



In the two-bedroom display suite at The Independent by Rize, contrasting textures add visual interest. A stone drum side table from Broagkam Furniture sits between two chairs in the living room, while a contemporary pendant light by Newco Lighting puts the focus on the dining area.

By CLAUDIA KWAN

The word that first comes to mind to describe the show suites at The Independent by Rize, strange as it may seem, is "texture." Interior designer Jim Toy and his team at False Creek Design Group have adroitly melded textiles, wood, metal, ceramics and stone into a cohesive whole, creating spaces prospective buyers are invited to explore.

In a den fitted out as an office, jars of buttons are just asking to be shaken, and a wooden secretary's chair dating back to the 1930s begs to be sat upon. The custom-made desk has been cleverly and inexpensively fashioned from maple butcher block, which has been given a coat of whitewash to fit the light and bright colour scheme.

Toy and his team also designed a custom wall-mounted entertainment unit for the living room that uses the same butcher block material in an A-line metal frame for an industrial touch. The combination of thrift-shop, custom and new elements is repeated throughout both show suites.

Kitchens are contemporary, with concealed appliances and a deliberate contrast between matte white and textured wood-look millwork. Modular cabinetry is deployed to create the maximum amount of storage possible in the homes, even replacing bedroom closets.



Refinished teak furniture dating back to the 1950s mingles with contemporary pieces.

"There are noticeable efficiencies in construction cost when you use modular closets — you don't have to frame them in, for instance," says Toy. "That also lets you gain back some crucial inches of floor space."

The design team updated a number of teak furniture pieces dating to the 1950s, refinishing and recovering them as needed. Works of art reference the surrounding neighbourhood, particularly four Raymond Wong sketches in one office space.

It speaks to the consumer aesthetic of those likely to be attracted to such a high-profile location in the heart of Mount Pleasant where Kingsway, Broadway and Main converge. The homes are meant to be sleekly modern and warmly accessible while paying homage to the neighbourhood's past.

When complete, the flatiron tower will soar 21 storeys high over the surrounding area. The low-rise portions of the development will demarcate a significant portion of the trapezoidal property, creating a sheltered nook for a private courtyard.

"Since Kingsway slices on the angle it does, it creates an opportunity to highlight a prow-like geometry on that portion of the site," says architect Russell Acton, principal of Acton Ostry. "We also kept hearing a preference for the development not to read as one big project, which led to the idea of treating it as almost five different buildings."

Thus, there is red brick on one approach, white brick with arty pops of banana yellow and lime green on another, dove gray on a third and dramatic black brick on a fourth. The tower is

clad in a combination of brick and composite wood panels.

The Independent is one of the first large projects to be built under new ASHRAE design principles, which call for a decrease in glazing since it is less energy efficient.

"In the past, you might have seen as much as 80 per cent windows on a tower like this," Acton explains. "This one is 45 per cent — you have to be creative on where to place your windows to make the most of them."

The neighbourhood is the type of community where you discover stories and individuals and little treasured spots. The people behind The Independent are hoping residents will find all of that and more in their new homes. ■