

Blending the old with the new

The cosy feel of the traditional living room can coexist with high-tech

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RIC ERNST/PNG FILES



Designer Celia Dawson created a display space at the Langley project that emphasized a welcoming fireplace setting, while incorporating storage and a large television. Mason



The spacious master bedroom benefits from the wider footprint of the home which accommodates side-by-side parking for a two-car family.

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The distinctive built-in shelving adds a unique touch to the living and dining areas and the hanging dining room light reflects off the shiny surface of the built-in.

the focus is on conversation, catching up with family, or grabbing a spot for a quiet read.

But as many homes are smaller than they once were, their occupants must do more with less space, and our tech "toys"—TVs, video games, computer stations and the like—have slowly crept into our living rooms.

"I find that the cosy fireplace in our homes has been replaced by the TV and tech centre, which is such a sad evolution," says Dawson, who designed the display suites at the Langley site of Mason & Green. (The name references the project's exterior brick details and its green spaces.)

It takes great creativity for interior designers and homeowners to find a balance in one room. But there need not be a conflict between tech centre and social, calm spaces, Dawson says. With a little planning and work, designers and homeowners can integrate technology into living rooms without losing warmth.

The living room in one of the Mason & Green show suites emphasizes a fireplace setting, while still leaving space for a large TV set and storage. Dawson has crafted this area so the TV doesn't intrude on the more traditional ambience that a hearth provides.

"I am hoping we can inspire here the notion that you can still have the high-end tech theatre-like space in harmony with the cosy fireplace of old."

In one show suite, Dawson decorated in an old-Hollywood glamour look, with distinct shelving on a white glossy built-in unit. The hanging dining room lamp light reflects off the built-in.

In another, she uses the large TV as a centrepiece for a modern home theatre.

Dawson says homeowners can soften their living room tech spaces by adding new elements around them.

"It's all how you dress it up and integrate your tech devices," she says.

"You can hide TVs in millwork or you can display them. They can be displayed in warm millwork with a cosy fireplace setting or front and centre in a "techie" system of sliding panels, speakers and high-gloss walls.

"It all comes down to the planning, designing, proportions and integration of details."

There are other ways that Dawson and Polygon Homes focused on achieving the comfort of a single-family home in a townhome. For instance, the developer will build the homes with a garage that can accommodate cars parked side by side, rather than tandem (one vehicle parked in front of the other). The



Each unit has a side by side garage area for two vehicles at the Mason and Green development in Langley.

There's much to be said about the comforts of the traditional living room. Polygon Homes' designer Celia Dawson cherishes the days when living rooms were solely about spending time relaxing with family, perhaps around a fire. With a close arrangement of sofa and chairs,

garage's spaciousness will widen the homes' general footprint.

"Wider homes create a great room scenario which requires a design that is truly consistent, and each room openly marries with each other."