

LH

C

LUXURY
HOME
CANADA

Cultural Continuum Shim-Sutcliffe's Integral House

HIGH-RISE

TAKING LUXURY TO NEW HEIGHTS



Insight Design Inc.

VANCOUVER INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM PUTS A PLUSH, UNDERSTATED FACE TO A GENERATION OF CONDO TOWERS IN A BURGEONING PACIFIC RIM METROPOLIS

by Brian Libby

Nearly every morning when she walks into the Vancouver firm she founded fifteen years ago, Insight Design, Kari Henshaw says half-jokingly to her staff, “Good morning, Angels.” The joke, of course, is her reference to 70’s TV show “Charlie’s Angels,” which is a cheeky source of inspiration given Insight’s all-female and largely Gen-X staff. But the cheerful wishes are sincere and by design.

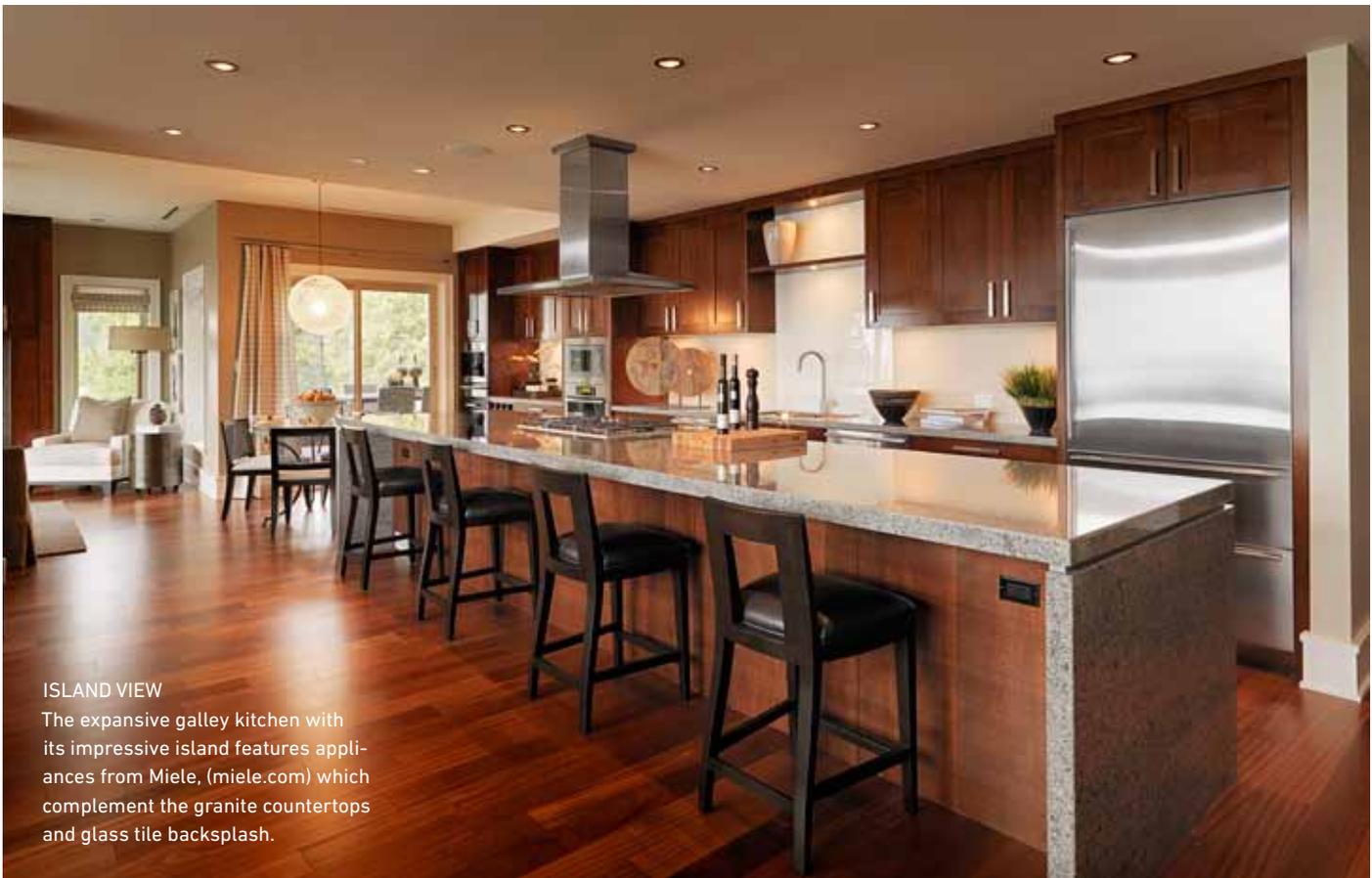
“I have these little quotes written around the studio,” Henshaw explains. “At the top of the stairs it says, ‘If attitude were contagious, would you want someone catching yours?’ It’s so important to enjoy coming to work every day.”

Her upbeat attitude is more than talk. Employees are encouraged to contribute to all facets of the design process, which has helped Insight to enjoy a high-staff retention rate, several even here since the firm’s beginning. “We can sit down and are drawing and designing the same thing,” Henshaw says of the communication that exists among them. “We’re almost thinking each other’s thoughts. We just understand each other.”

After starting the company in 1995 (for the first three years with a partner, and as sole owner ever since), Henshaw and her team have grown Insight’s portfolio to include a variety of work:

corporate offices, a health club, and both single and multi-family housing. Numerous Vancouver high-rise condo developers have hired the firm in an era when the city has added enough to transform the skyline and enliven the downtown with activity.

With a reputation for luxurious yet comfortable interiors, Insight has also designed many model units for new condo projects in British Columbia and throughout Canada. There are the bold geometric and floral patterns of the Luxe condominiums in Burnaby, with its juxtaposition of minimalist modern with classic styles. Alternatively, there is the more understated spa hotel-like ambience of the Aerie I and Aerie II Penthouse projects, perched atop twin towers in West Vancouver. In each case, and others, the Insight fingerprint exudes simple tones, with an emphasis on textures, such as the embroidery of a taupe-colored area rug in the Aerie I living room. The firm also is selective and sophisticated about picking art and objects that subtly match



ISLAND VIEW

The expansive galley kitchen with its impressive island features appliances from Miele, (miele.com) which complement the granite countertops and glass tile backsplash.

Aerie I

The center of this penthouse is its great room, including a long granite-covered cooking island in the kitchen, giving way to adjoining living and family rooms. "Even so," says Insight Design's Kari Henshaw, "yielding to the view meant...playing a lot on texture and luxury without it being over the top. It spoke of quality without being too pretentious." Custom furniture came from Bari Design (baridesign.com) & Omega (omegacustomfurniture.ca) as well as additional pieces from Spencer Interiors (spencerinteriors.ca) and Inform Interiors (informinteriors.com) Lighting is by Lightform (lightform.ca), and wool rugs from Colin Campbell (colcam.com). Sapele tropical hardwood floors are manufactured by Mirage (miragefloors.com).





Aerie II

In this successor to Aerie I, the volume is turned up slightly to give off a less understated but more strikingly lavish ambience. Off-white gives way here to a bright, almost polar whiteness, for example. Accent pieces are in shiny silver instead of matte copper. Accessories were purchased at local shops Da Vinci's Home (davincishome.ca), Brougham Interiors (broughaminteriors.com) and 18Karat (eighteenkarat.com). Art was sourced from Bau-Xi Gallery (bau-xi.com) and Jennifer Kostuik Gallery (kostuikgallery.com) in

*We're very careful in the things that we've picked:
the perfect scale, texture and lines."*

KARI HENSHAW, FOUNDER,

a room's personality. The units are both large, some 5,000 square feet each, which meant tinier objects could easily get lost along a lengthy credenza or kitchen countertop. Overall, there is an almost cinematic quality at work, which perhaps comes from the firm's method.

"One thing we do consistently is there's always a story being told from the time you walk through the door to when you leave. There's a continuity moving through the space," Henshaw explains. "Whether it's residential or commercial or multi-family, we always put a storyboard together. When we're out shopping, we have a copy of the storyboard with us. It's not about matching everything. What we try to strive for is an eclectic appeal. We're very careful in the things that we've picked: the perfect scale, texture and lines. There are differences in each room, but there is also a continuity of style. One room might be softer, another more bold."

Both the Aerie penthouses have floor-to-ceiling glass and spectacular views looking out at Bur-

ard Inlet; the palette is a series of soft greys and taupes. This allows one to absorb the color of the light itself coming off the blue water. "But, there's a lot of rain in Vancouver, so you can't make it feel too cool," the designer cautions. Instead, it's about finding a kind of universal appeal for a model unit that thousands will visit and view. "Aerie I, Aerie II, or any of our projects, you walk into a space and although it might not be your personal taste, you still can walk through there and get a great feeling," Henshaw adds. "It has to appeal to everybody. You can't do such a specific design that only a couple people would understand." ■

A MESSAGE FROM BOA- FRANC/MIRAGE
Mirage Floors are synonymous with comfort, beauty, and durability. Sixteen times recognized for outstanding quality in the last 9 years by dealers and other industry professionals, Mirage is indisputably the #1 hardwood flooring brand in North America. Choose peace of mind. Choose Mirage quality.



Mirage is proud to partner with **Insight Design**, one of Canada's leading Interior Design firm. We wish you continued success.

www.miragefloors.com

