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Feature

HOME

WINDOW TO THE WORLD ON
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DO MORZA



DESIGN FIRM: BRUCE WILKIN DESIGN

PHOTOGRAPHERS: PLATINUMHD VICTORIA & HEATH MOFFATT PHOTOGRAPHY



BY: TRACEY DRAKE

As I stood across the street by the steep ocean's edge on King George Terrace, looking up at this beautiful structure, I knew before I even stepped inside that this house was going to be something very special.

Paul Pallan and Elka Nowicka have owned the house since 2008, and purchased it with the express intention of renovating what was once a quaint Oak Bay cottage into what it is today – a modern day window to the world. Elka took the lead on the redesign project and hired Bruce Wilkin of Bruce Wilkin Design to help realize her vision.

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The house was originally built in the 1940s and had been previously renovated in 1990 by local architect and urban pioneer Pamela Charlesworth. Sitting grandly on King George Terrace, the current size of this home is 4,200 square feet, spread out over three levels. Designed by Bruce Wilkin, he describes the style of the new home as minimal/modern; the exterior is crisp white acrylic stucco and glass. I asked Bruce how the location of the home influenced the style decision. "Along the stretch of King George Terrace there are two really good examples of the Moderne style - I think this house becomes the third white house. Also, there is a great sampling of modernism in the area, particularly on Barclay Terrace, and Dennison Road." Paul and Elka's home fits perfectly into its surrounding neighbourhood.





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The lot sits high on top of a rocky hill with ocean and mountain views on three sides. A corner lot with a private back drive, the garden is fully landscaped with drip irrigation by Graeme's Irrigation and low maintenance plantings. In addition to an entrance patio and private back garden, there are also two spectacular upper decks for watching the sun rise.

"I am very peripatetic when it comes to design—I like to be flexible and not be locked into a style."

- Bruce Wilkin

Upon entering the house, you are met with a foyer filled with vibrant artwork and unique furniture, and a wonderful light filled art studio immediately to the left. From the front door, you can see into the wide open spaces of the main floor and the art influence is everywhere. Mistakenly I assumed the home was designed in large part for the art collection. Paul corrected me. "Not at all. We were only concerned with taking advantage of the 270 degree views." The end result is breathtaking, with floor-to-ceiling windows that span eighteen feet high in the living room, keeping watch over Harling Point and the sea below.

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MAIN LEVEL: 2,400 SQUARE FEET





The main floor really has personality; it is a mix of old and new, traditional and modern, conservative and eclectic. The original wing of the house, which was left largely untouched except for upgrades and décor includes a five piece bathroom, two piece powder room, laundry room, guest bedroom and twelve feet of built in closets.

The reimagined part of the main floor includes living, dining, kitchen and media areas. As I walked around the space, each step gave me a new perspective. The mindful layout that Bruce, Elka and Paul carved out for this home is brilliant. The triple stacked window blocks, which are a Bruce Wilkin signature, create so much light but also add an element of interest

that keeps the space from feeling cold or looking too austere. The triple block pattern is repeated artistically in the staircase. The expansive living room is south/west facing and features a large gas fireplace with Vancouver Island marble front that anchors the space. The dining room separates the living room from the kitchen; a custom floating buffet cabinet adding visual interest. The modern chandelier over the dining table was handpicked for Elka by Bob and Wendy MacRitchie, owners of Illuminations Lighting. To my mind, it is a little bit of wonderful metallic chaos in the midst of so much artistic splendour. A lot of the furnishings in the home came along with Paul and Elka from their previous home in Rockland. Clearly their design aesthetic is consistent, as everything looks right at home here on King George Terrace.

LOCALLY HANDCRAFTED DESIGNER KITCHENS



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The kitchen is a masterclass in restrained elegance; modern but with just enough quirky charm. The kitchen windows look towards Trial Island to the east and Mount Baker to the north. The showstopper in this space is the Jason Good custom cabinetry in white and rosewood with stainless steel and red accents. Truly a chef's wonderland, Paul and Elka's kitchen features a 36-inch professional Blue Star range in Ferrari red with oversized oven. One of my favourite details of this kitchen was the Lego art treatment on the range hood, created by Elka.

To preserve the home's modern aesthetic, high end Bosch and Jenn-Aire appliances are panelled to match the cabinetry. The unpolished black granite island (with under counter bar sink and wine fridge) is long and lean, leading the eye naturally into the comfortable media room with gas fireplace.

Bridging old and new is oak flooring from The Finishing Store that perfectly matches the original salvaged wood floors, and the open plan hallway and gallery feature wall that were the home's original snug back in the 1940s.

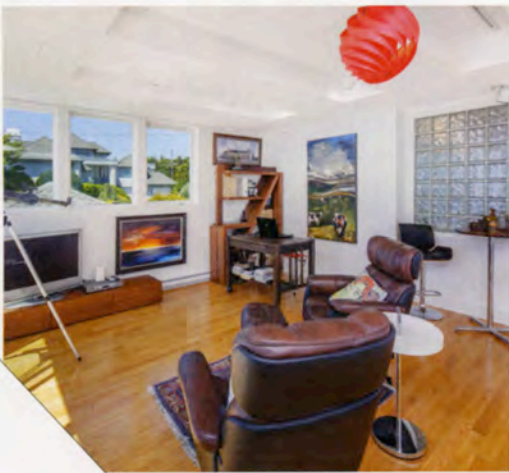
"It was always about the views. The second floor addition is a viewing chamber to look out from – like being inside a camera."

- Bruce Wilkin



UPPER LEVEL: 900 SQUARE FEET

The second floor is loft style, open to the main level below and includes the master bedroom with private viewing deck, two walk-in closets and a sumptuous master bathroom with Schonbek chandelier. This level also has the only addition to the house, Paul's open plan office with million dollar water views from the cantilevered indoor "cube view" balcony. The mood outside the windows seemed to change by the minute during our visit - it draws you in - and I can see that from this vantage point, it may be really hard to get any work done.



LOWER LEVEL: 600 SQUARE FEET

The main build took about ten months, six of which Paul and Elka moved out. The lower level of the house was not renovated until another year later. Now finished, the cozy guest suite is charming and streaming with natural light. Aside from a guest bedroom and bathroom, there is also an insulated wine cellar and private entrance to the garden.



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