

By Danielle Pope | Photos by Jeffrey Bosdet

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

A two-storey penthouse with spectacular views goes from blank slate to soirée central.

When Kayla and Adam moved into their luxury penthouse overlooking downtown, they were awed by the vantage point: 180-degree views of the city, the distant Olympic mountains and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

It didn't matter that their only furniture, for months, was a pair of camping chairs placed strategically by the windows in their otherwise empty 3,500-square-foot loft. They didn't want to commit to the wrong motif, after all — but the scene was comical.

"We wanted it to look nice, but we could not even decide on the kitchen table," says Kayla.

The newlywed couple was united on that front.

"We knew, pretty quickly, we would need help with even the basic things," says Adam.

A ONE-OF-A-KIND FIND

It wasn't long before the pair reached out to Iván Meade, principal designer and founder of Meade Design Group. They wanted to turn their new home into a space where they would feel proud to hold social soirées above the city — and one where they could relax, just the two of them, away from their hectic professional lives.



The view from this downtown condo was spectacular, but the giant columns posed a design challenge. Iván Meade's team introduced layers of texture — for instance, in the blue velvet accent chair and custom fabric sectional, both by Rove Concepts — and made the most of the room's height with the Bocci 100.11 chandelier.



"IT'S NOT YOUR TYPICAL WEST COAST CONDO — WE WANTED SOMETHING MORE SOPHISTICATED."

Above: Stone becomes a grounding feature in this high-rise design, with the marble side table from CB2 and feature coffee table from Eichholtz.

Right: The twin leather lounge chairs by CB2, offset with textural pillows from Maxwell Fabrics, create a chic and cozy conversational nook.

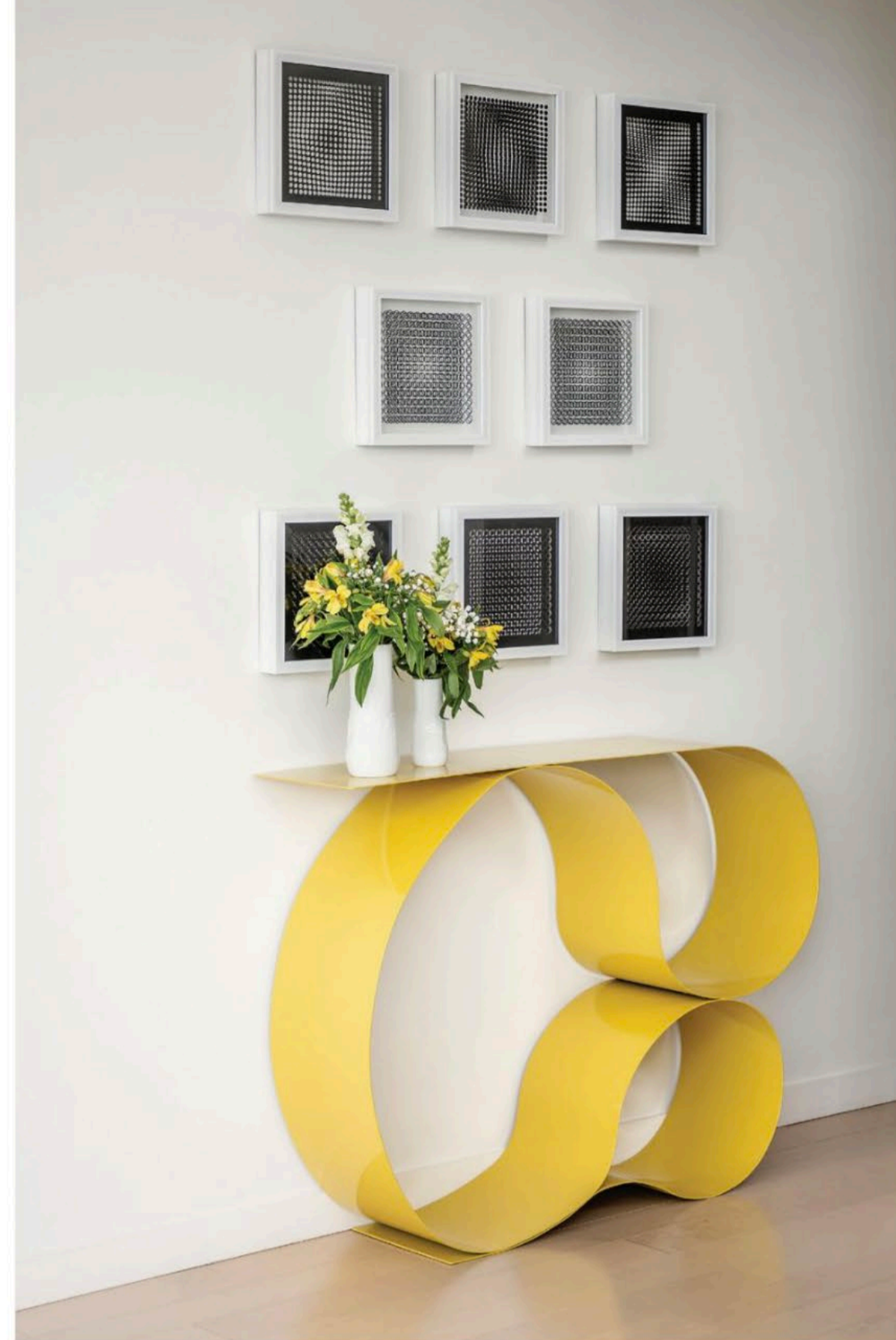
Meade recalls his first visit: The views were the best he'd ever seen in Victoria. The two-storey penthouse was a one-of-a-kind find. Yet five massive columns overtook the living space and an almost-hidden fireplace under a stairwell created a confusing distraction from the focal point of the view.

"It was actually a very awkward space," says Meade. "It had remarkable views, almost all windows, but no walls to hang art and a fireplace under the stairs, which made no sense."

While Meade was thrilled with the available space, creating style sans walls demanded some creativity. The space needed to reflect the youthful energy of the couple and the modern vibrancy of downtown, while also offering a reprieve from it.

Meade opted for an eclectic palette: custom and European pieces, a classic black-and-white scheme and dramatic pops of colour. Sweeping low, organic forms encourage movement in the space, with an aim to offset the rigidity of the building's more industrial, rectilinear elements.

Gathering areas were a priority throughout the home, with coves for the couple to enjoy a visit with guests while experiencing the vista. Two custom light installations draw attention upwards,



The artful entryway features a sculptural yellow credenza by Inés Benavides beneath an art series by Victor Vasarely, a leader of the 20th-century Op-art movement.



and suspended furnishings inspire conversation. The curved sofa by Rove Concepts is a feature of the room, capitalizing on the premium view.

"The furniture has to work with the scale of the home so it doesn't feel so empty," says Meade, noting most pieces are large and low. "The curved sofa and the art was really important in this type of project. It's not your typical West Coast condo — we wanted something more sophisticated."

The greatest shift of the reno was the feature wall divider Meade conceptualized to add calming stabilization to the room and counter the "fishbowl" effect of being almost surrounded by windows. The millwork and inset fireplace add a romantic touch for the couple to enjoy. The wall also holds space for a huge, 60-by-60-inch, custom piece by Victoria artist Natalie Brake. The artwork was commissioned specifically for the couple, and introduces bold colour to the home while giving onlookers a captivating view away from the natural ones.

'IT ALL BELONGS'

To create a luxurious touch, Meade added velvet fabrics, natural woods and stone sculptures. He also drafted the traditional dining area into the living zone and created a dining nook by the kitchen to seat a modest number of guests.

"We never would have thought, ourselves, of moving the location of the table. It's so much more functional," says Kayla. "When we have friends over, the layout really carries people through different parts of the living area — you're in the living space for appetizers, at the dining table for the main. It turned our home into this natural flow, and the side tables and stools can move around, too, so it has extra flexibility, depending on the event."

Despite their stunning social setting, the couple says they are still settling in. Their bedroom — ironically — is little more than a mattress on the floor. It's the next spot for attention, they agree.

"The millworker who built the wall panels, Jordan Cassidy, said everything should look like it has always been here — but also adds depth to the space," says Adam. "That's really what our home has become. It all belongs."

While the current setup leaves no hint of the original camping chairs, Kayla confesses that, as much as she loves their furniture now, she sometimes misses the nostalgia. No surprise: Their favourite place is still where those camping chairs once sat.

"Iván designed everything looking out, right down to mirror reflections, so that even if you're facing somewhere else you still catch glimpses of the view," says Adam. "Everything looks great, but it's also very comfortable. There were so many pieces I would never have considered in a furniture store — like our couch — but, in our home, it fits perfectly and it's where I sit all the time."



The kitchen and dining areas are designed for easy entertaining. Sliding glass doors close off the clutter of prep work in the kitchen. Utopia mini pendants by Kelly Wearstler illuminate gatherings at the island. In the far corner, a Rock Table by MDF Italia accommodates a modest number of guests.

PROJECT SUPPORT

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Meade Design Group

Contractor:
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