of loft living in the beauty of the burbs. ■

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