

A FAMILY *Affair*

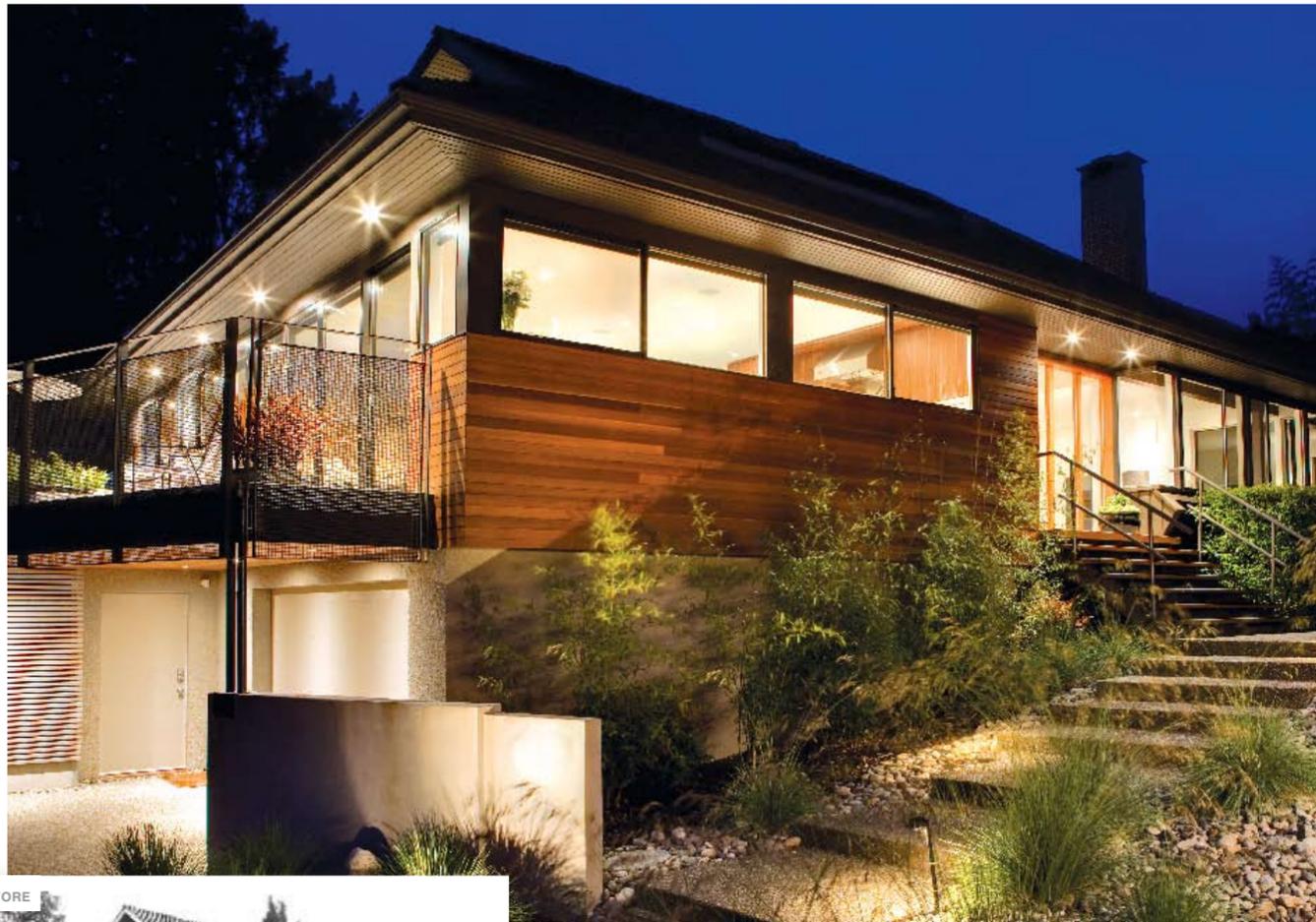
A rambling 1970s Vancouver home is renovated into an award-winning space with contemporary flair.

BY ANICKA QUIN

Photographs by Ivan Hunter



Open Sesame Sliding walls allow the space to convert from open to private, a major improvement from its former incarnation (above). Covered in metal laminate, the walls double as an art gallery on the corridor side and a message board in the kitchen.



“Wet” Coast Modern The previous owner, an avid boater, had angled the house on the property to make it easier to maneuver his craft in and out of the driveway. The off-kilter location brought an unexpected bonus: the windows capture the sun from morning to night.

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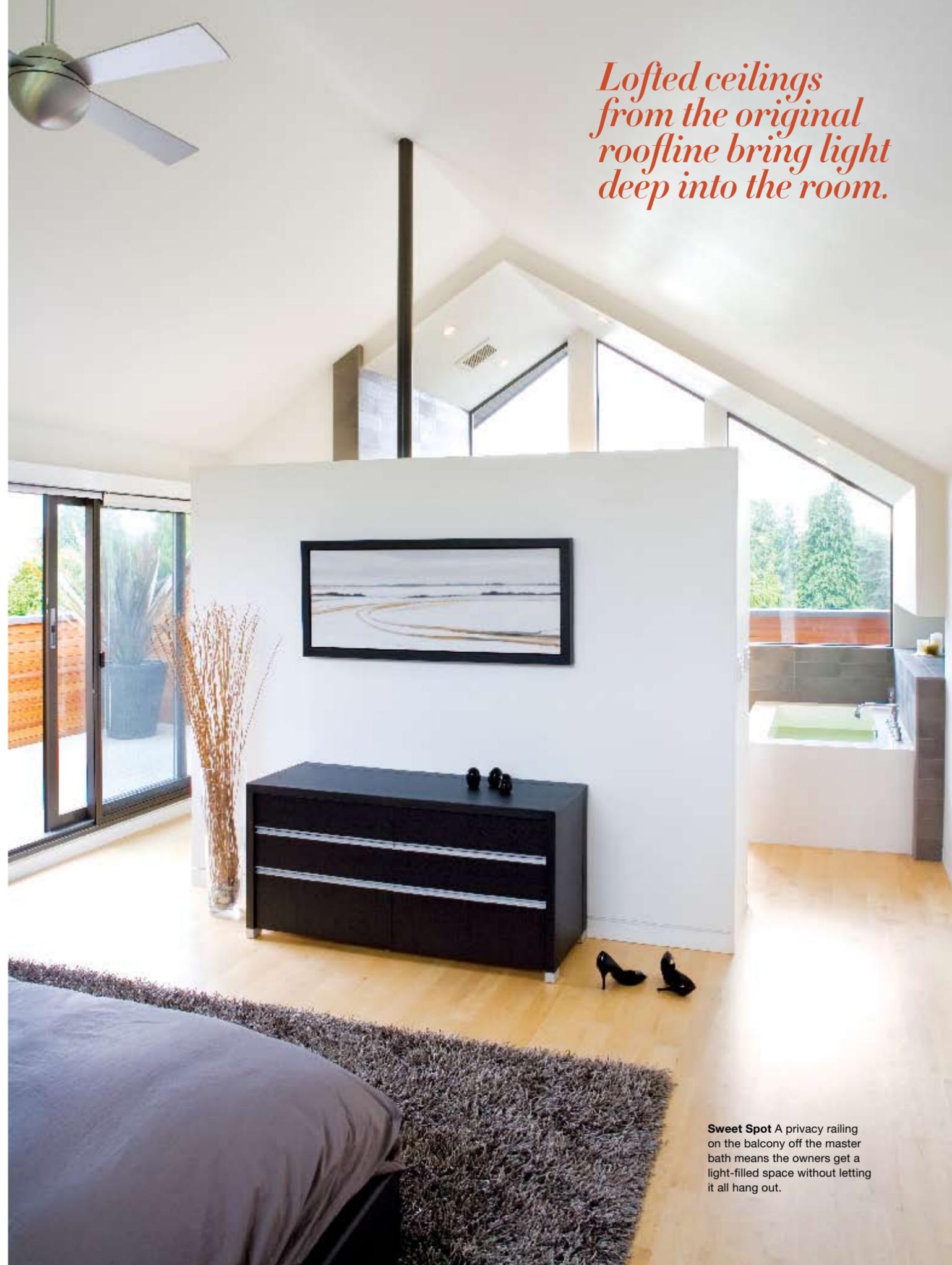
HEN THEY bought this dated home, this West Vancouver couple had pretty clear ideas of how they wanted it to transform. “We really liked modern, and we’re an organized couple,” explains the husband. “We like everything completely

organized without clutter.” But things change, he laughs. “Now we have four-month-old twins. We now have modern baby clutter.”

When the couple purchased it in 2005, the home was classic 1970s design. Piddling rooms carved up the main floor. The kitchen was a small galley and the only through access to the dining room. An elaborate garden, one that the previous owners had spent 25 years nurturing, was inaccessible from the house itself.

The couple brought on Nigel Parish of Splyce Design after falling in love with work he had done on a friends’ home. At the time, the couple shared the home with their three children. (That was *before* the twins.) Parish was charged with making the space open and livable for the family of five, along with the many friends and family they entertain.

And so down came the walls, but not without consideration



Lofted ceilings from the original roofline bring light deep into the room.

Sweet Spot A privacy railing on the balcony off the master bath means the owners get a light-filled space without letting it all hang out.

for privacy and the changing needs of this family. Along the central axis of the house, Parish installed a series of sliding, warehouse-like panels that roll out to create privacy or tuck away to open the space.

In the main entranceway, at the side of the house, a quiet, comfortable family room is surrounded by a corner window. The room itself is updated with modern seating along the windows, its dated rock mantle re-clad in modern tile. A soft shag rug, one of many throughout the home, warms the dark porcelain tile floor. Here, the sliding door is a translucent polycarbonate, backlit from hallway lights for a soft glow at night.

Just around the corner, the living room-office-kitchen area at the front of the house is what the husband refers to as their “condo”: this is where you’ll find the family most nights, watching TV, cooking and working in the corner office nook. Here the sliding doors are laminated with practical metal sheets in funky red and silver. One side is great for posting notes, kids’ artwork and kitchen-related messages; on the other, the husband displays his digital photographs. “With so many windows, we’re limited with what we can display,” he says. “These walls are perfect for that.” Slid in front of the kitchen, they block out noise for the chef or a teen focused on homework, with the added bonus of hiding the meal prep mess from the other side during larger gatherings.

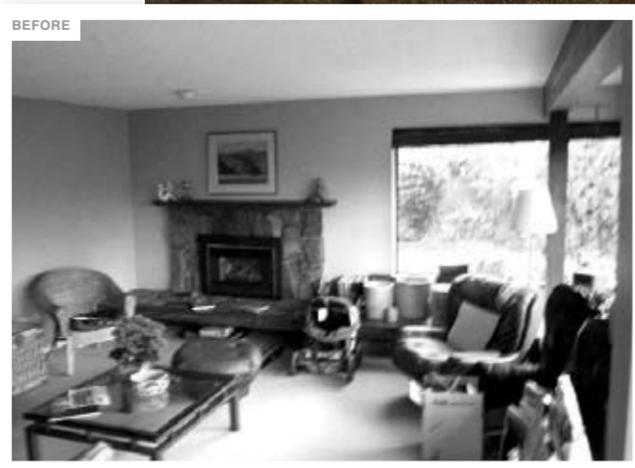
Two bedrooms—one now a dedicated nursery—are tucked off the main living area, with a bathroom shared between the two. And miraculously, Parish found the space to bring back a boldly tiled, hot-red powder room, eliminated from the plans years ago.

Upstairs, the master bedroom is a private retreat for the couple. (The older children have rooms in the walk-out basement, while the twins have their cribs in the main-floor nursery.) Lofted ceilings from the original roofline bring light deep into the room. The wall separating bed and spa bath drops down at the ceiling, opening up the space.

What started as an enclosed, cave-like home is now open, light and airy, forming a loop from the front entrance, through the quiet living area to the common area, kitchen and back to the front door again. So successful was the renovation that it netted a 2008 Award of Excellence from the Interior Designers Institute of British Columbia. It’s modern, but with two infants now in the house, the circular design has revealed an unexpected late-night bonus. Says the homeowner: “Now we use it for walking laps with the babies.” *wl*



Quiet Time The husband calls this room, located just off the side entranceway, their “Christmas room” (its former state shown below). It’s a sanctuary away from the bustle in the main living areas of the house.



Brilliant Disguise A series of panelled built-ins hides the television and stereo system (left). The Spark fire is gas-fuelled but cleverly eliminates the traditional (and often ugly) brass vents common on other models.