

SURPRISE GIFT

*Builder creates an exquisite penthouse
as a present for his parents*

BY HADANI DITMARS • PHOTOGRAPHY: AMANDA OSTER • STYLING: KARIN BOHNE



ANGELO TSAKUMIS REMEMBERS the best part of spending summers in his parents' village in the seaside town of Nafpaktos, Greece. "I was able to sleep outside on the verandah after lunch," he says.

The 37-year-old developer mentions this as he takes in the view from the double penthouse unit he has built in White Rock for his parents. The southwest-facing view of Vancouver Island, he says, is somewhat reminiscent of

the Peloponnesian coast, where he and his four siblings alternated summers with White Rock.

"In many ways, this place is all about the outdoor space," he says while sitting on an outdoor sectional sofa, taking in the panorama from the 1,000-square-foot wrap-around balcony.

Driven by shifting demographics – from elderly retirees and empty nesters to Asian investors and commuters seeking cheaper real estate—a string of new high-end high-rises is

popping up in the area known as "uptown," a mile up from White Rock's iconic beachfront on Marine Drive. The influx is driving the transformation of White Rock from sleepy beach town and bedroom community to sought-after resort area. 

A long, custom-designed dining table delineates the open-plan kitchen and living areas and offers sumptuous views of Semiahmoo Bay





While charming 1950s-era cliffside cottages are closer to the water, the view from the penthouse balcony reveals a tall Bosa tower as well as a new condo project around the corner. To the north lies Chantrell Heights, where multi-million-dollar homes proliferated in the 1990s.

The penthouse that Angelo planned for his parents is at the top of a new 17-storey tower he was responsible for as vice-president of development of the family business, Epta Properties.

Architect Chris Dikeakos sited it to capitalize on the stunning views, and designer Karin Bohne, a longtime collaborator with Angelo on many of his projects, was inspired by the opportunities afforded by her client's taste for an indoor-outdoor aesthetic.

"Using the NanaWall-type doors was key," says Bohne of the pivoting panels that open the 2,400-square-foot suite to the wrap-around balcony. But, like the rest of the suite, it was a design

decision driven as much by family considerations as by aesthetics. "My mum has vertigo," says Angelo, "so she needed the verandah to give a sense of expansiveness to the view, rather than have it just drop down suddenly."

His mum, Golfo, like many White Rock residents is a visual artist; hence the need for a third bedroom that doubles as a studio. She's also an artist in the kitchen, where she enjoys creating feasts for her family. 🍴

An 18-foot-long, white quartz countertop doubles as a multi-generational gathering place and food-preparation centre, while custom cabinetry offers streamlined storage



The marble fireplace boasts a see-through effect with a built-in, two-sided fireplace. It's topped by a flat-screen television. The custom-built bed is made up with linens that bear Greek motifs





There is a seamlessness between the outdoors and indoors in this condo. A wrap-around patio offers spectacular views enhanced by indoor-outdoor living, thanks to the NanaWall doors



“Opening up the living, dining and kitchen area into a single space was a natural gesture,” says Bohne of the condo’s open layout.

Pointing out the 18-foot white quartz kitchen island, Angelo says, “Now my mum can prep food and look out at the family seated around the table and beyond to the view of the ocean.”

Bohne delineated the condo’s spaces by using strategically placed walls and ceiling drops. There is a sense of comfort and coziness in the kitchen,

where the marble backsplash matches the marble slab of the fireplace at the far end of the suite. There is also a sense of elevation as the ceiling shifts subtly to amplify height in the living area.

By contrast, the master bedroom, with its walk-in closet and custom-designed bed, is nestled behind the kitchen wall, facing north for coolness and privacy away from the larger family area.

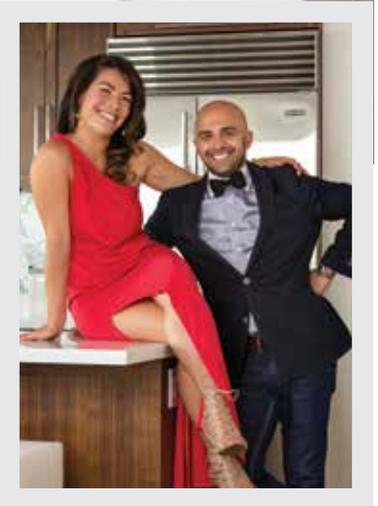
“There’s a temptation,” says Bohne, 32, who first worked with Angelo on a restaurant

interior before designing his own 9,000-square-foot retreat in nearby Langley, “to under-design when you’re working in the suburbs. But that’s not appropriate now. There are many sophisticated buyers in the market, especially downsizing boomers moving from the city, who are design-savvy. So my standards and attention to detail have to match their own.”

A marble-clad master bathroom offers classical luxury







With Bohne’s German background matching Angelo’s Greek taste for European quality, the process between designer and client meant many of the finishes were installed sight-unseen. “We talked about the big picture,” says Angelo, “but I trusted her completely to take care of the details.” Such details include ornate moldings, shimmering silver-leaf wallpaper from England, and a minimalist palette of white, black and warm honey-coloured woods, which ensure

the outside comes in, and a sense of intimacy remains in the interiors.

“So many condos are contained, constrained, and inward looking,” says Bohne. “But this is a real home for a real family” – not to mention a lovely place for an afternoon nap on the terrace. ☺

The living room, which is simultaneously cozy and open to the surroundings, has spectacular views of the night sky. (Inset) Karin Bohne and Angelo Tsakumis