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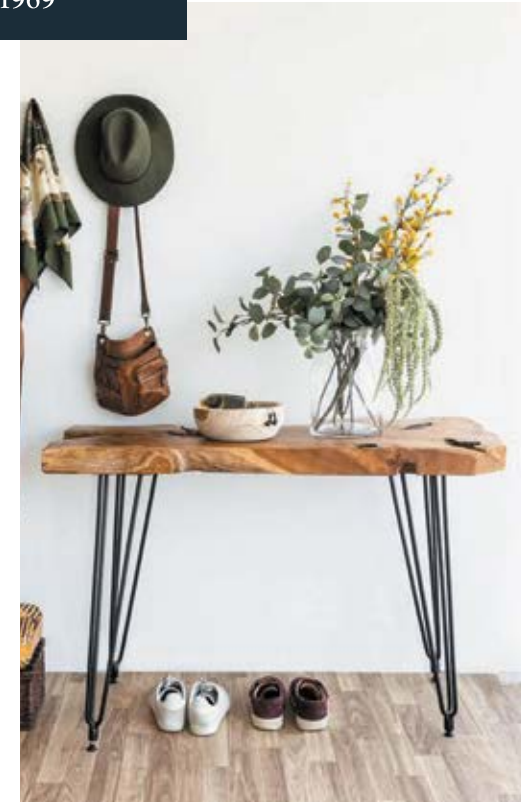
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All winter long we crave the warmth of the sun, and then by the summer, we're working hard to avoid its harmful effects. That's particularly true in our backyards, where too much direct sunlight can transform an idyllic oasis into a spot too hot to enjoy at certain parts of the day.

Every solution has its challenges, from umbrellas that blow away during storms to awnings that cast a permanent shadow and have to be taken down each fall. The ideal solution is a Natural Light Patio Cover, available from VanAm Construction.

All that's left to enjoy is the sunlight, the perfect solution for any backyard. Natural Light Patio Covers use Acrylite panels, made from 100% acrylic guaranteed not to fade or discolour for 30 years. They can be configured to work in any setting, attached to homes, to cover decks and patios, or built as stand-alone covers detached from the house. They are permanent structures that stay in place year-round.

Looking to get more enjoyment and use out of your Natural Light Patio Cover? A Three Season Sunroom is what you want! Our Eze-breeze sliding-panel windows will turn your Patio Cover into a unique and elegant enclosure whether integrated with an existing deck or patio, placed in your garden as a self standing structure

or as an addition to your home. These vinyl, glazed panels have the transparency of glass but are cheaper and lighter. The windows are fully screened allowing fresh air in while keeping insects out. Closed in cooler weather to keep it more comfortable.

Homeowners have two primary choices; aluminum or wood. Our standard cover is all Aluminum and comes in white, sandalwood or brown, our Hybrid cover has an aluminum roof with Douglas Fir posts and beams. Each order is custom-made to fit perfectly with an existing deck or patio.

The other options reflect VanAm's expertise as a homebuilder and renovation contractor. "We also offer the covers built into beautiful Timberlite pergolas," says Ken Blokker, director of sales. They are made with Douglas fir timbers and can be stained in a variety of colours to suit any backyard decor. "The timbers are absolutely beautiful, and the Natural Light Cover transforms the pergola into the perfect place to relax all summer long."

VanAm Construction, established in 1990, has a sterling reputation across Southern Ontario for building homes and doing renovations and backyard projects of all kinds. Owner Dave VanAmerongen is based in Grimsby, while Blokker lives in London and works with customers across

Southwestern Ontario. "I've been selling Natural Light Patio Covers for many years, serving customers in and around London," Blokker says. "Now that I've teamed up with VanAm, I can offer a wider selection of solutions for every backyard set-up."

In addition to the 30-year non-yellowing warranty on the Acrylite panels, there is a 10-year hail damage warranty, a 10-year light transmission warranty, along with a one-year labour warranty. While not inexpensive, a Natural Light Patio Cover or Timberlite Pergola is an investment, adding value to your home. "People really can't believe it until they're standing under the cover, with so much light filtering through but not feeling the heat of the sun on their skin," Blokker says. "By filtering the sunshine, we give people the best of the sun without any of the downside. It transforms backyards."

There's plenty of time to get a Natural Light Patio Cover to enjoy. There's a turnaround time of 4-6 weeks for aluminum structures, and a little bit longer for Timberlite options.

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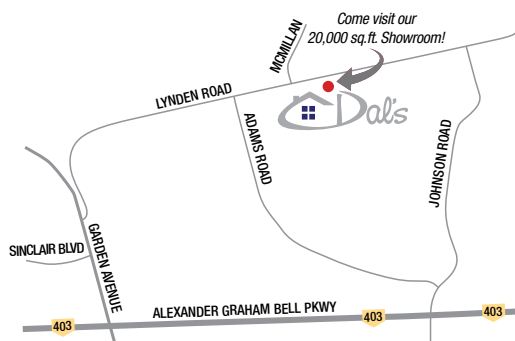
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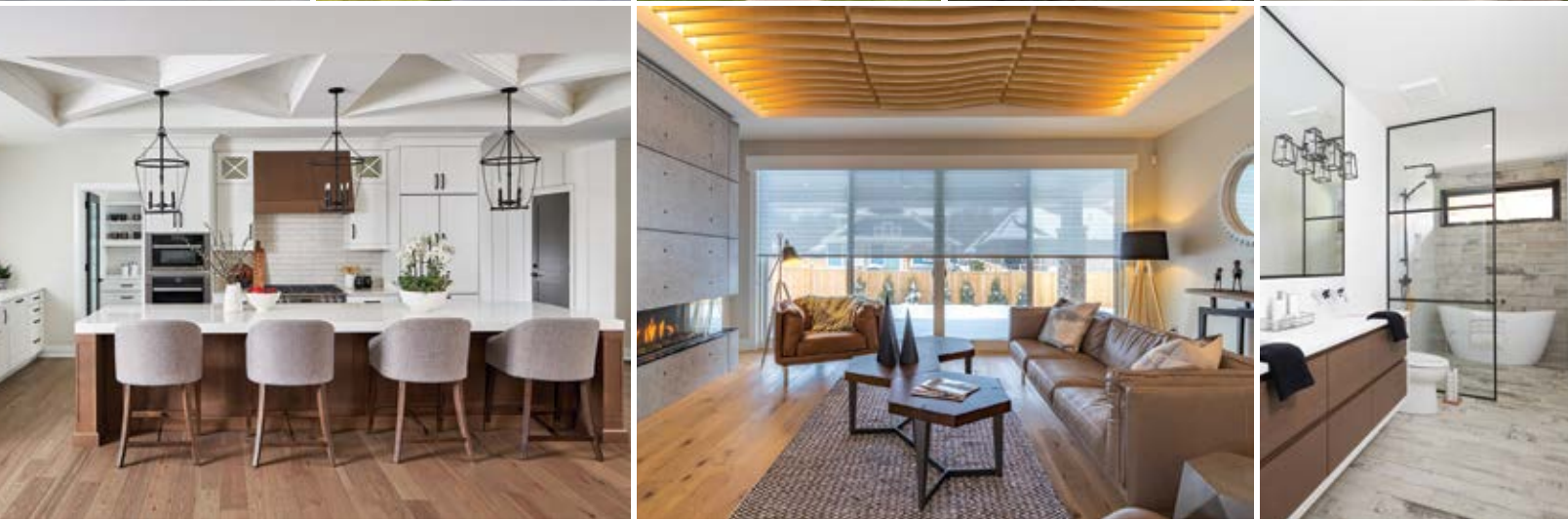
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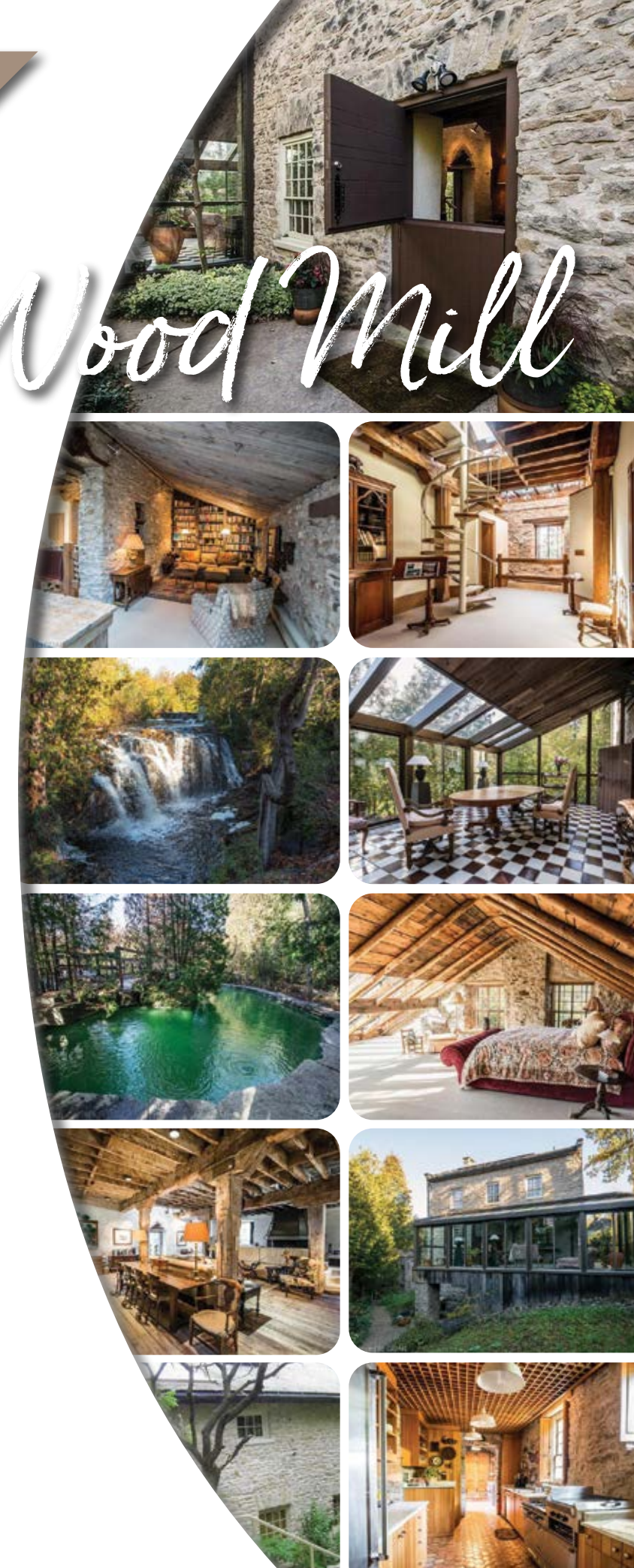
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**I'M WRITING THIS OUTSIDE ON MY DECK** while my son kicks a soccer ball. It's sunny and hot and it's hard to believe summer is coming to an end. Living in The Golden Horseshoe, we are so fortunate to have a prolonged warm season, one that trickles into fall but clings to summer even when the leaves start to change and the school buses stop to pick up the kids for school. As someone who grew up outside of Ottawa, where winter temperatures last for more than six months and September means coat weather is here, I am forever grateful for this climate. Every year I am reminded of the joy warm weather brings to most of us, and how it tends to inspire us when we design and decorate our homes.

Thick drapery, closed patios and heavy textiles for fall? Not in this area. In The Horseshoe, designers, builders and tradespeople are embracing the overlap of the seasons and designing homes – inside and out – that can be enjoyed outside of textbook seasonal boundaries. We see sprawling covered outdoor dining and lounging areas built for more than summer weather – decked with fire tables, outdoor heating and big, soft blankets. Floor-to-ceiling sweeping windows continue to dominate the walls of new builds and renovated homes, bringing in as much natural light as we can squeeze from the season. We aren't hunkering down until daylight saving time ends and forces us to turn the lights on at five p.m.

The homes we have for you this issue are truly stunning. Modern, bright and unique, yet so warm and homey – all in their own way. The designers, builders and trades in this region really give it their all with each home. I was left inspired, and I know you will be too.

Get outside and enjoy that sunshine!

Gabrielle Tieman-Lee, Managing Editor  
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### ON THE COVER

A Burlington family embraces the outdoors with their modern new home. Story, page 64. Photography by Adrian Ozimek.

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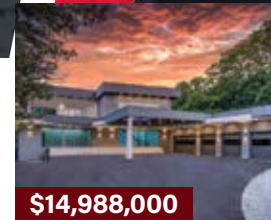
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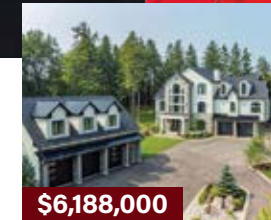
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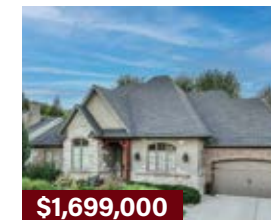
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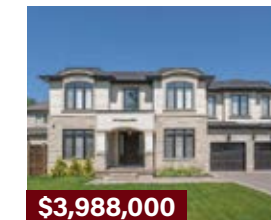
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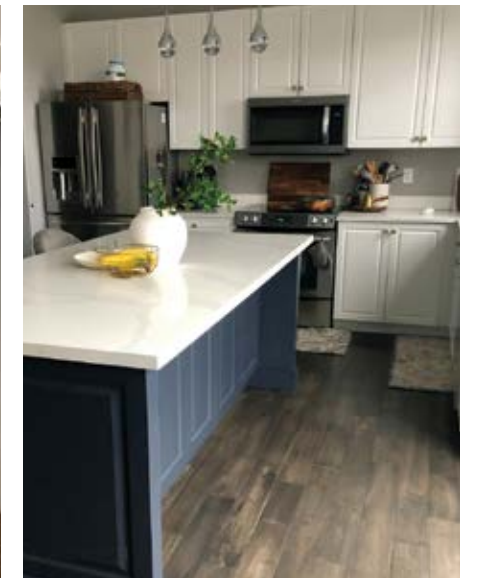
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# SPORTING GEAR STORAGE

Designer **Tamarisk McNalty Stephens** shares her ideas.

Storage for your sports gear isn't given much consideration when planning and designing a new home or renovating an existing one. However, if an average family stays relatively active and participates in organized sports or recreational activities, a significant amount of equipment can accumulate, which requires substantial square footage.

## Gear varies based on individual and family interests but can include:

- ✓ camping tents and cookware
- ✓ fishing poles and tackle boxes
- ✓ golf clubs
- ✓ bicycles
- ✓ rollerblades, skateboards and scooters
- ✓ helmets
- ✓ lacrosse sticks
- ✓ soccer balls
- ✓ footballs and cleats
- ✓ baseball gloves
- ✓ balls and bats
- ✓ curling brooms
- ✓ skates and hockey equipment
- ✓ skis, snowboards, boots and poles
- ✓ tennis racquets and balls
- ✓ canoes, SUPs, kayaks, paddles and life jackets
- ✓ motocross and snowmobile gear

Proper storage solutions make it easier to keep a tidy home and an organized system allows family schedules to operate more smoothly during busy seasons when you need to get out the door to the big game. Here are some tips for planning functional sports equipment storage in the home.

## TAKE INVENTORY

To determine what storage solutions you need, you must first evaluate what you have. Go through everything and donate, sell or pitch gear that is outgrown, worn out or irrelevant. Once you have purged, determine which items can be stored in a garage, outbuilding or shed without air conditioning or heat, and which items will need to find room in the home (so mould doesn't grow and rodents don't chew).

## SPACE/LOCATION

Think about what gear you need to access in each season. Depending on space, you may need to design a system that can rotate between summer/winter sports. Take a look around your home to determine if there is space not being utilized to its potential. Whether it's a closet, a corner in the basement, a spare room upstairs, space under the stairs, or some wall space in the garage that can be transformed into gear storage – claim it as such. Locating storage in an area accessible to children can encourage them to take responsibility for putting away their gear. They'll know where to find it when they need it and proper storage can also prolong the life of equipment.

## INCORPORATE TARGETED SOLUTIONS

Some equipment should be aired out after each use, so specialized hanging racks should be considered essential (and good ventilation is key!). In-floor heat in a mudroom also helps dry items quickly in the winter.

Make use of overhead space in a garage for hanging bikes, canoes, kayaks, etc. In addition to typical hooks, baskets and shelves, a slat-wall system offers flexibility you can tailor to your needs with specialized attachments. You can install mesh baskets for balls, wire shelves/baskets for boots and cleats, stands that keep golf bags off the floor, shelves and hooks for skis and boards, racquets and various helmets, and utility hooks for paddles and fishing rods. Wall-mounted clips can keep hockey sticks, curling brooms and lacrosse sticks organized.



SARIS: Cycle Glide

Deep customized wood shelving is handy for storing large totes and clear bins for camping equipment, off-season gear and hockey bags.

Locker room-style storage with a designated space for each person keeps their belongings organized. There are also bags designed to accommodate specific equipment, which keeps required items together for easy access when heading out.

## MATERIALS

Use appropriate materials and finishes that can stand up to wear and tear. Consider solid wood for doorjambs, casings, millwork and wall treatments (it stands up better than MDF to heavy use). Drywall corners with a radius are generally less susceptible to damage and chipping from being bumped. Durable floor surfaces such as porcelain tile and concrete can be swept and mopped easily. **OH**

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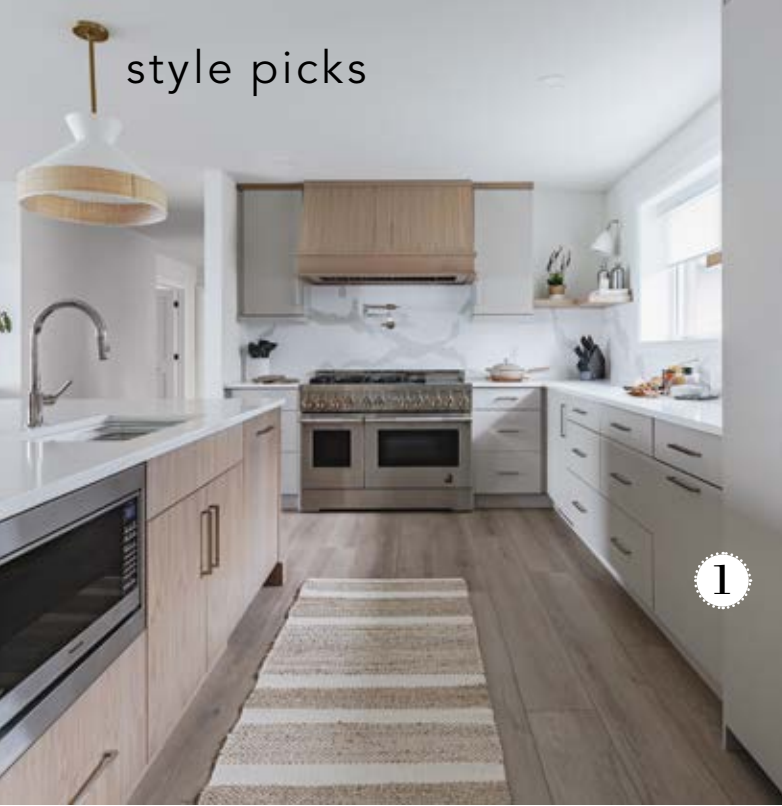


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# GIN & POMEGRANATE Cocktail

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY JENELLE MCCULLOCH



**THIS REFRESHING FALL GIN COCKTAIL IS TART AND HERBACEOUS. IT FEATURES POMEGRANATE AND A SWEET BUT EARTHY HONEY-THYME SYRUP.**

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 ounces gin
- 1 ounce pomegranate juice
- 1 ounce orange juice
- ½ ounce thyme honey syrup\*

\*To make thyme honey syrup, heat equal parts honey and water in a pan with a sprig of thyme. Bring to a simmer and let thyme infuse until cool.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all ingredients into a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake until cool and strain over ice.

Garnish with a thyme sprig and thick zest of orange peel.

Optional: With a butane torch, heat the thyme sprig until smoking. **OH**

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# COLLABORATION

## *At Its Finest*

STORY DENISE WILLSON | PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG



WHEN STEPHEN McGRAIL AND BARBARA GASPIC CAME TOGETHER TO START ANEW, THEY WANTED A HOUSE THAT WELCOMED THEIR NEWLY-BLENDED FAMILY.

*Continued on page 34*



Textiles and custom fabrics are a unique speciality of Sprague Interiors. The blue patterned bar stools surrounding the quartz island were custom-made and designed for this home by Laurie Sprague and her team.



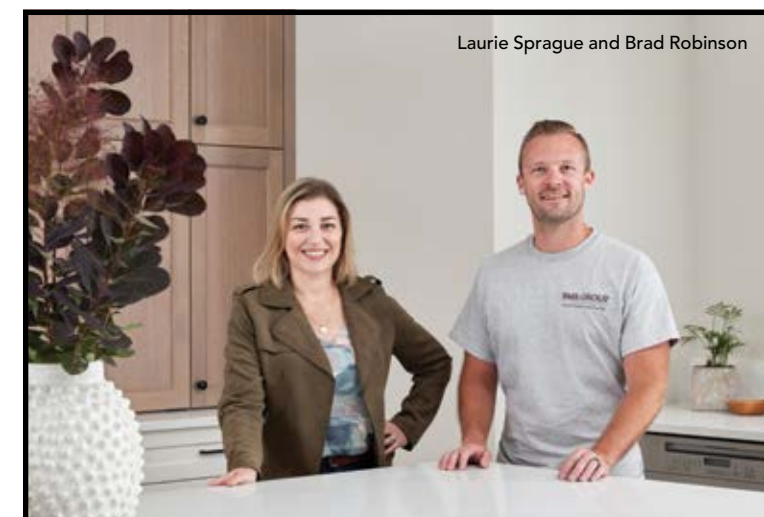
The couple had met online and shared common threads; both were widowers and parents of children currently aged 16 to 27. When it was time, they sold their separate homes to purchase a 12-year-old Beamsville abode they could envision as the hub for the entire family to come together. “But to make it work, the house needed a complete overhaul,” says Barbara.

The couple talked to neighbours who had tackled a similar major home renovation. They’d worked with **Laurie Sprague of Sprague Interiors** and **Brad Robinson of BMR Group Construction Ltd.** and provided positive feedback about the process of their renovation. “We called them immediately,” says Stephen.

The interior renovation focused on the family’s long-term goals. The couple wanted the main floor designed for retirement – including a stairless primary bedroom and en suite, a laundry room, an open-

concept kitchen, living room and dining room with ample space for large gatherings and tons of storage space. “The main level is our oasis, our personal space,” says Stephen. “The en suite is spa-like, and the bedroom has wall-to-wall built-ins (built by **Dave Inglis**.)” The basement level was reorganized to accommodate four bedrooms, two bathrooms and a lounge area for all ages. Even the mudroom was designed for seven. “We like to have everyone together for dinners or weekend breakfasts,” says Stephen.

A substantial part of the design project involved the kitchen and how the family uses the space. The kitchen was swapped with the living room to create flow and allow for a user-friendly layout. The change accommodated a large, beachy, white oak island topped with a solid quartz from **Rockstella Stonery Inc.** – the perfect complement to the soaring shiplap



ceiling. “The gorgeous ceiling treatment was a splurge that we had to push for due to the high level of detail and time required to execute,” says Laurie. The cathedral ceiling was a big project to cut, align and install using a specific technique to ensure no sagging or movement in the future. Choices were made to balance costs with homeowner needs and wants without sacrificing quality workmanship. For example, some bedroom furniture was professionally refurbished instead of replaced and additional bedroom designs were pared back. “Laurie and Brad showed us how to stretch our vision,” says Stephen. “They gave us options and samples, taking us on a journey to how our choices would lead to further changes and contribute to the end result.” *Continued on page 37*



The living room fireplace, flanked by built-ins, is now a feature that pops. The direct-vent zero clearance gas fireplace was provided by **House By The School, The Fireplace Co.** The custom kitchen cabinetry was installed by **Interior Works** and **Brenlo** supplied the mouldings, trim and doors throughout the home. Wainscoting created interest along the long entryway hallway and wide white oak flooring was installed throughout to create cohesion from room to room. The hardwood floors, carpeting and porcelain tiles were all provided by **Aristocrat Floors**.

All five bathrooms were gutted and refitted with new fixtures, hardware and lighting supplied by **iLITE Lighting & Fans**. “The bathrooms are contemporary with whimsical features,” says Laurie. “No two bathrooms look the same and each were given design attention based on the user’s personality.” The primary en suite is now one of the couple’s favourite spaces. The custom soaker tub from **Robinson Lighting & Bath** is the perfect spot to unwind. Plumbing was rearranged to accommodate the freestanding tub and large shower, creating a layout to suit the couple’s daily routine. Accent wallpaper by Sprague Interiors and **Benjamin Moore** paint in grey shades were chosen to set the mood. *Continued on page 38*



**LEFT:** Grey shades of Benjamin Moore paint were used to create a soft backdrop for the family’s collection of treasures, artwork and photos.

**ABOVE:** All five bathrooms are unique. Each was gutted and refitted with new fixtures, lighting and design details. **OPPOSITE:** The living room’s new gas fireplace warms the open-concept space while providing ambience.

**“I FOCUS ON MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS WHILE SUGGESTING IDEAS OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE.”**  
~Laurie Sprague



“I focus on meeting customer needs while suggesting ideas outside their comfort zone,” Laurie says. Laurie and her team really enjoy providing the full-service experience to their clients, touching on every aspect of the home’s design. Sprague Interiors was responsible for all finishing touches, including custom-made furniture, hardware, window coverings and home décor. New lighting added contemporary elements to the ranch-style home, and even the family’s artwork was updated with new framing and placement. “The homeowners stayed away during the final stages,” says Laurie. “This allowed us to complete our full install with furniture and décor so our clients could come home to a fabulous reveal.” *Continued on page 40*

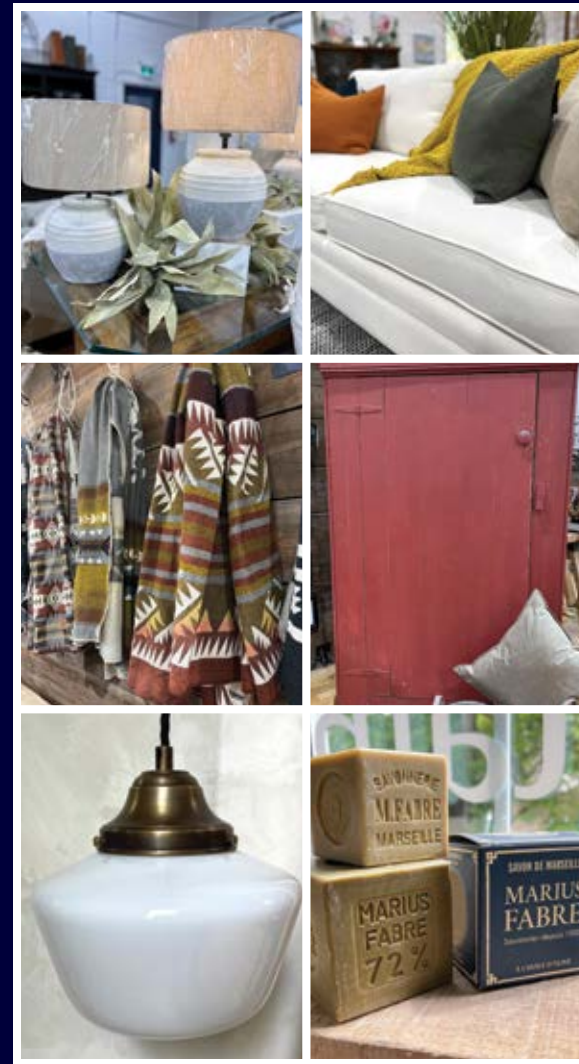
**LEFT:** The primary suite is flanked by wall-to-wall built-ins for tidy additional storage. **BELOW LEFT & RIGHT:** The primary en suite is one of the couple’s favourite spaces. With its large glass shower and custom soaker tub, it is a space for relaxation.



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Laurie and Brad work well together and have plans to tackle another large renovation together in the near future. “Brad is very organized and deadline-oriented,” says Stephen. The renovation timeline went smoothly from start to finish – despite obstacles. “Brad and Laurie took care of everything, so we didn’t have to deal with hiccups,” says Barbara. “If a change was needed, they presented options and explained the hurdles so we understood. We had healthy conversations before decisions were made.”

The project was a true collaboration between the homeowners, builder and designer. “Building or renovating a home is extremely personal,” says Brad. After 16 years in the business and winning awards like the Best 2023 General Contractor for the Hamilton area, Brad knows how important good partnerships can be.

The end result: a timeless home built with attention to detail; illustrating how homeowners truly benefit when their design and build teams work together. **OH**

**“NO TWO BATHROOMS LOOK THE SAME AND EACH WERE GIVEN DESIGN ATTENTION BASED ON THE USER’S PERSONALITY.” ~Laurie Sprague**

**ABOVE:** Each unique bathroom has a contemporary design with whimsical touches. **RIGHT:** Laundry was added to the main floor, near the primary suite. **FAR RIGHT:** Dave Inglis fitted the spacious mudroom with custom cabinetry to store boots and bags.



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PHOTO: KIELY RAMOS



STORY AMANDA SHIELDS

# 7 Steps TO CHOOSING THE PERFECT WHITE PAINT

The search for the ideal shade of white can be a daunting task. White paint may seem simple, but variations in undertones and finishes can leave your head spinning. Join me as I share my foolproof process for choosing the perfect white paint hues for your home.

## 1. Consider Natural Lighting

Before diving into the myriad of white shades, evaluate the natural lighting in your space. North-facing rooms tend to have cooler light, while south-facing rooms are warmer. East-facing rooms receive bright morning light, while west-facing rooms are illuminated by afternoon and evening sun. Understanding your room's lighting will help you choose the right white with the ideal undertones.

## 2. Determine The Atmosphere

The ambience you want to create plays a crucial role in selecting white paint. If you desire a clean, crisp feel, opt for a pure white shade like Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace, a designer favourite. For a warmer and cosier atmosphere, consider whites with yellow or beige undertones like Benjamin Moore Simply White. If you seek a modern and sophisticated look, cooler whites with grey or blue undertones may be more suitable, such as Benjamin Moore Designer White.

Continued on page 44

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### 3. Consider Undertones

White paints can have undertones that subtly influence the overall look of a room. Common undertones include blue, grey, green, beige and yellow. To prevent a clash with other elements in your space, consider the undertones of your furniture, flooring and fixtures. Warm undertones pair well with warm colours, while cooler undertones complement cool colours.

### 4. Test Before Committing

Always test paint samples before committing to a particular shade. Apply large swatches of white paint on different walls in your room and observe how they appear in various lighting conditions. One product I love to use is from Hello Paint, where you can order peel and stick paint swatches that can easily move from room to room. Assess the samples at different times of the day to see how they respond to changing natural light. This process will help you choose a shade that harmonizes with your space.

### 5. Evaluate Contrast

White paint doesn't exist in isolation. Consider how your chosen white will interact with other elements in the room. If you have vibrant or dark-coloured furniture, a pure white may create a striking contrast. Alternatively, if you prefer a more harmonious look, consider selecting a white shade that is like the colour of your furniture or other design elements.

### 6. Consider The Finish

The finish of the paint can significantly impact the final appearance of your walls. Matte or flat finishes create a soft, smooth look but are more prone to marks and smudges. Satin or eggshell finishes offer a slight sheen and are more durable, making them suitable for high-traffic areas. Glossy finishes provide a dramatic shine but are best reserved for trim or accent areas.

### 7. Seek Professional Advice

Seeking professional advice is a wise step if you find yourself uncertain about choosing the perfect white paint. Interior designers or colour consultants can offer valuable insights and help you select the best shade to suit your needs. Remember, choosing the right white paint in your home may seem daunting, but armed with the knowledge of lighting, undertones, atmosphere, and finishes, you can make an informed decision. Remember to test samples in your space, consider contrast and seek professional advice if needed. With these tips, you'll be well on your way to finding the perfect white paint that will enhance the beauty and character of your home. **OH**

Amanda Shields is the principal designer at Amanda Shields Interiors.




PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI



PHOTO: LARRY ARNAL

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# family FIRST

STORY **GABRIELLE TIEMAN-LEE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

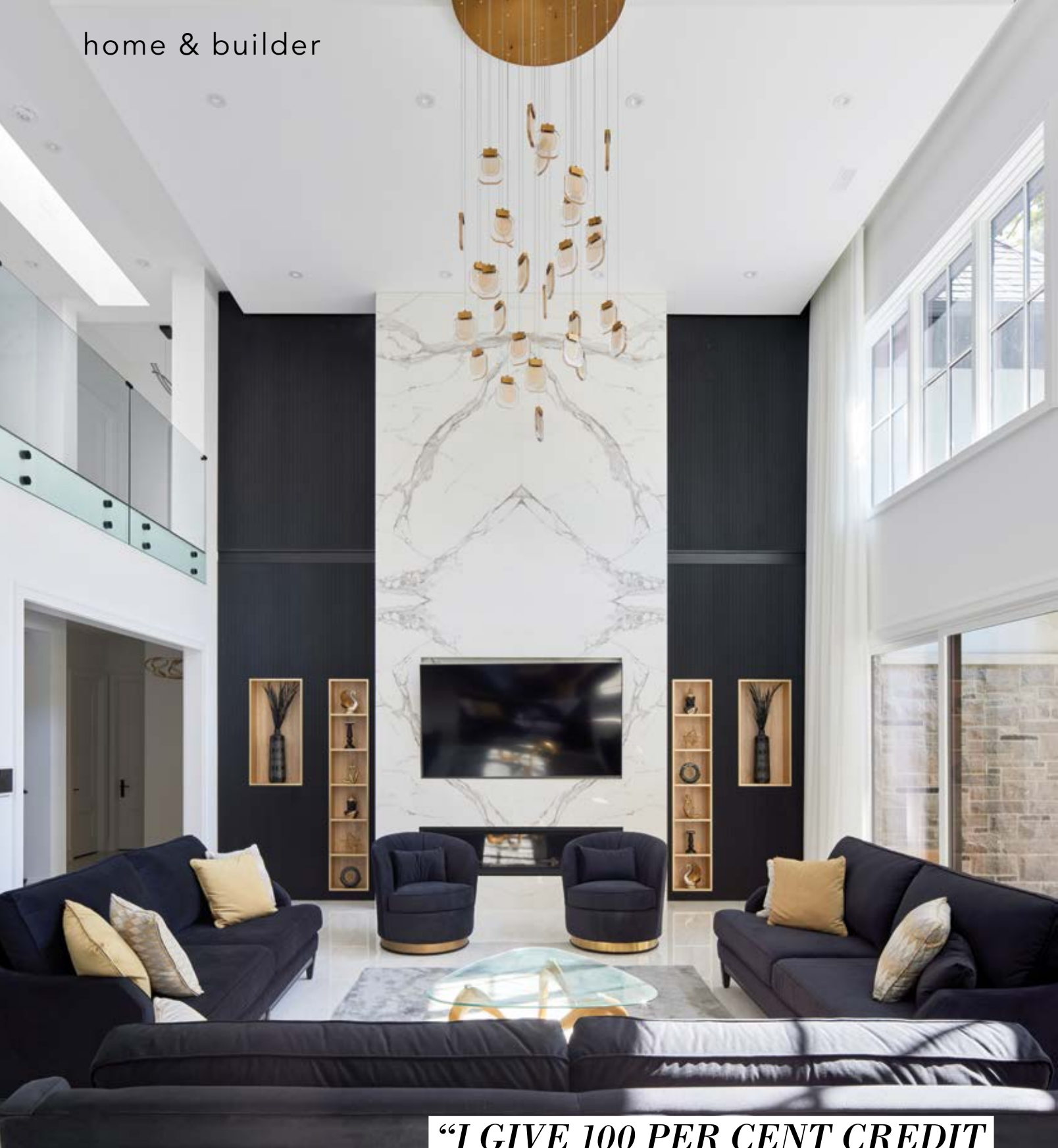


Gold finishing touches were added to the home's neutral palette, complementing family treasures and adding a touch of opulence. **OPPOSITE:** The formal living room overlooks the front of the home and the mature preserved trees that provide shade and privacy.

WHEN SONA AND JAY SAHNI CONSIDERED THEIR FOREVER HOME, THEY IMAGINED A PLACE THAT WAS NOT ONLY A HOME FOR THEM, BUT FOR THEIR ENTIRE FAMILY. "WE ARE A VERY WARM, CLOSE FAMILY," SAYS SONA. "WE LOVE TO HAVE OUR FAMILY VISIT. WE LIKE TO HOST PARTIES FOR OUR FRIENDS. IT WAS OUR DREAM TO HAVE A HOME WHERE EVERYONE FELT WELCOME."

The family decided to relocate to Mississauga, falling in love with a large lot surrounded by greenery in Lorne Park. "I love this area," says Sona. "Nature is very important to me and here we have the trails, birds, sunlight and trees." The family quickly set to building their home, one that would be cohesive with the neighbourhood but still provide their desired modern aesthetic. Sona knew there was only one person who could help her design her dream – her daughter Sonali, who delayed her travel plans to help her mother. "I felt that I had a good idea of what everyone needed," says Sonali. "An interior designer can come in and tell you what looks nice, but it's vital to truly understand the practicality and know what a family requires. There are so many little touches that we added that are unique to us as a family." *Continued on page 49*





Sonali and Sona Sahni

From the street, the new 11,000 sq. ft. home looks like it has been there for years. It's a grand, stone faced, two-storey home framed by mature trees. It has a traditional iron gate from **BTL Railings Inc.** The interior is a bright, open-concept modern masterpiece – with soaring ceilings and oversize windows by Kolbe Windows & Doors that give panoramic views of the private backyard. To execute their vision, the family partnered with architectural technologist **Richard Kossak** of **New Age Design** and **Peter Giampuzzi**, principal builder with **Ornella Homes**.

“We were very blessed to have a very good designer in Richard,” says Sona. “He was amazing and very familiar with Mississauga and the houses. We wanted a house from the outside that worked

with the neighbourhood and landscape, but inside, we wanted to completely change that style.”

“The homeowners wanted a design-focused home that fit with the traditional aesthetic of the mature, old growth neighbourhood without being too flashy,” says Peter. “We are a hands-on project management company. Our goal is to help the homeowners materialize their vision.”

Inside, rooms branch off from the foyer with an office to the left, showcasing treasures in built-ins by **Magnum Millwork Inc.**, and a formal living room to the right. It opens into the heart of the home, an opulent open-concept living room, kitchen and dining area shining in a palette of white, black and gold. The space is flooded with natural light that bounces off the bright tiled floor from **Ciot**. *Continued on page 50*



The kitchen was built for practical use. An expansive island, top-of-the-line appliances and black Dekton countertops were all chosen to support Sona's love of cooking.

**“I GIVE 100 PER CENT CREDIT TO ORNELLA HOMES, THEY WERE AMAZING TO WORK WITH. THEY UNDERSTOOD WHAT WE WANTED.” ~Sonali**

Natural light was a strict requirement when designing the home – 20-foot ceilings, skylights and sweeping windows were added to ensure the contemporary home feels warm and bright.



OPPOSITE & LEFT: Each family member's bedroom was outfitted with its own en suite and walk-in wardrobe, uniquely designed to suit individual styles. BELOW LEFT: The primary en suite features a stand-alone tub and spacious walk-in glass shower. RIGHT: Custom walk-in closets were designed with the family member in mind, featuring specific shelving for shoes, hats, purses and collectibles.

"A lot of people think modern means dark and not fresh," says Sonali. "I feel with the added light you are able to have both – a modern interior and warmth."

The kitchen was built for practical use. Sona chose black Dekton countertops and a coordinating veined backsplash from Apex Custom Fabrication to surround the cook space. The expansive island was topped with quartz for additional prep space.

"We chose black Dekton because we use a lot of spices in Indian cooking," Sona says. "We use a lot of turmeric and it can stain. So it was in our minds that we have to be careful."

The living room is the heart of the home and the family's favourite space with soaring

20-foot ceilings and a gas fireplace by The Fireplace Company at the centre, rising the full height of the room. Windows and patio doors sweep the full length of the back wall, giving access and views to the private backyard, covered patio and pool to anyone enjoying the family room.

"It is a really peaceful area and so sunny," says Sona. "This is why we added so many windows and a skylight. I want all of that positivity in my house."

Designed for longevity and aging years, the primary suite, complete with en suite and walk-in wardrobe, was added to the main floor to maximize living capabilities for the future. An elevator by RAM Elevators was also added for accessibility. *Continued on page 52*

**"A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK MODERN MEANS DARK AND NOT FRESH. I FEEL WITH THE ADDED LIGHT YOU ARE ABLE TO HAVE BOTH – A MODERN INTERIOR AND WARMTH."**  
~Sonali





“I give 100 per cent credit to Ornella Homes, they were amazing to work with,” says Sona. “They understood what we wanted. I liked that the designing was done by us, but Peter guided us along the way.”

The open-riser, glass-and-iron staircase by **mrail** winds its way through the home and acts as functional art. Each step was constructed using black Dekton – similar to the kitchen.

“If someone is wearing heels, you cannot slip on these stairs,” says Sona. “We were so blessed to work with such great tradespeople who guided us when picking materials.”

Upstairs, an additional 7,400 square feet splits to create a private sanctuary for Sonali and her brother and a retreat for guests. Each bedroom has its own palette and personality – each outfitted with an en suite and walk-in closet, custom to the needs of the family member.

The guest rooms, tucked away at the end of the open corridor lit by a skylight, allow visitors their own privacy. No detail was overlooked. A coffee bar was added upstairs for early risers. *Continued on page 54*



**TOP LEFT:** The open-riser, glass-and-iron staircase by **mrail** winds its way through the home and around the glass elevator. **TOP RIGHT:** A skylight illuminates the upper-level walkway leading towards a coffee bar for early risers. **LEFT:** Each bedroom was given its own unique palette and design details to reflect the family member.



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The lower level was designed for entertainment and fun. A beautiful bar is at the centre, designed around a backlit onyx crystal stone from Apex Custom Fabrication and a warm walnut finish. A gym, equipped with a sauna and jet tub bookends one side of the space while a prayer room and additional bedrooms flank the other.

“Everyone lives in their home, but we really wanted to enjoy it,” says Sonali. “Everything was thoughtfully curated for current and future comfort.

“I know how hard my parents have worked to get to a place where they can make their dream home a reality, and this will be their forever home. To help create that and bring out its full potential, it means a lot,” Sonali says. **OH**



TOP LEFT & RIGHT: No detail was overlooked. Picture-frame mouldings, custom built-ins and gas fireplaces add personality and warmth to the rooms. ABOVE: Each bathroom was given contemporary and practical finishes. RIGHT: The custom backlit onyx crystal stone bar is the centrepiece of the lower level's entertaining space and a family favourite.

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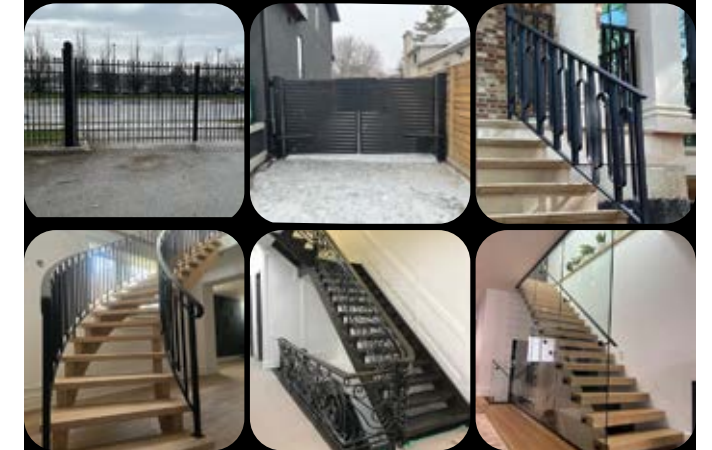
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PHOTOGRAPHY  
JASON HARTOG

# GIFTING Made Simple

## THE PLACE

Courtney Maren opened **Simply Gifted Burlington** in December of 2022 and instantly became part of the fabric of the downtown core. "We carry a wide assortment of locally- and Canadian-made products, many made right here in Burlington! From home décor, bath and body, greeting cards, plants, kids and pet products, and so much more," says Courtney. In addition to the gift shop, a bright and spacious studio hosts a variety of workshops. No matter what your level of experience, workshops are a great way to learn a new skill, meet new people and get creative. Current workshops include candle making, hand-built pottery, resin pouring, embroidery and painting.

## THE STYLE

The bright, welcoming shop brims with locally-inspired, thoughtful gifting options. Discover a treasure trove of unique, whimsical finds, from luxe bath products to one-of-a-kind care kits. Bonus: the storefront and workshop are fully accessible and dog-friendly! "One of our favourite things about the store is that we get to meet many of the artists and local makers in person," says Courtney. "This allows us to not only share their products with the community but also share their stories and inspiration behind what they make."



Courtney Maren

## THE DIFFERENCE

Simply Gifted strives to make thoughtful gift-giving stress-free. "Whether you are looking to cheer someone up, recognize a significant life event, or just a nice treat, we've got you covered," says Courtney. "We'll even gift-wrap it for you!" In addition to getting involved in community events and festivals, Simply Gifted also sells Burlington Downtown Gift Cards. Redeemable at a variety of businesses in the downtown core, they are a great way to encourage others to support local.



## FAVOURITES

The vast greeting card and stationary selection is a customer favourite. "We have an amazing selection of beautiful, funny, quirky, sassy, artistic greeting cards for all occasions." Courtney's favourite thing about owning her business? "Everything! The Burlington community has been extremely welcoming, and my team and I are thankful for the support. We love meeting new customers, and we are excited to be a part of this growing community!" OH



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PHOTO COURTESY OF ECITY MODULAR BUILDINGS INC.

# Garden Suites

Is an accessory dwelling unit right for you?

## AS CANADA'S HOUSING CRISIS GRINDS

on, governments have begun to pay much more attention to “gentle densification” – the concept of getting our existing properties to do more. In Ontario for example, the provincial government’s “More Homes Built Faster” legislation loosens up rules pertaining to accessory dwelling units such as garden suites.

So what does that change mean on the ground? Well, if you’ve been toying with adding a separate in-law suite, a rental suite or even some cool studio space on your property, today you potentially have less red tape to contend with.

While many of us might be intrigued, garden suites are also a fairly new format that not everyone is familiar with. And many homeowners may legitimately wonder: “Is a garden suite the answer to my family’s needs?” “Is this cost-effective?” And: “Can my property even accommodate a garden suite?”

We looked at the legislative changes and contacted a couple of industry experts about potential benefits and key considerations with garden and laneway suites.

## Here's a closer look:

### THE LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Setting the stage, Ontario’s Bill 23 (which passed in November 2022) stated: “One of the ways we propose to increase gentle density is by expanding what’s allowed to be built without further planning approvals. Our plan would permit up to three residential units on most residential lots ‘as of right’ – that is to say, without needing a by-law amendment. For example: a main residence, a basement apartment, a garden house.”

In Toronto, where the housing crisis has hit especially hard, city council permitted laneway dwellings in 2019. Then in February of 2022, the city adopted a “Garden Suites Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment” allowing garden suites in most GTA residential zones.

Samantha Chan is marketing and sales director of Toronto-based Elevate Realty Inc., a real estate sales brokerage that focuses on investing in houses and multi-family homes. In a nutshell, the new garden suite legislation translates into way more opportunities, she says. Realistically, Samantha explains, only about 47,000 or so properties in Toronto meet laneway suite requirements (i.e., they have laneway access and meet fire requirements). Yet, thanks to by-law amendments, now, Samantha says, “You don’t need a laneway. As long as you have a big enough backyard, you can build a garden suite. If a homeowner wants to do it, it becomes a lot easier and more feasible for them.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELEVATE REALTY INC. / URBAN LANES INC.

## WHAT ARE GARDEN SUITES BEING USED FOR?

Bianca Acqua is director of sales and marketing for Woodbridge-based City Modular Buildings Inc., a company that specializes in modular homes, laneway and garden suites. From where she sits, Bianca is seeing various motivations in terms of why homeowners are building garden suites: “It really just depends on the needs of the individual or family,” she says. “So some people are using garden suites as rental units to generate additional income, while others are using them as separate office or studio spaces to work from home. We see that these garden suites are a great way of providing additional living quarters for multi-generational families or to serve as a guest suite for visitors.”

## WHAT ARE SOME KEY FACTORS TO CONSIDER?

For homeowners exploring whether this option is workable, here are some key considerations:

- **Lot size** – Samantha notes a difference between garden suites and laneway suites. While a “laneway house can span the whole distance of your backyard,” she says a garden suite requires a setback on each side.
- **Compliance** – Garden suites must comply with relevant Ontario Building Code regulations and zoning by-laws.
- **Building permit** – These must be obtained.
- **Emergency access** – A compliance review is required.
- **Existing trees** – In Toronto, a garden suite “should not result in the removal of a healthy by-law protected tree.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELEVATE REALTY INC. / URBAN LANES INC.

- **Design** – Bianca says some homeowners match the architecture of their garden suite and main structure, whereas others prefer a juxtaposition. “We have architects and engineers that work alongside the client to create and bring to life their vision.”
- **Construction** – Decisions include whether to hire a project manager and/or specialized builders and contractors, etc.
- **Pricing** – This can range upwards from \$350 per square foot in Toronto (which is substantially lower than condo prices). Samantha notes that there are considerable fixed costs with garden suites and therefore building a two-storey suite can deliver both more living space and better cost per square foot as well.

Has there been an uptick in interest? In a word, yes. Already in the short time since new legislation rolled out, Bianca says she’s seen homeowner interest rise: “More and more people are looking for creative ways to maximize their living space and a garden suite provides a unique opportunity to do this.” **OH**



PHOTO COURTESY OF ECITY MODULAR BUILDINGS INC.

## WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/more-homes-built-faster>

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/garden-suites/>

<https://citymodularbuildingsinc.ca/>

<https://www.elevatepartners.ca/resources/toronto-garden-suites-information-updates/>

decorating

# the LUXE Life

STORY **DIANA ROSE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **MIKE CHAJECKI**

Interior design trends are always changing, sometimes to the point of frustration. You've redone your space and before you know it, that trendy hue is "out" and something completely different is "in." But when it comes to luxury design, this isn't the case. Luxury requires a bigger investment on many levels: more thought in the planning, more skill in the execution and more budget overall. This means that luxury demands longevity.



*The appeal of luxury interiors never goes out of style. Quality products and a refined aesthetic are always in demand.*



## THE ALLURE OF LUXURY

Home is everything. It's where we work and play, retreat and reflect alone or host family and friends. We all want beautiful homes. This means getting the design elements you need and indulging in the things you want.

Luxury doesn't have to come at a cost-prohibitive price point. This trend is more about satisfying a niche need, whether it's based on everyday life, experience or aesthetics. It's about tailored spaces and lifestyles.

For those looking to elevate their homes, here are four rules of living luxuriously.

*Continued on page 62*



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# decorating

**Details matter.** They don't have to be abundant, but two or three strategic additions in each room can make all the difference. Create an element of surprise with unexpected choices such as metal inlays, upholstered wall panels, eccentric wallpapers and unusual tile patterns. The trick to mastering this trend is to keep it simple and elegant. Overdoing the details can backfire, creating clutter and chaos. Instead, choose a few key details to focus your attention and budget.

**Elevate architectural elements.** Pay attention to the built-in elements in your space. Perhaps as important as the architecture is how it's showcased. A winding staircase, an elegant archway or a grand fireplace are not just functional parts of the home, they can be fabulous focal points as well. If you're renovating, pay attention to millwork, plaster ceiling details and wall panels. Then, make sure these elements are seen through tactical lighting and furniture layout.

**Incorporate custom elements.** There are lots of great products available "off the shelf," but tailored design fits your home and life like a glove. It also costs more. Approach this in the same way as you would your fine design details and customize where it counts. This includes custom cabinets and built-ins. Doing this will truly maximize every inch of the kitchen and your bathrooms, where space can be at a premium and storage is always in demand.



**Embrace the great room.** More than ever, our homes serve many different functions. The new reality of working and playing at home has created a new trend: the separation of spaces. Open concept is still very much a factor in modern design, but we're increasingly creating dedicated spaces for working and entertaining. The formal great room is back and greater than ever – sophisticated and elegant, rich with detail and stories. Even the broader room is divided into more intimate areas, such as cosy seating areas, a central fireplace area and, of course, plenty of room to move around, mix and mingle.



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Luxury will always be trending, whether in its true high-end form, or as a source of inspiration for elevating our homes. Whether you're all in or applying it in small doses, do it with confidence and engage the help of a professional designer who can help you creatively maximize your budget – whatever that may be. **OH**

Diana Rose is the principal and creative director for Diana Rose Design.

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STORY **GABRIELLE TIEMAN-LEE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **ADRIAN OZIMEK**



The caramel leather sectional sofa by Gus Modern was custom-made to fit perfectly in the sunken living room.



# MODERN *Scandi Vibes*

TUCKED ON A QUIET STREET IN BURLINGTON, A SCANDINAVIAN-STYLE TWO-STORY HOME IS NESTLED IN THE TREES.

When the homeowners decided to build this new home, they planned a modest yet modern home with connectivity to the outdoors. Sprawling windows, lots of natural light and a smaller footprint that encouraged togetherness while maintaining an organic integration with the existing mature trees on the property were all vital to the family of four. *Continued on page 67*



**LEFT:** White oak flooring and the coordinating island with a white quartz top brighten the neutral kitchen. **BELOW:** Several indentations and a large covered patio were added for additional pockets of space.

The family partnered with **Joel Tanner**, owner of the full-service planning and design studio **smpl Design Studio**. To match the requirements of the family's vision, Joel designed a Scandinavian home for Canadian living, utilizing clean lines, a minimalist motif and a light-filled interior using materials that emphasize functionality.

"All of the work we do in our studio is 100 per cent custom to our client's wishlist and the property we're developing for them," says Joel. "We review sunlight angles, privacy, views and any defining characteristics on the property on all our launches before we design. The goal with this project was a new home with modern Scandinavian vibes and very low maintenance. We really wanted to keep the defining trees in the front and rear yards in order to retain the property's mature feel."

No space would be wasted. smpl partnered with builders **Andrew Wood** and **Craig Spivey**, owners of **Ecnomus Construction Group** to ensure every inch of its 2,400 square feet was thoughtfully constructed for use, packing in every desired amenity. The home has three bedrooms, four bathrooms, a main-floor office and plenty

of living space for current use and future growth.

Several indentations and extrusions were added to the open-concept layout, creating pockets of space. A courtyard bridges indoor and outdoor living, allowing the parents, when working in the home office, to watch over the kids at the back while filling the home in natural light. Wide-plank white oak flooring from **NADURRA Wood Corp.**, floor-to-ceiling windows by **Inline Fiberglass Windows & Doors** and a neutral palette of whites and organic materials complement the surrounding greenspace. **Elmira Door + Trim** supplied all trim, doors and hardware for this project.

"The design process was the easiest and most fun," says the homeowner. "We spend a lot of time exploring online and we were really drawn to the Scandinavian look – metal exteriors and light wood interiors. smpl pulled it all together for us."

A switch on the standard home layout, the primary living area – a cosy sunken living room with 11-foot ceilings and a custom sectional sofa by **Gus Modern** – was tucked away at the back of the home. The homeowner says this quiet retreat is a favourite of both the family and the design team.

*Continued on page 68*





“This is the first sunken family room we’ve done and the feel you get when you are in the space with both views of the outside space of the backyard and the outside space of the courtyard is by far my favourite space in the home,” says Joel.

A galley-style kitchen with full-height cabinetry from **Kattlus Cabinetry and Millwork** bridges the rear living room and dining space and overlooks the large covered patio and outdoor dining area complete with firepit and furnishings from **Casualife Outdoor Living**.

A white quartz-topped island creates extra seating and complements the striking dark veined quartz counter and backsplash (all from **Aussie Stone**) along the perimeter. A concealed pantry tucks away unwanted mess – elevating

the usability of the main floor.

“We like that the kitchen is central and connected to the living room,” says the homeowner. “When the kids are playing in the other room or we are entertaining, you are all in the same place.”

An open-riser staircase by **Premier Stairs and Floors** leads to the upper level, where smpl’s design team continued the aesthetic, honouring clean-lines and utilizing bright whites to maximize natural light. The style shies away from colour, but statement walls – one in green and another in pink – are welcome in the kids’ bedrooms.

The lower level was utilized for more living space – a rec room, additional bedroom, bathroom and den were added for the kids to have space to grow into.

*Continued on page 70*

**LEFT:** Full-height cabinetry disguises the door leading to the concealed pantry. **BELOW:** A galley-style kitchen bridges the rear living room and dining space.



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For the exterior, smpl chose to clad the home in a mixture of brick from **Thames Valley Brick and Tile**, corten steel and grey metal roofing, which will stand the test of time and Canadian winters. **Sean McNally** of **McNally Landscape Construction** landscaped the front and back to blend with its surroundings and added a green roof over the single car garage and the rear covered patio.

“The aesthetic of the green roof and the contrast against the metal we really love,” says the homeowner. “Our primary bedroom and our daughter’s room overlooks these spaces. Putting that green space on top gives us a much more pleasant view than looking at a flat, plain rooftop.”

The family highlights that every member of the design and build teams worked cohesively – allowing them to enjoy the process.

*Continued on page 72*

**TOP:** The home is clad in a mixture of brick, corten steel and grey metal roofing. **LEFT:** The courtyard allows the parents to watch over the kids when working in the home office.



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“We gave the design team the parameters of what we were looking for, and then we left it in their hands,” says the homeowner. “When they came back to us, we had minor floorplan changes and revisions, but that was it, we loved everything about it.”

Joel says none of these projects would be possible without the strong relationships they have established over the past 13 years with their clients, builders and industry trade professionals.

“Our goal with all projects is to create a beautiful piece of art that our clients can move into and enjoy for decades to come,” Joel says. “We want the home to be unique, custom and tailored to their lifestyle and how they function as a family unit. For us, the success of a project lies in the design our firm puts together for our client and, even more importantly, the execution of the project by the clients and builder during the construction process.” **OH**



The primary suite is a calming retreat, overlooking the green roof and mature trees preserved around the home. **ABOVE LEFT:** Four bathrooms were built into the home, each with unique design details. **ABOVE RIGHT:** An open-riser staircase was designed for clear sight-lines.

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PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

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PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

## QUICK AND EFFICIENT

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# BATHROOM *Bliss*



STORY **FRANKIE CASTRO**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **VALERIE WILCOX**



A bathroom renovation is one of the most complex and expensive projects you'll undertake. It's also one of the best investments you'll ever make. A lot goes into a successful bathroom reno and much of the magic happens long before the demo begins. Here are four tips to take your bathroom project from "all wet" to "best bet."

## Plan Ahead

Every big project should start with a well-thought-out plan. Know the objectives of your bathroom renovation. Outline the details of the work, create a budget, including who will do it, and set a reasonable timeline. Working with a professional designer can help you avoid costly and time-consuming mistakes. Once you have a plan, apply for the necessary permits and order materials. It may take longer depending on the demand and availability of products and trades, so factor this into your timeline.

## Choose Quality Over Quantity

There's nothing more disappointing than having a beautiful bathroom design on paper that is then poorly executed with sub-par products, materials or workmanship. Be realistic and ensure your plan reflects your budget. Do your research and view all samples in person, not just online.

A good designer and renovator will also recommend correcting any pre-existing problems behind the walls, such as plumbing and electrical issues, before digging into cosmetic upgrades and extras.

*Continued on page 78*

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## design ideas

### Selecting The Right Materials

Is your goal to modernize and “trendify” your bathroom, or are you hoping to create a space with staying power? Plumbing fixtures in chrome will always have a place in the home. However, there are many options to give your space some understated (or overstated!) oomph. Bronze and gold finishes have become mainstream, bringing luxury and warmth to a space. Beyond these, matte black and white or saturated-coloured fixtures have come to the market as a fun and unexpected infusion of personality into the room. Just be mindful that trends come and go, so if longevity is a priority, select classic metals that won't soon show their age.

Are you a “bath person” or a “shower person”? Many homeowners want both within the design. Freestanding bathtubs are like art and can be the room's focal point and a functional fixture in the bathroom – a perfect addition to the bathing area, with a full range of styles, sizes and materials, from classic to contemporary.



### Know When To Step Away

Can you survive without the use of this bathroom? If not, consider alternative accommodations or plan a vacation. Second, plan to be inconvenienced for the duration of the renovation. If you stay home, prepare for dust, noise and trades coming in and out. And know that this is temporary. Finally, know when to let your designer take the reins. Let them do what they do best. You've done your due diligence, hired a designer with the right experience and approved the plan.

A bathroom renovation is an exciting endeavour. It can also be costly and all-consuming. Don't let it wash you out. Plan ahead with a clear vision of your renovation goals, budget and timeline and work with a professional designer to ensure a squeaky-clean process from start to finish. **OH**

**TIP:** Set aside an “emergency fund” to cover unexpected issues that commonly arise once the walls are opened. Reserve 10 to 15 per cent of your renovation budget. If you don't need it for corrections, you can add a splash of something else within the bathroom

Award-winning kitchen and bath designer Frankie Castro is the creative director and founder of Square Footage Custom Kitchens & Bath Inc.

AS SEEN ON HGTV

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## SPRAGUE INTERIORS

Sprague Interiors is an award-winning, full-service interior decorating and design firm specializing in residential interiors. Our mission is to create beautiful spaces for well-being while providing clients with an enjoyable, stress-free experience. Whether renovating an older home, building new or redecorating, we design spaces that are warm, inviting and tailored to your needs. With our network of trusted trades and suppliers, we deliver premium quality. Our imagination is inspired by the potential of a space so we pay particular attention to the unique architectural details of the home. We design spaces that are contemporary yet timeless, incorporating moments of texture and colour to add warmth and cosiness, creating spaces with soul and personality.



PHOTO: YOUNG GLASS PHOTOGRAPHY

## UNIQUE BUSINESS

Our full-service design process brings our clients' dreams to life. From concept to reality, we deliver beautifully-finished spaces that improve each client's lifestyle. We take care of everything from floor plans to furniture so they don't have to stress about details – giving our clients the TV-style reveal at the end.



*Sydney Bellows, Laurie Sprague & Brianna Pilch*

PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

## TRENDING

Textured surfaces – limewash and venetian plaster – are having a moment. The earthy, organic feel of these coatings greatly affect a room's ambience. Either finish can complement any interior design style. We love to use these textures on kitchen vent hoods and fireplace mantels to soften these elements and warm up the space.



PHOTO: YOUNG GLASS PHOTOGRAPHY

Continued on page 82

## THE MILLIONAIRE'S DAUGHTER

The Millionaire's Daughter is a friendly mid- to high-end furniture and décor consignment business with three retail locations in Hamilton, Aurora and Oakville. For more than 14 years they have carried a wide variety of furniture and accessories at various price points for the shopping pleasure of every customer. What began in Hamilton has since grown by taking over a smaller consignment store in Oakville and growing the business from 3,000 to 10,000 square feet. Aurora followed, with another 8,000 square feet of merchandise.



**Maureen Barnes**

PHOTOS: JASON HARTOG



## TREASURE HUNTERS

In the beginning, owner Maureen Barnes would go to auction sales and purchase items that would grab a customer's interest, like a carousel horse, large bar and cabinetry. They utilized their display windows and website to promote these products and garner attention. Today, sourcing through real estate agents and word-of-mouth expands their stock.

## UNIQUE BUSINESS

Each member of their team loves what they do. They find joy in witnessing the delight of consignors who see their beloved furniture go to a new home. They have established a global website to reach clients and now connect with clients from all over the world, from New Zealand to England.

**Happiness is reuse, repurpose and enjoy.**



## CRITELLI'S

Critelli's is dedicated to being the leading source for fine furniture, hand-knotted rugs and mattresses in Southern Ontario. Our team is passionate about helping clients find exceptional furnishings, accessories and rugs for their homes. After celebrating 100 years in business, Critelli's Rug Market was created to offer our clients the opportunity to own exclusive one-of-a-kind handmade wool and silk rugs sourced directly from the finest weavers in the world. Critelli's provides shoppers with a uniquely modern approach to furnishing.



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

## TRENDING

We see a shift towards mixing modern upholstery with classic style and fine rugs with colour. We see the trend of balancing international styles with practical purpose and functionality. We incorporate new collectible pieces into our room designs, as well as maintaining special family heirlooms. We work with trusted manufacturers who update us in advance of their upcoming trends, furniture and décor. Together we select the newest collections and items to showcase throughout our seven showrooms.

## STANDING OUT

For more than a century, the company continues to be owned and operated by the Critelli family. We have a long-standing history of exceeding our clients' expectations for excellence in customer service and innovation in design. We are fortunate to enjoy a special relationship with our clients. It is our valued clients that make us truly unique.



HOME OF RALPH & TANIA SACCO

**BACK: Joe Critelli, Julia Critelli, Naveed Muhammed, James Kaufman & Lisa Vljakov. FRONT: Juanita Hammond, Sydney Bellows, Nancy Cedolia & Robert Napolitano**



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

## BUY THE YARD INTERIORS

Buy The Yard Interiors is a full-service home décor studio and shop. We create residential interior decorating solutions that are functional and stylish, adhering to high service standards while guiding clients through the decorating process. Whether we are designing a full renovation, providing single-room decorating solutions or completing a custom upholstery or window treatment, our feeling is that if it's worth doing, it's worth doing properly. We take the time to get to know our clients and the feeling they want to establish in their home, providing custom products and services to create a home as unique as they are.



### TRENDING

Colour and patterns are coming forward. We are using large prints (bold stripes and florals) on draperies and encouraging our clients to express themselves with their textiles. There's a renewed love for tassels, trims, tapes and embellishments on pillows, upholstered furniture and window treatments. Curves are the hottest trends as well. Look for fluted wood, arched walls, curved sofas, rounded edges and organic light fixtures.



*Jill Fraser*

PHOTO: JASON HARTOG



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

### FINDING INSPIRATION

We pride ourselves on offering custom pieces and access to suppliers that are different from our competitors. We use the global furniture markets as inspiration for what is happening in the industry and are proud to offer international product lines. Our revamped website and social media share the pieces we are excited and inspired by, providing ideas in a timely manner to inspire clients along the way.

## NINE LIVES CUSTOM REFINISHING

Nine Lives Custom Refinishing is Niagara's premier one-stop shopping experience for kitchen and bath refinishing projects. We also refinish furniture and supply quartz countertops and hardware. Our dedicated and experienced team focuses on producing a premium product along with a stress-free customer experience. Nine Lives can manage your renovation project with their full collection of trades and services to offer a true one-stop shopping experience.



*Carolyn, Madi, Brandon & Kevin Coyle*

PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

### RAPID GROWTH

Nine Lives Custom Refinishing is proud of the fact that we started off as a one-man show and have evolved over the past eight years into one of the major players in the kitchen and furniture refinishing industry – servicing the Niagara region and beyond.

### NEW VENTURES

Nine Lives owner Kevin Coyle has launched a new project and website that complements Nine Lives and many other businesses called the Niagara Business Support Group. niagarasupportgroup.com is a digital mall of trades and services all working together to provide a complete experience for the customer.

Continued on page 86



PHOTOS: JASON HARTOG

## RINALDI HOMES

Since 1987, Rinaldi Homes has provided a hands-on approach and a high level of personal involvement during each step of the building process. Integrity, perseverance and work ethic are a few of the values that have led this third-generation family business to success. We've been building the Niagara lifestyle for more than 30 years and we are proud to put our family name on every home we build.



### TRENDING

Interior design is a constantly evolving art form influenced by many factors such as personal style, cultural heritage and global trends. There are many trends present and coming forward that we are really excited about. These include:

- Live-and-work floor plans which separate the workspace from the living quarters
- Functional basements
- Extended outdoor living spaces and covered decks
- Interesting materials that add texture and visual interest, including slatted, reeded, fluted wood, faux concrete, brick veneer and natural stone slabs – especially in kitchens
- Arches – specifically rounded door frames and barrel vault ceilings. They add an old-world architectural feeling and a sense of timelessness
- Sustainable design choices
- Bold colours and warm earthy neutrals, like cream, caramel, rust and terracotta

### STAYING ON TOP

We stay on top of the trends by reading, researching and following the market, whether online, through social media or magazines. We attend industry events, seminars and trade shows to keep up on the latest products, materials, colours and patterns coming forward. We also like to test and try different things in our models, which allows us to tweak based on customer feedback and stay ahead of the trends in our builds.



*Eric Thibideau, Scott Jackson & Tully Jackson*

## SPORT COURT ONTARIO

### THE COMPANY

Sport Court Ontario has been designing and installing Sport Court Game Courts for more than 20 years. All our courts are custom-built to embrace the specifications and budgets of our customers. We can tackle a project from the ground up or work alongside landscapers to install surfacing and accessories. We are proud to be the only Sport Court product dealer and installer in Ontario.

### WHAT'S NEW

Our Sport Game PB surfacing has been named the official modular tile surface of USA Pickleball and official portable court surface for the PPA tour. Our Sport Game PB surface brings innovation to the modular tile market. Excellent ball bounce and playability incorporate safety properties, allowing athletes of all ages to play for hours with less wear-and-tear on the body. We look forward to working with Ontario's pickleball enthusiasts.



### THE ADVANTAGE

Sport Court International has been manufacturing its own products since 1974 and are the original creator of modular athletic surfacing products. A 15-year warranty and unparalleled customer service are some of the many reasons that Sport Court Ontario has successfully served the best in high-end products for more than 20 years. **OH**

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# MEDIA *is the* MESSAGE

STORY MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS

PHOTO COURTESY OF STATION EARTH

Whether it's the latest Hollywood blockbuster, the Stanley Cup Playoffs or *La Traviata* beamed directly into your home from New York's Metropolitan Opera, investing extra thought into the design of your media room or home theatre will create an optimal viewing and listening experience for everyone. Prices can range from \$10,000 for a simple home theatre package (projector, screen, speakers) to more than one million dollars for a mind-blowing, subterranean, high-tech installation. Here's some advice from local experts.

## USAGE

First, determine the primary usage of the space. If it's a multi-purpose zone such as a main-floor great room or a gaming area with a pool table and bar, there will be ambient light and sound issues, so it's better to stick with a large flat-screen television and strategically placed speakers. If you're a film enthusiast looking to faithfully recreate a movie theatre atmosphere, a dedicated room that can be effectively darkened, with a ceiling-mounted projector, screen and more complex sound system will be a better fit.



SAMSUNG: Micro LED

## ADVANCED SCREEN TIME

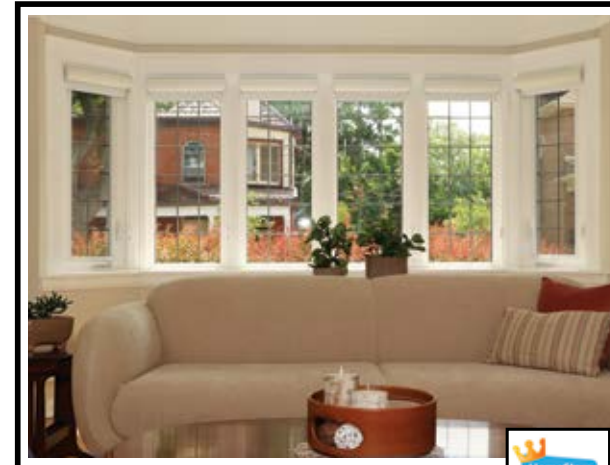
"Really cool projection technology is readily available," says Jason Rodrigues, general manager at London Audio, an audio/visual company specializing in home entertainment and automation. "For a multi-purpose media room, the current standard is a 75- to 98-inch high-definition 4K TV. Those with bigger budgets could opt for an 8K ultra-high-definition TV or the 114- to 140-inch micro-LED walls that are now available for residential use."



Continued on page 90



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design ideas

*The revolutionary LG Signature rollable 65-inch television is rolled into a tube that can roll up for viewing or back down to disappear.*

LG: Signature OLED R

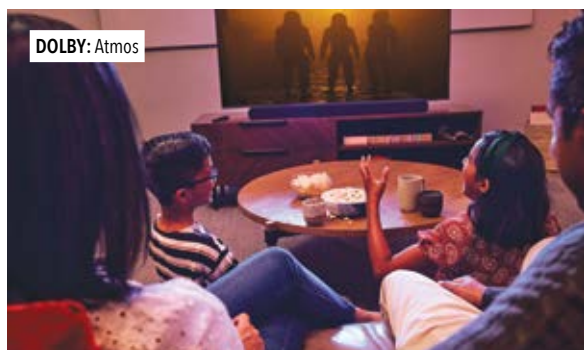


John Stumpf, manager at Fergus-based Station Earth, a custom electronics integration company specializing in the design and installation of high-performance home theatres and automation, says short-throw laser projectors will soon become more commonplace. These hybrid TV/projectors can throw a crisp image onto a 120-inch screen. The revolutionary LG Signature rollable television is also now on the market. The technology is housed in a sophisticated low black console with a front speaker and a 65-inch television rolled into a tube that can roll up for viewing or back down to disappear.

**SOUND ADVICE**

According to Jason, “You can’t have a good home theatre without good audio. Clear, quality sound elevates the viewing experience, so it’s important to invest in high-performance speakers. Entry-level packages include five speakers and one sub-woofer and go up from there.”

John recommends installing Dolby Atmos overhead channels, which typically include 11 speakers and four subwoofers. “We can directly place the sound within the room, providing an enhanced experience. You feel like you’re in the middle of the action – inside the car during a high-speed chase, in front of the tanks rolling towards you or directly beneath the plane flying overhead.” But he adds, “don’t forget the soundproofing.”



**STRATEGIC LIGHTING**

Light spill will dramatically diminish picture quality in a home theatre, so it’s critical to install automated blackout curtains or blinds. For safety, add LED floor lighting and for fun consider adding a dimmable fibre-optic ceiling to recreate the constellations.

**AUTOMATE**

A single universal device eliminates the need for multiple controls. Local audio-visual companies can help set you up with a dedicated system that will not only automate all your media, but also lighting, sound, home security, heating/cooling and shading.



**INTEGRATION**

Integrating state-of-the-art wiring, sound and internet features when building a new house is a no-brainer, but if you’re living in an older home, there are still ways to retrofit your rooms to hide unsightly wires, bulky components and speaker towers. Station Earth recommends using stealth speakers that can be installed behind drywall, wallpaper or wood veneer. An art-frame TV can camouflage a large black screen or hide it completely with a lift mechanism that allows a mirror or art piece to glide in and out of view.

What are you waiting for? Make some popcorn! **OH**

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crafty ideas



# FELT LEAF garland

PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
TARA CHATTELL

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### TOOLS AND MATERIALS

- Felt in a variety of colours
- Yarn in a complementary colour of choice
- Yarn needle
- Pencil
- Card stock
- Scissors
- Rotary cutter (optional but handy)

### HOW-TO

Make a leaf template with some card stock. Fold the card stock in half and draw half a leaf on one side of the fold and cut out with your scissors. When unfolded you'll have a full leaf template.

Place your leaf template on top of a piece of felt and cut around the outside with scissors or a rotary cutter. Repeat until you have enough felt leaves for the length of garland you'd like.

**TIP:** We found the rotary cutter a little quicker and easier to cut multiple pieces of felt at one time. You'll need to make sure to protect your worktop with a cutting mat.

Start stringing your leaves onto a strand of yarn. Leave the yarn attached to the spool at one end until you have all your leaves strung, that way you'll be sure that you have a strand that is long enough. Thread the other end through the eye of the yarn needle. Fold one of your leaves from tip-to-tip accordion-style (this helps to keep your stitches even) and work the needle through all the folded layers and then gently pull the leaf over the needle and down the strand of yarn. Repeat this process until you have the length of garland you desire. Cut the yarn from the spool and knot the ends.

Now you're ready to decorate and enjoy! **OH**



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# Tailored BUILDS

PHOTOGRAPHY SIMON TOME

## THE PLACE

**Aberdeen Interiors** has made it their mission to enrich the lives of their clients, thoughtfully tailoring each project to fit homeowners' needs. This involves not only creating beautiful spaces but improving the functionality and flow of a home. They build spaces where families can live and grow in harmony.

## COMPLETE SERVICE

For 10 years their team has provided a complete service operation for all renovation and building needs. From design, architectural and engineering drawings and permits to renovations and final touches, their team provides exceptional quality and professionalism from start to finish – remaining engaged with clients every step of the way. “We take all the responsibility off of the client so they can focus on their daily lives and leave the details to us,” says Robert Armstrong, owner of Aberdeen Interiors.



## WORKING TOGETHER

Aberdeen Interiors says every project has a unique feel that reflects not only the owners, but the home itself. Robert credits his entire team for the cohesive aesthetic and style they establish for each home. “We listen to the client’s needs and wishes, big or small, to bring every vision to reality,” Robert says. “Combine this vision with the taste and perspective that our team has, that is what translates into the final product.” Robert personally places a strong focus on the design and how it will apply functionally. “I look at the flow in the space. Are there any encumbrances? Are there appliances or door swings that are going to interfere with the functionality and flow of the space?” These are the kinds of questions Robert considers for every project.



## TIMELESS AND TRENDING

Not one for trends, Robert’s team works with clients to create fresh ideas that reflect their personality, needs and vision. From bathroom and kitchen updates to multi-generational homes and large additions, Aberdeen Interiors encompasses styles from modern to more traditional selections – meeting the needs of both the home and the homeowner. **OH**

Joe Raposo (Project Manager), Robert Armstrong (President), Natalie Kurjancic (Interior Decorator) & Rick DeMerchant (Operations Manager)



PHOTO: KATHY DEMERCHANT

## TRUSTWORTHY TEAM

Their talented team is comprised of architects, engineers and in-house design consultants who all work together during the renovation and building process. Robert also teams up with many local trades and businesses that demonstrate an extensive knowledge in their field, which helps facilitate a stress-free experience. “We have a great level of trust and confidence in each other,” says Robert. “These are invaluable partnerships – many of these sub-trades have been working with us since we began.”



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 (Please see ad on pg 61)



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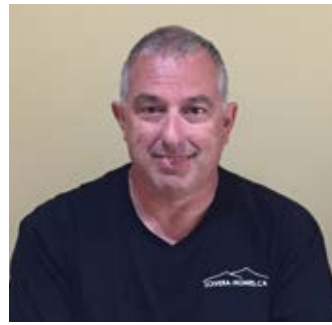
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# SERENDIPITOUS *Design*

STORY **MELISSA NORTH**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

**ERIN, ONTARIO RADIO PERSONALITY ALEXA LEAL HAS MADE A CAREER SHINING LIGHT ON TOP CANADIAN COUNTRY MUSIC ARTISTS. COMING HOME TO A SPACE THAT'S ALL HER OWN IS THE PERFECT COUNTER-BALANCE.**



**OPPOSITE:** Carpeting throughout the home was replaced with a rich engineered hardwood from Floor Diva. **LEFT:** The kitchen was given a big revamp. Cabinets were removed, walls were painted and a contemporary quartz countertop was added. **BOTTOM:** Lisa Leal and Alexa Leal.

Alexa hosts *Alexa's Country Party* on Erin Radio 91.7 FM, writes for the Country Music Association of Ontario and frequently attends industry events. When she purchased her two-storey Georgetown townhome in 2019, she enlisted the help of her mother, Lisa Leal, a design aficionado, to transform the dated spaces into a welcome respite from busy life.

"It had good bones," says Lisa of the three-bedroom, 1,700 sq. ft. abode. She liked the layout, the large yard, the finished basement and the neighbourhood. But the "granny style" had to go. Picture red carpet downstairs, pink upstairs, yellow walls and a green kitchen counter. "There were too many things going on in here," she notes.

The revamp has been an ongoing process, and one that Alexa and Lisa have worked on together. The first thing they did was replace the red carpet on the main floor with engineered hardwood, from **Floor Diva**. They also brought in **D.G. Thompson Home Design & Build** to install California shutters and update the gas fireplace with a brick surround. **Window House** in Georgetown replaced the windows. *Continued on page 101*





**RIGHT:** A neutral palette was chosen throughout, but on-trend accessories and textiles were added for pops of colour and personality. The painting is an original large self-portrait of the artist Cindy at Kew Beach when she was 5. It's just one of the treasures that find Lisa. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The staircase received a facelift with a fresh coat of paint and new spindles. **BOTTOM:** A unique antique metal wine rack and a trunk coffee table make a statement in the open-concept living space.



Perhaps the biggest change, though, took place in the kitchen. Removing a cabinet from over the peninsula immediately opened the space, as did painting the walls in **Benjamin Moore** Simply White. They replaced the cabinet hardware and the faucet. And that green countertop? Gone. In its place, **CMC Cut Stone Inc.** installed a contemporary quartz waterfall-style countertop. "It made the biggest difference," says Lisa. "Although the house is bigger elsewhere, this is the hub."

Lisa doesn't have a formal background in design. By the time she recognized her passion for it she was well into her career in the car industry. But she has welcomed the opportunity to explore her creativity while helping her daughter. "I've enjoyed pretty much every aspect of it," she says. "It's surprising what a little bit of paint and elbow grease can do!"

"I trust my Mom's vision," says Alexa. "Envisioning the full picture is a challenge for me, whereas that is one of my Mom's strengths. But I give input on individual pieces."

Lisa completely redesigned the upstairs bath, banishing a dark enclosed shower stall that leaked, along with more dated cabinetry (and an aqua countertop). **TASK General Contractors Inc.** did the heavy lifting but Lisa chose all the components herself, including the glass shower stall from **French Glass Co.** His-and-hers undermount sinks topped with tall, striking mirrors render the room almost unrecognizable and create a sense of grand height on the ceiling. **Craig Wigley of Professional Electrical Services** completed the electrical work and **Aitken Plumbing and Mechanical** did the plumbing work. The bathroom, now modern and stylish, has become one of Alexa's favourite places in the house. *Continued on page 102*

## feature

Since they were installing durable laminate in the bathroom (**Traffix Flooring** and tile from **Olympia Tile**), they chose to run it through to the bedroom, walk-in closet, hallway and into a guest bathroom (the night before the photo shoot), which led to addressing the staircase and replacing the spindles and painting the walls. "It's a never-ending love story," Lisa says.

When asked about her design inspiration, Lisa explains that many of their decisions have been directed by the budget, but even more so, by good fortune. A self-confessed bargain hunter, she has a keen eye for a good buy and has found many serendipitous second-hand pieces.

For instance, twin chandeliers in the kitchen, above the counter, were found online. Both women immediately loved them for the touch of femininity and brightness they added.

While out for a walk one day, Lisa spotted a Persian rug at a garage sale. She didn't even have her wallet with her, but she knew it was meant to be and made the deal. Alexa hadn't lifted the carpet in her bedroom yet, so the rug stayed rolled up for a year, but when the time came, it was perfect. *Continued on page 104*



**LEFT:** A self-confessed bargain hunter, Lisa has a keen eye for a good buy and has hunted and found many pieces serendipitously. **BELOW:** A Persian rug, a miraculous garage sale find, warms the primary bedroom.



## A JOURNEY Through Time

The Millionaire's Daughter furnishes the NEWLY Renovated Rodman Hall Inn in St. Catharines.

Originally completed in 1863 Rodman Hall was the private residence of Thomas Rodman Merritt, the son of William Hamilton Merritt who was instrumental in the building of the first Welland Canal that connects Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. This awe-inspiring heritage-designated mansion is now being restored to its original historical majesty as a boutique hotel and event venue dedicated to hosting world-class weddings, corporate and private functions.

When Nino Donatelli, the developer, took this project over he really was concerned about how to find the right furniture and decor to give this Boutique Hotel its majestic appeal. Someone mentioned The Millionaire's Daughter to him and the rest is

history! The Millionaire's Daughter's staff set to work pulling from their inventory from all 3 stores as well as keeping an eye out for those 'perfect pieces' as the project evolved.

Maureen Barnes, owner at The Millionaire's Daughter said about 90% of all the decor are from our stores. This whole project is something near and dear to her heart. "I love seeing all of these extraordinary treasures being used in such a wonderful way. I see folks booking here for family reunions, weddings and couple weekends away and our preloved items will be part of their story now. Rodman Hall Inn is the perfect setting for any special event with an indoor capacity to host 50-200 guests with its onsite grand ballroom. It is just a magical place that I hope you will soon visit."



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# feature

A vintage French 1950s Rigidex wine rack, worth 50 times what they paid for it, came along just as Lisa was thinking she would like an unusual wine rack. It's an anchoring point for 28 Sid Dickens Memory Blocks she displays above. "This is how things come to me," Lisa laughs. "The rug, the wine rack and the large antique trumeau mirror in the entranceway, that's how my style has evolved."

They're attentive to the spaces they are working within too. "Since there isn't a lot of square footage on the main floor, we had to be mindful," Alexa notes. "Colour choices and pieces we implement are carefully selected. Changing the paint colours to white and black has made it feel a lot more spacious, and having a neutral base helps to keep a calm vibe."

Lisa points out that the black-and-white concept also requires no colour commitment. By changing up a couple throw pillows or accessories they can easily stay on trend.

With country music's ongoing popularity and Alexa's numerous roles in the industry, she's going to continue to have an active schedule. So it's wonderful that she and Lisa have collaborated to create an inviting place to return to. "I really enjoy coming home to the calm and welcoming entrance," Alexa says. "I also love the open concept of the kitchen/family room. It's where friends and family gather." **OH**



The bathroom was completely redesigned. A new glass shower, dual undermount sinks, tall mirrors and modern accessories completely transform the bathroom.



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# ABCs AND 5 Ds of PRUNING

STORY TERESA MATAMOROS

## Why Prune?

Every shrub should have a purpose in the overall garden design and that purpose will dictate how the shrub should be pruned.

The goal of pruning is to enhance and emphasize the natural shape and to maintain the health of shrubs and small trees. A well-pruned shrub can live for 100 years!

Afraid or reluctant to prune for fear of not doing it right or hurting the shrub? Follow these few steps and you'll be a pro.

**A** is for assessment. First and foremost, identify the shrub you are pruning. Questions to ask are:

**1) When does it flower?** Spring or summer? If it flowers in spring, it often means it is blooming on last year's wood and shouldn't be pruned until after it has flowered and before it sets new buds for next year. Forsythia, Bridalwreath spirea and lilacs are in this category. Roses, Hydrangeas and Rose of Sharon can be pruned early in the spring as they bloom on the new wood.

**2) What is its natural shape?** Prune to accentuate the natural shape of the shrub and please put the hedge shears away! No balls or squares here unless you are into topiary and that's a topic for another article.

**3) What is the purpose of this shrub?** Is it for flowers, fruit, for the birds or for privacy?

*Continued on page 108*

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## gardening

**B** is for take a breath. Relax and give yourself time to know the shrub and look at it from all angles so you have the full picture of what you will be pruning.

**C** is for confidence. With time, trial and error (plants are very forgiving), you will gain confidence in your pruning abilities.



Now the **5 Ds**. The Ds help you figure out what to prune.

**Dead** or dying branches. Remove the dead and dying branches for aesthetics but also for health. Dead branches can be an entry point for various pathogens. Always remove the dead branch to a healthy, green node.

**Diseased** refers to anything that has a disease or pest problem that could potentially harm the plant if left unchecked. Cleaning your tools after each cut of a diseased branch is important.

**Damaged** is just that! Any branch that has been broken from winter snows or spring storms needs to be removed. These are weak points and again could be an entry point for pathogens.

**Doubling** branches. Sometimes the shrub will have two branches in close proximity growing in the same direction. Pruning one of the branches out will open the shrub, giving it better air circulation and strengthening the remaining branch. Also, remove any branches that are going from the outside to the inside of the shrub.

**Desirable.** This is what we want the plant to be. Do we want lots of flowers or is it the fruit or both? Do we want the shrub for privacy or is it a focal point in the garden?



### Tools For Pruning

Invest in a good pair of secateurs or bypass pruners and a good hand saw. Loppers will help to remove the stems larger than three-quarters-of-an-inch. Always wear your personal protective equipment, such as gloves and safety glasses.

### How To Prune

Cut branches/stems at a 45-degree angle, one-quarter-inch above an outward facing bud or branch. Be careful not to leave a stub as this could be an entry point for pathogens.

I hope you feel confident now to get out and prune your shrubs. Doing is the best way to learn! **OH**

Teresa Matamoros has a Bachelor of Science degree, an Ontario Diploma in Horticulture and is an ISA Certified Arborist.



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cooking at home



**INGREDIENTS (Makes 4)**

**Brown Sugar Sauce**

2 Tbsp butter

¾ cup brown sugar

¾ cup water

**Apple Dumplings**

4 medium-sized baking apples, peeled and cored

½ cup sugar

1 Tbsp cinnamon

Pastry dough

Egg wash (1 egg whisked with 1 tsp of water)

Butter

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Brown Sugar Sauce**

In a pot over medium-low heat, combine the ingredients for the brown sugar sauce. Bring to a boil and let simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

**Apple Dumplings**

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Combine sugar and cinnamon in a bowl.

Roll out pastry dough and divide into four equal squares. Place an apple in the middle of each square. Place one spoonful of cinnamon sugar into the middle of each apple and top with a dollop of butter. Fold the dough around each apple, matching all corners and seal the sides with egg wash as needed.

Place the dumplings in a baking dish and pour the brown sugar sauce on top of the dumplings. Bake for 35-45 minutes, or until the apples are tender. This will vary with the variety and size of the apples you choose.

**TIP:** If the tops start to brown but the apples are not cooked through, place a piece of aluminium foil or parchment paper on top of the dumplings.

Serve each dumpling with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. **OH**



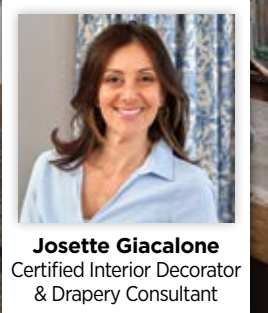
# APPLE Dumplings

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY **JENELLE MCCULLOCH**

These apple dumplings follow the traditional approach. Whole apples are wrapped in pastry and baked in a brown sugar sauce. They are perfect served with a scoop of ice cream.

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- 1. MERCANA: Lahey Chandelier 2. MADE GOODS: Alondra Chandelier 3. RENWIL: Indah Mirror 4. MADE GOODS: Nerine Dresser 5. RICHELIEU: Cabinetry Hardware 6. UNIVERSAL FURNITURE: Nomad Golden Hour Utility Cabinet 7. MADE GOODS: Cyril Round Dining Table 8. CYAN DESIGN: Serres Vase 9. RENWIL: Hannes Candle Holders 10. UNIVERSAL FURNITURE: Nomad Breeze Nightstand 11. RENWIL: Joline Table Lamp 12. UNIVERSAL FURNITURE: Nomad Sischo Bench 13. SURYA: Yukon & Bola Throw Pillows 14. MADE GOODS: Eada Coffee Table 15. MERCANA: Carola Bar Cart 16. STYLE IN FORM: Evita Swivel Chair 17. MADE GOODS: Malcom Bench 18. JAIPUR LIVING: Idriss Rug 19. SURYA: Birmingham Rug OH

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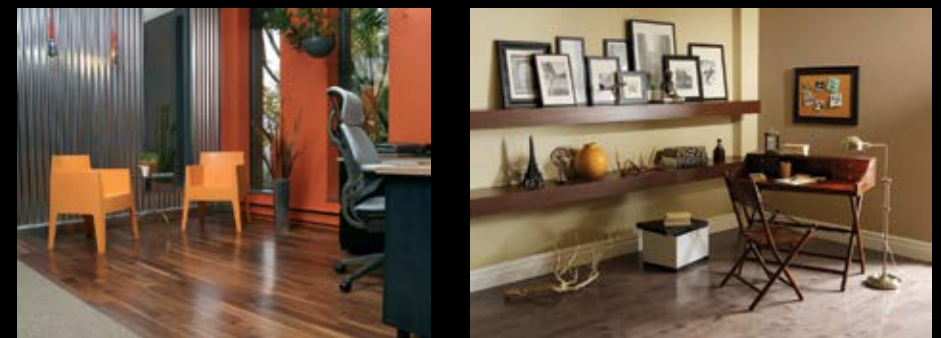
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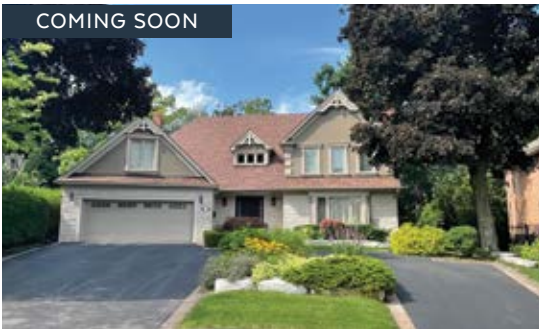
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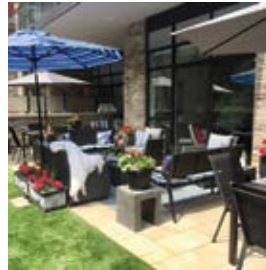
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### MODERN WONDER \$4,088,800

Contemporary dream home in a class of its own! Open concept great room, designer kitchen/dining + walkout lower level, glass wine cellar, theatre/home gym, party room and guest suite.



### COURTYARD SUITE \$919,800

Stunning ground-level, 2bed, 2bath, +2 walkouts, spacious resort style outdoor patio space, rooftop terrace, pet wash, amazing gym, social lounges. Prime parking location + EV charger!



### LAKESIDE BUNGALOW \$1,275,000

Thoughtfully renovated raised bungalow in charming tree-lined well-established neighbourhood. Resting on an oversized, 9,200 sq.ft. parcel lot. Mins to lakefront, stunning green space, beach access, playground, picnic areas & waterfront path.



JAMES HODGINS  
BROKER OF RECORD

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JAMESHODGINS.COM



### LUXURY LIVING IN LORNE PARK AT ITS VERY FINEST

\$6,998,800

Sequestered on one of South Mississauga's most exclusive courts. Privately nestled amongst stately mature trees & manicured gated grounds this David Small Masterpiece home and resort style pool escape are worthy of international acclaim. Custom built with comfort & enjoyment in mind this home will fulfill and wonderfully exceed all of your family & entertaining dreams.



### LUX BY THE LAKE! \$1,475,000

Luxurious modern farmhouse feel, min. from the lake. Open concept living, gourmet kitchen overlooking family room with floor to ceiling fireplace. New custom deck+landscaping. Private court. Great schools, restaurants + golf.



### CHIC LAKE LIVING! \$2,599,800

Contemporary living with warmth & character in trendy lakeside South East Port Credit. Magazine worthy whole home reno & addition on premium private lot! Open concept designer kitchen + primary bdrm retreat & fin. basement with entrance.



### RAVINE RETREAT \$2,599,800

Once in a lifetime signature property befitting none other than her Grand Worship our beloved Mayor McCallion. Almost 300ft deep grounds with inground pool, cherished gardens & an Great Room addition.



### POOL RETREAT! \$1,395,000

Charming 4 bdrm detached in sought after neighbourhood. Flex design main floor family room, formal dining room & living room + eat-in kitchen. Finished basement. Multiple walk-outs to pool retreat + play area. Premium 120' wide lot!

Not intended to solicit buyers or sellers currently under contract with a brokerage.

CELEBRATING  
35  
YEARS  
TOP  
1%  
IN CANADA

