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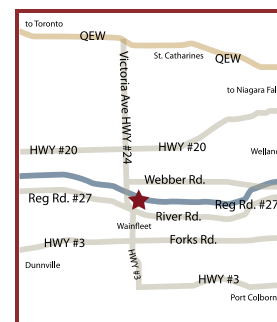


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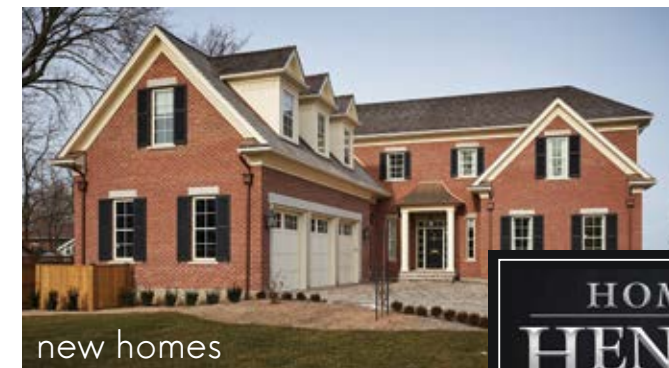
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editor's note

Me with Expo



Me with Jackson

LONG BEFORE THE PANDEMIC STARTED, walking my neighbour's dog was one of my favourite ways to break up my day. I loved it so much, I decided to turn it into a side hustle, though stopped calling it that soon after I started. I have a habit of falling hard for anything on four legs and a wagging tail, so referring to that as a hustle seemed, well, cold.

It's true, I might have been helping out some humans by checking on their canine companions while they were at work. But those animals helped me more than I did them, especially during this past year.

Spending time with each one let me use a different muscle – they didn't care about my story leads, clincher quotes or grammar. They got me outside, away from the pressures of deadlines and pandemic living, save for the wide berth we always made when passing someone on our walks. They were the break in the day I needed more than visiting the local coffee shop for a tea latte that used to be my regular afternoon pause so I could mull a story or get primed for an afternoon of editing.

I'm not the only one who gets the therapeutic effects of dogs (don't tell my cats I wrote that). There are countless headlines about pet adoptions soaring during the pandemic. Animals helped us through sheltering in place, easing our anxiety as we lived through many unknowns and filling a void when our social bubbles were popped in the name of flattening the curve.

Still others found comfort in their homes. Renovations became just as common as retrievers. In this issue, we catch up with two families who turned their homes into places bound to make pandemic living more bearable. We also showcase some of the area's top tradespeople and retailers happy to help if you're still not sure about overhauling the kitchen or adopting a king shepherd.

Maybe both are in the cards. If so, I know where you can find a dog walker if you ever need one.

Tiffany Mayer, Managing Editor
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ON THE COVER

A kitchen – and a home – fit for a family. Story, page 22. Photography by Kelly Horkoff.



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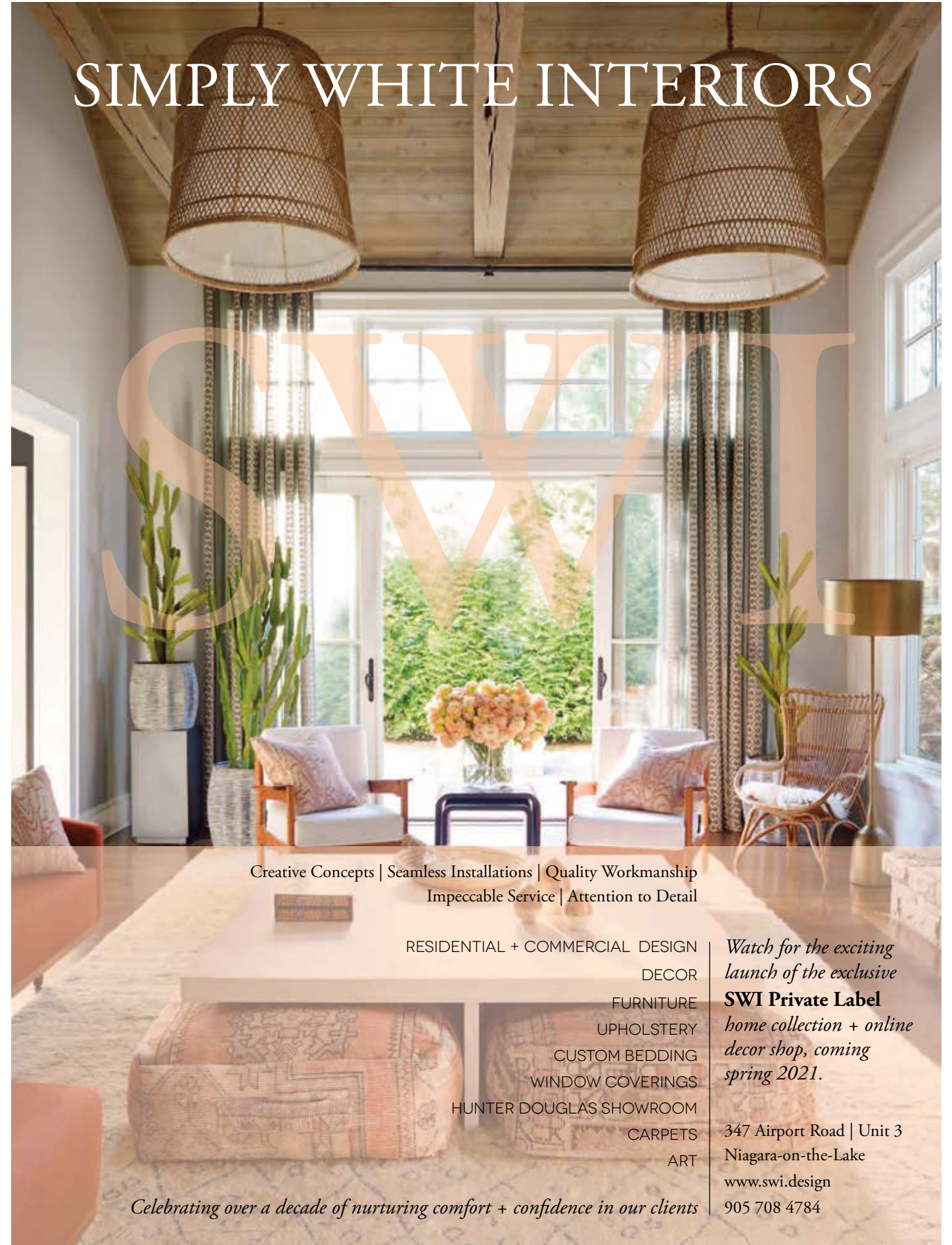
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Interior Designer **Dolores Pian** shares her ideas.

SURVIVING THE ELEMENTS

The great outdoors: Whether we experience it on a tiny balcony, a cosy deck or a big backyard, we all want to get out to enjoy warmer temperatures. While it's lovely to lounge, linger and live outdoors, you need to know Mother Nature is cruel towards materials. The scorching sun, with temperatures that go up and down, along with the wind, rain and water are all challenging to materials, natural or man-made.

To navigate the dos and don'ts for your outdoor life experience, first, ask yourself, "How much time do I want to devote to maintenance?" A bit of research will make your lounge time more enjoyable.

CABINETRY AND FURNITURE – MAINTENANCE 101

- ☀ Most products are made of plastic, wood, aluminum or wicker, and each material has its own set of positives and negatives.
- ☀ Take time to read and follow manufacturers' instructions to clean and maintain any products. It'll make your life easier in the short and long run.
- ☀ Corrosion- and weather-resistant means the finish protects materials. It is not waterproof.
- ☀ UV-stable and light fastness is a stabilizer added to protect from deterioration or fading in the sun.
- ☀ Fire, heat and impact-resistant materials are easy to clean and non-corrosive. The most practical is stainless steel.
- ☀ The easiest solution is to cover your furniture and place in storage when not in use.

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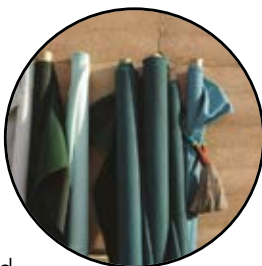
Look for recycled plastic, reclaimed wood or FSC-certified wood. Teak is well known for durability, beauty and strength and is popular on ships.



CABANACOAST: Landing Deep Seating in Umber

FABRICS

Cushions and fabrics make outdoor lounging comfy. Make sure fabrics are breathable and UV, water, mildew and stain-resistant. Most people are familiar with Sunbrella fabric for its durability and soft feel. Power-washing is not recommended as it can ruin the seams of the cushions.



SHADES AND CANOPIES

Extend your outdoor stay in a natural way to keep cool, protect yourself from UV rays and reduce the premature ageing of wood and fabric. Add a fan for ultimate breezy coolness.

FLOORING

What's under your feet needs to be practical, beautiful and long-wearing. First, take an inventory of the area you want to cover. Assess conditions such as drainage, holes made by animals, soil type and exposure to sun and rain. This will determine what materials you'll need to use. Flooring options include:

Wood: It's versatile. Redwood and cedar have a natural resistance to rot and the elements. Other woods require sealants.

Stone: Natural and durable. Includes granite, slate and marble and still requires care. Dark stones absorb the heat and will scorch your tender tootsies.

Brick and permeable concrete pavers: Great hardscape options for eco-friendly patios and walkways.

Tile: Porcelain tiles can mimic the look of other materials, including wood and stone, all while being durable and budget-friendly.

Rubber paving stones and recycled plastic: Helps divert waste from landfills. Resilient, durable, slip resistant and shock absorbent – a favourite around pools and kids' playgrounds.

Composite Decking: Wood fibres encased in plastic and binding agents. Low-maintenance, easy to install with a multitude of great traits. Very popular despite higher cost of materials.

Carpets: Makes the outdoors homelike. The synthetics are easy to clean, and are mould, mildew and stain-resistant. Many are made of recycled materials.

Artificial Grass: It's not the real thing, but it is easy to install and long-lasting. You do need to vacuum it.

NOTE: Make sure your flooring has a matte or non-slip finish. Shiny surfaces are hazardous around water and in the winter.

Finally, your evening outdoor stay is more enjoyable when you light things up! Make sure any fixture you use is wet-rated. Safety first. **OH**



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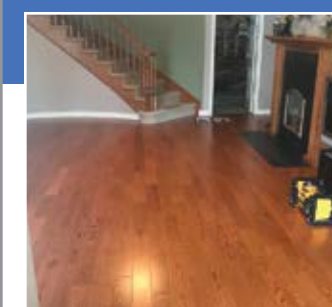
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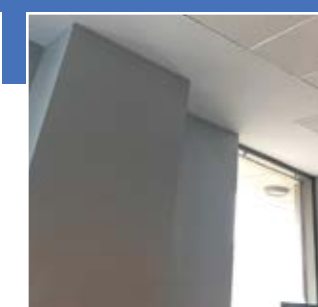
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1

fresh START

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RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

MELON PROSCIUTTO SALAD

This is the perfect fresh and bright salad for spring. Sweet, juicy melon and salty, slightly smoky prosciutto are a classic pairing.

INGREDIENTS

SALAD

1 cup melon, balled (your choice: cantaloupe, watermelon and/or honeydew)

1 cup bocconcini cheese

8-10 pieces of thinly sliced prosciutto

Mint, to garnish

Basil, to garnish

DRESSING

¼ cup olive oil

2 Tbsp wine vinegar, your choice

1 tsp honey

A few leaves of basil, thinly sliced

Salt and pepper, to taste

HOW-TO

In a large bowl, mix together dressing ingredients.

Add melon and cheese and toss to coat in the dressing.

Place the melon mixture on a platter and arrange with slices of prosciutto.

Tear mint and basil to garnish on top. **OH**

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Sow EASY

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY MELANIE REKOLA

2020 was a wild year that brought so many challenges – some were utterly heartbreaking and others were just plain annoying. The lack of availability of items we take for granted was frustrating, including plants. Many garden favourites just weren't attainable. Seed-sowing to the rescue!



Most garden seeds (both flowers and veggies) are readily available online and at your local nursery, often in varieties you might otherwise never find. Plus, growing plants from seed is an inexpensive, fun and rewarding process. Most seeds can be started indoors earlier in the growing season but for this piece I'm focusing on the direct sowing method because it's terrifically simple. Direct seeding/sowing means to plant seed directly in the garden. Sounds easy doesn't it? That's because it is!

Unlike their inside-grow counterparts, seeds that have been grown in place don't experience the stress of transplanting and won't need to adjust to their new surroundings. Often you won't lose any time at all direct-sowing and I learned this (again) firsthand during last year's growing season when a friend gifted me a variety of veggie seeds in June. With no time to start indoors I had no choice but to direct-sow them. To my surprise, many of these sown-in-place seedlings grew better and produced more than the ones I started inside the previous months.

Continued on page 20

Melanie is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.

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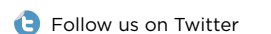
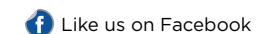


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TIPS FOR SEEDING SUCCESS

Though direct-sowing is easy, it doesn't mean your new plant babies won't need care. Follow these tips for the best direct-seeding success:

- Make sure to clear your seeding area of any weeds and have the soil loose, damp and ready for planting.
- Most of the specific sowing info per plant variety is found on the seed packet. Please read carefully. The rule of thumb is to plant a seed three times as deep as its circumference, but some require light or a cold stratification to germinate. Also keep in mind that when to sow is equally important, as some seedlings are frost-hardy and some are not.
- Mark your spot. It's really easy to forget where you planted seeds once springtime growth is in full swing.
- Water your seeds gently as needed until you see germination, then again whenever you see the soil surface looking a bit dry. Watch the weather and adjust your watering. Schedule accordingly as seedlings can easily die from drought or drowning at this delicate stage.
- If you have a good germination rate, you may need to thin your seedlings to give them airflow and room to grow. I find it's better to pinch the unwanted seedlings off at the base because pulling them disturbs their delicate, young root systems. If the unwanted seedlings are edible plants you can eat them, too.
- Keep watching and caring for your new brood until they're established plants, and always be on the lookout for pests and predators. Some insects love to snack on and decimate defenseless seedlings.

MELANIE'S PLANT PICKS

Annual flowers, vegetables, and even some perennials are great candidates for direct-sowing. Some plants even seed themselves for subsequent years. Here is my list of favourites, but please don't let it limit you. There are many others that will work.



THE EDIBLES

Beans, salad greens, parsley, basil, dill, borage, cilantro, fennel, beets, carrots, peas and radish.



BLOOMS-FOR-DAYS ANNUALS

Cosmos, zinnia, calendula, sunflowers, nasturtium, nigella, bachelor buttons, california poppies, morning glory and moonflower.



DEPENDABLE PERENNIALS/BIENNIALS

Foxglove, blue flax, black eyed susans, milkweed, butterfly weed, columbine and lupine.

PRO TIP: After your seed garden is well established, don't forget to sow succession crops of both flowers and veggies to keep those beautiful blossoms and edibles coming all season long. You can even save some seeds at the end of the season for next year.

Lessons learned? Direct sowing is a little bit risky and patience-building but also incredibly easy and inexpensive. Which method will you choose this gardening season? **OH**

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The family room features shelving easily accessible to everyone big and small. An area rug on the hardwood adds softness for little feet. Artwork by Marina Randazzo.

DESIGN PLAN *flip*

STORY DENISE WILLSON
PHOTOGRAPHY KELLY HORKOFF



The kitchen is in a space that was originally the dining room. **RIGHT:** The new dining room used to be the kitchen. By switching the rooms, the renovation created more space and functionality. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The Helder family.



Rachel and Ben Helder love their home.

They created almost 10 years of memories there before deciding it was time for a major overhaul of the main floor. Their family had grown substantially over the years – six children between the ages of four and 16. Nothing was more important than spending time together as a family, but they weren't sure how to make it happen. And they didn't know the best design plan would include a drastic flip, reversing the first draft of the new floor plan entirely.

Decorator **Mary Cath Altobelli** of **Alto Interiors** and **Rob VanderBruggen** of **Ridgeline Renovations** knew. The original design didn't relocate the kitchen or dining room, but after

giving it some thought, Mary Cath realized doing so would best serve the Helders.

"The drawings were done, so Rachel and Ben were hesitant to make drastic changes," Mary Cath says. "But the drop-dead gorgeous island and kitchen wouldn't have been the same without flipping the design plan, making the space much more inviting and user-friendly."

They switched the dining room and kitchen, removing the wall between the kitchen and living room to create an open space that's now uniquely framed by floor-to-ceiling pantries, the result of Rob and brother Todd's design genius.

"The pantry area became a feature unto itself," Mary Cath says.

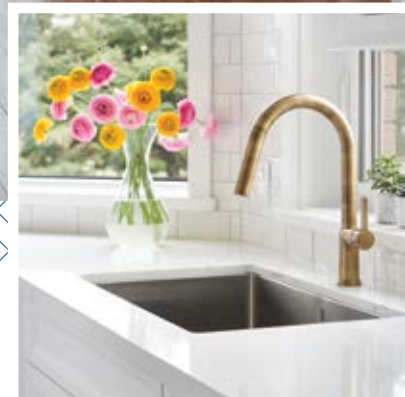
"One pantry is for food and kitchen supplies, and the other houses kids' stuff like snacks and lunch goodies, making it easy for the kids to get ready for school. Together, the pantries are an architectural conversation piece."

The homeowners also love how the flip gave them clear sightlines to the backyard so they can watch the kids play outside.

The Helder home is nestled on a three-acre parcel along the Niagara Escarpment in Grimsby, only minutes from city amenities and schools. "We fell in love with the area, and the house was only a year old when we bought it," Rachel recalls. *Continued on page 26*



Switching the kitchen and dining room allowed for the addition of a large kitchen island, where the family can gather together and work on baking projects.



RIGHT: Much work was done on the windows in the kitchen to make the most of natural light.



Mary Cath Altobelli and Rob VanderBruggen.

Before the renovation, the 2,800 sq. ft. home had two eating areas, both too small for a large family, and a kitchen layout that made it difficult for more than one person to cook. “We knew from the start the kitchen and dining areas would be a problem for our growing family,” Rachel says. “But we wanted to live there for a while before making changes so we’d know how we use the house.”

This was a good call. The house was hemmed in by the pool, septic system and garage, making expansion impossible. By removing a few choice walls, Mary Cath, Rob and Todd maximized the workable space within the existing square footage, creating the open-concept living, dining and kitchen area that’s become the epicentre of the home.

Rachel loves to bake, often with the kids, and the dining area now accommodates up to 22 people thanks to a custom dining table by **Expressions in Wood** – perfect for this family of eight and their friends. The family often hosts birthday parties and holiday gatherings.

New flooring was installed throughout the main floor. Hardwood from **Flooring Liquidators** was chosen for its warm colouring and texture, perfect for hiding scuffs and scratches. To make things softer on all those feet, an area rug from **Décor on a Dime** was added to the family room. One window was bricked over, one was added, and two were replaced with larger panes to flood the place with natural light. Window treatments from **Gotcha Covered** are there for privacy when needed. *Continued on page 28*

decorating spaces to enjoy



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The living room is where Ben and Rachel Helder can sit together for some quiet time as a couple while still being close to the rest of the family. **TOP LEFT:** A wall between the kitchen and living room was removed and pantries were added as an architectural feature. **LEFT:** The newly revamped powder room.



The homeowners and Mary Cath spent a lot of time choosing light fixtures and hardware – the home’s crown jewels. “Finding lighting was an eye-opener,” Rachel says. “We didn’t realize how much lighting is needed and how it can really change the look of a room.” Lighting purchased from **Gerrie Electric** was used to define work and play spaces and draw attention to the gorgeous cabinetry, built-ins and millwork done by **Dwayne Blokter of Silverbirch Woodworks**.

With six kids, most still small, the family needed shelving that was easily accessible to everyone. The living room built-ins surround a **Distinctive Fires** fireplace offering a stunning focal point, and art by **Marina Randazzo** adorns the walls here and in the family room. “We love the built-ins,” Rachel says. “They add much-needed storage and give the house character.”

Mary Cath also found creative storage space in every nook and guided the homeowners in picking furniture and drapery.

A coffered ceiling was added to the family room as well, taking it “from a square box to a cosy lounge area,” Rachel says. “It’s now a room we love to be in.”

Continued on page 30



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The homeowners also love the built-in wine bar and dining area, which is great for entertaining. “We are very happy we had Rob and Mary Cath to help us,” Ben says. “We didn’t have the time needed to plan and follow through with every detail, and these guys helped immensely. Always hire professionals.”

The Helder home renovation also included the main-floor office, laundry room, powder room, entryway, second living room and staircase to the upper level.

Having finished the reno in March 2020, the timing couldn’t have been better. A province-wide COVID-19 lockdown meant all six kids were out of school, studying online alongside Rachel and Ben working from home. “We made the dining area into a classroom,” Rachel says.

The dining room also became a place of worship when their church closed to contain the virus. “If there was ever a great time to test the success of this renovation, now is the time,” Ben says with a laugh. **OH**



TOP: The home office, which has been getting a lot of use since the start of the pandemic. **FAR LEFT:** Toys line the shelves in a clever use of space. **LEFT:** The master bedroom.

SOURCE GUIDE

- Alto Interiors • Custom Granite
- Décor on a Dime • Distinctive Fires
- Expressions in Wood
- Fortified Plumbing • Gerrie Electric
- Gotcha Covered
- Halton Electric • Marina Randazzo
- Ridgeline Renovations
- Silverbirch Woodworks
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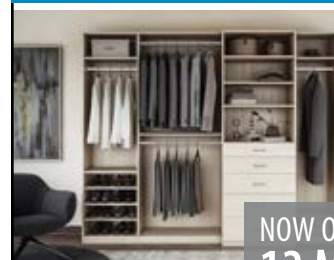
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THE TREND

Home theatre seating is no longer just for the basement rec room. These days, homeowners are buying beautiful sets that surpass what you'll find in a cinema. Ambient lighting, USB ports, cupholders, tablet holders, foldaway tables, lumbar support and everything needed for a comfortable night in are standard on these amped-up sofas, which are being placed prominently in homes. "Gone are the days when people had a formal living room they just looked at," Melissa says. "Everyone wants a room they can use and is reflective of how they want to use the space, and this seating allows that."



THE PLACE

When it comes to hidden gems in Niagara, **Interiors By Better Shade** might be a contender for crown jewel. The family-owned and operated furniture store in St. Catharines is well-known for making custom window coverings – a niche it started carving 65 years ago. But it's the furniture, added to the offerings 40 years ago, that most surprises people when they step into the store. Interiors By Better Shade offers brands and prices that are hard to find elsewhere, including Natuzzi, with its sleek, tailored European look. "And we probably have the best prices in the world," says design consultant Melissa Rey. Canadian brands Brentwood and Palliser also get prominence in the store. Interiors By Better Shade is home to Ontario's largest selection of Palliser recliners. "We're known as a hidden gem in furniture," Melissa says. "We sell quality furniture at really good prices."



THE APPROACH

Staff have expertise in window coverings, furniture or both. Design consultants, including Melissa, will help plan and create your space. In-home consultations are also possible, all with the goal of finding the right home furnishings – from big pieces to accessories – in a low-pressure, relaxed environment.



Melissa Rey, Scott Somerville and Jordan Cecchi

PHOTO: KELLY HORKOFF

WHAT'S NEW

In-home consultations can be done virtually. The store recently added Canadian brand Dutailier with its Technogel seating technology that won't sag with use over time. Technogel also alleviates any pressure on the spine. "Any movement you do repeatedly or not enough of can be bad for us," Melissa says. "So having furniture supportive of spinal alignment is good for our overall health." **OH**

Where

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PHOTO: KELLY HORKOFF / LANDSCAPING: FAIRVIEW/LANDSCAPE

HOME IMPROVEMENT FORECAST 2021

WHAT HOMEOWNERS CAN EXPECT

STORY **CONNIE JESKE CRANE**

IF YOU TRIED TO COMPLETE SOME HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (OR EVEN BASIC MAINTENANCE) OVER THE PAST YEAR AND HIT A FEW SNAGS, YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Homeowner Karen Homer has certainly been there. Homer, who's been completing a string of projects on her Guelph century home over the past year, recalls encountering everything from booked-up contractors to lumber shortages to COVID-related product and shipping delays. With a custom door for example, she says, "This door should usually take nine weeks to come, which is long enough, but it took 16 weeks."

Add to that an extra layer of COVID protocols and PPE. At one point, during some mould remediation work in her basement, Karen found herself dealing not only with "guys in COVID suits but others in mould-hazard suits. So it's been fun!"

For industry players and homeowners alike, 2020 was uniquely and unforgettably challenging. If you plan to begin a new project this year, here's a look at what's in the forecast for the home improvement industry plus advice on navigating challenges.

MORE OF THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT, TOO

What can homeowners expect this year? We talked to Michael Garrity, CEO of Financeit, a Toronto-based company that provides mobile-friendly financing apps for things like home renos.

Michael begins by making sense of what happened last year. "If there was a theme for 2020, it would be 'Dealing with change without a playbook,' right? We had no idea this was going to come, once it hit us we had no idea how big it was going to be, what the implications were going to be, what the government reaction was going to be, what people's perceptions of safety would look like. It was all trial by fire."

Adding to the complexity, says Michael, after an industry lockdown in Q2, the home improvement sector saw a wild 60 per cent year-over-year rise in the third quarter – hand-in-hand with unprecedented delays and shortages.

For 2021, with a second lockdown in January, he says, "We are going to continue to wrestle with effects and implications of the health pandemic for the entirety of the year." Yet Michael also sees more reasons to be encouraged.

"What's different this year from last year is we have information; we know what to expect. We're done with [establishing] policies and procedures and protocols. We know how to operate in a lockdown... in a grey zone, and a yellow zone and red zone. We're ready as an industry."

BETTER TECH TOOLS

In 2021 we're all also armed with geeky new skills, having mastered virtual meeting platforms and other tech tools thanks to COVID. Michael says on the industry side, "We've moved to virtual consults, taken advantage of new tools that are available so we can minimize interruptions with customers." In this wider-scale adoption of tech, he says his own company's online applications, which allow customers to finance home improvement projects online, also saw real growth in 2020. "Electronic payments and online financing tools like ours exploded because of again just health concerns and the inconvenience of cash."



PHOTO: KELLY HORKOFF / LANDSCAPING: SHADES OF SUMMER LANDSCAPING AND MAINTENANCE



NATUREKAST WEATHERPROOF CABINETRY

SUPPLY ISSUES

Supply issues are improving. Overall, Michael says, "I think that supply chain issues are going to be less frequent because of knowledge. We know and we can plan for alternative places to source material from."

SPECIFIC TRENDS

Michael says the past year also brought a "reinforcement of the value of the home." In 2021, with people still not travelling, we should see more of the same – spending on backyards, pools, spas, outdoor kitchens, new driveways, basketball courts and anything that maximizes enjoyment of our homes.

ADVICE

For 2021, with home improvement projects, Michael advises planning ahead as much as possible. "Secure the contractor that you want to work with as early in the season as you can because there will be an increased amount of demand."

And for larger spends, particularly if you might sell down the line, Karen says a savvy realtor with good local knowledge can really help you prioritize spending. "I had a realtor walk through the house with me and make lists of bare minimum things that needed to be addressed," she says.

Finally, the right mindset – being patient and flexible – and the need for good safety protocols will stay with us this year. "We're going to experience elements of the health pandemic for all of 2021," says Michael. "It's safe to do projects, as long as you take care." **OH**



BASKETBALL COURT: SPORT COURT ONTARIO / LANDSCAPING: LAND EFFECTS OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES



DESIGNING *a wine country life*

STORY GABRIELLE TIEMAN-LEE | PHOTOGRAPHY KELLY HORKOFF

FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS, NIAGARA WINE COUNTRY WAS JANE WOOLSEY'S FAVOURITE ESCAPE – trading the bustle of Etobicoke for the calm of the vineyards at every opportunity, daydreaming of the day she could retire along the southern shores of Lake Ontario.

“Every time I left, I wanted to get back. It’s such a calm and welcoming feeling here on the (Beamsville) Bench,” Jane says.

When Jane met David Jacobs, they found their future plans to be as in sync as the two of them. With Jane approaching retirement from the corporate world, and David semi-retiring, they knew there was no better time to find their forever home in wine country.

In 2019, their realtor found a brick bungalow in Beamsville with the dynamic property of their dreams: front-to-back views of Lake Ontario, sprawling vineyards and the Niagara Escarpment.

“The property was perfect,” Jane says. “We wanted space and vineyards around us, and having the escarpment almost in our backyard was a bonus.”

The 4,900 sq. ft., 1992 custom build was a vision with clean sightlines and grand, arched windows. But it needed to be opened up and modernized to bring the outdoors in.

The couple partnered with designer **Laurie Sprague** of **Laurie Sprague Designs**, whose vision aligned perfectly with Jane and David’s for their country home. Laurie spearheaded the heavy lifting on the project, contributing to the overall re-design of the whole home, including lighting, kitchen design, material specification, wallpaper, window coverings, millwork design and art arrangement. Throughout, she drew inspiration from items that were significant to the couple, ensuring a place of prominence in her designs for David’s incredible rug collection and a vintage hutch, for example, in the dining room.

Continued on page 39



David and Jane Jacobs with Lucy.



BELOW LEFT: It was a significant undertaking but a custom-coffered ceiling replaced a pan ceiling in the dining room. **BELOW RIGHT:** A glimpse of the staircase that changed the sightlines on the main floor of the home. **OPPOSITE:** The living room is a warm and inviting space with its new cathedral ceiling.





“WE WANTED IT TO BE MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN A CLICHÉ FARMHOUSE, BUT FULL OF WARMTH AND PERSONALITY LIKE JANE AND DAVID.” – Laurie Sprague

“We wanted it to be more sophisticated than a cliché farmhouse, but full of warmth and personality like Jane and David,” Laurie says. “One of my missions is to make every home feel cosy. Homes are meant to be lived in and enjoyed. This was a team effort with great trades.”

Their first step was to open up the interior to let light flood in. Contractor **Brad Robinson of BMR Group Homes Ltd.** began removing walls, doors and sight barriers that blocked any views.

First to go was the maple staircase set in the centre of the foyer. It was replaced with a contemporary glass staircase with soft wood railings and minimal structural metal. Envisioned by David and executed by **E&B Glass Enclosures** along with **Stairfab and Railings Inc.**, the staircase now acts as a functional centrepiece to the home and allows for uninterrupted light flow.

We wanted to see the view of the vineyards in our backyard the moment we walked through the front door,” David says.

The matching glass railings extend from the staircase and frame the upper loft landing, which overlooks the main floor. The loft – featuring two guest bedrooms, a guest bath and sitting nook – is home to two of the couple’s favourite spaces.

Dubbed the Georgian Bay Room, the guest bedroom pays homage to Jane’s family cottage.

It incorporates antique furniture and artwork from the cottage, including a painting by Jane’s mother, all with the intention of honouring the family heirlooms.

“I feel so good every time I come in this room,” Jane says. “I feel connected to something important.”

The sitting nook has David’s passions on display. Laurie chose the bright space as the backdrop for showcasing David’s collection of guitars and tall-ships artwork.

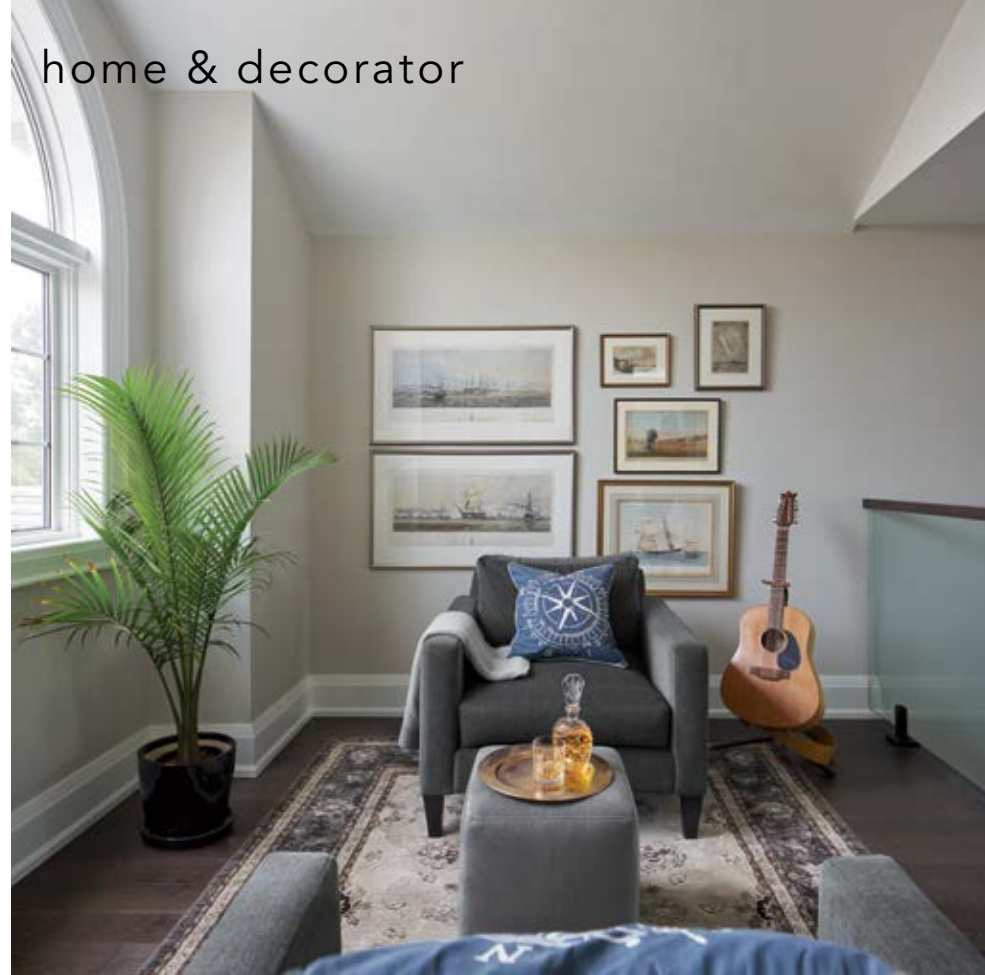
Back on the main level at the base of the stairs is the master bedroom – elevated by a board-and-batten wall that complements wainscoting in the foyer. The en suite features an oversize, double-glass shower by **E&B Glass Enclosures** and a heated basket-weave tile floor selected by Laurie. *Continued on page 40*



Laurie Sprague



TOP LEFT: The kitchen was made timeless with largely white finishes. **LEFT:** Wallpaper in the powder room makes the space unique to the home. **OPPOSITE:** An L-shaped island ensures room for seating and working. It also adds colour and contrast to the white kitchen.



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A surprising statement is the powder room, which is tiled with unique hexagon flooring and wrapped in a whimsical abstract floral wallpaper.

“Both bathrooms are so unique,” Jane says. “I told Laurie, ‘Nothing vanilla’ and she delivered.”

The kitchen, living and dining areas are at the heart of the home with the open-concept layout now allowing for conversation to drift from room to room.

The bright kitchen underwent a complete overhaul by **Justine Driedger** of **Mission Custom Cabinetry**. This included a white subway-tile backsplash by Laurie, new cabinets by Mission Custom Cabinetry and appliances by **Nickerson Appliances**. A larger window and statement lighting by **Universal Lighting** were installed to further brighten the kitchen.

The standout is the sage green and Cambria quartz L-shaped island used in place of a kitchen table for seating.

“We didn’t want the island to match the kitchen; we wanted it to be a statement on its own,” Jane says.

The warm and inviting family room is decorated with antique pieces and new furniture from **Stoney Creek Furniture**. A custom floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace, supplied by **Stamford Fireplaces** and designed and created by Laurie and Brad, warms the space and is a favourite feature of David’s. The fireplace draws the attention to the ceiling, which was converted from a reverse pan ceiling to cathedral

Continued on page 42



ABOVE LEFT: A sitting nook in the loft was personalized with items reflective of one of the homeowner’s passions, including a collection of guitars and tall ships artwork. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The main bath is kept clean and classic in black, white and shades of grey. **BELOW:** Dubbed the Cottage Room, this guest bedroom is another example of how items of sentimental significance to the homeowner were respectfully incorporated into spaces throughout the home.



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TOP LEFT: The master bedroom. Wainscoting lines the walls throughout the main floor. **ABOVE:** The ensuite with a large, double-glass shower.



A new, open staircase with glass railings gives the entire main floor a more open-concept feel and creates sightlines from the front to the back of the house.



in the living room and a beautiful, custom-coffered ceiling in the dining area.

“That was a beautiful architectural detail, executed perfectly by Brad, and was a big part of the project,” Laurie says. “It makes the dining room feel more intimate and defined.”


The dining room’s original chandelier was painted black to coordinate with the black walnut live-edge table crafted from wood acquired from the **Wood Shed** and executed by Mission Custom Cabinetry.

More black walnut accents were added to each room to tie the spaces together, including floating shelves and range elements in the kitchen and the fireplace mantel. It’s these special details that Jane and David can’t wait to show their family and friends.

“Everyone involved shared our passion for this project and it shows in the quality and craftsmanship displayed throughout the house. We love this home and it’s now a double love affair,” Jane says. “We cannot wait to have our family and friends gather here with us. That is what this home is all about.” **OH**

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MATERIAL WORLD

STORY **EUGENIA TRIANDOS AND KORINA KHAMIS**
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Fashion runways have always been at the cutting edge of design, inspiring everything from simple daily clothing choices to complete lifestyles – and yes, they even have a say in what our home environments look like, too. As designers, we’re personally drawn to the latest collections from notable fashion houses, with anticipation of what might walk down that runway and change the trajectory of interior design as we know it.

Perhaps the most literal connection between fashion and home décor is the use of textiles. Look around you – they are everywhere, from window coverings and wall treatments to your furniture upholstery and accessories. Here are some of our favourite fabrics and where to use them.



WOOL

Just like your favourite sweater, wool is great to snuggle while lounging. Wool throws and pillows add decorative texture, but they also serve a warm and cosy purpose on colder nights. This fabric also boasts many natural benefits. It’s a renewable resource, biodegradable, durable and despite visions of shrunken sweaters emerging from washing machines and dryers, modern innovations mean many wool products are no longer “hand-wash” or “dry-clean only.”

SILK

Silk is a highly durable and beautiful material, making it the perfect choice for fashionable and functional flooring. A rug that is 100 per cent silk or a wool/silk blend has a natural sheen to it, and because it usually has a higher knot count when compared to other rug materials, it allows for intricate patterns in its designs. While our favourite silk rugs have a single, solid colour, this natural material has organic variances in colour, making a solid rug feel beautiful and luxurious.



VELVET

Velvet is classically rich and luxuriously over-the-top, instantly adding glamour to everything it touches. In the right doses, it can elevate the look of any room. This fabric is consistent; its low pile gives it a smooth appearance, which shimmers under different light. This quality makes it a beautiful choice for furniture upholstery and pieces featuring beautiful curves. Despite its dramatic look and feel, velvet is low-maintenance and very forgiving, making it an elegant and practical choice for sofas, chairs and cushions.

LINEN

Linen is widely known for its versatility, both on and off the runway. This organic material varies in weight from light and airy to heavier options, and is known for its characteristic woven texture and casual vibe. Linen can be easily dressed up with a bold pattern or colour, thanks to its ability to absorb dye. All of these qualities, combined with the fact that linen always seems to fall nicely, make it a favourite choice for window coverings.



COTTON

There’s nothing quite like the look, feel and even the smell of crisp cotton bedding. There’s a reason we all use cotton in a variety of applications on a daily basis. This particular material pleases the masses – it’s smooth and soft, not scratchy like some linen bedding or hot like silk. The structure of cotton fabric has air channels that make it cool and breathable, and this is one fabric that actually gets better with use. The more you wash it, the softer it gets.

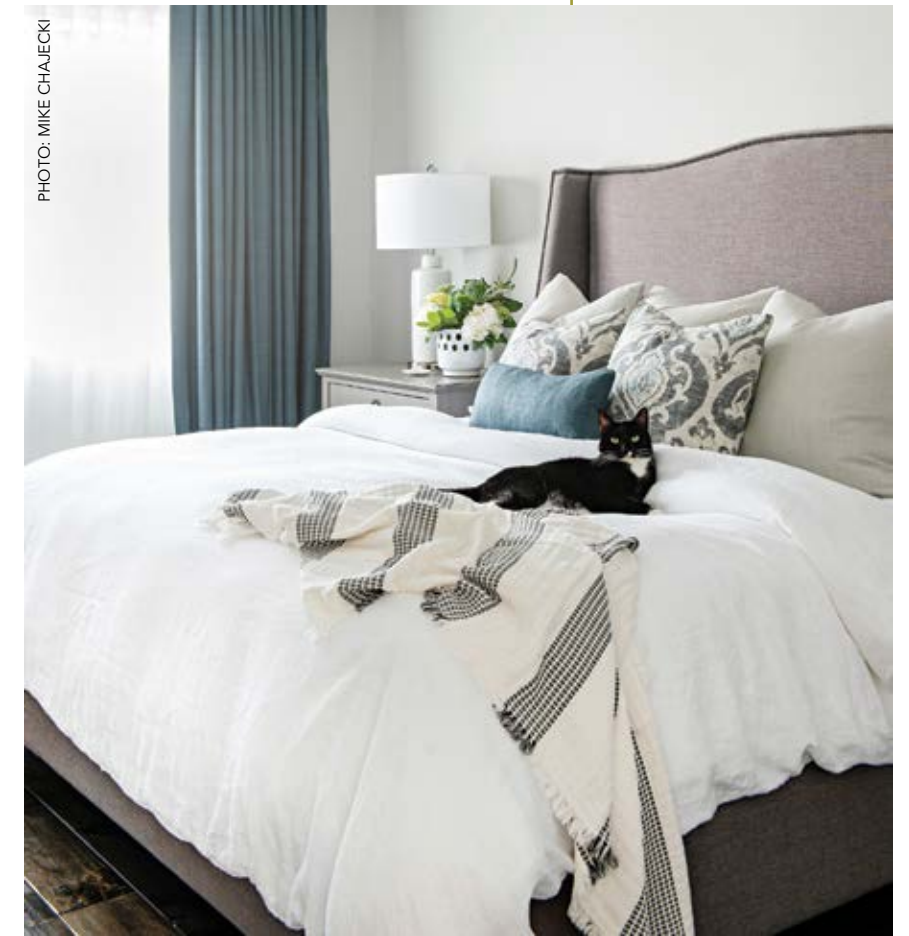


PHOTO: MIKE CHAJECKI

When it comes to finishing touches in your home, textiles are everything. They add softness, texture and depth to your design and create a cosy nest to settle into at the end of the day. Do your research and consider your choices from an aesthetic and practical standpoint. Remember, there’s a perfect fabric for every application. **OH**



NINE LIVES CUSTOM REFINISHING

After multiple evolutions, **Nine Lives Custom Refinishing** has experienced another benchmark year and looks forward to a very bright future. Since its inception in a garage four years ago to its current 2,000 sq ft facility in Fonthill, owner Kevin Coyle and his team of craftspeople produce beautiful kitchens and customized spray finishes. Nine Lives now offers quartz countertops by Cambria and live edge tables, complimenting the kitchen transformations they have become known for. With the completion of over 600 kitchens, Coyle and "Nine Lives" have become an industry front-runner in the Niagara region. Focusing on customer satisfaction, they are proud of the volume of referrals that come from existing customers, cabinetmakers, paint stores and even competitors. The new location includes a showroom to display cabinet doors and hardware, quartz, live edge pieces and the beautiful furniture expertly refinished by Coyle's wife, Carolyn.

The next evolution of Nine Lives will bring their custom spray finishing on the road with a mobile finishing truck that houses a booth designed to spray interior, exterior and even garage doors on site. A first of its kind, this mobile set-up will allow completion of a front and garage door, including trim, in as little as three hours. This exciting new addition to the business is slated for the Spring of 2021.

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Now more than ever, people are really utilizing their outdoor space as an extension for living and entertaining. These are some of the trends we are now seeing:

- PAVILIONS AND SHADE STRUCTURES are enabling people to enjoy spending time outside lounging and dining while being protected from the sun and inclement weather.

- POOLS have become popular as a way of bringing fun and fitness to your own backyard.

- GARDENING has become an interest and hobby in addition to enhancing the aesthetic of your home. More people are getting outside and enjoying gardening whether it be installing beautiful perennials, low maintenance shrubs, large trees or perhaps sneaking in a few vegetables.

- FIRE FEATURES extend the time spent outside well into the fall. The temperate weather conditions in the Niagara area can even extend the use of fire features into the winter months.

- WATER FEATURES add the soothing sound element of water. There are a variety of water feature options ranging from a sheer decent water wall to a calming trickle from a basin or spout.

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(Please see ad on pg 19)



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Don's Light House boasts hand forged lighting from Hubbardton Forge, innovative modern styles from Kuzco Lighting and Canadian manufactured outdoor lighting from Snoc along with many other top lighting brands.

From complete new home orders to that one perfect light or maybe it is just a light bulb you can't find, we are here to help. Meet our experienced lighting specialists like Lisa who has been lighting people's lives for 27 years. The knowledge and history available to you with our staff combined with interactive displays provides an environment for making your home beautiful that you cannot replicate online.

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Interiors By Better Shade is a destination showroom for all your interior design needs in the Niagara peninsula. A stone's throw from Toronto and on the way to your Niagara-on-the-Lake getaway, we are Ontario's largest chair gallery with a beautiful selection of furnishings for your whole home, at a better price.

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We specialize in all residential solutions, from rewiring knob and tube to panel upgrades. From hardwiring smoke alarm systems to bringing your home up to current electrical code standards.

Some of the new trends we are seeing are task lighting for home offices, generator installations, and many different exterior lighting ideas to transform a backyard space into a dream "staycation" oasis (ie, hot tub installations and accent garden lighting).

Established in trust, integrity and hard work, we uphold our competitive edge while striving to complete our projects on time and within budget. We believe it is this foundation that keeps our clients and contractors returning, project after project.

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(Please see ad on pg 43)

project PROS

Local pros talk about what's keeping them busy.



PHOTO: KELLY HORKOFF



Denise Palomba, Sarah Cymba & Karla Asadoorian with Cinder the shopcat.



TRENDING

Benjamin Moore's 2021 Colour Trends are all about the harmonious elements of nature, letting colour elevate your day and personalize your space, from bold, saturated colours that bring spaces to life to earthy and gently muted neutrals that create warmth with an ode to the elements. This year is all about letting nature inspire your space and mood.

CREEK ROAD PAINTS

Creek Road Paints, Benjamin Moore is a locally owned paint retailer in the heart of Niagara wine country. We offer the finest Benjamin Moore paints, Goudey Stains, JF Fabrics and York, Têlio and Provincial wallcoverings, as well as the finest paint tools and sundries for any paint project.

SPECIALTY

The colour experts at Creek Road Paints specialize in interior design, colour consultations, custom wood stains and finishes, window coverings and any and all of your paint and decorating needs from commercial to residential.



Continued on page 50

ENNS CABINETRY

Enns Cabinetry strives to deliver on our three core values: quality, integrity and service. Our experienced staff and variety of products give us the ability to find new and creative ways to make any dream a reality. Any room in your house can have a beautiful, custom, perfectly functional solution to make home your favourite place to be.



Jessica Irving, Art Enns & Nellie Witzke

PHOTO: STEVE ENNS

ESSENTIAL FINISH

FENIX is an Italian synthetic panel material that takes synthetic design to the next level. It is extremely opaque, soft touch and anti-fingerprint and can be thermally healed of superficial micro-scratches.

LATEST PROJECT

It was a home kitchen done with the FENIX finish. FENIX surfaces have a unique non-porous external layer, allowing the material to stay neat with simple, everyday care and cleaning methods. They are also suitable for contact with food.

Continued on page 52

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PHOTO: KELLY HORKOFF

Jordan Heckman

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TRENDING IN HOME DESIGN

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MEMORABLE PROJECT

I like to be challenged! Back when we started this project, it was very much outside of what we were known for in residential design, but we adapted and made it happen for our clients.

Continued on page 54

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PHOTO: KELLY HORKOFF

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Spray-Net has a customized approach to exterior painting. We deliver the convenience of a professional exterior painting service that you love with the benefits of replacement that you need, including a spray-applied factory finish, all backed by our unique 15-year “no peel” warranty.

CURRENT TREND

Greys are still popular, but we are seeing more white, off-white and light colours such as sandstone and clay, accented with black trims.



MEMORABLE PROJECT

I remember when I saw the house, I could see the potential right away and knew that we could make a big transformation. The homeowners trusted me with the colour recommendations, and they were thrilled with the final results. They have received many compliments from neighbours and we have since done several projects in the area as a direct result of this one. **OH**

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PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY TARA CHATTELL

Egg Carton FLOWER PICTURE FRAME

These adorable flowers are so easy to make and no one will guess they're made from egg cartons! Use them to embellish a picture frame, mirror, memo board or anything else in your home that could use a makeover with some pretty flowers.

Tools & Materials

- Scissors
- Paintbrush
- Hot-glue gun
- Egg cartons (1 egg carton makes 3 flowers)
- Acrylic craft paint in colour of choice
- Acrylic craft paint in metallic gold
- Picture frame

How-To

PREPARE EGG CARTON

Tear off the side and top of your egg carton, and using your scissors, cut out 12 individual cups.



Tear off the tall corners and around the top edge of each individual cup until the height is somewhat even all the way around. Don't worry about getting it perfectly straight – the imperfection adds to the rustic beauty of these flowers.

Divide your cups into groups of four. Each flower uses four cups.

ASSEMBLE FLOWER

Take three of the cups and cut slits into each corner, down to the bottom where the cups are bent. Take the fourth cup and cut slits in each corner, a little further past the bend towards the centre.

Tear around the edges and remove sharp corners to create a more rounded shape for each petal. Curl each petal out with your fingers.



To make the outside portion of the flower, glue together the first three pieces, offsetting the petals of each layer.



For the middle of the flower, take the fourth piece, overlap each petal and glue together. Curl out the top edges.



Attach the middle piece to the outside pieces. Now you have a full flower.



Make a stamen for your flower by cutting out a small rectangle from the top of the egg carton. Cut two slits into the rectangle and curl it into itself. Place a dot of glue on the bottom and attach it inside the middle of your flower.

Repeat the above steps until you have enough flowers to cover your frame.

PAINT FLOWERS

Mix your paint with a couple drops of water. This makes it easier to apply.

Coat your flowers with paint, making sure to cover all the petals, front and back.

Once the paint dries, take a very small amount of gold paint and lightly brush the edges of all petals.

EMBELLISH FRAME

Paint your frame the same colour used for your flowers. You can brush a little bit of gold paint over the edges of the frame as well.



Using your glue gun, attach finished flowers around the edge of your frame.

Voila! Now your frame is ready for a picture. **OH**

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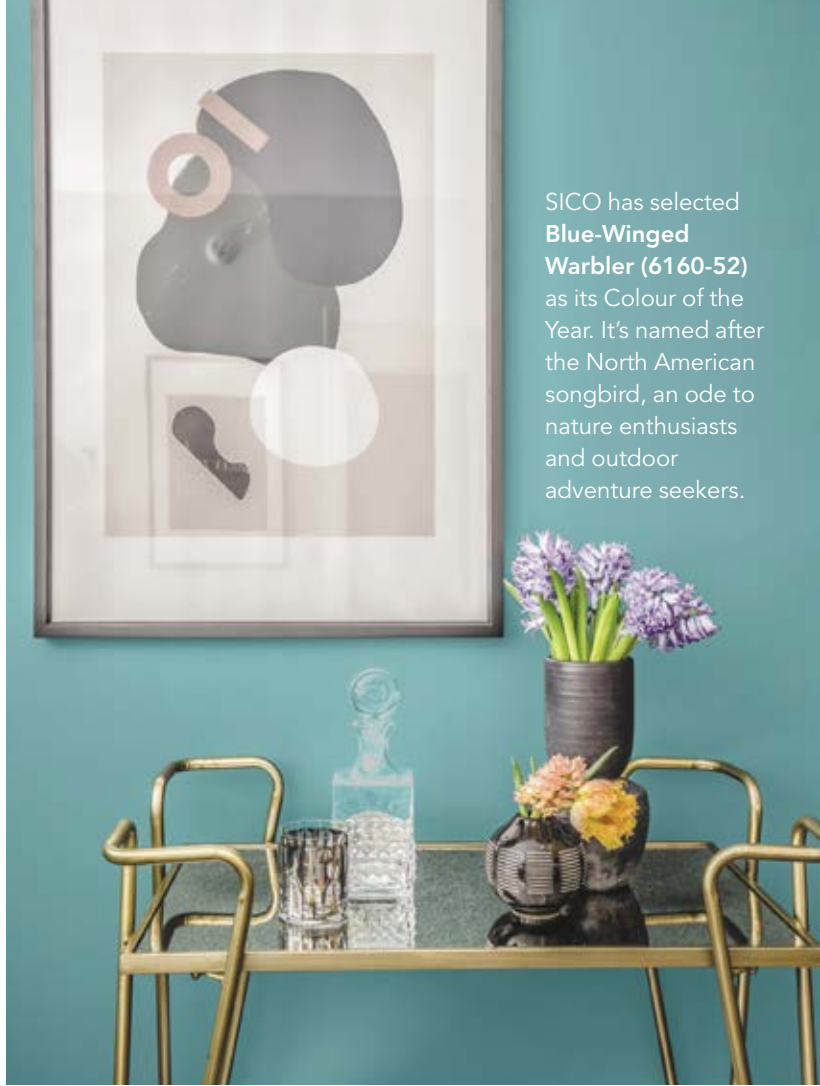
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COLOUR TRENDS

STORY **GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH**



It's a blue year for interior design. Major paint brands have picked their top paint colours, and blues are trending for your walls and home accessories.



SICO has selected **Blue-Winged Warbler (6160-52)** as its Colour of the Year. It's named after the North American songbird, an ode to nature enthusiasts and outdoor adventure seekers.

Benjamin Moore says its colour, **Aegean Teal (2136-40)**, will help create natural harmony in your home. The company calls the colour "intriguing, balanced and deeply soothing." Imagine this colour on your kitchen cabinets.



BACK TO NATURE

While blues dominate, our natural surroundings also inspire colour.



Urbane Bronze (SW 7048), the top pick from Sherwin Williams, is a warm hue the company says will help you create "the ultimate retreat for reflection and renewal," and "a sense of calm from the ground up." It's perfect for window trims or accent walls.

THIS YEAR'S COLOURS ARE OPTIMISTIC AND PLAY TO OUR OVERWHELMING NEED FOR COMFORT AT HOME.

THE BLUES

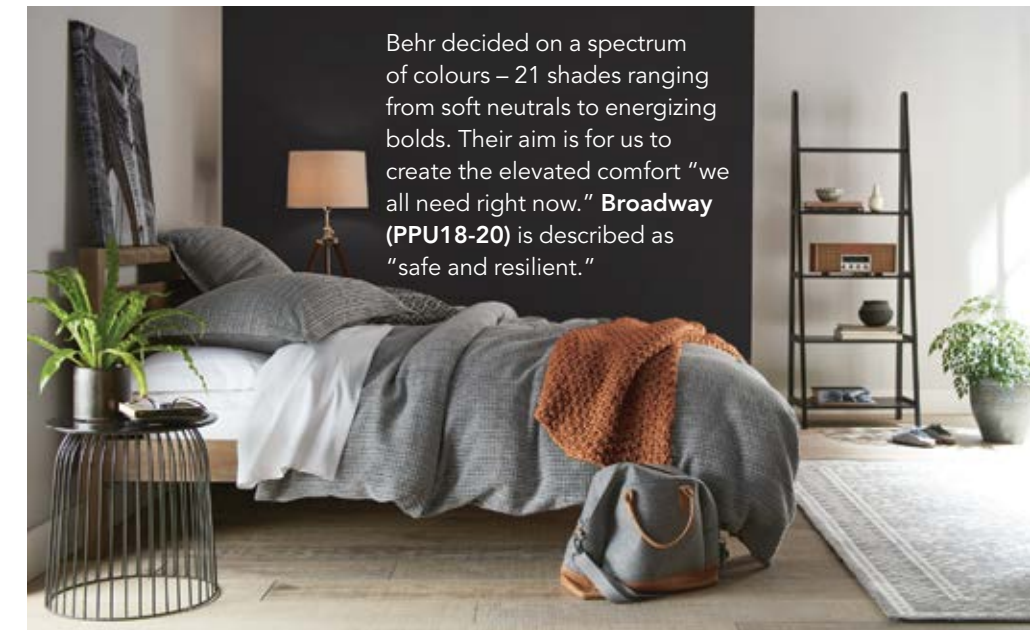


Beuti-Tone Paint has selected **Dancing in the Rain (C20-5-0644-0)**, a pastel blue. "It's a blue we can relax in while feeling as though we are in a calm and tranquil environment," says Kristen Gear, Beuti-Tone's lead colour designer.

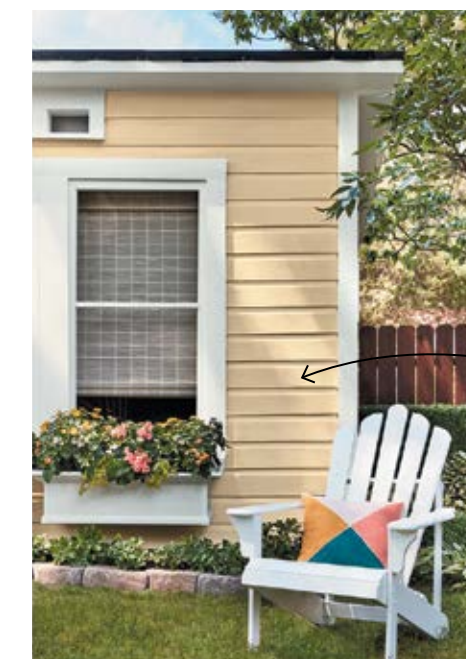


Aqua Fiesta (PPG1147-4), a vibrant blue-green, is Glidden's first-ever accent colour of the year. It's a bright refreshing aquamarine that will make a splash in small doses, perhaps on millwork or an accent wall.

MOVING AWAY FROM GREY



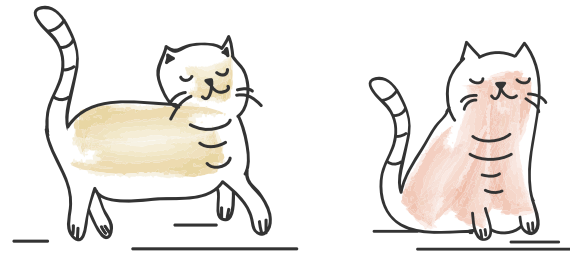
Behr decided on a spectrum of colours – 21 shades ranging from soft neutrals to energizing bolds. Their aim is for us to create the elevated comfort "we all need right now." **Broadway (PPU18-20)** is described as "safe and resilient."



Valspar's colour experts unveiled 12 "fresh and familiar colours" that are on-trend now and are "easy to love forever." One of our top picks from this collection is **Soft Candlelight (3005-6C)**.



Farrow & Ball has selected 12 shades for its 2021 colour trends, mostly earthy neutrals and natural colours. The company says its selections reflect "a broader trend toward warm, organic colours and away from cool greys and blues." We like **Green Smoke No.47. 0H**



CATIOS

THE COOL-CAT WAY TO GIVE YOUR FELINES THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

STORY **CONNIE JESKE CRANE**

Meow. Not that long ago, it was the norm to throw open the door and let your cats prowl the 'hood when they wanted out. More and more though, we've come to associate negatives with letting our kitties participate directly in the food chain. Not only are outdoor cats' lives drastically shorter thanks to dangers and predators, they also kill distressing amounts of wildlife, birds in particular. (For more details, see sidebar.)

In Ancaster, Jill Graham and husband Les Csepey reflect Canadians' changing outlook. Graham, an owner of three cats who grew up with outdoor felines and currently rescues cats says, "Absolutely, I would never let my cats outside. I don't believe in it."

According to Humane Canada's Cats in Canada 2017 Report, leagues of cat owners like Graham and her husband have produced a "particularly exciting statistic." Specifically, the 2017 public survey found 72 per cent of cat owners now prevent their cats from roaming free – an astounding 13 per cent leap from 2016 when only 59 per cent reported doing so.

BEHIND THE CATIO TREND

All great of course, but as any cat owner knows, simply herding cats indoors is a compromise. "These are such interesting little creatures," says Don Bacha, of Hellas Custom Catios in Edmonton, noting a cat's innate curiosity and activity level. So here's where catios come in. Don says outdoor pet enclosures can be a great solution, helping cat lovers embrace responsible pet ownership yet also give their felines back some of the outdoor experience – safely.

The concept isn't entirely new. "It's been big in Australia and Great Britain for 20, 25 years," says Don. Yet in North America, he says, we've only been hearing about catios for 10 years or so, with much more interest lately. In fact, Don and his wife and business partner Yvette recently scaled up their business due to demand. No longer only serving Alberta, they now ship their catio kits across Canada and the U.S.

A RANGE OF CATIO OPTIONS

Considering a catio? There are a range of options available today to fit varied budgets. At the low end, Don says, you could simply purchase a wire crate from a local pet store and place it outside so your cat can enjoy some fresh air and stimulation.

For DIYers, there are plenty of catio building plans and resources available online. (Local



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HELLAS CUSTOM CATIOS

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JILL GRAHAM

SPCAs can help guide you.) Increasingly, there are also ready-made catio kits available from various suppliers, with Hellas being one of the notable Canadian-made options. Don says his company's solutions range "anywhere from \$1,500 to the sky's the limit" depending on size and customized options such as catwalks. His standard catio product measures four feet by four feet, and has a galvanized two by two-inch wire mesh, which Don says is both low maintenance and strong. "We're comfortable saying large dogs or even a small bear are not going to get in."

If your budget allows, Don recommends fitting your catio with an independent access (i.e. pet door) to let cats come and go from the house as they please. "If you have to take your cat out to [the catio], it's not as fun."

Finally, there are uber-high-end solutions that are, let's face it, as nice for the humans as for the cats. In 2020, Jill and her husband completed a screened-in catio/addition on the back of their Lake Erie cottage. "We take our cats with us when we go down and wanted a safe spot for them to really enjoy the feel of the outdoors and being at the lake." Their simple catio project ultimately morphed into a \$20,000 project, complete with a screened-in porch, storm-proof slider windows, and two access doors into the cottage giving the cats a scrambling circuit. The space lets everyone enjoy the lake breezes and nature, but as Jill insists good-naturedly, "The initial intent was I wanted something for the cats."

BENEFITS

To be sure, safety and peace of mind are top benefits. Yet many catio owners also get a huge kick out of watching their animals safely playing or lazing in the sun.

Don says he's had many clients thrilled to see their indoor cats get a taste of outdoor fun. As a cat owner himself, Don says his cats' year-round adventures in their (admittedly fancy) catio are hugely entertaining. "In the colder days they'll go out and check their little territory and run back in and lick their paws. In the summer they're like little children – they'll come in to eat and then run right back out!" **OH**

FREE-RANGE CATS: NOT-SO-FUN FACTS

- ❗ In Canada, cats are the number one killer of birds: They kill anywhere from 100 million to 350 million birds annually.
- ❗ Coyote attacks on outdoor cats are not uncommon. In California, one study found that 20 per cent of an urban coyote's diet consists of cat.
- ❗ Toxins like antifreeze and rat poison taste good to cats, meaning outdoor cats face more poisoning risks.
- ❗ Roaming cats are also frequently hit by cars. In Toronto, more than 1,300 dead cats were collected from city streets in 2017.
- ❗ The Ontario SPCA says the average life expectancy for a free-roaming cat is two to five years; for indoor cats, it's more than 12.

[Sources: Environment Canada, U.S. National Park Service, Nature Canada, Ontario SPCA]

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\$\$	 <p>KRAUS: Oletto Pull-Down Single-Handle in Brushed Brass</p>  <p>DELTA: Junction Single-Handle Pull-Down in Matte Black</p>	 <p>PFISTER: Tenet Single Control in Brushed Gold</p>  <p>MOEN: Colinet Two-Handle High Arc in Matte Black</p>
\$\$\$	 <p>MOEN: Weymouth Brushed Gold One-Handle Pre-Rinse Pull-down</p>  <p>FRANKE: Active Plus Pull Out Spray in Onyx Granite</p>	 <p>BRIZO: Invari Widespread with Arc Spout in Polished Gold</p>  <p>RUBINET: 1BRTLKBK Single Control in Matte Black</p>
\$\$\$\$	 <p>GRAFF: Manhattan Single-Hole in Brushed Gold</p>  <p>KOHLER: Purist Single-Handle Semi-Professional in Matte Black</p>	 <p>AQUABRASS: MB2 Widespread in Brushed Gold</p>  <p>KOHLER: Composed Single-Handle with Lever Handle in Matte Black</p>



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