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ENTERTAINMENT
REPORTER **SUSIE WALL**
RECREATES HER
MODERNIST VANCOUVER
HOME IN A SPARE,
ELEGANT AND VERY
PERSONAL STYLE.



*Text by Laura Muir
Photography by Janis Nicolay*

NATURAL

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Modern, fresh, creative. One wouldn't expect anything less of the house owned by fashion and style expert Susie Wall, and neither would she. "The house is really an extension of my work in that it dabbles in glamour, but at the end of the day it's a jeans and bare feet kind of space," Susie explains.

As the West Coast reporter for CTV's national entertainment show *eTalk*, Susie regularly interviews A-listers at red carpet events and reports on Hollywood and Hollywood North, and the TV and fashion industries. A cast member since the show's debut five years ago, Susie

LEFT: By painting out the walls and fireplace in white, Susie enhanced the airiness of her living room, which boasts 20' ceilings and a wall of windows. The room houses an eclectic mix of furnishings, from a traditional pedestal table to modern slipper sofas and an Eileen Gray side table. A shag rug and cowhide cube add textural interest; hardwood floors and lush garden views inject warmth. Chairs, 18 Karat; Eileen Gray table, cube, trellis pillows, votive. The Cross; velvet pillow, Bacci's; painting by Heather Ross, birds, sconce, Heather Ross [in house].

BEAUTY

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attributes appearances on *The Vicki Gabereau Show* and *Canada AM* as the launching pad for her television career. "I've been writing for [Vancouver newspaper] *The Province* for nine years and for *Flare* magazine off and on for six," says Susie. "My work is a mix between getting to write from home and then jetting out to do really exciting, interactive, Hollywood-glamour projects with *eTalk*. It's a nice contrast."

So are the contrasts that grace her Vancouver house, which she shares with her husband, a high-tech executive, their 17-month-old daughter, Brontë, and four-year-old British Lab, Ojai. But although the house reflects its owners to a T, it may be surprising to learn that when the couple set out to purchase a house five years ago, Susie wasn't necessarily intent on one specific look. "It was a conflicted process for me when we were looking because I love so many different styles of houses," says Susie. "For instance, I love French farmhouses, and I love that Cotswold cottage look with an English It Girl vibe — the hodgepodge style that looks really lived in and lovely."

When they came across this 2,700-square-foot,

ABOVE: Low, wide steps lead from the living room up to the dining room, and sliding doors in both rooms open to the garden. A green feature wall ties inside with out and offers a fresh, mod hit of colour. The show-stopping crystal chandelier adds drama, and its contemporary look offsets the traditional table and armoire. The frosted-glass door leads to the kitchen. Chandelier, The Cross Decor & Design; armoire, mirror, paintings by Gabriel, Liberty; table, Restoration Hardware.

RIGHT, CENTRE: Susie displays heirloom crystal decanters on a bar cart in the dining room. Cart, bucket, tongs, Atkinson's; wall colour, Grape Leaves (400D-6), Behr; Louis Ghost chair, LivingSpace.

Susie has a penchant for metallic elements and chose a silver and gold botanical print to add drama in the dining room; the paper also wraps around and continues on one wall in the living room. Wallpaper, Ringwold Paper special edition (BP-1651), Farrow & Ball; end chair, Restoration Hardware.



ABOVE: The kitchen's glass mosaic tiles, which cover a striking feature wall in the breakfast nook, coordinate with the green cabinetry and creamy granite counters in the adjoining kitchen (not shown). A Saarinen-

style table and a graphic poster by Brooklyn artist Tracy Jenkins enhance the mod look. Table, Ikea; chairs, The Cross Decor & Design; stool, Urban Barn. **TOP RIGHT:** Finishing a square of wall in chalkboard paint and

adding a granite shelf below it, which holds the phone and favourite cookbooks, creates a playful message centre here. Porcelain floor tile, C&S Tile; phone, Pottery Barn; chalkboard paint, Kerrisdale Lumber.



West Coast Modernist house, originally designed by Vancouver architect Peter Wardle in the early 1970s, they were seduced by its indoor-outdoor aesthetic, which was unexpectedly paired with a strong sense of privacy for a truly West Coast nest atmosphere. It had an abundance of large windows and sliding doors offering easy access to the lush, leafy garden — which features weeping beech, dogwood, Japanese maple, magnolia, eucalyptus and plum trees — from anywhere on the main floor.

Of course, all wasn't entirely perfect when they moved in. "You know how people say, 'Our house really just needs some lipstick?'" With this house, it was just the opposite. What it needed most was makeup remover," says Susie. The kitchen was dark and dated, the bathrooms were adorned in tropical peaches and pinks, "and the inefficient closets were totally traumatizing for someone who works in fashion," she recalls with a laugh. In addition, every room looked like it belonged in a different era. Susie's goal was to pare it back to, in her opinion, its original intentions: to modernize it, to marry glamour with the West Coast look, and to rework it



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LEFT: To refresh the traditional cabinet and dresser, hand-me-downs from Brontë's aunt, they were painted white and fitted with crystal knobs. Hutch shelves display sentimental items like Brontë's shoes, favourite books and a photograph of Susie's grandmother. A pair of pajamas hangs on an antique hanger purchased in Paris. Elephant, Tiny Warbler; change pad, cloth, Babylicious; lamb, pajamas. The Cross; knobs, Restoration Hardware; baskets, Kitchen Corner. **RIGHT:** Cosy elements include a big chair and ottoman, Chair, hippo, Ikea.



to better reflect her young and creative family.

While the couple kept the layout and structure of the split-level home intact — "I wouldn't dare alter the footprint of a Peter Wardle!" she says — elements like new paint, wallpaper and other finishes, as well as contemporary decor in a neutral palette with hits of green (to best connect with the outdoor views) gave them the comfortable, modern and wonderfully inviting look they wanted.

In the living room, an imposing medieval-looking open-flame gas fireplace was swapped for a new gas insert and painted the same fresh white as the walls. To help brighten the kitchen, the couple tore down a divider that hung above the kitchen counter, removed some open shelving and took out an office area. While not crazy about the kitchen cabinetry, which has a green stain and cottagey look, Susie kept it for its quality, but elevated and updated the look by adding a granite countertop, mosaic-tiled backsplash and feature wall, and dark porcelain-tiled floors. A blackboard area in the breakfast nook is a playful element.

A strong focal point for much of the main floor, the yard had an English garden aesthetic when they bought the house and was full of river rock and English country plants. Susie brought in landscape designer Anne Talbot-Kelly to help overhaul it and give it a more Zen look that better complements the interior of the house.

After Brontë was born, Susie updated the top-floor nursery with the help of Tina Barkley of Babylicious. "Susie is very modern and hip, but she likes things fresh and simple as well," Barkley says. "We took all those things into consideration in Brontë's room." Thick horizontal stripes in cream and tan were painted on the CONTINUED ON PAGE 208



Tina Barkley of Babylicious decorated Brontë's bedroom walls with broad horizontal stripes in cream and tan paint then added playful hits of hot pink. Change pad, bedding, Babylicious; pink throw, fur throw, The Cross; crib, Crocodile Baby; floor lamp, Pendot; carpet, Burritt Bros. Carpets.