



LIFE AT HOME

DECOR • DOMESTIC ARTS • RENOVATIONS • RENTALS • RESALE

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Photos, Stuart Gradon,
Calgary Herald

Diane Schon and Masten Brolsma's renovated home has a Scandinavian and Asian esthetic, illustrated in its simplicity of design. Wherever possible, local materials were used, such as in the rundlestone fireplace.

The idea of being eco-friendly today and for many years to come was the thinking behind a couple's renovation plans

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

JACQUELINE LOUIE
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Diane Schon and Masten Brolsma do everything they can to tread more lightly on Earth.

They own one vehicle and cycle, walk or take public transportation whenever possible. They compost and recycle.

So when they decided to update their 1970s bungalow, it was a given that they'd go for an eco-sensitive renovation. Their goal was to make their northwest Calgary home as sustainable, healthy and as beautiful as possible.

Finishing touches to the renovation, which began last September, have just been completed. The family's Silver Springs home now has an alpine look and feel.

Brolsma and Schon planned their renovation to take full advantage of the great southern exposure and sweeping views of Bowmont Park, the river valley and the Rocky Mountains. They drew much of their inspiration from Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian residential design style with its emphasis on bringing the outdoors in, and the use of natural, local materials.

The home's new look blends Scandinavian and Asian elements in its simplicity of design, materials and layout; and in the interplay of light and dark, with the dark grey Rundle rock fireplace and wall, white paint, and light woods.

The couple, who have two young daughters, dramatically changed the look of their home



The renovation was inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian residential style with emphasis on bringing the outdoors in.

by taking out four interior walls that had previously divided the family room, living room, kitchen and dining room. The renovated space allows plenty of opportunities for interaction.

Storage spaces are mostly built-in, so everything feels open and airy. The renovation did not make the 1,600-square-

foot bungalow any larger, but instead focused on using the existing space more wisely.

"So that you can keep the things you want, but not let them clutter your life," says Schon. "I've always been a big believer in small living spaces."

Brolsma and Schon also thought carefully about how

their renovated home could serve their family's needs well into the future, and have made provisions for aging in place. For instance, all interior doors have handles that are levered for arthritic hands. The front door and two back doors are nearly one metre wide, ensuring wheelchair accessibility if it were ever to be needed.

Energy efficiency and sustainability also made up an essential part of the renovation. The first strategy was to conserve energy, says Tang Lee, an architecture professor in the University of Calgary's Faculty of Environmental Design, who was brought in as a consultant to address the issues of energy efficiency, energy conservation, solar energy, and improving air quality.

The design team for the renovation increased the thermal insulation value of the building envelope in a number of ways. "It's like when you go outside in the winter, you put on a coat. So that's what we did here — we put an overcoat over this house," says Lee. They replaced the old windows with high efficiency windows, and wrapped the exterior walls with five centimetres of additional rigid styrofoam insulation, beefing up the R-value to R-20. (The R-value is the resistance a material has to heat flow. Higher numbers indicate greater insulating capabilities). They installed James Hardy siding, a low-maintenance cement board that mimics wood siding; and insulated the roof. They also looked at air leakage — a particularly important issue in an older house — and improved the

air tightness of the windows, doors and exterior walls.

To decrease the energy required to heat the fresh air entering the house, they installed an "earth tube" — approximately 30 metres of 10-cm PVC, buried nearly two metres underground in the back yard. It's a low-tech solution that Schon jokingly describes as "a poor man's geothermal." The earth tube's purpose during winter is to pre-heat the fresh air supply before it enters the house, so the furnace doesn't have to work as hard. Cold air that passes through the earth tube will easily heat up from -20 C to zero degrees. And during the summer, the earth tube pre-cools the outdoor air before it enters the house, eliminating the need for air conditioning.

"It's so simple, and very cost-effective," says Lee. While an earth tube is a simple concept, he adds, it must be properly engineered to function properly.

Passive solar heating was another simple strategy the design team turned to. Large, low-E, triple-glazed argon-filled windows were strategically placed in the living room to capture the sun's energy. ("E" stands for emissivity, a measure of heat loss). Vertical windows were installed in the two south-facing bedrooms to allow the low winter sun to penetrate deep into the house, while the bedrooms' polished concrete floors retain the sun's heat and radiate it out. During the summer, the large overhang of the eaves helps prevent overheating.

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AROUND THE HOUSE



Courtesy, Moen

Showers with curves

PRODUCT • Singing in the shower has always been appropriate and now you can conduct, too, with extra elbow room thanks to a new inspiration by Moen.

The company has come up with an adjustable-length, curved shower rod that fits standard-sized curtains, but adds a note of spacious luxury. The stainless steel rod provides up to 19.5 centimetres more room and comes with pivoting flanges to enable secure, easy installation — even on uneven surfaces. It comes in chrome, brushed nickel or bronze finishes. It sells in the U.S. for between \$51 and \$71 Cdn. Moen says it will be available in Canada this fall.

Also for the bathroom, Price Pfister has launched a new line of shower heads in rustic burnished metal finishes, a growing trend in home decor. The lines come in distressed pewter and bronze finishes, including Ashfield rustic bronze that hint of old-world charm.

The showerheads sell for about \$300 and come with a lifetime warranty. Towel bars and kitchen faucets are also available. Available at most home improvement stores or check out PricePfister.com.

— CanWest News Service

Apple retains its touch for design

TREND • "Apple makes revolution accessible to everybody," says Paola Antonelli, curator of architecture and design at New York's Museum of Modern Art, hailing the glossy black iPhone as yet another milestone in product design.

Like the iconic Apple products that preceded it, the glass-face iPhone, with its rounded-edge, slim silver frame and multi-touch display screen combining phone, iPod and Internet access, is likely to influence the design of more-mundane household appliances such as refrigerators and microwave ovens.

"The interface on this phone is not only easy to use and have fun with, it's universally understandable," Antonelli says.

The candy-coloured translucence of iMac computers, beginning with Bondi blue in 1998, set off a wave of colour in irons, vacuum cleaners and sewing machines. Three years later, the clean lines and click-wheel control panel of the iPod started showing up in ovens and ranges.

— The Washington Post

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