



HOMES

Before & After: A Multigenerational Richmond Abode Goes from Cookie-Cutter to Custom Dream Home

Joy Chao of JHA Architecture and Interiors transforms a 90s-era house into a modern oasis for a new family on a budget.

By Kerri Donaldson / July 5, 2023



Brett Ryan Studios

Adrian and Jennie Kwok, a tech-savvy duo, dared to dream big. Adrian was now taking over the family home from his parents who were ready to downsize to an apartment, passing the torch and opening the space up to a new way of living—more modern, open and better suited to the couple’s work-from-home lifestyle. The goal? To turn Adrian’s childhood home, a

classic 'Richmond Special,' (coined by Joy Chao, lead interior designer) into a modern sanctuary for their soon-to-be family. With the help of Chao and the team at [John Henshaw Architect Inc.](#), they embarked on a journey of transformation.

BEFORE: Bathroom





AFTER: Bathroom





Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.



Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.





Bathing Beauty: The custom millwork vanity, complete with mirror, storage, countertop and shelving, is a testament to thoughtful design. The freestanding Acritec tub, paired with Hansgrohe fixtures, invites relaxation. Vicostone countertops, Vega Minor wall sconces and Richelieu stainless steel edge pulls add a touch of sophistication. The flooring from Ames Tile & Stone, along with the Centanni tiled shower, complete this serene retreat. Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.



“We ordered one of the vanities, had it shipped and inspected it to ensure it was of good quality. We ended up using these vanities for several of the secondary bathrooms in the house, which resulted in significant savings for the homeowners,” says Chao. Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.

The original house, a product of the 80s and 90s, was a labyrinth of dark rooms and disconnected spaces. “It was like a time capsule,” Chao quips.

“The layout didn’t suit their lifestyle. They wanted something brighter, more contemporary.”

BEFORE: Kitchen



AFTER: Kitchen



Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.



Custom millwork cabinets and drawers, a sleek Vicostone countertop and champagne bronze pulls blend seamlessly to create a modern, functional space. The crowning jewels? The striking Kuzco Vega Minor Gold Ceiling Pendant and Tech Lighting Balto Linear Suspension Pendant, casting a warm, inviting glow over this bright culinary haven. Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.



Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.



Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.

And so, the metamorphosis began. Walls were knocked down, creating an open-concept floor plan that breathed new life into the home. “One of their first requests was to remove the wok kitchen—Adrian’s dad was a chef—and open up the living and dining areas,” Chao reveals. The result was a more connected environment, perfect for a new generation of family living.



A dream kitchen pantry. Custom-built storage solutions throughout the home and particularly in the kitchen keeps the home organized, the space minimal and a young family sane as they embark on a new chapter. Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.

“Traditionally, houses in that area have three to four bedrooms upstairs and open principal spaces like the family room, formal living room and dining room,” Chao says about modernizing a home that’s been passed

down from generation to generation. “It was a multi-generational living situation. The client’s grandmother, who is in her 90s, was living on the main floor in an ensuite bedroom.”

BEFORE: Living Room







AFTER: Living Room



Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.





The lighting upgrade brought a significant change to the space, accompanied by the removal of the gas fireplace. In pursuit of energy efficiency and aesthetics, an electric fireplace replaced it, allowing for a lower TV placement. LED decorative lighting enhances the contemporary atmosphere, creating a versatile space for entertaining, gaming and enjoying quality time with friends... “even some impromptu karaoke” says Chao. Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.

The kitchen, once cramped and dated, tripled in size. “We significantly expanded the kitchen and added ample storage,” Chao remarks. Now, it’s a culinary dream, featuring sleek European laminate panels that are as stylish as they are practical.

BEFORE: Stairway



AFTER: Stairway





The original budget closely aligned with the final cost, with only a 15% difference. Along the way, the team made adjustments and discovered clever savings. For instance, the plan to have a glass handrail for the stairs was reconsidered due to skyrocketing glass prices. Instead, ready-to-go spindles were utilized, resulting in significant cost savings and practicality, especially with a baby in the house. Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.



Reading Nook: This captivating space features the iconic Herman Miller Eames lounge chair & ottoman, creating a cozy retreat for book-lovers. The staircase, adorned with stylish Monterey Autumn Hill vinyl plank flooring, adds a touch of modern elegance.

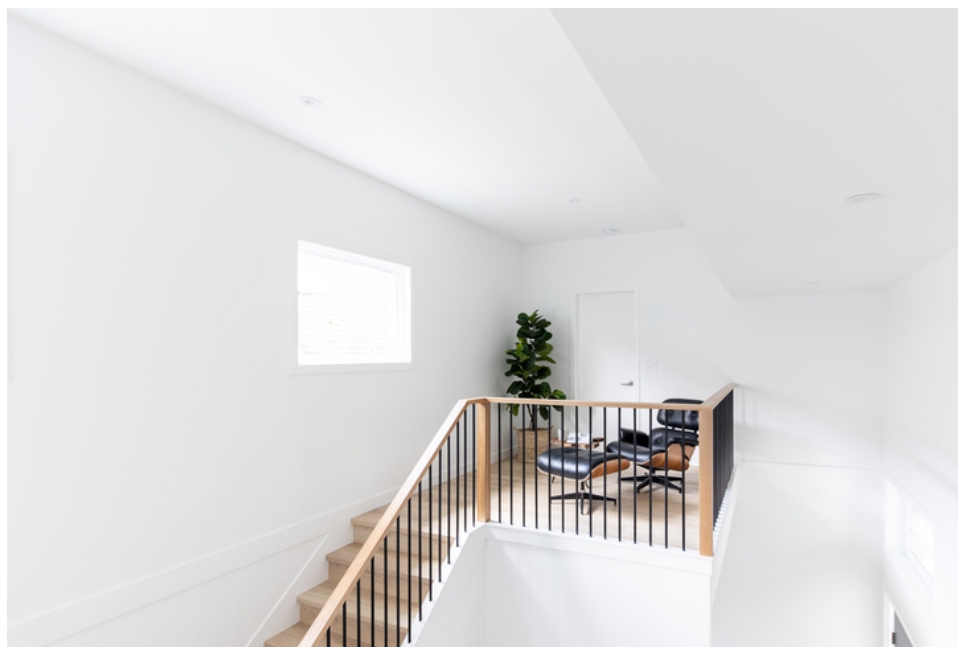


Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.

But the transformation wasn't just about aesthetics. The Kwoks, both working from home, needed their space to be tech-friendly. "They wanted the home to be updated with high-speed internet wiring," Chao explains.

And they achieved it all while being budget-conscious, choosing cost-effective materials like Monterey Autumn Hill vinyl plank for flooring.



Above is the powder room and transition space. With flooring by Ames Tile & Stone and warm lighting by Mitzi Anya Ceiling Pendants, this space is both stylish and inviting. The full vanity, courtesy of the Vanity Store, adds a touch of elegance to complete the ensemble.

The result? A home that's not only beautiful, but also practical and future-ready. "My favourite room in the home is definitely the kitchen," Joy Chao enthuses. "We tripled the storage space and created a beautiful environment."



An entryway that's perfectly suited to its clients' lifestyle. With custom millwork cabinets and a bench, it's a practical space to sit, slip on shoes and store away

essentials. The Vicostone countertop, matching the one used in the kitchen, adds a touch of elegance while the Monterey Autumn Hill vinyl plank flooring brings warmth and durability. A perfect blend of style and function that matches the home.

In just 10 months, the Kwok family's home became a modern marvel, staying within 15% of the original budget. "Planning is key," Chao advises homeowners looking to renovate on a budget. "By understanding budget restrictions and enlisting professional help from the beginning, homeowners can achieve their savings goals while bringing their dream home to life." Now, that's a renovation story worth telling.





Photo by Brett Ryan Studios.





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