

Going to the wall with elegant design

Classic pieces, bold wallcoverings inform show suite at Mount Pleasant project

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Midtown, an undertaking from PortLiving, comprises 41 homes in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood.

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The Eames lounge-chair replica from Moe's is designer Jenna McBride's favourite piece in the show suite.



The Midtown show suite has white Barcelona chairs that dominate the main living space.

The story of designers Jenna McBride and Janie Hungerford's work on Midtown, a new Mount Pleasant development from



Midtown comprises 41 homes, including two townhomes, in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood.

PortLiving, is a story about design classics.

One, a Barcelona chair, is a timeless icon of sleek minimalist comfort. The other is wallpaper — fallen out of favour among some decorators for a time, only to be revived again with the rejuvenation of graphic design choices in the marketplace.

Midtown's presentation centre on East Broadway in Mount Pleasant includes a one-bedroom-and-den display home with a sophisticated vibe, with standout white Barcelona chairs dominating the living space.

The chair has been popular since its birth in 1929, when designers Mies van der Rohe and Lilly Reich crafted it based on the folding chairs of Pharaohs and Romans.

First coveted by architects, designers and artists, these chairs have been loved in their various restorations for some 85 years.

"The Barcelona chair is like the little black dress of furniture design," says McBride, of Jenna McBride Designs, who concentrated on much of the decor, while Hungerford Designs chose the high-end finishes.

"It can be the feature piece in a minimalist architectural office or blended into a contemporary suburban living room. In this particular case, it shines as a feature of the living room, and it provides a contrast to a contemporary sofa, while being

complemented by other modern elements in the space."

Meanwhile, wall covering dominates the bedroom. Wallpaper is made up of repeated patterns that are referenced in other places; a similar pattern is repeated in pillows. Though it's more expensive than paint, McBride sees wallpaper as a way to add instant depth and sophistication to a room.

"Wallpaper has come a long way from the floral prints in your Grandma's house," she says.

"There are so many great modern options now available and it's a great way to add depth and texture to a room that a coat of paint just can't achieve. Whether you select a grass cloth for a cosy bedroom, a subtle tone on tone geometric pattern to create a sense of elegance, or a bold oversized pattern for drama, they all act as the backdrop for your design."

McBride is clearly a fan of layering textures. She placed mirrors on top of the patterned wallpaper, and used plush fabric headboard and satinsheen pillows to accentuate the bed, never allowing any new layer of texture or pattern to dominate or overpower the space.

"My design philosophy has always been to focus on textures and patterns for big ticket items, and limit colour to the accessories," she says.

"By keeping the wall covering, rugs and other large items in neutral tones, I was able to layer an eclectic array of patterns and textures without it overwhelming the eye."