

Urban Suburban

BY NEAL McLENNAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
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THE INSPIRATION

WHEN INTERIOR designer GERALYNNE Mitschke moved into this suburban Vancouver house 18 years ago, she knew two things: the kitchen would serve the needs of her then-growing family, and it would eventually need some major work to bring it in line with her modern design philosophy. The key for Mitschke, who works with acclaimed interior designer Robert Ledingham, was ensuring that the finished project continued to be “a real kitchen, for a real family.”


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THE PLAN Punching the exterior wall out half a metre gave the kitchen more breathing room, allowing for a 2.6-metre island. The large island not only offers a big expanse of Okite quartz counter space but doubles as the family kitchen table, with the addition of bar-height seating. Dual Fisher & Paykel wall ovens, a sleek built-in Liebherr refrigerator and an integrated Asko dishwasher keep the kitchen humming with activity.




COLOUR KEY The owner-designer wanted a European-style kitchen but was careful to ensure that the result was not too modern and sleek, so it would flow with the rest of the house. A neutral wood tone for the cabinets balances her desire for a clean look with the overall colour palette. Glass tile in a companion hue lines the backsplash, smartly counterbalanced by a white-topped island that helps bring lightness to the space.





LIGHT BRIGHT Of paramount importance was the need to bring natural western-exposure light into the space, so a large window was installed above the appliances. “I now see flowering apple, lilac and plum trees in my yard that had been sitting unnoticed for the last 18 years,” says Mitschke. Recessed pot lights take over when the sun goes down (or, this being Vancouver, on days when it decides not to get up).



BEHIND CLOSED DOORS At first blush the sleek cooktop resembles a ceramic cooking surface; in fact, it's a cutting-edge Fagor induction system that uses magnetism in place of a heating coil, generating heat quickly with enviable energy efficiency. Best of all, the moment a pot is off the element, the cooktop is immediately cool to the touch and ready to wipe down with a damp cloth.



CABINET SHUFFLE Working with Ledingham taught Mitschke to trust in quality, so when it came time to order the cabinets she looked to fabled Italian manufacturer Meson's, eschewing upper cabinets for a lighter look. She has also fallen in love with the full-extension drawers and two pull-out pantries that are the backbone of the cabinetry. “I left two lower cabinets in non-pullout mode and it was the biggest mistake in the reno,” she says.