

# Serendipity

Creating a modern family farmhouse

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PHOTOGRAPHY TONY COLANGELO

## QUICK FACTS

5-acre property  
Post-and-beam design  
2,900 square feet  
4 bedrooms  
3.5 bathrooms  
1 fireplace

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**hether you believe** in serendipity or not, some circumstances suit the concept. This was certainly true for a pair of homeowners who discovered the property of their dreams; and it was also true for the builder they hired to renovate the 1980s home that came with it.

Enter the homeowners: a husband, wife and three young children from Surrey.

"We kept saying that we wanted to move where there was a bit more land," recalls one of the homeowners, who wished to remain anonymous. "When we travelled to Duncan to pick up our new puppy, we thought this was the type of area we had in mind."

As luck would have it, a friend from Vancouver Island soon introduced them to a couple who was looking to sell their five-acre property in Duncan.

"This all happened much more quickly than we had been planning, but the acreage was exactly what we were looking for."



Set on a sunny plateau with mountain, farmland and treed views, the property also features a post-and-beam home, a 1,200-square-foot cottage, several outbuildings, a former pig barn and paddock. The house, however, required significant renovation for this young family of five.



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“When we first walked in the front door, a giant 2.5-storey fireplace sat in the middle of the space, cutting up the area into small rooms. We knew this was going to need a major renovation, so we began to look for a builder who had a green, environmental approach. We ended up calling David.”

Enter David Coulson of David Coulson Design Ltd.: “I was very familiar with this house. About 20 years ago I built a portico over the front door for the former family who were friends of mine. My father-in-law had built the stairs in the cottage, and I have a lot of family and friends who live in this area.”

With David on board, as well as associate designer Brigitte Allec, the team set to work reimagining the layout and tackling demolition.

“The game-changer was losing the central fireplace,” says David. “Removing that opened up the entire space and gave us more real estate upstairs. We installed a new fireplace on the far wall of the living room and all of the rooms became so much brighter.”

But the fireplace wasn't the only challenge.

“The demo was ugly because it just kept getting worse and worse. The roof had been leaking for many years so every header over every window was coming out in handfuls,” says David. “There were termites, squirrels and ants living in the roof joists. We stripped the entire roof and re-did all of the framing and upgraded the sheathing.”

One of the key selling features of the home was the original posts and beams, which were kept, but painstakingly burnished and re-stained. Upstairs, the cargo floor decking was also original but

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spaces between the boards allowed dust to drift down to the main floor.

"We decided to drop the main floor ceiling by two inches and put in high-density insulation between the old timbers," says David. "Those two inches provided us with the room we needed to embed the lighting, a sound system and sound proofing. It still looks original but now it works for today's lifestyle."

To keep the house suited to its pastoral setting, the homeowners knew they wanted a modern farmhouse look. They assembled inspirational photos to share with Brigitte and the design began to take shape.

"From the very beginning, we were all on the same page," says the homeowner. "We worked really well together as a team."

The unity of vision is apparent in the finished product where the posts and beams lend a rustic element that pairs beautifully with the more modern finishes. The kitchen, with white cabinetry, a blue-grey island and textured tile backsplash, sits seamlessly within the beam structure.

"The kitchen had a lot of revisions," adds the homeowner. "I had originally wanted a walk-in pantry, but Brigitte convinced me to do a pull-out pantry and that was the right decision. David and his team also found a way to build the cabinetry into a valance we had to keep and it looks so intentional."

The original stairs were repositioned and rebuilt, opening up a larger space for the dining room.

"I wanted the main level to be one open room," says the homeowner, "and now it is."

The posts cleverly delineate the spaces and lead to the main gathering zone around the new split-face limestone fireplace.

One of the major changes to the home was an 800-square-foot addition which is connected via a shiplap-clad hallway leading to a two-piece bathroom, laundry room, mudroom and the principal

bedroom and home office. To link the older portion of the home with the new, beams were added to the cathedral ceiling in the bedroom. A sliding wall of glass-paneled barn doors and sidelights provide privacy in the office space, but also allow the light to filter in.

"This is such a great office space and it leads onto the deck. At some point when I no longer need it to function as an office it can be a sitting room."

The principal en suite picks up on the blue-grey of the kitchen island with stacked subway tile in the same hue. A glass curb-less shower, black hardware and shiplap walls complement the white oak vanity and veined quartz countertops.

Upstairs, the three bedrooms are generously sized with cathedral ceilings clad in tongue-in-groove wood, providing plenty of room for the three children to sleep, study and play.

"These are real hang-out spaces that work so well now that the kids are getting older," notes the homeowner.

A new three-piece bathroom with a playful patchwork tile floor and glass shower sits next door to another bathroom that had been recently renovated by the previous owners.

"We changed out the flooring and added in a new vanity," says the homeowner, "but decided to keep it as a second upstairs bathroom. With three kids getting ready in the morning, it seemed like an added bonus."

One of the charming quirks upstairs is a wooden ship-style ladder that leads to a catwalk and cosy loft room.

"Our youngest son loves playing up here with his Lego, and because it's out of the way he can leave it set up for the next day."

Outside, care has been taken to create many options to enjoy the views and opportunities for outdoor living. An original in-ground pool is being repaired in the front yard and creates a beautiful view from the wrap-around front porch.

After a 13-month renovation, the family is nicely settled in and enjoying the extra space they were seeking.



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"Now we have chickens, a pot-bellied pig named Gertie, ducks and bunnies. The kids just get to be kids. They wander and have fun and they've turned one of the paddocks into a soccer pitch. When I ask them whether they like our home in Surrey or this home better, this one wins every time. It feels like this is where we're meant to be."

For David, his long-term relationship to the previous family and home were never far from his thoughts during construction. "For me this was a special project and there was a lot of serendipity in how we all came together. I am so happy that I was the one to help take this home into its new chapter."



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### SUPPLIER LIST

- Full design and project management and build:** David Coulson Design Ltd.
- Principal designer:** Brigitte Allec of David Coulson Design Ltd.
- Landscape design:** Eden Projects
- Floor refinishing:** Double N Hardwood Floors
- Fireplace masonry:** Glenelg Masonry
- Heating and cooling:** Exchangenergy Inc.
- Flooring/tile:** End of the Roll, Duncan
- Custom tile install:** Nicholas Rota & Adam Drover
- Metal roofing:** Coast Roofing Ltd. and Golden Rule Roofing
- Cabinets:** JJ Frith Services and Neufeld Furniture
- Millwork:** David Coulson Design Ltd.
- Drywall:** S.V.I. Interiors
- Pool:** All Star Pools by Lorenzo Inc.
- Painting interior:** Full House Painting, SWS Painting
- Painting exteriors:** Daughters Painting
- Paint supplies:** Sherwin Williams, Cloverdale Paint, Pacific Paint Centre
- Gutters/soffit:** Vancouver Island Gutter Ltd.
- Fireplace:** Delco Fireplace
- Electrical:** Harfield Electric Ltd.
- Plumbing:** JS Plumbing & Heating
- Plumbing fixtures:** Andrew Sheret
- Custom audio:** Jensen Audio Video Electronics
- Custom shower glass:** Nugget Glass
- Doors, trim:** Windsor Plywood
- Construction materials:** Slegg Lumber, Rona
- Concrete:** Gravel Hill Supplies Ltd.
- Custom timber:** Seasonal Cedar Salvage
- Appliances:** Trail Appliance
- Insulation:** Alliance Insulation
- Forming materials, re-bar:** JP Construction Supplies
- Drainage supplies:** ICONIX Waterworks
- Excavating/landscaping:** Pontious Contracting Ltd.
- Trusses:** Pacific Truss

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