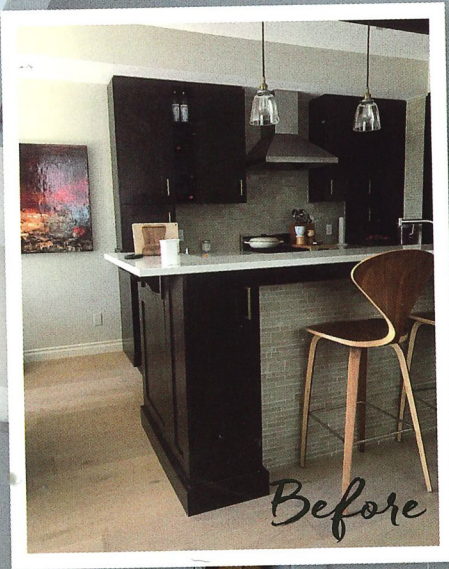


ONE FOR ALL

A Calgary home strikes the perfect balance between masculine and feminine style.

Text by Catherine Sweeney | Photography by Phil Crozier





Instead of gutting the kitchen, designers Reena Sotropa and Alanna Dunn kept the footprint as is and refreshed the space with new finishes. The existing cabinetry was repainted in a timeless, cool grey, which complements the herringbone backsplash and marbled quartzite countertop. Leather stools by Lenny Kravitz for CB2 are an unexpected choice that supply a bit of rock and roll edge. The dated, two-tiered island was transformed into a single-surface workspace with a waterfall edge. **Millwork colour**, Storm (AF-700), **wall colour**, Tapestry Beige (OC-32), Benjamin Moore; **countertop**, Alberta Marble and Tile; **hardware**, Banbury Lane; **backsplash**, oak **flooring**, Stone Tile; **pendants**, RH; **sink**, The Royal Flush Boutique.





A cosy dining nook opposite the kitchen is a perfectly romantic spot for a couple's dinner. A 30-light chandelier kicks up the glamour and anchors the space. **Dining table, CB2; dining chairs, Wayfair Canada; chandelier, AllModern.**

THE DECISION TO RENOVATE or move is always a tough one. For Calgary's Lisa and Keith Miller, the dilemma pitted their 2,800-square-foot infill house against a hypothetical move to the B.C. coast. In the end, their current home, full of memories and located in a coveted area just outside the downtown core, won out.

Keith, a partner at a law firm, purchased the new-build house 14 years ago before marrying Lisa, an energy industry veteran. The couple had renovated parts of the home together in 2009, but something didn't sit right with Lisa, who craved a more sophisticated look. "It was very masculine, with leather furniture everywhere," she says.

Luckily, taking the house from man cave to forever home meant a lot of refurbishing but not too much demo. Designers Reena Sotropa and Alanna Dunn of Reena Sotropa In House Design Group took a balanced approach to the project, which started with a redo of the living room millwork, then snowballed into a nearly whole-home facelift. "We wanted the house to look cohesive, so we just kept going," says Lisa.

The duo transformed the house room by room, maintaining what worked — like the floor plan — and banishing dated finishes. "The old house was very dark and heavy. Now, it's light, bright and feels much larger," says Alanna, noting that she and Reena focused on introducing lighter materials throughout. "I'm still amazed at the power of paint," adds Reena. "Sometimes it's hard to imagine how dramatic the change can be."

Alanna and Reena also mixed in new pieces alongside the existing furniture to better reflect the homeowners' tastes. "When we first got there, it was a very builder-basic style," says Reena. "The home didn't match Keith and Lisa — they're youthful, fashionable and design-savvy." The couple also wanted to use every room in the house, so the designers got creative with their use of space. Upstairs, in lieu of two spare bedrooms, each owner has personal space; Keith uses his as an office, while Lisa retreats to her luxe den for reading and relaxing.

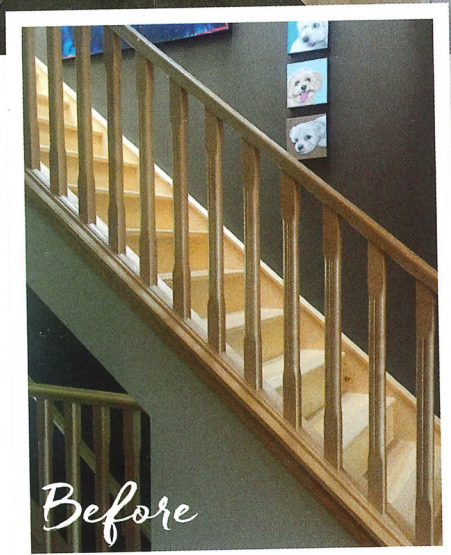
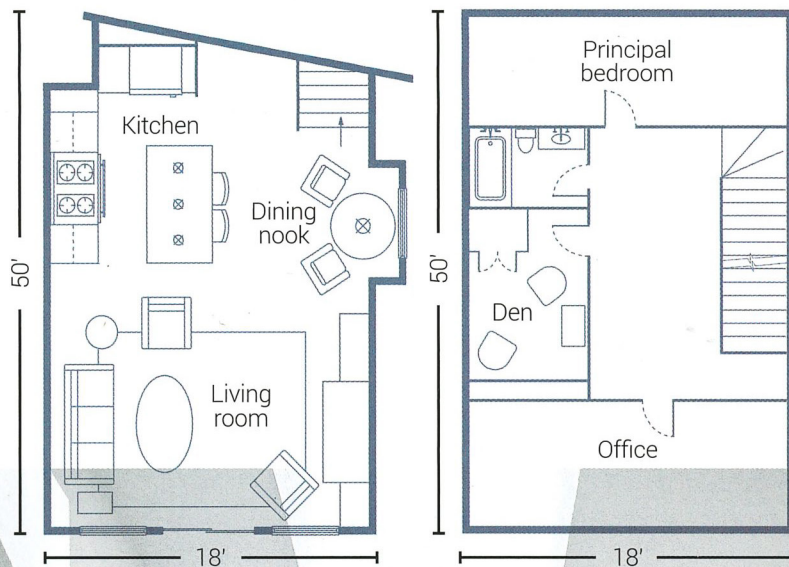
For the couple and their four dogs, the house now feels like a stylish place where they can create more memories. One could call it the little black dress of homes. Coming to life with punchy artwork and personalized accessories, it's a fabulous backdrop for living well.

In the living room, which spans the back of the house, a natural stone hearth is the star attraction. "We decided to spend more on the stone to get the look we wanted," says homeowner Lisa Miller. Tailored, asymmetrical millwork on either side anchors the gas fireplace and television, and provides lots of storage space. A rug with a wood-grain pattern blends seamlessly with the lighter tones of the white oak flooring. **Millwork design**, Alanna Dunn and Reena Sotropa, Reena Sotropa In House Design Group; **millwork fabrication**, Peppertree Studio; **stone**, Saltillo Tile Calgary; **sofa**, RH; **chair**, Bondars; **floor lamp**, Maria Tomás; **striped throw pillow fabric**, Kelly Wearstler; **graphic-print throw pillow fabric**, Schumacher; **throw pillow sewing**, Kerstin Daly.





The floor plan



ABOVE: Swapping out a shiny maple railing for a more sleek, Art Deco-inspired iron design was an impactful change that better reflects the couple's tastes. "They wanted something more high-contrast and fashionable," says Alanna. **Artwork** by Joshua Jensen-Nagle, *Newzones Gallery of Contemporary Art*; **railing**, *Spindle, Stairs & Railings*. **RIGHT:** The principal bathroom is now a sleek retreat. A flying pig sculpture adds a touch of whimsy. **Shower fixtures, tub**, *The Royal Flush Boutique*; **shower tile**, *Stone Tile*; **glass partition**, *Urban Glassworks*; **sculpture**, *Chintz & Company*.



Floor plan illustration by Esther Byun



A custom vanity topped with dark honed granite replaces the speckled counter of yesteryear. Alanna selected a round statement mirror to hang above the sink and a single row of tiles for graphic punch. **Countertop**, Icon Stone + Tile; **vanity design**, Alanna Dunn, Reena Sotropa In House Design Group; **vanity fabrication**, Peppertree Studio; **backsplash tile**, Saltillo Tile Calgary; **mirror**, CB2; **faucet, sink**, The Royal Flush Boutique; **light fixture, vanity hardware**, RH; **wall colour**, Cloud White (CC-40), Benjamin Moore.



One of the couple's four dogs relaxes in Lisa's personal den, formerly a guest bedroom. "I read and dabble on the guitar in here," says Lisa. "It's the lady of house's hangout space," adds Alanna, who was pleased to have finally found the perfect room where she could apply Kelly Wearstler's dramatic Crescent wallpaper. **Wallpaper**, DWA Interior Furnishings; **floor lamp**, Maria Tomas; **ottoman**, Outpost Original.





LEFT: A glossy, Art Deco-style bar cart complements the foiled wallpaper beautifully. "I love brass — I'd have it everywhere if I could," says Lisa. **Bar cart, CB2.**

BELOW: With a wall of full-height drapery, the den exudes cosiness. A velvet swivel chair in a blush pink delivers a dose of glamour. **Chair by Jonathan Adler, Dade Loft.**



ALANA DUNN



REEMA SOLROPA

FIVE TAKE-HOME TIPS

1 PAINT, PAINT, PAINT Truly assess the function and condition of old cabinetry before demolition. Having storage sprayed a new hue might be all that's needed to update a room.

2 RETHINK ROOMS Don't get stuck on a room's original purpose. Upstairs bedrooms might be better suited to different functions — think home office, den, dressing room, craft space, yoga studio...

3 USE HIGH-QUALITY, NATURAL MATERIALS Organic textures elevate any space and look even better as they patina over time.

4 AIM FOR A COHESIVE LOOK Consider the house as a whole in terms of colour and material palettes, with special thought put into sight lines from room to room.

5 ADD IN PERSONALITY Choose artwork that speaks to you and furniture pieces that reflect your own personal style to craft a truly comfortable and welcoming home.

