



**THIS IS A STORY OF GLASS, STONE, WOOD AND LEATHER,** and how the combination of these elements turned a West Vancouver property into a balanced, high-end home.

This quartet of materials gives the two-storey home a cool temperament, a timeless solemnity, a natural warmth and a comfortable funkiness.

Designers Vanja Santic and Dario Drinovac, who own Vancouver firm ROOM<sup>8</sup>, sought out the highest quality glass, stone, wood and leather,

and designed the three-bedroom house in such a way that one element never takes centre stage.

“You don’t want any to fight for dominance,” says Drinovac, who knows that a preponderance of stone and glass—those contemporary designer favourites—can turn a house cold. ☞

*The wood wall, which helps define the dining room, is actually one side of a cube.*

*The powder room is inside the cube; its seamless entrance has no frame or jam.*

*Also sharing that cube space, on the other side, is the kitchen pantry.*





Once construction was completed on the 3,800-square-foot home, ROOM<sup>8</sup> sourced and installed all the furnishings and finishes in the space. The company also worked with the homeowner on the selection of colours and materials used on the exterior of the home, selecting and supplying the stone used outdoors, which matches the stone in the home's interiors.

The 2012 build, which sits on the site of a demolished house, is perched on a slope

overlooking Burrard Inlet. Its exterior style is modern, and some of its lines are Art Deco. The two black overhangs in the rear offer a pleasing geometric sculpture, even if they exist simply to compensate for the variance in height between the back and the front.

The story of the four elements begins with a specialty that ROOM<sup>8</sup> has developed: highly durable glossy glass. The firm has been working with it since 1999 and has been getting an increasing

number of clients to install it in their kitchens. Drinovac says the Italian-made material he imports, customized by the trusted manufacturers who work closely with him, is both indestructible and elegant. "This glass is four times stronger than tempered glass. Only a diamond or Swarovski crystal could scratch it," he says.

*Vancouver-based artist Tanya Slingsby created all the canvases and sculptures in the home.*



A black version of that glossy glass covers the kitchen's pantries, cabinets, and refrigerator door, with a grey version covering the countertops, backsplash and island's sides. In the rest of the house's interior and outside on the deck, clear glass is used to allow for the passage of light and to increase sightlines, namely through windows and balustrades.

The stone chapter in this story takes a historical turn before it enters this house. Limestone

slabs—those that measure four-feet-square on the interior floors and those that are two-feet square on the deck—are cut in a factory in Croatia. The factory, which is close to the Adriatic Sea, has been around since 1905, and, according to Drinovac, helped refurbish the White House early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. So, how did the U.S. government from that era wind up commissioning a foreign factory for such an important monument? “There was an American delegation in Vienna.

They looked at all these buildings and saw that after so many years there was no deterioration,” says Drinovac, adding that the Viennese had been loyal limestone clients of the Croatians. ☞

*The black glass's sleekness is enhanced by the absence of cabinet handles. The drawers are electronically opened with a tap of a hand that triggers a sensor, which in turn pushes the drawer forward. All the other cabinets, as well as the refrigerator, open with pull handles that are recessed in their edges.*





Drinovac visited the factory for the Vancouver project, and had the stones x-rayed to ensure there were no voids in the slabs.

The homeowners originally wanted porcelain but “it looked too commercial,” he says, adding that the superior look of so many great buildings in the world comes from natural stone, such as this.

Wood brings a rough and natural quality to this house and adds some complexity to

this story. A meeting of the smooth, the sleek and the strong makes for a boring tale, but put in some wood, and you get a mix that’s closer to nature. The light-grain walnut that’s found on the kitchen stools, the cladding on the feature walls, a credenza and some shelving, bring a softer sense to the house, while a raw-wood elm table and chair in the entrance add some “bohemian chic” to the house, Drinovac says. *✍*

*All the bull-hide furnishings in the living room are from Baxter Italia. The lamp’s base is crafted of European cedar; the green chairs have ash legs and a seat base of cast brushed aluminum.*



*“This glass is four times stronger than tempered glass. Only a diamond or Swarovski crystal could scratch it.”*

The story closes with the final element: leather. Technically, it's Norwegian bull hide, used in the living room: on the sofa, the cowhide print armchair, and two smaller green chairs in nabuk, (a more velvet-like bull hide). Even the lampshade, which is meant to look like the more endangered zebra is made of bull hide, and the coffee table top is also made from... yes, bull hide.

All that animal hide gives the space a '70s feel, but the play of colours and the high grade

of materials, as well as the originality of the pieces, anchor it in the contemporary.

Santic and Drinovac coordinated every aspect of the project. While they were the authors of this story, the glass, stone, wood and leather became the protagonists and brought the tale to life. »

*With its comfortable outdoor furniture, sea-and-sky view, and enough room to lounge on the deck or in the garden, the home's exterior is every bit as inviting as its interior.*

