

HOUSE & HOME OF THE MONTH

Homeowner Amy Goos' friends Jerad Mack and Shane Pawluk of Izm made the white oak dining table, which has a twist on the classic trestle base. A white frame gives the walnut credenza a mod look, while the bold blue art and black pendants are graphic hits against the white panelling. **Interior design**, Nam Dang-Mitchell Design; **architectural design**, DaDe Art & Design Lab; **builder**, Mission Homes; **chairs**, Inmod; **credenza**, Organic Modernism.



MODERN FAMILY



The house has no formal living room, so this family room is meant to be unfussy and comfortable, while the lounge is more elegant. The focal point here is the wall unit built of rift-cut white oak. Its chevron-pattern doors hide the TV. A huge coffee table anchors all the seating. **Wall unit**, Lee Quang Millworks; **coffee table**, rug, RH Restoration Hardware; **art**, Domine.

DESIGNER NAM DANG-MITCHELL LETS US IN ON HOW SHE PUT A SERENE, CONTEMPORARY SPIN ON A YOUNG FAMILY'S CALGARY NEW-BUILD.

Text by **BETH HITCHCOCK** | *Photography by* **COLIN WAY**



Designer Nam Dang-Mitchell changed the initial plans for the entry, adding a second doorway into the adjoining rooms for flow. "But it's also important to create a sense of arrival, even in an open-concept house," she says. Natural hits, like huge *Monstera* leaves and a turtle shell, enhance the home's quiet beauty. **Console**, Crête & Barrel; **stool**, Calgary Interiors; **basket**, vase, Pottery Barn.

HOUSE & HOME: We've featured your work many times, but this is a look we haven't seen from you before. Has your approach changed or is this house simply a reflection of the homeowners' tastes?

NAM DANG-MITCHELL: I definitely went a little more clean and modern here, but that's the great thing about collaboration. The homeowners, Amy and Ryan Goos, are full of energy, as are their two young kids. This was their first experience building a home, so we worked together to develop a modern farmhouse style that feels young and fresh, while also highlighting natural materials.

H&H: Why do you think the gently rustic modern look has such staying power, and what's the secret to making it feel new?

NDM: We're all craving authenticity — from farmers' markets to handcrafted pieces — and we certainly don't want to walk into a basic builder-grade house with no personality. My challenge was to add layers of old world texture atop the drywall, whether it was the applied panelling in the dining room or the glazed brick in the kitchen. If the envelope has character, you can be more spare with the furnishings. In terms of making it feel fresh, I paired cerused white oak flooring and cabinetry with blackened-steel interior windows, and included some mid-century modern furnishings for edge.

H&H: That kitchen is a showstopper! What was your inspiration?

NDM: The kitchen is right in the centre of the home, and there's no exterior wall, so the challenge was to make it feel bright — that's why we chose the light wood flooring and cabinetry. I designed an interior window to allow light to flow in from the office, but I had to be careful, because interior windows can be cheesy. If this were the '80s, we'd be putting in glass brick! Instead, this metal-framed window added an industrial feeling, and also

This lounge off the front hall is Amy's favourite place to read or have coffee with friends. "Ryan got a big garage, and I got my reading nook," she says. Iconic Fornasetti wallpaper draws the eye to the cosy niche, and furniture and accessories in different styles give the space a rich, collected look. **Banquette**, Calgary Interiors; **coffee tables**, Crate & Barrel; **wood chair**, **sconces**, RH Restoration Hardware; **leather chair**, Jayson Home; **rug**, Buckskin Leather; **wallpaper**, DWA; **ceiling light**, Lambert & Fils; **pouf**, HomeSense.





Nam clad the entire outer face of the island in Calacatta Gold marble. "A waterfall effect wasn't enough; we wanted it to be monolithic, like it was carved from a block of marble," she says. "Tilting the gables makes it look more structural." The marble hood stands out against a wall of glazed bricks. Luxe surfaces are offset by white oak cabinets and floors, and rustic pieces, like wood stools with tractor-style seats and pendants with jute-clad cords. **Caesarstone** (on outer counters), **marble** (on island, hood), Alberta Marble & Tile; **cabinets**, Sunview Custom Cabinetry; Kohler **sink**, Emco; Wolf **range**, Miele **dishwasher**, Jerome's.



BY THE NUMBERS

0 OUTSIDE WINDOWS

1 “DRIVE-THROUGH” WINDOW
(according to the kids)

7 SPOTS for prepping food

29 CLOSED CUPBOARDS

31 DRAWERS

50 GUESTS hosted at one time
(for Ryan’s 40th birthday last summer)

9 COUNTERTOP APPLIANCES
(5 for coffee alone)

1 HUSBAND who loves to cook

provided a jumping-off point for the pantry door and the shower stall in the principal bath.

H&H: *Speaking of the shower, it’s massive — definitely a focal point. Was that a tough sell?*

NDM: Surprisingly, no. Ryan and Amy loved the mix of metal and marble, and how the materials referred back to the kitchen. I hear that their kids play in there and pretend it’s a jail!

H&H: *There’s not a lot of colour in this young family’s home. Why is that?*

NDM: It’s true. Colour is a problem for me — I just can’t do it. I think people who gravitate toward neutrals aren’t afraid of colour; they’re actually extra sensitive to it. Also, colour has to make sense. If you’re Diana Vreeland and your whole living room is red, there’s a reason for that. Luckily, the homeowners I work with check out my portfolio before they hire me, and they know I work with the shades of nature, like greys and browns. Blue is the only colour I can commit to, and I’ve used some blue in this home.

H&H: *You’re not afraid to play with negative space by leaving a wall blank or a shelf empty. How did you find the right balance here?*

NDM: Ryan, Amy and I agreed that we like a room to feel open-ended, like you could continue adding items or taking them away. It’s a fine line, because you don’t ever want a room to feel unfinished, but there’s a big difference between minimal and plain. Ultimately, a room is like an outfit: If someone is trying too hard, it’s no longer stylish.



ABOVE: The walk-in pantry was a place to add drama. “We gave this tiny utility space its own graphic hit,” says Nam of the high-contrast cement tiles. The glass door makes it feel roomier and puts the tiles in the sight line. “Ryan likes to have countertop appliances out, and I like to put them away, so this is a compromise,” says Amy. “The kitchen looks tidy, but we still have easy access to these appliances. I also wanted a second sink, but preferred to keep the island clear.” **Tiles,** Icon Stone & Tile; **door,** First Impressions Metal Works.

TOP RIGHT: Vignettes, like this one in the dining room featuring an Ellsworth Kelly poster and woven tray, reflect the textural materials and natural hues used throughout the home.

BOTTOM RIGHT: With ample space for homework, crafting and bill-paying, plus lots of room to tuck things away, the office helps keep the adjacent kitchen clutter-free. Nam enhanced the black accents by painting the wall behind the built-ins dark grey. **Cabinets,** Sunview Custom Cabinetry; **window,** First Impressions Metal Works; **white oak flooring** (throughout), Heritage Hardwood Flooring; **glazed bricks,** Brock White; **chairs,** Inmod.

OPPOSITE, LEFT: Patterned cement tiles in tones of grey, white and black are a fun yet moody foil to the mudroom’s wall of white oak built-ins. Long stretches of hooks, shelving and floor-level cubbies mean abundant storage for the busy family of four. **Tiles,** Icon Stone & Tile; **bike** by Brooklyn Bicycle Co., The Cyclepath Calgary; **blanket,** Hermès.

TOP RIGHT: The Goos family includes Amy, Ryan, an oral surgeon, Tommy, 3, and Ella, 8.



THE INSIDE STORY

Homeowner Amy Goos on living in this unique space.

H&H: *This was your first experience building a home. What were you hoping to achieve?*

AMY GOOS: Open, bright and contemporary without being super modern, and something our family could grow with. We loved Nam's ideas from the start. The day she came over to plan the palette, she dashed in the door, handed me the mudroom tiles, and headed back out to her car, and I turned to Ryan and said, "I don't know where she wants to put these, but I love them!"

H&H: *What's your favourite element in that dream kitchen?*

AG: The way the island is made to look like it's carved out of a solid piece of marble. And the metal-framed window. It opens up, and the kids pretend it's a drive-through!

H&H: *Do you do a lot of entertaining?*

AG: We hosted about 50 people for Ryan's 40th birthday last summer. Of course, they all ended up gathering in the kitchen and dining area. It was totally perfect — just like we imagined.



ABOVE: One of Nam's signature statements, seen here in the spacious principal ensuite, is to frame a freestanding tub with drapes. "It makes a bathroom feel more civilized and less clinical — like it's an extension of the rest of the home," she says. The huge metal-framed shower was designed to match the interior window in the kitchen and door on the pantry, and the block-like marble bench echoes the kitchen island. A huge vase, side table and sconces with rounded lines balance the right-angled elements. **Shower enclosure**, First Impressions Metal Works; **Aquabrax tub**, **plumbing fixtures**, Emco; **drape fabric** (throughout), DWA; **drape sewing** (throughout), Bonnie's Blind Ambition; **sconces** by Visual Comfort, Carrington Lighting; **marble shower tile**, **floor tile**, Saltillo Imports; **marble** for counters, shower bench, Alberta Marble & Tile; **wall colour** (throughout) China White (33-8), **trim colour** (throughout, including panelling), Swiss Coffee (33-5), Pratt & Lambert.

LEFT: In the ensuite, Amy's vanity is made from the same rift-cut white oak as the kitchen cabinetry. Limestone floor tiles set in an elongated herringbone pattern enforce the home's earthy palette and create a sense of movement. **Tiles**, Saltillo Imports; **cabinetry**, Sunview Custom Cabinetry; **sconce**, Carrington Lighting.

Nam energized the principal bedroom's restful scheme with a high-contrast rug from Ikea, geometric fixture from RH Restoration Hardware and bold ikat accent pillow. "All ceiling fixtures should have personality," she says. "They're such an important part of the vocabulary of a house." Here, the colour-blocked drapes play backdrop to an artful reading chair. **Bed, bench, desk, RH Restoration Hardware; chair, Rove Concepts; floor lamp, art, Domaine; bedspread, Pottery Barn; ikat fabric, DWA.**

