

Art doesn't have to be separate from daily life — form can combine with function in furnishings and details of daily living



The coffee table in front of the fireplace is actually a work of art by metal sculptor Michael Mintern. Beneath the glass surface, metal fish flit among the wrought-iron fronds and fat floating heads of bull kelp.

The home beautiful

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PHOTOS BY JOHN MCKAY
Times Colonist staff

Watching Donna Riddell "stage" a room makes me wish there were some way to get her into my own house. Within minutes of arriving at an upscale Brentwood Bay home, whose owners prefer not to be named, Riddell sizes up the living room, shifts an ottoman about, angles a leather armchair in just a notch, clicks on a few lights and the room that was already enchanting is transformed into *Home and Garden* magical.

It's that kind of eye for form, texture and light that has brought award-winning Riddell, owner of Artistry Designs, recog-

niton for her kitchen and bath designs. When the owners first saw the sand-toned three-storey house, they were taken with its lovely setting and beautiful forested views.

But they were not so impressed with the house's wall-to-wall carpets and puzzling floorplan that kept the heart of the home cast in cave-like shadow.

Riddell banged out walls to create pathways for the natural light to flow across the home.

Riddell then expanded the views further by replacing a transom window and double-french door set with custom-crafted oversized fir french doors that reach up to the ceiling.

"The transom let in the light, but it cut

across the view of that mountain," says Riddell.

"If you look at it now, the doors are echoing the view. They're tall and high, and the trees are tall and high, and there's no break."

The carpets were torn out and replaced with variegated American cherry hardwood ribboned in tones ranging from light sand to a dark burnt umber, colours that Riddell repeated to good effect throughout the space.

Riddell knocked out the wall between the dining room and the media room, and replaced it with a built-in, two-sided cherry sideboard with flat panels trimmed in beaded mouldings.

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Sampson, the family dog, stretches out on the expanse of hardwood flooring, an American cherry featuring variegated shades from sand to deep umber.



Polished rocks, many with fossils embedded, below, are used as handles on the cabinets in the dining room, above.

DETAILS

Built: 1998 with kitchen renovated 2004.
House size: 3,800 square feet with four bedrooms and four baths over three storeys.
Property size: 1.8 acres of aged cherry trees amid native plantings.
Designer: Donna Riddell at Artistry Design. www.artistrydesign.com



The right angles help draw light into a home, both summer and winter.





The granite-topped island in the kitchen set the tone for a lot of other colour choices.

Colour: Random look involved careful selection

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The sideboard is topped with polished granite. Its grain streams along in coppery chestnut flecks that contrast with rippling bands of clamshell whites and soothing ocean greens.

On the side facing the media room, the cabinet conceals a media centre, while on the dining room side, the cabinets offer a generous storage space.

The owner added her own innovative touch to the cabinetry. She used kiwi-sized stones, some embedded with fossils, as knobs. The dining room stones were left with their natural uneven shapes and each differs from the other in colour. "We spread them out all over the gran-

ite counter," says Riddell, "because as random as it seems, you really have to choose stones with colours that resonate with the counter; otherwise, it wouldn't look right."

The main storey flows in a circular plan with the media room as the hub. From the foyer, the space opens to a large living room with soaring ceilings.

Deep upholstered fabric and leather furnishings cosy around an eye-catching coffee table created by metal-sculptor Michael Mintern. The glass top has been sandblasted so that its edges feel like rippling water under the fingertips. Beneath the glass, iron bull kelp blades swirl from their bulbs and down to their finger-like holdfasts on which the table stands. Iron salmon swim among the blades. The table upstages the room's tall, bowed granite fireplace.

The room circles around to the dining room, which is furnished with a circular solid-walnut table, custom built by Victoria craftsman Rick Heatley. The table fits elegantly into the bay shape of the room.

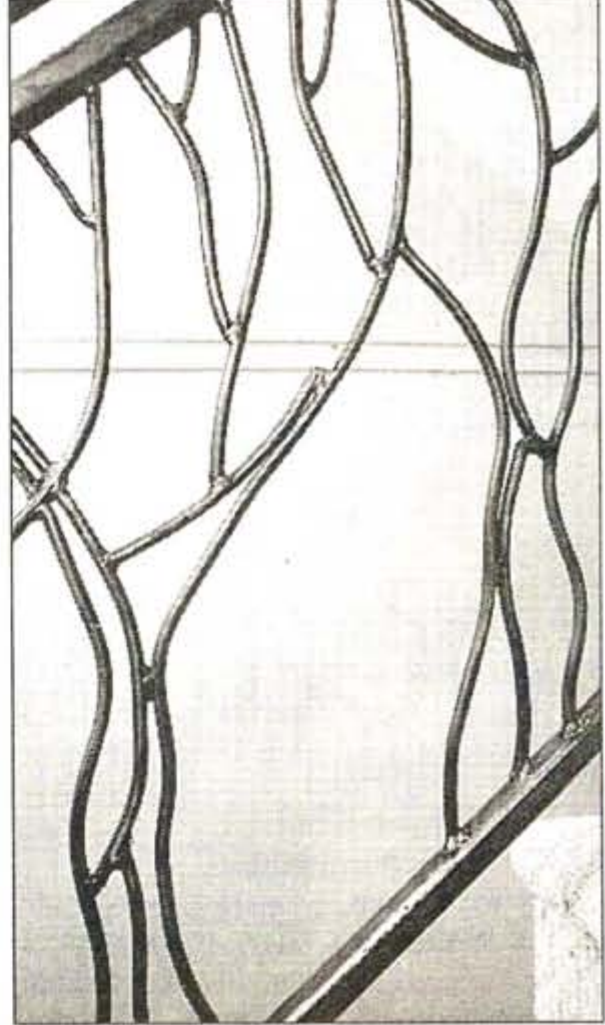
The kitchen comes into full view from the dining room, a fact that played into Riddell's design decisions.

"We wanted this side to be more elegant, so we added corbels under the bar top and used furniture-like cabinetry in the island," says Riddell. Handmade Italian glass pendant lights sculpted in an ocean foam fashion hang over the granite eating bar.

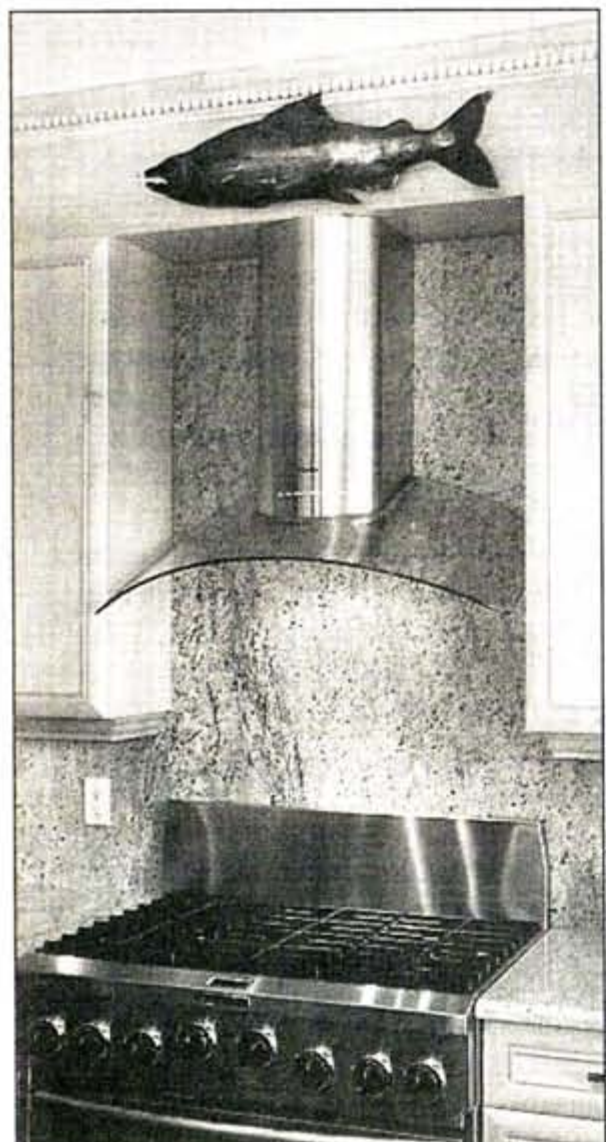
Riddell spent hours dropping the lights and bending the S-track "to define the eating bar without creating too much interest to take away from the other features of the kitchen or the hearth." The kitchen hearth is the granite backsplash above the stainless steel professional-grade Kitchen Aid range. It stretches up to the ceiling.

To preserve the dramatic effect of the hearth's upsweep, the owners chose a glass and stainless steel Miele range hood. The feature is topped with a Mintern salmon sculpture.

"This is a very functional kitchen, but we didn't take it too seriously. We did some whimsical things," says Riddell as she points out three iron-man pulls scram-



Even the staircase combines function and esthetic appeal with sturdy, coated metal handrails supported by an artistic wrought-iron sculpture.



Cooking with a work of art — a stainless steel stove and range hood are combined with a dramatic granite backsplash and the whole is topped with another Mintern sculpture — a sleek salmon.

bling over the cabinet doors.

The kitchen is ready for formal entertaining with granite surfaces over furniture-like cabinetry. Riddell's signature style appears in the multi-toned cabinetry that ranges from rich cherry-wood reds, misty greens and natural maple woods. The walls are saturated in a green-cast taupe paint, which ties into the room's natural colour palette. Rich red hand-knotted wool herati runner floor rugs flank the island.

Seagrass basket drawers add variety to the lower cabinets and make for easy-to-reach root vegetable bins. Glazed cabinets with glass shelving and focus lighting add a formal touch.

The stainless steel fridge appears to be sunken into a cabinet facade, but not all is as it seems. Riddell pulls on one side of the cabinet to reveal a narrow floor-to-ceiling shelf drawer.

"Never waste an inch," says Riddell.