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INSPIRED INTERIORS AND SPECTACULAR VIEWS ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS STUNNING VANCOUVER PENTHOUSE

BY KATHLEEN FREIMOND
PHOTOGRAPHS BY IVAN HUNTER


Sunlight streams into Thu Watson's Yaletown penthouse, playing off the myriad shimmering surfaces that help give this sky-high retreat its unique and sparkling character. Here, a ceiling-to-floor water feature cleverly camouflages a supporting wall while glass panels that clad the 100-foot-long passage and lacquered kitchen cabinets reflect light into every corner of this large, three-bedroom highrise home.

Watson, a Vancouver-based designer transformed the penthouse with a complete renovation. After ripping out all the walls and fittings, Watson set about reinventing the 33rd-floor space to take best advantage of the magnificent water and city views. Two-and-a-half-metre-high windows, together with elegant, dark-stained Wenge wood floors and custom fittings and furnishings now define this sumptuous space.

Faced with a structural support wall she was unable to move, Watson opted to turn it into an enormous water feature (see left). To soften the scale of the eight-foot-wide wall of water, which could easily have overpowered the living room, Watson installed rippled glass. Water trickles gently over the undulating surface, providing a serene backdrop for the room's elegant furnishings, which include a round velvet ottoman and creamy leather Roche Bobois sofa. Silk



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The magnificent water feature camouflages a supporting wall while city views attract attention on the opposite side of the living room. Right: Vancouver-based designer Thu Watson.

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Glossy cabinets and top-quality granite define this ultra-modern kitchen. Below (left): The stovetop is in a central island – a stainless-steel hood complements the other appliances. Below (centre): The colourful cocktail drinks cart introduces a playful touch to the dining room. Below (right): A partial wall divides the luxury bathroom from the main bedroom and also acts as a one-of-a-kind headboard.



pillows provide floor-level comfort while the hand-woven rug, which echoes the rippled lines on the water feature, is clearly visible through the glass coffee table. This east side of the penthouse is a favourite gathering place for friends and family, and is conveniently situated alongside the open-plan kitchen.

A granite-topped island divides the kitchen from the living space and also provides a useful work surface for cooking or for settling down with a laptop to catch up on work-related tasks. Recessed handles in the lacquered kitchen cabinet doors keep the look streamlined. Countertops are kept clear of appliances, all of which are housed in cleverly designed cabinets that also conceal the larger appliances such as the dishwasher and fridge. The stovetop is in a central granite-topped island beneath a state-of-the-art stainless-steel hood.

A wall divides the kitchen from the intimate dining area, where an Italian, custom-designed glass table accommodates eight people. The circular shape of the table is repeated in the area rug and also on the wall where a large convex mirror provides depth and a touch of intrigue. Artwork by Tanya Slingsby, one of Watson's favourite artists, is showcased in the dining room and throughout the penthouse.

Down the passage from the dining room are an office, the guest bathroom and a second bedroom. A glass-tiled shower competes for attention with the spectacular vessel sink. The fiery red in the sink provides a dramatic contrast to both the black granite countertop and the mirrored wall, which helps visually enlarge this relatively small space.

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Glass tiles surround the soaker tub, while two vessel sinks introduce an exotic element to the space. Below: A soft amber bedside light highlights the upholstered wall.



The master bedroom is located at the end of a passage, behind heavy custom wooden double doors that feature two half-circle glass insets that echo the circular shapes seen throughout the penthouse.

The bedroom, with its own sitting area, features almost floor-to-ceiling windows on two walls making the space feel much larger. Hotel-style bedding keeps the decor simple and understated. The bathroom is clad in aqua glass panels similar to those found in the long passageway that runs almost the entire length of the penthouse.

Thu Watson has recently turned her attention to publishing a book on some of Vancouver's most spectacular interiors. Her penthouse, along with 10 other homes, is



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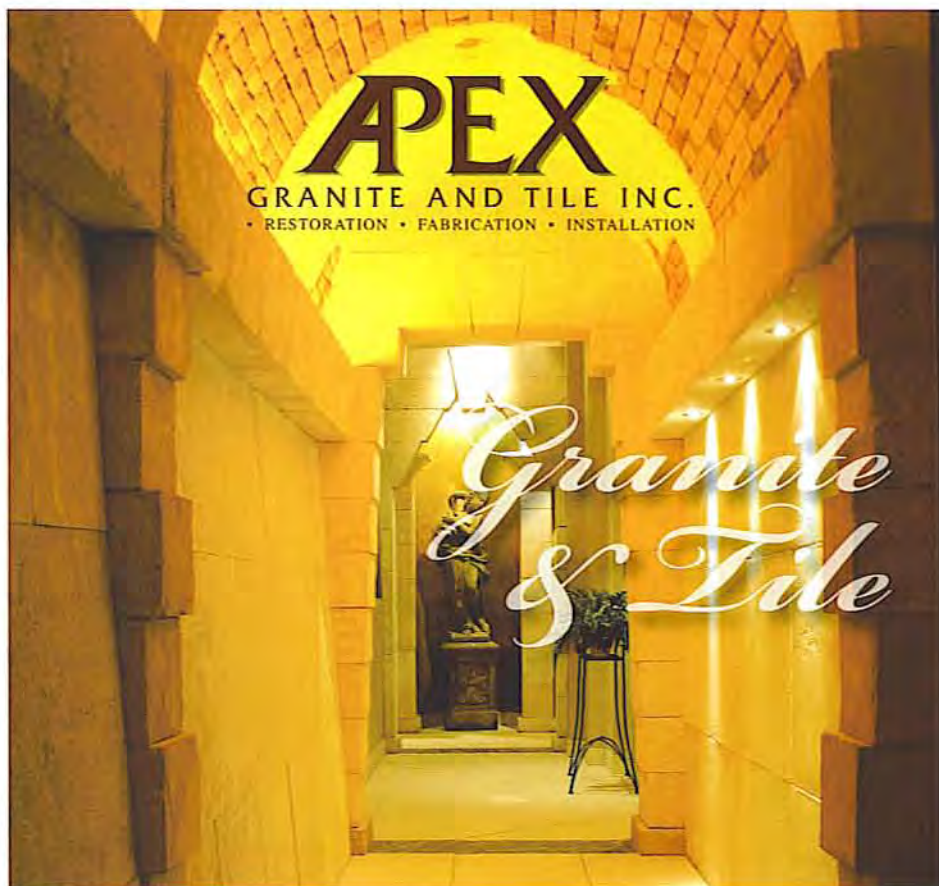
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featured in the book *Vancouver Signature Interiors*, available from 18KARAT on South Granville and distributed by 18KARAT. ■

SOURCES: Architect: Ted Feenstra; Builder: Rudy Kuettel, R&M Vancouver Construction Co. Ltd.; Kitchen cabinets: Empire Kitchens; Fireplace: Main Sheet Metal; Plumbing fixtures: Cantur; Flooring: Wallmax; Painted glass walls: Good & Quick Glass; Faux finishes: Soco Decorative Arts; Bathroom glass tiles: North Sea Contracting; Paintings: Tanya Slingsby; Light fixtures: Lightform; Living room sofa, bedroom lamps: Roche Bobois; Bar stools: Manotti; Furniture and furnishings: TWR Designer Showroom.
See SOURCES on page B4



Vancouver Signature Interiors, available from 18KARAT on South Granville.



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