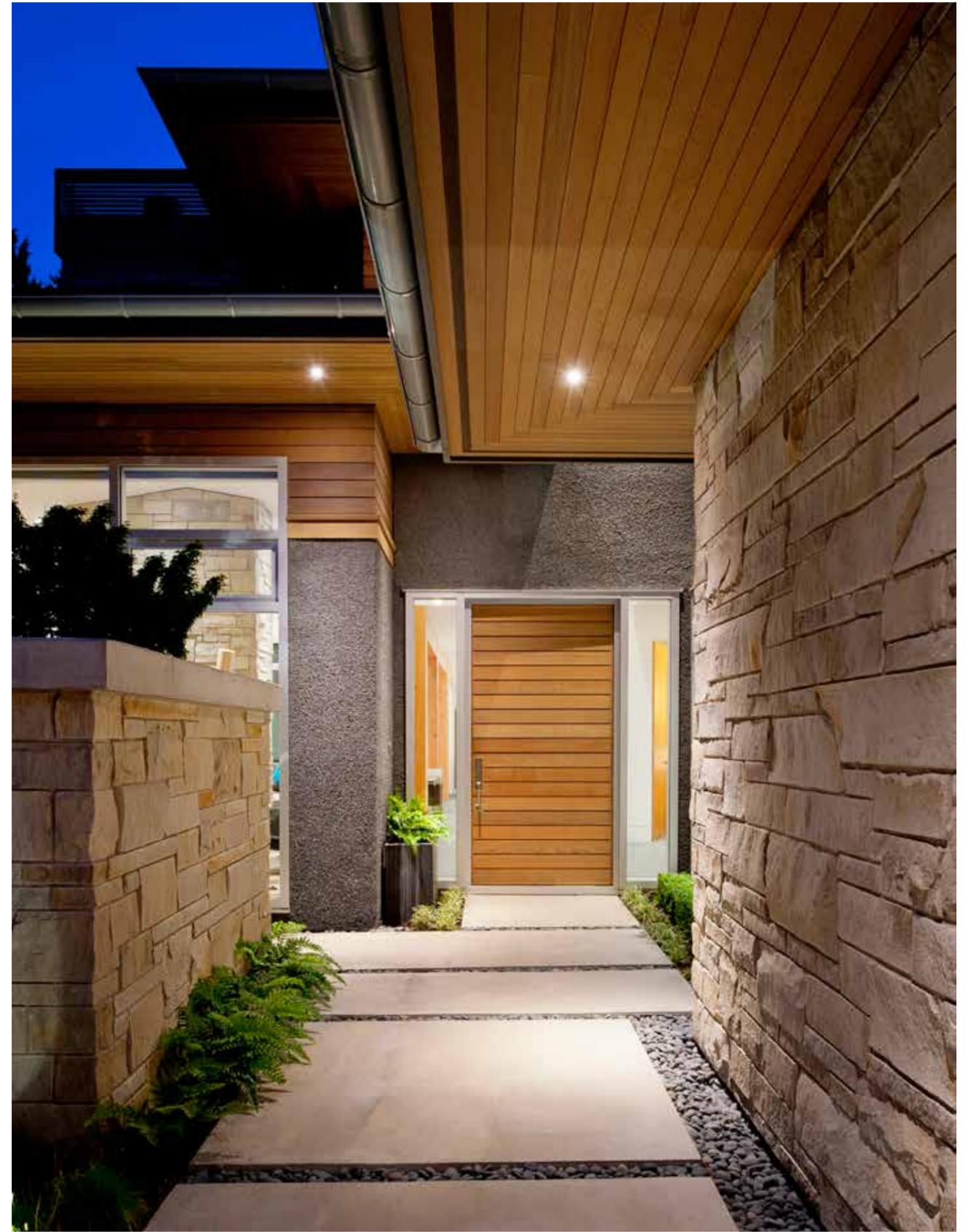# FAMILY LIVING
## INDOORS AND OUT

*Stylish home and garden are replete with family-friendly features*

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BY PHILLIPA RISPIN
PHOTOGRAPHY: JASON BROWN



DESIGN

*(Previous page) The homeowner is enamoured of her home's large overhangs faced in fir, "an organic way to do contemporary design in Vancouver." The front door is heavy, with only a thin strip of wood between it and the lights on each side, so it's mounted on a pivot rather than hinges.*

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*My primary motivation was what my husband and I wanted for the family.*

**THIS KERRISDALE HOUSE** was designed with one overarching priority: it had to be family-friendly.

"My primary motivation was what my husband and I wanted for the family," says the wife. "We didn't consider things such as resale value. It was really important that our two teenagers could enjoy it while they were still at home, that they and their friends would hang out here."
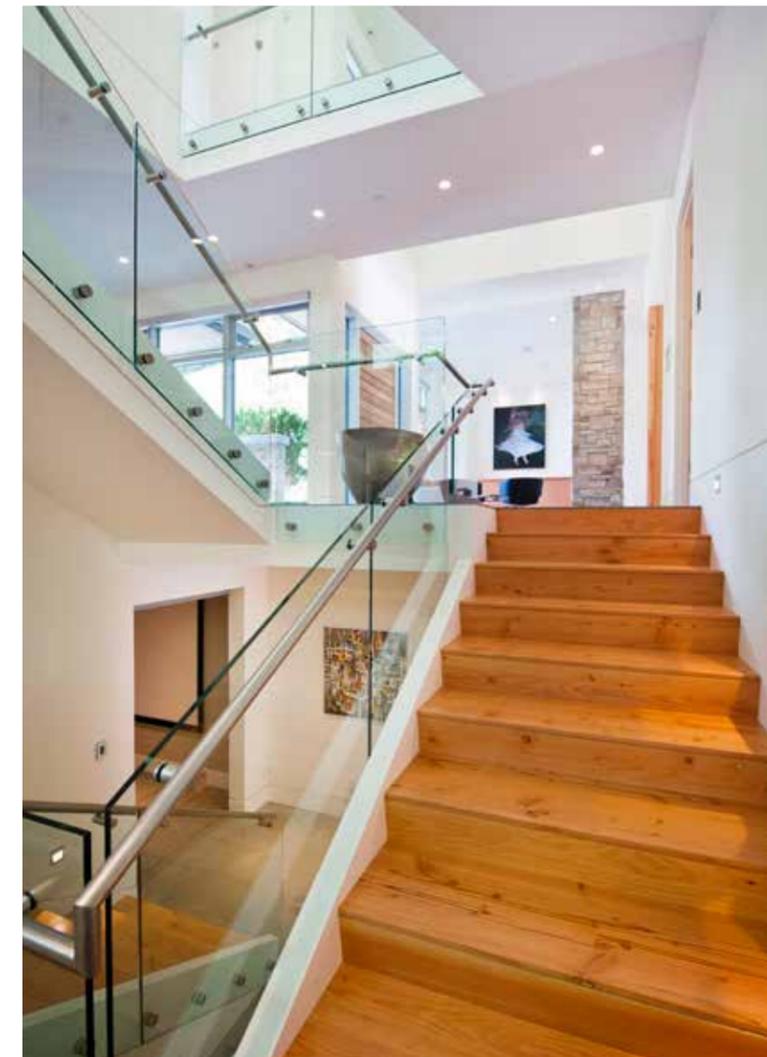
To that end, the home and gardens are filled with details to lure young and old. The backyard features a sports mini-court (adaptable for tennis or basketball), pool and hot tub, two conversation areas (each with its own firepit), and a large covered, heated patio with barbecue, outdoor kitchen, and a skylight that keeps it bright.

Indoors, there's no shortage of space. On the main floor, the open plan features a large kitchen and dining area where everyone can hang out, and a family room with a two-sided fireplace. The lower floor has a media room, a gym, a possible nanny suite that's currently set up for table tennis, and a rec room with a TV, fridge and sink. The wine cellar, while not strictly speaking a hangout, is part of the fun, too.

All this–plus main-floor office, mudroom, laundry room and powder room, as well as three upstairs bedrooms with ensuites and a lower-floor guest suite–is contained within 7,181 square feet of home in a relaxed low-slung style with distinct echoes of Prairie School architecture. ☞

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> *We've got our dream home about 10 years before we can afford it.*

*Like many other spaces in the home, the kitchen is set up for entertaining, with a side entrance and a prep area that caterers can use. In quiet moments, the daughters do their homework there while family meals are being prepared.*
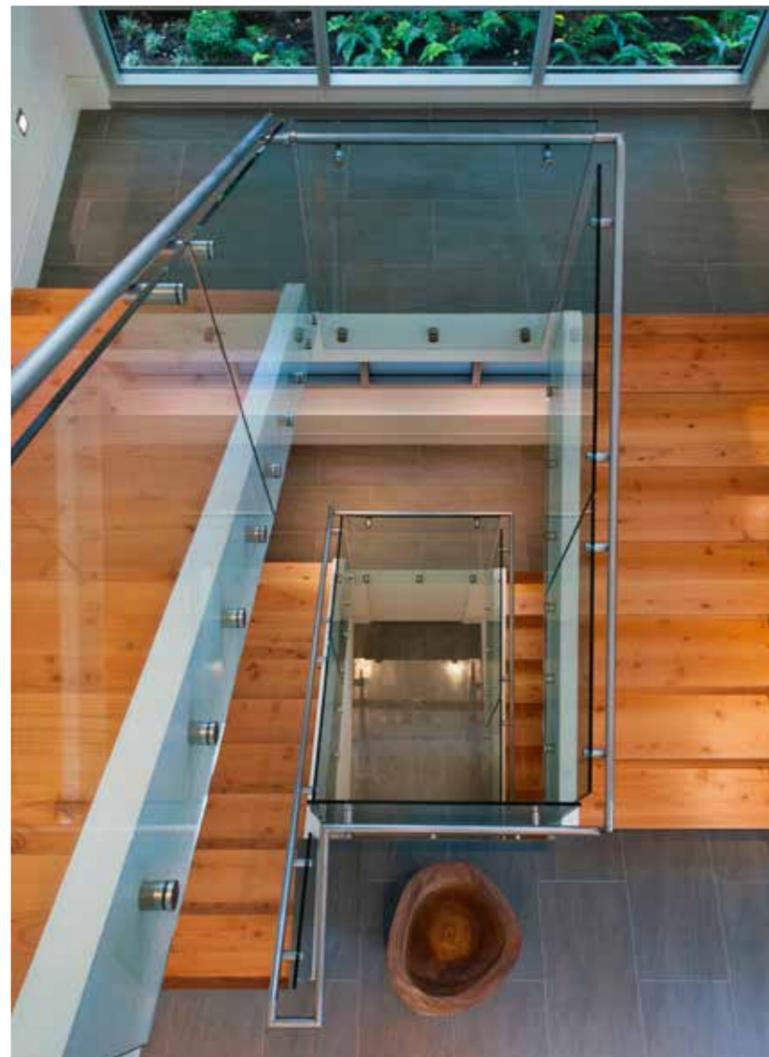
The house was designed by the late Chart Mc-Culloch; the interior space and finishes were designed by his wife, Pat McCulloch. "I started out with a long list of wants," says the homeowner. "I was obsessed. I had magazine clippings, a 40-page list. Chart laughed. And then he and Pat were really great at helping us narrow it down. In the end, we were able to get the feeling I wanted."

The homeowner quotes her husband as saying, mostly in jest, "We've got our dream home about 10 years before we can afford it," but the project actually came in not much over-budget. The homeowner ascribes that to careful planning, a good relationship with the McCullochs, an equally good relationship with builder Ken Toews of Rockridge Fine Homes, and the fact that "I quit my job and made design and construction of my home a full-time job," she says.

"I made it my mission not to have surprises. We couldn't afford surprises. We were careful. I did the project management, and my husband was very involved as well. I was there every day. The teamwork on the project was fantastic. Ken [Toews] was amazing. We always had his attention; we never felt as though we were just one of many projects."

The homeowners had originally called in Toews to discuss renovating the house they then lived in. He pointed out that, for not much more cost, they could have a custom-built home. And so they did. ☞

*"I love the contemporary look of the staircase," says the homeowner. "It combines the organic element of fir with glass and custom-designed bolts to hold the glass panels in place."*

Toews and the Rockridge team worked from the outside in. "We had to begin the project with the excavation of the pool, because if the house had already been built, we would not have been able to move equipment down the side," says Toews. "It's a long but narrow property, 66 feet by 340 feet.

"The house itself is unique, with lots of new ideas. For instance, the front door is completely custom-made, with the horizontal lines of the door designed specifically to match the exterior siding of the house. There are so many elements in the house that are custom.

"I love the use of natural materials outside: stone, and cedar soffiting with large overhangs that show the detail of the work. In the evening, the landscape lighting really sets the mood.

"I like the contemporary aspect of this house. Around all the doors and windows there's no casing. All the baseboards are flush with the drywall, including a half-inch reveal between the two materials to create detail. It looks very simple, but to achieve that clean look takes a lot of steps. Those clean lines give it a really contemporary look."

Toews is enthusiastic about the millwork inside, done by Art's Custom Woodcrafting.

The home is also energy-efficient. "There are LED bulbs throughout, from the landscape lighting to the exterior lighting to all the interior lighting," says Toews. "Everything in the house is automated, from the blinds to the heating to all the lighting and the audio controls."

The homeowner adds, "My husband had a lot of input into the smart-home design. He programmed lighting themes–entertaining, cooking, and so on–so we don't have to go around flipping light switches.

"Technology plays a part in our family life. For example, we've added USB sockets in the kitchen, where each girl has a workstation for doing homework while I prepare food.

"There's not anything I wanted that we don't have in some way. I absolutely love our home. I'm so proud and thrilled to have people over. It's everything I ever could have imagined." ❧

*The backyard design, by Teer Co Landscape, offers several distinct areas for adults and children to hang out, including a casual seating area and firepit near the sports court.*