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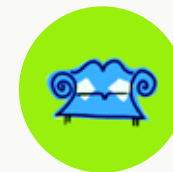
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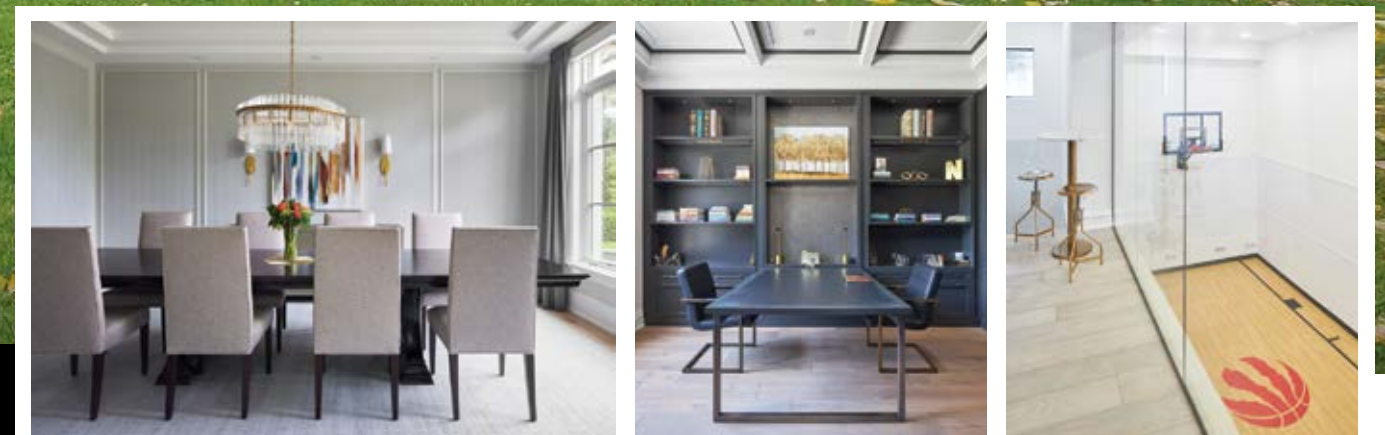
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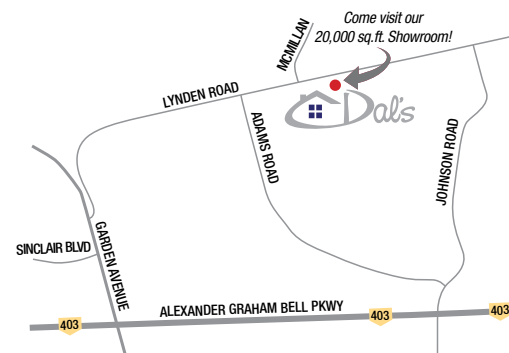
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All winter long we crave the warmth of the sun, and then by the summer, we're working hard to avoid its harmful effects. That's particularly true in our backyards, where too much direct sunlight can transform an idyllic oasis into a spot too hot to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

As we are coming into the winter season, it is not too late to order one and enjoy it, especially if it is a 3 season room. With a small electric fireplace you can comfortably sit and enjoy watching the snow fall.

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A kitchen with white cabinetry, a large white island with a white countertop, and a blue island. The kitchen features a modern design with a white subway tile backsplash and pendant lighting.

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REGIONAL PUBLISHERS Jamie Jefferson
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REGIONAL MANAGING EDITORS Gina Makkar & Gabrielle Tieman-Lee

REGIONAL PRODUCTION MANAGER Lynn Derrick

MARKETING & ADVERTISING Lisa Ormsby, 705.445.5065 x200
lisa.ormsby@ourhomes.ca
Dianne Brown, 905.975.0280
dianne.brown@ourhomes.ca

REACH US EASILY: firstname.lastname@ourhomes.ca

OUR HOMES is a registered trademark of OUR HOMES MEDIA GROUP INC.
OUR HOMES The Golden Horseshoe is published four times a year.

OUR HOMES is distributed to residents of Oakville, Burlington, Mississauga, Hamilton & Area and the Niagara Region via direct home delivery. OUR HOMES is delivered to *The Globe & Mail* and *Toronto Star* subscribers across the GTA. Copies of OUR HOMES are available for free pick up at high traffic locations throughout the region. OUR HOMES is distributed to select business leaders via direct mail.

Please send all letters and/or feedback to OUR HOMES Magazine,
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OUR HOMES MEDIA GROUP INC:

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Georgette McCulloch

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DIGITAL EDITOR Rachael Havens

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Walter Franczyk, Rachael Havens,
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PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Julia Dempsey, Kelly Donaldson,
Tracy Shuttleworth

OPERATIONS

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING

Jamie Jefferson
jamie.jefferson@ourhomes.ca

MANAGING DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS

Georgette McCulloch

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE &

DIRECTOR OF DISTRIBUTION Lisa Ormsby

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Kelly Craig

ACCOUNTING Tyler Annette

CONTRIBUTORS

Adrian Altobelli, Larry Arnal, Sheila Britton, Stephani Buchman, Mike Chajeki,
Blynda DaCosta, Laura Dorrington, Joyce Gionet, Jason Hartog, Connie Jeske Crane,
Lisa Kooistra, James C Lee, Sandy MacKay, Gina Makkar, Tiffany Mayer,
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editor's note



A NOTE FROM
*Hamilton
& Niagara*

GROWING UP, MY BROTHERS AND I would get so excited when the Sears Wish Book arrived. That thick-as-a-phone-book catalogue would land on our front porch and even though it was only September, we could basically smell Christmas creeping into the house. We would each be given a pen and instructed to circle two things. But as the oldest, I was asked to pay close attention to what caught the eyes of my brothers. I think this is where my love for buying for others began.

To this day, I still can't help but get overwhelmingly excited each year when I sit down to plan how to surprise my family with gifts they don't even remember mentioning. This year, we are committed to gifting experiences – tickets to local events, sports, concerts, etc. But even with this gifting goal, I still love to look at all the Top Gift lists – now with my son. They're festive and fun and watching him get excited gives me all the nostalgic seasonal joy I need.

We harnessed that feeling when putting together this issue. At OUR HOMES, we get to visit many small businesses – so filling our Spotlight and Style Picks pages with unique items is easy. Our team also created our own Favourite Things list with some of the top home and décor items on the market – a little inspiration never hurts!

Our feature homes also draw you right in. When visiting Springbank House (page 42) I wanted to snuggle up in their inglenook with a big mug of coffee and never leave. Trust me, you'll feel the same way! All homes in this issue are warm, inviting and exceptional.

Happy holidays everyone. Wishing you all the best in 2023. See you next year!

Gabrielle

Gabrielle Tieman-Lee, Managing Editor
gabrielle.tieman@ourhomes.ca

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editor's note



A NOTE FROM
**Oakville
Burlington
Mississauga**

I LOVE FILLING MY HOME with seasonal spirit. When it comes to winter, my style has evolved over the years. When we bought our home, red and green, portly Santas and plenty of lights adorned our space, indoors and out. Striped ribbons, candelabras and faux green centrepieces dominated. I've always leaned toward "more is more" during the festive season. When the kids were little, it was all about the magic of the holidays through their childlike eyes.

As they became young adults, I reclaimed my space and gradually moved toward a more organic style. I love real fir swags, magnolia leaves and soft gold, bronze and silver accents under glowing white light. I lean toward the whimsical, with handcrafted snowmen, driftwood reindeer, glittering pine cones and plenty of natural elements from the local garden centre.

Outdoors, I love a winter motif. I create planters filled with fresh boughs adorned with ribbon and then fill them with pine cones, vintage snowshoes and whimsical decorative skates. I prefer reclaimed barnboard Christmas trees to "Santa Stops Here" signs. I top the look with real boxwood wreaths instead of the cheery, festive faux fir variety that brims with poinsettias and multi-coloured baubles.

My son is a media production student, and he's always been obsessed with setting the scene, especially during the holidays. His verdict on my style? It's boring. If it were his home, he'd have enough lights to create a landing strip. His indoor style is classic red and green with plenty of sparkle (think tinsel) and multicoloured lights. Everything is big, just like his personality, and that's how he decorates his own personal space. Moving through the house is an eclectic experience as one goes from calm and serene to spirited and vibrant. In the last few years, I'm beginning to see his point. Colour doesn't have to be garish if properly integrated. This year, a splash of colour is on the agenda. What's your holiday style?

Gina Makkar

Gina Makkar, Managing Editor
gina.makkar@ourhomes.ca

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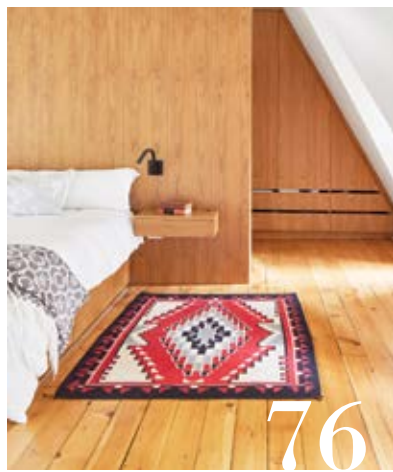
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CONTENTS

HOLIDAY/WINTER 2022/23



56



76



42

ON THE COVER

Restored and modernized for contemporary appeal, Springbank House welcomes guests and shares its rich history. Story, page 42. Photography by Jason Hartog.



52

LOCAL FEATURES

- 34 Style Picks** When the weather outside is frightful, cosy up with new finds.
- 42 Home & Designer** A historic home in St. Catharines is reborn as a luxurious bed & breakfast.
- 52 Spotlight** Don's Light House offers show-stopping lighting.
- 56 Feature** A custom home with beautiful Bali style.
- 70 Spotlight** Enjoy a gourmet experience at home with The Platter Company.
- 76 Home & Architect** The revival of Oakville's historic *King's Castle*.
- 92 People & Places** Turn your house into a home with local pros.
- 104 Spotlight** Common Purpose Design makes expert interior design accessible throughout Southern Ontario.
- 118 Home & Designer** The dining room is alive and well in this renovated Ancaster home.



34

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CONTENTS

HOLIDAY/WINTER 2022/23



40

104



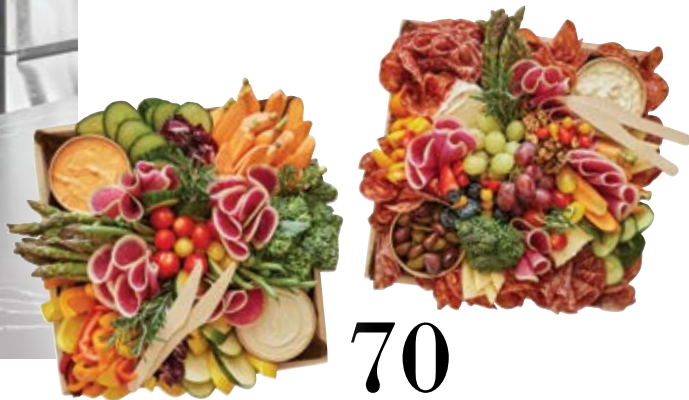
118



86 Festive holiday flair to keep your home dressed for guests.

DEPARTMENTS

- 24 Gabrielle's Note
- 26 Gina's Note
- 32 Advice Flickering Fireplaces
- 40 Good Taste Figgy G&T
- 54 Double Take Beautiful Bedroom
- 64 Holiday Traditions Multicultural Celebrations
- 68 Holiday Hints Christmas Wishes
- 72 Design Ideas Bold Black
- 86 Holiday Trends Fun and Festive
- 90 Real Estate Rent or Buy
- 106 Decorating Paint Shades For Kids
- 112 Crafty Ideas Creative Citrus Décor
- 114 Design Ideas Scandi Style
- 126 Home Resource Directory
- 128 Cooking At Home Bourbon Cheesecake
- 130 Finishing Touch Modern Metal



70

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GATHER 'ROUND

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

FEW THINGS ARE MORE WELCOMING IN A HOME THAN A FIREPLACE.

What was once a necessity for the daily functioning of a household (heating, cooking, baking, boiling water, etc.) has become somewhat redundant with advances in mechanical systems. However, it is difficult to substitute the sensory experience of the warm glow, flickers and crackles of an authentic wood-burning fireplace. The hearth remains the centre of a home and is a hallmark of emotional comfort to the human psyche.

Whether renovating or building new, installing a fireplace (wood burning, gas or even electric) creates a natural focal point and gathering place. The ideal location is logically within a common area, but it is also nice to view and enjoy the fireplace from adjoining spaces, such as the kitchen. The location of the chimney and venting requirements may dictate placement.

Many argue that the heat from a wood-burning fireplace is unrivalled, but it also comes with a certain level of commitment. Firstly, you need to cut or purchase a supply of seasoned firewood and have a place to stack and store it that is protected from the elements, such as an outdoor storage shelter or attached garage. You also need a storage rack or containment unit inside that can hold a supply for a day or

two. Although there are endless images of beautifully curated stacks of firewood inside homes, the reality is quite different! Firewood is messy – and so is the process of emptying and disposing of the ashes. Chimney cleaning and maintenance are also a must. However, an often-overlooked benefit of a wood-burning unit is the opportunity to slow down and create a daily ritual of getting the fire going in the late afternoon or early evening during the colder months – a good excuse to take a moment of repose while you do it!

There are parameters regarding the appropriate clearances of various units from combustible materials, often making the footprint of a wood-burning stove or fireplace considerably larger than a gas fireplace (and

PHOTO: SANDY MACKAY



OSBURN: Duplex Fireplace Tool Set and Equiss Freestanding Log Holder

much more than electric). For wood burning and gas stoves, there are also requirements for the surround to be faced with non-combustible materials, including honed natural stone, slate, porcelain tile and metal. Always plan ahead and work with a professional to ensure you can accommodate the unit of your choice.

One obvious advantage of a wood-burning unit is that it provides a heat source in the event of a power outage, which can offer peace of mind. This isn't always the case with a gas unit. However, for day to day, a gas stove provides heat at the touch of a button and doesn't require cleaning or managing of wood. Just be sure to select a unit with realistic-looking logs. The temperature of a gas or electric unit is set with a thermostat and is much easier to regulate than a wood-burning stove.

Traditionally, an authentic chimney breast will extend from the floor to the ceiling (avoid stopping it above the firebox). Balance the chimney breast in the space, while keeping the centre bay the widest/largest. If installing a gas or electric fireplace that is horizontal in proportions (wider than it is tall), ensure that it is raised off the floor. The design of the fire surround should take into consideration the scale of the unit, the chimney breast and overall space to ensure the proportions are harmonious. The design of the mantel and surround will be affected by the unit you select, as manufacturers provide specific dimensions regarding clearances.

Even though the iconic and substantial traditional masonry chimneys are no longer commonplace (a lovely addition to a new build – albeit costly!), it is still important to be sympathetic to traditional architectural design if you're installing a wood or gas fireplace. If you can afford a chimney, be generous and make it look as authentic as possible by cladding the exterior in brick or stone and using traditional proportions.

Always consult a professional when installing any type of fireplace. Also, check with your insurance company about extending coverage. **OH**

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Continued on page 36

8



9



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Continued on page 38

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RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

The figs give this gin and tonic a sweet honey-like quality and beautiful purple hue. Enjoy at your next holiday party!



FIG AND THYME SYRUP

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 4-5 fresh figs
- A few sprigs of thyme

In a saucepan, combine sugar, water and figs. Heat gently for 5-10 minutes, stirring until the sugar dissolves and the figs begin to soften and break down. Remove from the heat and add the thyme. Allow to infuse for 30 minutes. Strain into a clean jar. You can keep any of the unused fig syrup for 3-4 weeks in the fridge.

PER COCKTAIL

- 2 oz. gin
- 1 oz. fig syrup
- ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
- Tonic water to top it off

To make your cocktail, fill a glass with ice and add gin, fig syrup and lemon juice. Top with a neutral tonic. Stir well, then garnish with a sprig of fresh thyme and enjoy! **OH**

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Each room was tastefully decorated using a combination of family heirlooms, antiques and new pieces from Critelli's Fine Furniture.

STORY
DENISE WILLSON
PHOTOGRAPHY
JASON HARTOG

HISTORY

RECLAIMED

When the Taylor family originally built what is now Kim Dorrington and Geoff Irvine's home in 1908, the historic Yates Street property in St. Catharines was nothing but dirt and ash. *Continued on page 44*



ABOVE: Many of the home's original vintage light fixtures were painstakingly restored during renovations. **ABOVE RIGHT:** A permanent resident of Springbank House, the family's Bernese Mountain dog Ella sits outside the Yates Street entrance. **RIGHT:** The dining room, located off the main entrance, welcomes guests and encourages leisurely morning coffee. **OPPOSITE:** Pine garlands and greenery by BBBlooms Floral Studio complement the living's room earthy palette.



tHE SITE had history and deserved preservation, having once been home to the Springbank Hotel and Ridley College, which was forced to relocate due to a fire. Over the following two decades, the site was transformed into what would become the Taylors' home – a Queen Anne Revival-style abode and a place for family and friends to gather. Today, Kim and Geoff honour the home's heritage by greeting guests from all over the world – renaming the home *Springbank House*, and lovingly renovating it into a thriving bed and breakfast – giving it a new life and reclaiming history.

The renovation took two years and the talent of several local tradespeople to complete. **Brock Builders Inc.** managed the project from start to finish, and designer and decorator **Laura Dorrington** of **Common Purpose Design** brought the interior to life. "Laura knew what we wanted," says Kim. "We liked working with a family member." Laura is the couple's daughter-in-law, a detail that came in handy when completing the renovation.

As a designer, her job is to design a home that meets the needs and wants of the homeowners. Laura's time with the family gave her a unique perspective on how kin, friends and B&B guests enjoy the spaces. "We're a large family," says Laura. "We all tend to gravitate to the billiards room and kitchen area, where Kim is an amazing cook."

Continued on page 46

TOP LEFT, RIGHT: A custom Lacanche range is a favourite feature of Kim's – the cook in the family. **BELOW RIGHT:** Holes were drilled into the new cabinet faces for historic purposes – a feature that would have been found in the home's original cabinetry.



ceilings, oak wainscoting and solid oak floors testify to workmanship that lasts for generations. Large windows flood every room with light and leaded-glass windows adorn the grand staircase, billiards room and inglenook – a traditional fireplace alcove common in English houses and pubs. “The billiards room is spectacular,” says Geoff. “The vaulted ceiling and massive leaded-glass cabinet are original features we left largely untouched.” Most of the vintage light fixtures were painstakingly restored, but the grand chandelier (**Restoration Hardware**) above the pool table was added for better lighting. The kitchen pendants were purchased from Schoolhouse.

The couple say they weren't ready to be fully retired, and the B&B was the perfect complement to their life. “We love running our B&B,” says Kim. “We love meeting people and hearing their stories.” With the B&B, Geoff could spend time chatting with guests and Kim could feed her love of cooking. “Between us we have five kids,” says Kim. “We wanted a house big enough for our

kids and grandkids while making good use of the space when they aren't around.”

Springbank House boasts three guest suites. In the Sun Suite, an antique vanity, which originally belonged to the Taylor family, was reborn and reused in the en suite and an old leaded-glass window was added to the wall to allow for natural light to enter the suite's bathroom. The Taylor Suite, named after the family who built the house, was the only room to get structural changes. “We removed walls that were added years ago in a poorly executed attempt to create four suites versus three,” said Geoff. The Magnolia Suite pays homage to the spectacular magnolia tree in the yard – one of the oldest in St. Catharines – and had penny tiles scattered across the floor for an aged look. Each suite has an en suite, including a walk-in shower with a glass enclosure by **Low's Glass, Mirror & Windows** and new tiling. Colours and fabrics were chosen to enhance the home's ageless beauty and the artistic family's artwork. *Continued on page 48*



Geoff left the creative decisions to Kim, Laura and the builder's expert tradespeople. Decayed plumbing and electrical wiring were torn out and replaced by **Parisi Electric Inc.** The old wood floors were stripped and refinished by **Hardwood Flooring Niagara.** New windows were installed by **Crowland Sash & Frame Ltd.** The furnace and air conditioner were updated and gas fireplaces were added to keep rooms toasty during the winter months. While upgrades were functionally modern, every effort was made to mimic or complement the home's original elements.

“The house had been neglected,” says Geoff. “But we fell in love with its grandeur.” The original stone and stucco exterior bested time and the grounds were revived by **DeKorte's Landscaping** and **Emily Cooper Gardening.** The home's 5,500 square feet of soaring



A gathering hub for the family, the kitchen was fully renovated with new cabinetry, open shelving, soapstone countertops and appliances by CroMade Custom Cabinetry.

“We had to make room for Geoff’s grandfather’s painting,” says Kim. His painting, *The Cook*, takes centre stage in the kitchen, and the family’s Scottish tartan is incorporated into the décor with custom upholstery by **Main & Company Interiors**. **Artistic Antique Restorations** restored the home’s antiques and new pieces were cultivated by **Critelli’s Fine Furniture**. “Incorporating older pieces and existing built-in features wasn’t easy,” says Laura. “But the effort was worth doing.”

The kitchen received a major overhaul. **CroMade Custom Cabinetry** provided cabinetry, painted in Farrow & Ball’s Pigeon, built-ins and open shelving that complement the traditional décor. **Aristocrat Floors** installed the tile backsplash. “We originally thought we’d invest in the guest areas, not the kitchen,” says Kim. “Until I realized I spend a lot of time in the kitchen.” Kim fell in love with the custom Lacanche range. CroMade also provided countertops, appliances and bathroom vanities. “The kitchen is now the best room in the house,” adds Laura.

Continued on page 50



TOP RIGHT: The billiards room’s original vaulted ceilings were left largely untouched, lending a chalet vibe to the space. **ABOVE:** The inglenook, a traditional fireplace alcove common in English houses and pubs, makes for the perfect reading nook. **RIGHT:** Most of the B&B’s artwork are heirlooms and originals, depicting the family’s rich history and displayed along the home’s original oak wainscoting.

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While renovating a house of this magnitude could be daunting at the best of times, organizing trades during a pandemic was trying. Permits were hard to get, and supplies were backordered. “We had to source an abundance of options since we couldn’t be sure what would arrive on time,” says Laura. Sometimes a delay was good, allowing Laura and Kim to make decisions without rushing. At other times, the time-lapse left room for second-guessing. “The more time spent chewing on details, the more intricate the project became,” says Laura.

But it all turned out. From ash springs new life. And thanks to Kim Dorrington and Geoff Irvine, future generations will experience the heritage of *Springbank House*, reclaiming a bit of history for themselves. **OH**



TOP LEFT: In the Sun Suite, an antique leaded-glass window was added to the wall to allow for natural light to enter the suite’s bathroom. **ABOVE:** Large leaded-glass windows adorn the grand staircase, leading to the three guest suites upstairs. **LEFT:** Each suite features a king-size bed, open-concept sitting area and an en suite, which includes a walk-in shower.

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PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG

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TRENDS

No home is complete until it feels like your own. For that reason, Les says customization in lighting is important. "We all see light differently," says Les. "Some see light bluer, some want warmth. We are starting to see in production more customization in fixtures and more options in Critical Colour Temperatures." Casual boho is a highly sought-after aesthetic for 2023 – with string and rattan fixtures emerging. Sleek, linear chandeliers and pendant lighting in mixed metals are also in demand, both indoors and out.

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KNOWLEDGEABLE TEAM

As the first point of contact with designers and customers, Don's experienced lighting professionals know quality, which products are popular and the trends that are here to stay. This knowledge ensures the showroom remains stocked with only the best of the best. Employees take the time to get to know each customer's individual style and space so they can guide their selections. Les says many customers bring in plans and sit down with his team to discuss scale, style and budget before shopping.

SHOP IN 3D

Avoid becoming overwhelmed and visit the showroom before committing to a purchase. "Online, there is too much choice," says Les. "Literally, there will be 40,000 different fixtures for one room. Our showroom only carries the best – tried and tested products that are illuminated and stocked because they are in demand. See it in three-dimension, and you will know if it is right for you." **OH**



Lisa Littleton, Jason Newhouse, Les McKean, Stephanie Lipinski & Jason Howes

double take

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PHOTO: JASON HARTOG | DESIGNER: BRITTANY ZAZULA



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in London 2. **ELK HOME**:
Livingston 17" Wide 5-Light
Chandelier 3. **INDABA**: Ambu
Woven Pillow, Lina Linen
Pillow (Stripe) and Nantucket
Woven Pillow 4. **ELK HOME**:
Dash Accent Table 5. **ELK
HOME**: King Cake 22" High
1-Light Table Lamp 6. **CRATE
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Wood Bed 7. **BRUNELLI**:
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Bali

INSPIRED

STORY GINA MAKKAR
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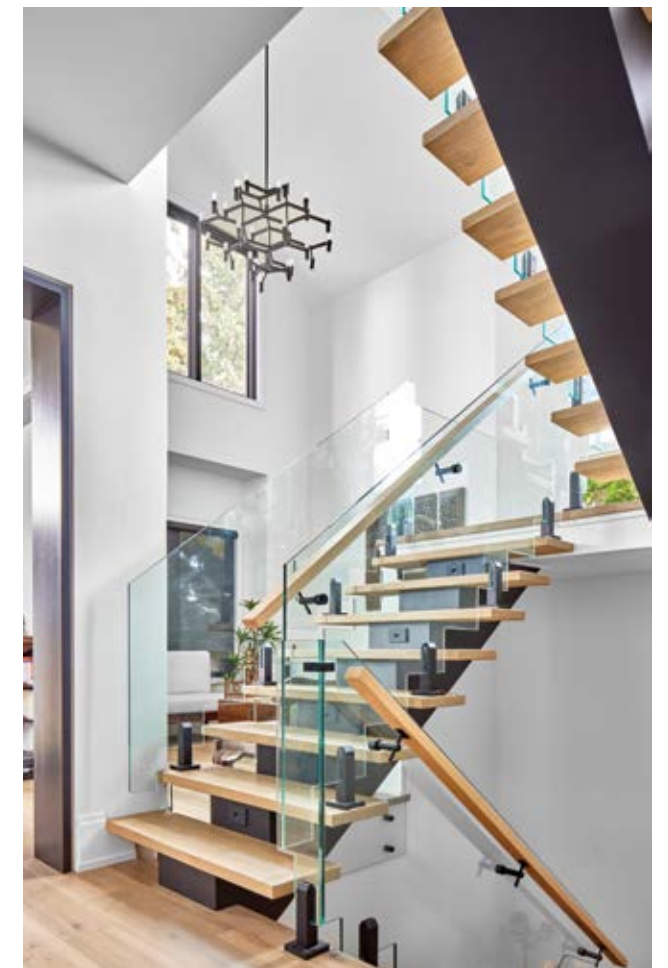
After much debate, an offset fireplace became the dramatic focal point in the family room. **BELOW:** Open risers and glass were used to maintain the airiness on the main floor. **OPPOSITE:** A majestic painting of Buddha was strategically placed to create a dramatic welcome in the entryway.

A black-and-white interior is striking and timeless. Like yin and yang, black and white bring harmony and balance to a space. Its monochromatic palette allows for mixing and matching and paves the way for dynamic design.

When homeowners Van and Jyoti Khurana set out to build a custom home, they knew they wanted to merge a modern, monochromatic aesthetic of black and white with classic artifacts. “We were always keen on transitional design,” says Van. After finding the ideal property in Oakville, the couple hired principal designer **Joris Keeren** of **Keeren Design** to design the home and bring their vision to life. Before the build commenced, they spent a lot of time outdoors, pondering potential colour schemes. “One of our biggest challenges was the exterior finished look. We are really happy with how the outside looks.”

The clean, linear design and thoughtful use of textures and finishes allow the 3,500 sq. ft. home to blend effortlessly into the landscape. **Miguel Almeida** of **Cornerstone Fine Homes** was enlisted to manage the project from start to finish. Van and Jyoti also played a pivotal part in the design and build, sourcing many of the materials and trades, and making design decisions with the help of industry experts.

Continued on page 58





“Jyoti has a lot of passion for design,” says Van, “but we also engaged a designer to ensure we were not digressing too much from the plan and what would work best.” Designer **Vanessa Loverly** helped develop the interior and exterior colour schemes and curate the finishes, including tiles, hardwood and lighting. **Divya Kambhoj** of **Ivish Interiors** assisted with designing an interior space that would suit the family’s lifestyle.

Just inside the front door, the soaring entryway boasts 20 ft. ceilings. A niche adorned with luxe wallpaper is the backdrop for a painting of Buddha, which Van calls a masterpiece, crafted by an artist from Bali. A dramatic chandelier hangs from above, creating the grand entrance the couple was after. Integrated touch-panel closets sit flush with the wall to maintain unrestricted sightlines.

Instead of tile, hardwood runs throughout the space for a seamless look. Tucked to the side, the open-riser staircase with glass panels gives the space a modern touch and creates an open airiness. The living room is adorned with Indonesian artifacts, from carvings to wall hangings. “We’ve brought lots of artifacts from around the world,” says Van. “We lived in Indonesia for many years and operated our own furniture business. It’s a modern home inside with a different artistic touch to it.”



Subtle patterns and gold accents create a curated display of treasures that can be enjoyed for generations. The tawny golden colour of the teak wood furnishings is juxtaposed with clean lines, creating a truly distinctive aesthetic. The jewels of the home – big, bold lighting throughout – were integrated early in the design process.

In the back, the open-concept kitchen, dining and great room were thoughtfully arranged. The kitchen, as well as much of the cabinetry throughout, was created by **Jit Mistry** of **Misani Custom Design**. “He has an amazing sense of design and space, and he helped us design the millwork for the kitchen, pantry, office, bar, mudroom and principal vanity.”

Jit suggested moving the closets, which were originally located by the kitchen in the original design. The change made way for a spacious walk-in pantry complete with soft lighting, cabinetry and appliances to keep the clutter out of sight.

A 10 ft. island offers plenty of space to prepare food or entertain. “Jit from Misani Custom Design gave me the advice to fix the island first, and everything will flow,” says Van. Oversize windows throughout and a glass patio door to the backyard let in plenty of light. The dining area is tucked off the kitchen and boasts an integrated bar and a two-way window that opens to the Muskoka room, perfect for serving guests. “The entire area is well connected and functional,” says Van.

Continued on page 61

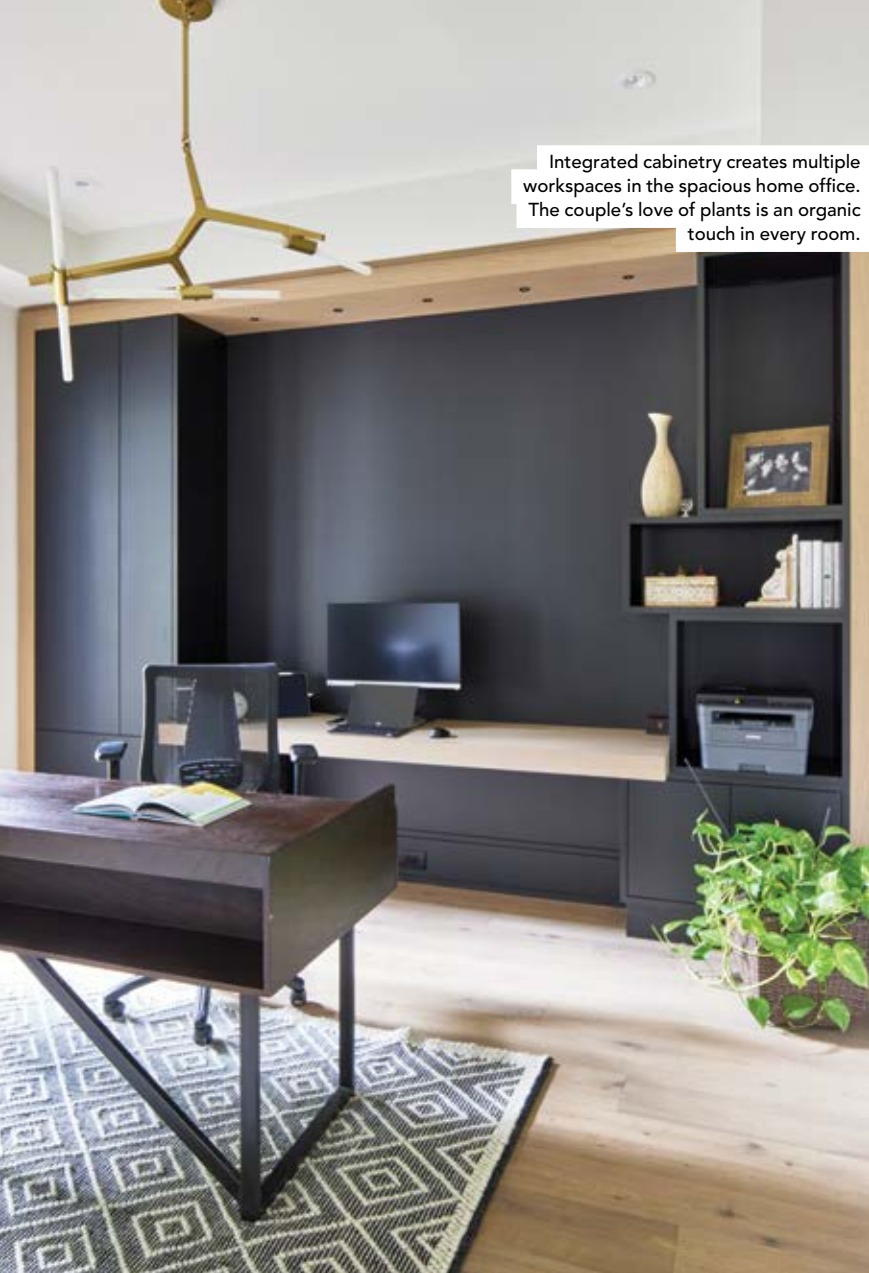


TOP LEFT: The stone vessel travelled with the family all the way from Indonesia. **ABOVE:** Mixing modern design elements with traditional Bali artifacts creates a truly unique interior. **LEFT:** The mudroom is strategically placed just off the entryway with access to the garage.

feature



The living room is elegant and inviting, with a mix of ornate carvings unique to Balinese culture.



Integrated cabinetry creates multiple workspaces in the spacious home office. The couple's love of plants is an organic touch in every room.

The television wall was a grand debate. While most people place the television over the mantel, Jyoti wanted the fireplace to have a distinctive look. They sourced a three-sided glass fireplace to add architectural interest and the drama that Jyoti was looking for. Though the television is offset, the right choice of colours and materials on the feature wall allows it to integrate seamlessly with the rest of the space.

The lower-level walk-up includes a gym, powder room and recreation space with a bar. A heated polished concrete floor is beautiful and functional.

In choosing a home automation system, Van says he didn't go with one system throughout. The lighting system is from a company in the United States called Brilliant. "The switches look modern and elegant and are fully controlled through a phone." A Sonos sound system was installed in the lower-level recreation room and the main living room. All the systems, including those that operate the hot tub and the cameras, are operated by phone apps. "It's a smart home operated by a smartphone," says Van. *Continued on page 62*

BELOW LEFT AND RIGHT: The lower-level walk-up to the backyard allows for plenty of light. The area houses a recreation room complete with theatre, lounging area and bar.



feature



Upstairs, when considering how the family of four would use the space, the design incorporated a private en suite for every bedroom in the house. “We made a trade-off in the size of the bedrooms but now that we are living here, we don’t feel it. It’s so functional,” says Van, adding large windows in every room also help create the illusion of space.

Now that the home is complete, the modern-meets-Bali-inspired haven creates an enviable sense of tranquility where the homeowners can seek refuge at the end of the day. **OH**



ABOVE: Lighting was carefully selected. The entryway light was strategically placed and can be seen from the upper level. **RIGHT:** Warm wood tones used throughout connect old and new seamlessly. **FAR RIGHT:** The sweeping curves in the furnishings add elegance to the primary bedroom.



The colour and texture of the bathroom mimic the colours used on the main floor to tie elements together throughout.



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STORY MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS

How Do You HOLIDAY?

MULTICULTURAL HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Canada opens its arms to people from many different cultures. During the winter months, family celebrations proliferate and many of us raise a glass (or a fork) to mark the arrival of cherished holidays and reconnect with loved ones. Here's a sampler of holiday traditions from local families.

Bermudian Holiday Breakfast

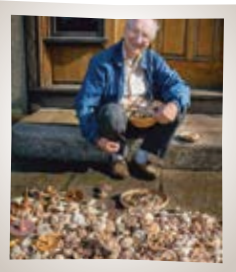
Sacha Welsh, a fertility nutritionist, originally hails from Hamilton Parish, Bermuda. While attending boarding school at Albert College in Belleville, she met her future husband, Owen Welsh, now a vice-president at the Canadian Football League. The couple have three young daughters: Whitney, 6, Victoria, 4 and Cassia,



her family: boiled codfish and potatoes with tomato and onion sauces along with sides of boiled eggs, banana and avocado slices.

Stockings Hung With Care

Fred Lafontaine grew up in Québec during the depression. Money was tight, so at Christmastime there weren't a lot of gifts, but he and his siblings always received a stocking with chocolate, a hand-turned wooden top and a tangerine – considered an exotic treat



Josée Lafontaine, who operates a retirement residence, keeps her father's tradition alive. "At midnight my staff and I hang Christmas stockings on every resident's door," she says. "Each one contains chocolate, a tangerine in the toe and a wooden top, hand-turned by my 99-year-old father who still makes these classic wooden toys in his woodshop."

Kwanzaa

Dewitt Lee, founder and president of Emancipation Month, has celebrated Kwanzaa (a pan-African holiday that began in 1966) his entire life. Every year, Dewitt and his partner, Suzette, enjoy sharing the week-long holiday with their six children. Kwanzaa begins on December 26 and ends on January 1, culminating with the Karamu feast when the family "samples foods from around the Caribbean, Africa and soul food from North America," says Dewitt. "One of the great traditions we have is shutting down the TV and social media. We focus on reading and writing about the Nguzo Saba, also

– in the toe. After Fred moved to Toronto in the 50s, he continued the custom with his wife Marie and their six children. Today, his eldest daughter Marie-

known as the Seven Principles or the Black Value System, which include: *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *Nia* (purpose), *Kuumba* (creativity) and *Imani* (faith)."

Chinese New Year



Ruowen Leung, a children's book author, immigrated to Canada from Tianjin, China in the 1980s. Now a mother to two adult children,

Kevin, 28, and Robin, 25, she carries on holiday customs she grew up with. "Traditionally, Chinese New Year falls at the end of January or the beginning of February and continues for 15 days," says Ruowen. "There are dozens of rituals but here in Canada, we follow only a few of them."

"Parents, uncles and aunts give red envelopes containing money to the younger generation and to anyone who isn't married. We buy red letters and create lucky words with them." Her family also eats jiao zi (pork dumplings) before midnight and enjoys vegetable dumplings after midnight, followed by sweets, which symbolize a sweet future filled with happiness, good luck and prosperity.

Hybrid Hanukkah

"I was born Jewish and though I am not religious, I have grown to love the culture," says Avery Saltzman, co-artistic director of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre. "Hanukkah is a time of giving: the giving of oneself to family young and old. And it's also a delicious time of potato pancakes topped with applesauce." Avery and his husband, Kevin Dunlop, celebrate Christmas with Kevin's extended family, including nephews and nieces who excitedly await the arrival of St. Nick. After celebrating with their respective families, the couple have created their own hybrid holiday. "We plug in our electric Christmas tree adorned with ornaments both Jewish and not, switch on our gas fireplace and celebrate our love for one another by ordering Chinese food." **OH**

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CHRISTMAS Wishlist

We asked the staff at OUR HOMES what they'd like to find under the tree for their homes this Christmas.



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Wafflemaker



Gina
Emile Henry Ultime
Large Rectangular
Baking Dish
in Charcoal

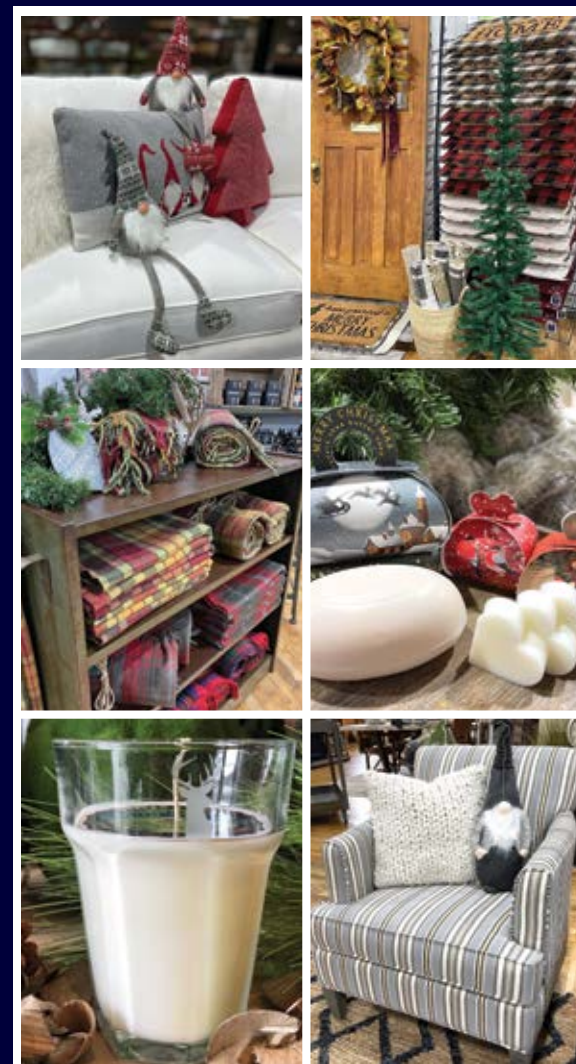


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PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG



THE PLACE

Nestled in the quaint neighbourhood of Aldershot Village in Burlington, **The Platter Company Gourmet Market** is a haven for gourmet food. Owner Jacqui Cronin is no stranger to delicious cuisine. With a passion for sharing gourmet fare made with fresh, local ingredients, she started a catering company in 2017 but pivoted and expanded to a gourmet market during COVID in 2020.

WHAT'S IN STORE

Elevate the everyday! The Platter Company Gourmet Market is a to-go market with "frozen to fabulous" appetizers, entrées and desserts, and a beautiful array of artisan charcuterie and crudité boards. Whether you're looking for a grab-and-go meal or hosting a lunch, shower or party, they've got gourmet options for every occasion. And no one goes hungry! With a variety of inclusive choices including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and dairy-free options, there's something for everyone, from appetizers to desserts.



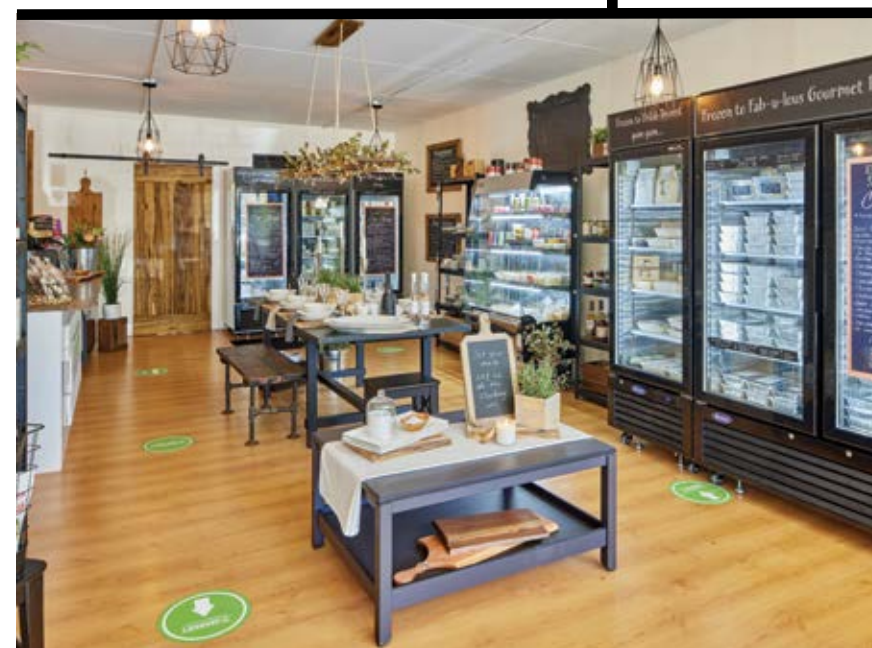
Jacqui Cronin

WHAT'S NEW

Short on time, want to skip the cooking, or need a thoughtful gift? The Platter Company Gourmet Market now ships anywhere in Ontario. Whether you're skiing, cottaging or have a busy week at home, each meal is carefully packaged and frozen to preserve freshness. Stock a loved one's freezer with a gourmet meal delivery. It's a great gift for new parents, seniors, hosts, new homeowners and young adults away at university. The order arrives right at your door ready to heat and eat. Serving up deliciousness has never been easier!

WHAT'S DIFFERENT

The store is set up like an old-school market. Visitors can wander and choose from an array of artisanal products, like charcuterie for two, fresh bread, meats, cheeses, olives and dips. Everything is made in-house in small batches with no preservatives. Try one of the famous artisan flatbreads in delicious blends like caramelized onion and mozzarella or truffle mushroom and gruyere. Sink into comfort with chicken cacciatore or beef bourguignon. **OH**



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Black is definitely having a moment right now. There are a zillion different ways to insert black into your décor. Personally, I like using black as a stylish accent colour rather than an all-over application and since I almost always use white as my backdrop, it acts as a nice contrast and really anchors your overall design. A long time ago I learned the classic 60-30-10 rule for decorating, which says that 60 per cent of the room should be your dominant colour, 30 per cent should be your secondary colour and the last 10 per cent should be your accent colour. Now I'm not one to follow all the rules, but I do believe if black is your accent colour, it should be kept somewhere under 20 per cent, otherwise it's going to come on too strong and you won't consider it an accent. I've seen some very cool all-black rooms, complete with black ceiling and black trim, but that's for another post.



Here are my favourite ways to use black as an accent:

SWITCH UP YOUR CABINET HARDWARE AND/OR PLUMBING FIXTURES

This is a great way to incorporate a little bit of black into any room without going overboard. Changing out your hardware is an easy and affordable way to make a quick update. Don't be afraid to mix your metals. Just try to limit your metal finishes to no more than two per room.

TIP: Matte black looks great with brushed gold. *Continued on page 74*

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1
PAINT YOUR
INTERIOR DOORS

I absolutely love this idea because literally anybody can do it regardless of budget and it makes such an incredible statement. Black hides a lot of dirty, grimy little fingerprints. So, buy a can of black paint and get to it my friends. There are plenty of great tutorials online to help with your technique and choosing the right tools. A designer favourite is Tricorn Black by Sherwin Williams and I'd go with a satin finish.



2
PAINT AN ACCENT WALL

I get that black is not the first colour that comes to mind for many when they are choosing paint colour for their home, but I would love you to reconsider. Just as white is a designer favourite, and literally goes with anything, I'd like you to consider black as the new neutral and try it out on an accent wall. It's moody, dramatic, cosy and can anchor a room in the best way possible. It works best if the rest of the room is white and you keep your furniture on the lighter side, too. **OH**



3
GO DARK WITH ART

You want to choose artwork that is heavy on the black. Simple right? There are lots of options out there ranging in price from high to low. Make a serious impact with something high contrast or go moody with an all-dark palette. Either way, tie it back to one or two of the other options on this list and your décor is going to look so pulled together people will think you hired a designer.



4
CHANGE UP LIGHT FIXTURES

I especially like this option in the kitchen, but changing out light fixtures anywhere in the home is a great way to add some black. An all-white kitchen with black pendant lights is a rising trend. Even though there's no sign of black anywhere else in the design, it just seems to work very well. That little hit of contrast gives a much more polished look by staying away from the dreaded "matchy-matchy."



PHOTO: LARRY ARNAL

Amanda Shields is the creative director and principal designer for Amanda Shields Interiors.

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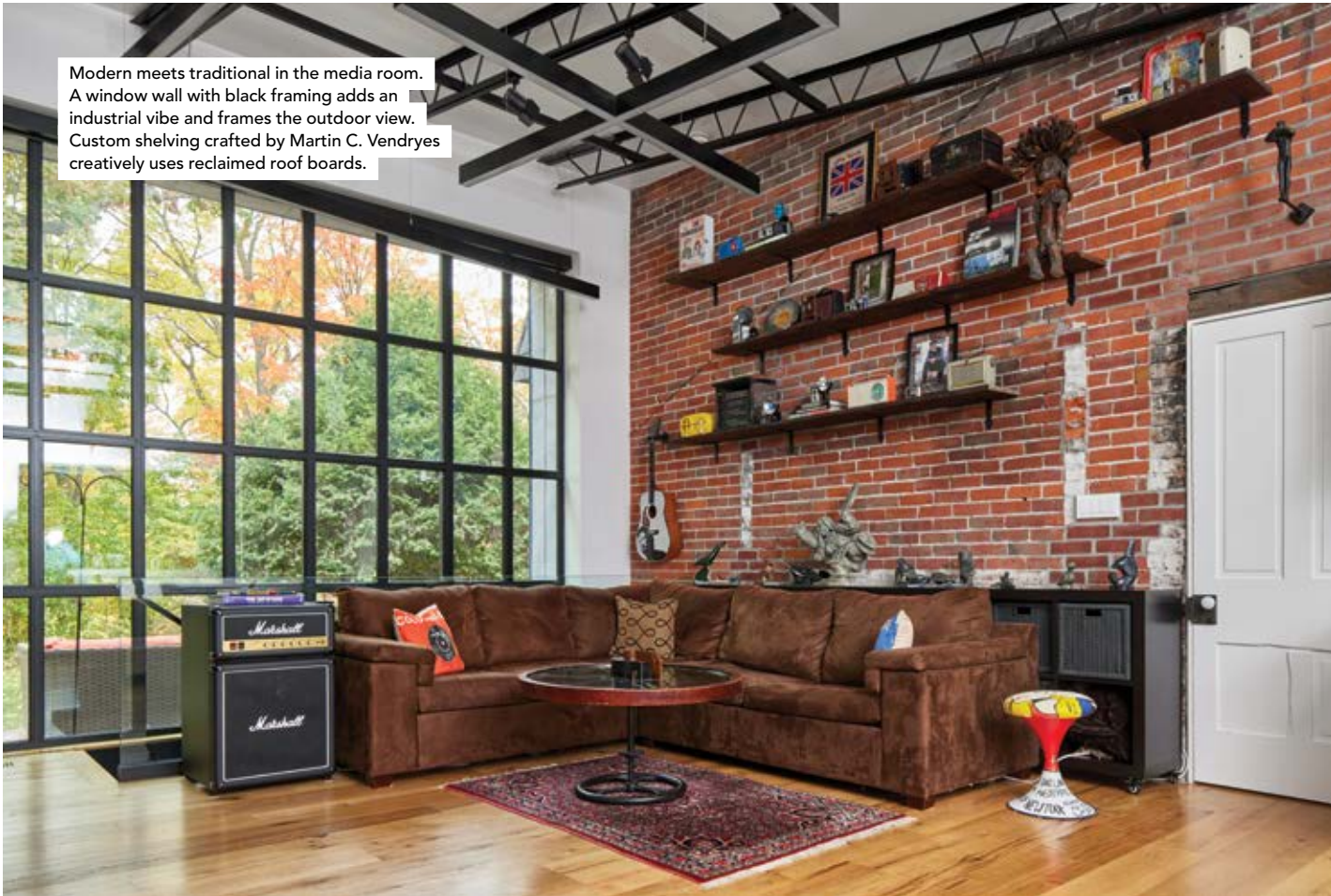
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KING'S CASTLE

The cantilever staircase up to the attic area maintains the drama of the soaring ceiling height. Exposed beams add rustic charm. The walnut bookshelf crafted by Martin C. Vendryes spans two storeys and was custom-designed to showcase the couple's treasures. **RIGHT:** The exterior is a marriage of old and new. The sliding door fully retracts to bring the outdoors in. The balconies cut into the roofline look as though they've always been there.



King's Castle was built in 1854 by Oakville publisher William MacKenzie King (not to be confused with William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's 10th Prime Minister). William MacKenzie King lost his parents early and was raised by his uncle, William Chisholm, founder of the town of Oakville. After a career as a sailor, William returned to Oakville, married and built a home in the Gothic Revival style – elements of which are evident in the steeply pitched roof and intersecting roof lines, pointed windows, rake fascia and pendent vaulting. He named his home *Solitude*, although townspeople continue to refer to it as *King's Castle*. *Continued on page 78*



Modern meets traditional in the media room. A window wall with black framing adds an industrial vibe and frames the outdoor view. Custom shelving crafted by Martin C. Vendryes creatively uses reclaimed roof boards.



Robyn Huether

In the wrong hands, the restoration and renovation of heritage buildings can be disastrous. In the right hands, it can greatly enhance a building's ability to inform future generations. The term heritage doesn't have to mean old, although most of us think of it that way. Heritage encapsulates all things a community chooses to value and preserve for future generations. Heritage properties are not necessarily more expensive to purchase, but they are desired because they are unique. As **Robyn Huether**, architect on this revival and principal at **Robyn Huether Architect Inc.** puts it, "they are a non-renewable resource."

Kerry Colborne, homeowner and a long-time member of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee, says the Town of Oakville is vigilant about enforcing rules and regulations that protect properties designated as heritage. In 1978, *King's Castle* was the first private dwelling to be designated a historic building in the town. Robyn is a professional member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP) and part of her architectural practice specializes in heritage. She's worked as the heritage consultant for restoration work at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and the Tom Thomson Shack at the McMichael Gallery. She's currently the heritage consultant for the proposed Estonian Cultural Centre in the Annex while continuing to work on architecture and design projects for private residences throughout the GTA.

Ben Scott of **LPC Construction** was the general contractor on this project. **Kevin Karst** and **Martin C. Vendryes**, both skilled millworkers, built cabinetry and furniture for this reno. **DDM Lighting Inc.** consulted.

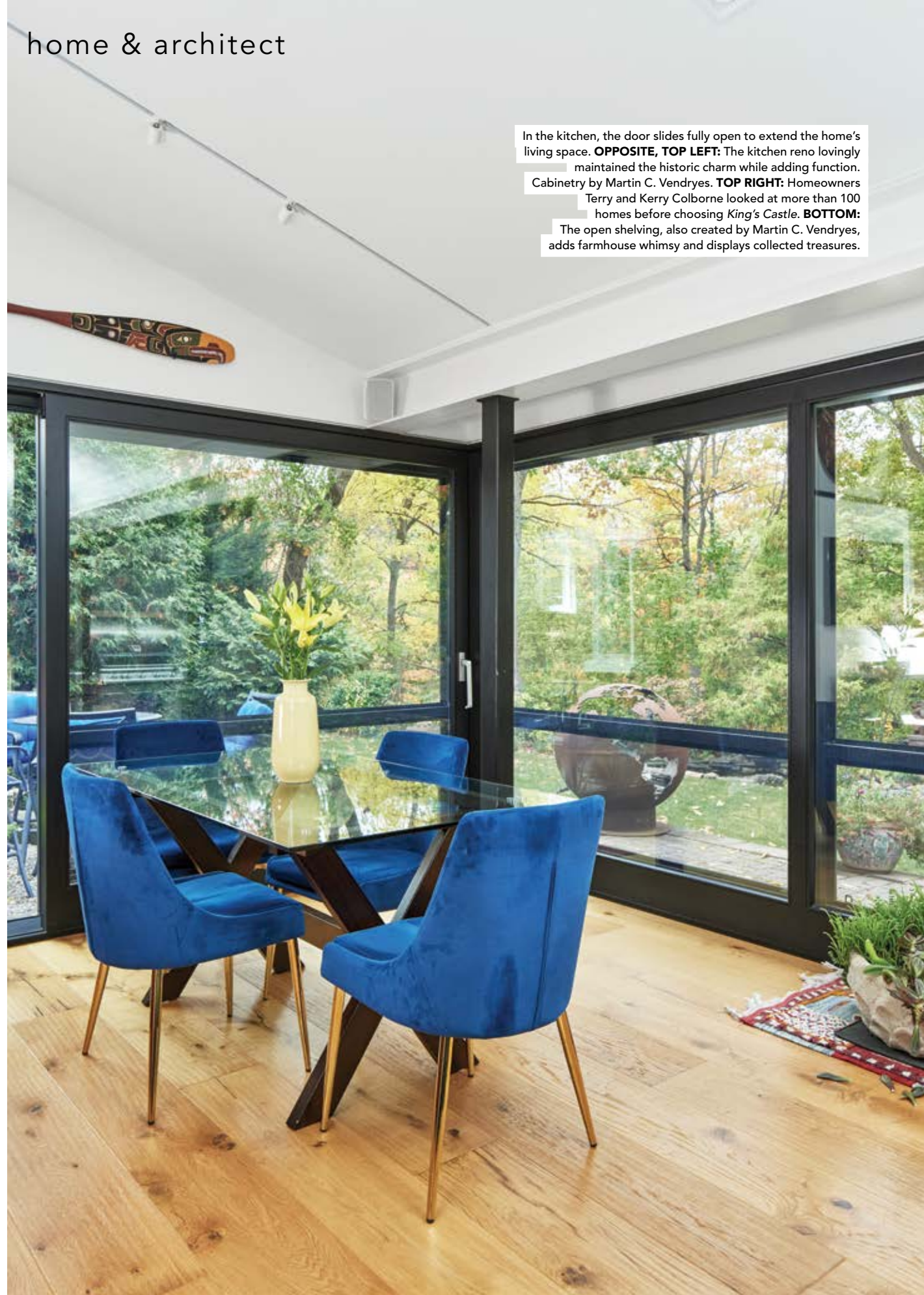
"The design for *King's Castle* introduces a sympathetic modern aesthetic by balancing the play of salvaged and traditional building materials, such as reclaimed wood studs and beams, original brackets and traditional plaster, with modern building materials like glass and steel," says Robyn. "Our firm designs for longevity and it's a collaborative process." With such an ambitious scope, collaboration was key to this project. Updates included a fourth floor reading mezzanine with a lit catwalk and a third-floor primary bedroom with en suite and dressing room. Glass balconies were cut directly into the roofline. A floating stairway, a walnut bookshelf spanning two floors, a modern media room and a kitchen relocation complete the renovation.

Continued on page 81

RIGHT: A small kitchenette in the media room creates easy access when working. **BELOW LEFT:** The beauty of the past can be seen in the tall roof peaks and gingerbread trim. **CENTRE:** Terry's photo studio houses an impressive collection of vintage cameras. **RIGHT:** The media room bathroom took cues from modern design with moody black tile and black framing that mirrors the window wall.



In the kitchen, the door slides fully open to extend the home's living space. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** The kitchen reno lovingly maintained the historic charm while adding function. Cabinetry by Martin C. Vendryes. **TOP RIGHT:** Homeowners Terry and Kerry Colborne looked at more than 100 homes before choosing *King's Castle*. **BOTTOM:** The open shelving, also created by Martin C. Vendryes, adds farmhouse whimsy and displays collected treasures.



The upper-level design took its cue from the view. “Before we contacted Robyn, my husband Terry and I took some heritage construction advice to heart: ‘Fix the house’s envelope first,’” says Kerry. “We replaced cedar shingles with slate, repointed the brick, stripped layers of paint on the roof trim right down to the bare wood, repainted the trim and repaired heritage windows. It was while we had scaffolding over the entire house that we realized just how spectacular the views really were and the idea for balconies was born.” When Robyn arrived, the first thing Kerry asked her to do was walk the scaffolding and determine the best location for balconies. “The floors dictated the height, but as it’s a heritage property, we had to keep balconies as invisible as possible,” says Robyn. “Glass guards helped here, while also delivering unimpeded sightlines.” “Heritage regulations in Oakville state that it cannot look like you have changed the exterior of the house,” Kerry says, “and you have to be able to put the roof back exactly the way it was.”

Originally, Kerry and Terry wanted to open the attic ceiling to create a soaring 23-foot-tall space for the primary bedroom. But Kerry was influenced by a book written by Herbert C. Merry, a fellow who lived in *King's Castle* as a child in the early 1900s. It’s called *God is in the Attic*. “How in good conscience could we rip out the attic knowing that?” says Kerry. Instead, Robyn designed a cosy, four-season reading nook. Light spills into the space through the balcony’s sliding glass door and the original Gothic arch window. It’s one of Kerry’s favourites spaces, with its view of the terraced garden, and ravine backdrop.

Continued on page 82



“THE DESIGN FOR KING’S CASTLE INTRODUCES A SYMPATHETIC MODERN AESTHETIC BY BALANCING THE PLAY OF SALVAGED AND TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS, SUCH AS WOOD STUDS AND BEAMS, ORIGINAL BRACKETS AND PLASTER, WITH MODERN BUILDING MATERIALS LIKE GLASS AND STEEL.”

ABOVE: The attic space is a cosy haven for reading and relaxing. Old meets new with the original Gothic window. The new balcony slides seamlessly into the landscape and looks as though it’s always been there.

A key principle in heritage renovation is juxtaposing new and old – renovating in such a way that what’s new can be distinguished from heritage. “There is also the celebration of the heritage materials themselves,” says Robyn. Natural wood elements, exposed brick walls and glass were used. Solid pine plank floors were carefully restored.

Texture was another key design element. The smooth surfaces and modern lines in the stone, cabinetry and glass offset the rougher textures of the heritage materials. Waterfall edges play beautifully against exposed brick. In the kitchen, the brick is a striking complement to the blue cabinetry. Creamy wall cabinets also play well in this space.

Notice the imperfections on kitchen walls; these were purposely left to add character. In a tongue-in-cheek nod to the house’s name, cabinet hardware on the island (sourced from **Oakville Fine Hardware**) is little metal crowns. In the primary bathroom, there is play between the textures in the tiled plumbing tower and a smooth white cement sculptural wall that Robyn designed to draw out the texture of the original wood and brick. This piece is a nod to Kerry’s passion for art – it’s both a dividing wall and a softly lit sculptural piece. Sections of the wall bookcase, designed by Martin in collaboration with Robyn, were sized to display specific art pieces from Kerry and Terry’s eclectic collection. *Continued on page 84*

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The reno paid special attention to preserving the historic elements by allowing the exposed brick to shine in many of the rooms. **BELOW:** The original beams are artfully juxtaposed with the sculptural cement feature wall.



“Reuse of heritage materials – repurposed and reinstalled – is a sustainable approach to design and construction,” says Robyn. Kerry chimes in, “when we cut the sides of the roof for the balconies, I asked the team to keep the wood. I cleaned and de-nailed the roof boards myself, even removing the plywood and while doing that, it occurred to me I might be cleaning dirt from way back in 1854. Our cabinetmaker, Martin, used the boards to build the shelves in the media room and kitchen. So many reclaimed materials have been repurposed in this house.”

Yes, it’s about creating gorgeous spaces, but function plays a role. The walls on the upper floors are insulated for increased thermal performance and noise reduction.

The kitchen was relocated for easy entertaining. Floor-to-ceiling doors slide open onto the garden on two walls, encouraging guests to wander down to the lily pond, beverage in hand, while dinner is prepared.

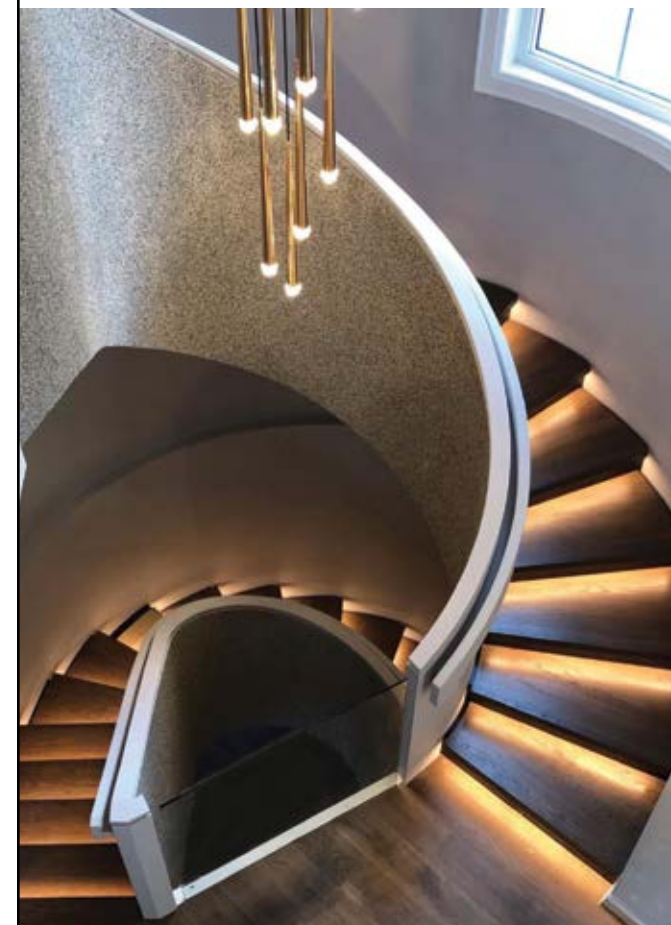
This beautiful physical evolution will continue the story of *King’s Castle* for the next generation. Such evolutions are one of the ways those who come after us understand where the community has been, so they are better able to determine their own path to sustainability. **OH**



The bedroom design integrated the natural lines of the home. A feature wall behind the bed acts as a divider to the walk-through closet.

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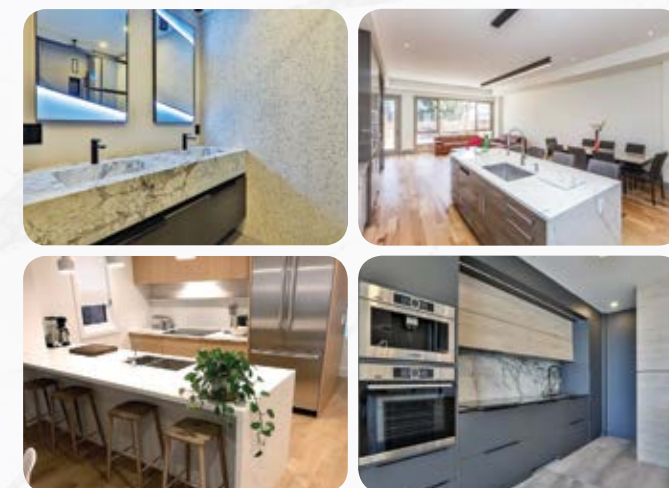
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holiday trends

Add a FESTIVE TOUCH



STORY **PATTI WILSON**

Your home becomes a hosting haven in the fall and winter months, when the chill sets in and people want a warm, cosy place to meet and greet. For some, their homes practically become an open venue for drop-ins and planned gatherings that stretch through the winter and into the new year. Here are some easy tips to keep your home “dressed for guests” on any given day.

MAKE WAY FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The cardinal sin of decorating, for everyday or any occasion, is creating clutter in the process. I'm a big proponent of the “one in, one out” rule, whereby you remove one item for every new piece you intend to introduce into a room. This is especially relevant when adding seasonal décor to an already furnished and accessorized room. Whenever adding a set of new or themed décor or furnishings, your decorating strategy should include the removal of some of your year-round elements in favour of those festive fares. If you are decorating your fireplace mantel, be sure to remove the existing décor and start with a blank slate. This rule also applies to tabletop accessories, centrepieces, pillows and throws. Similarly, swap out the photos in your picture frames and replace pillows and throws with something appropriately themed in a richer fabric such as fleece and chunky wool knits. And what about the decorated tree? Unless you have lots of open space, you'll likely need to remove an armchair or a side table to accommodate this larger item.

Continued on page 88

PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES C LEE**




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TIP: Choose a theme and stick to it. There are many festive options: woodsy cottage, winter wonderland, silver and gold. Carry your chosen theme into others areas of the home, too, such as fresh or faux greenery wrapped around your banister and incorporated into unconventional areas, like in the kitchen and bathrooms.

SET THE MOOD

Lighting contributes to the vibe in your home, which impacts the people who live in your home and visitors. Layer lighting by combining ambient, task and accent lighting that can be increased and decreased, depending on the mood of your gathering. For example, dim light is better suited to dining and intimate gatherings, while brighter light is great for more casual kitchen parties. Installing a dimmer switch on your lights lets you crank it up or down as needed, so you don't have to commit to one type of light – or party!

TIP: Candles are a must at this time of year, adding a key layer to your lighting strategy, not to mention their aesthetic attributes and aroma! But be safe and never leave a candle unattended.



The holidays should be a time of fun and joy, but for many, they are also a source of stress. Take the overwhelm out of the holidays by planning ahead and being prepared. Your gatherings don't have to be overblown or overdone. Just a little thoughtful planning and preparedness will ensure that you enjoy the season just as much as your guests do! **OH**

Patti Wilson, principal of award-winning Patti Wilson Design, is known for creating stylish, thoughtfully curated, livable interiors.



WOW WITH A CENTREPIECE

What's the first thing people see when they enter your home? Many open-concept homes open to a dining area or kitchen with an island, making these the perfect place for a seasonal centerpiece. This will welcome and wow anyone who walks into the home – yourself included! You can't go wrong with a classic floral centerpiece, but stick to the season with elements like evergreen boughs, pinecones and even consider incorporating seasonal fruit and vegetables. One particularly fun thing about the holidays is the opportunity to really lean on the theme and be a little bit extra with light strings, shimmering baubles, ribbons, feathers or candles.

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To Rent or Buy?

THAT IS THE QUESTION

STORY **MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS** | ILLUSTRATION **SHEILA BRITTON**

In life and in real estate, timing is everything. With interest rates ratcheting up at an unnerving pace, is it better to rent and luxuriate in a turnkey, trouble-free existence? Or should one take advantage of plummeting real estate prices and jump into the housing market before mortgage rates soar even higher?

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO? As a consumer, it's hard to know the right financial move in the current real estate climate, which is, at best, murky and at worst, highly volatile.

These are not idle musings. My American husband and I are in the thick of it. After 20 years living in the United States, we decided to move back to my Canadian homeland. I identified a charming, walkable community for us to live in, one with great restaurants and enviable cultural attractions, but by the time we relocated, house prices had soared an astonishing 40 per cent in a mere two years. Our dream of buying a storybook cottage imploded as pre-emptive bully bids and dog-eat-dog bidding wars became the norm.

So, we've been renting. Don't feel sorry for us – we're in a penthouse condo with amazing views, a private rooftop deck and heated underground parking. After decades of

homeownership, we're enjoying the freedom of not paying property taxes, shovelling the walkway or dealing with maintenance issues. But here's the rub: we miss being the rulers of our own domain. We want a real Christmas tree (only faux allowed here) and crave a big gas barbecue instead of the lame electric one mandated by the condo board. But most of all we want a fenced yard for our dog Duncan, who currently lives with our son because we're in a no-pets building.

I have bought and sold eight homes and done things the right way (made a tidy profit), and the soul-destroying way (sold two houses for less than I paid for them). Why do I keep buying real estate? Growing up, I was indoctrinated to believe that renting was "throwing money away" that could more advantageously be used to pay down a mortgage. That reasoning has merit, but on

the other hand, my husband and I don't want to be chumps and overpay for a house that won't hold its value. I consulted some local real estate professionals to get their take on the situation.

The market is correcting and that's a good thing according to Jodi Hannivan of Keller Williams Lifestyles Realty in London. "Now that prices and expectations are more balanced, buyers can ask for reasonable conditions such as financing and home inspections."

According to a recent study released by in-house economists at Desjardins Group, Ontario has moved from a "pandemic-fuelled seller's market" to more "balanced territory." Housing prices are predicted to drop by up to 25 per cent by December 2023 from their all-time high in February 2022.

Is springtime still the ideal time to buy? According to Jodi, maybe not. "Seasonality doesn't really exist in the way it used to," she says. "We see great properties listed throughout the year." Her advice to homebuyers: "Keep up your search. There aren't as many buyers in the winter so you won't face as much competition."

June Leitch, a realtor at Home & Company Real Estate Brokerage in Stratford concurs. "We're still in a transitional market and prices continue to go down slightly on a weekly basis," June says. "After six years of a seller's market buyers now have an advantage because inventory is high and negotiations come into play with almost every deal."

And renting isn't always the cheaper option. Recent stats from rentals.ca indicate: "The average price for all property types across Canada in September was \$2,043 per month." This is an increase of 21.9 per cent from April 2021.

"In our community we have a shortage of rentals and rents are high so it comes down to supply and demand," explains June. "If someone can qualify for a mortgage, they should consider purchasing because their monthly payments will likely be less than their rent."

Will my husband and I finally be able to buy a Victorian charmer on a mature tree-lined street at an affordable price? That remains to be seen. In the meantime, we're enjoying the perks of being renters but looking forward to the day when we can play with our dog in our own backyard. **OH**

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PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

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Kia Kazemian & Goli Basiri

THE DIFFERENCE

The design process we have created differentiates us from the rest. We use the latest design technology to allow our clients to picture themselves in their new homes. A lot of people struggle to see how things will come together, but our clients are easily able to grasp the overall concept through our virtual-reality walkthrough. It provides clients with the most accurate picture possible so they can approve or revise the design. Every inch of a client's home is customizable when they work with us.



CLIENT ADVICE

- Vision: Find a designer who is receptive to your style and taste.
- Communication: Prioritize working with someone who effectively and proactively communicates.
- Execution: Hire someone who will be available throughout the entirety of the project to ensure everything is executed as planned.

Continued on page 94

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WHAT'S NEW?

Tile is making a major comeback. Patterns are HUGE right now. Encaustic styles, herringbone installs, colours and textures – clients are enjoying creating a space that resembles their personalities and experiences and are moving away from the plain and ordinary. It's so exciting and refreshing to see.



TOP RIGHT: Heather, Lene, Natasha, Gina, Dianne & Lisa. RIGHT: Brian, Michel, Hekuran & Harout.



ADVICE

We always advise our clients to look at products that will work for them rather than what their neighbours chose. Have young children or large dogs at home? A luxury vinyl plank may be a better option than a natural hardwood in terms of wearability.



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MEMORABLE FINDS

When you salvage a farmhouse and remove the front porch only to find a magnificent entrance door with transom and sidelights that has been hidden for years – that is really exciting. Or when you acquire a piece of antique furniture that has a historical story attached to it that we can share with our customers.



Lorna & John Parcher

TREASURE HUNTERS

Stepping outside of ourselves is key to our buying process. We step back and try to see things from a customer's point of view. We believe in purchasing architectural components that can be integrated into a current home. When we purchase antiques we either love it, understand its usefulness or perhaps it has a story that can be shared.



Continued on page 96

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WORKING WITH CLIENTS

We work with the majority of our clients right from the start of the build process. When getting involved right from the conceptual stage, it allows us to get a very clear understanding of the style, size and budget of the new home or renovation the client is looking to do. This allows us to guide them through the entire design-and-build process while staying mindful of their criteria.



TEAM PHOTO: JASON HARTOG, HOME PHOTOS: HENDRIKS





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Continued on page 98

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Jill Fraser & Mackenzie Capitano

CURRENT TRENDS

Trends in home décor and styling are what give homes their edge and personality. We work with our clients to determine their fundamental style for their large investment pieces, such as custom draperies, upholstered furniture and original artwork. Then, we add their favourite trends in the accessories and styling items so the rooms feel current and fresh. Our mantra is that your home should be the best expression of your personality and taste.

WORKING HAND-IN-HAND

Decorating a home properly can be a daunting task as there are so many options for each of the many decisions to be made. We follow a specific process for helping clients move from design dreams to reality, which involves multiple on-site meetings and asking a lot of questions to determine lifestyle and functional needs before any of the pretty stuff can be considered. We make sure we understand how clients use their home before we begin to think about the look they are trying to achieve. More important than how a home looks is how clients feel in their home and that is the real secret to a successful decorating project.

Continued on page 100

Designer - Karin Bennett Designs • Contractor - Rose Building Group • Photographer - Particle Film Company

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WORKING WITH CLIENTS

We provide quality and professionalism from the start to the finish of every project. We remain engaged in every step of the process to bring the level of quality expected by each client we work with. All projects have a unique feel that reflects not just the owners, but the home itself. We listen to the client's needs and wishes, big or small, to bring every vision to reality. We demonstrate knowledge and non pretentiousness in detailed, itemized quotes that lend themselves to a seamless and stress-free experience for each individual. We work closely with local businesses to support our own community. These include, but are not limited to, an architect and engineer and our own design consultant to help with the selection process. We take all the responsibility off of the client so they can focus on their daily lives and leave the details to us.



KEEPING IT INDIVIDUAL

Each renovation is tailored to fit the homeowners' needs, as we create a space that is made for living in, not just for beauty. We work with clients to create clean lines, fresh ideas that add colour and creativity to every project, reflecting the personality and vision of the homeowners.

Continued on page 102

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ADVICE

When working with a designer, it’s always important to communicate your preferences and must haves. However, it is equally important to be open to new ideas, for that’s precisely what a good designer should be bringing to the table. **OH**

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THE DESIGNER

Design should enhance your life and create a space that you can live in comfortably. Laura Dorrington, the principal designer at **Common Purpose Design**, lives by these words when designing any space for her clients. Formed in 2020, Common Purpose Design’s goal is to make design services accessible for all homeowners. Whether building a home from the ground up, transforming a single room or overhauling your furniture and décor, Laura wants to help create spaces throughout Southern Ontario where you can sit back at the end of the day, a coffee in hand, and enjoy the space you live in, stress free. “Creating a space that makes my clients feel truly comfortable and where their design style is reflected, that is my goal,” says Laura. “I help guide the way so, when you come home, you can just melt away. I think everybody deserves to have a beautiful home.”

Laura Dorrington



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

livable
DESIGN

PHOTOGRAPHY LAURA DORRINGTON

TRENDS

Great design lies at the intersection between function and beauty. Building a space with a neutral base creates the perfect backdrop for personal items and textiles with personality. Laura finds herself reaching for Benjamin Moore’s White Dove, Tapestry Beige, and Balboa Mist again and again. For 2023, Laura says checkerboard flooring will emerge – but in modern, neutral palettes. Warm, moody colour tones will also continue to come forward.

SIGNATURE APPROACH

A personalized approach is at the heart of Common Purpose Design. Laura first likes to get to know homeowners and their space, which allows her to streamline every step of the process – from concept to completion – and zero-in on details that are important. “Design should tell a story,” says Laura. “People should be excited about the pieces they choose for their home. This is why I love incorporating antiques along with modern pieces; that juxtaposition really brings soul into a space.”

SERVICES

From conceptualization and planning to execution and purchasing finishing details, Laura believes in being accessible to her clients. Creating a functional floor plan of each project is key to helping home and business owners consider the flow of their space and visualize the result. She also offers online design options for those unavailable to meet in person.

Laura’s On-Call Designer service is an ideal feature for homeowners in the process of making updates to their home and would like regular consultations with a designer. This service is available for purchase in five or 10-hour blocks that never expire. **OH**



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Pick A Colour

EXPERT ADVICE ON CHOOSING PAINT COLOURS FOR YOUR KIDS' ROOMS

STORY **CONNIE JESKE CRANE**

From bedtime stories and board games to play dates. From Facetiming friends to homework. Your child's room is a place where a lifetime of memories are made. So when it's time to paint and decorate, let's face it, parents may feel a bit of pressure.

Colour in particular, so central to a child's room, may have you wavering a bit. Do you go bold or neutral with some bright splashes? And, more practically, is it possible to land on a colour that doesn't just work for today, but lasts for a few more ages and stages?

We took our questions to Sharon Grech, a design expert with Benjamin Moore Paints in Canada. Here are some helpful tips from Sharon:

Involve your child

Rather than just a quick chat to suss out your child's favourite colour or pop culture character, Sharon suggests a deeper dive. If kids are old enough, she says, "Let them have some creativity and learn about the process so it can be fun to go through it with them and see what colours they like, rather than just throwing down a paint deck," she says. She also suggests going online or looking through magazines with your kids and "getting out, letting them show you what they like and what they're interested in."

Sharon says today's trends are more about personalization "as opposed to saying, 'Oh, everybody's using pink' or 'Everybody's doing this.' It's more like everyone adding their own personality," Sharon says.

Ultimately, involving your child more, she says, may result in a décor scheme that has longevity. "It might even make them feel more like 'I'm going to keep my room tidy and clean because I was part of it!'" Sharon says.

Continued on page 108



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BENJAMIN MOORE

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Think outside the box with colour

Once you’ve made colour choices, the options don’t stop there. You may want to do something beyond applying colour to all four walls.

SHARON HAS CREATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

While **accent walls** have been around for a long time, she still likes them, saying colour helps define different areas. “The idea of the rooms being more multifunctional is big – the room has more functions than just for sleeping. And colour is a really great way to help define the difference.” One option, Sharon says, is applying a bold colour to one wall, while keeping others neutral.

Also popular is **colour blocking** or **colour dipping**. Here, Sharon says, you might run a favourite colour part-way up the walls, “maybe three quarters of the way up, or a quarter depending on what you’re defining. I think in a young kid’s room it almost feels like a horizontal stripe or band where things that kids can reach are below a certain area and defined by a colour – which is fun.”

Painted furniture can be a nice joint DIY project too, says Sharon. “Painting a headboard or chair or painting a dresser. It’s a great way to bring colour and fun into the space.”

“**Murals** are absolutely a thing I’ve been seeing,” she adds. Whether you hire an artist or paint one with your kids, murals can make a room personal and memorable. Sharon even sees them in tween and teen bedrooms but notes with this age group designs lean “more geometric, something like a mountainscape or treescape, but really simple and graphic.”



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BENJAMIN MOORE

Don’t be afraid to break some rules

Finally, Sharon says traditional paint and colour rules aren’t absolute. For example, “I don’t think colour really defines gender the way it did 50 years ago or even 20 years ago. I don’t think about rules for colour, especially when it comes to gender.”

Even with those tried-and-true rules, Sharon says there is wiggle room. “Maybe you think, ‘Oh I can’t use a dark colour because it’s such a small room.’” Here, Sharon says it’s more about creating balance. “Colour is very emotional and definitely we’re drawn to certain colours because of that emotional connection. You don’t want to lose that completely.”

So how to make that bold colour that your child loves work in a small space? From a composition standpoint, Sharon says, “Really, any colour can look fantastic in a room. It’s really how you use it.” She suggests adding good lighting and possibly balancing bold or dark shades with some neutral walls. “It can really add a lot of joy if it’s your kid’s favourite colour.” **OH**

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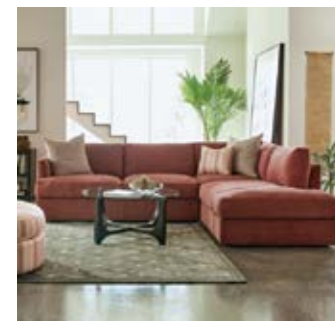
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MATERIALS

- 3 oranges
- Sharp knife
- Parchment paper
- Cookie sheet
- Hot glue gun
- String & needle
- Star anise
- Cinnamon sticks
- Rosemary sprigs
- Peppercorns
- Wooden beads (optional)
- String & needle

HOW-TO

Start by cutting the oranges into ¼-inch thick slices. Preheat oven to 200°F. Place sliced oranges onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Make sure orange slices are equally spaced and not touching each other. Bake oranges for between two-and-a-half and five hours, until slices are translucent.

Next, remove oranges from oven and let cool for two hours.

Then, with a glue gun, start decorating the orange slices. Glue some star anise to the centre, add some pink peppercorns, a cinnamon stick and a sprig of rosemary to complete your ornament. Have fun, get creative and try different combinations!

Lastly, cut some string to hang your ornament. Use a needle to make a hole near the top of the orange and thread the string. Add a wooden bead or a cinnamon stick to the string to complete the look. Knot the ends of the string.

Add these dried orange ornaments to your tree, as a decorative touch to your table or add to a gift for that special someone. **OH**



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3 REASONS Designers Love SCANDINAVIAN STYLE

If you've seen my work, then it should come as no surprise that I'm a big fan of Scandinavian décor. This distinctive aesthetic is also popular among many of my clients, who are seeking a home that is defined by simplicity, warmth and comfort, with contemporary flair. These happen to be the very qualities that encapsulate what has been affectionately dubbed "Scandi style" and from an end-user perspective, are what home goals are made of. From a more technical designer's perspective, here are three reasons this unique aesthetic has been at the forefront of interior design since the 50s, and it isn't likely to fade anytime soon.



IT WORKS

Function is one of the fundamental values and guiding principles of Scandinavian design. This approach gives precedence to the practical over the ornamental. Looks are important when it comes to design but the utilitarian mindset behind this decorating style focuses on efficiency, maximizing space, the user's energy and the materials used in construction. Aesthetically, Scandinavian-inspired design embraces clean lines, subtle curves and tapered legs, with a "less is more" mindset.

Another important aspect of this look isn't about what's in the space, but rather what isn't there. I'm referring to clutter. Regardless of your home's style, the dreaded "C" word creeps up and captures our home, and with it, our sense of space and sanity. Decluttering is even more critical in Scandinavian spaces to enhance a home's function and simplicity.

Continued on page 116

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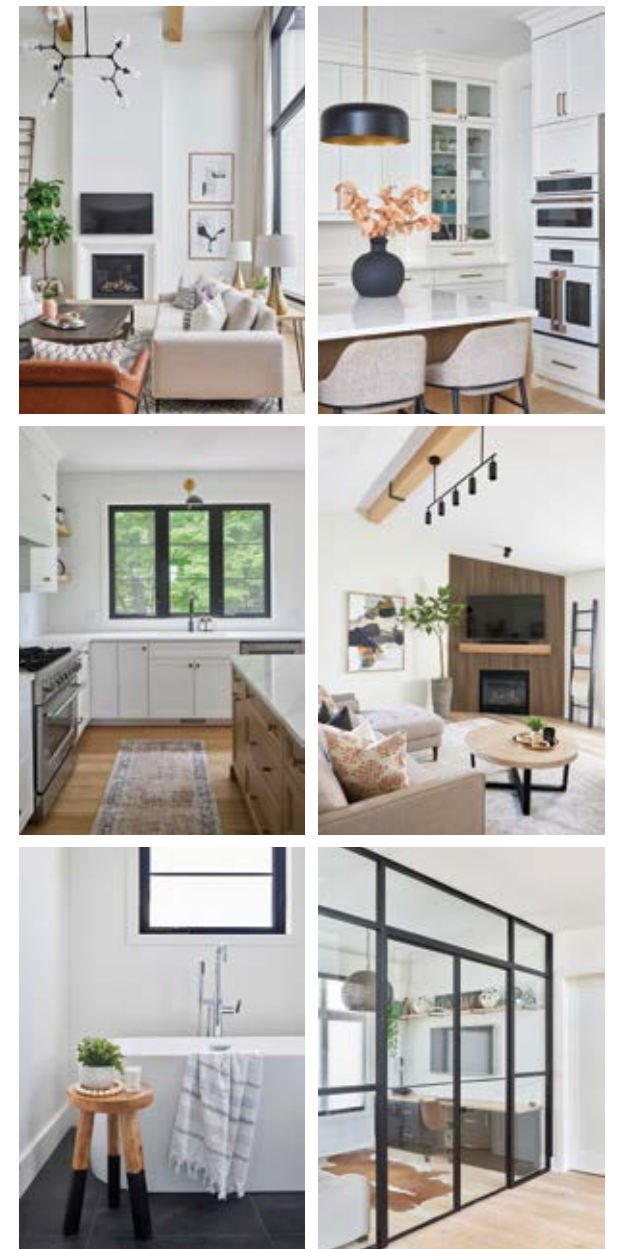
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IT HAS STAYING POWER

The neutral palette that defines Scandinavian style gives it a much longer shelf life than perhaps the bolder, more “trendy” styles that come – and go – and quickly show their age. This makes it a winning choice for many clients, who don’t want to endure the inconvenience of yet another redesign in a few years, or suffer the cost.

This minimal colour palette commonly includes variations of white, off-white, ivory, beige, taupe and grey, and visual depth is achieved through the layering of multi-tonal neutrals, some subtle (and specific) patterns, and a variety of different textures. Black details bring balance to this neutral backdrop, add emphasis and draw attention as key focal points in the space, such as black-and-white prints or black-framed artwork, black accessories or accent furniture.

Materials also tend toward the neutral and organic, with a big focus on wood everywhere from flooring and furniture to accessories.

PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI



PHOTO: STEPHANI BUCHMAN



IT FEELS LIKE HOME

The role of a designer is to make a house (or a condo) feel like a home. A home is intrinsically warm, cosy and comfortable, inviting you to come in, sit down and put your feet up. When a client feels all this in their newly designed home, a designer’s work is done. I love Scandinavian décor because it does exactly that.

The Scandinavian concept of “hygge” is about comfort as a state of mind. So, how does a feeling or a thought materialize in a physical and sensory way? Enter texture. Think oversize cushions, cotton chenille and alpaca wool throws, knotted area rugs and fluffy sheepskin. Now, layer these over hardwood, wicker, leather and linen. If you picked up on a theme, very good! Scandi style leans heavily on organic materials and motifs that instantly warm the heart and body.

Scandinavian style has it all – high function, simplicity and beauty, all priorities in today’s hectic world. A home should be a place to escape and feel embraced by the people, things and emotions that bring you comfort. If you’re in search of a new aesthetic for 2023 or are craving some cosy, give Scandinavian a go.

Lisa Kooistra is the creative director and principal designer for Lisa Kooistra Design.



PHOTO: STEPHANI BUCHMAN

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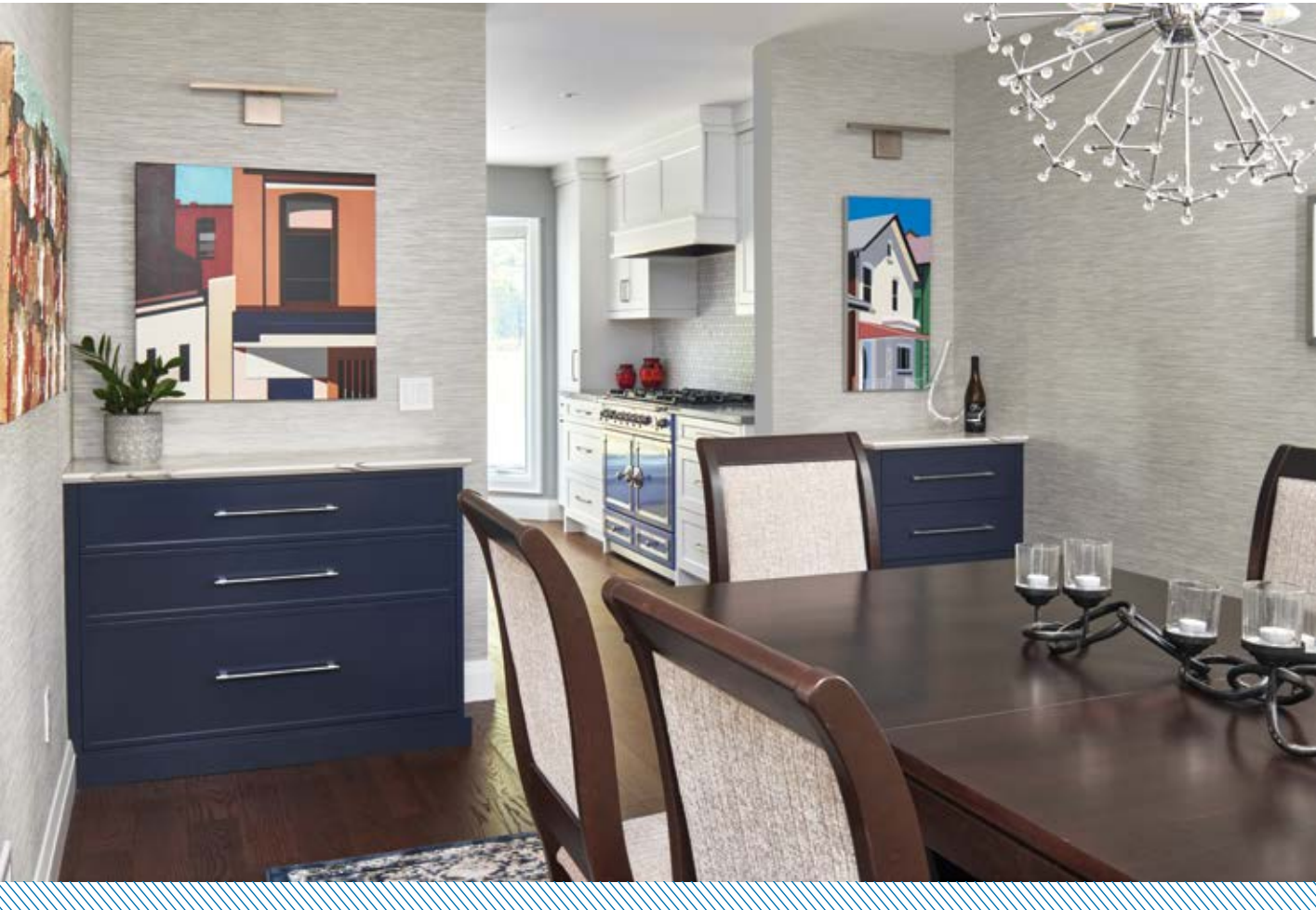
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family DINNER



The rare formal dining room is the heart of this family home. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The dining room walls were wrapped in grasscloth wallpaper, used as a subtle backdrop to the collection of bright artwork on the walls. **BOTTOM:** Mary Cath Altobelli of Alto Interiors.



Read a few interior design blogs or magazines and you might think the formal dining room is dead, sacrificed to open-concept designs featuring more casual, multi-purpose spaces.

But the dining room is alive and well in this Ancaster home. In fact, it's the heart of the family abode, given prominence during renovations in 2020 at the homeowner's request to builder **Rob VanderBruggen** of **Ridgeline Renovations**, and splendour at the hands of decorator **Mary Cath Altobelli** of **Alto Interiors**.

"We've always used the dining room," the homeowner says. "That's always been the space we eat in as a family. When you say you use your dining room, people say, 'No one has a dining room anymore,' but it was actually my favourite room in the house."

It still is, and now there's more of it to love. Rob shifted the dining space from its cramped quarters off the kitchen at the back of the house to where the formal living room used to be at the front.

The living room was rarely used but in its new incarnation, it's a space for gathering. Design touches include a firework pendant from **Gerrie Lighting & Fan Studio** over a **Penwood Furniture** dark wood dining table, and a luxe area rug warming sprawling hardwood and improving the acoustics. Combined, they do away with any stuffiness and create a place to lounge when the occasion calls.

Continued on page 120



PHOTO: ADRIAN ALTABELLI



The kitchen doubled in size during renovations, creating a generous, creative area for the homeowners who love to cook.

The walls are covered in grasscloth wallpaper, timeless and subtle enough to not distract from the artwork on the walls, including a panoramic view of Locke Street by Hamilton photographer Paul Elia and two original Gordon Levertton paintings that honour Hamilton architecture.

Along with custom drapery by Alto Interiors through **The Decorating Centre**, they are invitations to linger, Mary Cath explains. “The challenge was how to showcase the art, and they had many great pieces, and how to make the room feel cosy,” Mary Cath says. “It’s not just for celebrations. It’s for Tuesday night pizza.”

Two built-in navy cabinets by **Silverbirch Cabinetry | Millwork**

flank the passage to the kitchen and neighbouring great room. They replaced original plans for a butler’s pantry, keeping the dining area spacious and in proportion to neighbouring rooms.

Scrapping the living room also doubled the size of the kitchen, now a generous area for the homeowners to indulge in one of their favourite pastimes of cooking together.

Friday night is date night for the couple, parents to two teens, and with the help of a blue La Cornue range from **Goemans Appliances** that conjures a French country galley, they prepare elaborate menus featuring lamb, duck or pork tenderloin.

“It’s like having a Mercedes in your kitchen,” Mary Cath says. “I told

the homeowners, ‘We can do whatever you want in a kitchen but the range is the star of the show.’ It’s old and new combined and it’s unique and inviting.”

On weekends when the family dines together, it’s spaghetti and meatballs or roast chicken done up in a space that oozes form and function with plenty of gleaming white cabinets by Silverbirch and additional open shelving for lightness.

An oversize island is topped with grey Cambria Queen Anne quartz that boasts dramatic veining and expands the work and gathering space.

Further enhancements to the kitchen included removing a wall between it and the family room, creating a more open and efficient layout.

Thoughtful touches in the family room include two swivel chairs in front of picture windows, offering a view of the ravine in the backyard and a place to quietly sip morning coffee before shifting attention back to the action in the home. *Continued on page 122*



The cosy, ski-chalet inspired family room overlooks the greenspace and ravine in the backyard. **ABOVE LEFT:** A mudroom was added to the main floor, adding much-needed storage at the front of the busy family home. **ABOVE:** A double vanity from Silverbirch adds a pop of soft colour in the kids’ neutral bathroom.



home & designer

A new fireplace surround in hand-hewn stone came together like a jigsaw puzzle at the end of the renovation, giving a ski chalet vibe that channels the family's love of the sport and outdoors.

"Fireplaces aren't so much about the flame as they are about a texture or focal point," Mary Cath says. "They bring warmth even when the flame is not there."

Knocking down the wall between the kitchen and family room meant less wall space for a robust collection of art, however. The solution was to treat the upstairs hallway like a gallery where the experience of "getting lost in" the paintings of local artists Julie Veenstra, Marina Randazzo and Gordon Levertton is helped along by a Solatube that funnels natural light into the hallway.

A freshly stained staircase and new spindles make it easy to peer upstairs from the main level and be intrigued by the view.

"Hamilton does have a really great (art) scene and there are so many artists locally that we don't have to go outside our community," the homeowner says. "It's important to us to put something up on our wall that's from our community." *Continued on page 124*



“Fireplaces aren’t so much about the flame as they are about a texture or focal point,” Mary Cath says. “They bring warmth even when the flame is not there.”

LEFT: The powder room was a space to have some fun; a bold Cambria quartz floating vanity and tiled wall by Mario's Tile pair to create a room to remember. **ABOVE:** A new hand-hewn stone fireplace surround warms the family room.

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The en suite and entryway to the main bedroom were overhauled and “put back together (by Rob) like a sanctuary,” Mary Cath says. Rob made space for a large glass shower, double vanity with custom-framed mirrors and a new freestanding tub from **Wolseley Plumbing** that’s surrounded by new built-ins under the eaves of the gable where it sits.


Back downstairs, the finishing touches on the main level include a striking boutique powder room and a mudroom that took over the laundry room – which was relocated to the basement. Cubbies for each family member were carved into the space to tuck away outdoor gear, shoes and cell phones. Beyond the dining room, the walls are painted in classic **Benjamin Moore** Stonington Gray.

Two years after the renovation, the novelty of the changes haven’t worn off. It still feels like a new home, and the homeowners are grateful to have had both Rob and Mary Cath’s expertise. **OH**




TOP LEFT: The primary bedroom’s en suite was expanded to add space for a new freestanding tub and storage. **ABOVE:** The staircase was given new life with a fresh stain and new spindles. **FAR LEFT:** The soft primary bedroom, tucked away at the top of the stairs, overlooks the wooded area behind the home. **LEFT:** A large glass shower was added to the en suite during renovations.



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Harmen Design Inc., 69
Jordan Station Design Co. Inc., 75
Robyn Huether Architect Inc., 83

ART/ARTISANS/ART GALLERIES/
STUDIOS/WORKSHOPS

Hamiltons of Pelham, 33
Nest, 39
Serendipity Soy Candle Factory, 89

AUDIO VIDEO/HOMEAUTOMATION/
ELECTRONICS/SMART HOME
TECHNOLOGY

Schneider Electric, 10
Thomas TV, 26

AWNINGS/TENTS/SHELTERS

Van Am Outdoor Living, 18, 110

BEDS & BEDDING/MATTRESSES/
SLEEP PRODUCTS

Covers Canada, 103
Critelli’s Fine Furniture, 49

BUILDERS

Ambassador Fine Custom Homes Inc., 7
Frank Ricci Custom Renovations, 113
Homes By Hendriks, 39
Ridgeline Renovations, 125
Rinaldi Homes, 16
Rob’s Quality Construction, 25
Rock Cliff Custom Homes, 12&13
Scarlett Homes Ltd., 99

CABINETS & MILLWORK/CARPENTRY/
FINE WOODWORKING/CUSTOM
FURNITURE

Enns Cabinetry, 17
Martin C Vendryes Woodworking, 83
Milestone Millwork & Custom Kitchens, 91
Silverbirch Cabinetry, 123
Unique Custom Cabinets, 20

CHARITABLE/NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS

Habitat for Humanity, 127

CONSIGNMENT

The Millionaire’s Daughter, 11

COUNTERTOPS

First In Counters, 97
Rockstella Stonery, 85
Stone On The Go, 115
Take Us for Granite, 41

ELECTRICAL

Schneider Electric, 10

EXTERIOR FINISHES/IMPROVEMENTS

Spray-Net, 107

FABRIC/UPHOLSTERY/CANVAS

Buy The Yard Interiors, 123
Simply White Interiors, 31

FINANCIAL/INSURANCE/
MORTGAGE/INVESTING

Mortgage Alliance Golden Horseshoe, 91

FIREPLACES & STOVES/ACCESSORIES

The Source for Home Comfort, 33

FLOORING

Barton Bath + Floor, 125
Eden Tile-It, 99
The Floor Shop, 131

FLORAL DESIGN/FLORISTS

Blooms Fresh, 87
Satellite Gardens, 87

FOOD & DRINK/RESTAURANTS/
CATERING/DELI

The Platter Company, 24

FURNITURE & HOME DÉCOR/
ACCENTS/GIFTS/COLLECTIBLES

Arcade Home, 21
Buy The Yard Interiors, 123
Cornerstone Home Interiors, 66&67
Country Charm Mennonite Furniture, 6
Critelli’s Fine Furniture, 49
Dal’s Home Furnishings, 15
Graham & Brooks, 69
Interiors by Better Shade, 22, 23, 110
Joshua Creek Trading Furniture
& Home Decor, 27
Lofty Ambitions, 97
My Back Shed, 39
Nest, 39
Simply White Interiors, 31
Stoney Creek Furniture, 3, 111
The Millionaire’s Daughter, 11
Urban Cottage, 87
Vanessa Ferro Design, 73

GARDEN CENTRES/GREENHOUSES/
NURSERIES

Blooms Fresh, 87
Satellite Gardens, 87

HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Schneider Electric, 10
Thomas TV, 26

HOME IMPROVEMENTS/RENOVATIONS

Aberdeen Interiors, 37
F. Ingham Construction Company Ltd, 115
Frank Ricci Custom Renovations, 113
Giura Brothers Inc, 109
Homes By Hendriks, 39
Let It Rain: Roofing &
Home Renovations, 111
Ridgeline Renovations, 125
Rob’s Quality Construction, 25

INTERIOR DECORATING/INTERIOR
DESIGN/HOME STAGING

215 Design Co, 115
Alto Interiors, 123
Common Purpose Design, 51
Elegant Living Decorating, 89, 109
Francesca Designs, 83
Harmen Design Inc., 69
Milenkoff Designs, 65
Sarah Christina Interiors, 63, 110
Simply White Interiors, 31
Sprague Interiors Inc., 21
Vanessa Ferro Design, 73

KITCHEN & BATH

Barton Bath + Floor, 125
Crodon Kitchen and Bath Centre, 129
Enns Cabinetry, 17
Milestone Millwork & Custom Kitchens, 91
Nine Lives Custom Refinishing, 89
Oakville Kitchen & Bath Centre, 4&5
Silverbirch Cabinetry, 123
The Ensuite Bath & Kitchen
Showroom, 63, 110
Unique Custom Cabinets, 20

LANDSCAPE DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE/
LANDSCAPING/LAWN & GARDEN

DeKorte’s Landscaping, 41
Niagara Waterscapes, 37
Shades of Summer Landscaping
and Maintenance, 63

LIGHTING

Distinctive Lighting Concepts, 75
Don’s Light House, 37

MOVING & STORAGE

Mountaineer Movers Limited, 123
Organized Transitions, 17

NEW HOME COMMUNITIES

Fonthill Abbey – Rinaldi Homes, 16
Scarlett Homes Ltd., 99

ORGANIZATION/STORAGE

Closets by Design, 2

OUTDOOR FURNITURE/STRUCTURES

Van Am Outdoor Living, 18, 110

PAINTING & DECORATING

Benjamin Moore, 14
Bronte Village Paint & Decor, 14
Creek Road Paints, 109
Oakville Paint & Décor, 14
Spray-Net, 107
The Painters Place, 14

PAINTING, PRIMING, BLASTING
& STAINING

Nine Lives Custom Refinishing, 89

PLUMBING

Aberdeen Plumbing, 37
Barton Bath + Floor, 125

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT/
MAINTENANCE

Brick Properties Inc, 65

REAL ESTATE

Coldwell Banker Community Professionals –
Vince Fracassi, 8
Hodgins Realty Group, 132
PEAK Performers Realty – Eli Milenkoff, 65
Sam McDadi Real Estate, 29

ROOFING

Let It Rain: Roofing &
Home Renovations, 111
Taylor Made Roofs, 33

STAIRS/RAILINGS

Kenedy Stairs, 125
Next Step, 85

STONE PRODUCTS/VENEER

GTA Stone Care Ltd., 129

STONE RESTORATION

GTA Stone Care Ltd., 129

TILE

Barton Bath + Floor, 125
Eden Tile-It, 99

WINDOW TREATMENTS

Array Blinds, 41
Budget Blinds, 117
Buy The Yard Interiors, 123
Covers Canada, 103
Interiors by Better Shade, 22, 23, 110
Oakville Paint & Décor, 14
Salnek’s Custom Window Treatments, 9
Simply White Interiors, 31
Smart Shutter Canada, 55

WINDOWS & DOORS

Doorway Inc, 101
Unitech Doors Manufacturer Inc., 91



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Ingredients

GRAHAM CRUST

- 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 5 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ cup granulated sugar

CHEESECAKE FILLING

- 4 8-ounce blocks full-fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs, room temperature

BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream, room temperature
- ¼ cup butter, room temperature
- 2 Tbsp bourbon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp fine sea salt

Instructions

CHEESECAKE

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Using a food processor, pulse graham crackers into crumbs. Combine with melted butter and sugar. Press mixture into a 9-inch springform pan. Prebake crust for 10 minutes. Once baked, remove from the oven.

To prepare the cheesecake filling, using your mixer, beat together cream cheese and sugar on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add sour cream and vanilla until combined. Beat in eggs one at a time, stopping after the last egg is combined to prevent overbeating. Pour the cheesecake batter on top of the crust. Use a rubber spatula or spoon to smooth it into an even layer.

Place in oven and bake for 55-70 minutes, until the centre is set. When it's done, the centre of the cheesecake will wobble slightly if you gently shake the pan. Turn the oven off and open the oven door slightly. Let the cheesecake sit in the oven and cool down for 1 hour. Remove from oven and cool cheesecake completely uncovered at room temperature. Then cover and refrigerate the cheesecake for at least 4 hours or overnight.

BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

Combine sugar and water in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir once to combine and leave untouched until the sugar has caramelized. The sugar will slowly turn from gold to an amber colour. Cooking the caramel longer will enhance the bitterness and is up to personal preference. Once it reaches an amber colour, remove from heat and slowly whisk in the heavy cream. The mixture will bubble – be careful of the steam. Add in butter and whisk until combined. Add bourbon, vanilla and sea salt and whisk to combine. Set aside and let cool in the fridge until thickened.

TO SERVE

Remove cheesecake from the springform pan. Pour the caramel sauce over top and place back into the fridge to set or until ready to serve. **OH**



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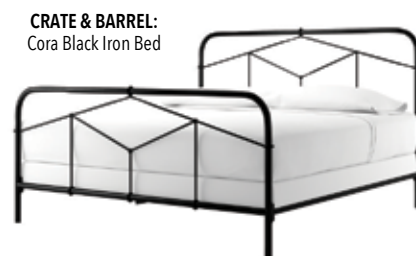
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