



WESTERN LIVING // APRIL 2017

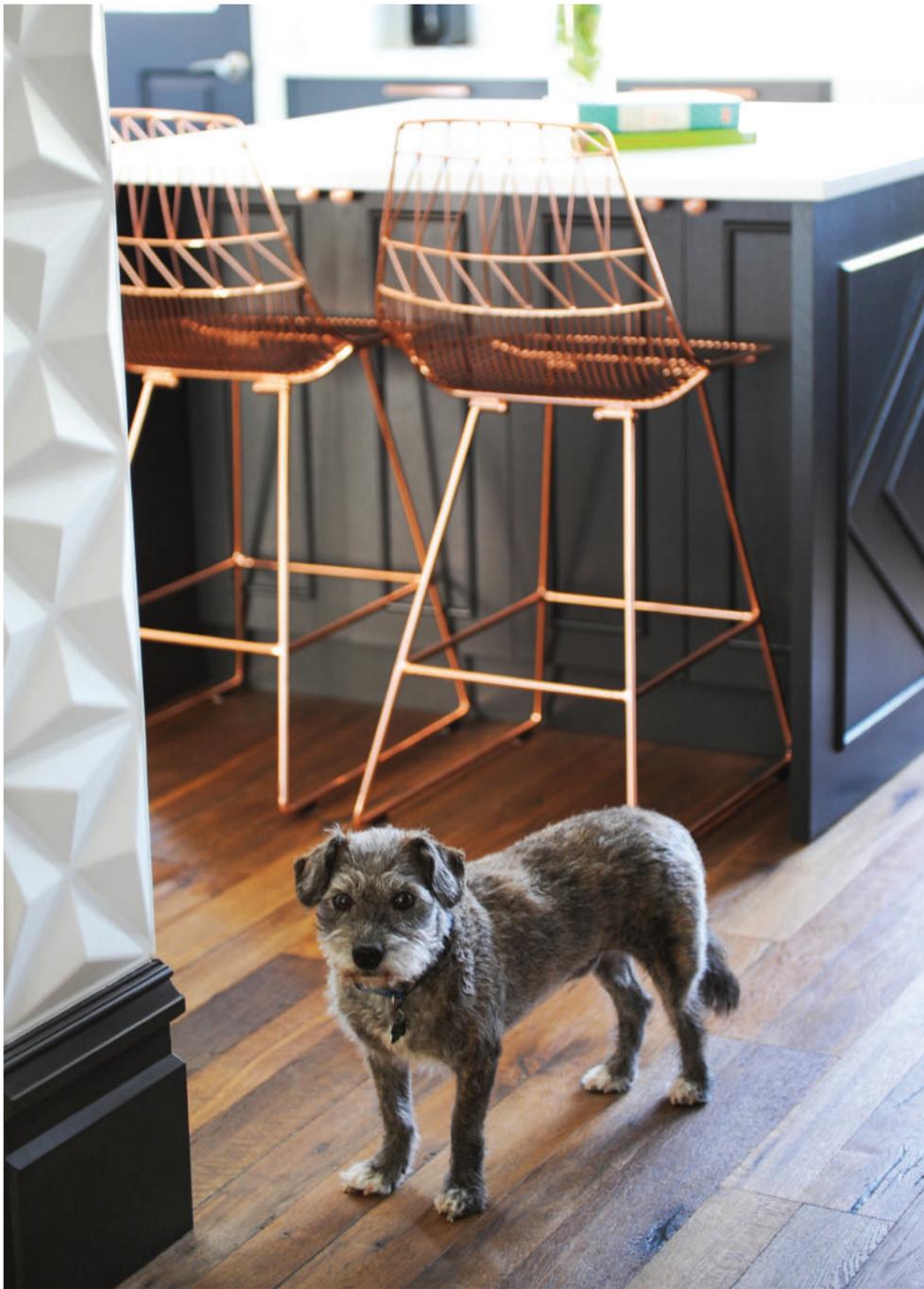
How a Century-Old  
Home Became  
a Modern Beauty

We Love  
Fashion Designer  
Paul Hardy's  
First Home Makeover

PLUS How to  
Cook Like a Pro

# Inspiring Renovations

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**Back in Black** Designer Tanya McLean of Mango Design brought this 1902 home back to glory; it features both vintage designs like the coffee table (opposite) and vintage-inspired pieces, like the Bend stools in the kitchen (above).



by **AMANDA ROSS**  
photographs by **TRACEY AYTON**

# THIS OLD HOUSE

A family home in Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood is given new life and a lot of love.

**Material World** McLean worked with the Strathcona neighbourhood's own Union Wood Co. to create the privacy screen at the front door and the living room's industrial shelving (opposite), in torched oak, blackened steel, copper pipe and wired glass.



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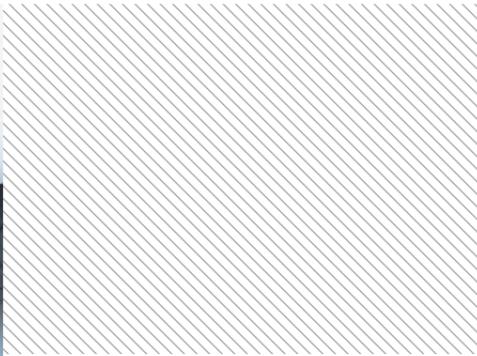
hen homeowners Meika and Jamie interviewed a seasoned contractor after purchasing their 1902 home back in 2012, his advice was clear: you need to live in the house before you renovate. Wise words to live by—if only the pair had listened. But they were too eager to wait. After all, they'd already spent years just finding the house in the first place.

After having nearly given up on househunting altogether, they alighted on the heritage charmer in Vancouver's Strathcona, the city's oldest residential community. The couple loved that the 2,200-square-foot house had high 10-1/2-foot ceilings that created the illusion of more space, but there was no finished basement and the rest was chopped up—and the exterior was covered in 1970s-era stucco. Still, they fell in love. "We could see the potential," says Meika. They immediately put forth plans to replace the stucco with original wood siding, finish the basement and gut the entire main and second floors, despite the contractor's warning. Cue the old words about "best-laid plans."

"We felt a sense of urgency for no reason!" says Meika. "We dove into the renovation and it went terribly wrong." They hadn't hired someone who was familiar with old houses, she says. "He was a friend of a friend—a great guy, but in the condo business. I was never happy with the designs and then we were always changing our minds mid-stream," she adds. "That's huge: if you're not content with the design, you can't change things on the fly, since it costs a lot and no contractor wants to work with people like that!" The distraught pair pulled the plug after replacing the exterior siding and finishing the basement—and opted to live in the unfinished house mid-reno instead to regroup.

Fast forward two years later, and a now-pregnant Meika needed to finally address those open, exposed walls. A recommendation from





*"I love working on old homes because you can feel their soul. This inspires the way we design the space—we definitely want to work with the home's integrity, not against it."*

**Black Beauty** "To be honest, we weren't sure about the black cabinets at first," says Meika. "Now the kitchen is by far our favourite room in the house." The Julien apron-front sink (opposite, bottom right) fits right into the 1902 home.

**Stylish Transition** Covered in white 3D tiles made of natural plant fibre, the reimagined room divider (top left) serves as a focal point to the main floor. Leather pulls on the mill-work add a masculine vibe to the home bar.

**Pattern Play** The Deco Diamonds wallpaper from Graham and Brown in the powder room (top right) served as inspiration elsewhere, too: McLean created an inlay tile in the front foyer that's an echo of this pattern.

**Home Sweet Home** "We made so many mistakes in the first round," says homeowner Meika (pictured right, with baby Morogh). "But once we met Tanya and her partner Nichol, we knew we'd made the right decision."





#### Heritage Details

DuChateau's Trestle oiled white oak flooring has the patina of reclaimed building materials (while still being FSC-certified) and matches the vintage stair treads and banister (top).

**Oh Baby** With Cole and Son's Woods paper on the walls, the nursery feels both modern and fairy tale-like—a reinterpretation of a 1950s design (bottom).



their landscaper, Aloe Designs, put them in touch with Tanya McLean of Mango Design, who coincidentally happened to recommend Claudio Ance as contractor: that very same contractor who had so wisely counselled them to live in the house when they first contemplated renovating. And he lived in the same neighbourhood. “We knew we were now in the right hands,” says Meika.

From the outset, the couple was clear on one thing—they wanted a design that would stand the test of time. “It needed to be timeless and not look like a 2015 renovation 10 years from now,” says Meika. They also wanted to retain the heritage elements while modernizing but also weave in a masculine aesthetic. All of which dovetailed with Tanya’s ethos: “I love working on old homes because you can feel their soul. This inspires the way we design the space—we definitely want to work with the home’s integrity, not against it.” Inspiration came from the palette of an old private investigator’s office: old wood, wired glass, vintage cool.

Part of the task was to create a space that was both functional for the family and for their myriad entertaining needs—they love impromptu gatherings with friends and family. The main floor now doubles as party HQ, thanks to the removal of a structural wall that ran through it. New structural beams stand in for much-needed support, while a dining hutch and coat closet hide the mechanical guts of the house.

With the dividing wall gone, natural light now floods the space. A large Douglas fir window was added over the kitchen sink—which connects the space visually to the backyard—and the mudroom’s walls were removed to create a more open vibe. Tanya had also presented the couple with two kitchen palettes: lighter and airier or darker and more classic with white oak stained in Benjamin Moore’s Black Beauty. The couple opted for black. “People are often afraid of black cabinets and feel they’re too dark—but with the white countertops, backsplash and paint, plus the new kitchen window, the space feels rich but not at all too dark,” says Tanya.

In a surprise twist, Meika went into labour six weeks early. The house, not yet finished, was telling them it wanted them to move in. Claudio wrapped up his work, and the couple soon enjoyed six months each with their newborn during their respective parental leaves. “It was such a nice space to have one-on-one time with the baby,” enthuses Meika. “It’s been the perfect space to celebrate with friends and family.” It was also the perfect end to their renovation tale—and the start of a new chapter in the home’s story. *///*