

Wow! A world-class Harbourside home in Victoria, British Columbia.

From this 1,200 sq/ft seventh floor sub penthouse suite, which is situated on the northwest corner of the popular Victoria Regent Hotel. The 700sq/ft 270deg wrap around deck offers a commanding view of Victoria's Inner Harbour. To the south, The Legislative Assembly (Baroque Revival design by Francis Rattenbury), to the west the Harbour entrance with an ever-changing vista of arriving and departing float planes, pleasure craft, ferries, kayakers and paddle boarders dotting to and fro.

In the backdrop the snow-covered peaks of the Olympic mountains of Washington State, draws one's eyes from sea to sky with spectacular Summer sunsets creating the most memorable and romantic dinners with the magical transition into night and the harbour lights.

Looking to the north is the beginning of The Gorge waterway and the relatively new Johnson Street Bridge. This extraordinary modern Bascule Rolling design crosses the Narrows leading to The Upper Harbour and an established industrial area and Point Hope shipyard. The former riveted iron bridge inspired the riveted iron ceiling cornices bringing the inside/out. Once fondly known as "*The Blue Bridge*" (due to its painted colour) The new design, included washing the new bridge in blue light making a dramatic night time spectacle.

And finally, a look to the east with sunrises and coffee overlooking The Design District of downtown Victoria with Mount Tolmie in the distance.

Built in 1981, the building has predominately been a combination of Hotel suites and Residences. Situated in the heart of the city on the Inner Harbour, just steps away from of the finest restaurants and bars. Travel is easy with bicycle and walking trails and bus routes. Located a 30-minute drive from Victoria International Airport and 40 minutes from The Vancouver Island Ferry Terminal with service to Vancouver and The Southern Gulf Islands. Going to Vancouver for a business meeting is literally a five-minute walk to Harbour Air Float Plane Terminal. Moorage is available from the (GVHA) Greater Victoria Harbour Authority at reasonable rates right alongside the building. The Whitehall Rowing Company have a rowing club offer reasonable membership fees to use their 14 ft rowing boats for fitness or exploring.

Inspiration

The Owner's Perspective.

As a Seaman I have had a life of travel and adventure, living in ships has given me an appreciation for space and everything being in its place. Traditional wood work especially Mahogany, finished with French polishing using orange shellac, brings a warmth and lustre and thus enhancing the iridescent nature of the wood. That is why I have used it throughout this home. It hadn't occurred to me, to incorporate a nautical theme, until a visiting tall ship docked alongside the building in 2010. It was then that I envisioned a sailing ship mast feature out of the concrete support Pilar. And so... **Bristol Fashion** it was to be.

Purchased in 2009 it was indeed all about location and what started a three-year renovation turned into a project bringing together some of Victoria's most talented craftspeople, all of whom gave of their talents, skills and love.

The nautical theme grew after learning that the building was situated on the site of the original "*Main Wharf*" which happened to be the berth for the famous Square-Rigged Sailing ship "*Thermopylae*" from about 1890. She was built at the same shipyard in Scotland as the "*Cutty Sark*" both as *Tea Clippers* but the former proved faster earning her the title of the fastest sailing ship of her type.

A very good friend purchased at auction and gave me a print of "*Thermopylae*". Lying alongside "*Main Wharf*", which is framed and hanging now in the passageway. Sitting at the table looking out across the harbour the concrete pillar turned mast is located where the great sailing ships mast and yard arms once overhung Wharf Street

I sought an aesthetic in bringing the beauty of the wood together with riveted steel boiler plate around the fireplace and riveted iron cornices at the ceiling. The combination of materials, fabrics, furnishings, tones and textures along with inspiring sensual artwork by both Luis Merino (biography listed further down) and Godfrey Stephens.

This I feel has brought balance to a man's shore side abode.

Features

Enter through a small vestibule with a mirrored wall and brass coat hooks plus backlighting to a picture wall and lit alcove for gloves and so on, also a key draw. Custom sized and built French doors lead into the apartment, these doors have opaque glass in the lights which gives a warm ambient light glowing through into the living area. A book cased wall with custom made cigar humidor and wine cabinet storage below has over one hundred beautifully leather-bound books of Franklin & Easton Press. Many classics, including the eighteen volume Richard Burton' "*Thousand Nights and One*" and '*The Complete Works of Ernest Hemingway*'. An eighteen-inch recessed doorway through the book case leads into a storage room with pull out pantry's, overhead and intuitive storage for dry goods, wine, luggage and seasonal clothing. The doors to the storage room, Pissoir and Ensuite are all handcrafted panelled and louvered 2" mahogany. Arched with fitted jams and frames taking into account all curves and radiuses used throughout

The layout is around a central block creating an open plan but making for more inner wall space. The outer extremities are all full-sized picture windows for an unobstructed view. Wool carpet (Oak Bay Broadloom) and cork flooring throughout.

The sitting area is furnished with a three piece leather sectional couch with down filled silk cushions by Chintz & Co. (one additional section is in storage). A Buttlers tray coffee table by Starbay Fr. A large oversized cigar leather chair by Sagers along with a "*Black Bear Rug*" in the corner an Octane Elliptical Trainer with matching cork and mahogany base (necessitated by Covid Gym closures). Also featuring a canvass covered 1914 reproduction steamer trunk as an end table in which is stowed numerous gym items 2 x 50 lbs multi dumbbells by Bowflex plus a 50 lbs multi kettlebell a TRX used with attachment to the mast. Room for yoga mats etc.

Luis Merino' painting titled "*Watermelon and Pomegranates*" adorns the wall and sets a striking discombobulated pose, this piece once made up part of The Swan's Art Collection. On the adjacent wall is a Flemish silk tapestry of *Gustav Klimt "The Kiss"* by *Metrax Craye*. There is a grand black iron riveted *Steampunk style (Crescent Moon Forge)* gas fireplace (Valour) with wooden mantle and flat screen TV above.

Towards the Galley Kitchen is a reproduction 1920 Naval Binoculars 12x80 which brings the harbour into view (Restoration Hardware).

The Dining table is the work of several craftsmen with the table itself made from a single 14 ft long x 33" x 3" Babinga board (African Rosewood) it stands at one end upon a turned pedestal made up of Babinga with Purple Heart inlays, it is attached at the other end to the Galley Island. The table also features an inlaid marquetry compass rose and a retractable brass light (Empress Hotel lamp by Waterglass Studio) for intimate dinning. The five Captains chairs are made from the same Babinga or Rosewood and Purple Heart (by Britts Fine Furniture and Design). Each chair taking one week to produce for a total of seven weeks with setup time. They are bookmarked and of the finest craftsmanship.

The island takes the form of a wheelhouse dodger with its simple and elegant curves the combination of white painted one-inch tongue and groove facing. Steam bent Sapele rail cap, ¼ inch black iron counter top (Crescent Moon Forge) slashed and peened with beaten copper backsplash.

The stove is a cream and black enamelled AGA Companion (agaliving.com) A four ring gas cook top with two electric ovens the lower one is a convection oven and a delight to use. Behind the stove is a downdraft extraction fan by Bosch. At the other end is a black iron bottle well for up to 15 bottles of spirits which is backlit from below, adding a soft glow through the the liquors.

Along the back counter top is a built-in wine rack and dual zone temperature wine cooler (Cavavin) and under cupboard wine glass racks and with matching Mahogany bead panelled doors in upper and lower cabinets.

The counter top continues in ¼ inch slash and peened black iron around to the Silgranite (Blanco) sink which features an under counter water filtration system with matching spigot.

Hardwired are two coffee machines a Nesspresso Vertua and a beautiful Copper and brass Italian Electra Micro Casa Leva S1 (elektracoffee.com)

At the left of the sink are the Marvel (AGA) refrigerator drawers with matching cabinet panels. Above the sink the wall is capped with brass bound and beaten copper cap complimenting the island backsplash, above which is the Pewter Octopus Candelabra (Waterglass Studios)

Sidled up to the bar is a reproduction Queen Mary Bar stool by Starbay of France.

Into the bedroom and although the layout is open it is beautifully appointed-with heavy silk drapery (Chintz & Co) the wall and ceiling colour is a deep Claret which lends its self to daytime sleeping with cooling and heating by an LG ArtCool AC Cassette discreetly situated to hold art work here is an intimate Merino Muse drawing.

The Queen-sized bed is a leather Sleigh Bed by Ralph Lauren along with canvass trunk chest of drawers and side table (Restoration Hardware)

The walk in closet is finished in mahogany with a custom built in chest of drawers a shelved mahogany louvered locker and brass rails for clothes hanging.

The ensuite has an oversized oval soaker tub with a custom bench seat in the form of a laid deck and the shower curtain in sail cloth stows away in it's own vented locker. Polished aluminium Marine mirrored medicine cabinets (RH) complement each other on two walls. There are two mahogany louvered lockers for linen and sundries also two louvered lockers above the longitudinal sink and vanity (RH) have a 110v power supplied for shaver and tooth brush charging.

In the passageway is a comfortable Queen Anne love seat with a canvass covered trunk side table. The laundry area is separated on each side by large custom built Sapele sliding doors each with twelve lights in opaque glass. The right-hand side is an airing cupboard with a Danby freezer below and built in ironing board. The left-hand side has a stackable Miele washer and dryer with laundry basket and additional storage. The hot water tank is situated behind these two spaces and can be accessed by a removable panel. The tank was replaced in 2018 and is rated for 10 years.

Across from the laundry is the framed print of the "*Thermopylae*" in 1891 with book shelving. Rounding the corner is the "*Pissoir*" which features a 1920's vintage urinal sourced in New York. This little room packs a lot of detail with traditional black and white checkered floor tiles, white T&G 1-inch wainscoting and beautifully inlaid mahogany deck panels. Above are professionally produced wall paper panels of British Admiralty Charts of the region and two prints depicting the "*Thermopylae*" and a leather clad ceiling.

Other Features

The windows in the living area are all equipped with remotely operated black roller blinds. Installed by Ruffle & Brown.

The living area is served with two Bose sound systems linked to a SoundTouch units in the bathroom. There are two sub woofers located under the fireplace hearth and the other in a custom rack in the kitchen area. This not only gives surround sound to the television but wonderfully rich sound throughout the living area.

Heating and cooling are provided by a convection air wall heater in the Hallway across from the laundry area, the gas fireplace in the sitting area and the bedroom is cooled and can be heated by the LG CoolArt AC unit plus there is a Convection air heater near to the walk-in closet. The windows and patio doors are all new and are double glassed gas filled units with Low-e coatings. There is very little heat loss in Winter or gain in the Summer months.

The building is concrete construction and as such is comfortable and quiet.

In 2016 a \$4,500,000.00 remediation project replaced all doors and windows to the outside and the buildings envelope sealed and repainted. The unit entitlement share was \$74,000.00

The outside decks are very private and offer an amazing view there are five planters with a timed watering system, on the north deck two are for growing herbs and such and the others are decorative plants.

There is a six-seat teak dining set with a low teak table/bench with a box grating top, (can be used for seating or laying out a buffet for outdoor entertaining. There are two awnings by (Jeune Bros) in Sunbrella fabric with lighted valances which give a pleasant ambiance. A Mahogany Companion way hatch (*Dog House*) makes an attractive architectural statement. It is primarily used for stowing the furniture cushions away from the weather and has its own Sunbrella cover. There are three large propane for the fire pit bottles behind and covered out of sight by the same cover.

A hose bib and hoses for wash down purposes is located on the North Deck.

There is a rope finished arm chair and couch with a chaise lounge (Restoration Hardware) both of which have new Sunbrella cushion covers in grey and white stripe to match the awnings.

There is a fire pit with grey tumbled lava rock. (RH)

Raised teak decking gives a contrast to the visual texture and is comfortable on bare feet. This is the place for entertaining. With the Canada Day Celebration, fireworks display (hopefully returning soon) going overhead is the most spectacular night of the year.

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Luis Merino biography

Luis Merino, was born in the heart of Mexico City in 1942, into a family of artists, so one can say that he entered into his profession and lifelong passion from a very early age.

Luis was fortunate to have studied in the prestigious Art Academy of San Carlos in Mexico City and later he studied and taught at the infamous Instituto Allende in San Miguel Allende, Mexico. In 1969 he married his Canadian born wife, Sandra, and they moved to Canada in 1970 where they resided in Edmonton, Alberta for a year before moving as far South and as far West as possible to Victoria, British Columbia.

Since his arrival in Victoria Luis has been a very active and well-known artist. He created numerous studios in the heart of Chinatown, and in other abandoned buildings in the old downtown core. Those derelict studios provided the impetus for hundreds of powerful paintings, drawings, sculptures, and murals.

So much history, so much contribution, group shows, one-man exhibitions, parties, and celebrations.

Today his work can be found in many private and public collections in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. They are the fortunate ones who own a Luis Merino because his work is like fine wine that just grows more beautiful and delicious with time!

One is always warmed by his sensuous colours and the rhythms of his erotic “cellos” We are always reminded through the delicate expressions of his women the constant complexity of beauty and drama and the unexpected!

Viva Luis!

Please like and follow Luis on Facebook at [Facebook.com/LuisMerinoArt](https://www.facebook.com/LuisMerinoArt) and check him out on Wikipedia and Instagram at [merino4006](https://www.instagram.com/merino4006)

*written by his biggest fan and critic,
Sandra Merino*