

Canalside Studio reimagines a builder-finished family home as a delightful, whimsical space

House

BY **CHRISTY WRIGHT**

PHOTOS BY **KENNETH WONG**



ABOVE In the foyer, closed storage was a priority. Throughout, the studio used interesting shapes to great effect.

Plywood, that most humble of materials, is often relegated to out-of-the-spotlight supporting roles in terms of design (think sub-floors, exterior wall sheathing, roof linings), but in this cute-as-can-be home, it takes a star turn. "The choice of plywood came very naturally and early in the planning," says architect Etain Ho who founded Canalside Studio with architect Francis Lam. "We wanted a material that would give warmth to the space and create interesting shapes, while being on budget for the young couple who lives here." The shapes conceived by Ho and Lam, along with the choice of maple plywood, conjure an animated playfulness that's in step with the twenty-something owners' love of jigsaw puzzles and Jenga, as well as their plans to start a family – it's easy to imagine little ones colouring and piling up building blocks just out of frame.

A tight budget dictated that the renovation of the two-storey, 1,880-square-foot house in