

MAXIMAL MINIMAL



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Gray

THE ART OF INTERIORS

Designer Diego Burdi pairs contemporary art with custom furnishings to create timeless interiors for a well-traveled Toronto couple.

By Paola Singer Photographed by Doublespace Photography





The walls in the great room of this Toronto residence, designed by Diego Burdi, are clad with wool-upholstered panels. Elegant oyster-colored chairs from Christophe Delcourt play well with custom furniture in various shades of gray. The 14-foot-tall doorways are cased in blackened bronze.

A second seating area in the great room is anchored by a large silk rug designed by Burdi; its spectrum of gray tones ranges from dark charcoal to silver.

When speaking about their projects, interior designers will often say they had “dream clients.” Sometimes it’s just a polite quip, and sometimes they truly mean it.

When recounting the process of designing this Toronto residence, Diego Burdi, co-founder of the Canadian interiors studio Burdifilek, gushes earnestly about the clients and the project—a new build for which he was given the freedom to create something completely custom. “They’re so amazing,” he says of the homeowners, a philanthropist couple. “They’ve become dear friends.”

After living for many years in a traditionally styled home, the couple was “ready for a new point of view,” Burdi says of his design. “We endeavored to create a space with an understated, elegant [style] that you can’t really put your finger on.”

Indeed, the quiet, rather spartan interiors don’t reference any specific time period or trend. What stands out instead is the inherent luxury of noble materials including limestone, marble, and oak, seen in nearly every surface in the home, and the sculptural quality of the rooms themselves: grand spaces with detailed finishes and perfectly placed doors that frame views of lush gardens and patios. Then there’s the great centerpiece of the home, a sculptural spiral staircase displaying organic curves. This three-story *pièce de résistance* twists around a slender 30-foot hanging light installation comprising hundreds of glass fragments shaped like gemstones (a bespoke collaboration between Burdifilek and Vancouver-based Matthew McCormick Studio).

“This level of design is not for the faint of heart,” says Burdi, adding that the project encompassed 25,000 square feet of living space. “You don’t understand the square footage from the outside—there’s an element of surprise when you walk in.”

Over the five years it took to construct and decorate the home, the designer and his clients traveled together to Paris, London, and New York City in search of special furnishings and objets d’art. The finished residence has two main levels with five bedrooms and several reception rooms, including a 1,500-square-foot grand salon. To make the scale more approachable, and to encourage »



THIS PAGE: The entry's minimalist fireplace is clad in the same French limestone used for the hallway floors. In the firebox, a sculpture features a series of bronze forms that resemble logs standing on end.

OPPOSITE: The fireplace's materials palette continues into the house with French limestone moldings and blackened-bronze door frames.





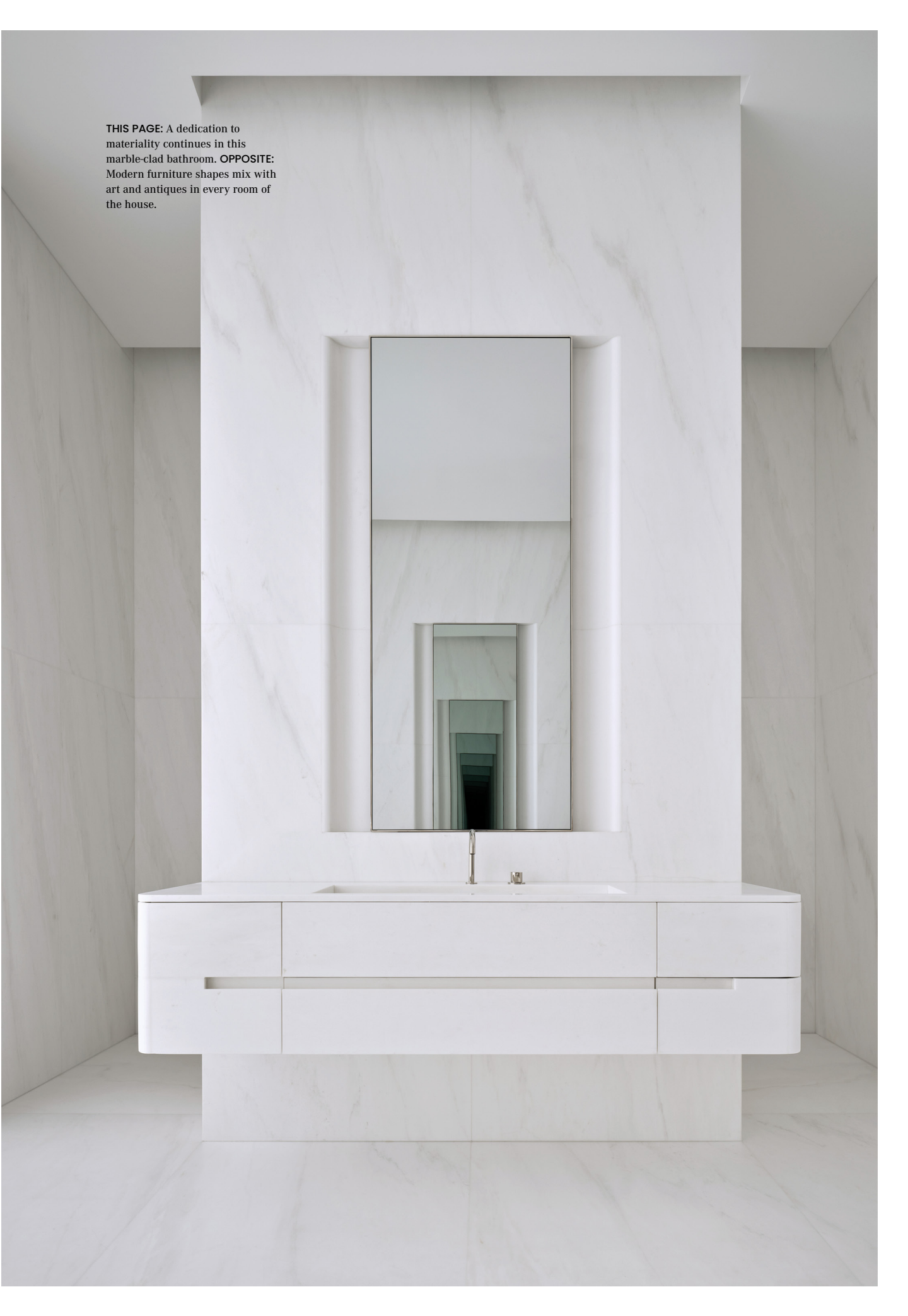




THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: A sculptural, hand-carved stone staircase serves three floors. Visible from the dining room, it spirals around a 30-foot-tall, cut-glass pendant light designed by Matthew McCormick. To create its bejeweled look, the lighting designer employed a gemstone-cutting technique used by jewelers.



THIS PAGE: A dedication to materiality continues in this marble-clad bathroom. **OPPOSITE:** Modern furniture shapes mix with art and antiques in every room of the house.







THIS PAGE: Adjacent to the dining room, the solarium displays limited-edition furnishings and 20th-century works by artists including Donald Judd and Vincent Dubourg. **OPPOSITE:** The family room walls are clad in black-stained Baltic pine panels.

intimate conversations among guests, Burdi created three distinct seating areas. The central parlor has clean-lined oyster-hued sofas, light-cognac-colored armchairs, and twin bronze coffee tables by Eric Schmitt for Ralph Pucci. On one end of the room, a grand piano sits alongside a set of aubergine-colored club chairs from New York's KGBL; at the other end, a curved sofa by Christophe Delcourt is paired with a round side table displaying an antique marble sculpture. A large ombré silk rug and wool-upholstered wall panels add a sense of harmony and warmth. "[My clients] entertain frequently, but above all, it's a home," the designer says. "When you look at the room, it's all very cohesive."

Throughout the residence, neutral hues of ivory, beige, and taupe provide a gallery-like backdrop for the couple's collection of vibrant contemporary artworks, including a monochromatic ocean-blue painting by Pat Steir, a multicolored, textured work by Larry Poons, and a black-and-white op art piece by Victor Vasarely.

On the basement level, there's another impressive collection: 3,000 bottles of wine, for which Burdifilek created a system of thin metal shelving that, when viewed from a distance, makes the bottles look like they are suspended in space. In the center of the room, a plump, curvilinear limestone island is used for tastings among friends. "There was a lot of customization, along with a collection of unique pieces from different parts of the world," says Burdi, who found the island's stone in France. "We wanted the interiors to be elegant, not loud, but also to stand out." ❄