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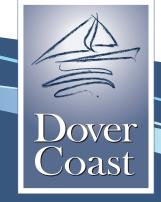


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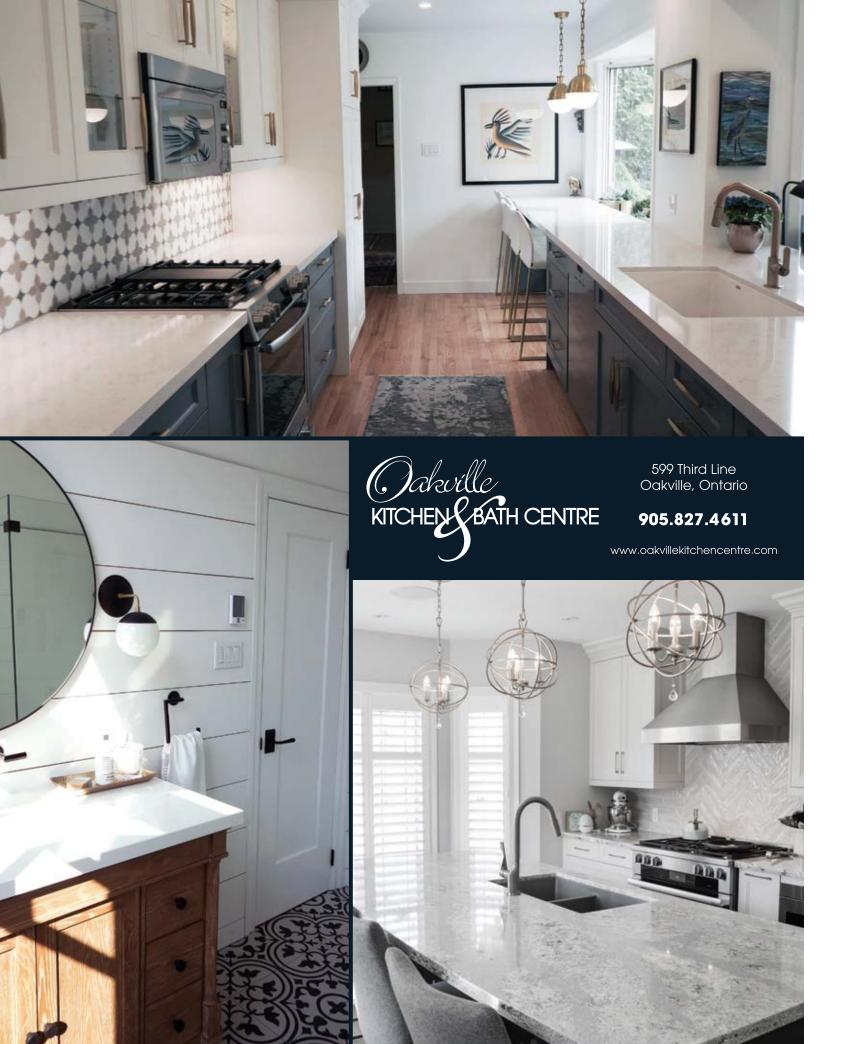
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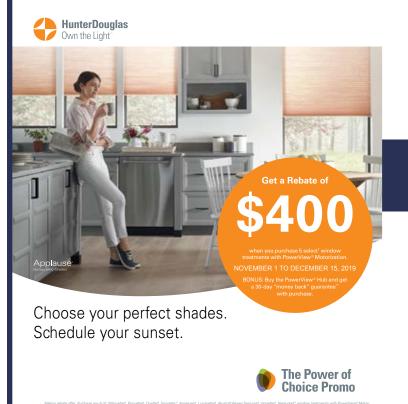
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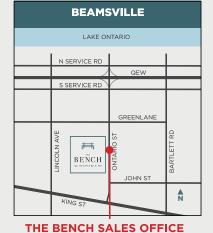
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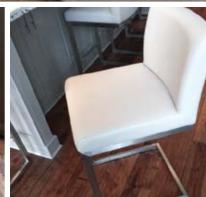
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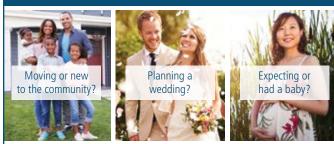
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#### editor's note



HOPE FOR THE COUNTY adverse

I LOVE LOCAL ARTISANS and hunting for unique finds, from upcycled pieces to one-of-a-kind handmade treasures. Over the years, I've bought everything from soap and beauty products to home décor and woolly knits. Handmade pieces are down-toearth and accessible, and supporting your local maker helps foster creativity and a close-knit community.

My holiday decorating style is organic and woodland inspired, with plenty of natural materials accented by warm mixed metals. Most of my artsy finds are versatile, and I can use them all winter long. Lanterns decked out for the holidays still look great when the glitter is swept away. Birch accents bring the outdoors in, all season long. Investing in a few quality pillow covers makes it easy to change things up, whether I want my décor to scream holly jolly Christmas

Not only do these beautiful items create a distinctive, personal space, they are also sustainable. Driftwood and fallen birch trees become beautiful tealight holders. Reclaimed barnboard can be used to create a whimsical sign or winter-inspired Christmas tree. Wood off-cuts can be fashioned into a simple lantern. After plenty of disastrous DIY Pinterest attempts, it's clear that I'm craft-adverse. I'm the girl that destroys a \$10 project with \$30 of material with nothing to show for it. I'm grateful for the opportunity to invest in treasures I have zero hope of making nearly as well on my own.

If you're craving something different, 'tis the season for local markets and craft fairs. Let me know what you find!

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

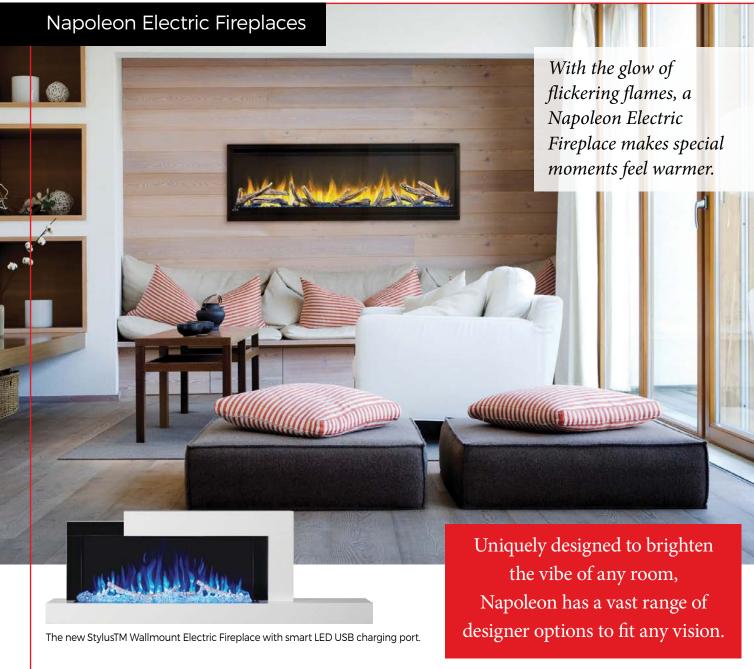
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## STAIRCASES GOING UP AND DOWN IN STYLE

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

Staircases are corridors, leading both the eve and visitor from one storey to the next. An important element in the design and function of a home, stairs can make a dramatic or subtle statement.

When planning a new staircase or renovating an old one, it's important to seek a reputable staircase manufacturer who can provide expert advice on types of steps, spindles and handrails, as well as crucial information regarding timing and pricing.

#### DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Staircase design is based upon your needs and wants, for example:

Architectural style: Gothic Revival, Georgian, craftsman or modern?

Function: utilitarian, statement piece or discreet?

Shape: straight, scissor, open, closed or double (à la Gone With The Wind)?

Materials and finishes: wood, glass, iron, metal, painted or carpeted?

#### SAFETY FIRST MAKE IT STRONG AND MAKE IT SAFE

"Stairs are the most complicated aspect of your home, and your contractor can't make important decisions on-site that could contradict the Ontario

Building Code (OBC)," states seasoned contractor Dan Robinson. "Even the smallest change can become a life-safety issue, affecting permit requirements and construction. Hire a professional who can design what you want and help you make important decisions to get your permit."

#### ALL GOOD THINGS REQUIRE TIME

Whether traditional or modern, all professionals agree: Stair placement and design should be one of the first interior elements considered when planning a project. "It's important to have a clear, unified vision between all parties: client, builder and homeowner," says Lee Whitaker, President of Barrie Trim & Mouldings. "Make sure all parties involved are all on the same page, trying to achieve the same outcome."

#### TIPS FROM THE PROS

Ask for shop drawings and 3-D renderings. They're a great way to review your decisions prior to building and installing a staircase.

Beware of falling in love with internet images. Staircase details from other jurisdictions may not follow strict OBC requirements.

#### OPEN-PLAN LIVING

Minimalist staircases are the eye-catching, sculptural focal point of many interiors. Their seamless design utilizes materials used elsewhere in the home, adding to a spacious feeling. A modern staircase can be the hallmark of a unique home.

To create a sound staircase with minimal structure, custom-stair professionals prefabricate each component, often using computers to ensure each piece is precisely cut. With the skeleton installed early in construction, all details must be finalized in advance details cannot be modified on-site.

#### THE FUTURE OF SPECTACULAR STAIRS

**Lighting:** LEDs show stairs in their best light, and can be placed on the wall, tread. handrail or riser. To avoid shadows on staircase treads, use a light source with a wide beam.

Varying materials: Mixing metals and metal finishes offers another colour and sensory option for your décor.

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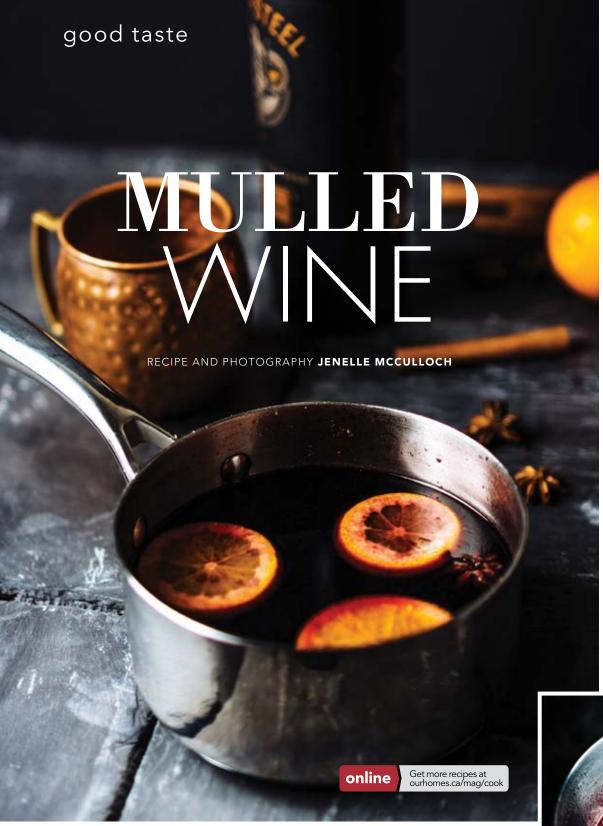






Sunset Through The Pines, Killbear. Oil on canvas, size 48-by-84 inches.





#### **INGREDIENTS**

4 or 5 star anise pods 1/3 cup sugar or honey One orange, sliced 2 cinnamon sticks ½ tsp whole cloves 1 bottle of a bold, full-bodied red wine

#### **GARNISH**

Orange slices Cinnamon sticks

#### **DIRECTIONS**

In a medium saucepan, combine sugar or honey, orange slices, cinnamon sticks, cloves and star anise.

Add ½ cup of red wine and simmer over medium heat until flavours are infused and a syrup forms.

Turn heat to low and add the rest of the wine. Gently heat through, being careful not to bring the wine to a boil.

Serve with an orange slice and cinnamon stick. он

Legend has it mulled wine was created by the Romans to protect their bodies from the Creating a small portion of syrup allows the spices to infuse with the harsh winter cold. Sounds like a good enough reason for me! Besides, everything tastes wine without the risk of overheating the entire batch – which can lead to better with a bit of sweetness and spice. burning off all the alcohol.





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Cedars are some of the most widely misunderstood and often unappreciated trees in our area.

Throughout my 20 years as a landscape designer, I've witnessed countless disparaging remarks about the humble cedar - the most common being their tendency to attract mosquitoes. It's certainly true that, in the wild, cedar trees naturally populate damp areas, and these damp places appeal to mosquitoes. But in a cultivated setting, a cedar will attract no more of the biting insects than any other tree on your property.

In fact the common and unpretentious cedar has a place in nearly every outdoor space, no matter how large or small – and has countless positive attributes.

As evergreens, cedars retain their foliage throughout the winter, keeping their lush look year-round.

Cedars are fast-growing, robust conifers that hold up well in cold climates.

Great for small spaces, cedar is quite malleable – trim it to fit the height, shape and width desired.

A hedge of cedar makes an excellent privacy, wind or sound screen.

Planted along a driveway, they're brilliant as a barrier for rolling basketballs and the like.

A cedar can be an excellent refuge and nesting site for small animals, and the ample seeds a food source for local birds and wildlife.

Cut branches of many types are excellent for Christmas arrangements,

Cedar wood is naturally disinfecting and resistant to water damage, hence its use in applications from saunas to cutting boards.

The compound thujaplicin gives cedar its trademark pleasant scent.

#### **COMMON VARIETIES** OF CEDAR

#### EMERALD CEDAR (THUJA OCCIDENTALIS "SMARAGD"

With a very tight, emerald green, conical form, these are the formal types often planted in a stately row, in pairs to flank an entryway or as a specimen planting. For best success, young trees should be protected by a wrapping of burlap for the first winter after planting. Like all cedars, they favour moist soil.

#### WHITE CEDAR (THUJA OCCIDENTALIS)

Often referred to as swamp cedars, these native cedars can be found growing in moist areas and along shorelines, though they also occur in dry areas where the soil is not acidic, such as on limestone. They provide invaluable shelter to a host of birds and mammals all year long. In urban settings, this variety is normally grown as a hedge.

#### BLACK CEDAR (THUJA OCCIDENTALIS "NIGRA")

Very similar to white cedar. Tough, and even tolerates some shade. Another great hedging variety, it has a smaller stature and its bark and leaves are a darker green.

#### **DEGROOT'S** SPIRE CEDAR (THUJA OCCIDENTALIS "DEGROOT'S SPIRE")

An interesting cedar tree with slightly twisted branches and a narrow, upright form. It's quite beautiful, but less vigorous than other types. Planting these cedars in a protected area with adequate moisture, plus wrapping them for their first winter after planting, is essential.

#### HEALTHFUL BENEFITS

Cedar has a long and impressive history of medicinal uses, earning the name arborvitae, meaning "tree of life."

With potent and beneficial phytochemicals, the essential oil of Thuja occidentalis is antimicrobial, antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal with immune-stimulating properties as well. Cedar also acts as an expectorant, aiding in chest congestion and productive coughs.

Cedar is a sacred plant to Native Americans and revered for its medicinal, household and ceremonial purposes. Exceptionally high in Vitamin C, cedar was used to treat and prevent scurvy, and indigenous people taught early explorers and settlers to the New World to make tea from cedar and other conifers. Some First Nations communities would dry and powder the leaves to use as a poultice for various skin conditions. Traditionally, the Algonquin used an infusion of the leaves to treat children with colic. The Abnaki, Algonquin and Iroquois treated rheumatic illnesses with topical applications of this versatile plant.

This winter season, why not try adding cedar to a bath for its immune-boosting, circulatorystimulating and mild painrelieving properties. Cedar foot baths work well, too: Simmer a few hearty handfuls of leaves in a pot on the stove for about 20 minutes and strain. As an herbal steam, cedar is wonderfully aromatic and helpful in breaking up sinus and chest congestion.

For all its medicinal. aromatic, aesthetic and utilitarian qualities, the cedar has remained a humble tree one that warrants consideration in your next outdoor project. OH



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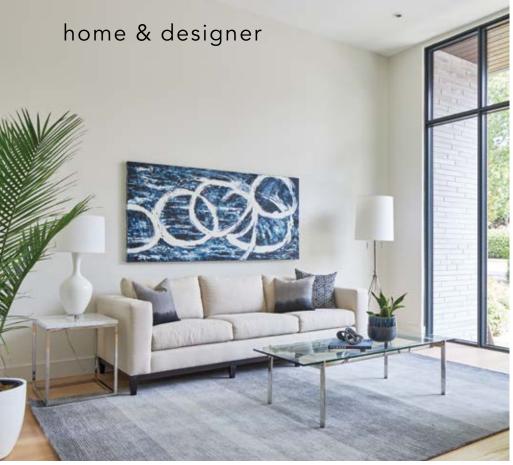
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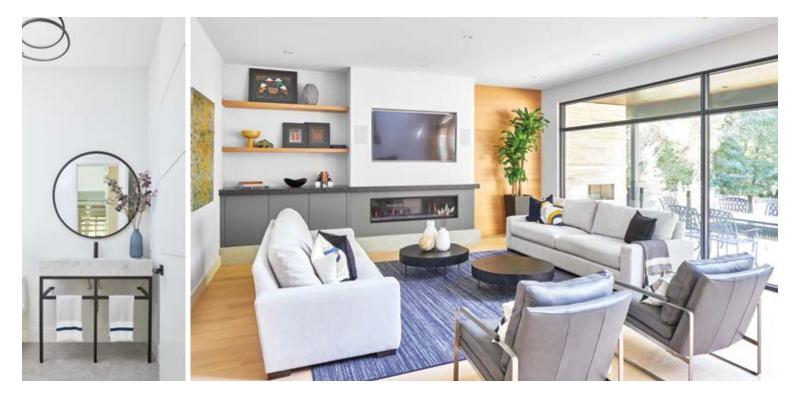
**LEFT:** Deep indigo accents fuse with neutrals in the den. **BELOW:** Minimal furnishings reflect the home's clean, modern lines.

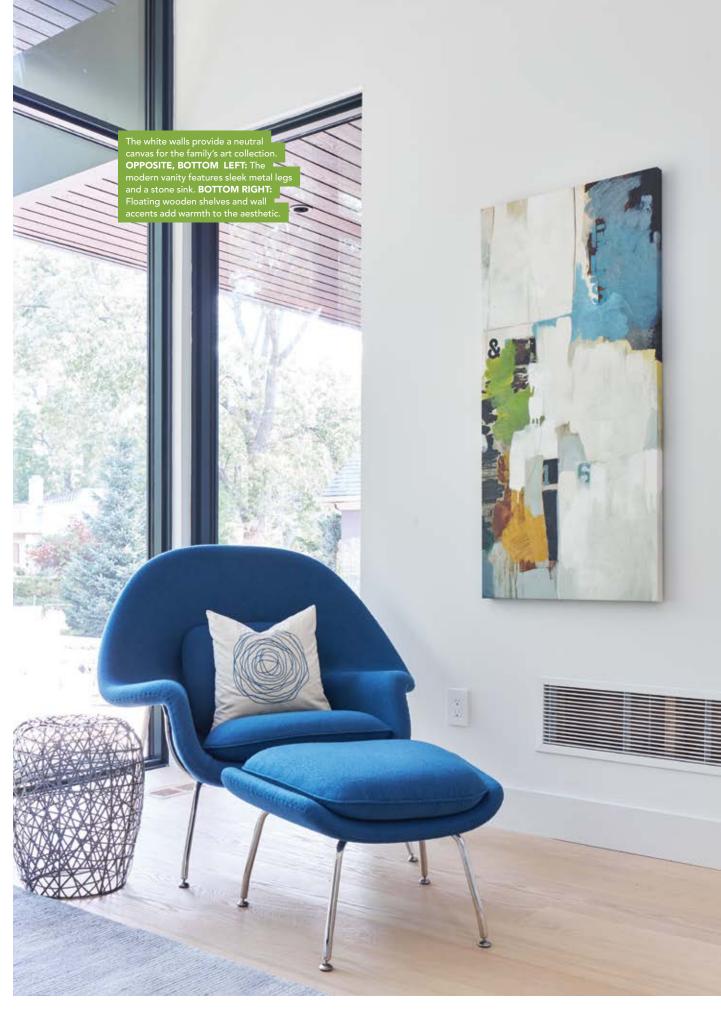


Elements like the family's art collection add a personal touch. The couple met Mississauga artist Chris Masoure at an art show and commissioned a painting that now sets the mood in the dining room. "He came to the house and saw the space and painted this for our dining room. It fits the space so well," says the homeowner.

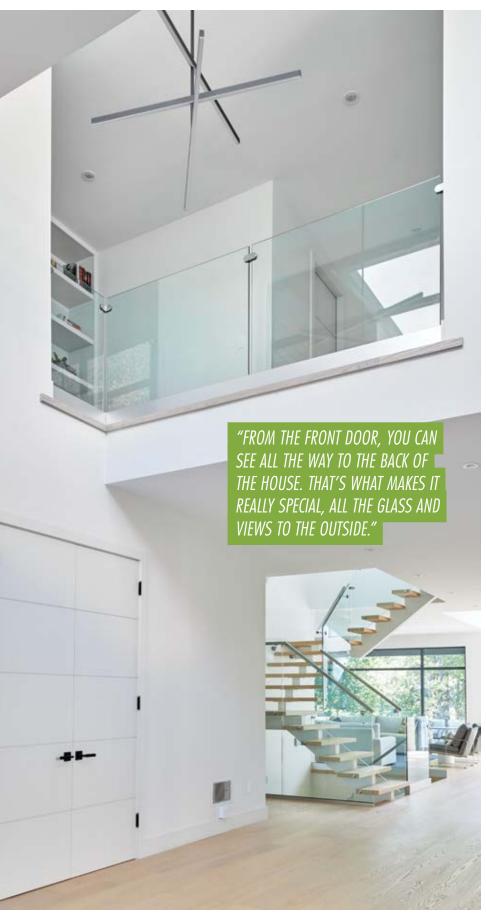
The living room also contains a standout piece, this time by Peterborough artist and welder Owen, who re-purposes industrial artifacts as gorgeously imagined works of art. "He's near our cottage, and he has his own company, Burn Island," says the homeowner. "It's a very cool, sort of rusty piece of metal that's bent and welded."

Continued on page 32





#### home & designer





Lisa also repurposed some of the furnishings from the homeowners' previous house, combining them with newer pieces to freshen up the overall look. "I appreciated that Lisa used a lot of our own things where she could," says the homeowner. "The home is very much a combination of things we already had and things that she introduced, so it felt like home when we moved in, rather than like we were walking into a magazine."

The homeowners were impressed Lisa helped them create such a warm and inviting home, considering the open layout of the space. "One of the things Lisa did very well was to make it a modern house, but also to give it a very warm feel."

"We used a lot of matte finishes and textures as opposed to gloss and bling," says Lisa.

To balance the sofas in the great room, Lisa found two large wooden stumps fashioned into coffee tables from **Elte MKT** that perfectly complement the large space and seating area. *Continued on page 34* 





**TOP:** The streamlined kitchen was designed and built with maximum efficiency and functionality in mind. **LEFT:** Designer Lisa Frahm helped the homeowners create a home that reflects their unique tastes. **ABOVE:** A simple shelf carries the wood accents into the dining room.

#### home & designer



She also made sure the home was suitable for the couple's children, aged 11, 10 and 7, and that it would continue to work and suit the family as the kids got older.

"Lisa was very, very good at recognizing that we're going to have little people around with dirty hands and friends and all of that," says the homeowner. "The couches are easy to wipe off, even though they're a lighter colour, and the home has a nice, youthful feel to it. She was very in tune with our needs as a family."

**ABOVE:** A large floating vanity and unique pendants elevate this bathroom space. ABOVE RIGHT: Geometric patterns and soft pastels make a girl's room pretty. RIGHT: Watercolours brighten up the neutrals in the bedroom. FAR RIGHT: Carefully chosen tiles in varying textures blend seamlessly in this bathroom.









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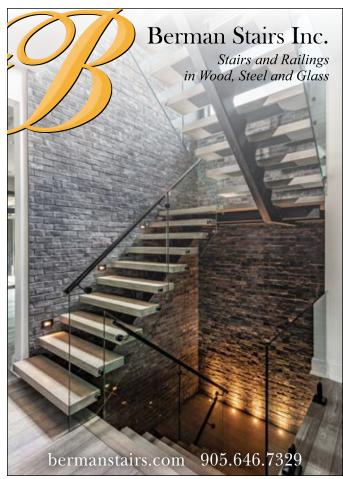
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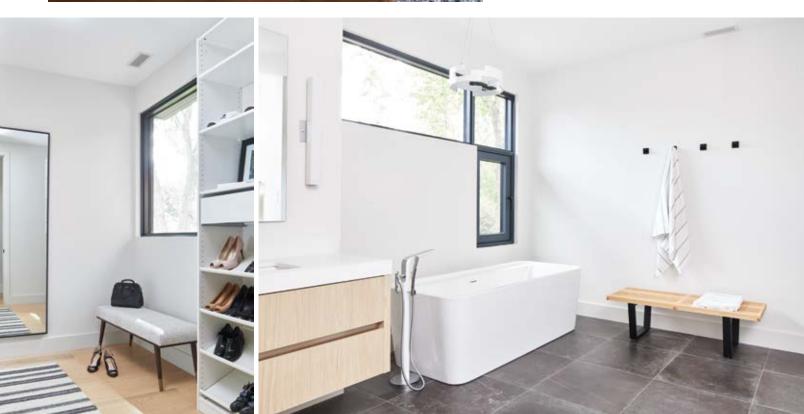


The home has another feature many couples include on their dream-home wish list: separate walk-in closets. One contains a window, the other has a skylight. The master bedroom also has a rooftop terrace with a view to the backyard, making for a luxurious, private retreat when the grownups need a little bit of space from their little ones.

The spacious master en suite features a walk-in shower and textured tile. The design incorporates his-and-her vanities, a soaker tub and a small sitting area with a bench. Done in black and white, the space is calming and offers the perfect respite after a long day.

It all adds up to a new, modern home that is warm and welcoming - a space the family will enjoy for many years to come. oh

**LEFT:** The grain of the wood keeps this modern bedroom from feeling too austere. BELOW LEFT: A walk-in closet with a window makes mornings easy. BELOW RIGHT: Strategically placed windows allow for maximum light in this en suite.





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#### decorating





STORY TAMARISK **MCNALTY STEPHENS** PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG** 

In the world of interior design, there is always a debate about minimalism versus maximalism, and whether "more of less" or "more of more" reigns supreme. It becomes as much a philosophical debate as an aesthetic one.

One is not better than the other, trendy or passé. They are simply different approaches on how to curate and edit the environment in which you inhabit, based purely on personal preference.

Both aesthetics are equally difficult to execute properly and require just as much thought and attention to detail. A minimalist space of "too little" can feel cold, bare and incomplete when implemented with the wrong formula. A truly maximalist space of "too much" can seem chaotic without consideration of the principles and elements of design.

Continued on page 40





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#### decorating

#### MINIMALISM

Although the term minimalism has become more mainstream during the last decade, the concept emerged in the 1950s visual arts and was later applied to other streams, such as architecture and interior design. Its focus is on intentionality - removing the distraction of excess to focus on core values or life purpose. Minimalism is not so much about how much (or how little) stuff you have but is focused on deciding what is wanted and needed. One of the biggest misconceptions about minimalism is having to live with bare necessities and doing without life's luxuries. The intention is the opposite - to consciously decide what is important in your life and creating a life centred around that.

#### Minimalist interiors tend to exhibit the following qualities:

- an uncluttered, simple, clean space
- \* a monochromatic colour scheme
- \* items that meld function and beauty
- \* focus on architectural features rather than on decorating
- \* focus on essentialism (nothing is generally present without thought to function)
- \* a strong emphasis on light, form and material selection

#### You might prefer a minimalist interior if:

- \* you like clean lines and uncluttered space
- \* you're overwhelmed by too much stuff
- \* you prefer the calming effect of natural, subdued colours









#### MAXIMALISM

In the world of interiors, maximalism was born as a reaction against minimalism. A maximalist space is defined by more of everything colour, patterns, art and accessories. The appeal for people who love decorating and collecting is that there are no hard and fast rules and it's about personalization over perfection. Although minimalists would find a maximalist space cluttered and excessive (one of the biggest misconceptions about maximalists is that they are hoarders and that there is no sense of order in their space), a successful maximalist space has been highly curated to keep it from turning into complete disarray.

#### Maximalist interiors generally include the following characteristics:

- \* layers of patterns
- \* bright, bold colours
- \* a blend of different period styles
- \* collections of art, found objects, heirlooms, etc.
- \* an air of glamour

#### You might prefer a maximalist interior if:

- \* you are energized by bright, bold colours and various patterns
- \* you love collections
- \* you find minimalist spaces to be boring and devoid of self-expression

At the end of the day, the way you choose to live in your home is an expression of your style, lifestyle, beliefs, appreciations and values. Everyone has different preferences and can handle various levels of stimulation in the environment that surrounds them. Whether you prefer "more of less" or "more of more" – regardless of what's trending – just do you. он







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manufacturer of luxury custom kitchens and cabinetry. Two generations of the D'Uva family manage a 300,000 sq. ft., state-of-the-art facility in Mississauga and have more than 200 employees.

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and their expertise has helped propel the company to the top of its class as an industry leader. Though things have changed over the years, the team remains true to the company's core values: integrity, craftsmanship and innovation.

PPREPAR

**WHAT'S TRENDING:** Whether it's traditional or contemporary, Downsview can create a unique aesthetic that

perfectly suits the preferences and tastes of the most discerning clientele. With an eye on the best kitchens of tomorrow, the team continually searches the world for the latest in products and materials. Add a little something bold with bronzed stainless steel. For a more modern love, try lacquer or textured melamine. For simple and streamlined, try walnut veneer. The possibilities are endless. OH













LEFT: Cosy cabin charm meets traditional by coupling warm and rustic holiday accents. BOTTOM LEFT: Ornaments collected over time tell a story. BELOW: The Christmas tree's slim profile slides seamlessly into place. OPPOSITE: Natural and faux elements weave together and add an organic element.





ust like a life hack, a holiday hack is a strategy, technique or tip to make holiday decorating organized, easy and memorable. We tapped Natasha Melanson of Natasha Melanson Designs for 12 hacks on keeping it real and realistic over the holidays. Natasha's home was on the Junior League of Hamilton-Burlington Holiday House Tour in 2018. Here's your chance to get the inside scoop on how a busy designer gets it done.

Continued on page 46





#### Start Early

Natasha and her husband love holiday entertaining, so she typically starts decorating six to eight weeks before Christmas. The planning starts earlier. Natasha suggests hitting the after-Christmas sales to pick up things for the next year.

Decorating Natasha's house took two weeks. "It can be overwhelming to do it all at once, so work on one room at a time and don't forget a touch of glam in bathrooms, bedrooms and even the laundry room," says the pro. But keep it livable, a tree in every room just isn't realistic for most families.

#### Have a Theme

This decorator leans toward the traditional when it comes to theming for the holidays. It's obvious she loves rich reds and deep greens, classic plaids and streamlined stripes, but she keeps things interesting by varying colours and shades, mixing metals, pairing live materials with faux, layering, texturing and adding the unexpected. Like Natasha, pay attention to lighting, it's a mood maker.

"Don't limit yourself," says Natasha. Whatever your decorating style, traditional, transitional, contemporary or modern, it's always fun to step out of your comfort zone once in a while. "Browse the Pinterest website," says Natasha. People pin truly unique ideas to their boards. Continued on page 48



#### home & designer

#### Budget

Create a budget and stick to it.

Decorating shouldn't stress you or your budget. "Think of holiday decorating like building a good wardrobe. Choose a few statement pieces and then accessorize with less expensive, but distinctive finds," says Natasha. Her own ornaments have been amassed over the years. "They have history, they tell stories," she says.

Despite her creds as a professional decorator, Natasha is practical about budgets. On the kitchen island, burgundy chargers and classic green dinner plates are topped with white tin camping cups, edges trimmed in red. A fun find at Walmart, they're perfect for hot holiday cider. In the dining room, clear plastic globes from the dollar store serve as place holders. Instead of name tags, Natasha rolled up old family photographs, slipping them inside to unfurl. The photos encouraged holiday chatter about Christmases past. Empty wine bottles make great candle holders. Drop a string of mini lights inside each bottle for added ambience.





For most of us, the holidays are about family and friends. The Melansons and their extended family get together each year to bake, and everyone takes some home for the freezer so there's always something sweet on hand. To lighten the load when hosting, Natasha suggests creating holiday serving stations for buffets, desserts, drinks, even coffee and hot chocolate for the kids.

"On Christmas Eve, the first specialty drink is made by me. After that, family and friends help themselves to everything,"

Natasha says. It's about making

people feel at home. Continued on page 50





#### home & designer





#### **Mix things Up**

Natasha loves to combine fresh greenery with faux. Done well, it's difficult to tell – is it real or artificial? Decorating on the fireplace mantel in the family room is a subtle mix of both, with a delicate sprinkle of artificial snow.

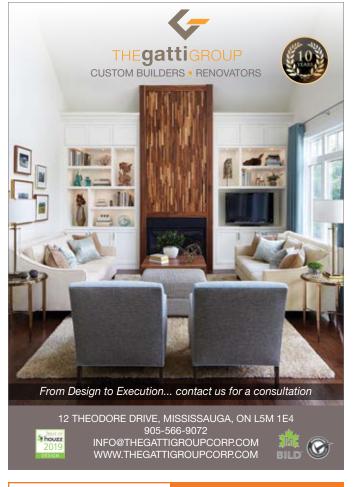
On the dining room table, the wood cuts were done locally. Natasha's friends own a woodlot. The circles were cut with an axe and hand oiled. Although she uses them year-round as hot pads, chargers or to serve food, the live edges are particularly appropriate paired with Christmas greenery. Each place setting includes a parchment menu, decorated with a cedar branch sealed to the paper with a wax stamp from Michaels.

#### Be Scents-ible

"On the tour, people commented how nice our house smelled." It was all about the fresh greens and a well-kept designer secret... natural scent sticks called Sentsicles, Natasha reveals.

Continued on page 52







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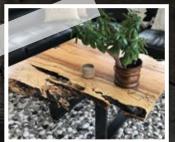




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TOP LEFT: Simple, organic elements like a flocked tree maintain the master bedroom's serenity. TOP RIGHT: Greenery adds texture and colour to the cool en suite palette. ABOVE: Just a small touch makes a big impact and ties together the décor throughout.

She tucks them into arrangements and inside faux tree branches. If "scenting" appeals to you, Sentsicles can be found at Terra, Michaels, Canadian Tire, Walmart and on Amazon. They come in cedarwood, balsam, fir and pine.

Natasha is also a fan of mixing metals. "Don't be afraid to pair gold ornaments with silver and add splashes of whatever colours fit your theme," she says.

#### Repurposing

Reuse, recycle and repurpose. The burlap basket sitting on the stairway was filled with fallen branches that hubby collected along Appleby Line. Natasha added string lights and glass ornaments to reflect window light. In the entranceway, Natasha made a seven-foot tree the focal point. Set on a table, its height draws the eye upward to the soaring 23-foot ceiling.

#### Keep it Livable

Natasha decorates bedrooms, bathrooms and for the tour, she even gave the laundry room a touch of red. "But keep things livable," she reminds readers. A

tree in every room just isn't practical, in most cases. We don't want to tiptoe around overly precious decorating.

In the master bedroom, two spring wreaths were repurposed. "They had been on my front door for years and I was actually going to throw them out, but then I thought 'why not use gold spray paint to bring them back to life." Leftover fabric was used to wrap the pot that holds a tiny tree.

Although not on the 12 holiday hacks list, Natasha says "don't discount the unexpected in design." A few photographs on the family room wall were wrapped like presents. "It was a prime attention getter. I wrapped recent photos and left those from the past unwrapped, and, just like the place-card holders, it started the family reminiscing."

#### Switch it Up

Any final tips from the pro? "Switch things up." Don't decorate the same way every year. A new year brings an opportunity to do things differently - as much in decorating as in life. So have fun! OH





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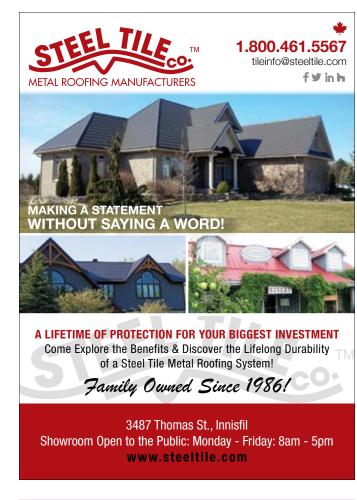
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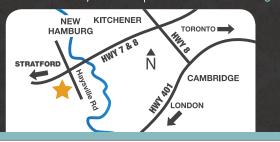
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#### LAMINATE \$

Modern laminate flooring products are a popular choice for good reason. They're cost-efficient and ultra durable. Aesthetically speaking, they are not far behind their costlier counterparts. In fact, today's laminate products are head and shoulders above their predecessors, thanks to advancements in technology and the manufacturing process. Expect to see crisper, deeper embossing and colours that are faithful to their original counterparts. Check out laminate wide-plank flooring, which looks uncannily like hand-scraped hardwood, or tiles that are suspiciously similar to stone, slate and travertine. You'll have to touch them to confirm if they're authentic or fabulous fakes.

**DESIGNER TIP:** Laminate flooring is a great choice for high-traffic areas like playrooms and basements. As a high-impact, low-cost option, I like to match a laminate to my engineered wood and substitute the lesser in the basement. The result is a low-cost. high-impact look you'll love. Check out the vast collections of engineered hardwoods available today like Kitsilano - Cypress Peak. Alternatively, its cheaper but equally stunning stunt double, is SoHo - Silver Oak Laminate.



#### **LUXURY VINYL TILE \$\$**

When it comes to price, luxury vinyl tile is a step up from laminate - and the same can be said for its durability and aesthetic attributes. This product delivers a high wear-resistance, with the bonus of being water resistant and, as some manufacturers even claim, waterproof. I suggest seeking out options with a base layer of cork and opt for glue-free click systems that stay in place thanks to their own weighted design.

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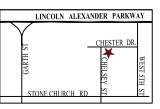
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Continued on page 60

**KRISTA** 

AT HOME

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Continued on page 62

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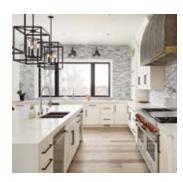


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Brar became a Decorating Den Interiors franchise owner after progressing through an extensive qualifying process and completing the company's Professional Decorating and Sales School along with other pre-business opening training. She has a bachelor's degree in home science, a diploma in leadership skills, and a certificate in home staging. She also is continuing studies with the Interior Design Institute. ritubrar.decoratingden.com

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In addition to furniture, the store is filled with hand-picked, one-of-a-kind items for a unique shopping experience. Browse our selection of sparkly chandeliers, antique mirrors. soaps and bath products. upholstered chairs, ottomans and many other home décor

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# WINTER warm-up

PHOTOGRAPHY PROVOKE STUDIOS

#### THE CRISP AIR AND EARLY EVENINGS OF WINTER LURE US INDOORS

to hibernate - if not for an extended period through these cold months, then at least for some quality time to cosy up after a long day braving the freezing temperatures. We like to approach the task of seasonal décor as we would a wardrobe. Just as the weather defines the clothes you wear, so too should it play into what you have in your home. By layering some key elements into your décor, your space will be cosy as can be, regardless of the temperatures outside. Here are some of our favourite ways to crank up the heat, without ever touching the thermostat.







#### Accessorize in Layers

Combine colours, patterns and various textures to lend your home a warmer overall visual impact. An area rug layered over a larger rug or wall-to-wall carpet creates a luxurious, plush effect. By the same logic, double-up on your cushions and throws, too. Sofas, loveseats, chairs and even a corner of the room can instantly become that coveted cocoon we all so desperately need in winter.



#### Heavy Fabrics

Heavier textiles are a great addition to the home when temperatures fall. Think velvet, thickset corduroy, faux fur, wool and chunky cable-knit designs. Swap out your lighter bedding and use richer, heavier, textural and weighted sheets, blankets, bedspreads and accent pillows. Consider swapping out your window coverings with the change in seasons, too. While a second set of heavier-fabric drapes is a bit of an additional investment, it'll be worth the spend and the benefits are twofold. You'll create a warmer. cosier look overall in your home, and heavier window coverings can actually help naturally regulate your home's internal temperature, giving your utility bills a break.



#### Warm Light

Believe it or not, the type of light bulbs you choose has a huge impact on the visual temperature of your space. The neutral option, bright white, is not quite yellow (on the warm side) nor blue (on the cool side). If you wish to warm up the look of your home, simply replace your bright white bulbs with soft white ones, which are a slightly warmer shade and a very popular choice in living rooms and bedrooms, where a cosy ambience is typically preferred. With any kind of light, use dimmer switches - we can't stress this enough! In fact, we recommend putting a dimmer on every light. They're a great way to customize your home's lighting, depending on the season, the occasion or your mood.







In addition to these no-fail solutions to winter's darkness, one of the easiest and cheapest ways to warm up your home is with good oldfashioned candlelight. When the temperatures drop, line your mantels, windowsills, shelves and tabletops with arrangements of glowing pillars and tealights. Place your candles in view of a mirror to double the light and warmth. Let's not forget the obligatory PSA: Be careful to never leave burning candles unattended, or consider high-quality faux battery candles.

With Canada's drastic swings in temperature throughout the year, it only makes sense that our homes adapt in order to provide us with comfort and style. If your objective is to warm up your home, play a word association game for inspiration. To you, warm might be something physical, such as a fireplace stacked with wood, or a woolly blanket rolled up at the foot of the bed. Perhaps warm is something more abstract, like a colour or a particular scent. Think cinnamon. With the right seasonal switch-ups, your home will be perfectly toasty, all year round. OH

Phyllis Lui and Aleem Kassam are partners at Kalu Interiors.







ABOVE: A blue glass catwalk is the epitome of fun and function.
ABOVE RIGHT:
Nature-inspired artwork adds colour. RIGHT: A powder room is a great space to experiment with bold colours and textures. OPPOSITE:
Patience paid off when Colleen found the perfect stone for the fireplace surround.





# Tony and Colleen chose Port

Credit when they decided to embark on a new home build. "Tony always loved this area, and we wanted to be where we could walk to town," says Colleen. "We like to cycle and run, so we wanted to be able to get onto a bike path. We wanted to have that active lifestyle."

In searching for the right property, they originally dismissed the spot their home now stands on. Its aging bungalow had to come down and the surroundings lacked impact. On their next visit, they decided to step inside. "When we walked into the house, that's when we really got the feel of the backyard and the whole landscape."

With the perfect backdrop in place, they called on home designer **David Small** of **David Small Designs** and **Joel Atkinson** of **Profile Custom Homes** to make their vision a reality. Though they weren't strangers to new home builds, Colleen says a mature outlook resulted in a much different experience. "When you are younger and starting out, you are building the box and building necessities. It seemed more important this time to get what we wanted on our wish list. As we get older, priorities change, taste changes, you can do things with intention."

The overall design is contemporary with a warm touch. A modern exterior incorporates plenty of windows for natural light. "It's kind of funny, because we never thought we were modern," Colleen says. "As you start to go through magazines, you get a better feeling of yourself." Continued on page 73



Colleen admits striking the right balance took time and patience, especially when sourcing materials that would lend the look and feel they were after. "The fireplace took me forever, because I didn't want black and white," she remembers. "I find black and white very strong, for me." The couple worked primarily with **Ciot** for tiles throughout the home. While browsing Ciot's Vaughan showroom, Colleen came across porcelain slabs with various colours and patterns that had just the right amount of warmth. "TLK **Construction Ltd.** took pictures of the slabs and mapped them on a piece of paper, and then cut the slabs to ensure the best look possible," she says. The effect is spectacular.

The wish list of items included a mainfloor master bedroom and a solarium-style living room with floor-to-ceiling windows where the family can relax. "Main-floor living was number one," says Colleen. A blue glass catwalk is a showstopping feature seen from the front door. "We were at a home that had a walkway that led to library shelves on the second floor, and I thought it would be cool to have a catwalk of some sort."

The custom cabinetry was a fundamental feature of the overall design. When the couple first stepped into **AyA Kitchens**, all the pieces fell in place. Continued on page 74





#### feature



"We checked out AyA because it's in the neighbourhood, and that brought us to **Joanne Hamaway**, and we just clicked."

Joanne, senior designer and sales associate with AyA, was on site early in the process, and helped the couple integrate custom cabinetry throughout. "We'd draw things out on graph paper and look at it," says Colleen. This allowed Joanne's expert eye to spot and fix inconsistencies before they became a problem. Adjustments were made to the kitchen window location to provide balance between the cooktop and the tall cabinets along the window wall.

"It was so easy to work with them," says Joanne. "We worked together so well that our ideas kept bouncing back and forth. They knew exactly what they wanted. The high gloss and natural walnut were important. It was about configuring and making sure it all combined and worked together."

The kitchen's blend of high-gloss cabinetry with warm walnut adds dimension. A bar area designed by Tony integrates the living and kitchen spaces. Push-to-open latches on doors provide a seamless look and cleverly conceal bar items. No detail was ignored, down to the height of the shelves to accommodate glassware and the depth of the drawers to store bottles.

"I think we went through every little detail to make it all work," says Joanne. "It was done perfectly," says Colleen. Continued on page 76





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Joanne advises homeowners to get a cabinet company involved early in the process. "Plan it all out and then make the necessary changes as you go through the process, that way it's not rushed, and it gives you lots of time to design your dream kitchen and built-ins."

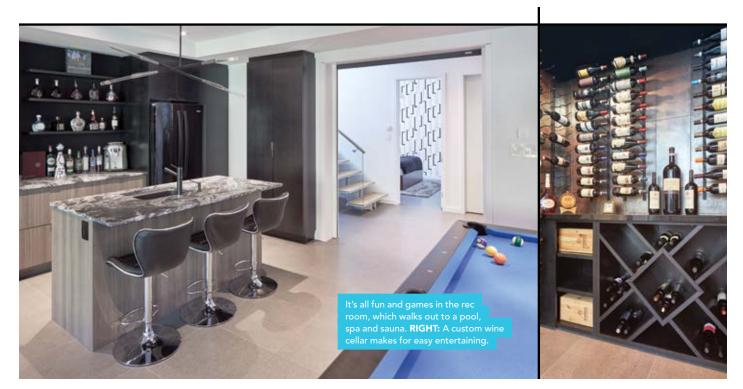
Without the rush, Colleen and Tony were able to add items to their wish list, like the wine fridge and coffee centre in the three-season room. The small addition provides big function, as it saves guests from going to the kitchen to get drinks.

AyA also fabricated the luxury wine cellar in the lower level, the bathrooms throughout, and the walk-in closet in the master bedroom. The closet cabinetry incorporates Colleen's love of blue, its soft shade a beautiful transition to the bedroom and en suite. "When you walk into

each bedroom, the way Colleen decorated picks up on the colours of the cabinets," says Joanne. From top to bottom, the home is a well-planned labour of love.

"We are both detail-oriented and spent a lot of time going through things and dissecting things," says Colleen. "You just don't want to make a mistake, because it's the last house we are

Having pros on the design team was a definite must to help pave the way to home-building success. "They had so much input, and it's helpful when clients come in and know what they want and are part of the process," says Joanne. "At the end of the day, they are living in it, I'm just here to help and guide." **OH** 





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# BUTTERNUT SQUASH ROAST

A delicious, meatless twist on a classic holiday dish, this stuffed butternut squash roast is perfect for your next holiday meal – and is sure to please your guests.

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY JENELLE MCCULLOCH

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 large butternut squash

Cooking oil

4 cups dried bread, cubed

¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 cup scallions, chopped

½ cup pine nuts, toasted

2 Tbsp allspice

1 tsp salt

1 tsp pepper

½ cup butter

1 medium white onion, diced

1 cup celery, diced

3 cloves garlic, diced

½-¾ cup vegetable broth

**Butchers** twine









#### PREPARE SQUASH

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Slice the butternut squash in half lengthwise and remove seeds.

Place face up on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Drizzle with cooking oil and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Roast for 15-20 minutes, just until the squash is slightly tender. (Do not cook all the way through.)

In a large bowl, combine dried bread, parsley, scallions, pine nuts, allspice, 1 tsp salt and 1 tsp pepper and mix.

In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion and celery and sauté until translucent. Add garlic and cook for another minute.

Remove from heat and add to bread mixture, along with ½ cup of vegetable broth.

Mix until combined and bread begins to break down. If the mixture is too dry, add more vegetable broth until the stuffing is wet.

#### **STUFF SQUASH**

Remove squash from oven and scoop just enough flesh from the middle of both halves to create a cavity, being careful not to break the skin. (Save scooped squash for another use.)

Fill each half with stuffing and place the squash back together so it looks whole again. Tie with butchers twine.

Decrease oven to 375°F. Cook for about 30 minutes, depending on the size of your squash.

Slice and serve with your favorite cranberry sauce at your next holiday meal! OH

# hopping

Impress your guests with a fabulous bar that says you're ready to have some fun. Check out these three ways to create and style a bar in any space.



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With just a small corner in your home, you can create a stylish spot to converse over cocktails with these fab finds.



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