

# HITTING ALL THE ANGLES

WHERE OUTDOOR AND INDOOR SPACES CONVERGE







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**W**HEN the vision of the client meets innovative architecture and an interior design with panache, "it's synchronicity," says Keith Baker of Keith Baker Design. Add a generous helping of mountain and sea views and voilà, a Victoria, BC home becomes an award-winning tour de force.

After consulting with Mike Miller of Abstract Developments who recommended Baker, Lorne and Jennifer Porayko asked him to design a contemporary home with West coast styling that would fit snugly into the landscape. They had a list of 30 requirements including a gym and media room. But one wish was paramount – a master suite with a huge bath and walk in closet that encompassed the entire upper level. "From the onset, I knew there would be challenges," Baker says. "The lot was rocky and overgrown with difficult elevations. I knew it would not lend itself to ordinary design."



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Happily, the Poraykos were willing to take a leap of faith. Instead of a layer cake footprint, Baker designed a striking split level with atypical angles and graceful curves. He skewed the house on the property and divided it into two distinct two-story areas with curved terraced steps that would lead beside a playful fountain to a wide front door. For the exterior, he envisioned a combination of tactile materials including wood, steel, stone and glass. Terraced decks on three sides would provide expansive views of Mt. Baker and the Juan de Fuca Straits to the east and the Olympic Mountains to the south.

Although clients rarely accept an architect's initial draft, the couple was delighted. "Basically, it remained in tact through completion," says Baker who was not looking for 'design du jour.' Instead, he wanted to create an environmentally friendly sanctuary eminently suited to the couple's taste.

In addition to Baker and Miller, the "dream team" included Sandy Nygaard of Nygaard Design. "It's wonderful when you have a builder of this caliber who has the desire to get it right and an interior designer who nails it," Baker says.

The home's most striking architectural feature is the soaring 24-foot atrium and curved ceiling highlighted by sustainable Douglas Fir beams and an open bookcase. Slanted walls and quadrilateral polygon-shaped windows punctuate the design. With innovative indoor and outdoor lighting that offsets the misty grayness of Victoria winters, the house sparkles like a prism in sunlight. But the massive expanse of windows and the angled placement on the lot afford the couple so much privacy that there is little need to activate the hidden power solar blinds which descend in unison.

The atrium is more than just the home's exclamation point. It provides access to every room. The expansive living, dining, kitchen area lies to the left and rooms flow from one to the other, unimpeded by doors or archways. A right turn off the atrium leads to the office, two guest bed-



"It's wonderful when you have a builder of this caliber who has the desire to get it right and an interior designer who nails it." The expansive living, dining and kitchen area flow from one to the other unimpeded by doors and archways. Two-way fireplace by Montigo, sofa from Scan Design and coffee table from Monarch Furniture.



rooms with ensuite baths and up the striking curved staircase with glass railings to the master suite.

A predominance of hard surfaces and an open floor plan could make the house feel uninviting but custom cherry millwork and built-ins by Swiftsure Woodworkers and overhead beams create an inviting atmosphere enhanced by a see-through fireplace in the living room. Sustainable Jatoba hardwood flooring with radiant heating installed throughout the living space adds visual as well as tangible warmth.

"It exceeds our expectations 100 percent," says Jennifer Porayko. "There was no stress during the building process and the workmanship is extraordinary. When we come home after a stressful day (he is an ICU physician and she is a communications consultant), we feel like we live in a resort."

Nygaard became involved early in the project and was able to help refine some of the space with function in mind. When she suggested minor tweaking, Abstract Developments was quickly onboard. "They take change as a challenge rather than a problem," she says. One of those challenges was a kitchen island capped by a six-inch thick slab of polished concrete with a side apron that became the focal point. By combining black granite countertops, eco-friendly bamboo cabinets and windows that ascend from counter top to ceiling, Nygaard successfully married form and function. Smoked glass Jenn-Air appliances add eye appeal and energy efficiency.

"Because the Poraykos didn't bring any furnishings from their previous residences, I didn't have to integrate a hodge podge from grandma into the design," Nygaard says. She played off the couple's preference for Japanese-influenced minimalist décor by complementing the sleek architecture with clean-line furniture like black leather sofas and chairs used throughout.

"From the huge tiled rain shower and steam room, they have stunning views of the mountains. Light pours through three skylights, illuminating the relaxing Japanese soaker tub and twin vanities. "It's so relaxing we

Interior Designer Sandy Nygaard was able to help refine some of the space with function in mind. Kitchen island is capped in polished concrete with a side apron. Eco-friendly bamboo millwork was installed and completed with smoked glass Jenn-Air appliances. Windows and doors ascend from floor to ceiling.





feels like we're in a spa," says Jennifer. Their ability to enter the built-in laundry room from the hall or walk-in closet turns an annoying chore into a pleasurable experience.

The bedroom's only furnishings include the low-slung built-in bed with a curved tufted black leather headboard and attached nightstands and a black leather and chrome chair and vanity stool. Even the built-in dressers have been banished to the oversized closet/ dressing room to enhance the sleek minimalism. A deck accessible only from the bedroom provides an outdoor retreat for steaming cup of coffee in the morning or a glass of chilled wine at dusk.

On the lower level, a climate-controlled wine cellar and cherry paneled media room with a concealed 100-inch projector makes entertaining a delight. Both are high on fitness and keep in shape in their well-equipped gym enhanced by a bath and juice bar.

The creativity of the design team was richly rewarded for their stellar efforts by the Canadian Homebuilders Association of Vancouver Island. The project garnered an unprecedented seven gold and two silver CARE awards in 2008 for excellence and sustainability, including the coveted titles, Project of the Year and People's Choice Award. It has also been nominated for four Georgie Awards® given by the Homebuilders Association of British Columbia which honors projects that exemplify a high caliber of expertise.

Grand without being grandiose, the Victoria stunner has an attitude of freedom. "Nothing in the house appears abrupt or out of place," says Baker. "There's a continuity that flows between the rooms and everything is built in, intentional and harmonious. It feels at peace with itself and that's what excites me most." The Poraykos could not agree more. ♦

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Custom curved headboard, platform and side tables designed by Sandy Nygaard and built by Swiftsure Woodworkers. Sustainable Jatoba hardwood flooring with radiant heating throughout the living space adds visual as well as tangible warmth. Ceiling fans from Modern Fan Co. Lights by Forecast Lighting.



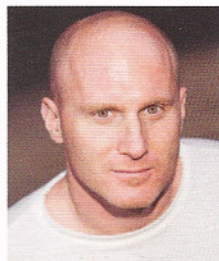




**Mickey Goodman** is an award-winning freelance writer with more than 500 bylined articles in *Veranda*, *Southern Living*,

*Reuters International*, *People Magazine*, *Pink Magazine*, *CURE*, *Atlanta Style & Design*, *Atlanta Magazine*, *Women's Wear Daily*, and a host of regional publications.

She is a member of *The American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA)*, *The National Association of Press Women (NFPW)* and *The Atlanta Press Club*.



**Gregory Eymundson** has been shooting profession-

ally for the past twenty-five years and has been published in *Architectural Digest*, *National Geographic*, *The Robb Report* as well as many outdoor adventure magazines. Greg's contractual assignments take him around the world on a regular basis; from the tops of mountains to the bottom of the ocean.



**Kathy Belcourt** holds degrees in English, History and Education from the University of Western Ontario.

She is a high school teacher in Alliston, ON, and also a small business owner, operating Cottonwood Historic Trim & Moulding in Creemore, ON. When not in the classroom or minding the showroom she writes and travels with her husband Paul visiting

children, grandchildren, and places of historical significance.



As a teenager, **Joern Rohde** began taking photos for his high school yearbook as well as taking photos for the local

neighborhood swim club. Photography continued to be a hobby for Joern until moving to Whistler in 1995. Shortly after arriving, Insight Photography became interested in Joern's panoramic "hobby". As it turned out, his father is the Canadian importer for Noblex panoramic cameras which Joern took an interest in immediately. This "real panoramic" format is very specialized which, locally, gives Joern the upper hand in selling images taken with this technology.



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