



Eat, Play, Live

After undertaking two simultaneous renovations, a busy restaurateur couple finds calm in their luxurious bungalow oasis

This page Accents and accessories in metallics bring a modern touch to this cozy dining area for two.

Opposite The renovation removed interior walls to allow for a larger, more comfortable kitchen.



Fresh, serene and peaceful are not words that typically describe the hectic lives of restaurateurs. But in the case of Kim and Han Ngo, part owners of a Chinese restaurant, their Mayfield home is the ultimate tranquil retreat from their fast-paced work environment.

The chord between home and restaurant life is tight. When family needed help with the restaurant nine years ago, the Ngos moved from Calgary, became part owners of Szechuan Castle and were launched into a whole new lifestyle. Their home is a lifeline that provides balance and escape, and it also reflects their love of cooking — they cook many meals for family and friends on a professional Wolf gas range in their kitchen.

“This is all the space we need. There are only two of us,” says Kim of their newly renovated, 1,000-square-foot bungalow. “If we were to buy a new house, we would be farther from the res-

taurant. That’s the last thing we want because we work 14-hour days.” In fact, their home is close enough the couple can walk home for midday escapes from the restaurant.

When the Ngos house-hunted nine years ago, Han didn’t want to view the 1950s west-end bungalow. But, at Kim’s insistence, they took a look. To their surprise, they both liked it.

“We bought this house from an older couple who had lived here for more than 40 years,” Kim says. “We liked it very much, but wanted a fresh look.”

Serendipitously, one of their regular customers at the restaurant was interior designer Marie Hebson of Interiors by Design.

“Marie said that she would love to design the restaurant for us,” says Kim. “But we had just redone the kitchen, so we weren’t ready.”

“Kim is an Asian beauty,” says Hebson. “Her smile lights up the room. I kept telling her I wanted to renovate the restaurant to reflect her

beauty and the beauty of the food.”

After a few chats, the Ngos hired Hebson to work on their residence, instead. But, after a major fire ripped through the restaurant, Hebson ended up redesigning the Szechuan Castle’s interior, too.

“The Ngos have busy, chaotic lives, so they wanted a pure, tranquil oasis at home,” says Hebson.

The renovation included removing a bedroom and relocating a bathroom to make way for a more luxurious bathroom and expanded kitchen. Now, instead of a choppy, walled-in layout, the space is linear and open.

To complement the dark cabinetry in the kitchen, Hebson chose a light backsplash and a quartz countertop for contrast. The wall colour was inspired by the muted brown and grey hues in the countertop. Sea foam blue on the banquette upholstery helped to soften the home’s hard edges — the countertop, cabinetry and shelving — and



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– Marie Hebson, interior designer

Top An oversized ottoman doubles as a coffee table with the addition of a tray.

Above Built-in storage blends in the living room combining form and function by hiding the TV.

Above Right A colour palette of beiges, greys and blues creates a calming atmosphere with a beautiful play of light.

give an ethereal light to the space.

Throughout the home, shades of blue, grey and graphite espresso form the colour palette. Every square inch of the house also focuses on style and functionality. Practical and visually pleasing features throughout include custom bathroom cabinetry that hides an ironing board and provides additional clothing storage, a bench along the kitchen wall for extra seating, and a wired-in sound system running from the living room to the bathroom, eliminating messy chords.

In the kitchen, the dining bench was custom-built to accommodate the homeowners’ heights. “We didn’t want our feet to dangle,” says Kim. Behind the bench, a feature wall is emphasized with wallpaper that mimics raw silk, while recessed glass shelving provides storage.

The most notable space in the house is the fully tricked-out master bathroom. Han points out the timed exhaust system that controls bathroom humidity and the heated floor covered with brown travertine tiles. There is also a glass shower and adjacent soaker tub. Kim’s favourite feature sits beside the shower: a Neorest 500 commode, a \$4,000 extravagance that automatically deodorizes itself, has a heated seat and even has a built-in bidet. “I got my dream toilet,” she laughs.

In the living room, the couple hides their flat-screen TV behind custom cabinetry that flanks a central fireplace. Above the fireplace, a bright, stylized oil painting of the Bow River hangs over the mantle. It was painted by Han’s sister, Thai Ngo, a Calgary-based artist, and painted with colours matching the decor. Personalization to

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“We asked Marie to design a functional and tranquil space. She achieved both for us,”

-Kim Ngo, homeowner



The master ensuite is a luxurious retreat complete with heated floor, glassed-in shower and an oversized soaker tub.



The Source

DINING ROOM

Chairs custom designed by Interiors by Design (IBD) (decorati.com/cmariehebson), built by DesignMaster (designmasterfurniture.com), upholstery from J.Ennis Fabrics (jennisfabrics.com), opal fabric by Maxwell Trapeze 1936 Opal (maxwellfabrics.com)

Table custom-designed by IBD

Bamboo floors by Commercial Linocraft (16307 111 Ave., 780-455-9106)

Banquette custom-designed by IBD, built by Trevor Brown Upholstery (trevorbrown.com)

Throw pillow 1936 Opal by Maxwell Trapeze

Flame mirror by Global Views (globalviews.com)

Chandelier and bird decorations by Park Lighting (10353 170 St., 780-434-9600)

LIVING ROOM

Couch and ottoman by Leather Elite (10434 Mayfield Rd., 780-444-7800)

Chest by Lexington Furniture from Coast Wholesale Appliances (5345 Gateway Blvd., 780-436-5501 and 18503 Stony Plain Rd., 780-451-6095)

Area rug from Sears Flooring (16307 111 Ave., 780-452-6169, commercialcarpetcraft.com)

Oil painting by Thai Le Ngo (thailengo.com)

Fireplace refurbished and custom designed by IBD, slate cladding from Julian Ceramic Tile (11419 160 St., 780-452-5010, juliantile.com) and construction by Rock-Solid Construction Services (780-932-2936)

Tilework by Commercial Linocraft

Cabinetry by Superior Cabinetry (11045 190 St., 780-409-3400, superiorcabinets.ca)

KITCHEN

Stove by Wolf from Coast Wholesale Appliances

Cabinetry by Superior Cabinetry

Bamboo flooring from Commercial Linocraft

Faucet from the American Standard Culinaire Collection (americanstandard.ca)

BATHROOM

Bath tub and shower doors from Bartle & Gibson Co. Ltd. (10045 158 St., 780-483-1411 and 13475 Fort Rd., 780-472-2850)

Cabinetry by Superior Cabinetry

Mirror custom-designed by IBD

Wall sconce and pendants from Park Lighting

Flooring from Commercial Linocraft

this degree means the couple has definitely made a home for themselves.

“We thought we’d only be in Edmonton for five years to help with the restaurant,” says Han. But after the ordeal of the restaurant fire and undertaking such large renovations, their plans changed. They now share a deeper connection to both their living and working spaces.

“We look forward to going to work every morning,” says Kim. “Our customers are part of our family. That’s how we met Marie.”

Looking back, Kim remembers the ups and downs of managing simultaneous renovations at home and at work over the course of more than four months.

“Someone called my husband about the demolition, and he’d say, ‘Which one?’” laughs Kim. “It’s so funny now!” But at the time, there was no refuge. Amidst a whirlwind of planning and insurance calls, Kim was so busy she had to resort to communicating with Hebson through late-night e-mails.

Although managing two renovations was difficult, the Ngos’ wishes came true in the end.

“We asked Marie to design a functional and tranquil space. She achieved both for us,” says Kim. “I feel like I’m in a million-dollar home.”

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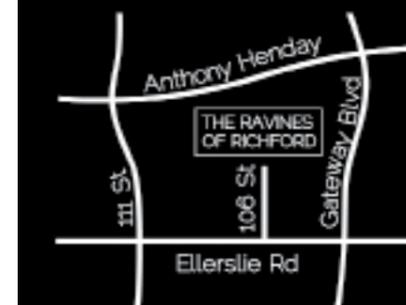


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