

HOMES

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■ COMICS, F7

CARE AWARDS

Great style in limited spaces

When every square foot has to be cleaned and heated, it pays to look for smaller kitchens, bathrooms



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High land values in Victoria mean home builders and designers have long had to do more with less — resulting in some creative use of space in small kitchens and bathrooms.

For both rooms, in fact, there's an "under 175 square feet" category in the Canadian Home Builders' Association's annual CARE awards. Here are some of the finalists in the two categories.

"With the price of land, you're probably going to see more small-home living in the future," says Casey Edge, executive director of the Victoria chapter of the CHBA. "A category for smaller spaces evens the playing field in the design competition. But a lot of it has to do with design and functionality. All the entries are wonderfully designed."

Often, smaller spaces can be a lot more challenging for designers. While the size of a bedroom can be discretely trimmed without anybody except the owners knowing, public areas such as the kitchen and bath require more finesse.

Typically, appliances such as fridges and stoves can't shrink too much, so it means a designer has to make the available space both look larger and perform more tasks.

One of the tricks to create more space is to move some of the functions out of the room.

"Typically, a kitchen includes space for 'dry' storage — all the non-perishable food," says Raj Sahota, principal of Method Built Homes. "So what we did was to build a separate walk-in pantry alongside the kitchen."

He says such space-saving strategies are not new — they've been employed in condominiums for some time.

"All you have to do is look at a beautiful penthouse," he says. "You get a lot of sophistication without a lot of square footage."

His Olympic View house is a finalist in both the small kitchen and bathroom categories in the CARE awards. He was able to squeeze five bedrooms and four baths into just 3,130 square feet of living area.

Doing more with even less is Dave MacKenzie, another finalist in the small kitchen category. His recently completed kitchen is in a 1960s-era house that was only 600 square feet before renovations. Now it's a still modest 1,600 square feet.

"You have to get more for less," says MacKenzie, a

22-year construction veteran and president of Falcon Heights Contracting. "It has to do with cost and one's overall carbon footprint. Every square foot built needs to be heated and cleaned."

The whole-house renovation included removing the walls of what was originally a small kitchen. The layout was already functional, but he improved on it with the addition of a large island for food preparation. The island houses a dishwasher and also serves as the pantry.

He believes one of the reasons the kitchen looks attractive is because its size is proportionate to the dimensions of the rest of the house.

Cosy master ensuite bathrooms are another area where designers and homeowners have invested a lot of time and energy.

The bathroom in the Olympic View project is perhaps a bit daring — there are no walls separating the bedroom and bath. The standalone bathtub is only about six feet from the bed, seemingly floating in the middle of the open-plan room. A change in flooring — from tile to carpeting — is the only visual cue dividing the two.

The master bedroom in Moorecroft, a submission by The Interior Design Group of Nanaimo, is more traditional. The nine by 14-foot room is warmed by stained wood in both window mouldings and the bathroom vanity.

"The couple wanted a private getaway," says Ashley Campbell, an interior designer with the company. "We incorporated pony walls to the his-and-hers showers and mirrors opposite the windows to brighten and open up the space."

The room has a vaulted ceiling with a transom window to deliver natural light to the adjacent walk-in



The kitchen of the Robison reno in the Qualicum area makes a big impression in a very small footprint.

PALLADIAN



FALCON HEIGHTS CONTRACTING

White cabinets reach the ceiling, providing plenty of storage in the Falcon house in Victoria.



METHOD BUILT HOMES

A bank of kitchen components in the Olympic View home at Saxe Point is tucked under the loft.

closet. The dual vanities flank a central medicine cabinet that also serves as storage for linens and other items.

"As builders, we are seeing a large switch to smaller spaces," says MacKenzie, who moved to Victoria five years ago. "Instead of spending \$100 per foot [in construction costs] for a 3,000 square-foot place, people can instead spend \$200 per foot on 1,500 square feet. It's smaller — but nicer."



PUCKETT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION AND JASON GOOD CUSTOM CABINETS

A double vanity in the Salisbury project features lots of storage drawers and cupboards.



METHOD BUILT HOMES

The bathroom of Olympic View has no wall — only a change of flooring — separating it from the bedroom.

