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Inviting Design

Wine Country Inspires
a Chic Calgary Home

Retro and Modern:
Hot New Furniture
for 2017

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Chicken Dinner*



Wine Country Style
By adding wooden columns and steel beams to the double-entry entryway, designer Nina Dang Mitchell created both a warmer, more welcoming space and brought a house-style vibe to the Calgary home. The dark rug, console and ottoman in the same entry (shown) provide an elegant spot to slip on shoes.

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

Who needs wine country when the best elements of an intimate resort are right down the hall?

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photographs by COLIN WAY



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ot everyone can retire to the Napa Valley. Even those who have the means may have locally rooted kids and grandkids who likely wouldn't appreciate the distance—and then there are the monthly board meetings and book clubs and friends and assorted other commitments that make the thought of leaving one's hometown for wine country start to seem like a pinot-fuelled pipe dream.

As it turned out for recently retired couple Michele and Bob Michaleski, however, some aspects of the California fantasy have been fairly well compensated for in a Calgary home whose aesthetic brings to mind a classic Napa resort.

After a dozen years in a large, traditional house on an acreage on the city's western limits, the Michaleskis—who loved the expansiveness inside and out when they had kids at home—found themselves feeling a little too remote. “We didn’t want to be in Springbank anymore and wanted to downsize,” says Michele. “We were ready for a more urban life, for places to walk to and things to see and do in the city.” Currie Barracks, a former site of CFB family housing and located within walking distance of Marda Loop's village of amenities, suited them perfectly.



Love Living
Dang-Mitchell worked with greys, whites and bronzes for the colour palette, as well as a mix of modern and traditional furniture design (above). In the dining room (above left), a Graham Gillmore piece strikes a vibrant note in a somewhat mid-century influenced design.

“We were ready for a more urban life,” says homeowner Michele Michaleski, “for places to walk to and things to see and do in the city.”



"My son and his girlfriend are living with us while they look for their own home to purchase," says Michele, adding with a smile, "I don't think they're in a huge hurry to go."

Quiet Retreat

The master bedroom features hand-painted wallpaper from Gracie Studio (left). The master bath is set for a spa-like experience (right), with travertine lining the wall behind a deep Aquebress tub.

The Michaleskis' designer of choice, Nam Dang-Mitchell, got in on the home's construction in time to tweak the blueprints of the two-storey "Prairie-style" plan by luxury builder Mission Homes. Dang-Mitchell's dominant focus was to bring in the light, warmth and ambience of a Northern California winery.

The entrance to the home, whose brick exterior follows the architectural regulations of the New Urbanism-style neighbourhood, was underpinned by a main double-height hallway. Concerned there was risk of "feeling like you were in a two-storey box of drywall," Dang-Mitchell added wooden columns and steel I-beams to add interest to the hallway—elements that appear structural but whose sole purpose is to introduce a Napa feel. Three riveted-steel hanging candelabras leading to the kitchen likewise set the stage for a combined palette of natural and industrial materials, including white oak cabinetry, grey-and-white marble countertops and an oversized riveted-steel hood fan with bronze strappings; the happy effect of the relaxed culinary-chic aesthetic on visitors is a hunch that a bottle of new-world red and a French Laundry-inspired dinner may not be out of the question. (They're invariably correct.)



While nods to Northern California's inns are repeated throughout the house from the grey limestone fireplace, wide-plank wood flooring and bronze fixtures on the free-standing spa tub, Michele's own sartorial taste gets equal props for inspiring the elegant interior. "Michele is a blonde and wears lots of greys, whites and bronzes," says Dang-Mitchell. "Her style is tailored, classic, clean and modern—I took cues from her in designing a shell that could accept modern pieces as well as traditional furnishings."

The master bedroom (which is the only bedroom on the main floor; the others are located in the basement, along with a wine room, weight room and an extensive gallery of the couple's collection of traditional Canadian landscape paintings) is where Dang-Mitchell's two major inspirations dovetail into this sanctuary. Hand-painted wallpaper by Gracie Studio, a sleek canopy bed and an elegant, neutral palette ensure the homeowners and their guests want to check in and never check out.

"My son and his girlfriend are living with us while they look for their own home to purchase," says Michele, adding with a smile, "I don't think they're in a huge hurry to go." To be sure, it's tough to imagine more welcoming accommodations in any climate. **///**