

preventing the unexpected...

Many homeowners think about getting a full home inspection before purchasing a home. But what about before a major home renovation? It can **pay** to **inspect** before beginning any renovation. **> P.6**



Make the most of the reno

After the home renovation is complete, the old furniture and interior décor may not really match the new look. This is when the professionals – **home stagers and interior designers** – can help homeowners maximize their newly renovated living space with stylish furniture and finishings that won't necessarily cost a lot more money. **» p.5**

September 2010

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Tom Bakker Design's Tom Bakker relaxes at a South Surrey home where his company completed a major renovation. When a home starts getting older, it may be necessary to rebuild entirely, but smaller renovations can make vast improvements to the home, inside and out, as well. *Martin Knowles photo*



change it up

Rebuild: repairs only go so far

Metro Vancouver renovator makes it as easy as possible for his clients

MAGGIE CALLOWAY

The home is outdated, old and tired. The 1970s may seem like yesterday but it's 35 to 40 years ago. Maybe the kids are gone and it's time for the homeowners to rethink the way they use their

living space. The remnants from the '70s can be embarrassing and even if the trend setters say revisiting the era is in, it is definitely time for a change.

There is no question it's a big decision to embark on a major renovation.

When a house reaches around 35 years of age, there is a lot to change in order to bring the mechanics of the home up to date and more energy-efficient.

But when the homeowners love their neighbourhood and want to stay in a place where 'everybody knows your name,' then a renovation is definitely worth considering.

The first job is to find a designer and contractor who take the time to fully understand the family's dynamic, needs, and dreams. Homeown-

CONTINUED ON P.2



Cater to your kitchen

TRICIA LESLIE

One definition of a kitchen describes it as simply, "a room or an area equipped for preparing and cooking food."

But it is so much more than that.

Sure, the tempting smells that waft throughout the entire house after a cookie-baking session, or prior to a meal, are indicative that food preparation is indeed, important to this part of the home.

But the kitchen is also – often – the heart of the home.

It's the warm, safe refuge where kids take their troubles to Mom.

It's where tweens and teens hang out after school or sports or shopping.

It becomes the centre of every party and social event ever held in the home and, as all of these things, it is related to or part of countless memories as the family grows together.

This could be why so many homeowners focus on the kitchen when planning home renovations.

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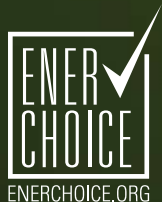
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AFTER



BEFORE

Before and after photos show the massive difference a home renovation can make. From uninviting or out of date to welcoming and chic, many reputable Metro Vancouver renovators are available to help homeowners get exactly what they want when the renovation is complete. Greater Vancouver Homebuilders' Association president and CEO Peter Simpson notes \$3.7 billion is expected to be spent on home renovations this year in Metro Vancouver alone.

'My job is to open the doors of creativity'

CONTINUED FROM P.1

ers will be spending a lot of time with these people over several months, so it's important not to make any quick decisions they may regret.

A year of renovation can seem like 10 if the homeowners are at odds with contractors; if they have a bad experience during the design and build stage, this could also influence how

they feel about the end result and the ongoing enjoyment of their home.

Tom Bakker of Tom Bakker Design, a well-known Metro Vancouver practitioner of interior and architectural design, has an interesting background; he started out studying furniture design and manufacturing in Holland.

"My education was more technical than academic, which has paid great dividends throughout my career," Bakker says.

"I am closer to the manufacturing shops. When I design, I am also thinking about who is going to build this for me. I am pushing the envelope all the time. I am questioning the norm constantly."

Bakker says he asks his clients 'why' throughout every step of the design stage of

CONTINUED ON P.3



AFTER

Look at experience, reputation before reno

CONTINUED FROM P.2

the renovation process.

“Everything should be questioned. It is easy to just follow the trends but this is their home and every single item needs to work for this family,” says Bakker.

“My job is to open the doors of creativity. It is then you get something very special.”

Bakker refers to himself as a coach to his clients and describes the relationship as a team that feeds off each other.

“You don’t need a designer telling you what to do,” he says.

During the design phase, Bakker encourages clients to ‘open the floodgates of creativity’ and forget the budget in order to help visualize what the clients really want.

“This is when you get interiors that put tears in people’s eyes,” says Bakker.

“This is my biggest reward – when people are totally thrilled with the results, both interior and exterior.”

Bakker has had a varied career; he has designed hotels, yachts, and commercial offices.

This vast experience, plus his grounding in design and manufacture, make him unique and able to bring a different dimension to every project.

Many of his clients are well-travelled and have been exposed to a vast variety of styles, and they want to incorporate some of what they’ve seen in their own home.

“If they have stayed in a hotel room they loved, for instance, they want that same feeling in their own home.

“Travel changes who people are and they want that reflected in their surroundings,” Bakker says.

Bakker feels the finished

CONTINUED ON P.4



Tom Bakker Design created a functional backyard space that looks fantastic at a South Surrey home. Bakker says it’s important for clients to have a good relationship with the people who are doing their renovation. He says it’s his job to help the clients think creatively about their dream renovation and get any and all ideas flowing. ‘It is then (that) you get something very special,’ Bakker says.

Tom Bakker Design photos



BEFORE



Home should 'fit like a glove'

CONTINUED FROM P.3

home should fit the homeowners like a glove, which takes a lot of time and effort.

"Every single time the parameters are so different. The challenge I always put on myself is that the finished home really needs to fit in the minutest detail," Bakker says.

"My conditioning, both in Holland and here, comes from jobs where I was exposed to clients who expected and demanded the very best in a very positive way."

Everyone embarking on such a major project should prepare in advance, not just the physical dislocation but the stress such a venture places on each member of the family.

Communication is the key, and it's important to fully understand the timeline of the renovation – delays are sometimes inevitable while waiting for materials, for example – but the end result is usually worth any headaches along the way.

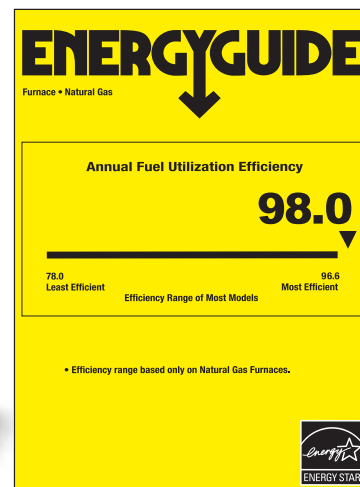


This hot tub and outdoor deck area created functional space that can be used year-round in a South Surrey backyard. Martin Knowles photo

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 **Black Press**

Create a home you'll love – after the renovation

MAGGIE CALLOWAY

The major renovation is finally over. The new design and finishes are spectacular but – and sometimes it's a big 'but' – the furniture and finishings look a little awkward in the new space.

So now what?

To make the most of the new renovation, some homeowners call on the professionals – home staging companies that know what they're doing.

Granted, most people likely think of this before selling the home, but the sheer talent of the designers and their eye for first, using what the homeowners already has, eliminating the rest and making suggestions about what to buy, is invaluable.

Ron Sowden, co-founder and CEO of Dekora, says when his company comes in after a reno, the concept is less about staging and more about interior design.

"When we stage a home for resale, we don't take into consideration the people presently living in the space or how they use the home. We are focusing on the potential buyer; we are literally merchandizing the home," Sowden says.

"When we are consulting with a homeowner, the opposite is true. Who they are and how they live in the home is paramount."



After the home renovation is complete, the 'old' doesn't necessarily blend in with the 'new' where interior décor is concerned. Hiring a home staging company can help homeowners make the most of their home after all the reno work is done, to help them more fully enjoy their new-look living space.

Photos courtesy of Dekora

CONTINUED ON P.12

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Keys to your successful kitchen renovation

By Paul and Lee:
The Design Duo



Are you looking to renovate your kitchen but are afraid of making costly errors in the most important room of your home? Here are a few key points to ensure that your kitchen renovation is successful.

1. Use an experienced kitchen designer to obtain your complete, detailed kitchen design. Not all interior designers specialize in kitchen design. Also, many people make the mistake of going to a cabinetry manufacturer thinking they are getting a kitchen design. They are not. A kitchen design is more than just filling the space with a particular manufacturer's cabinetry.
2. Your detailed kitchen design should include layout and functionality drawings, elevation drawings, as well as any necessary electrical / mechanical drawings. Your finish and fixture selection should include flooring, cabinetry (door style, wood species, and finish), countertops, backsplash, handles, sink, faucet and other plumbing fixtures, lighting fixtures, paint colours, as well as any fabrics, wallpaper, window coverings or other design elements that apply to your kitchen renovation.
3. Ensure that your contractor has Liability Insurance and Workman's Compensation.
4. Ask your contractor for references.

A reputable firm will be happy to provide you with a couple of references.

5. Renovating is a business transaction. Ensure that your contractor provides you with a detailed contract that details all the fixtures and finishes finalized in the design, as well as all terms and conditions. That detailed design will now not only avoid costly errors during construction, but also allow you to have a fixed price contract avoiding costly surprises associated with cost plus projects.

6. Ensure that your contractor obtains the necessary permits. Your design calls for the removal of a structural wall? You're going to need a permit.

Taking the time to follow these few suggestions will save you time, money, and headache.

Thinking of renovating early next spring? If so, remember that now is the time to start with the detailed design phase of your project.

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Home inspector Glenn Duxbury says it can pay to get a home inspection done before undergoing renovation – not just before purchasing a home – to ensure there aren't any nasty surprises. Martin Knowles photo

It pays to inspect before a reno

MAGGIE CALLOWAY

General common sense says it is wise to have a home inspection before any homeowner completes a home purchase.

No one wants to be hit with major repairs, or worse yet, structural weaknesses, after they move into their dream property.

"There is no point spending good money on a major renovation without knowing the state of the fundamentals of the building."

When it comes to renovations, homeowners might not really think about having a full home inspection done prior to embarking on a major renovation.

But perhaps they should.

When planning a major home renovation, it is human nature to be

drawn to the finishes, the flooring and the colour of the walls – but this is all for naught if the crack in the basement turns out to be a foundation failure and the whole structure is in jeopardy.

A truly independent home inspection has immeasurable value.

There is no greater truth than 'knowledge is power' and this is exactly what homeowners need before making

renovation decisions.

This can eliminate crossing the fingers and hoping everything will be OK; homeowners can arm themselves with real information on which they can reliably make informed decisions about what they need and what they can afford.

Glenn Duxbury of Glenn Duxbury and Associates, Building Inspection and Consulting, couldn't agree more.

"Most people think of home inspectors only when buying a house, but having an inspection before you begin even designing a renovation makes perfect sense," Duxbury says.

"There is no point spending good money on a major renovation without knowing the state of the fundamentals of the building."

Duxbury's company often acts as a consultant throughout local renovations to ensure all sub-trades work is up to par.

The average homeowner is likely out of his depth judging the soundness of a roof (until the rainy season) or the professionalism of the electrician or plumber, so Duxbury and his staff lend a hand.

Of course, after the initial inspection, it helps if homeowners hire a certified renovator with a solid reputation, one who belongs to a reputable industry organization such as the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association, or those who are RenoMark-certified.

Duxbury recalls that one client who he worked for as an advocate during a major renovation called the whole renovation 'boring' because there were no disputes between anyone on site.

This ability to diffuse sometimes-tense situations, which can occur during something as potentially stressful as a renovation, allows everyone to concentrate on what they do best and enables a smooth process from start to finish.

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Cathie Newman works out in her home gym.



WORK OUT
AT HOME

Creating a home gym can be easy

MAGGIE CALLOWAY

Many homeowners continually promise themselves they will get fit.

They read all the information on how important it is to their whole existence: heart health, stress management, setting a good example for the kids and, not least, a healthy life expectancy.

They start doing all the right things with great enthusiasm – eating better and exercising – but everything seems to get in the way. They know they should drive to the gym after dinner, but all they want to do is veg in front of the telly.

Maybe the answer is to install a home gym – something the whole family can use. Just walking down the hall or into the finished basement to exercise is more appealing than climbing into the car and driving across town.

Fitness Town, which has eight retail location across Metro Vancouver, sells the latest in home and office fitness equipment.

“Most people don’t know what they need. They know they should do something, but how to start?” says Fitness Town chief operating officer Dai Manuel.

“The quality of the home gym equipment has gotten top-notch so now, you can bring home professional-quality equipment that has been built for the home. Quality is now available in space-saving design.”

Planning a home renovation is a great time to incorporate a home gym and, just like all the other sub-trades and designers involved in the planning, bringing in a specialist to design the fitness area early in the process is a great idea.

“Don’t think you need a huge space to have an effective, workable space,” says Manuel.

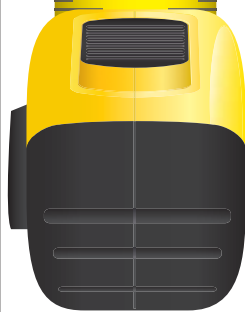
“We just finished putting a gym in a yacht and it works just great. It just takes planning and that is where we come in. Each person has unique needs which need to be addressed so they stay motivated.”

Manuel says Fitness Town staff also suggest hiring a personal trainer, once the home gym is built, to help get the best use out of all the equipment.

Before they know it, homeowners may become addicted to physical fitness because it’s so easy to exercise at home.

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Renos: is your family protected?

MAGGIE CALLOWAY

Nobody lines up and volunteers to pay taxes.

British Columbians are likely feeling more than a little assaulted by the demands on their paycheques lately, what with the introduction of the HST and a hike in carbon tax, and it can be hard to resist the temptation to hire a renovator "off the books."

And, with \$3.7 billion expected to be spent on home renovations and improvements this year in Metro Vancouver alone, it is obvious many local homeowners are renovating, or planning home renovations.

Peter Simpson, president and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association, gives strong cautionary words of advice to any homeowner contemplating this shortcut.

"You'd better be prepared to adopt your cash-only renovator if he or she has an accident on your property," Simpson says.

"If your builder doesn't have a written contract with you, if they aren't registered with WorkSafe BC, if they don't have liability and accident insurance, the judge hearing the case may not look kindly on your defense."

Another point he makes is that, if the contractor does a bad job or damages the home, homeowners have no way to

go after them in court because there are no records, no permits, no inspections or anything to prove their case against a bad contractor.

"Homeowners must resist the temptation to avoid paying the applicable taxes by dealing in the underground cash economy," says Simpson.

"Why would they place themselves and their family at great emotional and financial risk?"

In Canada, B.C. and Metro Vancouver, there are several reputable industry organizations, such as the GVHBA, that promote industry professionals who hold themselves to a high standard.

There is also the RenoMark program, where homeowners can look up contractors with a solid reputation in their region.

A lot of work has been done by this organization to walk homeowners through their project and make sure they are dealing with reputable companies.

Reading their RenoGuide online - www.renomark.ca - is a good start. RenoGuide lays out five steps to a successful renovation. No job is too small to use a professional.

Another thing to keep in mind is to ensure that all the sub-trades the main contractor hires are also fully qualified and insured.

Embarking on a renovation, both extensive and small, is a stressful time even if the job goes smoothly.

Hiring a RenoMark-certified company can, at the very least, relieve the homeowner of the stress and potential dangers of dealing with an unscrupulous, cash-only contractor.

"Homeowners should always do their homework and make sure they're absolutely protected," Simpson says.



Peter Simpson

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TRI-CITY NEWS

Comfort is key when creating home offices

TRICIA LESLIE

Home. For many the home is a refuge, a sanctuary, a safe haven hidden from the rest of world.

Yet many homeowners cannot totally escape the outside world, especially if they work at home – or bring work home with them from a regular ‘nine-to-five’ job.

That’s when it’s time to think home office.

Whether a tiny condo with flex space in the corner or a huge, single-family detached home with room for more than one home office, it is always important to make the den/study/home office space usable and personal, says Carolyn Lino Stewart.



Carolyn Lino Stewart

“It has to be functional as well as aesthetic,” she says.

“It’s about having the design applied to (homeowners’) lifestyle and personalities.”

Stewart is a principal with Concept To Design, a busy Metro Vancouver design company.

While Concept To Design designs brand-new homes throughout Metro Vancouver, the team is also extremely active with local renovations.

If space allows, designating a separate seating area within a home office space can create a more intimate setting, Stewart notes, while – again, space-willing – adding a fireplace to such an area can add warmth and elegance, making it more inviting.

Having storage space is pretty important to everyone, she adds.

Combining storage with open shelving can work – custom built-ins and millwork are becoming more and more common for clients, especially in smaller



Concept to Design created ‘his’ (above) and ‘hers’ home office space for a Metro Vancouver client.

homes, Stewart notes.

When the work space is open to the rest of the home (as is common with flex space), Stewart says custom built-ins can help make the area look more like a library than an office.

“We make it so that it looks like part of the space, not like an office or like a work environment,” she says, and notes that having a natural flow from room to room is key.

She has noticed that homeowners are really catching onto the functional/aesthetic appeal. Computer armoires are often used in home office spaces, for example, or desk/dresser combos or other furniture that has more than one use, such as shallow drawers that can be pulled out to become a work space.

“Using furniture that ties in with your living space

HOME
OFFICES

CONTINUED ON P.11

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'It has to be functional as well as aesthetic'

CONTINUED FROM P.10

is important," she says.

Stewart and the Concept To Design team always get to know the homeowners and their respective lifestyles before starting any job.

This helps them to add personal items to the home office space – artifacts, trophies, certificates, objets d'art, etc.

Once they get to know the clients, they know which personal items should likely be purposefully displayed.

And homeowners don't necessarily need to shop at big box stores to get office chairs, pen holders, or other office necessities, Stewart adds.

Desk chairs can be funky and multifunctional, she says, for use as a desk chair or an extra seat when company arrives. And the pen holder?

"It can be anything from special boxes – a favourite special box – to a flower pot to an antique," Stewart says.

"The idea is to incorporate (the homeowners') hobbies into the work-space."

From traditional, conventional comfort to contemporary, minimalist chic, Stewart and her colleagues at Concept To Design can design it.

The goal is always to shape a space the homeowners will use and enjoy, she says.

"When a customer says they just absolutely love being in the space we've created for them ... that's the most satisfying," Stewart says.

"That's the whole point."



Concept to Design principal Carolyn Lino Stewart says whether large or small, home offices can be individual, comfortable and functional. Having items such as trophies, certificates, or collectables on display adds a personal touch.



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CONTINUED FROM P.5

Dekora staff will spend time learning about the homeowners needs, likes and desires for the new space, he notes, then to realize that vision for them, or lead them to a way to make it realized, Sowden says.

Another consideration is the budget.

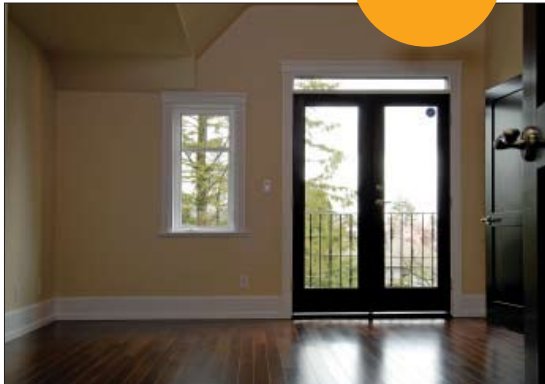
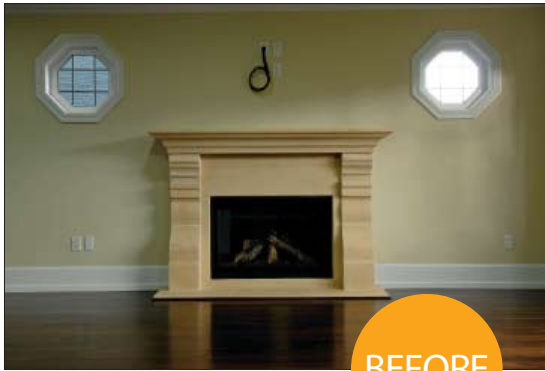
After spending a sizable amount on the actual renovation, facing another large expenditure on new furniture is not only daunting but sometimes, financially impossible.

“We fully understand the constraints of budget but we can help clients make a longterm plan,” Sowden says.

“Buying furniture ad-hoc, which can be an investment, can sometimes lead to very costly mistakes. We can go into a newly renovated home, make a master plan of what to use and what to discard then come up with a step-by-step plan the homeowner can implement over months or years, as the budget becomes available. This way the home looks great right from the start and just improves as pieces are added.”

This is a fantastic way to work toward a space that is personalized for the homeowners’ needs, especially if the family dynamic has changed, and what worked previously needs a new sophistication.

And the end result? The homeowners have a beautiful space the entire family will enjoy for a lifetime.



A professional touch can help maximize the entire effect of a home renovation and make everything look fantastic, while still remaining functional.

Photos courtesy of Dekora

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Love your kitchen: renovate

CONTINUED FROM P.1

As with any home renovation, no matter how large or small, the process starts with what the client wants; each reno differs depending on budget, space, varying tastes and based on the relationship between the homeowners work with their renovation team of contractors.

"It's important to build a relationship with each client," says kitchen designer Bruce Macdonald, who works with My House Design/Build Team alongside interior designer Linda Jones.

"They have to feel comfortable with you."

Both Macdonald and Jones recently worked together on a fabulous kitchen renovation on Crescent Road in South Surrey; it was featured in this year's Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association's Parade of Renovated Homes.

As with many renovations of older homes, Jones says the homeowners wanted to open up their old kitchen space to the rest of the living area, instead of having a small, tucked-away space.

"We get asked to do that all the time," says Jones of the open concept.

A variety of trends and styles is constantly changing in the kitchen design world, but Jones and Macdonald concur that sev-

HEART OF THE HOME

My House Design/Build Team designers Linda Jones and Bruce Macdonald in the renovated kitchen of a South Surrey home. *Martin Knowles photos*



CONTINUED ON P.14



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after
before



after
before







AFTER



BEFORE

A South Surrey kitchen before and after a fantastic renovation by My House Design/Build Team shows the difference. The home was recently featured on the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association's Parade of Renovated Homes.

Martin Knowles/Keith Henderson photos



BEFORE

'Do it all on paper first' before reno

CONTINUED FROM P.1

eral design requests are currently more in demand than others. Stainless steel appliances – and in some cases, countertops – still attract huge demand, but also, flat-panel and integrated appliances, which create a more seamless look between the cabinetry and the appliances. Granite countertops are very much chic, along with quartz, silestone and a huge variety of both natural and composite stone.

CONTINUED ON P.14



AFTER

Extend your kitchen outside

CONTINUED FROM P.14

Some homeowners prefer to go with a clean, sleek, European look, while others prefer a more traditional feel, or perhaps, a stylized/themed look (i.e. a French Country kitchen or a heritage-inspired kitchen); slab cabinetry and horizontal grain on the cupboards are chosen more and more by homeowners.

"I think the trend is to a more transitional look – not as contemporary as some, but not totally traditional, either," Jones says.

Wenge, teak and cherry are popular cabinet/stain colours right now, as well as opening up the kitchen to more than the home's interior, says Macdonald.

"A big request is to extend the kitchen outdoors," he notes, and adds that with today's options related to heaters, barbecues and gas fireplaces – some portable – the outdoor 'room' can be used year-round.

AFTER



Many Metro Vancouver homeowners are opting to extend their kitchen to an outdoor area that can be used all year 'round. Martin Knowles photos

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