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Woman's Day
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Volume XIII, Number 2
U.S. \$4.50
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August 2011
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A COUPLE TAKES THE NEIGHBORHOOD INTO CONSIDERATION WHI



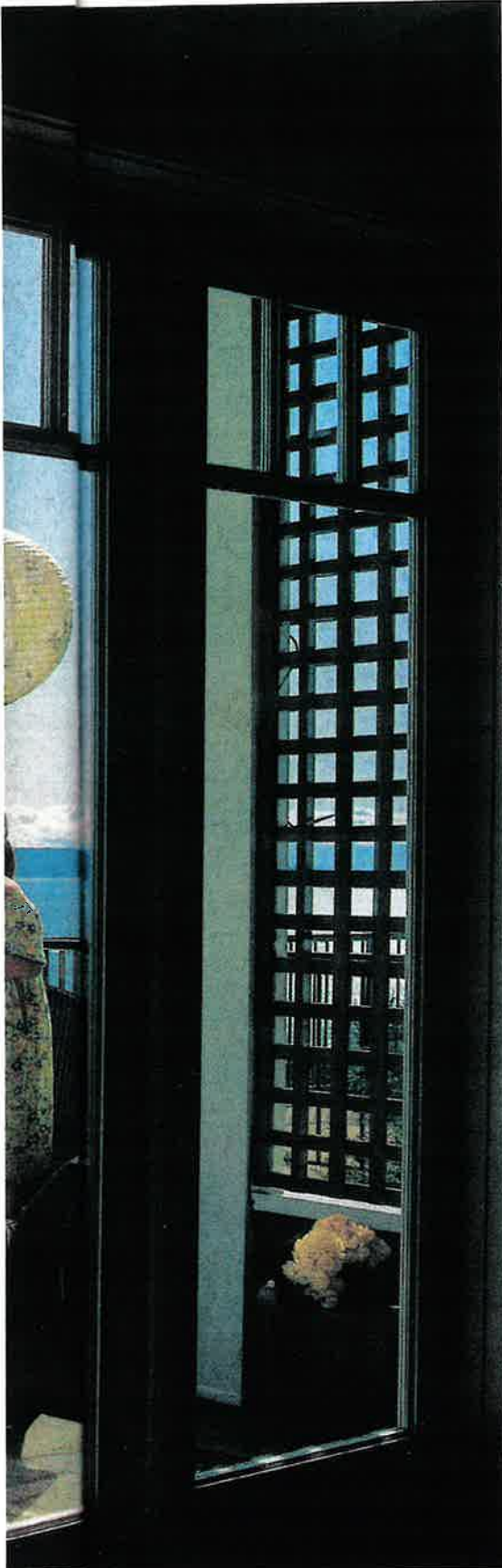
Four French doors open accordion style to create a 10-foot entrance to a deck that extends the full length of the rear of the house. Taking in the view of Stanley Park and Burrard Bay are Jennifer Heffel and her 7-year-old daughter, Ainsley.

Fitting In

BY MERVYN KAUFMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT MELNYCHUK

DESIGN AND STYLING BY JENNIFER HEFFEL



ABOVE: The Heffels' 3,500-square-foot cottage was built on a small 50x120-foot lot. BELOW: The kitchen has warm off-white cabinets, which homeowner Jennifer Heffel designed, plus a cherry island topped with honed granite.

The sloping lot was small, only 50x120 feet, but "Robert and I had to buy it because the view was so enticing," says homeowner Jennifer Heffel. Their lot is in Ambleside, overlooking Burrard Bay in West Vancouver, British Columbia. Once a vacation area, it's now filled with tiny cottages like the Heffels' that sit on narrow tracts.

"We designed the house to integrate into the neighborhood," says Jennifer, co-owner of Heffel Balagno Design Consultants in West Vancouver. "I did not want it to look like a huge new house, so I was adamant about having the top floor built into the roofline." The result: a four-bedroom house on three levels—all focused on the view.





“Although I tend to favor a contemporary look in the homes I design,” says Jennifer, “I do believe that the interior of a house should reflect its exterior architecture and that the decorating theme should be carried throughout the house.” Because her house was narrow and space on each level was limited, the designer opted for fewer, bigger rooms rather than a series of smaller, more confined spaces.

Instead of a living room, there is a great room that includes a sitting area and kitchen. One whole wall of kitchen cabinets extends into the sitting area, flanking the fireplace, where the TV, videotapes, CDs and DVDs are stored. “I’ve kept the furnishings quite spare and simple, contemporary without being strictly modern,” says Jennifer, “because I wanted the rooms to feel comfortable and uncrowded.”

Jennifer designed a square dining table—in walnut and walnut veneer—for the square dining room. The chairs, also designed by her, are in a classic shape, upholstered in washable imitation suede and trimmed with French nails. The floor here and throughout the first floor is cherry. Rattan armchairs, from the Heffels’ previous home, can be pulled up for additional seating.

SIMPLE ELEGANCE

“I think having detail on the ceiling can make a home—or break it,” says Jennifer. Thus, there’s a coffered ceiling in each first-floor room.

■ The layout of the coffers “took precedence over the layout of each of the rooms,” Jennifer explains.

■ The rooms are symmetrical, so they work coherently with the coffers that Jennifer designed.

■ Squares and rectangles abound, not only in the shape of the rooms but also in the window trim, the shape of the dining table and the inset panels of the cabinets.

■ The only departure from the geometric theme is the dining table pedestal. “Its hourglass shape draws your eye the moment you enter the room,” she adds.



“I made the fireplace the focal point in the sitting area of the great room, but I wanted to avoid overkill,” says Jennifer. She also designed the cherry coffee table and cowhide-covered stools. “My daughter sits there to draw and often has breakfast there too,” says Jennifer. Just as often, Otis, the family pug, sleeps under that table, which stands on a woven paper sisal rug that is as simple as indestructible.”





ABOVE: A high, sloping ceiling gives the master bedroom a feeling of expanded space. BELOW LEFT: Wall tile in the master bath is capped with a shift from tile to paint. Flooring is mosaic tile with a stock border. BELOW RIGHT: Cabinets are the same design as those in the kitchen. The counter is off-white solid surfacing.



The Heffels' 3,500-square-foot house has three bedrooms on the top floor and a guest room on the lower level, directly under the great room. Rooms facing the spectacular view have large, uncurtained windows; those facing near neighbors are not as imposing, designed less for looking out and more for letting sunlight in.

A pair of pocket doors creates a privacy option without taking up wall space in the master bedroom, whose sloping ceiling reflects the roof profile. The upholstered headboard, which Jennifer designed, is imitation suede trimmed with French nails—"similar to my dining chair design," she points out. Bedside lamps are clear acrylic; tall enough to be functional but lean enough to take little space. The floor covering here and on the entire top floor is gray wool sisal carpeting. ■

COLOR FLOW FROM ROOM TO ROOM

"I think that, before you move in a stick of furniture, the bones of your house should be consistent and flow from room to room," says Jennifer. She has similar feelings about her color palette:

■ **"I chose a warm off-white** for all the woodwork—it's really white with a kind of orange-peel tinge—and I repeated it in the tile that we used upstairs, in the master bathroom."

■ **There is a warm taupe-gray** on walls in the great room and dining room. That same color is repeated, in a slightly darker tone, on the walls and ceiling in the master bedroom.

■ **"Ainsley's room looks different, but it really isn't,"** says Jennifer. "The wallpaper is basically the same off-white as all the wood trim, but the ceiling and upper wall color was chosen because her room gets a lot of morning light. Her bath, directly across the hall, has the same palette. So the colors in this part of the house really are consistent."