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*Function* and flow in a modest frame

# ROOTED IN REAL LIFE

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**W**hen I first walked through my clients' 1940's bungalow, it was immediately clear why it had become their first home – and just as clear why it needed a renovation. Like many houses from that era, it was modest in scale, compartmentalized and designed for a very different way

of life. The bones were solid, but the layout and storage didn't reflect how the homeowners wanted to live now. The goal wasn't to erase the past, but to reimagine it with intention.

Built as part of a standard subdivision, the bungalow followed a familiar pattern: Small, closed-off rooms, limited natural light and very little sense of flow. What made this

project unique was the homeowner's hands-on skill and shared vision.

Working closely together, we designed and fabricated all the custom cabinetry in-house. That level of collaboration allowed us to consider every millimetre, ensuring that function guided each decision, from drawer dimensions to hinge placement, without losing a sense of refinement.



beams, could not be moved. Instead of seeing these as obstacles, we treated them as design cues. Millwork was used to wrap and integrate them, so they felt intentional, not intrusive. Cabinetry was carefully aligned with existing columns, and ceiling details and material transitions were used to guide movement through the space without obvious breaks.

## A common thread

Custom cabinetry ultimately became the unifying feature that tied the home together. From the kitchen through to the hallways, storage was designed to be generous yet discreet. Concealing everyday items, such as shoes, coats and appliances, proved to be one of the more complex aspects of the project. Good millwork relies on understanding how people live: Where clutter gathers, how spaces are used at different times of the day and how to make storage feel effortless.

One of the most satisfying transformations occurred in the entry hallway. By using the full height of the open entry, what was once a pass-through space was turned into floor-to-ceiling storage that feels architectural.

Flush cabinetry, integrated pulls and well-planned interior organization

allow these units to blend seamlessly into the home.

Soft-close hardware was specified throughout, not as an indulgence, but as a practical choice. When cabinetry plays such a central role, how it feels becomes just as important as how it looks. Drawers and doors that move smoothly and silently contribute to a sense of calm and quality that's felt daily.

## Ebb and flow

To maintain a sense of flow, a consistent material and colour palette weaves throughout the main living areas. Flooring runs continuously, and cabinetry finishes repeat in subtle ways from room to room. This creates cohesion and helps the home feel more expansive, while still allowing each area to serve its own purpose.

## Timeless allure

Ultimately, this renovation was about careful planning, restraint and problem solving that abounds in real life. A once ordinary 1940's bungalow was transformed into a home that feels timeless, personal and deeply functional, an example of how thoughtful design can elevate even the most familiar spaces.

## Open spaces

The main objective was to create a home that felt brighter and more open, yet still grounded and comfortable. Clean lines were essential, but were softened with subtle Scandinavian influences. Natural wood tones, matte finishes and gentle contrast formed the base palette, layered with multi-functional storage elements that quietly support daily routines.

Opening up the floorplan was critical, though it came with limitations. Structural elements, including load-bearing walls and



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