

Best of Both Worlds

DESIGNER ROBERT BAILEY EFFORTLESSLY BLENDS DESIGN ERAS IN A HOME ON VANCOUVER'S WEST SIDE.

by JIM SUTHERLAND
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Be Seated Designer Robert Bailey effortlessly blends design eras in this Vancouver home: art deco-inspired side tables from De La Espada pair with mid-century and modern pieces (opposite). In the dining room, a striking piece by artist Andy Dixon is framed by an elegant Ligne Roset dining table.



The living room design spans centuries rather than decades, and young moderns from Downton Abbey would feel as comfortable as New York admen.

Before hiring Robert Bailey to work with them on their new home in Vancouver, Kathie and Canon Fung had some ideas of their own—though not all of them were good. They popped into open houses as a source of inspiration, but, unfortunately, most of them were for spec-built homes with generic layouts that didn't translate to their non-generic place. "We needed help," Kathie says, an imperative that became especially dire as construction proceeded further along. "And because we were homeless, we had a strong incentive to get it done."

The end result of the first-time homebuilders' collaboration with registered interior designer Bailey spans eras, obviously, but also continents. Canon works in finance (Kathie is in insurance), and he regularly travels to Europe. While he enjoys a lot of the usual things there, there's one aspect that really struck him. "The houses are old," says Canon. "But inside, everything is modern and clean."

The Fungs' house, built in the westside Vancouver neighbourhood where Canon grew up, may be new, but its exterior, designed by architect Jonathan Ehling, certainly looks traditional enough: a classic white Georgian, albeit tweaked a little to fit a difficult triangular site looking down a long hill. Inside, however, Bailey helped them find a formula that both fits



Double Time Designer Robert Bailey plays with symmetry and pairs in the living room, with comfy armchairs from Room and Board, and side tables from De La Espada. While the colour palette is simple and restrained throughout the home, the powder room (opposite) gets a bold treatment with a gorgeous floral wallpaper from Trove.



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The traditional-looking house with a modern interior is pretty much the 21st-century norm. Restrictive bylaws or pressure to conform sometimes dictates the former, yet almost no one chooses to live in an interior designed for domestic life as carried on before the Second World War. That said, says Bailey, the Fungs really were looking for a blend of old and new. They had a traditional cross-hall layout for their upstairs bedrooms, and formal dining and living rooms. Really, when it comes to layout, only the great room is completely modern.

The latter has proved to be the spot where most of the Fungs' life is carried on. Both cook: she during the week, he on the weekend, and guests crowd the space on social occasions. This thoroughly modern milieu is defined by Poggenpohl cabinets in wenge and high-gloss lacquer, and a waterfall counter of shimmering "princess white" granite. But these are softened a little by oak floors, a cut-glass lighting effect and the mullioned windows that are common throughout the house. "The windows add architectural character and a formality that juxtaposes with the open modern interior," says Bailey.



Cool and Collected
With its Ligne Roset sectional, the great room proves a cozy spot to hang out while the meal is prepped in the nearby kitchen. In the dining nook (opposite), an Eames table is paired with classic Eames chairs and a custom banquette in the window—perfect for the kids.

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To Dine For The Fungs were looking for modern European design inside their home, and the custom Poggenpohl kitchen fits right in. Sleek white lacquer is warmed up with comfy LaPalma bar stools (this page), and dark wenge accents on the island and the integrated appliances (opposite, bottom).

Furniture in the great room runs the gamut from mid-century to purely contemporary. Bailey thinks of the look as “curated”: pieces that work well together and are a reflection of the way people live their lives.

The designer's favourite spot in the house is the living room, which is decidedly formal with its drapery, symmetry and graceful proportions. The curator here had his or her eyes on a period spanning centuries rather than decades, and young moderns from Downton Abbey would feel as comfortable as New York admen. Proportions are similarly formal in the dining room, but the feeling is purely contemporary thanks to furniture choices and the dominating presence of a painting by Vancouver artist and musician Andy Dixon.

Upstairs, there's that cross-hall layout with its mostly modern furniture, and to get there a spiral staircase—yet another element that has a traditional vocabulary yet defies easy dating. That's the philosophy here: a careful balance that allows the happy intermingling of different styles and eras. “If you put things together in an appropriate manner,” Bailey says, “they can all work together.” *HL*

