

# Living large on a budget

## When you work in the industry, you know how to get an upmarket appearance without spending a fortune

**BY PEDRO ARRAIS, TIMES COLONIST** FEBRUARY 19, 2011

Victoria can boast several builders whose beautiful creations - some of them custom-designed, multimillion-dollar homes - win awards and grace the pages of magazines.

But how do the builders of these stately homes live themselves?

Over the next few months, we'll look behind the scenes and tour the homes of five local home builders.

This week we visit the home of Rov Dosanjh.

For a man who has constructed lavish houses for clients, Dosanjh's own home is quite modest. The five-bedroom, five and-a-half bathroom, 5,200square-foot house built in 2007 is downright conservative, fitting in unobtrusively with the other houses in the neighbourhood.

"There is nothing over the top. It's not Hollywood," says Dosanjh, the owner of Rayn Properties, a company that specializes in building custom homes. "I just wanted something that was comfortable for my family."

His wife Satnam, a nurse by profession, couldn't agree more.

"We wanted a style that would be timeless," she says. "A style that ages gracefully."

To that end, the West Coast contemporary-look house was conceived with a spa-like feel, with soft, calm colours and fabrics.

Dosanjh admits his house sports a higher level of custom millwork -interior trim mouldings that serve to enhance walls, woodwork and cabinetry. It is usually an added extra to a custom home but he says the extra cost isn't as high as some may think.

"I usually recommend extra millwork to clients because it helps add definition to a room and helps the eye move around," says Dosanjh. "It's not that much more because the mouldings are made of medium-density fibreboard, a product made of wood composite that is more economical than the real thing. With painted mouldings, a casual observer can't tell the difference."

High ceilings contribute to the sense of spaciousness. On the main level there is a formal living and dining room. But most of the living done by the family is around the designer kitchen and adjacent family room.

While the kitchen looks expensive, Dosanjh insists it is middle-of-the road with a few highlights, such as granite countertops, that make it appear pricier. Again, the added attention to detail with decorative millwork on the kitchen cabinets help convey an upscale aura.

Dosanjh stresses that achieving a high-end look doesn't always have to mean high cost. He says builders sometimes can pass on a significant cost savings in construction costs due to a builder's expertise in construction and the volume of work they do.

An office with an outside door allows Rov to meet with clients and tradespeople without their having to enter the main house.

The master suite and the two children's bedrooms are upstairs, with a bath each for the children as well as the master ensuite bathroom.

The basement houses an entertainment as well as a recreation room, so that the younger family members can entertain friends without the noise disturbing their parents.

The last point was taken into consideration when the house was being designed. As a nurse, Satnam sometimes works well into the night, so being able to get a sound sleep during the day was important. By locating the master on the upper instead of the main floor, noise becomes less of an issue.

Extra sound insulation separates the house from a self-contained suite, included against the day that elderly parents wish to move in with the family.

Builders these days are more aware of the environmental impact of construction. Dosanjh is quick to point out his company is a Built Green certified builder that promotes environmentally friendly building practices using resource-efficient products.

He is even environmentally friendly outside his house -with a nod to his hobby. The grass that rings the house is artificial, even the putting green he had installed.

"I got tired of all the gas and pollution from a mower, the fertilizers I had to apply, the water I had to use and all the time spent on maintenance.

"So I decided on an artificial lawn," he says. "Now, instead of mowing, I get to practice my putting."  
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