



Gray Area

Patricia Gray crafts some of the city's most elegant interiors, but in her own Alberni Street townhouse, creativity is the freedom to make mistakes

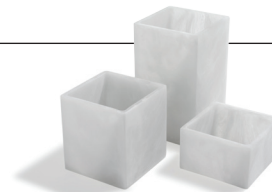
BY ADRIENNE MATEI | PHOTOS BY LUCAS FINLAY



“THIS IS A PRETTY SKOOKUM blade,” Patricia Gray says, brandishing a dagger in a convincingly menacing manner. Luckily, the interior designer/feng shui master returns the Ethiopian weapon to its silver sheath and resumes chatting about her love of fine craftsmanship and beautiful detailing. “My mother was a couture seamstress, and having grown up with fashion and fabrics

helps a lot when I’m designing,” she says of her work creating luxe custom spaces (including False Creek’s Erickson project and John Travolta’s Vancouver pad). “I can literally remember being in my crib getting irritated that my teddy bears didn’t look right,” she says. Though her passion was steadfast, Gray recalls the necessity of taking a bookkeeping job to afford design school in her 20s: “I hated it. I’d

wait until nobody would notice and run out the back down three flights of stairs in my heels to look at art galleries for a few minutes just to get me through the day.” Now Gray has a painting studio of her own, where art continues to provide liberation from professional structure. “With my design I can’t make mistakes, but in here there are no accidents.” Beaming, she adds, “I am completely free.” **VM**



“I LOVE MARTHA STURDY’S SQUARE RESIN VASES IN WHITE MARBLE. I USE THEM ALL THE TIME!”
(from \$135, providehome.com)



ROOM WITH BOARD

Gray, alumna of the Parsons School of Design in Paris, finds inspiration everywhere from cactus blossoms in Palm Springs to Netflix. “I was binge-watching *Suits*,” she explains of her golden work in progress (forefront), “and the set included these beautifully detailed blond oak walls. I went, ‘Pause! Where’s my sketchbook?’”

CURIOSITY LANDING

On trips she collects examples of intricate local craftsmanship: Ethiopian daggers, Somali necklaces, a silver cigarette case from London’s Portobello Market, and an abacus from Hong Kong share space on a 200-year-old English breakfast table carved from old-growth mahogany.



LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

When she first walked in, Gray was struck by this sun-drenched room. “I was so excited about the three-storey light well and how bright it made the space that the realtor told me to control my emotions or I’d ruin any negotiations.”