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BATHROOMS AT THEIR BEST

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Industrial INSPIRATION

Mid-century modern design is the inspiration behind two beach-view bathrooms

BY AMY TYLER MAIR PHOTOGRAPHY ROB CAMPBELL

Not surprisingly, when it came to designing the bathrooms in their White Rock home, Jonathan and Maia Brown wanted to maximize their ocean view. But the self-professed architecture buffs were also inspired by the flat roofs, floor-to-ceiling windows and utilitarian design of the Case Study Houses in southern California, a number of mid-20th-century homes designed by noted architects of the day in answer to the post-Second World War housing boom.

The bathroom is built on multiple gridlines to capture views of the ocean as well as the surrounding hillside.



One of the most striking aspects of the Browns' master ensuite is its unusual shape. The house, perched on a steep hill, is built on multiple gridlines to capture views of the ocean as well as the

surrounding hillside and main pier to the east of the home. These gridlines are evident in the downstairs master bathroom, which resembles the shape of a parallelogram.



“Some of the lines in the bathroom are perpendicular and some are parallel,” explains builder Ron Kliewer of Kliewer Brothers Construction. “As you enter the bathroom you are aware of the uniqueness of the room. You aren’t walking into a rectangular room or a square room – it wakes you up.”

The most dramatic feature of the bathroom is the ceiling-mounted tub filler that drops a cascade of water directly into the freestanding bathtub below. The ceiling fixture eliminates bulky hardware attached to the side of the tub and was less expensive to install than plumbing the exterior wall of the bathroom.

Upstairs, the Browns opted for more drama with the main-floor powder room. Jonathan was influenced by – of all things – the men’s washroom at the newly renovated Prince George Airport, a cutting-edge example of modern architecture.

The Browns replicated the look of the airport bathroom’s floating vanity atop a stainless steel I-beam, which invokes the industrial feel they love so much but is also calm and clean. The square over-mount sink was then set off-centre



HIGH DRAMA Silver-speckled wallpaper and black trim set the mood in this powder room inspired by the cutting-edge modern design of the Prince George Airport men's room.

of the vanity that extends the width of the powder room.

The empty countertop to the left of the sink functions as a table and eliminates the need for additional furniture in the compact 40-square-foot space. While the sink is set to the right of the vanity, when you open the door to the bathroom it appears centred from the hallway to flow with the rest of the house.

The same industrial materials used throughout the home, from stainless steel countertops to concrete floors, are repeated in the bathroom. But instead of white baseboards, the trim in the

powder room is painted black. The dark baseboards, combined with dramatic black sand-like wallpaper speckled with silver flecks and a crystal chandelier hung low over the vanity, impart a sense of elegance.

"It's fun for guests to have a different experience in the powder room from the rest of the house," says Maia. "People are a bit taken aback by the wallpaper. It is consistent with the rest of the house. It isn't like you are walking into a pink flowery bathroom; it is still masculine and glamorous like the rest of the house." ■

STYLING Heather Cameron

Bringing industrial design home

HARDWARE

According to the Browns' builder, Ron Kliewer of Kliewer Brothers Construction, even the smallest door hinge can be a distraction when it comes to industrial design. "When you see a door on a shower, even the hardware, your eye catches it," says Kliewer. The key is to eliminate extra hardware when possible or exaggerate it and make it an architectural feature. In the Browns' case, a gap between the wall and the sheet glass shower enclosure in the master bathroom serves as a nondescript entry and exit from the shower. By contrast, just upon entry to the ensuite your eye is drawn to the oversized barn door hardware over the walk-in closet.

TEXTURE

The overall mood of the Browns' Case Study-inspired home is Zen-like. Simple finishes, the absence of large-scale patterns, and solid tones are central to the design. To keep the space from becoming monotonous, designer Kylie Brundell with Concept to Design played with texture. The black sand-like wallpaper and embossed feature tiles over the sink in the powder room create interest, but because they are in the same dark tone as the wall colour and baseboards, they don't overpower the space.

ORGANIC ELEMENTS

Even though both bathrooms feature minimalist design, the introduction of organic and traditional design details such as cut flowers, seashells, glass apothecary jars and an etching of a ship all warm up the space. "Our builder told us that the architecture should blend into the background and your things speak to who you are," says Maia. "Modern design is a backdrop for whatever you want it to be. You can add country elements, traditional elements – it all works." □