



## Couple at ease in peaceful room

By Barb Livingstone, Calgary Herald June 5, 2010

Alexsador Pozsonyi and Susan Gallagher are both Calgary interior designers.

The work they have put into their 1961 bungalow in Fairview shows both the passion of their vocations and their joy in working together as a couple on a home they love.

Alexander works as a designer and project manager with **Riddell Kurczaba Architecture Engineering Interior Design Ltd.**

Susan, who also has professional LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) credentials has, for

the past 10 years, worked in and managed an office furnishings design department. She is currently pursuing other opportunities.

Their favourite room in the renovated home is the living room/sitting room -- and the things within that not only enhance the house, but their own history.

For example, Susan says about a radio that sits in the area: "The story behind it is that was my grandparents' radio. My dad has told me how he remembers on Saturday nights out on the farm, his mom and dad would roll up the carpet, put the radio on and dance in the living room.

"That was their entertainment. It is a very special piece for me. It connects me to a wonderful childhood memory of my dad's."

- Which room in your home is your favourite?

- Susan -- That is a difficult question to answer, as I really love all the rooms in our home ... since we renovated. I would have to say that our living room/ sitting room is my favourite

- Alex -- After a total renovation including custom millwork, fireplace addition, new windows (in a blank wall), I must admit my favourite room is our living room and sitting room.

- Why?

- Susan -- It is bright and peaceful, cosy and welcoming. It is a wonderful room for morning tea or an evening visit with friends. It draws you in and puts you at ease. We chose colours and elements that reflected nature, bringing the outdoors in. I think this has helped to create the comfortable feel of the space.

The other reason this is my favourite room is because I know how hard we worked to complete it and seeing how great it turned out, just makes me appreciate it more.

- Alex -- The space is livable, relaxing and truly the one space Susan and I start and finish our day in.

- What are the extras in the room, that add to its meaning?

- Susan -- The fireplace. This room had no real architectural interest. It was just one big room. We have always loved the Arts and Crafts period and wanted to incorporate some elements from that time. We love the old houses with the fireplaces, flanked by cabinets and windows and wanted to have that look in our home. Alex and a friend built the mantel and the cabinets on either side. He did the tiling and I did all the painting. We ordered the door fronts to match the french doors going into the sitting room.

(Susan says other items include:)

-James Bond storage -- When we built the fireplace, we had a good deal of wasted space on either side of the upper portion of the mantel, so, on one side we put in shelves to store vases, etc., and on the other side, we put in a pull out "James Bond-esque" bar. It has a shelf for bottles and a place to hang glasses.

-The windows -- We were lucky enough to have a bow window in the living room when we bought the house. When we added the screened windows on either side of the fireplace, we were amazed at how much more light we now get. This room now gets light from early morning until mid-afternoon. They also give us the option of getting fresh air and air-flow into the room.

-The floor: We had the hardwood refinished and found the original tag from the wood. We looked into it and found out that the wood for our floor came from Springfield, Mont. It's No. 1 Red Oak, which was only available for about five years.

-The sitting room: As a third bedroom, this room was a catch-all. We used it as an office, but it really wasn't a great space to be in. We decided that space would be much more functional as an extension to the living room. We closed the door off to the hallway and put Arts and Craft-inspired pocket french doors opening into the living room. I have my grandmother's small writing desk there and also use the space to read. This is a wonderful room for welcoming guests and a great space for an intimate conversation during a large gathering.

-The closets: Our front closet was at the end of the hall and never had a door. That meant that all our stuff was always showing. It always felt messy to me, especially when we had friends over. To clean things up and give more function to our kitchen, we decided to turn that closet into a pantry with pull-out drawers and shelves. We used the space from the closet in the third bedroom and created a built-in front closet that is now a part of the sitting room. To maximize the storage space, we used the IKEA Pax system. The closet has pull out shoe storage, coat storage, shelves and bins. It keeps us organized and looks great.

- Alex -- The fireplace, storage, custom millwork and the natural south light. It makes the room so inviting, we often loose track of time, reading, visiting or simply enjoying the warmth of the fire.

- Who designed the room?

- Susan -- We did.

- Alex -- A total collaboration between Susan and myself.

- What did you want, and need, in the room?

- Susan -- We needed a more functional space, more storage, a better front closet. We wanted more light and a fireplace.

- Alex -- There was a definite need for natural light (new windows), a fireplace and storage. Also, to complete the whole home renovation, we made sure that the living and sitting room tied into the new smart systems (data, cable, phone, audio and network).

- What makes this room special?

- Susan -- What makes this room special is that we rolled up our sleeves, pulled all nighters and, together, created a space that we absolutely love.

- Alex -- The fact that Susan and I designed the space and then built it together.

- Do you think of it as "your room"?

- Susan -- I think of it as "our room." Every morning we have our tea and coffee together and talk about our life. What we are doing that day, things we have to remember, birthdays etc. It is our room.





- Alex -- Definitely our room. Typical rooms of this era of home, are generic and designed for the masses, but are great blank canvases for personalization. This room is specialized and contemporary while still matching the craftsmanship of the builder. And all the elements met the clients' criteria. Our criteria. It combines elements of nature, retains the warmth that a home should and still respects the craft and art of quality homebuilding.

- Who built your home?

- Susan -- Our home was built in 1961 by Keith Homes.

- Alex -- And subsequently renovated (badly) approximately five times prior to our commitment to renovate the entire house, from basement to roof. To be honest, most of the previous renovations were major safety concerns. And yet, the original "bones" of the house retained the same care and detail that Keith Homes were built with.

- If you had to do it over again, would you change anything about the room?

- Susan -- No, it's a great space. Even when family and friends come over, this is the room they want to be in ... unless we are cooking. Then it's the kitchen.

- Alex -- The only thing I might consider ever changing, is the addition of ceiling-installed audio and a possible skylight. Other than that, the room is complete.

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