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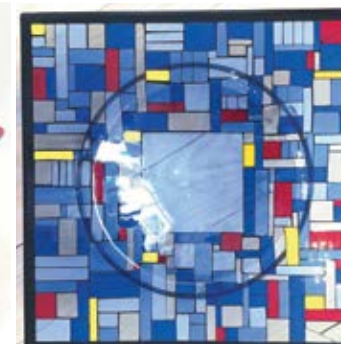


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I HAVE ALWAYS SUFFERED (OR BENEFITED, depending on your point of view) from a slowly burning wanderlust. Pre-pandemic, I would pack my bags at least two or three times a year in search of relaxation and adventure. Destinations varied, but there was always delicious food and the simple indulgences of an afternoon nap or getting lost in the pages of an all-consuming book.

But last summer, as our pandemic lifestyle required us to stay close to (or at) home, I learned vacationing has much more to do with your state of mind than it does your physical location. And that is in part why I am hotly anticipating a return trip this summer to my new favourite destination – backyard bay.

I will experiment with new dishes on the grill and dine al fresco; I will float in my pool, making my way through my summer paperbacks; and I will most definitely sneak in a nap or two under the shade of the umbrella. And this summer, fingers crossed, I will be able to host a good old barbecue again, safely.

It's not surprising to learn that creating great outdoor space has become one of the most coveted projects by homeowners since the pandemic began. Whether it's a sweet terrace at your condo, a lovely and lush backyard, or full rooms outside to extend your living area, a functional and beautiful outdoor space is a must. It's also home base for a great summer staycation.

This issue is filled with ideas, tips and tricks that make for perfect reading while lounging in backyard bay. Our three feature homes are all stunning and are rife with clever design details that will inspire you. Our Style Picks showcase unique home items to add summer heat to your décor. Find the perfect stone for your kitchen or bath project in our Spotlight.

Enjoy those long summer days, Ottawa – right in the comfort of your own home!

Heather Wright

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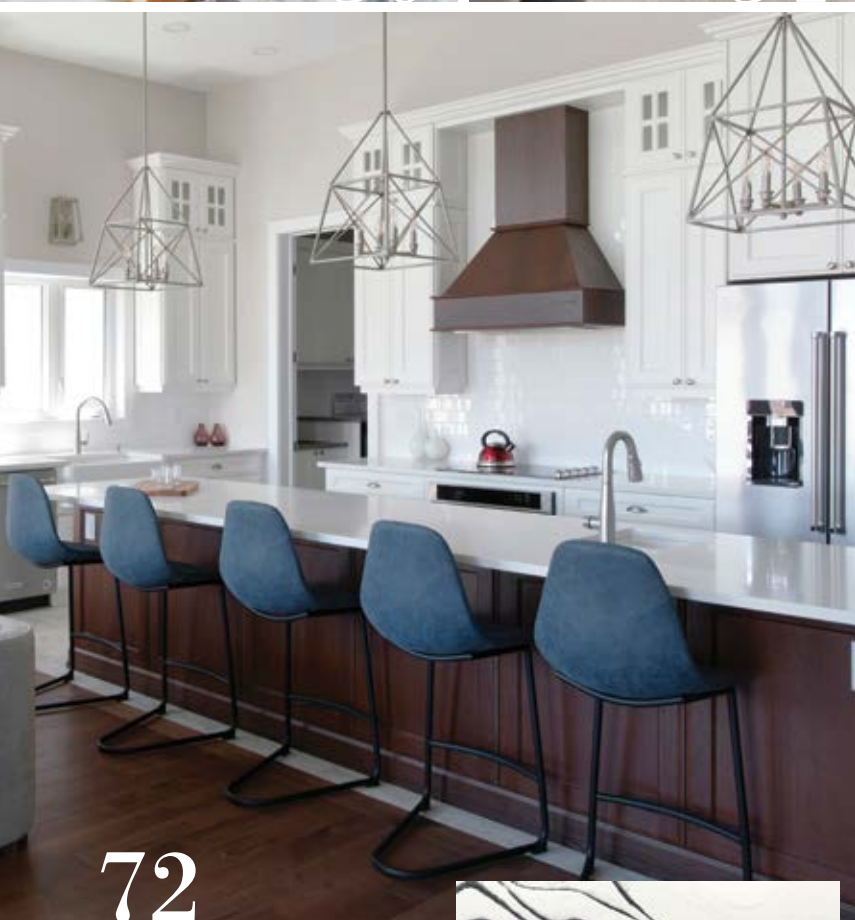



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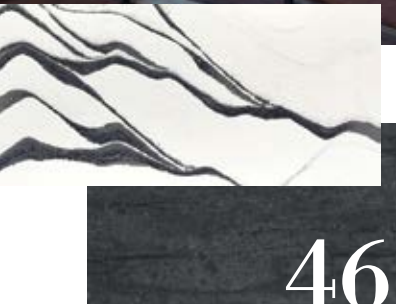
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ON THE COVER

This award-winning custom build demonstrates that home is where the heart is. Story, page 32. Photography by Gordon King.



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FINALLY, SUMMER IS HERE AND IT IS TIME TO RELAX and enjoy the freedom of the great outdoors, which I have come to appreciate more and more over the course of our lockdowns. The warmer weather brings the prospect of less scheduling, simple al fresco meals, and hopefully a return to patio gatherings.

My hubby and I used to chuckle at how cute it was when my parents would get up in the morning and prepare for a long drive. They wouldn't necessarily have a destination or a schedule, but would choose a direction. They would make a day of it and stop somewhere along the way to pull out their folding lawn chairs, tablecloth and picnic lunch. We don't laugh anymore – as we have started doing this ourselves as our newly discovered favourite pastime due to COVID. The simple pleasure of exploring the beauty of the Ottawa region and deciding on the perfect spot to stop and enjoy our lunch is now appreciated. My parents' lunch would consist of sandwiches and a thermos of tea. Wouldn't they be impressed with the modern-day picnic recipes in this issue? Packing a charcuterie box, Aperol spritz and mason jar tiramisu will certainly elevate your next road trip or picnic lunch.

You are sure to discover inspiration in this edition of OUR HOMES to make your summer the best it can be. Sit back and learn more about the birds of summer and decorating with pastels – or tour three beautiful homes while relaxing on the dock or your patio. However you plan to enjoy the lazy days of this summer, stay safe and enjoy the better days to come!

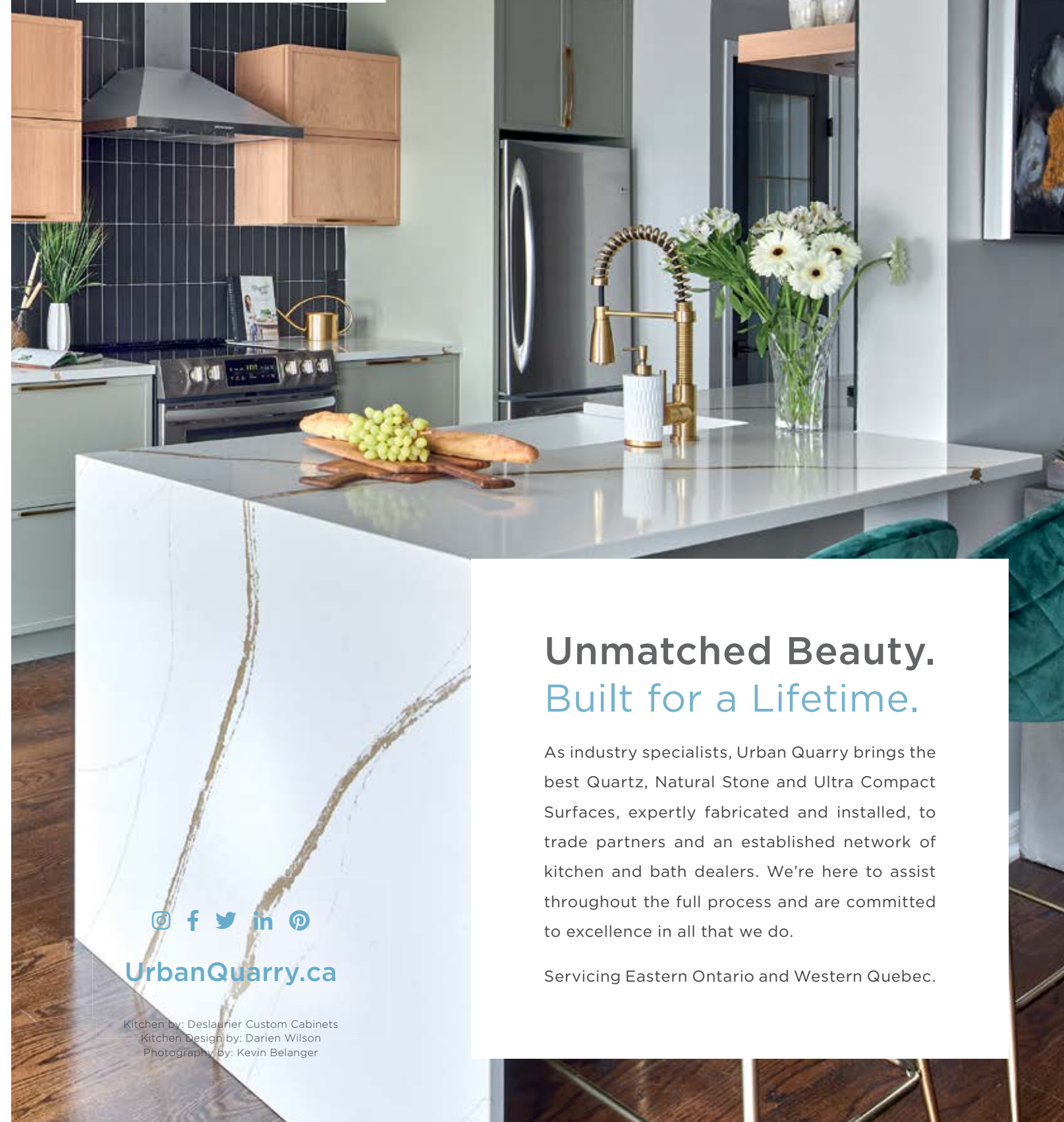
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THE ETHICS OF SOURCING

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

The housing industry contributes significantly to the Canadian economy and plays an important role in our local – and global – communities. However, the procurement of products involved in the construction, design and decoration of our homes can also have a significant impact on the well-being of both people and the planet.



1. **LUMINAIRE AUTHENTIK:** Talo 12 LA00 & Sub 09 03-LA43 (Drawn, designed and made in Quebec) 2. **MYRA SCOTT TEXTILES:** Sydney Cushion Cover in Jive (Hand-sewn, designed and printed in Canada) 3. **FUSION MINERAL PAINT:** Zero VOC Paints (Made in Canada) 4. **PURPARKET INC.:** Engineered Hardwood Flooring (VOC free, CARB Phase II Compliant and made in Canada)

To meet a growing expectation from consumers, businesses are adopting an ethical sourcing approach to ensure products are obtained responsibly and sustainably. To be effective, it depends upon the integrity of the entire supply chain to include environmental standards as well as a commitment to safe working conditions, fair labour practices and living wages for the workers producing the goods.

In a global economy, with different environmental and social standards across countries, this can be a complex, layered issue – so how do we know where to begin?

Here are some simple ways we can all source more ethically:

Choose less. The most sustainable product is the one that is not produced.

Choose local. A local supply chain reduces shipping, emissions and energy usage.

Choose vintage, reclaimed, recycled or upcycled. Reuse or repurpose a material or product that is already in circulation.

When sourcing, do your own research and don't be afraid to ask the supplier questions on the procurement of goods. Businesses must take responsibility for the goods they provide. A transparent process builds trust with customers.

- 🏠 Where was this product manufactured?
- 🏠 How was this product manufactured? What resources and energy were required?
- 🏠 What raw materials were used in the production? How sustainable are they?

- 🏠 Does the production of this material cause environmental degradation to the local ecosystem?
- 🏠 What is the company's policy surrounding ethical sourcing?
- 🏠 Are the working conditions safe for those who produced the product? Are living wages and fair labour practices ensured?
- 🏠 What will happen to this product at the end of its useful life? Does the company offer a recycling program? Will it eventually biodegrade? Or will it end up in a landfill?

Several certifications have been developed to help consumers identify responsibly sourced products. Although these certifications provide a good starting point, it's important for buyers to continue asking questions and performing independent research to understand the certification requirements. Consumers can also identify products that may not carry certification, but the producer/supplier/business may still have high independent standards for their procurement of goods. Examples of certifications to look out for:

- 🏠 Fairtrade – sets standards for sustainable production and livelihoods for factory workers and farmers.
- 🏠 FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) – responsible forest-management standards.
- 🏠 GoodWeave – certifies child-labour-free rugs.
- 🏠 GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) – products meet strict organic criteria.
- 🏠 Nest Ethical Handcraft Program – monitors artisan supply chains for ethics and sustainability.
- 🏠 OEKO-TEX – textile certifications concerning health, environment and fair manufacturing.
- 🏠 RWS (Responsible Wool Standard) – supports the well-being of sheep and the land they graze on.

A criticism of ethical sourcing is that it does not address the core issue of consumerism. If sustainability is a basic tenet of ethical sourcing, as privileged as we are in the Western world, we must acknowledge that our current rate of consumption is simply not sustainable. We can begin to evaluate basic needs, research the environmental impact of purchases (big and small), prioritize the well-being of people and the planet, support local supply chains and become more intentional and mindful consumers. Aligning our habits of consumption with our values will help contribute to the world we wish to see today – and for future generations. **OH**

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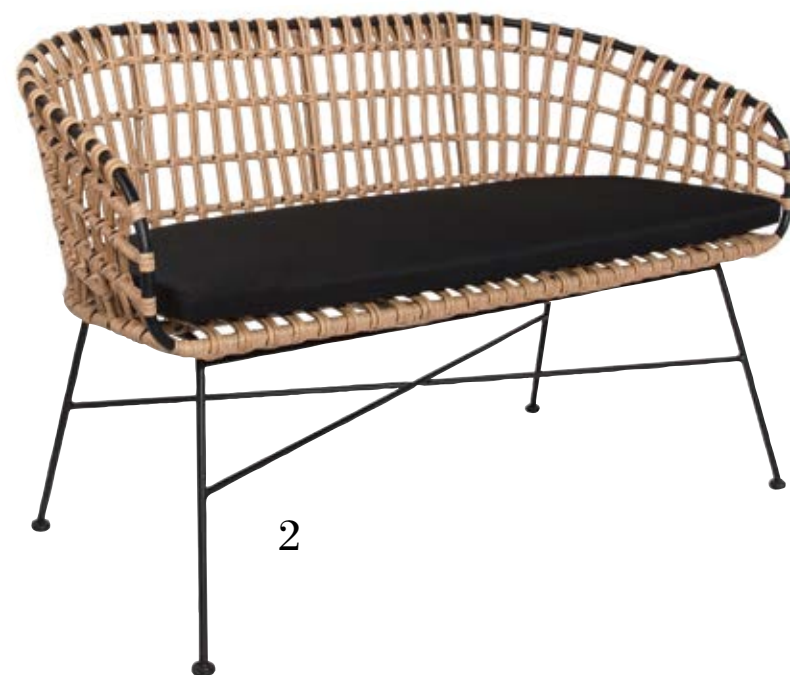




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Continued on page 26

3



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From a design perspective, “imperfectly perfect” interiors have been gaining popularity as the world becomes more accepting of imperfection and increasingly seeks out the beauty in it. Gone are the unattainable, stress-inducing standards of perfection. This interior trend is all about living our best life in comfort and style. Here’s how to get this look.

MIX OLD AND NEW

Vintage pieces are key to this aesthetic. If it’s distressed, aged and faded, all the better. Remember, they’re not just scratches, they’re stories. One reason I really love this style is that it doesn’t demand the purchase of all-new items; the contrast between old and new can be quite beautiful. Some newly purchased furnishings and accessories can make your vintage pieces pop in a way that’s uniquely you. This style is also conducive to upcycling cast-off furnishings with some new upholstery and a fresh coat of paint.

Generally speaking, avoid anything that’s too matchy-matchy and aim for eclectic and artisanal. Look for contrasts and combine a variety of materials such as wood, glass, lacquer, metal and mirror. The goal is for your items to look collected rather than purchased in one afternoon at your local big box store.

Continued on page 30

PERFECTLY

imperfect

STORY **SASCHA LAFLEUR**
PHOTOGRAPHY **WEST OF MAIN DESIGN**

This world is full of wonderful things that happen entirely by accident, but when it comes to our homes, the “perfectly imperfect” aesthetic doesn’t always come by chance. Though effortlessly curated in appearance, this distinctive style is quite deliberate, reflecting unique lives and interests, and the home that’s at the heart of it all.



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design ideas

Try this: In the kitchen, take the mix-and-match approach to your metallic finishes. For example, try pairing brushed nickel cabinetry hardware with gold-toned lighting or plumbing fixtures. Just keep a consistent temperature – warm with warm, or cool with cool. Alternately, matte black metal is a neutral and trendy option that pairs well with everything.



TELL YOUR STORY

Incorporate sentimental items and found objects that speak to your personal interests and experiences. Find a place to display that retro typewriter or your vintage camera collection. Put yourself out there through things that bring you joy and help tell your story.

Bring added interest to your collections by peppering your display with plants, books and artwork to create mini focal points through the space.

Think in odd numbers when displaying your collections and curios on tabletops, shelves or the fireplace mantel. Arrange your accessories in groups of threes or fives, with the largest item in the middle. This draws attention to the centre of your display and creates balance.



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LIVE IN LAYERS

Textiles can completely change a room, adding warmth and dimension to what would otherwise be a cold and sterile space. Along with this particular aesthetic, pillows and throws were never intended to be neatly lined up and folded into a perfect little square. Just toss, drape and pile them where needed.

Your fabric choices create a mood and set a tone. Layer bold animal and cultural prints with more subtle patterns and solids for instant impact without having to make a huge investment or commitment. You can lighten up your fabrics during the warmer months with linens and cottons and go warmer and heavier during the winter with wool, faux fur and chunky knits.

Consider adding reclaimed antique rugs, window coverings, wall coverings, upholstery and accessories such as cushions and throws. Again, look for variety in colour, vibrancy, pattern and texture.



The final piece of decorating advice could easily apply to life as well. Rather than trying to fight the randomness that sometimes surrounds us, embrace it. Do things just because and you might be surprised by the outcome. **OH**

Sascha Lafleur is the principal senior designer at West of Main.



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Award-winning designer and builder **Gordon Weima** and his wife Debbie moved into their new home in September 2018, when pockets of Ottawa were dark because multiple tornadoes touched down throughout the region. They had no power and no furniture their first night, so they stretched out on a mattress in front of the fire. While the scene sounds spartan, it was perfect, as this was a moment they had waited decades for. That night, Debbie turned to Gordon and said, “I’m finally home.” *Continued on page 35*



FINDING YOUR
Way Home

STORY **HEATHER WRIGHT**
PHOTOGRAPHY **GORDON KING**



TOP: Large windows throughout the home display Gordon's love for natural light. **RIGHT:** Gordon draws the eye upward with subtle detailing on the ceiling, delineating room perimeters in the open space. **BELOW:** A large, comfortable dining table to accommodate their large family was a must for the Weimas. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** At the base of this home's design is space for family time, including this oversize island with multiple workstations.



Thirty-six years ago, Gordon, Debbie and their six children happily occupied a small bungalow in Nepean's Heart's Desire. As the years passed, they outgrew the space and moved to another home – keeping their bungalow, in the connected community they loved, as a rental property. Decades later, the time was right to come back, raze the original home and build new from a design that had been collecting in Gordon's mind for a generation.

This sleek and airy home is award-winning, with Gordon grabbing multiple Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association (GOHBA) awards in 2020, including Best Home Office, Best Custom Home 3000 sq. ft. or Less and Custom Home Builder of the Year.

Is it different when a designer plans their own home versus designing homes for clients? Not really, says Gordon, because his fundamental approach begins with a deep understanding of the

intentions on how to use the space day-to-day.

"I always put myself in my clients' shoes, and base my design on what I know about them," says Gordon. "I always ask myself, 'If this was my house, would I do this?'"

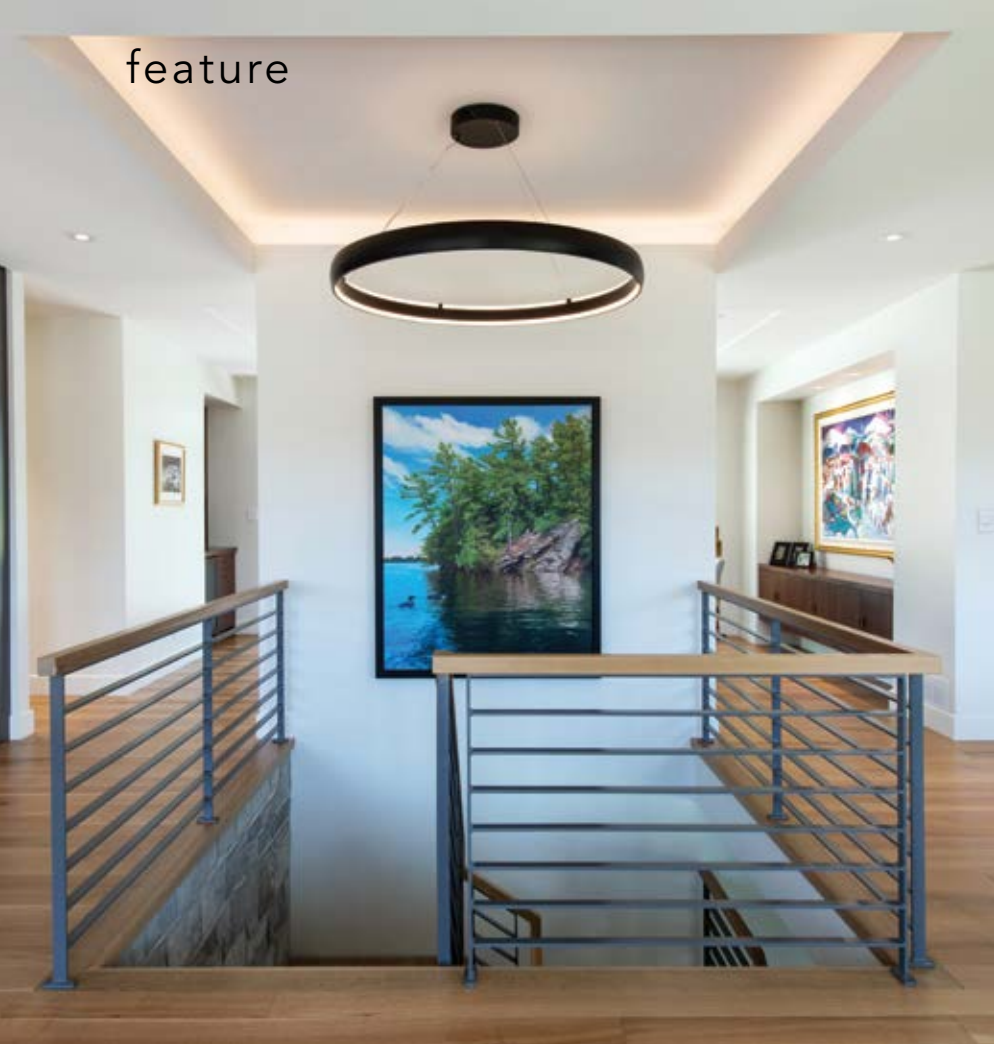
"We knew we wanted a kitchen and front room facing the river," says Gordon, referring to the open-concept main floor. "We wanted to create flow from room to room."

That flow is predicated by an abundance of natural light spilling through large and plentiful windows (**Pella Windows**). "I am huge on natural light," he says. "Natural light is key in any house." He paid special attention to window placement, connecting indoor and outdoor living spaces. Both the front balcony off the kitchen and rear patio off the dining room benefit from clear and wide sightlines, where floor-to-ceiling windows frame exterior views and create the appearance of uninterrupted space.

Continued on page 36

"I ALWAYS PUT MYSELF IN MY CLIENTS' SHOES, AND BASE MY DESIGN ON WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THEM."
– Gordon Weima





After living in their original bungalow on this site for 10 years, the Weimas knew exactly where the light would fall during different seasons and different times of day. They incorporated that knowledge to maximize light and assist with heating and cooling during winter and summer.

The design centrepiece is the staircase (**Accurate Stairs & Railings**), placed in the middle of the main floor. With open-tread risers, steel stringer railings and intricate details in the corners and connections, the staircase promotes airflow and movement of light, all while creating a “wow” factor.

Open-concept living spaces can be cavernous, but Gordon cleverly delineates the areas in a simple but ingenious way, drawing the eye upwards. Over the staircase, he creates a subtle focal point, accomplished by applying an extra layer of drywall. Coffered ceilings, trimmed with lights and a bold light fixture grab the gaze in just the right spot.

“It visually breaks up the open concept,” says Gordon.

That ceiling detail was used in other areas of the house, like the kitchen, dining room and primary bedroom. This is reflective of the cohesiveness of the design, where every element overtly plays a role in creating dramatic impact and the comfort that comes with home.

Continued on page 38



LEFT: The powder room reflects the nuanced, natural décor seen throughout this house. **FAR LEFT:** Sightlines are extended through large windows. **ABOVE LEFT:** The Weimas commissioned a Sheila Ballantyne painting of an island near the family cottage, hanging here above the staircase. **ABOVE:** The sunny lounge is a cosy spot for reading and reflection. **TOP RIGHT:** Gordon’s home office even has its own stylish entryway. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** A large patio provides extra living space outside. **RIGHT:** This lovely home office won a GOBHA award in 2020.





Now Open Pella Experience Centre



In the kitchen, stone (**Merkley Supply Ltd.**, installed by **Dawson & Jacklin Masonry**) runs up the wall to balance the weight of the stately stone fireplace (**High Energy Gas & Wood**) in the opposite space. Stone also lines the wall in the bright walkout lower level. In the mudroom on the lower level, Gordon used the same rich hardwood (**Gaylord Hardwood Flooring**) as the main floor, installed shiplap-style behind a custom bench.

With a big extended family that includes 11 grandchildren, the kitchen had to be spacious enough to accommodate lots of people and multiple cooks. An oversize island (**Gerry's Custom Built Kitchens & Vanities**, countertop from **Ottawa Granite Pro Inc.**) stretches out with plenty of room for two workstations. There are three ovens and a large pantry with rollout drawers.

Continued on page 40

ABOVE LEFT: Large windows in the primary bedroom bring in tons of natural light. **ABOVE RIGHT:** There is a place for everything with ample storage in the primary bedroom. **BELOW:** The en suite features smart motion-sensor lighting.



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A sleek mudroom uses the same hardwood as the upper floor. **ABOVE:** This unique staircase appears to be floating, thanks to a myriad of design details. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The laundry room is a functional hub, with an extra dishwasher, fridge and HandyWaiter. **RIGHT:** The same stone is used inside and outside the home, lending unity to the décor.

Just off the kitchen is a laundry room, which functions beyond wash and fold. It's also home to the Weimas' second dishwasher, second fridge and a smart gadget that just makes life easier – a HandyWaiter (**WB Fowler Industries**). It runs down to the lower-level garage and delivers groceries to the kitchen and pantry for unpacking.

The home office provides a cosy and creative space for Gordon to drive his designs, but is practical as well. It is plumbed and can be easily converted to a second main-floor bedroom with bath to permit aging in place down the road.

What this home demonstrates is that, although the concept of home is intangible, it can be broken down and built through physical design, especially when you have decades to distill your ideas.

“This home is really just an extension of where we lived 35 years ago,” says Gordon. **OH**



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STORY **MICHELLE BERWICK**
PHOTOGRAPHY **LARRY ARNAL**

Pastel PALETTE

The world is craving a little whimsy. Requests from our clients have gone from “keep it neutral” and “keep it white” to “let’s have a little fun.” Enter the pastel palette. Let us show you how to sprinkle this whimsical colour scheme into your home in fresh new ways.



TILE

Yes, bring on the tiles! We know it can be scary, but you won’t regret it. We love using a bold colour or pattern on a tile, especially when it’s a spot with only a little bit of square footage like a shower niche.

ARTWORK

A large-scale colour print will work wonders in a space and is a great opportunity to showcase your personality. Incorporating a mural can also be a fun way to add colour to a room.



ACCESSORIES

It’s one of the easiest ways to take the plunge into pops of colour. Little art pieces for shelves, decorative objects and books are all small ways to make a big impact.

FLORALS

Make it temporary. Florals are a wonderful way to incorporate a fresh pop of colour. The best part is you can switch between whatever colours you want that week. **OH**



Designer Michelle Berwick specializes in residential and commercial interior design.



FABRIC

A few toss cushions? A comforter? Even a throw blanket. No need to go wild; we want the colours to speak for themselves.

Layering colourful patterns and textures in your space will bring the room to life. Whether large or small scale, pattern brings a playfulness to a room.

Blush



These tones vibe seamlessly in most colour schemes.

Blue



Soft ocean-like blues carry us away.

Purple



These hues are reminiscent of spring blossoms.

Mint & Teal



Whimsical and fun but not overpowering.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO INCORPORATE THESE SOFT HUES INTO YOUR SPACE.

PAINT

Paint an accent wall and repeat that colour through accessories. The shade doesn’t need to match perfectly; mixing and matching shades of the same colour creates dimension and sophistication.

Spray your kitchen island. People are usually scared to do this. We often hear, “What if we don’t like it in 10 years?” We would rather you be in love with something for seven-to-10 years than feel blah about it for 15.

Refinish your furniture. You don’t always have to resort to white. Sometimes a soft colour can feel like a neutral.

Paint your cabinetry. A minty hue on lower cabinets can be an unexpected surprise when entering a kitchen. Don’t forget about your laundry room! A perfect spot to really go for it.



double take

All DECKED OUT

RECREATE THIS LOOK IN YOUR OWN HOME.



PHOTO: SANDY MACKAY



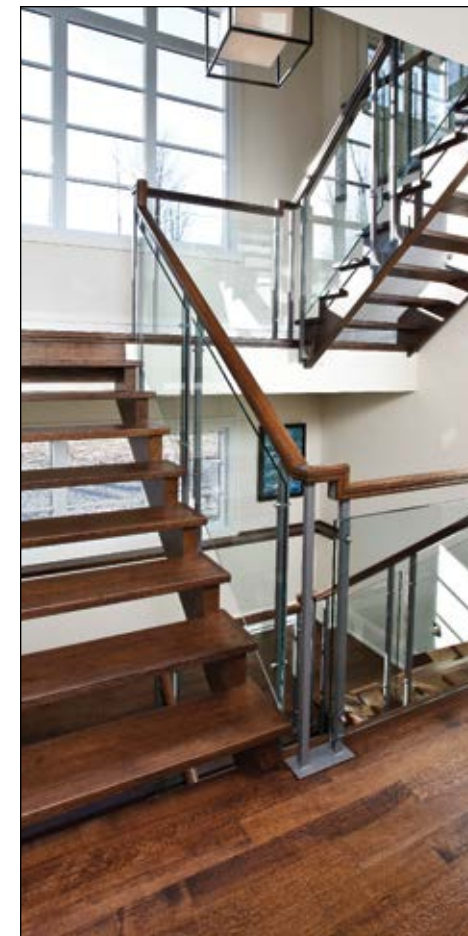
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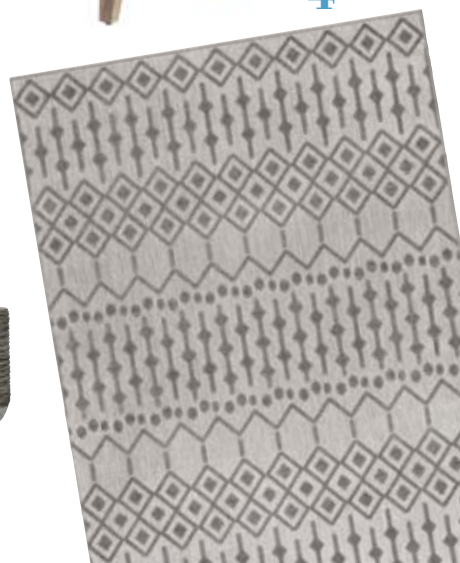
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4

1. **SUNPAN**: Logan
End Table in White
2. **MODLOFT**: Netta
Sectional Sofa 3. **ARD
OUTDOOR**: Bayside
Round Coffee Table
4. **SURYA**: Big Sur
BSR-2309 Rug
5. **WEST ELM**: Palma
Outdoor Rattan Lounge
Chair 6. **RENWIL**:
Midland Outdoor
Pillow 7. **ABBOTT
COLLECTION**: Large
Spiral String Planter **OH**

spotlight



PHOTOGRAPHY
ALEXANDRA QUEZADA
ROLDAN GUERRERO

stunning STONES

THE PLACE

TGI Quartz and Granite focuses on design consultations and sales for the retail market, along with their B2B partner The Stone Fabricator, which provides stone slabs and additional accessories like sinks and faucets. Together, they offer end-to-end service, including design, digital laser measurements, CNC fabrication and installation. TGI recently opened a 3,500 sq. ft. showroom in Ottawa's west end and a 3,200 sq. ft. showroom in the east end. Both are bright, inviting spaces with design centres, samples and slabs on site.

HIGH-TECH TOOLS

You may have a wishlist for your kitchen or bath project but visualizing it can be a challenge. TGI removes the guesswork by offering a digital kitchen and bath visualizer on their website, with numerous colours, materials and configurations. Customers can work directly with TGI's qualified and savvy designers to consider options for projects across a broad price point.



CUSTOMER COMMITMENT

What really sets TGI apart, according to Roldan, is their proven commitment to customer service. "We want our customers to fall in love with their counters every day and feel confident in their choices. We ensure an excellent customer experience from beginning to end and beyond," says Roldan. They recently won the 2021 Consumer Choice Award (CCA) for Ottawa and region in the countertop category for the third year in a row.

OUTDOOR KITCHEN

For an outdoor kitchen, materials have to be durable and stand up to the elements. TGI recommends Cosentino Dekton, the darker tones of the Natural Stone Collection in the TSF 24Pack and leathered dark granites.

WHICH STONE IS FOR YOU?

"Choose a stone that suits your home, your character and your lifestyle," says Roldan Guerrero, President of TGI. "Consider colour palette, pattern, durability and material. For best value, start with the TSF 24Pack," says Roldan. Customers are encouraged to bring samples home. It's important to try them in different light and times of day to get a proper feel for how they will look at home.



WHAT'S TRENDING

Quartz colours, particularly TSF 24Pack's Catalina, Julietta and Madison. Also trending: large, book-matched islands, waterfall panels and mitred edge profiles. **OH**



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saltwater pool, yoga
studio, sauna, reception
hall, entertainment
lounge, and public
terraces with barbecues.



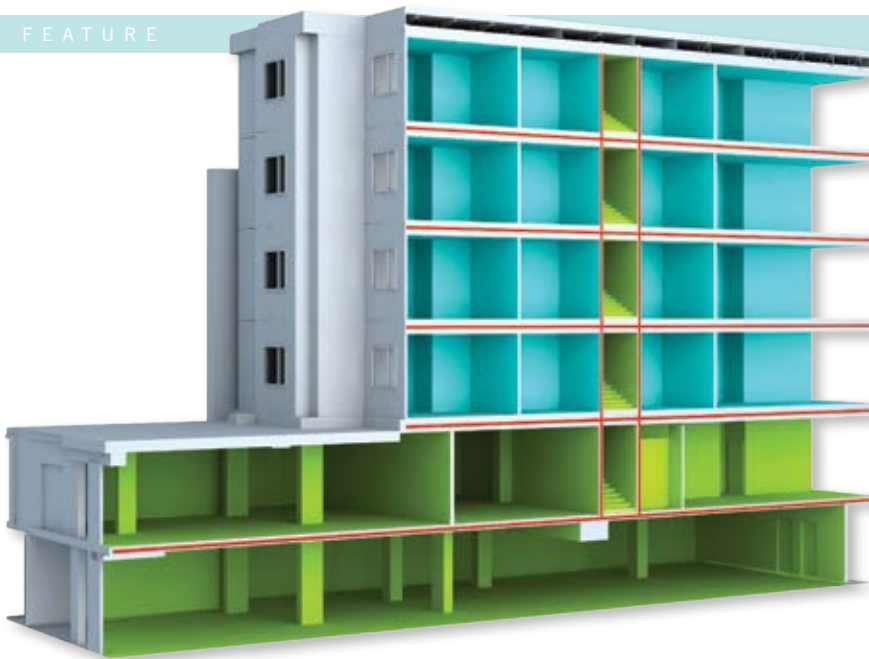
*Sample suite: 1496 Sq.Ft.



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LÉPINE APARTMENTS
by Joshua Magee



A vital and often neglected component in a healthy life is air quality. As our understanding of health and well-being continues to grow, so too does our understanding of the requisite for quality air; nowhere more so than in our homes, where we spend up to 65% of our time. As apartment living increasingly becomes the sustainable mode of housing, it is of paramount importance that people learn to identify air quality in Apartment Buildings, and what distinguishes a clean habitat versus an unsanitary one. The air you breathe indoors can be 4-6 times more contaminated than fresh outdoor air. Those with pre-existing conditions feel the effects of poor air quality ten-fold, as pollutants can accelerate the aging of lung tissue and reduce your quality of life. With air quality having such a profound impact on our physical health, it is important to identify what factors control our indoor environment.

Many apartment buildings still employ older design practices that have major weaknesses that allow air to be shared from unit to unit. Typically, the air would be pumped into common areas such as hallways and then transfer into the individual apartments. This poses a potential problem as you are exchanging pet dander, food odours, bacteria, and other particulates which seep through filters and may be inhaled. One might think to solve this by cracking open a window, but this is not always convenient, especially when the weather is inhospitable, be it during our harsh winters or hot, humid summers. Not only that, but by opening a window, you may now invite noise pollution from outside, as well as vehicular exhaust, dust, pollen, and mould. Adding to this dilemma is the global virus outbreak. Now more than ever, we do not want to be sharing our "bubble" with others, as we try to reduce infection rates in time for a vaccine to be dispersed.

Thankfully, there is a practical solution to poor indoor air quality: Compartmentalization.

When looking for a rental with high-quality air, you want to ask your agent or prospective landlord about Apartment Compartmentalization. Higher quality apartment buildings will be designed in a series of self-contained compartments. These compartments each make up an individual unit, separated from common areas, other apartments, and the garage itself. You want to find a builder who designs every single unit to be supplied with its own fresh-air intake, with ventilation taking the exhaust directly outside. This will prevent air transfer from one apartment to the next.

Beyond air intake, other factors are at play for air quality. In an apartment building, you may want to ask about what sort of attributes are in their partition walls. Ideally, you would have walls with double acoustic insulation dividing each unit. This will provide you with an energy-efficient, noise-canceling, fire-resistant, and air-tight home. A masterful builder will also know that proper compartmentalization goes beyond the vertical divides of walls, but also the horizontal spaces between ceilings and floors. It is important for a prospective tenant to know what separates their unit from another both horizontally as well as vertically. Each self-contained compartment should be encased in a combination of concrete, metallic, and dry wall partitions that provide non-combustible protection against the threat of fire. There is great uncompromising value in safety and protection that is often overlooked in place of cosmetic finishes.

One final element you might want to explore when shopping for a new residence is the engineering behind the windows and their installation. High quality windows will prevent exterior air flow from getting in, insulate internal temperatures, and minimize convection, all while providing natural outdoor light and contributing to an aesthetically pleasing home.

When looking at a residence's windows, you want something with a low emissivity rating. This will keep the outdoors outside and allow for better temperature control. In an ideal unit the windows would be double-glazed with sealed argon gas to keep the cold from seeping in. Beyond the glass itself, be sure to ask about how the window is seated into the frame and wall. Professional builders will employ extruded window frames with a compartmentalized design that buffers against exterior air transmission and moisture. In Canada's unruly climate, you want your windows perfectly airtight through a combination of caulking, insulation and framing.

"Higher quality apartment buildings will be designed in a series of self-contained compartments"

Your apartment is your sanctuary from the outside world. You want it to provide you with a clean and healthy space for you and your loved ones. Cosmetic finishes are the first thing we notice when shopping but should not be the last. Air may be invisible, but the implications it brings are glaringly salient. When shopping, it is well worth your time to investigate the engineering and thought processes behind your new apartment and what lies hidden beneath the surface.

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pack a PICNIC

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

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TO-GO FOR YOUR NEXT AL FRESCO MEAL.

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There's nothing better than charcuterie for a picnic. Whip up a quick charcuterie box and head to the beach to enjoy the sunset!

A How-To Guide to Charcuterie:



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Meats and cheeses
– choose 2-3 of your
favourites

Fruits – grapes,
berries and kiwi

Dried fruits – apricots,
figs or dates

Condiments – olives, jams,
grainy mustard and nuts

Crackers and bread

A portable to-go box
– you can use a baking
dish as well

TIPS AND TRICKS

Try layering a variety of textures and colours. You don't want similar items next to each other.

Start with the bowls you will use. These will act as a placeholder for the rest.

Next, layer in your larger items (the cheeses and then the larger fruits).

Crackers come next, then fill in the spaces with things like dried fruits and nuts.

Rule of thumb: Start with the larger items and work your way into filling the gaps. Finish by filling your condiment bowls.



TO-GO APEROL SPRITZ

This classic summer cocktail is perfect to enjoy outdoors. It's easy to make ahead and ideal for sharing.



INGREDIENTS

Aperol

Dry sparkling wine

Soda

Oranges, to garnish

1L sealable container

DIRECTIONS

The recipe for this cocktail is very simple – just follow this ratio: 1 part Aperol and 1 part soda to 2 parts sparkling wine.

Simply mix together all ingredients in a resealable container.

Serve over ice with a slice of orange.

Continued on page 52

MASON JAR TIRAMISU

This recipe is the perfect to-go dessert this summer – easy to transport and eat outdoors. It also stays true to the original by utilizing egg yolk to give it a custard-like feel.

INGREDIENTS

- (Serves 6)
- 4 egg yolks
- ½ cup granulated sugar, separated
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 1 cup mascarpone cheese
- 1 cup espresso, cold
- ¼ cup liquor of choice*
- 12-18 lady fingers**
- Cocoa powder, for dusting
- 6 500 ml mason jars

DIRECTIONS

Over a double boiler, whisk together egg yolks and ¼ cup of sugar. Continually whisk for about 10 minutes until the sugar is dissolved and yolks double in size and turn pale yellow. Set aside to cool.

In a separate bowl, whip cream and the remaining sugar until stiff peaks form.

Once cooled, fold the mascarpone cheese into the egg yolk mixture until combined.

Next, gently fold yolk mixture in the whipping cream until combined.

In a shallow bowl, combine espresso and liquor.

TO ASSEMBLE

Break lady fingers into pieces to fit the circumference of the mason jars. This will be a bit messy and won't be perfect. Quickly dip the lady finger pieces into the espresso and place into the mason jar in an even layer.

Top with about two tablespoons of the cream mixture and repeat the layers.

Sprinkle cocoa powder on top to finish.

Place the lid on each jar and store in the fridge for up to one week. They taste better after a few days!

RECIPE NOTES

*Traditionally, tiramisu is made with Marsala wine but you can also use rum, brandy or coffee-flavored liquor.

**Depends on the size of your mason jars.

Traditionally, tiramisu is made with raw egg yolk but this recipe tempers the yolks to ensure safe consumption and shelf life. **OH**



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STORY **SUSAN SYKES**
PHOTOGRAPHY **GORDON KING**

For **Claudio Falsetto**, President of **Revelstoke Custom Homes & Renovations**, every project is a chance to build on success. “We try to improve every time,” says Claudio, although it is hard to imagine what could be better than the 3,300 sq. ft., four-bedroom beauty the firm recently completed in Alta Vista.

Continued on page 56

Designed by **Jason Flynn** of **Flynn Architect**, the home is inspired by the iconic style of Frank Lloyd Wright, updated to meet the needs of the modern family. Clean lines and neutral stonework from **Merkley Supply Ltd.** allow the home to blend naturally into the streetscape of the established neighbourhood without sacrificing architectural interest. To keep it from overpowering the surrounding homes, its size and placement respect the contours of the lot. “It sits well within the minimum setbacks,” notes Claudio.

The generous, two-storey foyer is flooded with natural light that streams through the many large windows from **Dalmen Pro Windows**. Conveniently tucked off the main entrance is a home office, complete with beautiful and functional double doors from **De La Fontaine Doors** to muffle the sounds of family life happening in the rest of the house. Floor-to-ceiling windows provide a clear view of the front yard from the office space, perfect for keeping an eye on the kids while working from home (landscaping by **ALM Construction & Landscaping**).



LEFT: Great care was taken to ensure this modern home respected the streetscape of this established neighbourhood (landscaping by ALM Construction & Landscaping). **TOP:** The kitchen cabinetry offers pleasing contrast with darker finishes. **ABOVE:** The luxe and long quartz island is the perfect family gathering spot. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Numerous sightlines are available from the dining table in the wide-open space.



The remainder of the main floor is dedicated to an expansive open-concept kitchen and living space. The kitchen has an immediate wow factor, equipped with all the bells and whistles, including top-of-the-line Fisher & Paykel appliances from **Universal Appliances**, modern European-designed cabinetry from **Irpinia Kitchens**, and the enduring beauty of quartz countertops.

Although the kitchen is wide open to the

dining area and living room beyond, a sleek wall of built-in cabinetry in dark wood tones provides ample storage and minimizes visual clutter. With seating for four, the island anchors the kitchen and invites family and guests alike to gather around. For more formal meals, there is plenty of space at the full-size dining table adjacent to the kitchen.

This family-friendly hub is completed by a bright and airy living area, with lots of room to relax and unwind together. The back wall

of the house is almost entirely glass, with multiple patio doors providing ease of access to the outdoors and bathing the space in warmth and light.

Asked for his favourite part of the home's layout, Claudio points to the practical placement of the amenities – including the thoughtfully tucked-away powder room by the rear entrance. This way, he reasons, it's easily accessible to children or guests enjoying the backyard. *Continued on page 58*



“We want every house we build to be a home, with a sense of connection to the community it’s in. – Claudio Falsetto

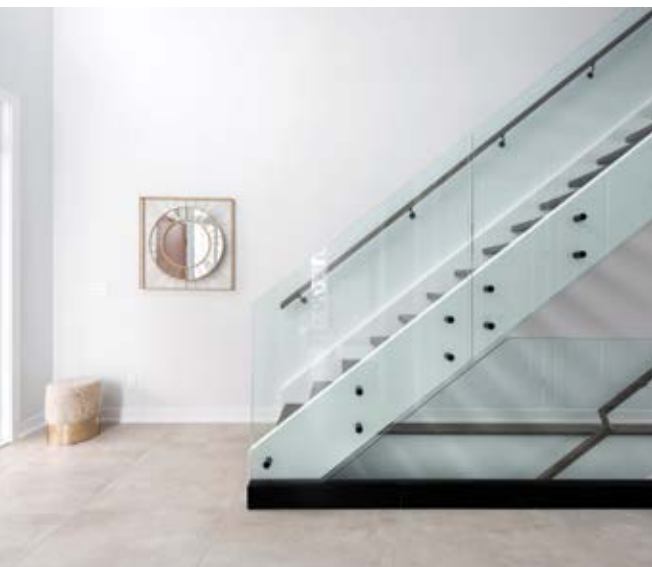


Families will also appreciate the function of the oversize mudroom with its handy built-in bench, hooks and cubbies. Back in the foyer, the striking staircase seems to float towards the second level, its open risers and clear glass railing allowing for unobstructed sightlines throughout the main level. Upstairs, the main attraction is an inviting principal suite that Claudio envisioned as a sanctuary for the homeowners to relax and recharge. The spacious bedroom area features hardwood flooring that flows into the drool-worthy walk-in closet, fitted with custom shelving and drawers to keep everything organized.

The en suite feels like a five-star hotel, with an extra-large walk-in shower and separate water closet. A clever dividing wall provides a little extra privacy for the freestanding tub, tucked behind the floating vanity. Large-scale floor tile from **EuroTile & Stone** makes a strong statement despite its calm, neutral tones, while the shower floor brings in a contrasting dark wall tile and a smaller mosaic pattern underfoot for extra texture and interest. Three additional bedrooms round out the second-floor sleeping quarters, offering ample space to keep the rest of the family happy. “We made sure they were all the same size so there would be no fighting over the bigger room,” laughs Claudio. *Continued on page 60*

ABOVE: The wall of windows bathes the living room in natural light. **TOP RIGHT:** Families will love this stylish mudroom, with built-in bench, hooks and storage. **RIGHT:** Neutral finishes were selected to broaden appeal and outlast trends.





Just off the kitchen, stairs lead down to the fully finished basement, which adds valuable family living space plus an additional bedroom.

Claudio always strives to provide the highest possible quality within the established budget. Because this home was built on spec by Revelstoke, he wanted to provide a blank canvas for the eventual buyers to add their own flair. The finishes throughout are luxurious but intentionally neutral, creating a subtle elegance that will stand the test of time. “I could picture life in this home perfectly before it was even finished,” says Claudio.

The Revelstoke team takes obvious pride in their work, fueled by the belief that little things make a big difference. It’s a philosophy

Continued on page 62

ABOVE: This dreamy home office makes working from home wonderful. **LEFT:** Clear railings and open-tread risers on the staircase help to amplify the sense of space.



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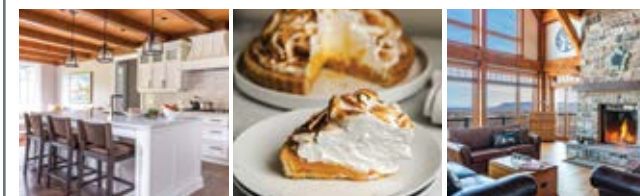
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Rich hardwood floors create décor drama in the primary bedroom. **RIGHT:** The extra-wide shower sends a spa-like vibe. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** A dividing wall offers extra privacy for the deep soaker tub. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** This floating vanity reflects the neutral tones seen throughout the home.



that’s also fully embraced by their trusted suppliers and tradespeople, who repeatedly demonstrate that they are willing to go above and beyond. “We’re fortunate to work with so many dedicated, diligent people to help bring our homes to life,” says Claudio. “Some of them have been with us for decades.”

What’s the difference between a house and a home? Ultimately, it’s often more about the way it feels than anything else, a nuance that Claudio understands well. “We want every house we build to be a home, with a sense of connection to the community it’s in,” he says. Thoughtfully planned and meticulously finished, this is a house any family would love to call home. **OH**



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“Your home is your biggest investment, so capture the most equity you can get for you and your family. Why settle for less?”



**Lucie
Meloche**

STYLE SECRET

Staging is also about styling the space so potential buyers can see functionality and flow throughout the home. I always ensure every staged home is also professionally cleaned and organized. Every home deserves to be showcased to its full glory.

STAGING IN A SELLERS MARKET

You have three seconds to capture potential buyers’ attention when they are searching for their new home on portal searches. For sellers, staging is crucial to set their home apart from their competition.

Continued on page 66



Donna Warwick with Lola

PHOTOS: KEVIN BELANGER

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Before

After

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Generation-3 Homes offers a popular step-by-step process that helps answer questions and lets clients make informed decisions. The process focuses on usable, beautiful design for homeowners, with options that respect their budget. With a no-pressure approach, there is no major financial commitment until all these factors combined meet client approval.



HOW TO BEGIN A CUSTOM HOME DESIGN

Reviewing the Linwood models on our website is an effective way for clients to define their scope of ideas and articulate their wishes. We're then able to advise based on our experience and general cost expectations, while helping clients narrow their search to one or two models that best fit their objectives.

TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF THE BUILD PROCESS

Our price-protection guarantees have saved our clients money and lets them enjoy the build journey without stress. Our transparency and experience provide solutions and a plan for a path forward, ensuring comfort in making a major financial decision.

Continued on page 68



Chris Fleming & Julie Fleming

PHOTOS: KEVIN BELANGER



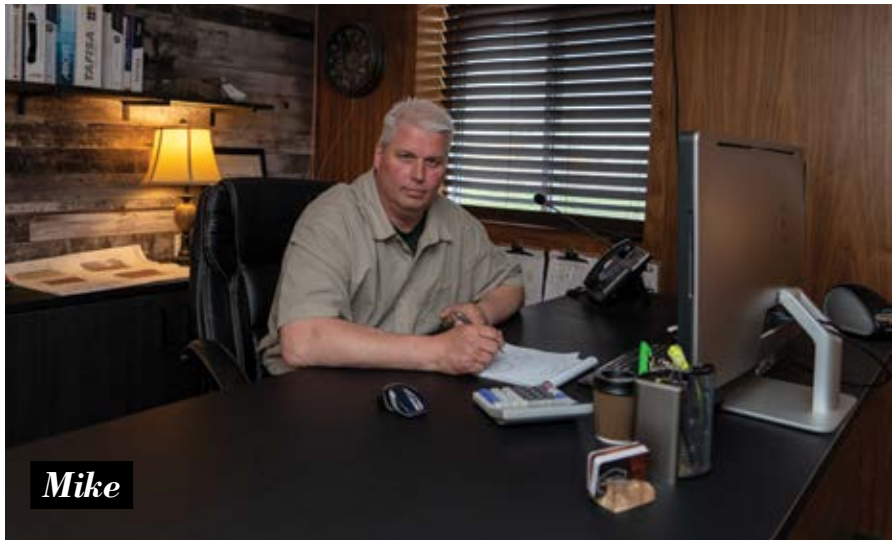
Milan, Jacob, Mike, Spenser & Burnie

PHOTOS: ELSMORE MEDIA

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Mike

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CUSTOM SOLUTION

We get to know customers and how they intend to use their homes. We ask: “What do you want your kitchen to do for you?” and provide options to have that experience.

WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN PROCESS?

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Jason Allen



“Good storage space is valuable in any home and you can never have enough.”

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MAKING THE GARAGE MORE USABLE

Having quality storage off the floor for your garage is great for keeping it organized. You’ll be able to find exactly what you’re looking for when you need it and wonder how you ever overlooked this room in your home.

Continued on page 70

people & places



"In business and life, I was mentored to always help someone out with no expectation of personal gain."

Giuseppe Castrucci



LAURYSEN KITCHENS

Family-owned Laurysen Kitchens was founded in 1970. They manufacture semi-custom and custom kitchens, vanities and closet organizers. Laurysen continues to expand in markets across Ontario and uses technology to keep the company competitive in today's marketplace. Vice president of sales and marketing Giuseppe Castrucci is retiring in June after 30 years with the company.



SEE OUR DIRECTORY FOR ALL CONTACT INFORMATION.



MOST MEMORABLE PROJECT

My first millwork project was the Heart Institute, which was later visited by Princess Diana. Also memorable is the home of the Ottawa Senators – the Canadian Tire Centre.

WHAT'S TRENDING?

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STORY BRIANNE SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY GORDON KING



Just outside of the bustling city centre of Ottawa lies the quiet, rural community of Diamondview Estates. This quaint Carp neighbourhood is comprised of new two-storey and bungalow homes by **Phoenix Homes**.

With an impressive roster of beautiful family homes, condos and rental units, Phoenix Homes has carved out a reputation for outstanding quality and craftsmanship. Since 1997 the company has built 5,000 homes in Ottawa and surrounding areas.

Among the various single-family homes, one particular model – the Springfield bungalow – has stood out for many new homebuyers and those among the local design community.

The fully-furnished Springfield model bungalow feels anything but cookie-cutter. The 1,730 sq. ft. home is built on a generous 50 ft. lot with views of the community and undeveloped landscape beyond. Chock-full of wow features and custom upgrades, the model home helps potential buyers truly

visualize themselves in the space.

Rahul Kochar is the Vice President of Operations for Phoenix Homes. He says they put their own spin on designing a modern bungalow that families can transition through.

“I think for a family with two kids, it certainly is a great long-term home,” he says. “I’ve definitely seen a trend among younger families contemplating bungalows over traditional two-storey homes because the parents realize they can hang onto the home through multiple stages of their life, instead of having to shift to something else later.”

Bungalows in the past were typically focused on empty nesters, not necessarily affording the kind of space that a family might require, but Rahul says that’s changing.

Continued on page 74

LEFT: The towering fireplace is a stunner, with dramatic wainscoting. **ABOVE:** Homebuyers can choose between four exterior options.



“You’re seeing bungalows with secondary and tertiary bedrooms as being a reasonable size for full-time occupants,” he says.

It’s easy to see why this model has been among the builder’s most acknowledged designs. No small detail has gone unnoticed in the bungalow, which features an expansive entryway, three spacious bedrooms and a swoon-worthy en suite bathroom.

The back half of the house opens up to what Phoenix Homes calls the great room, which is comprised of an open-concept kitchen ([Spectrum Kitchen & Bath Design](#)), living room and dining space. Impressive 12 ft. ceilings open up the space and give it a sense of grandeur.

With a choice between four striking exterior options, Springfield homebuyers have flexibility and variety in both the outside and inside of their bungalow with an assortment of custom finishes and upgrades.

Continued on page 77

TOP: A deep and bright foyer permits comfortable passage in and out of the home. **RIGHT:** A huge island is the perfect place to gather the family or to entertain in this wide-open space.





One of Rahul's favourite features is the striking row of windows that runs along the entire back portion of the house, bathing the main living space in an abundance of natural daylight.

"You get a design impact item there," he says. "For a targeted demographic this home really ticks all the boxes."

So far, the Springfield model has been a popular choice in both the Diamondview Estates and White Tail Ridge (Almonte) communities. In the Diamondview Estates neighbourhood, five Springfield models were sold during Phase Two, with Phase Three properties set to be released shortly.

Since the model was released in March 2019, Rahul says its popularity has only increased. He attributes this to people being able to walk through and feel the attributes that could potentially make up their future home.

Continued on page 78

***"FOR A TARGETED
DEMOGRAPHIC
THIS HOME
REALLY TICKS
ALL THE BOXES."***

- Rahul Kochar



ABOVE: This home is award-winning, taking two GOHBA awards in 2020. **BELOW:** The laundry is conveniently located off the garage. **RIGHT:** Banks of windows infuse the great room with natural light. **FAR RIGHT:** A bright formal dining room is an elegant space for entertaining.





“It’s not unusual for builders to see the sale of a particular model ramp up considerably after they’ve built a physical model of that house,” he says. “There’s a very strong correlation to people being able to physically walk through a model and that model’s success.”

Springfield didn’t just catch the attention of homebuyers; it has also been widely recognized by the Ottawa design community, with Phoenix taking home a number of awards at the 2020 GOHBA Awards. They received two for the Springfield bungalow, including Production Home: Single Detached Under \$600,000 and Best Single-Family Home Under 2,000 sq. ft.

The awards, presented early this year, came at a time when the construction industry was facing, and continues to face, unprecedented challenges due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Like many companies,

Phoenix Homes had to comply with imposed regulations, which have included halts in construction, impacts to human resources and shortages of crucial building supplies.

Despite the setbacks, Rahul says the company took the opportunity to strengthen their online resources by going paperless. In doing so they were able to cut down their environmental impact, reduce office costs and improve efficiency for new buyers all while minimizing human contact.

“You’re sort of now buying a home online. You’re not necessarily putting it in a virtual shopping cart and hitting checkout, but essentially your entire process can be handled without actually having to go to a sales centre,” Rahul says. “You need to take the best of a bad situation and figure out how you can pull some positives out of it for your process and the health of the company.” *Continued on page 80*



ABOVE LEFT: The primary bedroom is soft and inviting, featuring rich hardwood floors and large windows. **ABOVE:** The en suite is luxe and leaves no décor detail behind.

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RIGHT: The secondary bedrooms rival the primary bedroom in size. **BELOW RIGHT:** The main bathroom features chic and contemporary finishes. **BELOW:** Welcoming bedrooms are a key component of making this bungalow so family-friendly.

“I THINK FOR A FAMILY WITH TWO KIDS, IT CERTAINLY IS A GREAT LONG-TERM HOME.”



Despite the challenges of the last year, Phoenix Homes is showing no sign of slowing down. In fact, it's doing the very opposite. With community developments in four fast-growing Ottawa communities, the team's sights are set on the future. Phase Three of Diamondview Estates is scheduled to be released this summer along with upcoming projects in Orléans and Kanata.

“We are revamping our approach to elevations before our next release where we will offer our homes in an entry-level Modern Farmhouse version, an upgraded Craftsman version and a further upgraded Modern version,” says Rahul.

Additionally, Phoenix Homes owns and operates a granite and flooring supplier, **Stone Design Concepts Inc.** and are in the process of acquiring more sub-contracting companies. **OH**

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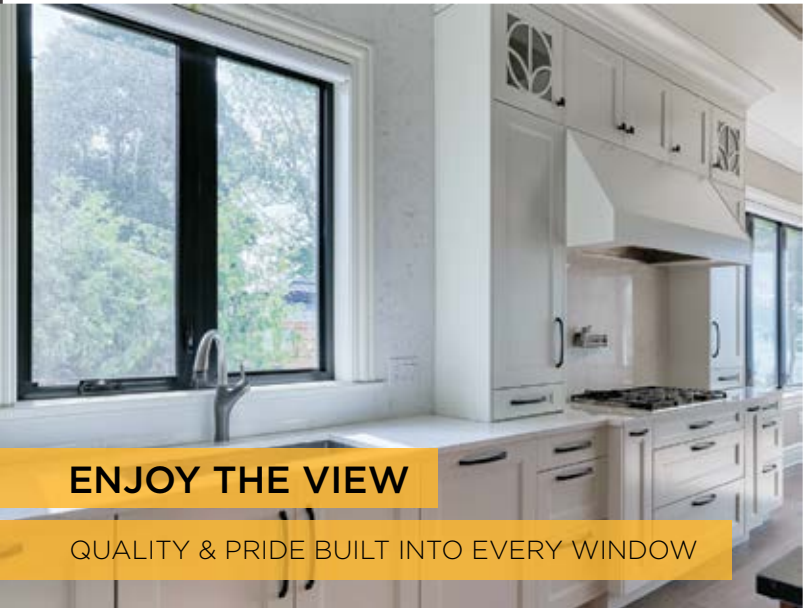
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Clear polyurethane

HOW-TO

Carefully disassemble one of the pallets using a pry bar and hammer.

Using the hammer and claw, carefully remove all nails from the boards.

To create your tabletop, use the decking boards from the first pallet to fill the open spaces on the top of the second pallet. You may need to trim some of the boards with a jigsaw to fit. Hammer or screw all boards into place.

Flip the pallet and nail or screw stringers from the first pallet around the perimeter of the base. This will add height to the table and create a stronger base for installing the caster wheels.

Attach the new spruce boards to the sides of the table, creating a skirt. You may need to trim the boards to fit. Remember to keep the top edge of the boards even with the top of the table.

Attach the casters to each corner of the table's underside.

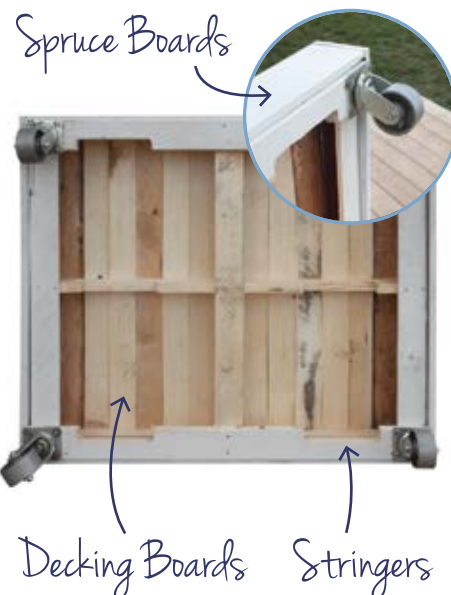
Use caulking to fill nail holes or cracks on the table.

Paint the entire table with an exterior paint.

Choose a design or pattern of your choice for the top. We used a five-pointed star from a quilting pattern and marked the design using painter's tape.

Apply two coats of paint to your pattern, allowing time to dry between coats.

Finally, seal the table with two coats of clear polyurethane, allowing time to dry between each coat. **OH**



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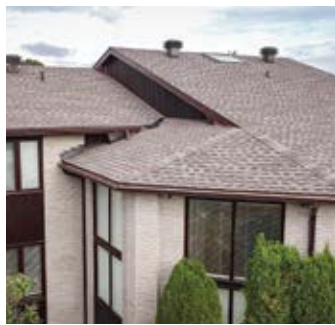
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(Please see ad on pg 53)



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STORY **LYNNE RICHARDSON** | PHOTOGRAPHY **NIGEL EVES & DALE DARCY**



Bald eagle

WITH THE ONSET OF LENGTHENING DAYS AND WARMER TEMPERATURES, many OUR HOMES readers will be familiar with the urge to change up winter clothes and comforters and feather their nest with fresh décor for the fine weather ahead. It's something we have in common with the avian migrants that have just returned to our backyards, fields, forests and lakes – the birds have transformed their drab winter wear into fresh and colourful spring wardrobes. Once winter settles into spring, thoughts turn to summer construction season, for humans and birds alike.

MASTER BUILDERS

From hummingbirds, the original “tiny house” builders, to osprey and eagles with their palatial lakeside and rural homes, birds are master architects and master builders. Much of this construction gets underway right in your own backyard. If you want to expand your knowledge of bird biology you can be the local bird building inspector! A typical property with established trees, shrubs and gardens could easily be home to up to 10 different species of birds, all working on their nest projects. It can be a fascinating deck-chair study to see just how many species are exercising squatter's rights on your property for the season.

MASTER ARCHITECTS

Each bird builds its nest with an architectural style unique to their particular species. Each style perfectly suits the species' needs. Exuberant house wrens are easily attracted to bird boxes and will stuff it high with fine twigs. Occasionally a sweet little chickadee will use the birdhouse and fill it with only the softest quality materials. In more rural settings the bluebird of happiness will gladly occupy a bird box, as will the tree swallow, which will swoop by with incomparable grace. Chirping sparrows, with their jaunty red caps and sporty white eyeliner, and serenading song sparrows will seek shelter in lower, thicker shrubberies, lining their tightly spun fine grass cups with cosy hair or fur linings. Mourning doves are not famous for their nest-building abilities – a few twigs laid on a supporting spruce branch will do. The ubiquitous robin will build its sturdy, mud-lined grass nest on almost any tree branch or ledge. Eastern phoebes will construct their lovely, moss-covered nests under an eave, often on a light fixture – if a robin doesn't get there first. Cardinals and blue jays will hide their rather large but loose twig nests deep in your cedar hedge. Brilliant Baltimore orioles, master architects, will hang their intricately woven deep pouch nests from the outer branches of tall backyard trees. Meanwhile, goldfinches will wait until later in the summer when thistledown is available to line their lovely nest beds. Depending on your location, numerous other species may be busy at work in quiet corners of your yard as well.



House wren



Yellow warbler on nest



Red-eyed vireo on nest



Baltimore oriole nest

AN ABUNDANCE OF BIRDS

Discovering this hidden activity can open your eyes to the secret life of birds. Birds are the most apparent form of wildlife you will encounter. Just think, you might see a few mammals in your yard once in a while, but it's possible to see dozens upon dozens of different bird species migrating through or stopping to nest from time to time. To give you an idea of the possibilities: I've documented 292 different species in, flying over, or seen from my yard alone! Obviously, there's a lot of time involved staring out the windows, but it's time well spent, considering the interest and entertainment songbirds bring.

DO NOT DISTURB

While observing nests and watching hatchlings grow on their bellies full of bugs (gleaned from your yard as a free pesticide service) can be exciting, always be mindful of the Code of Birding Ethics – the welfare of the birds and their habitats come first! Do Not Disturb! Resist the urge to get up close and personal. If adult birds become agitated, back off. Some birds such as red-winged blackbirds and the elegant barn swallow are not afraid to take you on with all of their 50 grams of heft behind them.

Finally, while you're enjoying your new-found feathered friends, perhaps think a bit about how you can give back to them. Incorporate native trees, shrubs and flowers in your landscaping plans. Native species provide a much greater abundance of higher-quality natural food sources birds require. Hang a hummingbird feeder, put out oranges for orioles, nuts for the nuthatches and sunflower seeds for almost all others. And sit back and enjoy! **OH**

Lynne Richardson is a retired environmental planner, now active in natural heritage conservation and citizen science projects, with a focus on birds.



Tree swallow



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in the kitchen



AN ISLAND TRIP

5 WAYS TO EXPERIENCE THE WORLD FROM YOUR KITCHEN ISLAND

STORY JULES TORTI

The pandemic has squashed many of our travel plans both near and far. Lockdowns, vaccination delays and safety concerns have forced Canadians to re-evaluate road trips and flights due south. While some have leaned on Netflix, podcasts and books for escapism, there's no reason why you can't turn your kitchen island into a destination. It can be as easy as upgrading your pantry shelves and wine cellar.

BOOK IT!

You can transport yourself everywhere with cookbooks. Chef Sean Brock's *South: Essential Recipes and New Explorations* is a fast ticket to the southern states and classics like grilled catfish, fried green tomatoes and stovetop grits.

County Heirlooms: Recipes and Reflections from Prince Edward County by Natalie Wollenberg and Leigh Nash offers a decadent collection of 42 recipes from chefs, farmers, beekeepers and food truckers with tap roots in the county, Mexico, Sweden, Brazil and beyond. Jump from Spinach & Ricotta Gnudi to Dill & Garlic Sauerkraut.

For those who like to keep things local, you can – with a Swiss twist! Ilona Oppenheim's *Savor: Rustic Recipes Inspired by Forest, Field and Farm* will appeal to those seeking twists for a farmer's market haul. From garlic scapes and lamb sausage to chanterelles, Ilona offers a generous serving of simple and savoury ideas.



PHOTO: JULES TORTI

PHOTO: DETOUR COFFEE ROASTERS



BEAN THERE

Expand your horizons from the moment you wake up. Instead of a generic drip, visit your local indie coffee shop and introduce yourself to another perky part of the world via coffee beans. Join a monthly coffee club to receive curated beans on your doorstep. Subscribers are privy to samples of new releases from women's collectives and family-owned estates. Learn about the farmers and their fincas while planning your future trip to Guatemala or Ethiopia.

Tea fiends can travel just as easily from Darjeeling, India, to Moc Chau Plateau, Vietnam, every day of the week. Ambitious teetotalers can try growing their own tea stock by planting herbs like mint, lemon balm, lavender and lemongrass.

PHOTOS: LCBO



RUN OF THE MILL

Thinking about crispy grilled chicken from that roadside oil barrel barbecue in Egypt? Missing the dense, buttered slices of hverabrauð (Iceland's famed "lava bread") buried and baked by geothermal heat in a tin can? Mexican street corn (elote) char-grilled and slathered in Cotija cheese and crema? Pay homage! While an oil barrel grill might be frowned upon in your neighbourhood, and a geothermal too deep to tap into, embrace the trade secrets of other countries when you can. Find a fancy Turkish pepper grinder and give cumin, coriander and cardamom a whirl! Add some sizzle with a wok, or woo your family with a fondue. International beer and wine tastings are definitely part of the curriculum.



PHOTO: JENELLE MCCULLOCH

SPICE THINGS UP

You can instantly bring the Middle East into your kitchen with za'atar spice. The blend of dried oregano, thyme, marjoram, sumac and toasted sesame seeds will elevate your dishes in a fragrant way. Have you tried garam masala? Kaffir leaves? Turmeric has been trending for a while, but don't worry if you're late to the game. Aji amarillo, a chile pepper popular in Peruvian cuisine, has been keeping pace with black lime (dried key lime) as 2021's kitchen gamechanger. Don't forget about the world of hot sauces.

HOMESCHOOL

There are countless virtual classes that allow you to experience the globe from the comfort of your own galley. Airbnb, Masterclass and Delish offer a satiating range for all palates and skill levels from cook-along videos for kids, handmade pasta classes with a Florence chef, and interactive Moroccan chicken tagine lessons. **OH**



directory

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smooth RENOVATION

STORY **DENISE WILLSON** | ILLUSTRATION **SHEILA BRITTON**

A smooth renovation requires partnership, a melding of minds. Beyond sheer manpower and expertise, a homeowner needs to know that a contractor or builder shares their vision. It might surprise you to learn a contractor needs the same from a homeowner. The result of this perfect pairing is often visible: a well-built home that meets or exceeds the expectations of both sides – the builder and the homeowner.

How does this kind of magic happen? Here are the top five things a contractor and homeowner need from each other to make a renovation run smoothly.



BIG-PICTURE SCOPE

While details such as lighting, flooring and cabinetry are always discussed, both parties need more. “It’s imperative we draw out the homeowners’ core needs,” says Brent Pym, president of Pym & Cooper Custom Homes in Niagara. “Details like why the homeowners want to renovate, and why renovate versus move or build. Most homeowners are surprised to discover their needs aren’t what they originally thought.” Answers define the project scope – noted in writing, discussed and agreed upon before the work begins. “By creating and following a concrete plan,” says homeowner Margaret Graves, “we met with vendors to choose fixtures, appliances, paint colours, etc., in an order that retained our vision while helping our contractor, Pym & Cooper Custom Homes, keep a steady schedule and finish on time.”

BUDGET

By wading into financials, builders can help homeowners refine their wish list. “Budget is not a bad word,” says Louie Zagordo, owner of SLV Homes and VP of the Ontario Home Builders Association. “Pricing and costs should be clear, documented and

discussed at length. It’s the only way to ensure the homeowners’ wants and needs are financially viable.” A payment structure with clear instructions ensures contractors and their trades are paid at specific stages while homeowners understand what they’re paying for. “Most projects don’t go over budget,” adds Louie. “The ones that do are usually homeowner-driven – add-ons or a change in the plan.”

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

When both parties discuss and document expectations, disappointment is rare. For example, when a builder creates a schedule and sticks to it, the homeowner understands how long each stage takes and respects those requirements. Renovations are messy, loud, inconvenient and sometimes dangerous for young children. When homeowners relocate and store personal items, contractors can work unencumbered. When moving out isn’t possible, a contractor can make a plan to minimize any negative impact on the homeowners’ lives. Communication is key to setting clear expectations. When both sides provide contact names and numbers and respond promptly, questions don’t cause confusion or delays.

QUALITY WORKMANSHIP

When we think of quality workmanship, building materials come to mind, or the expertise of the principal contractor or project manager responsible for the renovation. While these elements play a part, quality workmanship must extend to the builder’s staff, designers, vendors and experienced trades. “When a contractor and their trades present themselves in a professional manner, you can rest assured your home is in good hands,” adds Ben Helder. Ben and his partner Rachel spent most of 2020 living in a rental while their home was under renovation.

TRUST

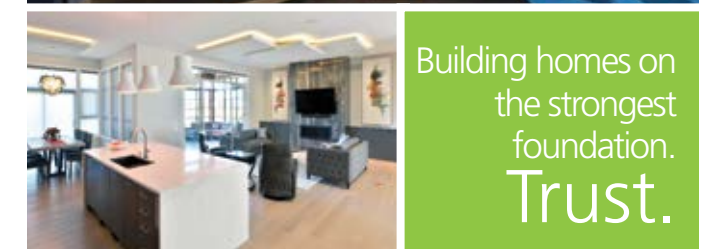
Trust flows both ways. Both sides must be professional and honest at all times. A contractor must trust the homeowner will respect an experienced perspective. “Trusting your contractor is paramount,” says Ben Helder. “Rely on the professionals you hire, on their judgment, on their creativity. A contractor must respect your wishes, but you must respect theirs as well since they are the experts.” When both parties understand what the other needs, the renovation experience is not only smooth but spectacular. **OH**

Fall in love with your home all over again.

Hindsight is great, however when it comes to your renovation there's no substitute for a decorator or designer. Find one near you with DDA Canada's directory.

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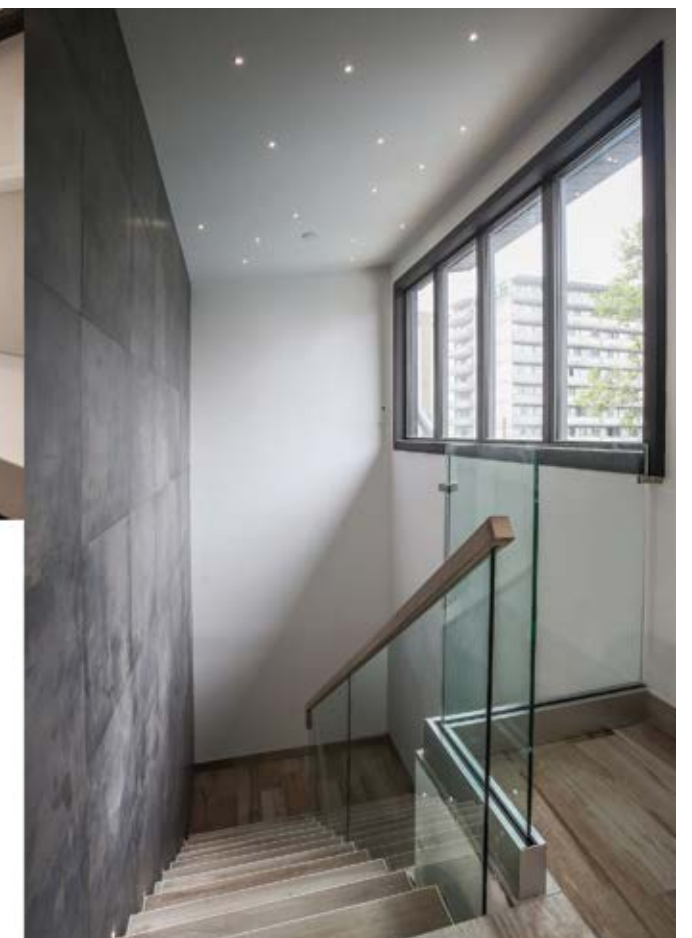


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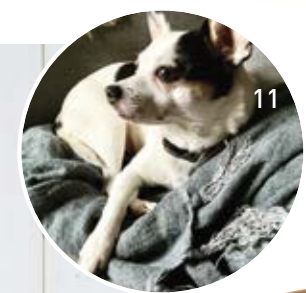
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