



WEST COAST

WONDER

Interviewing megastars like George Clooney and Gwyneth Paltrow isn't Susie Wall's only talent: The Vancouver-based style expert and TV commentator also fashioned a stellar home for her family and friends

BY CHRISTY WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY BY JANIS NICOLAY

Since Susie Wall spends much of her time in front of TV cameras, it seems only fitting that her home would be a haven hidden from view. “Our house is in Vancouver’s Quilchena neighbourhood and the setting is incredibly private,” says Susie, a well-respected Canadian style expert. “We’re nestled beneath some of the area’s oldest cedar and weeping beech trees. And inside, you can’t see the road from anywhere. I’ve always found that creates a sense of peace – that’s the dream, right?”

Having outgrown their first Vancouver home, a row house in South Granville, Susie and her husband, Chris, a tech entrepreneur, moved into this original 1976 home designed by Peter Wardle a week after getting married in 2004 (they now have two daughters: Brontë, 8, and Gemma, 6). “We loved the seclusion, giant windows and clean lines,” says Susie. “It had so much rad potential and personality.” Her vision for the 2,800- square-foot space was similar to her approach to fashion: “My style ethos is pretty done-undone. We travel, so I wanted low maintenance; we entertain, so I wanted welcoming; and I wanted a gallery vibe without it feeling chilly. But most importantly, a family lives here, so skateboards are allowed inside and out.”

Susie quickly got to work on a few cosmetic changes, from refinishing the original hardwood floors to painting all the walls white. “They were wilted watery tones dominated by pale green – it was a top-to-bottom mudslide.” In 2009, she turned to designer Alanna Johnston of Vancouver’s Living Design to begin the renovations, which included adding a fourth bedroom and rejigging the master bathroom. “When we moved in, we called it the *Bold & Beautiful* bathroom – it had a giant disco jet tub, pale pink tile work and peach walls,” says Susie. Streamlining the bathroom allowed them to create the “Europe meets West Coast” look Susie desired and free up space. With the interior finished, Susie enlisted landscape designers, Rose & Pistols to rebuild the outdoor property in 2013. “I knew they were the only ones who could make the space creative and low maintenance.”

Fashion will always be Susie’s first love – she’s just launched a shop-sell app called Breez – but now it’s trumped by time spent with her daughters. “When we’re home, we want to celebrate the big and small moments with the girls. You don’t need five-inch heels and a Rick Owens dress to do that.” ©



susie wall
 CHATELAINE'S WEST COAST CONTRIBUTOR FOR CITYLINE AND BREAKFAST TELEVISION

SOFTEN WHITE SPACES WITH WARM TONES

“One of my friends told me I was suffering from grey-itis, and he was right,” says Susie. “For a while everything in the house seemed to be grey. So we moved toward a beachier feel by adding furniture in sandy tones.”

DEFINE AN AREA WITH ART

A bright piece of artwork anchors the open floor plan’s dining area. “This is by an artist collective called Instant Coffee,” says Susie. “Chris and I attend the Western Front auction every year and always come home with something a little crazy and amazing. We love this image of a super-traditional home set in a retro, Atari-like format.”

ART, FRONT.BC.CA. PENDANT LAMPS, NICHEMODERN.COM. TABLE, INFORMINTERIORS.COM. CHAIRS, LIVINGSPACE.COM.



MAKEUP, CINDY LEVLAND



PERSONALIZE WITH A GALLERY WALL

“The gallery wall was a way of bringing together so many contrasting but sentimental works,” says Susie. It takes advantage of the living room’s high ceilings, while the casual, low-slung sofa riffs on Susie’s formal-informal approach to style.

COFFEE TABLES, FLEXFORM.IT. SOFA, INFORMINTERIORS.COM.

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BRING THE OUTDOORS IN

Susie replaced the dining area’s original fixed sliding doors with updated folding ones. “I pained over taking them out because they were in keeping with the architecture. But adding these doors was one of the best design decisions I made,” says Susie. “This space is so defined by its connection to the outdoors.”

DOORS, ECLIPSEARCHITECTURAL.COM.



MODERNIZE A BRICK FIREPLACE BY PAINTING IT WHITE.



SHOWCASE KIDS' ART

The master bedroom features a collage of 117 pieces of art made by Brontë and Gemma. "I had them formatted by an artist in New York for Chris' 40th birthday. It tells so many stories for us; drawings and paintings of everything from the Olympics in Whistler to our trips to the pumpkin patch. It's a treasure."



SNEAK IN STORAGE BEHIND THE BED

The master bedroom was designed with hidden compartments in mind. "I am obsessed with adding storage, so the wall behind our bed is shared with a long, walk-through principal closet on the other side."

CUSTOM CLOSET, BED, LEDESIGNINC.COM. PENDANT LAMP, BEDSIDE TABLE, INFORMINTERIORS.COM. BEDDING, MERCI-MERCI.COM.

"I AM OBSESSED WITH ADDING STORAGE."



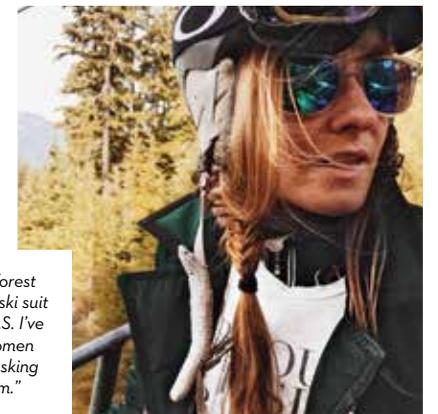
8

"My Dries van Noten dress from Vancouver store Bacci's. It's a four-season red carpet crowd-pleaser."



9

"A multi-hued, bohemian evening bag I bought in France. It's the ultimate dressy-but-chill garnish to a black dress, denim, anything."



7

"A super-edgy forest green and black ski suit designed by S.O.S. I've literally had women ski next to me asking where it's from."

9 of my FAVOURITE THINGS

1

"White leather Jack Purcell trainers—a gift from a movie director and his stylish wife, who I used to work for in L.A. They're 20 years old and aged to perfection."



2

"A giant gold-nugget cocktail ring that I found at the Wythe Hotel's lobby pop-up in New York City. I was there at a wedding and left for the powder room but came back with this awesome Mr. T knuckle-duster. Best wrong turn ever."



3

"This classic woven black Bottega Veneta wallet. It was a gift from my best friend, and it was stolen a while ago. I came home recently and it was in my mailbox with her birthday note still tucked inside. I don't know how it found its way home, but we were just meant to be together."

TRAINERS: THEBAY.COM. WALLET: NET-A-PORTER.COM. JACKET: SMYTHEVESTES.COM.

4

"R13 slouch skinny stretch denim jeans in black—dress them way up or way down, which is a pretty mandatory requirement in Vancouver."



5

"This deconstructed suiting vest by designer Hajnalka Mandula. It's edgy, it's gender bender and it defines dressed-up tomboy. I wear it with everything."



6

"My coveted collection of jackets, blazers and suits from Smythe. For me, that brand defines classic with a supercool, fresh edge."





DIVIDE A BUNK BED BETWEEN TWO ROOMS TO CREATE MORE USABLE FLOOR SPACE UNDER ONE.



GET CREATIVE WITH BUILDING CODES

“We call this wall feature the shelf of curiosities, and Brontë’s featured items of choice rotate constantly,” says Susie. “But the built-ins were actually mandatory for the bedroom to be up to code. They act as a fire escape to the skylight above.” The showstopper chair belonged to her grandmother. “I had it re-covered after a stay at the Covent Garden Hotel in London. I got home and wanted to add hits of colour throughout the house. This print felt very Kit Kemp to me: English, out of place, eccentric – some of my favourite adjectives.”

BUNK BED, OEUFNYC.COM. CUSTOM SHELVING, LEDESIGNINC.COM. UPHOLSTERY, THECROSSDESIGN.COM.



TREAT KIDS’ AWARDS LIKE ART

A grouping of Brontë’s riding ribbons is a colourful focal point in her bedroom. “I love it when something a child is so proud of doubles as art,” Susie says.

*"IF THE WEATHER'S GORGEOUS,
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MAKE YOUR FRONT YARD AN OASIS

Susie moved backyard functionality up front. "It was well thought out," she says. "The trees make it tough to grow grass here so granite made sense. Now the girls use this space to play soccer or rip around on their skateboards. If the weather's gorgeous, I love pulling our furniture outside. The lamp comes out for parties with our pals."

LANDSCAPING, ROSEANDPISTOLS.CA. FIREPIT, PAOLALENTI.IT. SOFA, CHAIRS, LIGHT, LIVINGSPACE.COM.



BUILD A COMPLEMENTARY KIDS' SPACE

"This is the girls' playhouse," says Susie, "and we built and painted it to mirror the main house. It's heated, and I hung a vintage lamp that I found in a little town in France. When I need total quiet on a phone call, I actually sneak away here. So I guess it's my playhouse too."

