

HOUSE & HOME
OF THE MONTH

SITELINES



In the living room in Juli Hodgson and David Thom's new Vancouver house, a gas fireplace is recessed into a dramatic wall of travertine. Pieces like a roomy leather sofa, plush alpaca rug and slouchy chairs make for a cosy setting. Sofa, ottoman, stool; Inform Interiors;

chairs; LivingSpace; painting by Zoe Hodgson; rug, Colin Campbell; white vase, Martha Sturdy; tray, Once a Tree; pillows, Pillow Decor. **OPPOSITE:** Built of walnut and glass, the open staircase allows light from the second-floor windows to flood all the way down to the basement below.



A NEW VANCOUVER HOUSE SLEEKLY AND ARTFULLY EMBRACES ITS UNIQUE PROPERTY, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT.

Text by Laura Muir Photography by Martin Tessler

Sometimes things don't work out the way they're first planned, but that doesn't mean the results are any less gratifying. In fact, a few false starts may actually lead to something that's nothing short of spectacular — as was the case when interior designer Juli Hodgson and architect David Thom built their new home.

It's not that they had any major complaints about their previous house, a traditional 1920s gem in an established area on Vancouver's west side. "It was a really nice little place," says Juli. "But I always wanted to build my own house, and we wanted a more modern house."

To that end, the couple purchased a 1970s bungalow in the

same area in 2006. Over a succession of three weekends, they honed their plan for the house. At first, the couple decided to add a room onto the back. "I thought that I could renovate it and add onto it and have a retro bungalow," says Juli. That idea was thwarted when they were told by one of David's colleagues that zoning wouldn't allow for the larger footprint. "That was weekend one," says David. On weekend two, they decided to go up instead of out. "I drew a plan for a second-floor addition. Then Juli looked at it and said, 'You can't do that. We wanted the youngest kids' bedrooms on the same floor as us,'" says David. (The two youngest of their six kids were 6 and 8 at the time.) Then came weekend



The fireplace in the sitting area adjacent to the kitchen has a travertine surround that matches the one in the living room. The room features two of Juli's vintage pieces — the Kagan coffee table and the floor lamp — which are injected into a classic contemporary mix. The brass and metal sculpture depicting a flotilla of sailboats is another sinuous element that counterbalances the architecture's clean lines.

Sofa, chair, designed by Juli Hodgson, made by Carmel Furniture Designs; black chair, Inform Interiors; rug, Pottery Barn; pillow on chair, Pillow Decor; wall colour (throughout house).

Decorators White (CC-20), Benjamin Moore.

OPPOSITE, TOP: As the hub of the home, the kitchen was designed not to look like a kitchen, Juli says. At the same time, it's actually highly functional, in part to facilitate Juli's passion for cooking. The 16'-long island, built of walnut and quartz, houses a sink, fridge drawers, a bar fridge, a dishwasher, a warming oven and shelves on the outside for cookbooks. The stove's quartz backsplash is flanked by a panelled fridge and airy glass shelving. To one side, cabinetry with back-painted glass doors houses a second sink and dishwasher. Cabinetry,

Stirling Woodworks; counters, M & W Stoneworks; stools, Inform Interiors; resin bowl, Martha Sturdy.

BOTTOM: Flanked by iconic modern chairs, the dining table is an old fir one the couple has had for years and that Juli had lacquered in lime green for the new house. A photo of Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation was given to David's grandfather, who was in the Royal Air Force. Huge windows offer views of the bamboo forest and the backyard and pool. Walnut floors run through the house. Flooring, Champion; chairs, LivingSpace.



A glass railing allows sliding glass doors in the corner of the principal bedroom, which overlooks the pool, to be opened during the warm months. "In the summer, it's fabulous —

you really feel like you're sleeping outside," says David. The cabana is clad in dark-stained horizontal cedar. (The house's siding is a mix of stucco and large rocks on one side, and

dark-stained horizontal cedar on the other.) Bed, Carmel Furniture Designs; bedding, Bed; lamps, Artemide; drapery fabric, Maxwell; sewing, The Natural Textile Company.



ABOVE: In the principal bedroom, an antique bamboo table is a unique nightstand. Table, Jacana.

LEFT: The principal bathroom's vanity, with a quartz trough sink, is set in front of a floor-to-ceiling mirror. Built-in cabinetry is a mix of open shelves, glass-fronted drawers and cupboards. Sink, designed by Juli Hodgson, fabricated by M & W Stoneworks; mirror, designed by Juli Hodgson, fabricated by Stirling Woodworks; resin sculpture, Martha Sturdy; pendant lights, Lightform.

three. Aside from the foundation, the bungalow was scrapped entirely, and David created plans for a brand new 4,700-square-foot L-shaped split-level house with the same footprint as the original structure. "That's what we ended up building," he says.

Along with a modern aesthetic and three bedrooms on one level (six in total), the couple wanted the new house to have a strong connection between the indoors and out. "We wanted to incorporate the outside, and to be able to live indoor-outdoor, as much as you can in the short summers you get in Canada," says Juli, whose light-handed, contemporary take on design was featured in an invitingly casual seaside B.C. house featured in *House & Home* last year ("Pacific Idyll," May 2007).

The "whole site" concept for this property came naturally to David, whose expertise lies in large-scale urban planning projects. "In urban design, the key is the design of the outdoor spaces," he says. "The buildings serve as the walls of the public realm, and that's how you shape big pieces of the city. So I can't help myself — to me, the design of the house had to do with the entire piece of land, not just the building itself. Every piece was a room, whether it was indoors or outdoors."

In this case, he had an interesting outdoor space to work with. The property is dramatically stepped, so it allowed for various landscape elements to be divided among each of the lot's outdoor "levels." In the backyard, a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 127

In the principal bathroom, the freestanding soaker tub, which is enclosed in a separate area with a walk-in shower (not shown), sits on a travertine floor and is surrounded by white ceramic-tiled walls. (The shower has a draining floor made of ipe wood.) Damask drapery in a mod orange hue adds drama. Duravit Starck bathtub, Vola tub filler; Cantu Bath & Hardware; drapery fabric, Decorator's Walk, through Anne Starr Agencies; sewing, The Natural Textile Company; floor tile, Star Tile; wall tile, Ann Sacks.





Clad in dark-stained horizontal cedar siding, the 200-sq.-ft. cabana houses a sitting area and bathroom, and has an outdoor shower. (The house's siding is a mix of stucco and large rocks on one side, and dark-stained horizontal cedar on the other.) A spacious deck steps down to a pool and courtyard area, which then step down to another courtyard that flows into the back of the house. "The site is really steep, so when you're sitting in the pool cabana, you can actually see out the window and down to the street beyond. You're above the trees, so you can see the tops of the surrounding houses and all the trees in the distance," says Juli.

CONTINUED FROM

SITE LINES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 166

200-square-foot cabana at the back of the lot and a spacious deck step down to a pool and courtyard area, which then step down to another courtyard that flows into the back of the house. The garage sits up high overlooking a lovely “green room,” a big square of lawn. “The site is really steep, so when you’re sitting in the pool cabana, you can actually see out the window, [over the house] and down to the street beyond. You’re above the trees, so you can see the tops of the surrounding houses and all the trees in the distance,” says Juli.

The steep lot also offers unique perspectives of the outdoor elements from inside the house through large windows and sliding glass doors. Case

and stone. “It’s really simple,” she explains. Walnut, travertine, quartz and glass repeat throughout the house, enhancing its easy flow. The furnishings — contemporary pieces interjected with a handful of collectibles like mid-century modern classics and precious family treasures — create a distinctive yet comfortable look. “When people walk into the house, they certainly say, ‘This is really Juli,’” says David.

In the kitchen’s sitting area, for example, a brass and metal sculpture depicting sailboats on the water, handed down to Juli from David’s mother, is a funky element that Juli gave pride of place over the mantel. In the dining area, a photograph of Queen Elizabeth II taken during her coronation, also from David’s parents, and a vintage ceramic elephant are intriguing personal touches

“It’s like having huge paintings — fabulous, dynamic pieces of art,” says David Thom

in point, the lawn sits right at window-height outside the living room window, offering a great expanse of green as a backdrop, and the pool is at the same height as the table in the dining area, giving diners a unique across-the-water view. On either side of the house, two large windows frame lush, green views — of a bamboo forest on the south side of the house and a laurel hedge on the north side. “It’s like having huge paintings — fabulous, dynamic pieces of art,” says David. Along with these intimate views of its surroundings, the house also offers breathtaking vistas of the mountains and the ocean from the second floor.

To keep in sync with both the indoor-outdoor vibe and the clean-lined modern architecture, Juli decided to use a limited palette of sleek and natural finishes in the home’s interior — a judicious combination of wood, glass

in the pared-back space. “Elephants are lucky [in feng shui] — but only if you make sure their trunks face the door,” says Juli of the charming piece that does double-duty here as a bar table.

With such a large family (two of the older children are now back living at home as well) and plenty of friends coming and going, the new house, which took a year to build, easily accommodates its “Grand Central Station” status, especially the soaring kitchen, dining and sitting area ... and a handful of bathrooms (including one out in the cabana). Because in fact Juli says they had one small grievance with their previous house: “It only had one bathroom,” she says. “And we got tired of living like that.” So now each bedroom has its own ensuite — “which is fantastic,” says Juli. Like everything else here, it’s nothing short of spectacular. **H&H**



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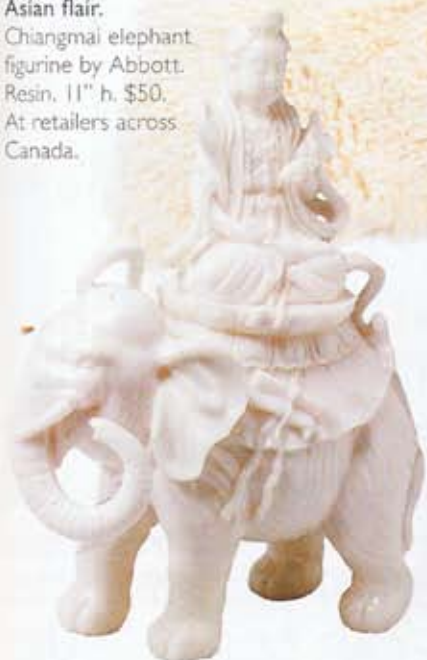
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