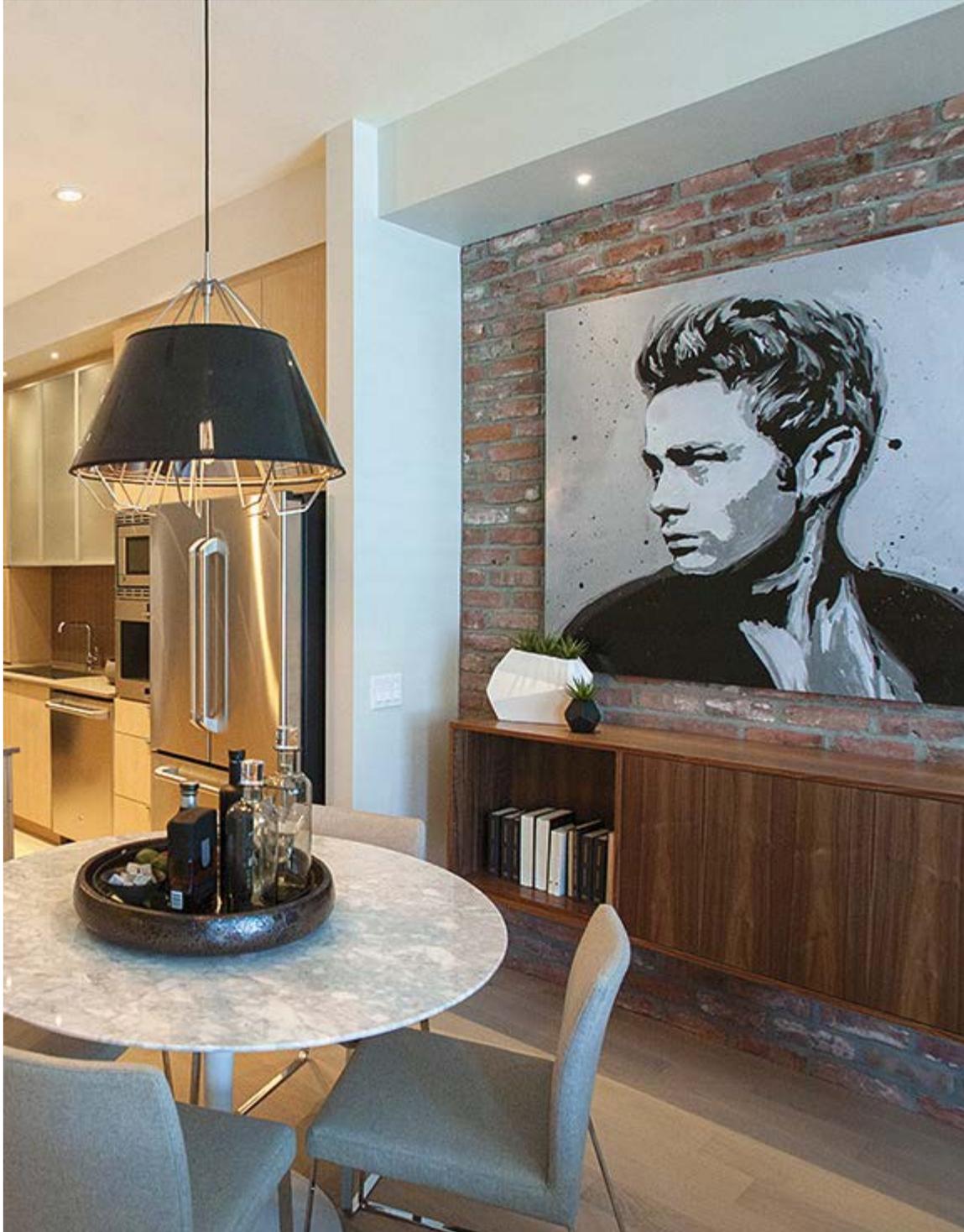


Portage by Aragon at 260 Salter Street New Westminster 111 condos in a 4 storey building

Form & function by the fraser



Aragon's Portage project in New Westminister marries practicality with West Coast Modern style



Earthy tones mixed with white in the bedroom creates a feeling of warmth and space.



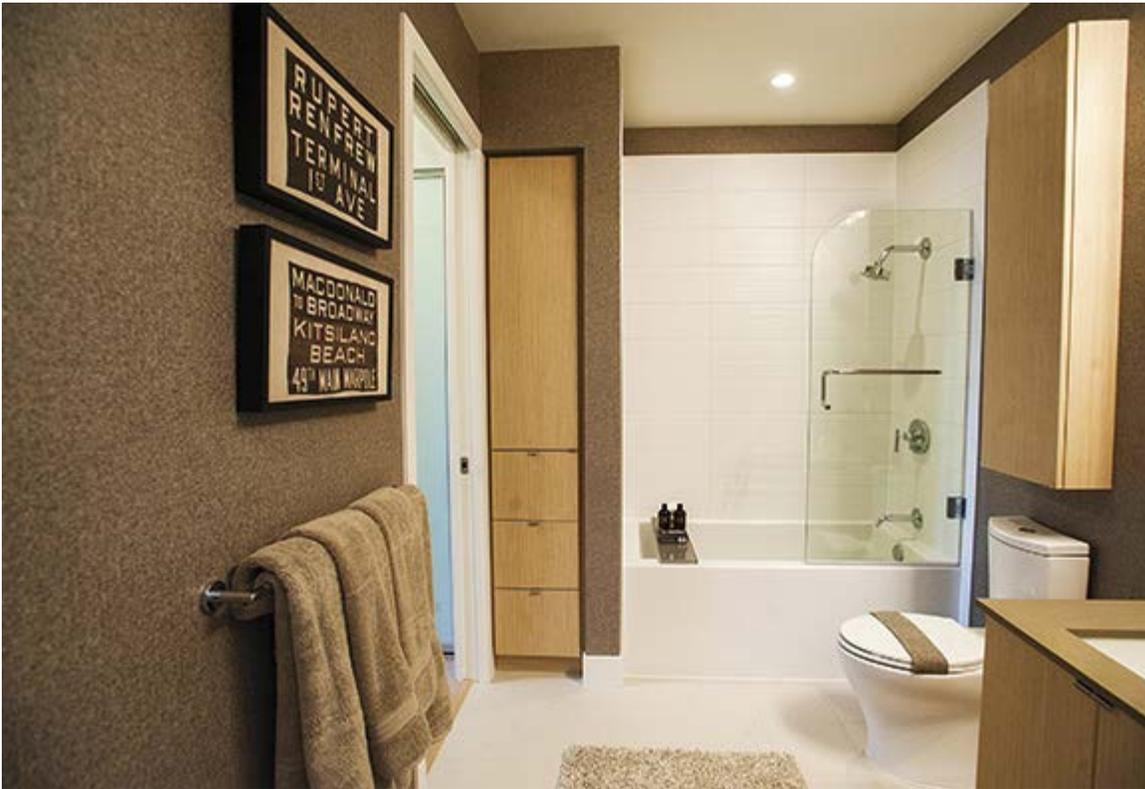
The kitchen incorporates an impressive amount of storage, with full-height cabinets and a marrow rollout pantry in the right of the cooktop



A wall of windows in the living room lets in light



A brick feature wall adds texture and colour to the living area, which adjoins the dining area in the open plan space



Earthy tones mixed with white in the bathroom creates a feeling of warmth and space.

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Story CLAUDIA KWAN | Photos Arlen Redekop/PNG

If interior design is ultimately about allocating space, Aragon's Maria Zoubos is focused just as much on the practicalities of everyday life as she is on esthetics. That's obvious in the homes at the company's Portage project, in the Port Royal neighbourhood of New Westminster.

In the kitchen of the two-bedroom show suite, for instance, the interior designer has opted to extend the upper bank of cabinetry all the way up one wall to take full advantage of the 10-foot ceiling height that's standard in all units. With lower cabinets lining the kitchen space and two banks of drawers in the island, there is enough storage to allow Zoubos to leave upper cabinets off the second kitchen wall, allowing for a stunning white-tile backsplash almost two metres high behind the hood fan.

"I'm all about the storage," Zoubos says emphatically. "I don't like clutter, and I really enjoy thinking about where people will put away the stuff that they use each day."

In the Portage kitchen, that includes a Lazy Susan rotating shelf for pots and pans in a corner cabinet, and an appliance garage for toasters and the like. A one-foot-wide, full-height rollout pantry neatly accommodates sundry goods without taking up much floor space. An additional touch of practicality can be seen in the choice of maple rather than white interiors for the cabinets, since they are easier to keep clean. "They also add a richer, natural look," explains Zoubos. "I chose frosted glass for some of the upper cabinets to introduce a light, airy element — it lets you showcase some items without fully revealing all of the stuff you have stored away in there!"

That frosted glass is echoed in the sliding doors of the bedroom closets. Built-in linen towers in the bathrooms, medicine cabinets and vanities anchored to the floor (as opposed to the currently popular floating vanities) offer even more storage. The over-all esthetic is meant to be West Coast Modern. Zoubos has paired earthy wood tones with porcelain and sleek chrome, all highlighted by the natural light pouring in from the oversize windows. A brick feature wall — a hallmark of Aragon projects — adds warmth, colour and texture to the living area. Little luxury touches include a built-in Bosch coffee machine and electric fireplaces.



Space allocation was also important for project architect Bernard Decosse, principal of Bernard Decosse Architect Inc. “New Westminster has mandated that 40 per cent of the homes here are adaptable, meaning wider doorways and bathroom layouts that can accommodate mobility aids,” he says. “That’s part of a larger conversation about allowing people to age in place, and how that can contribute to a sense of community.”

Decosse was sensitive to incorporating Portage into the neighbourhood, preserving views of the Fraser River for existing homes. He says the views for the project are also extraordinary — some residents of the third and fourth floors will be able to see as far as Mount Baker on clear days. When the project is complete (expected in July 2015), a series of pathways will wind through the courtyards for each of the two buildings, allowing direct pedestrian access to a green belt and trail system. Ultimately, Decosse and Zoubos agree that residences must first and foremost be livable. They are confident that they have achieved that by considering every last detail involved in making the homes at Portage function beautifully.

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