

Canada's HOME IDEA BOOK

# RENO+DECOR

SUMMER LIVING TRENDS • TOP TEN OUTDOOR ACCESSORIES  
BEAUTIFUL BACKYARD MAKEOVER • HOME FINDS

## Outdoor Issue

**ATTICAT  
PINK**  
by OWENS  
CORNING  
See story  
page 24

JUNE/JULY 2023

\$4.95

07



0 56698 70467 6

PRODUCT SHOWCASE: HOME INSPIRATION



# Open concept by design



Location and lifestyle influence the *outcome*

by TRISH KNIGHT • photos JANIS NICOLAY

**T**here's a debate raging in the interior design world – walls or no walls? Indeed, open-concept interiors surpassed the traditional, divided

floorplan of the past, first rising to fame in the 1970s and dominating designs ever since.

So, what'll it be – open-concept or traditional? The simple answer is, there is no simple answer. When we design a home for a client, there are a variety of factors that help influence the outcome. In the case of this modern-minimalist city home, we focused on its location and the client's lifestyle.

## The location ●●●

An open concept won the favour of these homeowners, a couple with two young-adult children and a brand-

new home in the works being built in a West Vancouver neighbourhood. The new home was perched atop a hill, boasting a different but equally breathtaking view of the ocean, mountains and city. The home's location became a driving factor behind some key design decisions.

The architect maximized the views and the home's exposure with window placement: North-facing windows are positioned higher up in order to frame the mountain peaks. The principal bath catches the morning sun in its east-facing windows, while the southwest-facing main living area enjoys great light flooding into the soaring 14-ft. space all day, lending the home a modern, loft-like feel.

## The lifestyle ●●●

This was another critical component addressed in the design. When we

first met these clients, they were living in a traditional-style home and were open to an open concept, and wanted a space that would evolve with the family's changing needs in the future.

Because the homeowners' penchant for hosting large family gatherings centred around cooking and enjoying meals together, the kitchen was a design priority. The prep area opens to the main living room, allowing the chef to enjoy unobstructed views and the company of guests, while cooking. In staying true to the design, we elected to have the pantry/back kitchen open as well, adding visual interest and charming custom details.

Messy items are carefully hidden around the corner, in a space that doubles as a coffee/breakfast bar.



## designer advice

An open-concept design demands visual continuity between adjoining areas such as the kitchen, living room and dining room, which are typically combined, but have their distinct functions. Colour and material palettes create that continuity through design elements such as continuous flooring, a uniform colour scheme, and repetition of shape and materials. Working with a neutral colour palette and creating interest with texture leads to a more balanced esthetic.

## Continuity ●●●

To achieve visual continuity between the kitchen and living area, we opted for a clean, minimal look in keeping with the modern, linear elements of the adjoining living area.

A large-format porcelain tile runs through the entire space, including the stairs, bedrooms and exterior patios, and a single paint colour was utilized for all walls, with two finishes for cabinetry and a feature wall in cement to tie in the exterior features.

With minimal interior walls, sound will travel farther. Some subtle ways to help absorb excess sound is to integrate soft furnishings, area rugs and drapes into the space. Consider panel walls in wood specially designed to help absorb and reflect sound.

## Final touches ●●●

Last but not least, the final touches make all the difference. Create a "curated" collection of furniture and decor. Choose each piece



thoughtfully, ensure it has a purpose, and each item should relate to the rest.

In an open-concept space, rooms can be seen from all angles, and different "zones" are defined by the

details, including furniture placement, area rugs and lighting. Remember to leave some negative space between the various functional areas to give them some breathing room.



*Designers Trish Knight and Nicole Varga are co-founders of Knight Varga Interiors. Collectively with two decades of experience, this Vancouver-based multi-award-winning design firm is known for creating well curated interiors. The firm provides complete bespoke residential design services throughout Vancouver & North America. [knightvarga.com](http://knightvarga.com) @knightvarga*