

# future PERFECT

One man leads a group of designers and engineers to re-imagine urban, sustainable living—and shape the next phase of architecture as we know it.

Written by RACHEL EGGERS • Photographed by EMA PETER

In an innovative Vancouver home, a reverse floor plan results in an expansive top floor for entertaining, with a seamless flow from kitchen to dining to living area. The space then opens up, via striking folding doors, to an expansive outdoor lounge strategically tucked into the tree canopy, providing privacy and a treehouse-like feel. The Hi-Bridge sofa, by Molteni & C., is from Italinteriors; the Hay Tray tables are from Vancouver Special; the leather Zoe chaise is by Verzelloni from Spencer Interiors; and the large area rug is from Burritt Bros Carpets. The photograph above the sofa is by Trig Singer, courtesy of Vancouver's Winsor Gallery.

## DESIGN TEAM

**construction and development:** Vanglo Sustainable Construction Group

**structural engineering:** PJB Engineering

**landscape design:** TLZ Design Consultants

**architecture and design:** Lang Wilson Practice in Architecture Culture

**interiors:** Vanglo and Lang Wilson Practice in Architecture Culture

**interior styling:** Gaile Guevara Interior Design & Creative and

Laura Melling, as a collective of Modern604

**pop-up event:** Gaile Guevara and Laura Melling in collaboration

with Leonie Hörster and This Open Space

*“Our mission was to show that good design isn’t just something you buy, it’s something you live with.”*

—GAILE GUEVARA, INTERIOR DESIGNER

**THIS PAGE:** Chairs by Alias from Italinteriors play well with a modern table by Hay from Vancouver Special. Concrete floors with radiant heating keep the house cool in the summer and warm in the winter. **OPPOSITE:** The upper deck is outfitted with modular outdoor furniture from Spencer Interiors. The chef’s kitchen includes made-to-last appliances from companies Liebherr, Wolf, and Viking; custom millwork by Fusion Woodworks, made with FSC-certified Echo Wood; and an island that sets off the kitchen from the dining area and reflects the angles of the exterior architecture.

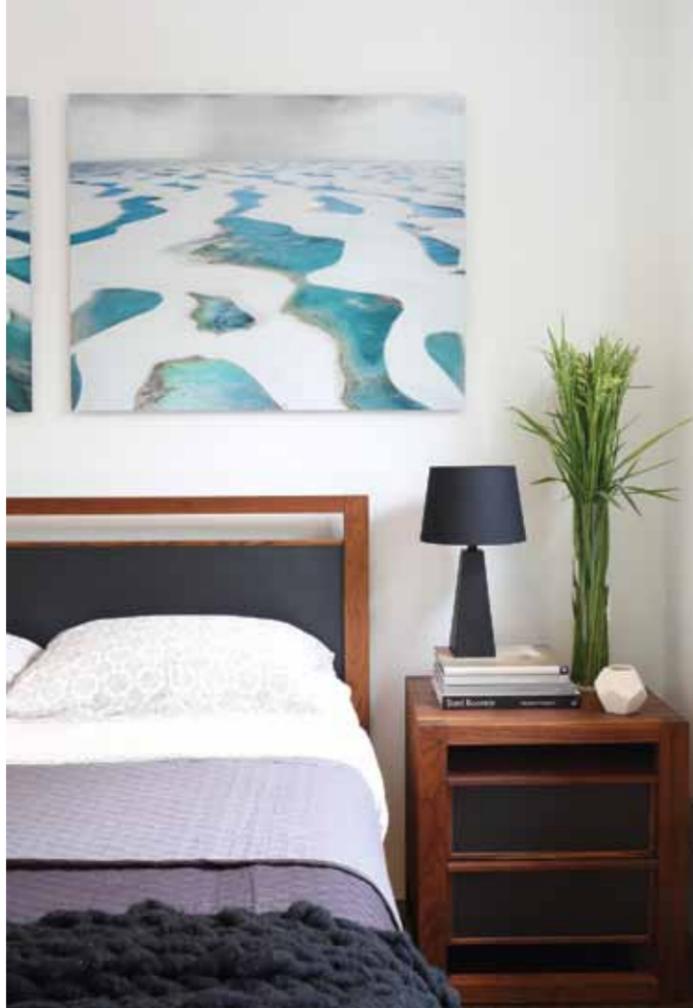


Developer and builder Martin Warren, founder of Vanglo Sustainable Construction Group, knew he was onto something good when local kids affectionately nicknamed his latest project, a bold, angular house in Vancouver’s Mount Pleasant neighborhood, “the spaceship.” “If the kids love the design, then it’s a job well done in my opinion,” he says. After all, the true test of any building is its ripple-out effects—not just on its inhabitants, but on the community surrounding it, the city it resides in, and the very earth on which it’s built. Where once was a dilapidated house on an awkward lot now sits the Vanglo House, whose forward-thinking, striking design has invigorated Vancouver and inspired conversation around how to design for livability in an increasingly dense city. More than 1,000 locals alone visited the space during real estate open houses and a post-sale pop-up event. “It was a diamond in the rough,” says Warren of the unusually long and narrow lot. “It left many developers scratching their heads and eventually walking away.” Undaunted by the challenge, Warren reached out to Oliver

Lang at Lang Wilson Practice in Architecture Culture to collaborate on a spec home that Warren hoped would be “a form of urban art.” Without direction from a specific client, Lang had the freedom to develop a concept organically. “The design is a balancing act between compactness and generosity, elegance and playfulness, and privacy and connectivity to the urban fabric,” Lang says. The 2,250-square-foot, three-story house—including a garden floor with private entrance—allows for incredible adaptability, with the potential to morph between family home, vacation spot, or office. Additionally, a 400-square-foot garage space was finished as a flex room and insulated, heated, and soundproofed. To accommodate the skinny lot, the architect developed a gracious, linear floor plan with a series of playful integrated windows on the south-facing side that allow for plenty of natural light. It’s all a part of Warren’s goal: to blend progressive design with green design. The Vanglo House presents a compelling case study for sustainable building in a city. For a start, the team recycled »

"The design doesn't distinguish between walls and roof, but creates one continuous envelope where all parts blend together," Lang, the architect, says. Nowhere is this concept more apparent than at the street-facing southern wall, with its unified, softly angular façade punctuated with dynamic integrated windows from Cascadia Windows that keep the eye moving—ingeniously providing privacy for those inside. The Tesla Model C parked in the driveway is a suitable match for the home's eco credibility.

*"We were going to stand out for some time to come, so we knew we needed to create something engaging and pleasing to the eye. Building new to look old was not going to be our style."* —MARTIN WARREN, DEVELOPER



**TOP:** The master bedroom features the Parallel bed and nightstand from Kate Duncan, linens from the Cross Décor & Design, and a chunky throw by Hendrik.Lou. The art is by David Burdeny, courtesy of Jennifer Kostuik Gallery. **BOTTOM:** An additional two bedrooms can alternatively serve as an office or (as pictured here) play space. A dipped wood ladder and copper-plated basket are from the Mill. The overdyed Turkish rug came from the Cross Décor & Design.

95 percent of the existing unlivable home, which, Warren notes, “included sending the old framing and siding to a processing plant to make bio-ethanol.” The design and materials of the new structure were chosen with an eye toward longevity and flexibility, from the appliances (Energy Star-compliant) to the building envelope (insulated walls; triple-glazed, low-heat-loss windows; and an airtight vapor-permeable membrane). It’s a home meant to last 300 years—exceptional in a market where most homes are meant to last 15.

“It’s a home seeking someone who understands the value of living in a community they want to participate in,” says Gaile Guevara of Gaile Guevara Interior Design & Creative. Guevara partnered with interior designer Laura Melling, a colleague in the design collective Modern604, to stage the house before it went on the market. They filled the home with pieces from Vancouver designers, manufacturers, and shops. They imagined the family who might inhabit the space: a young, professional couple who would appreciate the neighborhood’s walkability and good schools, and who could use the extra space to work or to incorporate cross-generational living. The home’s flexibility is another reflection of its sustainability. “Too often in our field, value is confused with cost versus understanding the investment of quality and support of our communities,” Guevara notes. Inside and out, Vanglo House offers canny solutions to create true worth.

After just 26 days on the market, the Vanglo House was purchased by a pair of fashion executives from the United States who both live and work in the home. After the house sold, Guevara, and Melling hosted a pop-up event, inviting locals to see the home and its carefully selected interiors outside of the typical retail setting—and to buy their favorite pieces. The weekend of the event, there was an open house next door for a newly built spec house—one of the cookie-cutter faux-Craftsman variety flooding the fast-paced Vancouver housing market. “The expressions on the faces of those who came to visit after walking through next door was priceless,” Guevara says. “We just knew that all it takes to create change is to show people what truly sustainable design looks like. And this means we need to start leading by example, building community and culture for what Vancouver represents as a young, rapidly growing city in the process of finding its own voice.” ✱



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** In staging the home’s interiors, Guevara’s team sought pieces from local makers and stores that would reflect Vancouver’s design community, including the Collister armchair from Union Wood Co. The master bathroom looks onto a small stone terrace. The room benefits from the home’s superior heat-recovery ventilation system, which lets the house “breathe.” Stairs made of bleached poplar lead from the main floor to the top floor; the reverse floor plan allows for a balance between privacy and sociability.

