



DESIGN

# THE GREAT ROOM

*Designer turns family room into space where everyone gathers*

BY PHILIP FINE

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK WHITEHEAD

STYLING: DERICK RODROZEN





**SOME AREAS OF THE HOUSE GET ALL THE LOVE.** The family room in this Kitsilano home has become a magnet for all four members of this family and for all manner of activity. Meal preparation can take place while children are occupied in the homework nook, next to the dining room, and someone sitting on the sofa can converse with another family member sitting on one of the island's stools. Sightlines give everyone in the great room a sense of togetherness.

"We really live there," the homeowner says of the space. She compares it with the other side of her house where more formal activities take place. The family rarely uses that space, which is comprised of a classic living room and dining room. In fact, she adds, the family entertains in the formal rooms only two or three times a year.

Last year, the family room was at the heart of a three-month renovation of the 4,000-square-foot, 10-year-old home. The family engaged RodRozen Design to give the house a more contemporary look with neutral colours and modern furnishings.

Designer Derick RodRozen faced a few challenges: "The old kitchen was a traditional yellow colour that didn't match the clients' needs and lifestyle," he says. "The island was very small and not practical, and the lighting wasn't sufficient at all. And there was no area designated for the kids' needs."

He took two important steps in that room. "We redesigned the breakfast nook to a wider, practical window seat," he says, and found a sectional sofa to fill the space under the bay window.

The formal living and dining room were given new lighting and painted in a wheat shade. Those rooms occupy less space than the family room and are more traditional in their decor. But they're also not intended for the rambunctious activities of the homeowners' school-age son and daughter. Without the TV and sprawling sofas, those formal rooms hold no attraction for her children, the homeowner says. 



---

*“My whole kitchen is indestructible.”*

---

(Previous page) The dark grey area rug, bought at HomeSense, was a perfect match for the sofa and contrasted well with the rest of the room. (Above) Kitchen cabinets were custom-finished by RodRozen Design. The countertops are Cambria’s Torquay quartz.



The great room, on the other hand, is full of comfy spots, especially the sofa, which fits into the contour of the window. The sofa was a find at Jordans, saving the family the time and money it would have cost for a custom-made piece of furniture.

However, the homeowner is most interested in something else: the room stands up to her children. To wit: the kitchen now has a galvanized steel table for family dinners, “where peanut butter can’t fall between the cracks” and MDF cabinetry covered with melamine “can be wiped with cloth and water to get ketchup off it.”

“My whole kitchen is indestructible,” the homeowner says proudly. She also had a Teflon coating applied to the sofa’s fabric to repel spills, and bought insurance offered by the furniture store to cover the cost of replacing stained cushions.

In addition to creating the great room, the construction division of RodRozen Designs converted a portion of the basement from crawlspace to living space. It now includes a nanny suite and a guest room, as well as a games room, bathroom and laundry room.

The renovation also included the back deck. The previous owners had installed a railing atop the deck’s surface; a new exterior-mounted railing in cedar and wrought iron was installed, increasing the surface size of the deck by one foot all around.

RodRozen says listening to his clients’ needs and observing their lifestyle was an important part of creating the design. “Sometimes, people are scared to find out what they are really dreaming of,” he says.

For the homeowners, the dream was to have a space that feels comfortable and stylish, where family members can see each other while engaging in their various activities... and not destroying anything in the process. ☀

*(Opposite) Designer Derick RodRozen says the homeowner wanted a chandelier over the dining room table. "That would have been too much," he says, adding that the house required cleaner lines. Instead, he found a fixture that features a perforated aluminum shade around hanging Swarovski crystals.*

