

# THE QUALITY FACTOR

*A Port Coquitlam penthouse is given superior materials in a redesign*

BY LAURA BEESTON  
PHOTOGRAPHY: PAUL GRDINA  
STYLING: SARAH GALLOP



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**OFTEN, A NEW CONDO NEEDS** to be given a bit of character. Spec buildings – put directly on the real estate market, built quickly and decorated in basic grey, white and beige – can lack soul and substance.

That was the case with this penthouse suite in Port Coquitlam before the owner turned to designer Sarah Gallop of Sarah Gallop Design Inc. for help.

He had bought the unit for its location and gorgeous view of the Lower Mainland, and wanted more from the space but didn't want to be overly involved in bringing his vision to life.


After an initial walk-through and a subsequent 15-minute approval meeting, the homeowner left Gallop to execute the redesign. ☞

“The quality of materials in the space needed to be brought up a few notches,” says Gallop. “He wasn’t happy with the quality of the materials or aesthetic of the two-storey penthouse and wanted to live in a more upscale environment.”

So the designer and her team reverse-engineered the condo’s contemporary style, adding “more classic and timeless elements to the design,” says Gallop. They gave it personality while keeping the structural layout intact.

It was the kitchen backsplash, a jewel-glass water jet mosaic tile, that set the tone for the rest of the reno, says Gallop, and a subtle diamond motif is referenced in elements that include the fixtures and the floor. “I tried to carry it through small elements and other angular shapes to give repetition and continuity to the space,” she says.

Another way the designer achieved a traditional look was through the quality of

the millwork. “The client mentioned he really liked wood, so we wanted to introduce this element without making it feel too heavy,” says Gallop. In addition to the walnut flooring in a herringbone pattern, a wall of 3D-wood paneling adds interest in the space that leads up to the second-storey wine room and patio. 

*The television in the master bedroom is retractable, so it doesn’t distract from the gorgeous view of Vancouver’s Lower Mainland.*





Gallop's go-to custom millworker, Geoff Pearson of GP Woodwork, crafted the kitchen's sapele island, the crotch mahogany master ensuite vanity, the linen tower and walk-in closet—both in sapele wood—and the diamond veneer sapele dining table.

But Pearson's pièce de résistance is the 12-foot-long crotch mahogany media console in the living room that would not fit into the building's elevator when it was ready for installation. It was heroically carried up 27 flights of stairs.

Utilizing formerly "weird, dead space" was also part of Gallop's plan from the outset. The wine room at the top of the stairs gives the space an intended purpose. Adjacent to a large outdoor deck that features areas for both dining and sitting, the room has automatic shading and special uv glass to protect its contents from exposure to light. Adding a bar area next to the wine room meant fewer trips to the kitchen, says Gallop, and it serves as a bridge between spaces. ☞

*The penthouse suite's original structural layout was maintained. In the bathroom, a tub was replaced with a spa shower.*





*The kitchen backsplash – a jewel glass waterjet mosaic in pearl, schist and lava stone – is part of the Parquet Line by Sara Baldwin for New Ravenna Mosaics. The diamond motif was the inspiration that set the tone for the aesthetic of the penthouse’s redesign. The kitchen also boasts custom stained-glass inlays and an island with room for three extra seats.*

Gallop created ample storage behind paneled walls. An impressive floor-to-ceiling closet in the master bedroom boasts built-in cabinetry, tiered hangings and pull-out drawers.

Other changes to the penthouse were practical. The designer dropped “a goofy and uneven” ceiling to add air conditioning and hide venting and the sprinkler system. There is a Murphy bed in the home office that can be pulled down from the wall to provide extra accommodation. And in the master bedroom, a drop-down TV above the bed ensures it doesn’t block the view.

The home is also automated; lights, music, security features, blinds and television can be controlled from a smartphone or tablet. It’s a feature that fits the owner’s lifestyle, as he travels often between properties and for work.

After six months of renovations without the owner’s input, he was pleasantly surprised with the result. “He didn’t see it until it was finished,” says Gallop. “It was like the big reveal you see on TV.”