

MODERN LOVE

Appearing to float on a rocky oceanfront outcrop in Oak Bay, the iconic home of designer Bruce Wilkin and Ann Hillyer offers a fresh, modern look rooted in classic aesthetics. It's a home that has inspired poets and photographers, and, at the time of its construction, marked a brave thrust into modernism in a city and neighbourhood known for heritage.

◀ The great room opens to the cantilevered patio, which expands the space for entertaining and barbecuing. The patio faces west and its glass railings allow for unimpeded views.





When friends and business partners Bruce Wilkin and Ann Hillyer first built their Oak Bay oceanfront home with its modern forms and clean lines, it was so visionary that some people didn't understand this magnificent piece of architecture. Five years later, this modernist home is an accepted — and celebrated — part of Victoria's visual landscape. In fact, year by year, other homes sharing a modern aesthetic have begun to pop up.

Influenced by Scandinavian and Austrian architecture and the work of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, the home reflects Wilkin's streamlined approach with its flat roof, clean lines, and absence of embellishment. Concrete, wood, and glass communicate a simple dialogue with the home's classic lines. With this sensibility, it's little wonder Wilkin frequently quotes Richard Neutra, Oscar Niemeyer, and Tadao Ando, legends of architectural modernism.

"My main objective while designing this house was to maximize the views and make all of the elements of the house appear to be floating while maintaining the architectural lines as cleanly as possible," says Wilkin, who, prior to construction, lived with Hillyer in an existing bungalow on the property, getting to know the views and the light. With this intimate knowledge of the land, they designed their 5,500-square-foot, two-level home to take full advantage of ocean views to the west, south, and east.

Hillyer's sensibilities influenced the design as well. "I wanted rooms where I could bathe in light," she says. The original design for the home's façade didn't satisfy this craving for light, so Wilkin then designed a new concept for the Mondrian-inspired façade, with tiny windows to bring western light to the hallways. Like the work of Mondrian, the home's façade makes a strong, beautiful statement of radical simplicity.

▲ MODERN QUARTERS

Inspired by the magnificent lodges of the West Coast, this great room features stunning views of the surrounding mountains. The perimeter inside the home is covered with fir panelling, which brings a sense of rhythm, echoing the windows. Two over-scaled Cassina sofas bring instant symmetry to the architectural asymmetry of the space.



▲ SIGNATURE STYLE

An oversized custom-designed table comfortably seats 14 in a dining area defined by Artemide light fixtures. Rift-cut white oak floors complement the fir walls, seamlessly adding an unexpected sense of warmth to the house. The paint, Decorators White by Pratt and Lambert, adds a contemporary crispness to the walls, ceiling, baseboards, and trim.

▲ DREAM LIBRARY

Arne Jacobsen chairs (circa 1950s) and a Saarinen tulip table were carefully chosen to allow for minimum obstruction of the view. Aboriginal masks and black and white photography offset the architectural library wall, creating the perfect background for this beautiful space.



▲ BALANCING ACT

A cantilevered ceiling detail with dramatic Flos wall lamps overhead provides light to the peninsula. The grand island with a Cambrian black antique countertop is an instant focal point and hosts a TV at the end-gable conversation area. The kitchen features two cooking areas, one for savory, the other for sweets, and two sinks with Tara Ultra Dornbracht faucets, so that the owners, who both love to cook and entertain, each have ample space to work.



▼ LIVING COLOUR

A low credenza designed by Wilkin floats in the space, inconspicuously complementing the fireplace lines. Tolomeo lamps add a contemporary juxtaposition while a bright painting by world-renowned Kim Dorland brings personality and colour to the space. Lit shelving enhances the stunning glass collection above the custom-designed elongated mantel and floating fireplace.

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◀ MONDRIAN INSPIRED

The original design for the façade didn't have any windows, which concerned Hillyer. Even if the hallway had skylights installed, she felt it would have been too dark and cave-like, so Wilkin designed a new concept for the façade, including tiny windows that bring western light into the hallways. Inspired by the work of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, the windows were a practical yet artful design solution.

y View this home's inside panelling with poems written in light projected on them at yammagazine.com/extra.

SOURCES

- Architect: Bruce Wilkin Design
- Builder: Bruce Wilkin Design
- Interior Design: Bruce Wilkin Design
- Custom Furniture: Anthony Balzer, Bruce Wilkin
- Cabinetry: Jason Good Custom Cabinets
- Tile: Stone Tile/DAL/C&S
- Carpet: Fabrica
- Hardware and Plumbing Fixtures: Victoria Specialty Hardware
- Bathroom: Victoria Specialty Hardware
- Audio/Video: Sound Hounds
- Furnishings: Gabriel Ross
- Landscape Design: Bruce Wilkin Design
- Patio Containers Design: Barbara Gergel
- Patio Planters: Kathryn Pineo and Rob Rogers, Demi Tasse Specialty Plants
- Containers: Old Farm Garden Stone, Cowichan Valley
- Construction Material Supplier: Slegg Lumber

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