

CANADIAN

SEPTEMBER 1999 \$4.95

# HOUSE & HOME

CANADA'S MAGAZINE OF HOME & STYLE

## THINKING BIG

## IN SMALL SPACES

DOUGLAS CRIDLAND'S PRAIRIE PALETTE

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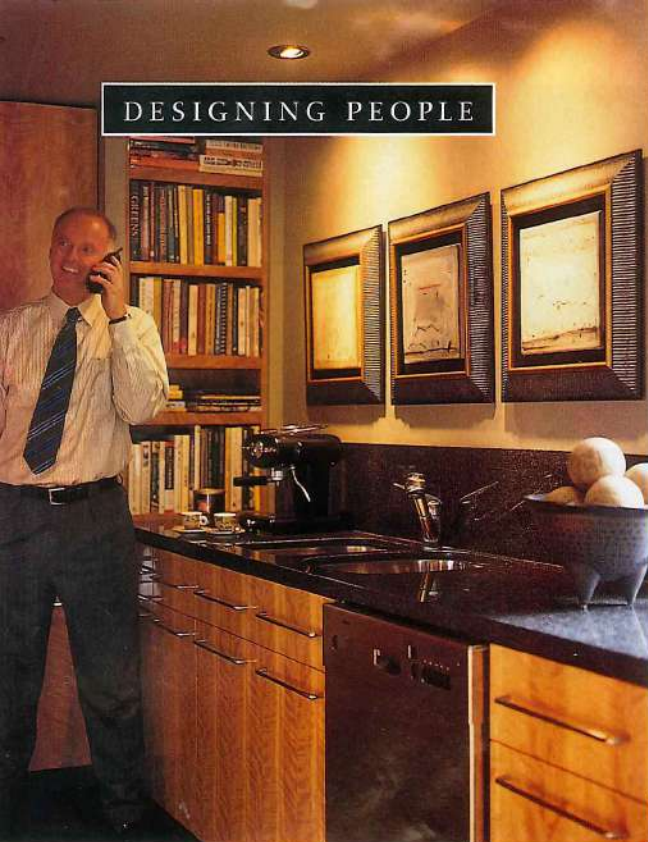
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**Ask** interior designer Douglas Cridland for the secret of his success, and he'll shrug off the question with a modest one-word reply: "Longevity."

But it takes more than just staying power to enjoy a 20-year relationship with design clients who top Calgary's *Who's Who* list: premiers, business leaders, philanthropists. It takes trustworthiness. It takes taste that leans to the traditional but is always current. It takes a finely tuned sense of quality. And maybe it takes another intangible quality, one that Cridland's clients respond to, but are probably not even aware of. Call it the ability to "see the light."

Cridland has a particular affinity for



# Museum

Calgary's Douglas Cridland employs a palette of prairie earth tones to create an ambient showcase for his eclectic art collection.

BY JENNIFER MACLEOD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ROBERT LEMERMAYER

# Qu





prairie light. "It's hard, crisp, sharp, bold and unforgiving," he says. "So I gravitate to prairie colours. My palette is muddy, dusky neutrals, because I love how they read in the light. I'm very specific about colour. I know when a colour is a near miss, and when it's just right."

When he works on houses in Vancouver, Seattle and other cities, Cridland varies his palette, finding colours that are more appropriate for the local quality of light. "In Vancouver, I often use an aqua-seafoam colour that I wouldn't use here," he says. "At the same time, I wouldn't use greys in Vancouver."

A native Calgarian and graduate of Mount Royal College's interior design program, Cridland started his career in

# ality

**Opposite:** Designer Douglas Cridland enjoys the "sense of light and space" in his condo's kitchen. "We really do live in here most of the time." Paintings, Mary Thompson.

**Centre:** Cridland chose a large kitchen island instead of a formal dining room as a focal point for dinner parties. The anigre-wood cabinets and granite-topped island were custom made in Calgary. Artwork (beside fridge), Derek Besant.

**Above:** The oversized kitchen window, which has a view of a tree-lined courtyard, initially attracted Cridland to the condo. A built-in desk by the window is equipped with a phone, fax, computer and file drawers. Paintings, Mary Thompson; bowl (on island), Donald Kottmann.

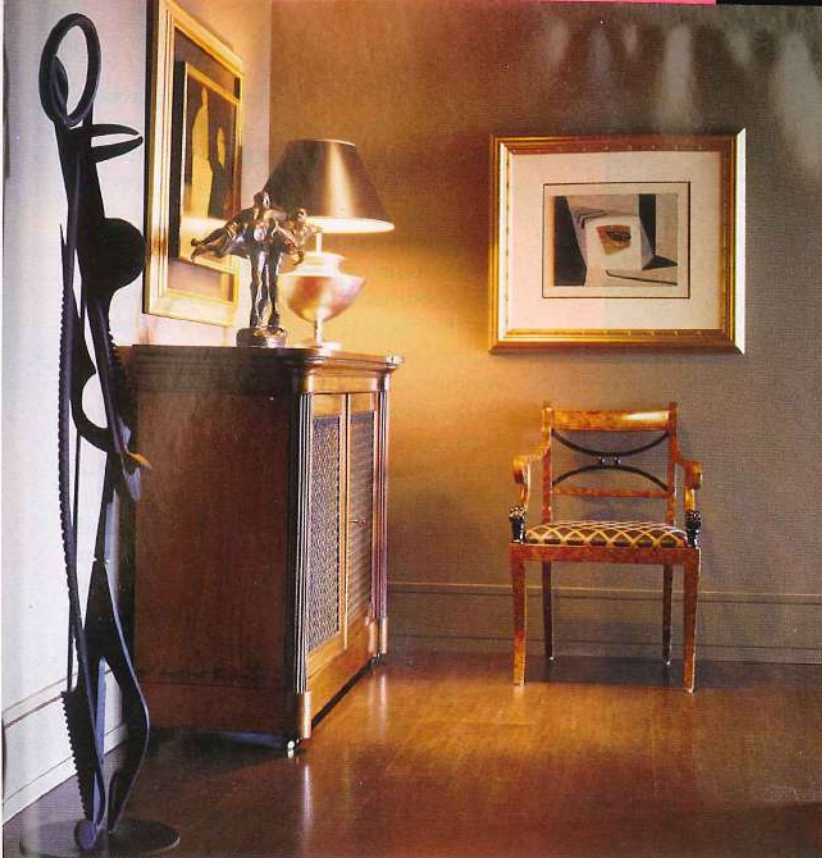
SEE SOURCE GUIDE

53









**Opposite:** Dan Wright relaxes at the small Empire dining table that doubles as a bridge table. *Lady on Yellow Floor* by Maxwell Bates. **Above:** In the entryway, an iron sculpture by Ben McLeod stands by works by Herbert Siebner (above a Biedermeier-style chair) and Richard Ciccimarra (above the Empire mahogany buffet). **Right:** The "gravel"-coloured living room is a calming retreat peppered with favourite artworks. A David Robinson sculpture (also shown top right) looks out across the room at two mixed media works by Bill Rodgers. **Bottom right:** On the dining table Cridland mixes old and new: Italian tortoise-glass pieces and a dramatically lit contemporary glass vase.



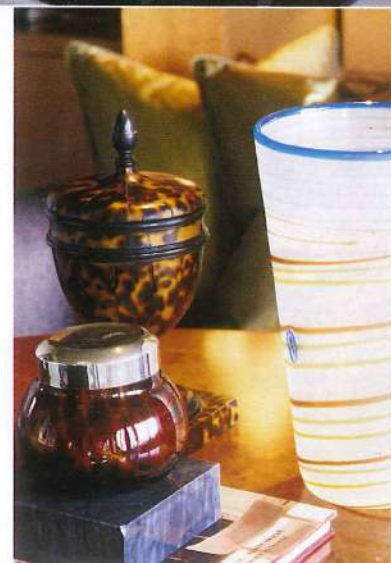
the '60s designing showhome interiors for a local developer. In those days, builders in Calgary did up display units on a grand scale. "I probably did 15 to 20 showhomes in any given year," he recalls. "It was a great training field."

After a decade of trying out "all sorts of crazy ideas" without actually having to reconcile those ideas with a real client, Cridland went out on his own in 1975, focusing on residential design. "My approach is to build up layers of quality — art and antiques," he says. "The most important thing is quality, but it has to be put together correctly."

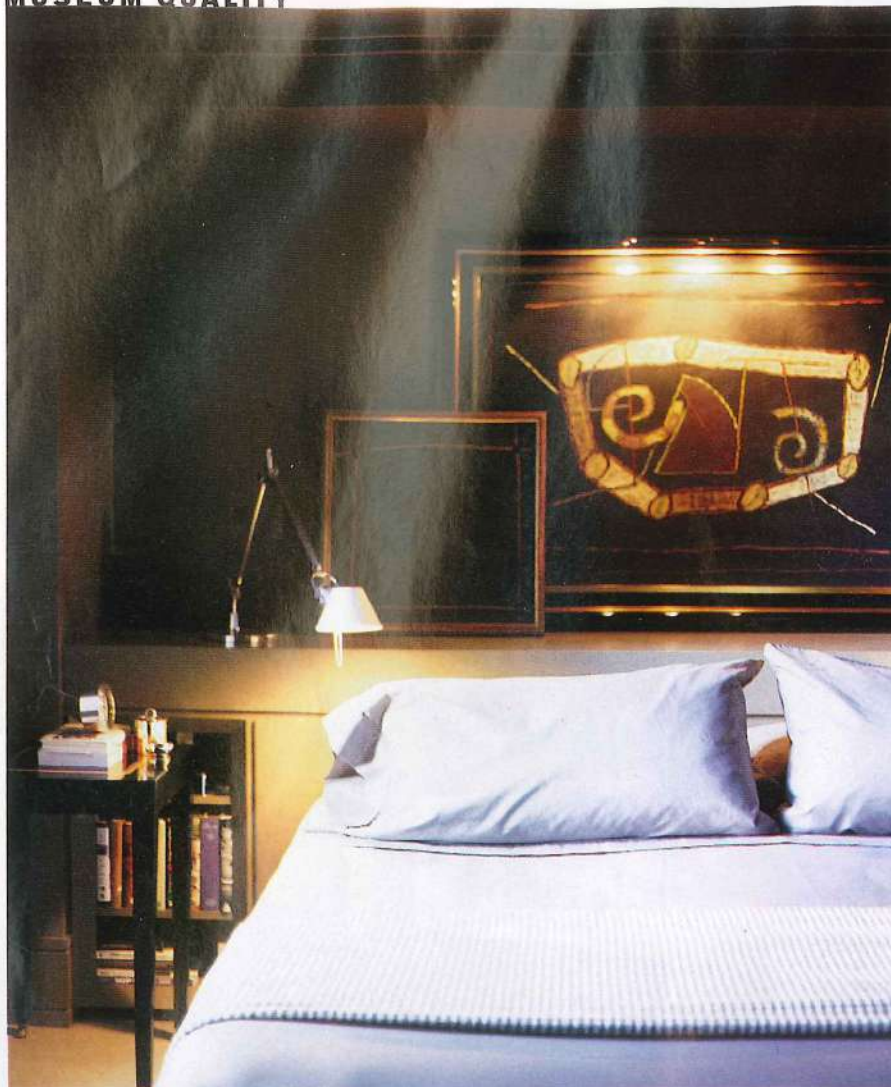
A self-described "foodie," he compares

designing to cooking, where the calibre of the ingredients is crucial to the success of the final product. He also speaks of design as a process of reinvention. He stays attuned to what's happening in other cities, in the design showrooms, in the magazines — but he's cautious when it comes to integrating the latest looks into his work. "It's like being a chef: you get ideas, you have influences, but then you reinvent and rework the ideas to suit your own taste."

That imaginative ability is a talent that Cridland's clientele — he refuses to drop names — appreciates. Over the years, he has tested different finishes, materials and



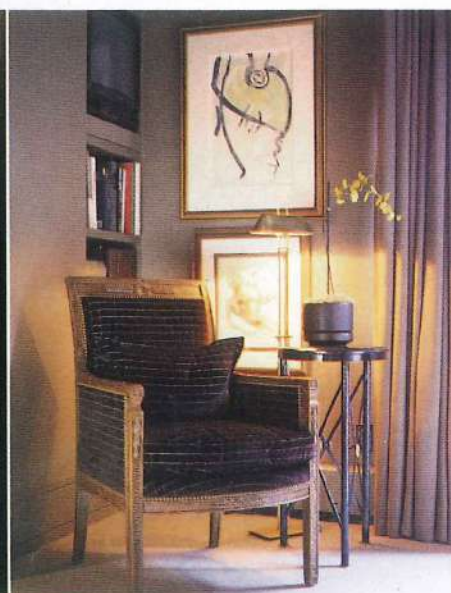




looks in his own homes, before recommending them to his clients. Frequent moves, he says, help keep his approach fresh. In the last 15 years, he estimates that he has lived in five or six different homes, designing most from scratch. From a grand, Italian villa-style house in the posh neighbourhood of Mount Royal, Cridland and his partner Dan Wright, a communications entrepreneur, moved into a tony condominium tower near the Bow River in downtown Calgary. The condo is only temporary. The pair have already begun building a new house in the city's Elbow Park neighbourhood.

In the meantime, the riverside condo offered Cridland the chance to do "something more '90s," mixing favourite antique pieces and artworks with such elements as granite countertops, chrome Le Corbusier chairs, wool sisal carpeting and colours he says he used years ago, but is now "re-inventing." The walls throughout most of the condo are painted a soothing dark "gravel" colour ("in the '70s we called it 'mink,'" he laughs).

With its neutral flooring, charcoal sofas and dark woods, the low-ceilinged living room feels like a shaded prairie coulee. A chartreuse chair subtly punctuates the scene; Cridland chose an upholstery fabric in an understated, almost grey version of this popular '90s hue, making the chair a





perfect complement to his masculine, earth-toned roomscape.

The condo's ultimate attraction is the kitchen. Spacious and airy, it has a large window overlooking a New York-style tree-lined courtyard. Cridland and Wright love to entertain, "but our parties tend to end up in the kitchen," Cridland says. So they dispensed with a formal dining room, and put a huge, granite-topped island, accompanied by high chairs upholstered in a reproduction Art Deco fabric, in the kitchen instead. Another granite counter-top by the window houses a work space with a phone, fax, laptop computer and file drawers. Cabinetry in high-gloss, golden aniegre wood from Africa lines the walls, concealing everything from a stereo and television to a deep, well-stocked wine and liquor drawer. "Everything is in the kitchen," Cridland says. "If we had to live in only one room, this would be it."

Cridland's home is, in the end, a well-placed collection of favourite things. With its restful tones, fine finishes, unique artifacts and original artworks, the condominium is a comfortable retreat to come home to, he says. And in his eyes, that makes the project a triumph: "Ultimately the hallmark of success is doing something that the client is comfortable with, and that I'm comfortable with. It always comes back to that." **NAH**



**Opposite, top, and bottom left to right:** In the master bedroom, paintings by Eric Gamble (right) and Richard Gorenko provide a focal point behind the bed. A small Georg Jensen bowl is part of Wright's silver collection displayed on the bedside table. A television and bookshelf are neatly tucked into a corner niche, where works by Bryan Ryley (top) and Salvador Dali hang behind a reproduction Empire chair. A still life of favourite pieces above the master bedroom's antique burlwood Biedermeier dresser includes French Art Deco urns, a large glazed-ceramic plate and a painting by John Snow. **Above:** Using spaces recovered during the renovations, Cridland added architectural interest in the guest bathroom. He raised sections of the ceiling and created a sculpture niche behind the bathtub where a bronze by Clint Roenisch is displayed. **Left:** The elegant master bathroom is appointed with dark, shiny granite and marble surfaces, a moody work of art by Bev Tosh, a silver compote by Georg Jensen and a television set. **Right:** A Maxwell Bates painting graces the practical yet stylish laundry room, where an under-counter washer and dryer and pull-out drying rack make the most of limited space.





## SOURCE GUIDE

Continued from page 122

(514) 738-2167, or through Ikea Home Shopping, 1-800-661-9807; linoleum tiles, Olympia Tile, Toronto (416) 789-4122; kitchen hardware, Canadian Tire stores, as above; red Texaco star, Decorum Decorative Finds, Toronto (416) 966-6829. **Page 74: Den:** Shelving, Ikea, as above; George Nelson pendant lamp, Quasi Modo, Toronto (416) 703-8300; French 1930s leather club chair, L'Atelier, Toronto (416) 966-0200; end table made by Art In Iron, Toronto (416) 762-7777; cushions by Sean Scherer, Toronto (416) 920-4543; oil and wax on paper, 1997, Sean Scherer. **Page 75: Bedroom:** Bed curtains, Ikea, as above; Ed Burtinsky photograph, Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto (416) 964-8197; Andres Serrano photograph of *Cabazo de Vaca*, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (212) 255-1105. **Bathroom:** Seagrass carpet, Elte Carpets & Home, as above; shower curtain sewn by Andrew Bottecchia, Bottecchia Artistic Group, Toronto (416) 972-6578; painting, *Rohtak*, 1996, Sean Scherer; wall colour, Tortilla by Martha Stewart Everyday, at Canadian Tire stores across Canada, as above.

### A View of the Highlands Pages 76 to 81

Knockinaam Lodge, Portpatrick, Wigtownshire, Scotland, DG9 9AD, Tel: 011-44-1-776-810-471. Dorothy Ames Design Studio, Toronto (416) 922-4769. **Page 78: Morning room:** Colefax & Fowler, and Osborne & Little fabrics to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior

Furnishings, Toronto (416) 921-3334; Mulberry fabrics through Kravet, Toronto (416) 921-1262.

**Page 79: Morning room:** Colefax & Fowler fabrics available to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior Furnishings, as above.

**Drawing room:** Colefax & Fowler fabrics available to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior Furnishings, as above. **Churchill room:** Nina Campbell fabrics to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior Furnishings, as above.

**Page 80: South room:** Zoffany wallpapers and fabrics through Tessuti Uno, Toronto (416) 922-0126. **Pond room bathroom:** Nina Campbell products available to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior Furnishings, as above; tableskirt ticking, Malabar, through W.H. Bilbrough & Company, Toronto (416) 960-1611 or 1-800-563-5716. **Bay room:** Nobilis fabrics through Telio & Cie, Toronto (416) 968-2020; Osborne & Little available to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior Furnishings, as above.

**Page 81: Dining room:** Osborne & Little products available to designers and decorators through Primavera Interior Furnishings, as above.

### Museum Quality Pages 82 to 87

Douglas Cridland Interior Design, Calgary (403) 228-0636. **Pages 82 and 83: Portrait:** Francis Francis coffee maker, Kilian International Design, Calgary (403) 270-8800. **Island:** Cabinetry, Northmount Industries, Calgary (403) 243-0200; appliances, Calgary Home Appliance Center, Calgary (403) 269-3600; island construction, Alberta Marble & Tile Company, Calgary (403) 287-

0944. **Window:** Chair upholstery fabric, through Douglas Cridland Interior Design, as above. **Page 84: Dining area:** Empire table in burlled-yew wood, William Switzer & Associates, Vancouver (604) 255-5911; Knoll chairs, Oggo Furniture, Calgary (403) 237-6446; painting by Maxwell Bates, Maxwell Bates' paintings available through Bau-Xi Gallery, Vancouver (604) 733-7011; bookshelves, sofas, lamps, through Douglas Cridland Interior Design, as above; glass vase, Barneys, Los Angeles (310) 276-4400. **Page 85: Entryway:** Iron sculpture, Ben McLeod, Canadian Art Galleries, Calgary (403) 290-0203; painting above chair, Herbert Siebner, Atelier Gallery, Vancouver (604) 732-3021; painting above buffet, Richard Ciccimarra, Sotheby's, Toronto (416) 926-1774; cork flooring, through Douglas Cridland Interior Design, as above. **Living room table:** Sculpture of man, David Robinson, Newzones Gallery of Contemporary Art, Calgary (403) 266-1972; lamp, plant urn, through Douglas Cridland Interior Design, as above; artworks on wall, Bill Rodgers, Paul Kuhn Gallery, Calgary (403) 263-1162. **Living room:** Sofas and coffee table, Douglas Cridland Interior Design, as above. **Tabletop detail:** Glass vase, Barneys, as above. **Page 86: Master bedroom:** Large painting, Eric Gamble, Canadian Art Galleries, as above; smaller painting, Richard Gorenko, Gorenko's paintings available through Trépanier Baer Gallery, Calgary (403) 244-2066; Artemide light, Kilian International Design, as above. **Master bedroom side table:** Small bowl, Georg Jensen, Martin Augsten Antiques, Toronto (416) 406-6358; table, Douglas

Continued on page 124

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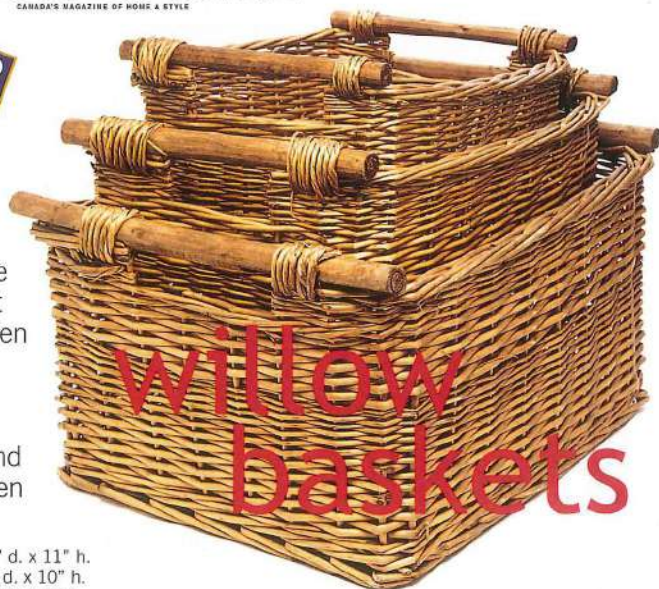
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