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THEORIES EVOLUTION

A light-filled penthouse provides a fresh forum for a Calgary designer's distinctive style.

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In interior designer Douglas Cridland's living room, a large-scaled contemporary painting provides a backdrop to his favourite Biedermeier chest. The chest mixes comfortably with contemporary elements such as a wire chair by Warren Platner, a chrome and glass coffee table, and an abstract sculpture. Rug, Weavers Art; coffee table, Knoll; painting by Otto Rogers; sculpture by Ben McLeod; mask (on left) by Elza Mayhew; wall colour throughout, Stratford Brown (8704D), General Paint; floral arrangements throughout, Anne Paterson's Flowers.



A retro-modern rug with a quiet geometric pattern emphasizes the city sensibility of the living room, says Douglas. It also adds lively pattern in the otherwise understated space. Pieces like the two

rounded Biedermeier chairs offset the slick contemporary aesthetic, adding richness and warmth. Sketches by Richard Circoimarra (top); Salvador Dalí. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Douglas in the living room. Painting by R.Gyo:Zo Spickett.



When Douglas Cridland

moves, three things are sure to follow: fabulous parties, a certain favourite Biedermeier chest and the Calgary interior designer's sophisticated style. His precise mix of elements, which results in an eclectic aesthetic, has become a trademark. "Although, the formula changes sometimes, from more traditional to more contemporary, for example," he says. Case in point, this ultra-urban penthouse that Douglas and his partner Dan Wright purchased over a year ago exudes a more contemporary hip edge than their previous home (featured in *House & Home*, October 2003), which had an interior that evoked the luxurious Moderne era. "This place is definitely slicker," says Douglas.

But having a slick and contemporary aesthetic doesn't mean the penthouse lacks an inviting ambience. Douglas explains that creating a modern yet warm space relies on using the appropriate colours and combinations of elements. His palette of soothing neutral tones is a signature. He has washed the penthouse in greyed-brown natural tones, both light and dark, and punctuated them with hits

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Rustic limestone floor tiles and the shimmery white fabric covering a row of modern stools are a handsome contrast to the kitchen's cherry cabinetry, stained a rich coffee-bean colour. Stools, Douglas Cridland Interior Design; fabric (on stools), Maxwell Fabrics.



ABOVE: Displayed keepsakes include a Murano glass lamp, a carved burl wood ball from Morocco, a tortoise-veneer jar from Florence, a bronze sculpture, and a decorative box with dovetail joints. Sculpture by Clint Roenisch.

BELOW: In the kitchen, metal-finished 2' x 6' ceramic tiles in a stacked pattern on the backsplash, sleek stainless steel pulls and appliances and polished-granite countertops create a sophisticated lustre.

of whites and blacks. "This place has sharper colour contrasts than our house did because the spaces are smaller," he says. "Big things, big art pieces, sharp contrasts — they trick the eye and give a sense of spaciousness." Pieces like the Biedermeier chest and built-in woodwork bring a sense of richness to the home. "I think wood is an essential factor in modern architecture because it adds a warm natural edge to drywall, chrome and other hard surfaces."

Douglas has always regarded his homes as testing grounds as much as places to live, a characteristic that befits an interior designer. "I'm intrigued by the process: why a room works, what makes for a successful space, how people interact in it. It helps me stay current in my industry." To that end, Douglas throws parties for as many as 100 people, both clients and friends. He likes to entertain, but these gatherings also offer him a chance to showcase his own home and experience the space with a variety of people over a set period of time. "I get to see the interactions and





Sliding glass panelled doors separate the dining area from the media room (beyond), which extends two storeys to 20'-high ceilings. The doors' mahogany frames are stained the same dark coffee-bean colour as the woodwork throughout the

penthouse. The media room's rug is another testament to Douglas's bent towards geometric patterns. Limestone tiles, Stone Tile.



ABOVE: Douglas displays collections everywhere; here, a mounted billiard ball and figural sculptures found at antiques shows.

BELOW: Vintage Mies van der Rohe Brno chairs with chrome frames and café-au-lait-coloured suede upholstery surround a table with a reeded column base and charcoal lacquer finish. The light fixture with a pleated drum shade was chosen for its simple design. Chairs, Knoll; Eureka light fixture, Lightspan.

reactions. What particular people notice intrigues me," he says. "One person will notice a painting; one person will notice a vase; one person will notice something about a bathroom detail. It always surprises me who notices what."

When it came to purchasing this penthouse, Douglas himself noticed the light, an element that has not always fascinated him in the past. "But here it just seemed so honest," he says. Wrapping around three sides of the building, the penthouse has floor-to-ceiling windows that allow plentiful light to dance off the high-gloss surfaces within. The ample windows also provide close-up views of downtown high-rises and vistas of the winding, tree-lined Bow River.

Douglas calls this home, with its big city views, terraces off the kitchen and living room, and sleek furnishings, his "Manhattan penthouse phase." He is quick to point out that he doesn't create thematic designs that stick strictly to one style or era. But certain eternal principles do accompany him through every project, allowing him to create fresh interiors while retaining his distinctive style.





Douglas softens his sleek modern aesthetic slightly in the bedroom, where he features a large delicately tufted, faux cashmere-covered headboard and wool-and-sisal carpeting. A bronze-finished stainless steel table by Italian architect Carlo Scarpa displays various artifacts. Bed, Douglas Cridland Interior Design; paintings by Richard Gorenko (top) Errol Lee Fullen (bottom).

Functionality is principle number one. In this penthouse, parts of the interior were reconfigured to create more functional spaces. For example, Douglas turned a small living room, with 20-foot-high ceilings and located off the dining area, into his media room because it had a more intimate feel. He then turned a second bedroom, a bathroom and walk-in closet into a larger living room that's more conducive to entertaining. Other repeated design concepts like symmetry and precision are exemplified in the large limestone floor tiling, the harmonious sightlines between adjacent rooms and the towering built-ins throughout.

Douglas is known for his exceptional collection of contemporary western Canadian art, mostly paintings and sculptures, which he prominently displays throughout his home. "My art collection is dear to me," he says. While he never designs around the art, it always seems to fit in. "I do play with sizes, viewing distances, colours ... but my art collection always seems to take on a life of its own."

Abiding principles, a signature colour palette, beloved artwork and the combinations — traditional with contemporary, wood and stone with chrome and glass — are key to the vigour in Douglas's designs. "I play it like a cook," he muses. "It's how you combine the flavours." **H&H**



In the bathroom, caramel-coloured marble bands align with the window mullion and vanity's granite countertop, adding to the room's precision. Marble tile, Stone Tile; motorized window screen, Silent Gliss.











