

SHOWCASING BC & ALBERTA'S ARCHITECTS AND INTERIOR DESIGNERS

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DESIGN

Q U A R T E R L Y



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VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN VISITOR CENTRE
ARCHITECT WALTER FRANCL | KITCHEN & BATH | FURNITURE | FLOORING
2012 WOOD WORKS! BC AWARDS

what is the design concept?



Meccanica Presentation Centre

At Insight Design Group, the first question we ask when approaching a new project is: “What is the design concept?” The concept is the most important aspect when creating a unified space with impact and atmosphere. Senior designer Linda Gallo describes our concept development: “For each project here at Insight, we develop a concept to initiate our design process. We flip through magazines, design blogs and various furniture and lighting websites to get our juices flowing. Often, we are simply inspired by our surroundings and each other.”

In terms of concept, presentation centres and display suites for multi-family projects are truly driven by creativity. This is because they are our client’s most useful marketing tool and help to sell a project from onset to move-in. As principal Kari Henshaw puts it, “Presentation centres and display suites give us an opportunity to really let our creative energy flow. They create a distinct experience from entrance to exit.” Developers want

to offer an exciting project that will stand out from others, and appeal to specific groups of people. Our goal as interior designers is to give future homeowners a vision of how the space will suit them.

We believe communication is the key to achieving consistency within a project. It is the common thread through which a solid, complete vision is created. The first step of this process involves the entire team. The developer will have a general idea of what their vision is, and will collaborate with the team through an envisioning meeting to establish a clear concept. Recently, we worked to the successful completion of the first stage of Meccanica, a project located at the corner of East 1st Avenue and Quebec Street in Vancouver. Meccanica, completed in a collaborative effort between Cressey Development Corporation, Raffi Architects Inc., Insight Design Group Inc, and Thought Shop Creative Inc., features a design heavily influenced by vintage Porsche styling and details. The project concept was inspired by a company named Intermeccanica located on the same site

as the proposed development which creates replica Porsche Roadsters and Speedsters, as well as the surrounding Main Street and False Creek neighbourhoods. During this envisioning meeting, questions were asked such as: “Who is our target market, and what drives them? How do we want this space to feel?” The main objective is to fine tune major details and ensure everyone is on the same page. “One thing to keep in mind,” says Henshaw, “is that as much as we want to define what this project is, it is also about what it is not.”

We also collectively ask questions about potential buyers: “What do these people do in their spare time? What is there to do in this neighbourhood?” The next step is to brainstorm how to bring this concept into each area of the project. For us as interior designers, we asked ourselves how we could incorporate this refined “Main Street” feel into the design of the entire project.

One of the first things we do is put together a concept board of images that portray what we envision for the project to help our client visualize the space. The concept board helps drive the design and is a constant reminder of what we’re working towards. Next, the finishes are selected and refined. In this case, the finishes in Meccanica were largely based on the Porsche concept, and Cressey decided to give their buyers options much like a car manufacturer would. After the finishes are finalized, we begin selecting the furnishings for the presentation centre and display suites. Every item within the suites and presentation centre is meticulously selected to fit seamlessly into the design, and each detail is deliberate and has a purpose in carrying through the specific concept.

“Everything must have a purpose,” says Gallo. “When implementing any design, we imagine how the end users will be living, entertaining, working etc. and create the corresponding mood accordingly.”

At the Meccanica presentation centre there are two display suites, each one designed to appeal to a different type of buyer and lifestyle.

All of these facets come together to form a cohesive design. Our objective is to bring to life a strong design that tells a story from start to finish. Meccanica is an exciting example of a fully developed, collaborative design carried through every aspect of the project, right down to the tag line: “Four walls inspired by four wheels.”

This article was supplied by the Insight Design Team.