

# MOMS' HAVEN

Highbanks Society's reno puts the treat in retreat

By Alykhan Velji ■ Photos by Kyla Gibson

Being a young mom taking care of children when you're not much older than a kid yourself can be a really challenging — if not dire — life circumstance. There are a lot of admirable institutions in the city that give support to these women, one of these is the Highbanks Society.

Nine years ago, I volunteered for a charity event called Designers' Showcase, in support of the Highbanks Society. Highbanks is an amazing local organization creating subsidized housing for young mothers who need support while finishing their education and creating a career path.

A few months back I received another

call from Highbanks Society President, Bette Mitchell, asking me if I would like to participate in helping design a suite for the expansion of their building in West Hillhurst. Knowing what an amazing organization it was, and all the great work they have been doing, I, of course, said yes.

After a few weeks of planning and collecting donations from suppliers, the building came together beautifully and the end result was a fun, energized 600-square-foot space that will hopefully help a young woman on her way. This month I want to share with you how each space was designed and the inspiration behind the suite. >>

As Seen in  
New Home  
Living Magazine

newhome  
living



#### LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

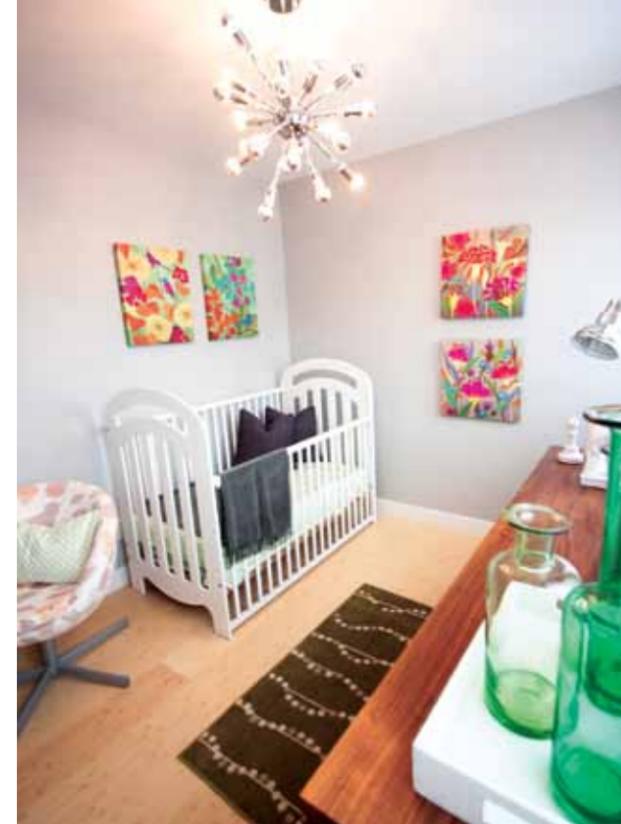
Being a small space, and open concept, I wanted to keep the living room and kitchen area bright and airy. The look has a mid-century feel and is inspired with a touch of whimsy to keep it young and fresh. The eco-friendly bamboo floors added an organic touch and were carried throughout the house. The space is small, so carrying the same flooring throughout helped to create flow.

In the living room, we chose to install sheer, floor to ceiling draperies that spanned the entire wall to create softness. There was room for a substantially sized sofa and a side chair for extra seating. We opted out of using a coffee table as the space is quite confined and we wanted to keep the traffic flow moving. Under the TV is a storage bench for toys and we made our big splash in the room with bold wallpaper on two walls in the space. The original '60s-inspired Marimekko print really adds the whimsical touch and the George Nelson light fixture completes our mid-century vibe.

The kitchen's high gloss, white cabinets were chosen for durability and for their sheen, perfect for a small space. The stainless appliances update the look and the blizzard Caesarstone counters add luxury to the space. For a big punch of colour, we added the gorgeous blue mosaic tiles on the backsplash in keeping with the fresh approach to the space.

#### KID'S ROOM

If you read my article last month, you know that I like to keep kid's rooms neutral and simple, with colour being introduced through artwork and accessories. A gorgeous mid-century inspired walnut dresser grounds the space and adds functional storage. The sheer drapery is carried in this space to create softness and unify the home. The crib is kept white, as is the chair. We chose a fun polka dot for the bedding and added a smaller pillow on the chair to repeat the pattern. The artwork is bold and contemporary — as is the light fixture — but still young and bright.



#### MOM'S ROOM

We wanted to create a retreat. We kept the warm grey walls that we used in other rooms but injected splashes of purple to keep the space feminine. To keep costs down we did one of my favourite DIY projects and used groupings of artwork in lieu of spending on a headboard, something that can be easily changed in time. The chrome and black side tables scale perfectly in this small space and help to create balance and symmetry. The lamps too are smaller and have a reflective base done in a tarnished mirror for an antiqued look. The bedding is a gorgeous neutral paisley to add some pattern to the space.

#### BATHROOM

Function was key but we also wanted to create a spa-like atmosphere. A deep soaker tub was used to help mom relax after a hectic day and set on a modern 12" x 24" ceramic tile: durable and easy to clean. The tub surround is a small-scale rectangular white tile to keep the smaller bathroom bright and airy. Repeating the high gloss white for the vanity and the Caesarstone counter tops, aided in keeping the bathroom light and with consistency. The mirror goes from the top of the counter all the way to ceiling with the light fixture installed on top of the mirror so that more light is reflected. All the plumbing fixtures are sleek, contemporary and uber stylish to give the Highbanks expansion an oasis-like feel.

It has been my pleasure to work with the Highbanks Society and I hope that whomever is chosen to stay there feels inspired to take on the world! **NL**

Keep kid's rooms neutral and simple, with colour being introduced through artwork and accessories.



#### Alykhan Velji

Having a successful design career for the last several years, Alykhan Velji has definitely made a name for himself on the Alberta design scene. Coming in as one of the top three finalists for HGTV's Designer Superstar Challenge in 2006 and then landing a role as a Stylist/Design Assistant on The Style Dept. also was a great boost to his career.

As well as having his own design business, Alykhan Velji Design, Alykhan has been featured in many local and national publications, offering his expertise in design and trends. Finding inspiration in his travels and keeping abreast with the design industry's new and innovative trends ensures his design esthetic is always fresh, all the while remaining original and timeless. In its fourth year as a design firm, Alykhan Velji Design specializes in both residential and commercial projects.

[www.alyveljidesigns.com](http://www.alyveljidesigns.com)



#### KEY SPONSORS

Design: Alykhan Velji Design  
 Kitchen: Hp Woodwork  
 Tiles/countertops: Icon Stone & Tile  
 Drapery: Than's Draperies  
 Flooring: Smith Bros.  
 Lighting: Carrington Lighting  
 Plumbing Fixtures: Royal Flush  
 Mirrors: Kordick  
 Wallpaper: Dwa  
 Accessories: HomeSense  
 Furniture: Furniture Connection/IKEA

