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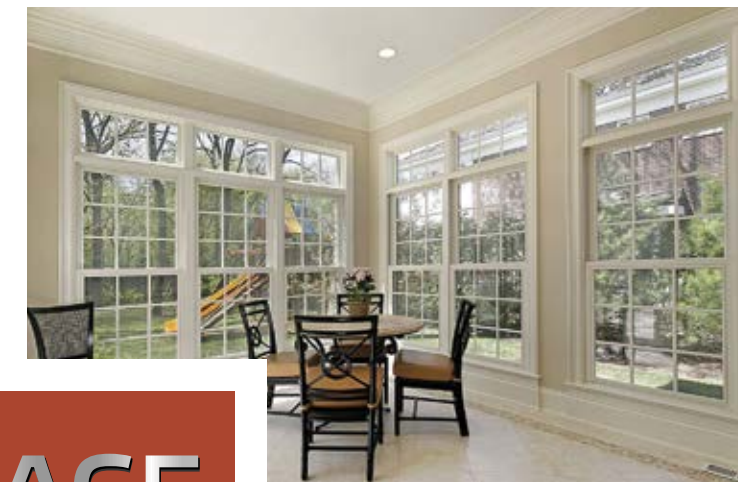
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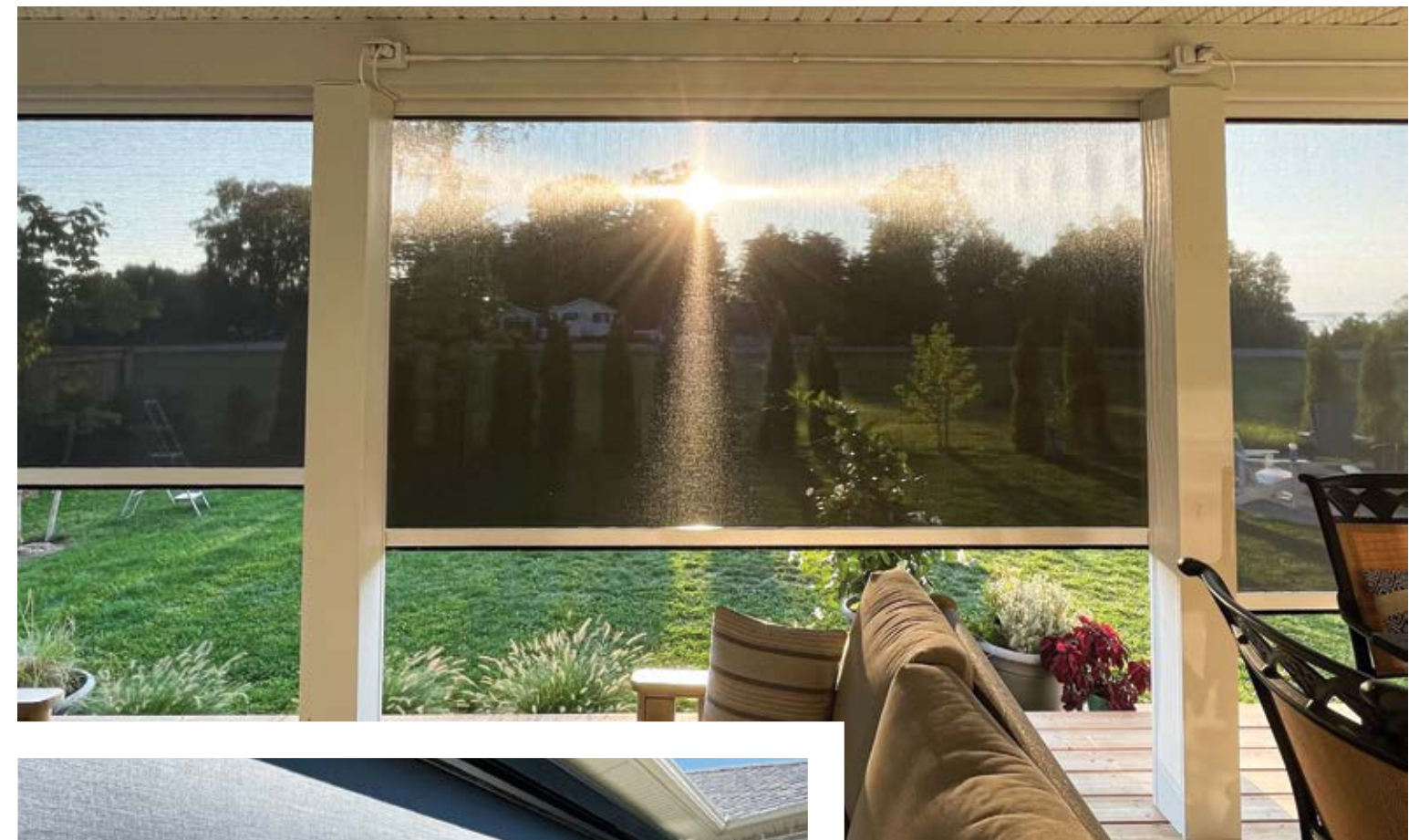
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FOR ME, SUMMER IS THE HAPPIEST OF SEASONS.

It gives you permission to do nothing, to feel the sun on your face, admire an electric blue sky or just quietly observe the symmetry of a blade of grass. Summertime entertaining is easy – throw

veggies and burgers on the grill, slather up a platter of corn with butter and serve ice cream with fresh berries for dessert and your guests are happy.

Other delights await you between these covers. The two modern homes featured in this issue – one in Grand Bend and the other in North London – are both stunning all year-round, but they shine a little more brightly in the summer months when their outdoor spaces are transformed by food, fun and laughter.

There's lots more to savour, including recipes for an unexpected kind of burger and a stylish summer dessert bursting with tropical flavours.

Speaking of style, does yours lean towards farmhouse, Bohemian chic or Mid-century modern? "What's Your Design Aesthetic" will help you define and refine your interior spaces to create a more personalized, cohesive whole. We also offer crafty instructions on how to make a beaded chandelier (I know I want one!) and hope to inspire you to "Try Something New" in your garden.

Whatever your summertime vibe, I promise you'll find something intriguing to capture your interest and attention. So enjoy doing nothing, and Happy Summer!

Megan Smith-Harris, Managing Editor
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Lake Huron vistas from a custom build in Grand Bend. Story, page 22. Photography by Jason Hartog.



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

THE ARRIVAL OF SUMMER IN ONTARIO BRINGS A COLLECTIVE DESIRE TO EXTEND OUR LIVING QUARTERS OUTDOORS. AFTER MONTHS OF COLD, SNOWY AND GREY WEATHER, WE DON'T WANT TO START COMPLAINING ABOUT THE HEAT! HERE ARE SOME SOLUTIONS — AT VARIOUS PRICE POINTS AND LEVELS OF PERMANENCY — THAT OFFER A REPRIEVE FROM THE HOT SUMMER SUN SO YOU CAN BE MORE COMFORTABLE ENJOYING LIFE OUTDOORS.

Hats

A good old-fashioned, wide-brimmed hat will provide instant shade from the sun. Choose an option that is lightweight and breathable (such as cotton or straw). A four-inch brim generally provides the protection you need on your face, ears and neck.

Umbrellas

An umbrella is an economical solution that can provide shelter from the glaring summer sun — and it can be moved to where you need it around your property. Umbrellas can tilt as the sun shifts during the day and raised or lowered depending upon the strength/heat of the sun. You need a sturdy base and remember to take it down during high winds! Choose high-quality fabrics that are colourfast and provide UV protection.

Shade Sails

Shade sails offer protection from the sun (and light rain/drizzle) and are more affordable than a more permanent roofed structure. However, you need to ensure appropriate supports as shade sails are aptly named and can catch the wind. Available in a wide array of colours and different shapes, they are a great way to provide UV protection for children's play spaces in open areas.



Shade Sails Canada

Retractable Awnings

Retractable awnings can be secured to your home or building. The benefits are that you retract an awning when you want the sun (perhaps spring and fall or early morning/evening in the summer) and extend it during the hottest times of the day when protection from the sun is most desirable.



Sunbrella Retractable Awning

Pergolas

Pergolas are identifiable structures with columns that support cross beams and open rafters (no solid roof). Pergolas diffuse the harshness of direct sunlight but do not protect from rain. They allow the breeze to circulate freely. They can be freestanding or attached to your home and can be designed to be contemporary or traditional, depending upon your design aesthetic. Pergolas can also offer a structure to support climbing vines and blooms, providing visual interest and additional shade. Consult a landscape professional when considering which plants will thrive in your zone (as well as the soil, exposure to wind and sun, drainage, maintenance, the possibility of invasiveness, etc.). There are also retractable canopies and canvas shades that can be incorporated into pergola designs.



Toja Grid Pergola

Gazebos

Gazebos are roofed structures often constructed in a hexagonal or octagonal shape and open on all sides (although sometimes screened in) and traditionally have a railing between the posts. They often act as ornamental structures to complement gardens, courtyards, parks, etc. They can enhance the aesthetic value of your property.

Covered Porch

Attached to a dwelling or building, a covered porch is a permanent structure that offers protection from the sun and rain. As a porch generally has a wood or concrete floor, it is easy to clean and provides a sturdy base for outdoor furniture. A covered porch is also a natural extension of your home in the warmer months while being accessible to the amenities, such as the kitchen and bathroom, when entertaining. Although a larger investment than some other options, you will probably recuperate the cost as a covered porch is a desirable feature for prospective homebuyers as it adds a particular charm and can increase curb appeal. **OH**



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

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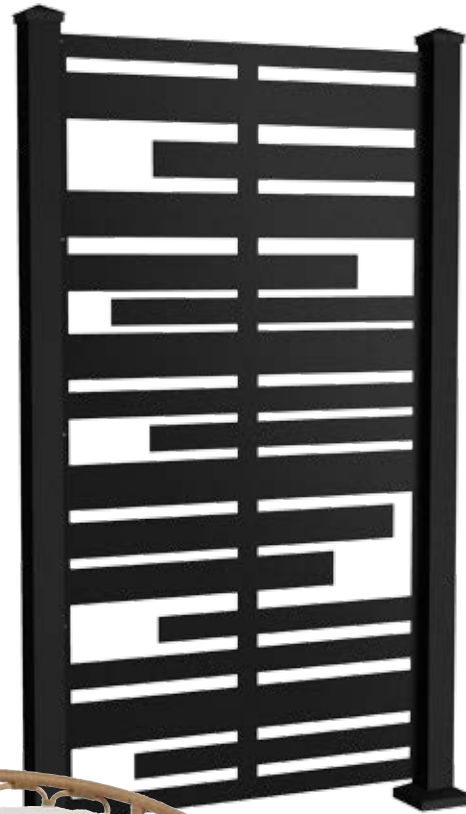
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cooking at home

COD BURGERS

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH



SWAP YOUR REGULAR BURGERS THIS SUMMER FOR THESE FRESH AND LIGHT COD BURGERS. WOW YOUR GUESTS WITH HOMEMADE QUICK PICKLES AND A HERBED DRESSING TO PULL IT ALL TOGETHER!

INGREDIENTS

BURGERS

- 4 fillets of cod
- 4 hamburger buns
- Arugula
- Red onion, finely sliced

QUICK PICKLES

- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 clove garlic
- Fresh dill
- 1 cucumber, sliced

HERBED DRESSING

- 4 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp yogurt
- Fresh dill
- 1 clove garlic, smashed

INSTRUCTIONS

QUICK PICKLES

In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, add vinegar, sugar, salt and garlic.

Cook until liquid begins to simmer and sugar dissolves.

Add dill and sliced cucumbers to a heat-proof bowl.

Pour simmering liquid over the cucumbers and stir to evenly coat.

Allow to cool at room temperature or chill before serving.

HERBED DRESSING

In a small bowl combine mayonnaise, yogurt, dill and garlic. Mix together.

COD & ASSEMBLY

Set aside quick pickles and herbed dressing until ready to assemble cod burgers.

Season cod fillets with salt and fresh pepper.

In a pan over medium-high heat, sear cod fillets until cooked through.

Remove from pan once cooked and place the hamburger buns in the pan to toast.

To assemble, layer the herbed dressing, fresh arugula, fresh red onion, seared cod and top with pickles. **OH**

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STORY TERESA MATAMOROS

TRY SOMETHING NEW

These are a few plants I like to use in gardens. Some are native and some are not, but all are growing in zones 5 and lower. They are low maintenance, drought tolerant and will resist some of the diseases common with overused plants. Some are good pollinators as well.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NVK NURSERIES

1 Instead of prickly horizontal junipers, try soft-needled **Microbiota decussata** or **Siberian Carpet Cypress**. Grows 30 cm tall and 175 cm wide. This evergreen can be grown in dry shade or full sun. The operative word here is dry. A bonus is that their foliage turns a copper penny colour in the late fall and winter.



2 **Hypericum kalmianum** or **Pot O' Gold St. John's Wort** can work very well instead of lower growing Spireas. This St. John's Wort has four seasons of interest starting with profuse golden yellow flowers on a two-foot-high shrub with bluish green narrow leaves. Persistent brown seed capsules and exfoliating bark add winter interest.



4 **Amelanchier canadensis** or **Serviceberry** is a well-used native in our landscapes for its beautiful white flowers, edible fruit and great red fall colour. I would use this native large shrub/small tree as a replacement for Burning Bushes (*Euonymus alatus*) which is now considered an alien invasive as it is a prolific self-seeder.

3 **Hepacodium miconioides** or **Seven-Son Flower** is a large (four-by-two-metre) uncommon shrub with white blooms later in the season. The highlight of this shrub is the pink to red calyxes left on after the flowers fade. The exfoliating bark is great for winter interest. Use this plant when you need a focal point in your garden.



5 **Caryopteris x clandonensis** or **Bluebeard** could be used as an alternative to Lavender in the garden when you still want purple flowers, but later in the season. Caryopteris is drought tolerant, a great pollinator and has fragrant foliage. Grows 80-by-80 centimetres.



6 **Clethra alnifolia** or **Summersweet** is a summer fragrant flowering shrub with white or pink bottlebrush type flowers, ranging in height from 100-to-200 centimetres. It attracts the pollinators, too.



7 **Geranium macrorrhizum** or **Bigroot Geranium** and **Asarum canadense** or **Wild Ginger** are great ground covers for full-shade areas in the garden. Periwinkle is considered an aggressive alien and should not be planted anymore. Geranium has pink or white flowers with fragrant foliage. Wild Ginger has interesting flowers half hidden under the leaves.

TIRED OF CEDARS? HERE ARE A COUPLE OF EXCELLENT ALTERNATIVES:



PHOTO: COURTESY OF NVK NURSERIES

8 **Picea abies 'Cupressina'** or **Columnar Norway Spruce** is a great choice when space is limited. It grows to eight-metres tall and 200-centimetres wide and has dense branching to the ground with dark green, stiff, short needles.

9 **Thuja x 'Green Giant'** or **Western Cedar** (a cross between *Thuja plicata* and *Thuja Standishii*). Although this is a cedar, it is not on the menu for deer, which is why I have included it here. It can grow to 13-metres tall and four-metres wide. It can be used for hedges and tolerates trimming too.



By using some of these less common selections, you are supporting sustainable landscaping practices.

The next time you are at the nursery, look for these plants. If they don't have them, ask for them. We need more diversity in our gardens and if we ask the garden centres for these not-so-common plants, we create a demand, and they will start bringing them in. **OH**

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

VIEW *Finder*

STORY **MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**



An enviable view of Lake Huron from the third-floor deck and entertainment area. Decking is a hard-wearing wood-grain composite that was colour-matched with indoor flooring for a seamless look. Outdoor furniture is the Cabanacoast line from Barbecues Galore.



For years, James and Shannon Sharp enjoyed spending leisure time at their second home in Grand Bend. In 2018 the couple discovered an empty lot close to Lake Huron with nothing on it but a treehouse. Curious about the sight-lines from a higher vantage point, James scrambled up. "You gotta come up here and see this!" he called to his wife. *Continued on page 24*

TOP LEFT: The angular modern lines of the house exterior are softened by horizontal white siding and strategically placed greenery. Concrete steps and parking pads interspersed with grass by Jared Stanlake Cement. A massive custom black door (Sharp Exteriors) visually connects with the outdoor light fixtures and black mullioned windows. **ABOVE:** A light-filled main-floor laundry room has heated tile floors, a built-in storage bench and access to the side patio. **LEFT:** Homeowner Shannon Sharp relaxes with a tall glass of lemonade on the third-floor deck.



THIS PAGE & RIGHT: Custom kitchen cabinetry and range hood by Martin Jesko. Quartzite marble-style “Cinderella” countertops are from Granite Kings. The stylish rope counter stools are from Modern Living London. GE Café appliances are from Lastman’s Bad Boy Superstore. **MIDDLE:** The centrally-located kitchen flows to an informal dining area that creates a layered, welcoming look through the use of colour and texture.



“WE COULDN’T HAVE CHOSEN A BETTER BUILDER. THEY WERE ACCOMMODATING, EXPERIENCED AND PROFESSIONAL.”
– Shannon

The view was stunning

– wide expanses of lake bordered by majestic red pines. The couple moved quickly to purchase the property before it went on the market and then embarked on a journey to design and build a custom home that could eventually become their primary residence. After a lot of research, James identified **Bradley Skinner** of the London-based boutique architectural firm **Skinner & Skinner Architects Inc.** as the architect they wanted to bring their vision to life.

“Bradley’s home is on a hill overlooking the Thames River,” recalls Shannon. “It’s modern and minimalistic, yet still cosy. His work resonated with us.”

“I like to find out what people’s interests are to help me define their vision,” says Bradley. “I translate their ideas by bringing scale and proportion. I’m interested in taking advantage of views, natural light and connections to nature.”

James hired a drone photographer to capture footage of the property at different elevations to help determine the ideal height

for the exterior decks while Bradley studied the site from every angle.

Accustomed to living in more traditional homes, the couple opted instead for an unapologetically modern aesthetic. The inspiration came via a California connection. James had lived there with his mother, a celebrated bodybuilder, when he was young and when the Sharps visited Santa Monica and Venice Beach, Shannon fell in love with the vibe and wanted to bring the same carefree style to their new home.

The couple’s wish list for the interior

Continued on page 26



LEFT: It's all about enjoying outdoor living. Two separate patio areas are defined with honeycomb paving stones. Easy-care landscaping by Peter Roelands of Oasis Landscapes and a privacy fence with horizontal orientation helps to create a private escape. **BELOW:** The back patio area has a firepit, modern seating, ornamental grasses and a low-profile bubbling rock water feature. **OPPOSITE:** The open-concept living room has a textured marbleized Calacatta porcelain tile (Eden Tile-It) fireplace flanked with floating shelves installed by homeowner James Sharp and his son. The beachy Bohemian vibe is created with a comfortable sectional sofa upholstered in faux linen, textured throws and ropey chairs.



included an open-concept main floor, a spacious primary suite with built-in storage and maximized lake views, airy functional guest spaces and a separate apartment for family or to be used as a rental. The most important features were the roof decks and exterior spaces, so the Sharps could take in the epic sunsets and lake views as much as possible.

Grand Bend's **Platinum Builders Inc.** were brought in to complete the entire build. "We couldn't have chosen a better builder," says Shannon. "They were accommodating, experienced and professional." Today, their home is a harmonious blend of wood, steel and glass, with design elements that nod subtly to the past. The horizontal white clapboard siding is reminiscent of seaside towns. "It sets a tone, a language that is different than brick and stucco," says Bradley. *Continued on page 28*





ABOVE: The homeowners call the third-floor lounge “the wheelhouse” because it’s reminiscent of a ship captain’s vantage point. Designed as a retreat for homeowner James Sharp, there is a wet bar, flatscreen television, tufted cognac leather furniture and matching cognac finish on the mullions. This space flows directly out to the spacious deck allowing for the ultimate in indoor/outdoor living. **RIGHT:** A small, open office area with picture-perfect lake views has a whimsical vintage birdcage and a chic desk and chair.

To unify the interior space, **Martin Jesko** of **Martin Jesko Custom Cabinetry** designed cabinetry for the kitchen, mudroom and laundry area as well as the closet and storage spaces in the main bedroom. Hardworking eight-and-a-half-inch wide flooring (Tribute from **Eden Tile-It**) was laid on all three floors. The entire house is outfitted with German engineered windows and doors from **Strassburger Windows and Doors** and **Glass Canada**. “I can’t wait to wake up in the morning, press a button to raise the blinds (**Made in the Shade**) and see the sky, seagulls and parasailers from my bed,” says Shannon.

London Bath Centre provided all the plumbing fixtures for the kitchen and bathrooms. The luxurious primary bath

has heated floors, surround sound and a unique wet room that combines the bathtub and shower. “I never need to go to a spa again,” quips Shannon, “That bathroom is my Friday night.”

With a passion for design, Shannon had a fully-formed vision for the interiors: layered, textured and a bit Bohemian. Elements such as woven sea grass mats, ropey chairs and white cabinetry along with furniture pieces in tones of ivory and beige are artfully accented by muted aqua and pink accessories and green plants. Everything blends effortlessly to create a relaxed coastal ambience.

A massive Oxford blue kitchen island is fronted by five counter stools and serves as an informal gathering spot. The adjacent dining area is anchored by a simple farm table

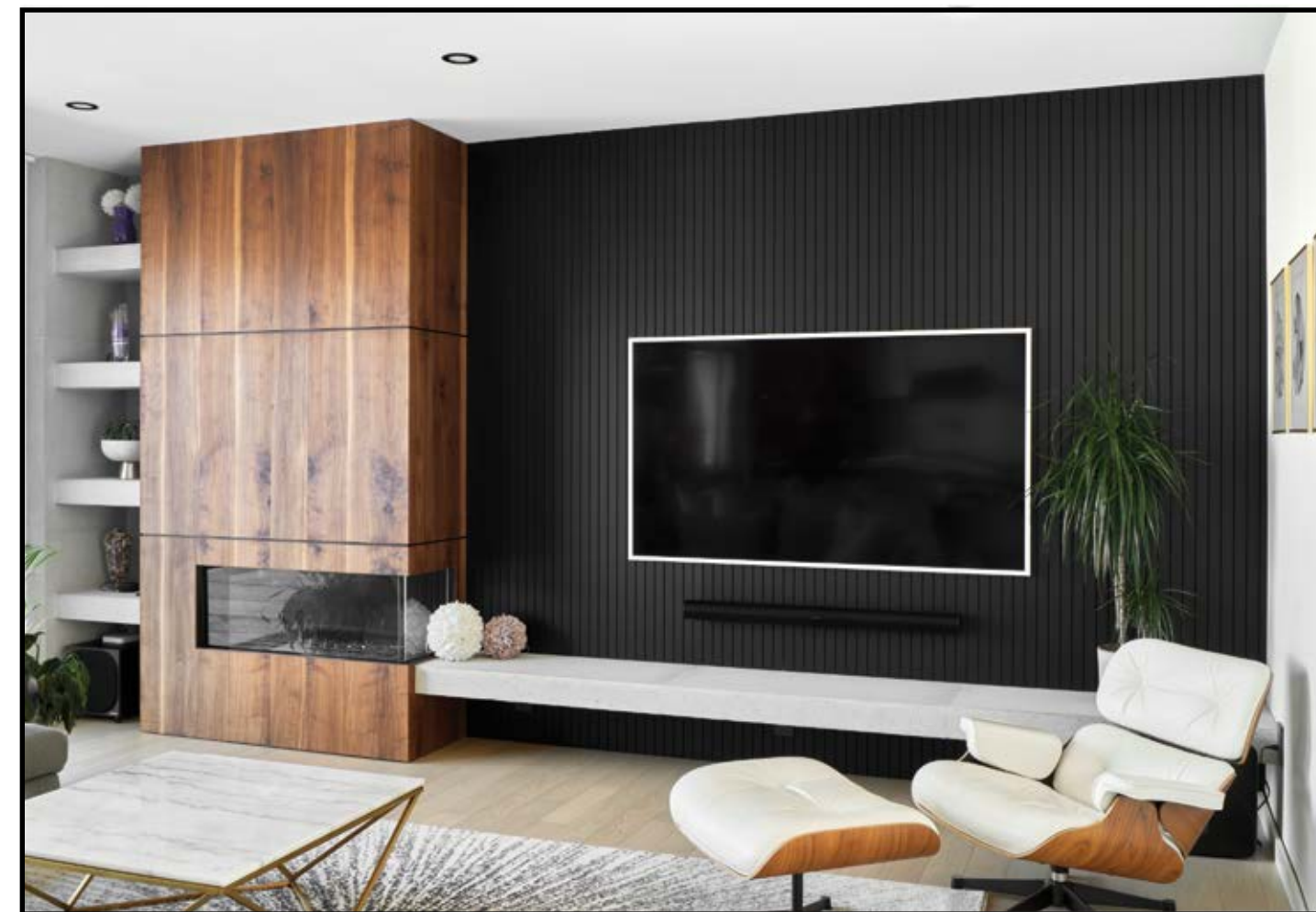
Continued on page 30



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“I NEVER NEED TO GO TO A SPA AGAIN, THAT BATHROOM IS MY FRIDAY NIGHT.”



ABOVE: The primary bath features a wet room with a luxurious Bain Ulta vessel tub and open shower, both by London Bath Centre. The textured Calacatta marbled porcelain floor tiles echo those on the main-floor fireplace surround. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The primary bedroom takes full advantage of pretty lake views through the handsome German-engineered windows from Strassburger Windows & Doors. Custom wall and window seat storage precludes the need for other furniture pieces.

with wrap-around bench seating and stylish rope chairs (**Modern Living London**) that can easily accommodate a crowd for dinner or transform into an intimate space for family game night.

James put his personal mark on their home by building a custom 10-foot front door through his company **Sharp Exteriors** in a dramatic Hornbeam Black.

Building a house during the pandemic was a steep learning curve, admits Shannon. “And a great lesson in patience and gratitude. For us, the third-floor space is the hallelujah moment – you walk around the corner and there’s Lake Huron.” She smiles. “It doesn’t matter if it’s a stormy or overcast or a picture-perfect day. To us, this is everything.” **OH**



A sky blue ceiling visually connects to the outdoor vistas. The pale grey king-size bed is the colour of driftwood.

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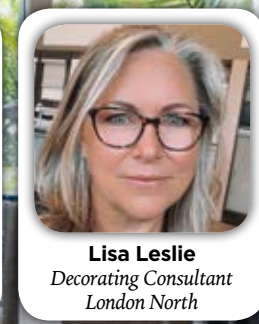
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5 TIPS to WASH & FOLD

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STORY **FRANKIE CASTRO**
PHOTOGRAPHY
VALERIE WILCOX

You probably spend more time in your laundry room than you'd like. What if you actually wanted to spend time there? A space that's well-equipped and aesthetically pleasing can make laundry feel less like a chore. Finding that balance can be challenging, especially when considering a household's diverse needs. These are the top five laundry room essentials.

Location, Location, Location!

Laundry rooms were historically unsightly, utilitarian rooms, usually tucked away deep in the basement where the machines could whirr, hum and buzz all day or night. This placement had its practical purpose, shielding living areas from noise and potential water leaks. But thanks to advances in machine technology and aesthetic design, many modern homes are now putting the laundry room in more convenient locations, near upper-level bedrooms, or adjacent to the kitchen or entryway mudrooms.



Storage Space

Smart storage is essential to an effective, efficient laundry room design. Customizing under-counter cabinets and uppers are a great option to maximize every inch of space. And while having everything behind closed doors leaves the space neat and tidy, it lacks visual interest. Consider incorporating a combination of open and closed shelving, which allows you to have a few frequently used items on hand and some decorative pieces on display. Ultimately, your storage system should match your needs and personality. If you're naturally messy, closed storage may be better suited to you. If you are neat and highly visual, you may benefit more from open shelving.

FUNCTIONAL ESSENTIALS: Bonus elements within the cabinetry design include an ironing board, a shelf for storing baskets and everyday cleaning products, and rods mounted high enough to hang shirts and longer items like dresses. Don't forget to factor electrical outlets and adequate lighting into your design plan.

Continued on page 34

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design ideas

Counter Space

As a designer, I love a long spacious countertop like the butcher block countertop we used in this design pictured below. As a doer of laundry, I can also attest that ample counter space is great for folding, ironing and organizing, too.

SPACE-SAVERS: If your laundry room is tight, there are many alternatives to a traditional countertop that can do the trick. Fold-down counters or tables on casters can create more space and can be moved in and out of the way when not in use. A retracting shelf or rack is another great addition to compact spaces. Installed beside the washer and dryer, or tucked between a stacked washer/dryer unit, this pull-out surface is a convenient and unobtrusive place to rest your laundry basket as you load and unload your machines.



Large Laundry Tub

While still available on the market, the oversize utility sink has gone by the wayside, making way for more modern options in various materials that match durability with style. For example, look for under-counter mounted sinks in stainless steel or acrylic porcelain or other hard-wearing materials that are made to last. Regardless of the specifics, make sure the sink is large and deep enough to hand-wash your delicates, soak your dirty shoes or give Fido a good scrub.



Some Style!

A laundry room is a great place to try out the latest design trends you've been coveting. Since this is typically a smaller room that isn't open to the living areas, it's a great place to be bold and introduce some colour. Try a patterned wallpaper or tile, or test out a trending hardware style, such as matte black or one of the brightly textured, coloured hardware options.

Ultimately, it's important to take stock of what you're trying to achieve in your laundry room and ensure that you have a solution to simplify each task. And don't forget to have a little fun with it. Separating the whites from the darks is boring enough without a dull beige wall staring at you! **OH**

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

Mark Your Calendar: Must-See Musical Events this 2023!



Marika Bournaki and Julian Schwarz

August 6 | The Avondale

After professing his love for her at the age of 16, cellist Julian Schwarz waited for the right time to propose. In the meantime, Marika Bournaki became one of the most sought-after pianists in the world. Experience the on-stage love affair of this (now married!) couple in their only Canadian performance this year!



John Pizzarelli

August 13 | The Avondale

Known as "the genial genius of the guitar", world-renowned guitarist and singer, John Pizzarelli, will make his Stratford debut in the SSM 23 finale. Established as one of the prime contemporary interpreters of the Great American Songbook, Pizzarelli has expanded that repertoire by including the music of Paul McCartney, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Tom Waits, Antônio Carlos Jobim and the Beatles. His themed shows, often performed with his wife Jessica Molaskey, suggest there is no limit to Pizzarelli's imagination or talent.



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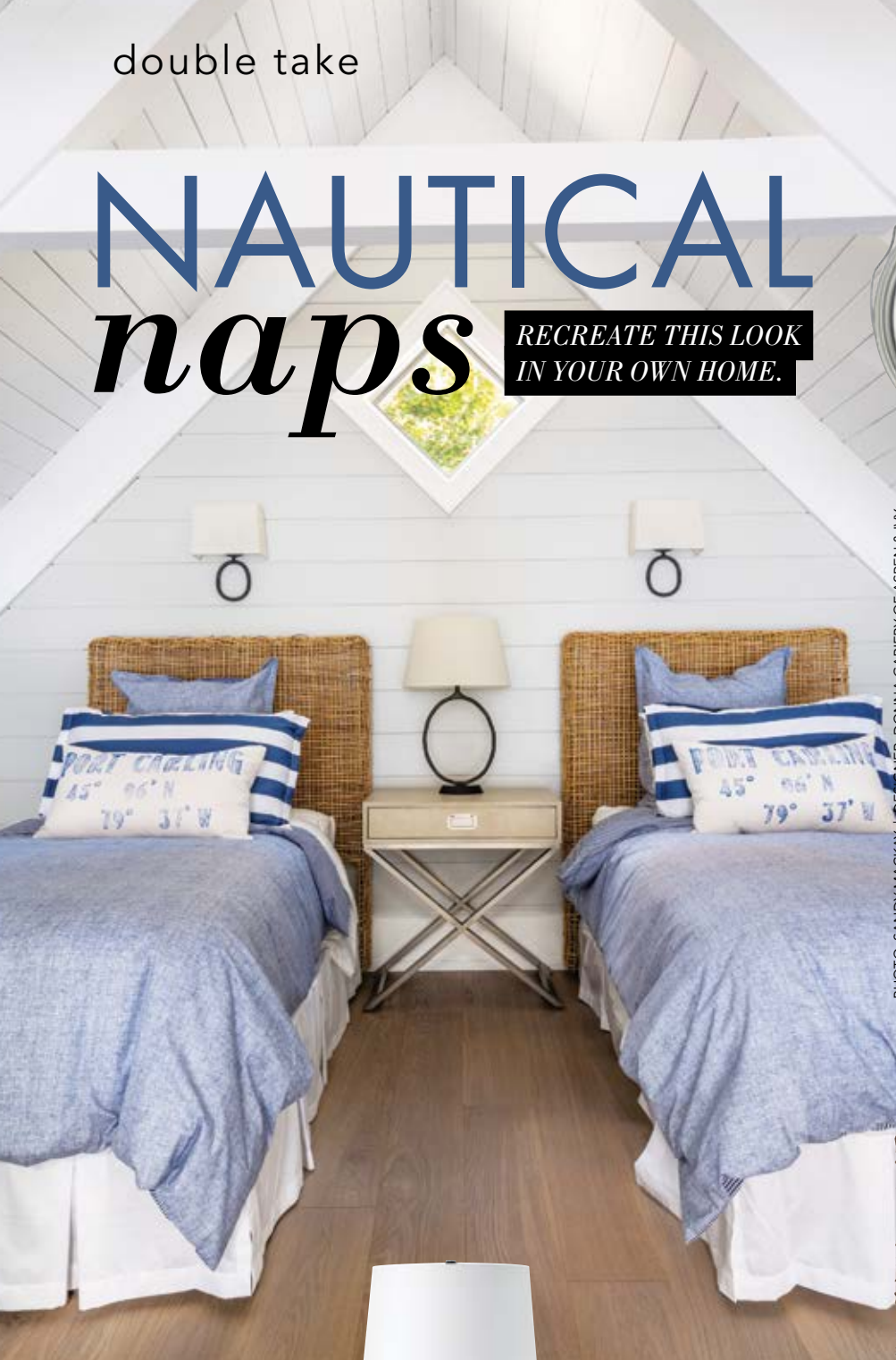
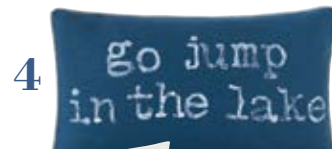


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PHOTO: JACKIE NOBLE

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PHOTO: JACKIE NOBLE



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REDUCE, REUSE, RETHINK

HOW MILLENNIALS ARE REDEFINING SUSTAINABLE LIVING

STORY **BONNIE J STINSON**

Millennials have matured, and so has their approach to sustainable living. Picking up the green torch and leading the way, this generation dares to define a new style of green living that balances personal responsibility with mental health – and the result is a sustainable lifestyle that feels good and gets results.

Natalie DeYoung Ricci, 40, is a busy millennial mother of two. Her fierce determination to resist the fast-paced disposable culture of single-use plastics led her to a surprising destination: her own kitchen.

“The kitchen is more accessible than other areas where changes might be more expensive and out of reach, like vehicles or clothing,” Natalie explains. She uses washable silicone bags in her kids’ lunches and cloth bowl covers for baking.

For other millennials, activities outside the house are a more meaningful pathway to sustainability.

“I group my errands together so I can drive less,” says Meadow

Holtby, a younger millennial who grew up on a small island and now lives in the city.

Meadow knows that a small change to weekend errands will only have a minor effect on her overall carbon footprint. However, this strategy helps her feel more in control.

For Meadow – and for many millennials – depressing headlines and discouraging politics do not offer enough reassurance to feel super hopeful about the planet’s future. As the parent of a young child, Meadow finds that a single personal commitment provides the psychological stability and integrity to move forward.

Does the prospect of switching to a green lifestyle sound complicated? You might be shocked to discover how simple sustainability can be.

Anna Culver, now 34, was in her late 20s and in between jobs when she started to seriously prioritize green living. Anna refills her soap, lotion and household products at zero-waste stores like Keep Refillery (locations in Toronto, Kingston, Creemore and Meaford). Reducing the clutter and waste of disposable products is not only good for the planet but it “greatly simplifies my life,” she says.

The pessimists among you may be thinking, ‘Sure, these changes are nice to read about but they won’t actually change anything.’ But millennials have actually hit upon a powerful insight.

Green living is not about changing the

world, it’s about changing yourself.

Yes, we need systemic change. Yes, we must advocate for better policies and invest in climate-friendly infrastructure. But, what do we do in the interim?

Millennials do not have David Suzuki’s hope, nor do they have Greta Thunberg’s rage. However, this generation is doing something far more radical than hoping or raging: they’re taking action.

“I know that my little contribution isn’t the same as large-scale, systemic change,” says Natalie, “but it helps me psychologically to have some agency so I don’t feel hopeless.”

Quietly and conscientiously, millennials are driving the green revolution by aligning their personal habits with sustainable lifestyle choices. Millennials are showing us that we can live like there’s hope for the future.

MILLENNIAL PLAYBOOK FOR GREEN LIVING

Identify one area of your life that creates a lot of mental anxiety for you around climate change. Example: “I feel incredibly guilty about takeout containers. I just don’t have the time to wash them or cook a meal at home right now.”

Figure out how your current habit is meeting some of your non-sustainability values. Example: “I love being able to spend more time with my kids instead of cooking or cleaning. I want to feed my family a balanced meal even if I’m really busy.”

Brainstorm creative ways you could live your other values while making a slight improvement on sustainability. Example: Set up a meal swap with a friend. Sign up for a meal kit subscription and cook as a family. Pay your kid to wash the takeout containers. Research local restaurants to find out who offers sustainable packaging.

Commit to one small change that balances your personal values with environmental impact. Example: “I value convenience and time with my family, so takeout is still the right option for me right now. But because I value sustainability, I will make a list and try to only order from local restaurants that use compostable and recyclable packaging for takeout containers.”

Nurture your new green living habit until you start to notice a difference in your mental health.

Repeat again, aligning another area of climate anxiety with your values by changing a small personal habit. **OH**

Sustainable options for the kitchen

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THE BARE HOME: Dish Soap 3 Litre Refill Kit with Glass Bottle

STASHER: Reusable Silicone Sandwich Bag in Rainbow Splash



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LOT8: The Double Duty Bowl Cover - Reversible Bowl Cover



LOT8: Loaf Bag - 100% Linen Bread Bag



Grebe with Grebette

STORY LYNNE RICHARDSON

PHOTO: DALE DARCY

HITCHING A RIDE

BIRDS BEHAVING CUTELY

Bird behaviour has always been a favourite part of birdwatching for me. Courtship displays, foraging techniques, a territory being vigorously defended by a feisty wee ball of feathers, and a wide range of other avian action adds interest to your observations and provides insight into the secret life of birds.

Behaviour watching can also provide some of the most rewarding sightings and photo ops. Picture this: A mother duck swims into view. Following close behind are a string of downy ducklings. Your interest level rises; baby birds are always appealing. Click, click, you get a picture with your camera – or in your mind’s eye. You’re about to carry on with your birding day when you notice the row of ducklings is shorter. Where did the others go? Then you see them. A few have scrambled up onto the mother’s back! The cuteness scale just shot up! Witnessing a moment such as this is one of the highlights of the summer nesting season.

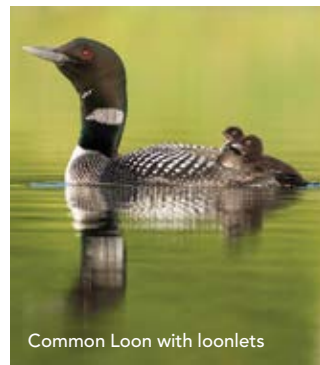
ALTRICIAL OR PRECOCIAL

Summertime is a busy time for birds. Songbirds have nests full of baby birds that hatch out featherless, helpless and completely incapable of surviving on their own. These nestlings are classified as altricial young, meaning they require much feeding and nurturing to maturity. They are also, let’s face it, not cute, with their naked featherless bodies, their big bulging eyes and their oversize gapey beaks.

But not all young birds hatch out that way. Some species crack out of the egg ready to hit the ground running, or swimming. They are the epitome of cuteness with their fluffy feathers and the way they can motor about and feed themselves. These species include the waterfowl family, which are in the precocial class of birds. Precocial comes from the Latin word for precocious and is an apt term for a chick who can swim circles around its parents and practically fend for itself from day one. However independent, these wee birds still require some level of parental protection and guidance to learn strategies for staying warm and conserving their limited energy supplies as they make their way in their big watery world.

PIGGYBACK RIDES

The poster bird for cottage country, and everyone’s favourite, the Common Loon, is beloved for its iconic wails, yodels and tremolo calls throughout the summer. But equally endearing is its habit of carrying the young on their backs for the first few weeks of their little lives. The young loonlets instinctively know they will be safe and warm when up on their piggyback perch. Adult loons are strong, fast paddlers; baby loons not so much yet, so they climb up and snuggle down when they tire or when they catch a chill from paddling about in the cold waters of their natal lake.



Common Loon with loonlets

PHOTO: MARK PECK

PREDATOR PROOF

Another bonus of catching a ride is the protection it provides from underwater predators. Adult birds can move their young away from danger very quickly by carrying them on their backs. A loonlet’s little legs just can’t paddle fast enough. And by remaining in the water, the chicks’ feet are dangling down rather enticingly in front of a lurking fish, snapping turtle or even a mink. Better to jump on the fast-moving mama’s back and get outta there in a hurry!



Duck with ducklings

GETTING YOUR DUCK(LINGS) IN A ROW

Hitching a ride isn’t the only energy-saving strategy in the baby duck repertoire. They soon learn that swimming all in a row behind their mama is easier than swimming in a bunch behind her. There’s physics at work here. The V-shaped wake the mother duck makes as she swims along forms a tiny wave the ducklings can surf down the sides and into the trough below. This wave energy gives them a wee push forward and the ability to keep up with their fast-moving mother. Each duckling down the line seems to know where to precisely position itself to get the benefit of the next ripple in the wake. That’s why the ducklings are so evenly spaced out in their row and this perfect symmetry makes for such an appealing scene.

SNUGGLE DOWN

Even fully-feathered precocial baby birds aren’t totally able to regulate their body temperature at first. For the first few days after hatching from their warmly incubated egg, the chicks of some species will simply scramble onto the patient parent’s back and snuggle down into its thicker, warmer feathers. They’ll even do this on the nest, perhaps getting ready for the parent’s launch into the lake. This back-brooding is common with the Pied-billed Grebe and again provides such appeal to birders’ eyes and camera lenses alike.



Pied-billed Grebe with Grebettes



Common Merganser with ducklings

PHOTO: LYNNE RICHARDSON

PHOTO: MONA TURNBULL

BIG BIRD

Nature is full of surprises. It turns out piggyback rides are not limited to just the waterfowl family. The Sandhill Crane is a big bird; more than one-metre tall, with long legs that raise it over the tall vegetation of its marsh-and-meadow habitat. Their young on the other hand – known as colts – are but centimetres tall at hatching and somewhat unequipped to keep up with their long-legged parents. The short wee colt (so named because of its ability to run around right after hatching like a young member of the horse family) is not averse to taking it easy when it can. So why not hitch a ride and get a bird’s-eye view of its domain.



Sandhill Cranes with colt

PHOTO: FELY CLARKE

As a bird behaviour buff, I highly recommend an early morning paddle or stroll along the beach, camera or binoculars at the ready, for a chance glimpse into the life of a baby loon, grebe, or merganser, or any other gift nature may present you with. It’s time well spent. **OH**

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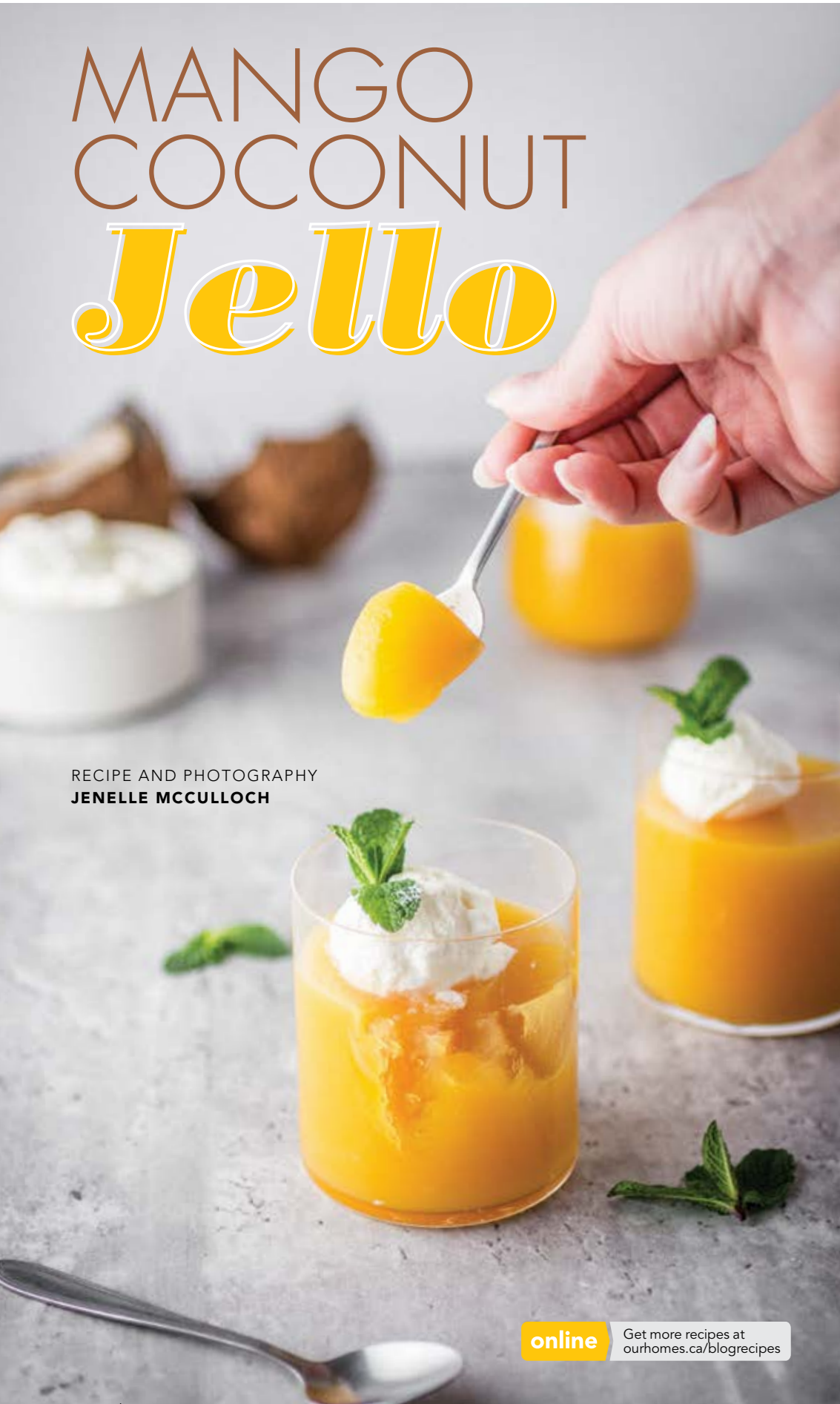


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Ingredients

SERVES 4

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½ cup mango purée**

1 cup coconut water

1-3 Tbsp honey or
sweetener of choice

Whipped cream for garnish

*Use agar-agar for a vegan-friendly version of this recipe. Agar-agar does not need to be bloomed and can be added right into the heated juice. Cook for 5-10 minutes.

**Make your own mango purée by blending the fruit of one mango.

Instructions

Bloom the gelatin by placing ½ cup of mango juice in a bowl and sprinkling gelatin on top. Wait five minutes until the gelatin activates.

In a saucepan over medium heat, heat the rest of the mango juice, mango purée, coconut water and honey. Adjust amount of sweetener to taste.

Add bloomed gelatin and whisk until dissolved.

Pour into four serving glasses and let cool in the fridge until firm.

When ready to serve top with a dollop of whipped cream. **OH**



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STRATEGIES FOR First-Time HOME BUYERS

STORY **CONNIE
JESKE CRANE**
ILLUSTRATION
SHEILA BRITTON



“Will I ever own a home?” These days, more than ever, this is a question that keeps many Canadians up at night. For would-be home buyers weary of pounding the pavement, and for young people (and concerned parents) looking ahead, Canada’s housing market is daunting.

THE LAST FEW YEARS, fuelled by inflation, interest rate hikes and lack of supply, an affordability crisis extends well beyond hotspots like Toronto and Vancouver.

Is there any recourse? We looked at some government initiatives and contacted Gary Taitt, a broker with RE/MAX Hallmark Realty Ltd. in Toronto. While there’s no magic solution, creative longer-term strategies can be very helpful for many first-time buyers. Here’s a closer look:

DOWN PAYMENT REALITIES

Understanding Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation requirements is a crucial first step. (Hint: you may need more of a down payment than you think.) Talking with a lender can help buyers get clear on how much they need to save.

For example, the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada states, “If your down payment is less than 20 per cent of the price of your home, you must buy mortgage loan insurance.” At the same time, “Mortgage loan insurance isn’t available if the purchase price of the home is one million dollars or more.” It means many first-time buyers are constrained to stick under that million-dollar price.

Gary says due to lofty requirements, even dual-income buyers with healthy salaries can struggle with a “down payment problem.”

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

As for financial assistance, Gary says, “The government’s come up with new incentives to help first-time buyers.”

This April, among several initiatives, Canada introduced a First-Time Home Buyers’ Tax Credit (HBTC), plus a registered First Home Savings Account (FHSA). The FHSA allows first-timers to save up to \$40,000 tax-free towards down payments – and unlike RRSP Home Buyers’ Plans, funds don’t have to be repaid.

Provincially, Ontario first-time home buyers may qualify for a land transfer tax rebate.

FAMILY HELP

Where possible, asking for family help is an increasingly common strategy for younger buyers. According to a recent CIBC report, almost one-third of first-time buyers get financial help from family for down payments.

On the ground, Gary says, “I see that way more now, where people get money from the bank of mom and dad.”

CREATIVE STRATEGIES

Finally, by necessity, today’s first-time buyers can apply other can-do strategies:

Smaller centres – Choosing to buy outside of Canada’s priciest centres can boost affordability. As Gary says, “If you’re living in Toronto, it may seem daunting, but if you’re living in Calgary or Ottawa, you just need a really good plan.”

Fixer uppers – While many buyers gravitate towards magazine-perfect “showpiece” homes, Gary says the “junky houses, the fixer uppers” are where buyers can find lower prices and add value.

Condos – In this niche, Gary says, “Now it’s kind of flipped where buying a new condo costs more.” Currently Gary sees more resale condos available and says for first-timers, these can be more affordable and easier to upgrade. “They only really have to do flooring, kitchen and bathroom.”

Co-ownership – Slowly gaining traction in Canada, Gary feels this strategy works for some, citing three buyers he worked with who bought a large house together in Toronto. “They held it for four years and by the end of it, they sold and each made enough for their down payments and moved on to their own houses.”

Finding tenants – Becoming a landlord during the early stages is another route Gary is seeing. “I would live in a basement and rent out the upstairs until my principal came down.”

MINDSET

In Canada, Gary has seen affordability concerns rising for 10 years or so. “I started hearing it when my kids were around eight or nine. ‘Oh, they’ll never be able to afford a house’ and parents say these words.”

Challenges aside though, Gary believes in a solutions mindset, and in the lasting value of home ownership. “Real estate values double every 10 years, give or take,” he says, and encourages buyers to have a vision not just of today’s challenges but of where they could be five or 10 years down the road. **OH**

BY THE NUMBERS

40 \$40,000 is the maximum first-time buyers can contribute towards a home purchase via Canada’s new tax-free First Home Savings Account (FHSA) (up from 20 per cent in 2015)

43 **43 per cent** of Canadians aged 20-34 own their home (30 per cent lower than other age groups)

36 **36** is the average age of first-time home buyers in Canada

30 **30 per cent** of first-time buyers in 2021 received financial gifts towards a down payment (up from 20 per cent in 2015)

82 **\$82,000** was the average down payment gift received by first-time buyers in 2021 (up from \$52,000 in 2015)

(SOURCES: MONEY.CO.UK; STATSCAN; CIBC; REVENUE CANADA)

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BUILT on Trust



Erika Friesen

STORY MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS
PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAM CHAN

ERIKA FRIESEN WAS DESTINED TO BE A DESIGNER. "I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THIS IS WHAT I WAS MEANT TO DO," SHE SAYS. "I NEVER WAVERED FROM IT. I LIVE AND BREATHE MY JOB."

The great room has a towering feature wall with a gas fireplace and a porcelain tile surround with natural finish in Nero Marquina from Ciot. The dark tile contrasts with the warm tones of the walnut wall panels. Custom matching coffee tables (Braam's Custom Cabinets) crafted in Macassar Ebony and custom nine-foot-long sofas upholstered in buff faux linen are scaled for the large proportions of the space.

And she's really, really good at it. Having worked in her field for decades, business for **Erika Friesen Design** is generated via word-of-mouth and repeat customers. A while back, she renovated a two-bedroom condo for a client who had talked about one day building a house. Twenty years later, the client got in touch and asked Erika to design her dream home.

"I knew when I built a home, no one but Erika would touch it," says the homeowner. "I trust her completely. Her vision is crystal-clear and she articulates her ideas thoughtfully. I have learned that Erika is always right. When she suggests something, I just say 'yes.'" *Continued on page 50*

TOP RIGHT: The stone house exterior (Shadow Stone Steel Grey from Arriscraft) boasts classic lines and the black standing seam metal roof dresses up the peaked roofs and coordinates with the black windows and double-width front door (both Pella Windows & Doors). **RIGHT:** A welcoming foyer has built-in closets with marbled surfaces from Schenk Architectural Imports that set the elegant tone for the rest of the house. **BELOW:** The back of the home features floor-to-ceiling windows with motorized blinds (Tru-Lea Decorator Fabrics and Accessories) that provide soft, diffused light to the great room and kitchen.





**“I LIKE EXOTIC WOODS,
I’M NOT AFRAID OF
BOLD GRAIN BECAUSE IT
CREATES WARMTH AND
CHARACTER.”**
– Homeowner



The dark Quartzite countertop and warm wood tones are thematically repeated in the powder room. Round mirror from Restoration Hardware.



ABOVE: The kitchen is dominated by a massive island with Quartzite countertops in Brilliant Black (Granite by Design Ltd.) that complements the dark wood floors throughout. A modern Kelly Wearstler linear light fixture resembling a grouping of magician’s wands (Guildwood Lighting & Fireside) is suspended over the island.
OPPOSITE: Kitchen cabinetry has a unique framing detail; a Wolf range with distinctive red knobs inspired the three lipstick-red ceramic bowls on the walnut shelves, one of the few pops of colour in the house.

But where to construct said dream? Enter **Peter McClure**, owner of **Wasko Developments, Inc.**, a generational custom build company with strong roots in the London area. He drove the client to an established residential North London neighbourhood to view an empty lot backing onto a picturesque wooded area. It was perfect.

Next, Erika drew up detailed designs, which were translated into construction drawings by **Eng Plus Ltd.** The stone exterior has traditional proportions, a peaked steel roof (**Fehr Renovations Ltd.**) and possesses a timeless quality. The house interior, however, tells an entirely different story, one that is minimalist, modern and Zen.

The rich, earthy tones of the black hardwood flooring (**Northern Wide**

Plank) that runs throughout the 4,500 sq. ft. space served as a design jumping-off point and provides a pleasing counterpoint to the neutral colour palette and array of warm wood finishes.

“I like exotic woods,” says the homeowner. “I’m not afraid of bold grain because it creates warmth and character.” Wood proliferates – from the towering walnut panels flanking the fireplace to the custom cabinetry in the kitchen, laundry room and bathrooms (all by **Braam’s Custom Cabinets**) to **Martin Jesko Custom Cabinetry’s** eye-catching crotch mahogany headboard in the bedroom. The staircase is built with solid wood slabs stained to match the flooring (**Roes Stair Corp.**) with a glass rail that visually disappears. *Continued on page 52*





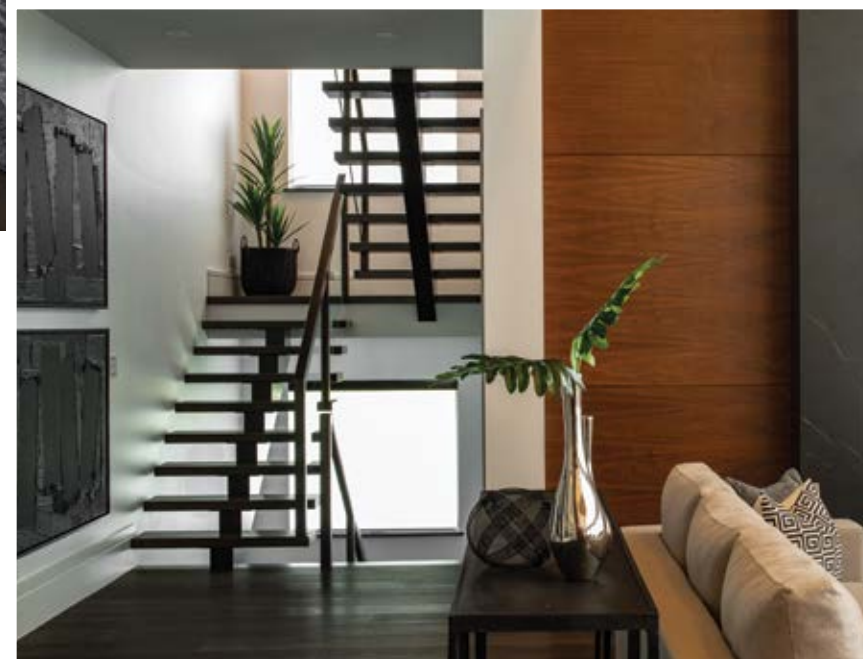
Six distinctive drop ceiling panels in the great room define the space and add depth. “I’d seen similar designs in hotels, but had no idea how they would be engineered or constructed,” says the homeowner.

“The drop ceiling was a challenge because the materials we considered at first were way too heavy,” admits Wasko’s project manager **Collin McClure**. “Ultimately, we used styrofoam wrapped in silver ebony veneer (**LightBeam Design** by **Habitart Group**) so the panels look like solid wood but are super light.” Strategic up-lighting creates even more visual impact.

The homeowner wanted to repurpose a few pieces from her condo, including a nine-foot sofa and a handsome Macassar Ebony coffee table. Identical versions of both pieces were custom-made and now anchor the luxurious living area.

The adjacent open kitchen and informal dining area are bathed in light from the wall of Pella windows outfitted with motorized blinds. The dining room has classical overtones, thanks in no small part to the

Continued on page 54



ABOVE: The formal dining room has tailored lines and is defined by the silver ebony veneer ceiling detail (**LightBeam Design** by **Habitart Group**) repeated from the great room. Modern, large-scale light fixtures in glass and black iron hang over a custom table and hand-carved New Zealand wool rug by **Rizzy Home**. The overscale detail from Michelangelo’s *David* commands attention and holds deep personal meaning to the homeowner. **RIGHT:** A glass and wood slab staircase gives the illusion of floating in space.



“IT ALL TURNED OUT BETTER THAN I EVER COULD HAVE EXPECTED. I’M SO GRATEFUL.”

Outdoor gatherings are a breeze in this gorgeous covered-patio area surrounded by mature trees, easy-care plantings and grass. The outdoor furniture by **Hauser London** is both chic and durable. A stacked stone wall provides a focal point for an outdoor gas fireplace (**Napoleon Galaxy 48-inch** installed by **S.W. Atchison Plumbing & Heating Ltd.**) and flat-screen television.



ABOVE: The office is intentionally spare, with slim black steel shelves fabricated and installed by Mark Deren of Custom Metal Designs, to showcase objets d'art. The custom desk is fronted by two taupe embossed leather chairs by Bernhardt. **TOP RIGHT:** A functional main-floor laundry room with walnut laminate cabinetry and white quartz countertops. **MIDDLE:** A second floating vanity and sink in the primary bathroom leads to the dressing room area. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Designer Erika Friesen calls this dressing area "an unexpected room," and is her favourite area in the house.

oversize reproduction of Michelangelo's *David*. The custom ceiling is sheathed in silver ebony veneer and echoes the living room drop ceiling.

Striking sculptural light fixtures from **Guildwood Lighting & Fireside** are featured throughout the house and work in concert with the upscale modern vibe.

There are four bedrooms, each with its own en suite. Currently, the homeowner resides in an upstairs primary suite with a light-filled dressing room and a luxurious bathroom that is a symphony of marble, mirrors and white porcelain.

The two-year build stretched over the first half of the pandemic. For the homeowner, having no hard and fast timeline was liberating. "It was important to me that the right things happen at the right time with the right people. I was willing to wait until the best tradespeople were available, or until the product we wanted could be sourced."

Her spirits weren't dampened at all by a December move-in during a snowstorm. Rather, she was elated. "It all turned out better than I ever could have expected. I'm so grateful." *Continued on page 56*



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- Mark Deren Custom Metal Designs Inc.
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- Silver Concrete Inc.
- S.W. Atchison Plumbing & Heating Ltd.
- Wasko Developments

"Wasko has a very professional team," says Erika. "Their trades are experienced and passionate about what they do. They were very accommodating to my creativity. Often builders just want to get it done, but they worked with us – it was a real collaboration."

Collin adds, "The most rewarding part of the experience was on reveal day after the final clean. The homeowner gave us the reaction you always hope for. She loved it."

And what's not to love? The house that trust built is a testament to sleek modernism and is imbued with grace, vision and warmth – a true reflection of the homeowner. **OH**



TOP LEFT: The primary bedroom features a custom headboard of black framed croch, crisp-white bed linens, tailored buff-coloured linen drapery, and black bedside lamps by Global Views in Crimped Steel (Guildwood Lighting & Fireside). **ABOVE:** The primary bathroom features Graff fixtures, a deep vessel tub (Maax Oberto 6731), and glossy large-format marbleized porcelain floor tiles. **LEFT:** A floating vanity with the Kohler Ladena sink and Graff Faucets (S.W. Atchison Plumbing & Heating) and Quartzite countertops (Granite by Design). The floor-to-ceiling black-framed mirror has backlighting that is both dramatic and flattering.



ERIKA FRIESEN DESIGN



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decorating

How to Create a FEATURE WALL

Feature walls come in all shapes and sizes and they all serve a very important purpose – to create a focal point, attract attention and deliver that essential wow factor that no room is complete without.



STORY **DIANA ROSE**

FEATURED FUNCTIONS

The purpose of a feature wall is to catch your eye. Will your feature wall be the focus, or will you use it as a way to highlight another focal point in the room?

A feature wall is a great way to invite attention to existing elements, such as a unique architectural feature or as a dramatic backdrop to a sophisticated fireplace, a fabulous staircase, a powder-room vanity or a prized piece of furniture. You can see how a bold colour or wallpaper selection can complement and underscore the high points throughout the home.

In the absence of an existing focal point, a feature wall can serve as the highlight every room needs. It is an eye-catching yet cost-effective way to make a visual impact.

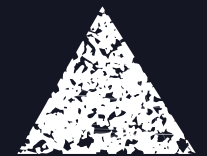
When choosing your feature wall, consider your view when you enter a room, or in the case of an open-concept area, the view from various points in the space. Which wall is your eye naturally drawn to? What's the first thing you see when you walk in? That's likely to be your target area. Avoid walls with windows and doorways, which can diminish the artistic integrity of the wall itself. Plus, a large blank wall is practically begging for some flair.

Continued on page 60

2
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MATERIAL MATTERS

A little paint can go a long way. When choosing a colour for your feature wall, create contrast. If the room is light and neutral, consider a vibrant or dark colour. If colour graces your walls, look opposite the colour wheel for some options that pop.

This opposite approach works for materials, too. Think glossy meets matte, rustic meets refined, classic meets minimalist – you get the idea. Create an element of surprise with unexpected additions such as metal inlays, upholstered wall panels, eccentric wallpapers and unusual tile patterns. From sleek to rustic, wood is another neutral material for an accent wall that is high impact and goes with everything.



PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI



PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI



PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI

TRENDING: Use three-dimensional tiles and marble slabs to create a feature wall that elevates a space by adding texture, colour and movement. There are some truly stunning paintable 3D tiles on the market, which use shadow and light to create an ever-changing effect – from subtle to dramatic, depending on the time of day.



PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI

THE OPEN-CONCEPT CONUNDRUM

Open-concept homes have risen in popularity in recent decades, but their proliferation has also brought to light some distinct design challenges. One of these is defining various functional areas within these vast, wall-less floor plans. Adding a feature wall is an effective way to visually differentiate a specific area without closing it off or straying from the overall style of the space. Adding a feature wall behind the dining table creates just enough drama – especially if you’ve taken my advice to leverage contrast! Similarly, a feature wall can also be applied in a front entrance area, in the office or reading nook and in the kitchen, to help visually separate these distinct areas from the others. If you’re planning to create multiple feature walls, don’t finish them with the same treatment. Remember, the goal is to make them stand out. Just be sure to give each one enough breathing room, so they don’t clash or compete for your attention.



PHOTO: STEPHANI BUCHMAN

Perhaps the best part about adding a feature wall is that sometimes it can be relatively easy to do and requires no structural changes. All it takes is some design creativity and a little bravery on the homeowner’s part. But trust me, it’ll truly transform and make for stylish and impactful interior spaces. **OH**

Diana Rose is the award-winning principal and creative director for Diana Rose Design.



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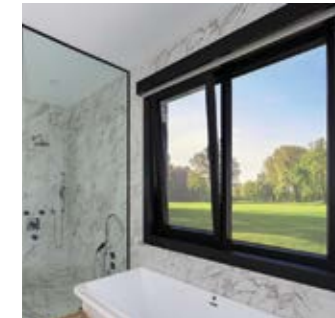
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PHOTO: GILLIAN JACKSON



PHOTO: LARRY ARNAL

INJECTING COLOUR

Do you love colour and gain energy from having it applied to walls or furniture? If you do, consider a rustic, coastal or Mediterranean look, as each incorporate colour as a main staple.

INTEGRATING KEEPSAKES OR MEMENTOS

Do you find comfort in seeing your memories displayed, and photos of family around you, or do you like to collect items from travel as reminders of the past? If so, select a style like countrycore or rustic country that incorporates more surfaces, walls and furniture for display of precious photos and mementos. These styles don't fight your natural preferences and instead easily allow you to incorporate elements that YOU love.

HERE ARE SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTING YOUR PREFERRED DESIGN AESTHETIC.

LOOK AT YOUR SPACE

Do you like open spaces, high ceilings and light walls, avoiding the feeling of being closed in? If the answer is yes, look for design aesthetics that incorporate this feel, such as modern, Mid-century modern, farmhouse modern or architectural. These styles all share light-painted walls, light floors, minimal decoration, large windows and lots of lighting, all of which create the feel of open space (even if your home is not big and open).



PHOTO: GILLIAN JACKSON

FINDING WARMTH

Does wood add warmth and a casual element you've always loved? If so, select an aesthetic that heavily incorporates both casual living and wood touches to it naturally. This would include a coastal or rustic look, even cottagecore or lodge. Each of these styles use wood as a main expression, whether light or dark and would fit your overall design aesthetic.

These principles offer simple examples of how to reverse engineer the style question to become "what are things that make me happy and that I want to experience every day in my space?" Once you know this answer, look at photos to see where your preferences fit within the millions of images of spaces available today.

Upon choosing a design aesthetic that captures how you want to live and feel, start building your style from there. And, of course, make it your own. All of these aesthetics can mesh into your own style, which is entirely the point! **OH**

Jane Lockhart is an award-winning designer, colour expert, TV personality, author and the principal designer at Jane Lockhart Design.

what's your DESIGN AESTHETIC?

STORY JANE LOCKHART

Coastal, minimal, Mid-century modern, farmhouse, Bohemian – these are just a few design styles popular today. Type any one of these in a search engine and multiple photos pop up displaying rooms for each look.

But what is a "design aesthetic?" Isn't it the same as picking a style? In today's world, it seems like they should be interchangeable terms and "design aesthetic" is simply another way to describe your style, right? In fact, a design aesthetic is a more in-depth understanding of a style. It relates to all elements included in the lifestyle represented by that style, not just the things we see in beautiful photos, like pillows or furniture. It digs deeper than the surface elements. To simplify, a design aesthetic includes not only the décor elements but also how you interact and behave in your space.

For example, if you lean towards a modern design aesthetic, simple furniture shapes and an uncluttered interior would appeal to your sense of style and you would also prefer to own

minimal stuff in general, with clean, organized closet interiors as important as the exterior living space. Design aesthetic is the way you live IN a space as much as the space itself.

A personal design aesthetic represents the authentic you. It captures what you love, rather than a passing fad or design trend that may come-and-go over your lifetime. That's not to say an aesthetic won't change as we age – it should change, as it represents our true self. As we evolve and re-evaluate our lifestyle over time, our style evolves with us.

How then do we identify our design aesthetic? It sounds a lot harder than just picking a style! The two do cross over, but to really drill down to finding a style that's meaningful to you, it has to fit your lifestyle.



PHOTO: GILLIAN JACKSON

PROFESSIONAL *pro*wess

These experts understand that there's
no place like home.



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According to Hunter Agnew, real estate is an adventure. "Honesty is my policy and passion is my drive. Let me show you why there's no place like home."

STRATFORD

I love selling Stratford to my clients like it's a real-life Stars Hollow (à la "Gilmore Girls"). You can't help but get swept up in this city's infectious charm. From the fantastic restaurants and fairytale scenery to the world-class theatre and cultural events, there is so much to fall in love with here. Though the true reason I chose to make Stratford my home is the people – the community here is like no other.



TRUE CALLING

When people ask me how long I've been in real estate, my answer is, truthfully, all my life. As a second-generation realtor, I grew up helping my mom measure houses and asking questions about her listings. Most importantly, I grew up watching her take care of each and every one of her clients – no matter what. This is a tradition I'm proud to carry on today. I'm a resourceful full-service real estate professional and I can't wait to help you find your next home.

Hunter Agnew, Realtor



PHOTO: JACKIE NOBLE

*"It's more than just a house
– it's your home!"*



Continued on page 68



John Vranic, Vranic Homes & Kevin Knell, Century 21 First Canadian Corp., Brokerage

VRANIC HOMES INC.

Vranic Homes Inc. is a family-owned business that specializes in quality custom homes with attention to detail and customer service that is unparalleled in the industry. Their homes are built on the foundation of integrity, customer service and professional expertise.

CLEAR SKIES

If an abundance of nature trails, golf courses, local farms and access to local businesses appeals to you, Clear Skies may be the place you've been looking for. This blossoming single-family neighbourhood is located in the charming town of Ilderton, only a 10-minute drive to all major amenities in north London. Phase three of this thoughtfully designed community is now open to homebuyers looking to lay down roots and real estate agent Kevin Knell is ready to assist you with your purchase.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

Owner John Vranic is passionate about his work. He has built a strong relationship of trust with all his trades and is so detail-oriented that he can be found on site every day, ensuring the homes he delivers to his clients are built with quality and care.



"We don't just build homes, we build relationships."
— John Vranic

PHOTOS: JACKIE NOBLE

FRESH NEW FACE

Selection is key with the latest quartz, porcelain, ceramic and cinder stone surfaces on display. The new London Showroom (a collaboration with Cambria quartz surfaces) features a stunning quartz-clad fireplace and a variety of installations for inspiration. In Strathroy, clients love to wander the aisles of 10-foot-tall samples for an immersive experience.

"You'll find an expanded team and a vast selection of colour, cut and style at our two locations."



Howard Wilton, Dave Sidhu, Dana Wilton & Ankit Komboj



ON TREND

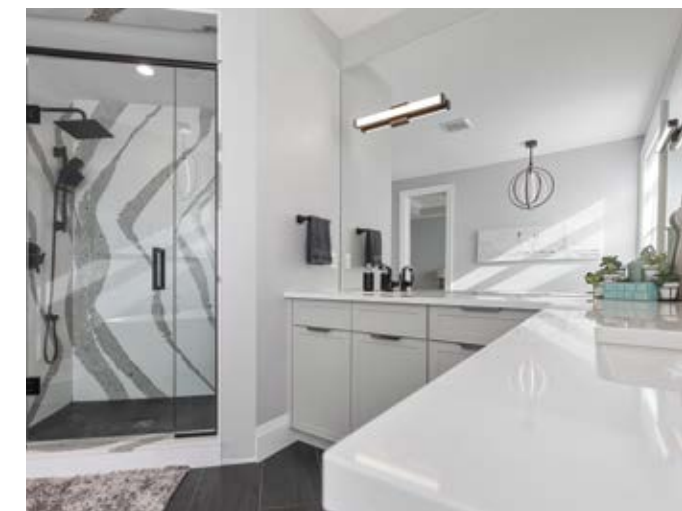
Not just for countertops, vertical stone applications include backsplashes, showers, fireplaces and stand-out feature walls. A stone surface beautifully transforms any space, and all products are durable and hygienic.

IN-HOME CONSULTATIONS

Looking for a personalized experience? Progressive Countertop's Dream Team will come to your home or business and help you make a perfect choice.

PROGRESSIVE COUNTERTOP

The expanded management team at Progressive Countertop has a clear vision: elevate the customer experience. So, they have renovated their main warehouse and showroom in Strathroy and created an elegant new designer showroom in south London. Homeowners, builders and contractors can source the latest stone surfaces for any size project.



Continued on page 70

**Brittany Wraith,
Nicole Morel
& Jeff McColl**



PHOTO: JACKIE NOBLE

HYBRID TUBS

"Something that is unique to the hot tub industry that a lot of consumers don't know about, is our hybrid hot tub option," says owner, Jeff McColl. The Hybrid package puts all the equipment in front of the hot tub under a step, which means the tub is insulated all the way to the wall on all four sides. It's extremely quiet and very easy to service."



GAZEBOS

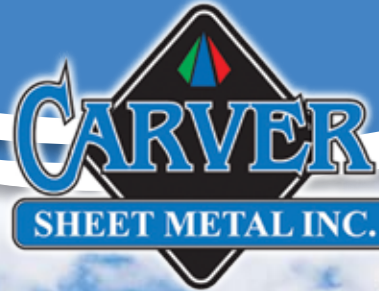
"Our gazebos are Canadian-made with Canadian lumber and they're quick to install. They start out as a simple open-air gazebo with four posts and a roof and can end up being another room outside of your home with sliding walls and screens, which give you the option of being indoors or out while always having a roof over your head." Four models are on display at Beachcomber Hot Tubs in London.

"Comfort is one of the most important features of any product you purchase, from a mattress to shoes. If it isn't comfortable you won't enjoy it or use it. The same rule applies to a hot tub purchase – if it's not comfortable or you float out of the seats, you won't enjoy it or use it. Always seek guidance from a professional." – Jeff McColl

Continued on page 72



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Debra Rigby

DEBRA RIGBY DESIGN

Debra Rigby is an accomplished designer with a keen eye for detail. With years of experience, she combines functionality and aesthetics to create timeless and captivating designs that exceed client expectations. Her passion for design and client-centric approach make her a sought-after professional in the field of design.

"My design philosophy is rooted in timelessness, where simplicity, elegance and functionality come together to create enduring and classic designs that stand the test of time."

SEE OUR DIRECTORY FOR ALL CONTACT INFORMATION.



GO TIMELESS

To create a timeless interior, choose a colour palette that transcends passing trends. You can add pops of colour through accessories and artwork. Focus on using high-quality materials to ensure that the design remains relevant and timeless for years to come. Don't be afraid to mix textures with patterns and colours to add visual interest and depth to your design. Trend lightly.



BESPOKE INTERIORS

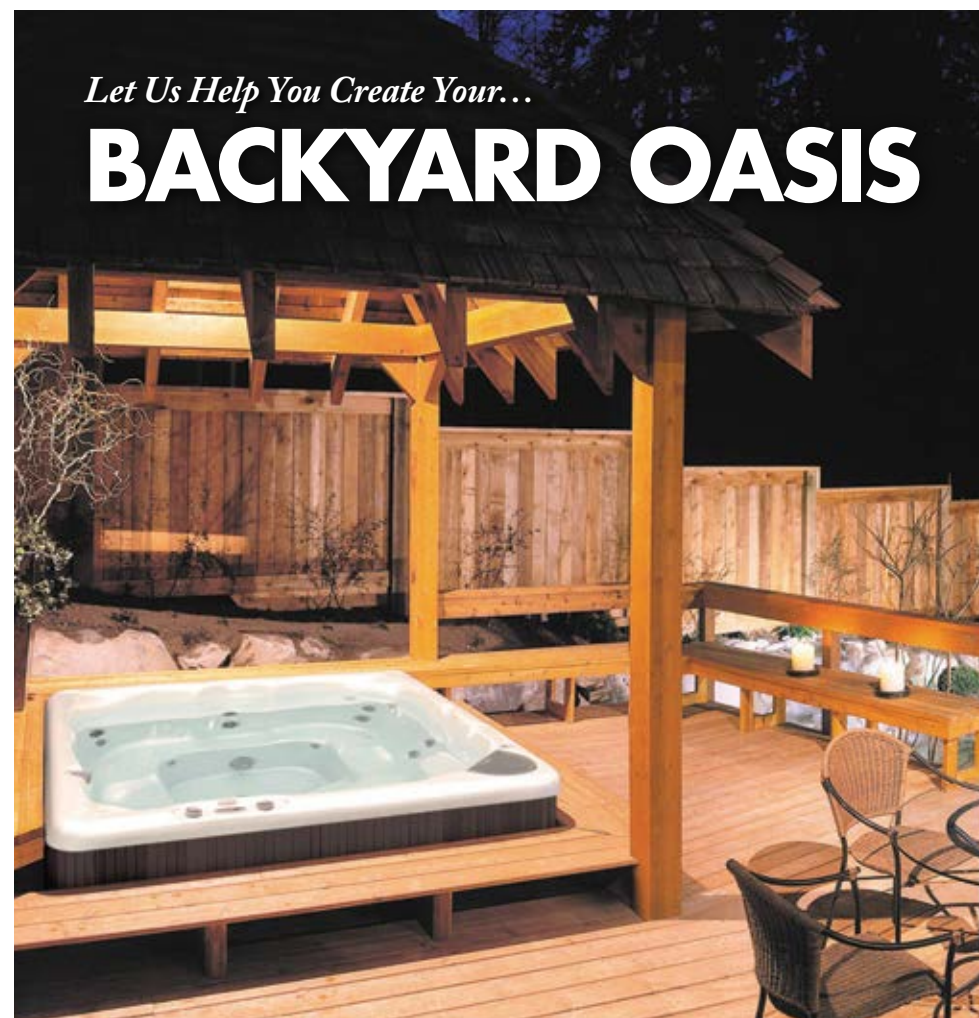
If you just can't find the right piece of furniture or are stymied finding the perfect linens or drapes, Debra Rigby Design can fulfill your vision. "I create bespoke furniture, luxurious bedding and custom drapery tailored to the unique style and preferences of my clients." **OH**

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How to STOCK YOUR PANTRY for a PLANT-BASED DIET



STORY **BAILEY FRANKLYN**

Whether you've recently adopted a plant-based diet, or want to eat less meat, a well-stocked pantry is the key to success. A plant-based pantry is similar to a regular pantry, with a few main differences, namely proteins and some baking ingredients.

If you want to start eating a plant-based diet, as a plant-based Registered Dietitian, I recommend stocking these 10 pantry and fridge staples.

BEANS & LEGUMES

Think black beans, brown or red lentils, cannellini beans, chickpeas and kidney beans. A great source of protein and fibre, beans and legumes can be found canned or dried. Both are equally nutritious, but if you're using dried, they require some planning as they have to be soaked and cooked before use.



HEMP HEARTS

Hulled hemp seeds have a mild, nutty flavour and can be added to anything from salads to oatmeal to boost the protein content.



NUTS & SEEDS

Common staples in most pantries, however, their uses are more versatile in plant-based cooking. After soaking, they can be blended to add creaminess and texture to dressings and sauces, while boosting the protein and healthy fat content.



TVP (TEXTURED VEGETABLE PROTEIN)

A soy-based meat alternative. Great for replacing meat in chilis, tacos or pasta sauce.



CHIA SEEDS

Available whole or ground and a great source of fibre and Omega 3 fatty acids. Can be used to make a "chia seed egg" to replace eggs in baking. Once opened, store in the fridge.



FLAXSEED

High in fibre and Omega 3s, it can be added to almost anything. Choose milled/ground flaxseed, as it's more versatile and nutritious than whole flaxseed. Commonly used to make a "flax egg," which can also replace eggs in baked goods.



PLANT MILKS

Used to replace dairy milk in coffee, smoothies or baking. With so many options available (for example soy, oat, almond and cashew), try different types and brands to find your favourite.

COCONUT MILK

While technically a plant milk, it's more often used to replace cream in cooking and baking. It adds flavour and creaminess to soups, sauces and curries, and can be used to make plant-based whipped cream.



NUTRITIONAL YEAST

Lovingly referred to as "nooch" by plant-based eaters, it's an inactive form of yeast with a cheesy flavour profile, and packs a nutrient punch. High in protein and B vitamins, sprinkle it on pasta or make a vegan mac and "cheese" sauce. Store in a cool dark place or in your fridge.



VEGETABLE BROTH

Easily replaces animal-based broths, and is used the same way. If you open a container and don't use it all, freeze in ice cube trays for later use.

You can get most of these items at Bulk Barn, Costco or your local grocery store. No need for specialty stores.

A pantry takes time to stock, don't feel like you have to buy everything at once. Grab a few items every time you shop, and you'll have a well stocked plant-based pantry in no time. **OH**

Bailey Franklyn is a registered dietitian and lives in Meaford.

DIY Beaded OUTDOOR CHANDELIER



THIS BEADED CHANDELIER MAKES A CHARMING ADDITION TO YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE. ITS SUBTLE CANDLELIGHT WILL PROVIDE AMBIENCE ON WARM SUMMER EVENINGS.



PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY
TARA CHATTELL



Materials

- Two 14-inch wood hoops
- 4-inch wood disk at least ½-inch thick (we used a coaster)
- 4-inch wood hoop (we used the inside of a small embroidery hoop)
- Strong adhesive
- 72 small screw eyepins, around 10-by-5mm in size
- Six screw eyepins 17mm in size
- Hanging planter chain that includes a hook and connector. Three pieces 6 ½-inches long. Three pieces 11-inches long. One piece 13 inches, or longer if needed, with a hook at one end and a connector piece at the other (you can cut or piece together sections of chain to obtain the length needed)



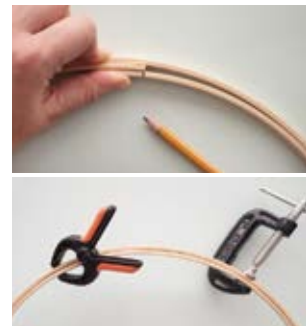
- Gold spray paint suitable for outdoors
- Strong fishing line
- Wood beads in various sizes (we've used 360 6mm, 360 8mm, 144 10mm, 144 12mm, 144 14mm, 144 16mm and 144 20mm)
- Flameless outdoor candle

Tools

- Pencil
- Tape measure
- Small handsaw
- Four to six clamps
- Small piece of cardstock or paper
- Drill with bits to match the eyepins (if you don't have a drill bit small enough for the 5mm eyepins you can use a dremel rotary tool)
- Bench vise
- Pliers
- Scissors

How-To

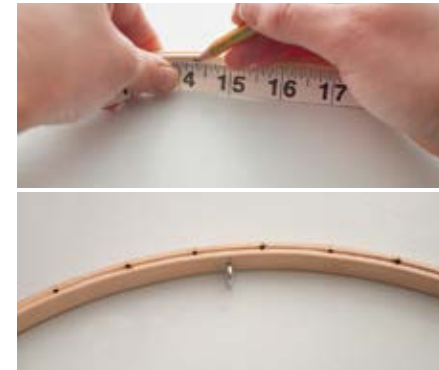
1. Start by cutting a small section from one of your 14-inch hoops, so that it fits inside the other hoop. Apply adhesive around the inside of your larger hoop. Place your cut hoop inside, then clamp the hoops together in multiple spots and allow to dry completely. You will have a thicker, sturdier hoop to work with.



2. Measure the outer circumference of your hoop and divide that number by 36 to determine how far apart each 5mm eyepin will be. Make yourself a small paper template with a few pre-measured sections drawn on it. Use the template to make little marks with a pencil on the surface around your hoop where you'll be attaching the eyepins. You should have 36 equally-spaced pencil marks.



3. Drill small pilot holes at all the pencil marks on the hoop and use pliers to screw in 36 5mm eyepins. These will be for hanging one end of the bead strands.



4. Measure the inside circumference of your hoop and divide that number by three. Mark three equally-spaced spots with your pencil on the inside of the hoop. Place the hoop in a bench vise and drill pilot holes for the larger eyepins at each mark. Screw in three 17mm eyepins. These will be used to attach some chain.

5. Now you're going to repeat this process with the wood disk (coaster). Measure the outer circumference of the wood disk and divide that number by 36. Make another paper template with a few pre-measured sections drawn on it and use it to make 36 pencil marks around the edge of the bottom flat surface of the wood disk.

6. Drill small pilot holes at all the pencil marks on the surface of the wood disk and use pliers to screw in 36 5mm eyepins. These will be for attaching the other end of the bead strands.

7. Using the outer circumference of the wood disk again, divide that number by three and make pencil marks at three equally-spaced spots around the outside of the disk. Place the wood disk in a bench vise and drill pilot holes for the larger eyepins at each mark. Screw in three 17mm eyepins. These will be used to attach some chain that will connect this wood disk to the 14-inch wood hoop.



8. With the adhesive, glue the small 4-inch wood hoop to the top surface of the wood disk, clamp them and allow to dry completely. This will be the holder for your flameless candle.

9. Coat your completed wood pieces, chain, hook and connector piece with gold spray paint and allow to dry. Once all the pieces are dry you can assemble the frame of your chandelier.

10. Hang the longest piece of chain by the hook from something such as a garment rack, shower or curtain rod. This will make it easier to work on your chandelier. Attach the three 11-inch pieces of chain to the connector piece that is at the bottom of your long piece of chain. Using your pliers, attach the other ends of the three 11-inch chains to the larger eyepins on the inside of the wood hoop, making sure that the side with the 36 smaller eyepins is facing down.



11. Using your pliers again, attach the three 6 ½-inch pieces of chain to the three larger eyepins on the inside of the wood hoop. Then, attach the other end of each chain to the three larger eyepins on the outside of the wood disk, making sure that the side with the 36 smaller eyepins is facing down. Your chandelier frame is complete!

12. Now you're ready to start stringing some beads. You'll need 36 strands of beads, approximately 14 ¾ inches in length, with the larger beads starting at one end and gradually transitioning through the varying sizes to the smallest beads on the other end. Each strand consists of four 20mm, four 16mm, four 14mm, four 12mm, four 10mm, 10 8mm and 10 6mm beads.



13. To make a beaded strand, cut two pieces of fishing line 25-inches long (we're doubling up on the fishing line to make the strands stronger). Put the two pieces of line together and tie a double knot about five inches from the ends. This will leave enough extra line to tie the strand to the chandelier frame once the beads are on. Working from the open ends, separate your pieces of line and string one piece through one of your largest beads and push it all the way down to your knot. Bring the two pieces of line back together and string the remaining beads over both pieces of line until you reach the second-last bead. Separate the line pieces again and string one piece through the last bead and then bring the line pieces back together and tie tightly with another double knot. Stringing them this way prevents the beads from sliding off the line at the ends. Repeat this process until you have 36 beaded strands.

14. Tie a beaded strand, beginning at the end with the larger beads, to one of the small eyepins around the bottom of the large wood hoop. Take the other end of the strand, with the smaller beads, and tie it to a small eyepin on the bottom of the wood disk. Repeat this process until all the beaded strands are attached to the frame.



Hang your chandelier in a covered outdoor space and add your flameless candle to the centre. Grab a cold drink, sit and enjoy your beautiful creation! **OH**

floral ROSE WINE SPRITZER

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

A SPRITZER IS A SIMPLE COCKTAIL MADE OF WINE AND SODA. THIS VERSION HAS A FLORAL TWIST WITH SUBTLE NOTES OF ROSE AND ELDERFLOWER. IT'S PERFECT FOR A SUMMER GARDEN PARTY.

ROSE SIMPLE SYRUP

½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup water

4 to 6 dried roses

Mix together granulated sugar, water and dried roses.

Bring to boil and simmer for five minutes.

Remove from heat, strain and let cool.

COCKTAIL

½ - 1 oz. rose simple syrup

1 oz. elderflower liquor

4 oz. dry rosé wine

2 oz. sparkling water

Fill a wine glass with ice.

Mix together rose simple syrup (adjust sweetness to taste), elderflower liquor and rosé wine.

Top with sparkling water and stir. **OH**

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finishing touch



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG | SWING: LOGS 4 LEISURE

Summer SWAYING

Nothing says summer like a porch swing. A place to sip lemonade with family and friends or just relax with a good book. Here are some swings that work for every front porch or patio.



CB2: Brisa Rattan Outdoor Hanging Lounge Chair

CB2: Zora Black Rattan Outdoor Hanging Daybed with White Sunbrella® Cushions



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CB2: Grove Hanging Outdoor Loveseat Swing



PHOTO: SANDY MACKAY | SWING: OSPREY MILLWORKS

FREESTANDING

No covered porch or structure to hang a swing from? No problem! There are many freestanding options out there that come with a frame to hang the swing from.

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ZUO: Bilbao Hanging Chair Grey



HOME HARDWARE: BOND Kittlano 3 Seat Swing - with Shade



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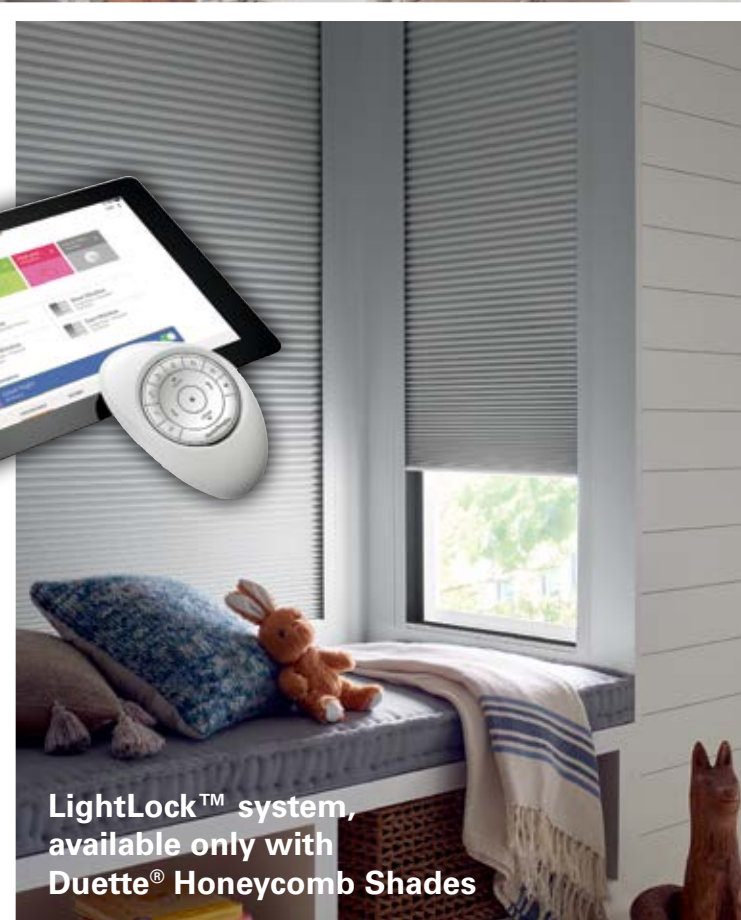
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