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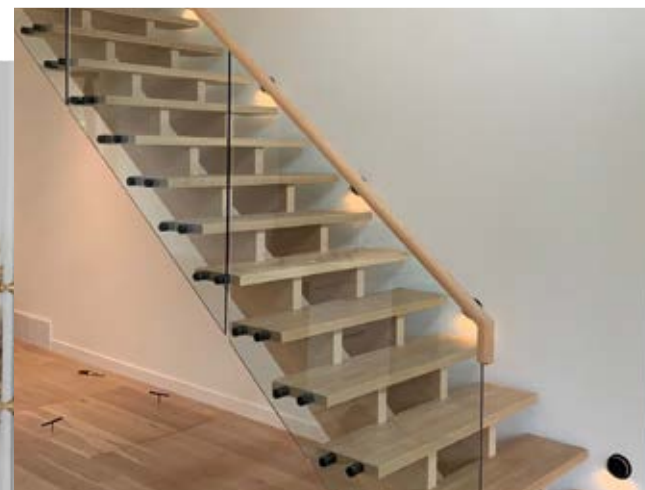
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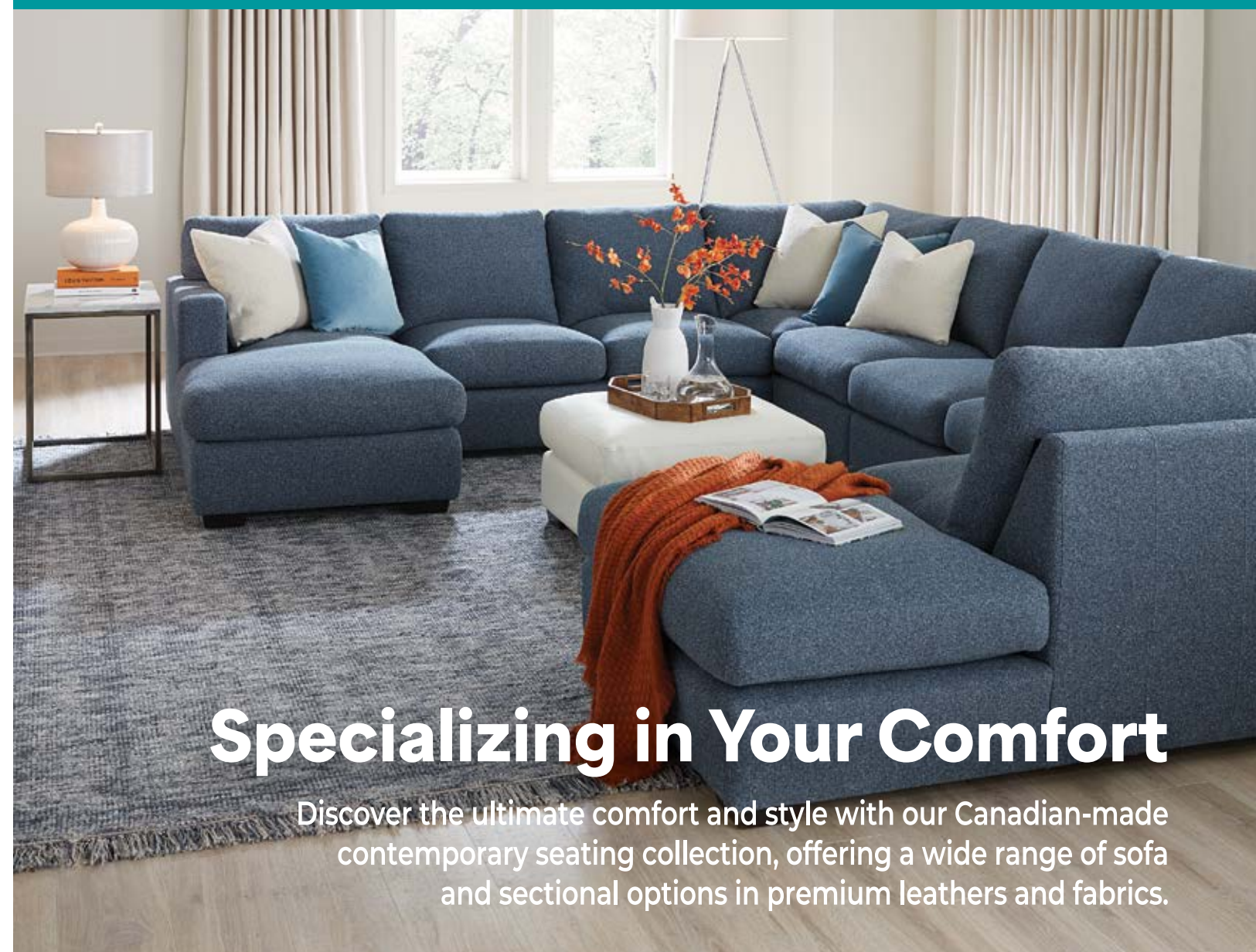
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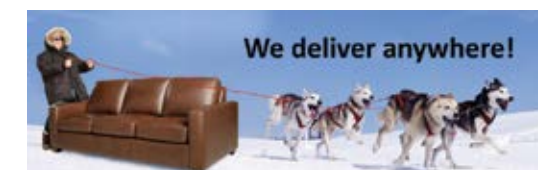
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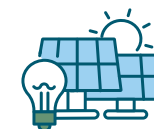


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REGIONAL PUBLISHERS Jamie Jefferson
Georgette McCulloch

REGIONAL MANAGING EDITOR Janet White Bardwell

REGIONAL PRODUCTION MANAGER Tracy Shuttleworth

MARKETING & ADVERTISING Jamie Jefferson
o: 705.445.5065 x211, c: 705.730.3827
jamie.jefferson@ourhomes.ca
Lisa Ormsby, 705.445.5065 x200
lisa.ormsby@ourhomes.ca

REACH US EASILY: firstname.lastname@ourhomes.ca

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OUR HOMES MEDIA GROUP INC:

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Georgette McCulloch

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Heather Wright

DIGITAL EDITOR Tracey Paul

MANAGING EDITORS

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ART

ART DIRECTOR
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PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Lynn Derrick

PRODUCTION MANAGERS
Julia Dempsey, Kelly Donaldson,
Tracy Shuttleworth

OPERATIONS

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING
Jamie Jefferson
jamie.jefferson@ourhomes.ca

MANAGING DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS
Georgette McCulloch

**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE &
DIRECTOR OF DISTRIBUTION** Lisa Ormsby

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Kelly Craig

ACCOUNTING Tyler Annette

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE Darren Foley

CONTRIBUTORS

Sheila Britton, Mike Chajewski, Lori Davis, Gregory Fast, Jason Hartog, Todd Hewines,
Nicole Hilton, Sandy MacKay, Gina Makkar, Lisa Marie, Jenelle McCulloch,
Tamarisk McNulty Stephens, Kira Noel, Denise O'Connell, Erin Rochon,
Angela Serednicki, Megan Smith-Harris, Janet White Bardwell, Denise Willson

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editor's note

AS THE WINTER CHILL SETS IN, 'tis the season to gather with family and friends to celebrate the traditions that bring us closer.

At the heart of all the homes we feature in this beautiful winter/holiday edition is the homeowners' desire to create special spaces that feel welcoming and fun, where friends and family can gather and make cherished memories. You'll find this issue to be a treasure trove of ideas to make the holidays extra special, whether you're decorating your home with twinkling lights and ornaments, baking delicious treats or exchanging heartfelt gifts.

For me, this year's holiday season carries unique significance as I enter a new chapter in life, suddenly an empty nester. With my twin boys embarking on their first year of university and spreading their wings, I eagerly anticipate their return for winter break. I have had more time than ever before to plan some special holiday details that were definitely missed last year in the hustle and bustle of our lives at that time! I'm rekindling my passion for thoughtfully wrapping presents, in contrast to the years of hastily covering large boxes with the cheapest and most abundant wrapping paper. I'm also remembering my art of tying a beautifully-crafted bow, as opposed to simply attaching whichever pre-fab bow happened to be nearby and somewhat colour-coordinated.

While it's bittersweet to have them away, I've come to realize that this newfound space and quiet offers an opportunity to make the holidays even more special when they come back.

I am also feeling extra grateful this holiday season as my family life changes (Hi Mom!), and parents adapt to the tides of life as it progresses, with grace. In many ways it's an invitation to establish new traditions while celebrating the family ties that have always been at the heart of the holidays, and to remember that home is wherever you are with the ones you love.

This season invites us to reflect on the year gone by and appreciate the moments that matter most. However and wherever you are celebrating the holidays this year, from OUR HOMES to yours, we hope your season is filled with what warms your heart most.

We'll see you again next year!

Janet White Bardwell, Managing Editor
janet.whitebardwell@ourhomes.ca

PS: I have been honoured to act as guest managing editor for this lovely Best of Ontario edition. Gina will be back soon!

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Photography by Jason Hartog.



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WINDOW TREATMENTS

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

Windows connect us to the outside environment and flood our space with natural light. They balance the architectural design and can frame views of nature. Why would we cover them up? Well, window treatments play a role from a functional and aesthetic point of view.

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PRIVACY & SECURITY

If you live in a city, town or close to a busy roadway, window treatments provide privacy that can increase your feelings of comfort. If you own a vacation property, obstructing the views to the interior provides additional security.

GLARE CONTROL

Whether working on a computer or watching television, window coverings temper the light to avoid casting a glare on your screens (specifically during certain times of the day or year).

SOUND ABSORPTION

With the prevalence of open-concept homes and vaulted ceilings, drapery made with a dense, tightly woven fabric can aid in absorbing the noise that travels throughout your home.

LIGHT TRANSMISSION

Window coverings can help to protect furnishings from fading and sun damage, particularly from the strong south or west sun.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Windows are constantly being manufactured to higher standards of energy efficiency but window coverings can still help (especially from the westerly winter wind or beaming summer sun). Heavy draperies layered with a honeycomb cellular shade can provide additional insulation value.

LIFESTYLE

Shift workers and light sleepers benefit from black-out blinds/draperies in the bedroom as darkness indicates to the body that it's time to rest.

Be mindful of your pets – cats like to climb curtains and dogs can soil the edges of your drapery.

Location

Consider the material, style and design of the window treatment and the characteristics and use of each room, as well as frequent occupants (greasy fingers from little people may affect your selections).

Style

Window coverings can elevate the home from an aesthetic point of view to support the overall design and architecture.

There are generally two types of window coverings – hard and soft. Soft window coverings include drapery, curtains and shades, while hard window treatments include blinds, shutters and screens.

Drapery is typically more formal than curtains. They are often pleated and hung on rods mounted outside of the window frame at the ceiling or above the top of the window frame.

Curtains are mounted inside or outside of the window frame. An example is the café curtain, which has made a comeback in recent years. They are installed halfway up the window (typically within the frame), providing privacy in the lower portion while allowing daylight to stream in from above.

Shades control light by filtering or blocking. Roller, Roman, sheer and cellular shades are examples. Depending on the options, they can be translucent, opaque or black-out.

Blinds are either horizontal or vertical and made of several materials, including wood, vinyl, metal or fabric. Traditional blinds can tilt to control light and privacy. Vertical solutions include slats and panel tracks.

Shutters are rigid panels in a frame with louvres that tilt. They have hinges that operate like small doors installed within the window frame. Screens can be sliding or folding, such as the Shoji screen.

Operation

Depending on the type of window covering, motorization is becoming more popular with smart-home automation, especially for difficult-to-reach windows, large windows or windows with sensitive fabrics that you want to avoid touching frequently. Some systems require a hardwire during the rough-in phase (possible for new builds and renovations), while others utilize a rechargeable battery system. Be prepared that motorized window treatments cost significantly more than their non-motorized counterparts.

Cost

Window treatments are an investment and should be a line item in your home build or renovation budget from the outset. To help determine costs, schedule an appointment with a local expert. They will evaluate your needs and tailor solutions to fit your requirements, your lifestyle and your specific house. For example, the style/type of window operation, whether you have traditional casing or drywall returns, and if you need black-out versus light filtering will all affect the best mounting solution, which will determine the measurements. It is best to consult a professional!

Care

As with anything, regular maintenance will extend the life of your window coverings. The style, material and design of your window treatments will dictate how frequently they need to be cleaned, but generally dust or vacuum during your routine and add a deep clean once or twice a year. **OH**



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3



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good taste

PEAR NEGRONI

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

This is a play on a white negroni, infused with pear and warming spices for a perfect festive winter drink.



INGREDIENTS (Makes 10 drinks)

15 oz gin

10 oz Lillet Blanc

5 oz Suze
gentian liqueur

One pear, peeled,
cored and sliced

3-5 cloves

1 cinnamon stick

A few slices of
ginger, peeled



DIRECTIONS

1) In a glass container, combine all cocktail ingredients. Let infuse in the fridge for 24 hours. Strain the contents out of the liquid.

2) To serve, measure three ounces of the prepared infused liquor into a cocktail mixing glass with ice. Stir to dilute and serve in a cocktail glass over a large ice cube. **OH**

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RING IN THE NEW YEAR AT HOME IN STYLE



New Year’s Eve is one of my favourite holidays. I love the idea of celebrating the start of a new year and all of the excitement and possibility it brings. This season, let’s lean into tasteful, simple and fresh NYE festivities to keep it classic, modern, and of course – fun. I’m planning on ringing in the New Year while hosting an intimate dinner party for close friends and family. These are a few tips I’m using this year as I plan the evening with style in mind.

STORY **GREGORY FAST** | PHOTOGRAPHY **LISA MARIE**

TIP 1:

Don’t Fall Victim To The Overdone NYE Décor

When creating ambience for dining, embrace the romance of a new beginning. Keep things fresh and light – no need for overdone floral arrangements on your tablescape this year. I love the simplicity of classic fine dining candlelight paired with a beautiful place setting. Guests won’t feel overwhelmed and can enjoy the company and conversation.

While keeping décor classic, we can still have fun with a little NYE glam. I love the idea of a hero moment for guests to enjoy throughout the evening. A larger scale décor prop like a clock or life-size champagne bottle will win the show instead of lots of small, kitschy décor that can make the room feel messy. Plus, it’s the perfect photo op!



Continued on page 32





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TIP 2:
Create An Intimate And Unique Dining Moment

Put a fresh spin on well-loved classics by stepping up the presentation. This year I am dazzling guests on arrival with a martini tower finished with stuffed olives. This is a fun way to re-invent the champagne tower!

For this event I want to create an engaging moment for guests. That's why I love a hands-on dinner like fondue. To keep the display interesting and eye-catching, roll meats and skewer them. Instead of oil in your fondue pot, try using your favourite broth-based soup for added flavour – my favourite is onion soup. Plus, a beautiful display of breads, accoutrements and sides will round out the meal.

My favourite part? A “guest experience” also lightens the load of the host to prepare and plate numerous courses and meals – all while creating organic moments of conversation and activity.



TIP 3:
Make It Fun With Thoughtful Party Activities

I love sending a formal paper invitation to set the tone for the event.

A dress code is always an engaging way to liven up the night! This could be black tie, a colour theme, or even “come as you are.” I am asking my guests to dress in classic creams and champagne tones – a stylish colour palette that will have guests ready to strike a pose for a great social moment. Place Instax instant cameras throughout the event so guests can have fun capturing the evening’s special moments.

For final touches, include note cards and envelopes so guests can write down their new year’s resolutions and celebrate the start of something new.

At midnight, a flute of champagne and a kiss never go out of style. **OH**



Gregory Fast is an entertaining and events expert who hails from Burlington.



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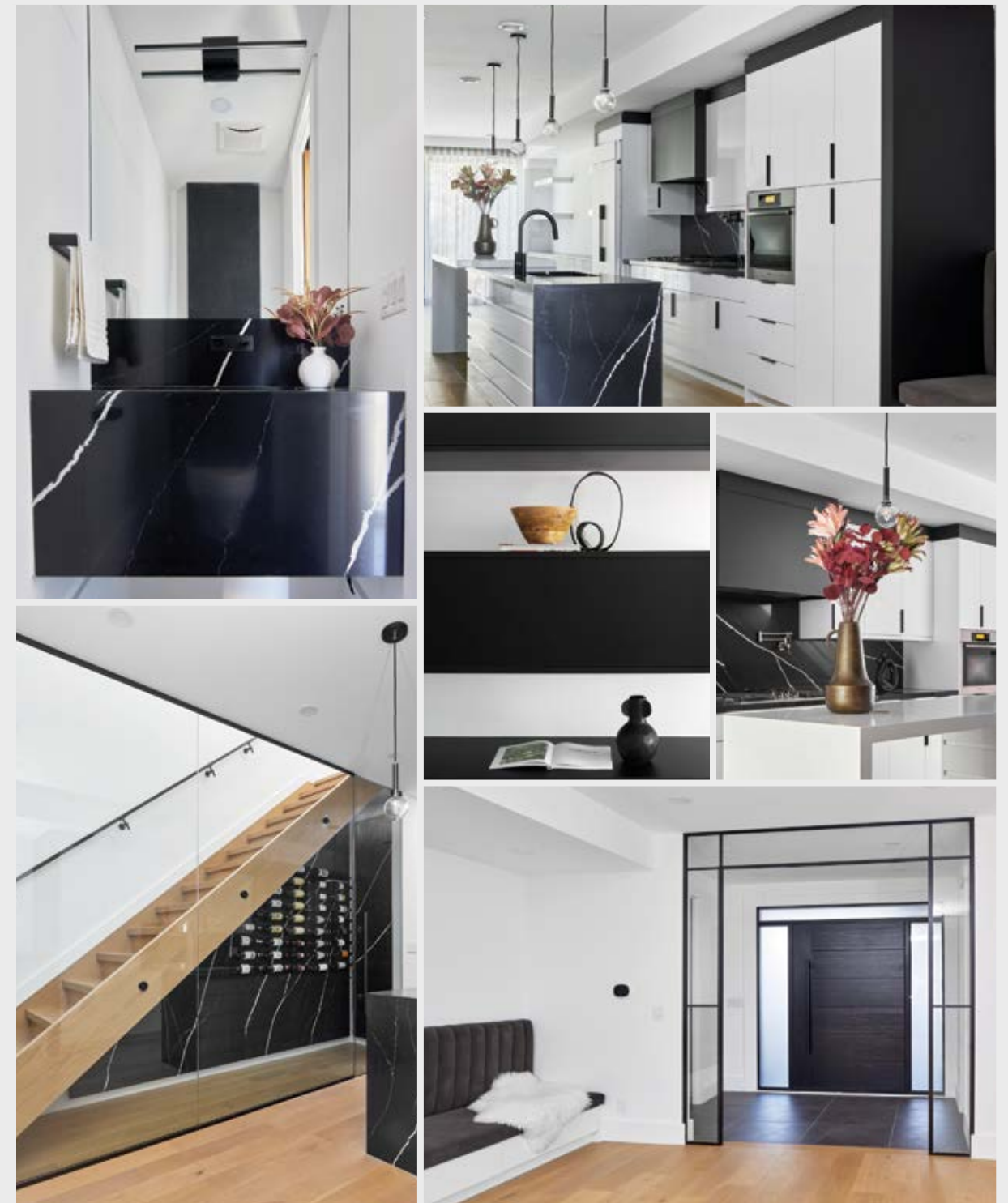
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HOME *again*

STORY **GINA MAKKAR**
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**



DRAWN TO THE QUIET NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH RAMBLING GREEN SPACES AND CANOPIES OF MATURE TREES, DEB AND BRIAN MADE THE MOVE TO UNIONVILLE 11 YEARS AGO.

Continued on page 38



The heart of the home is bright and airy with plenty of seating and meal-prep workspace. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** A dramatic dark entry door by Cobra Doors 2000 Ltd. and clean-lined sidelight windows create an unforgettable first impression. **RIGHT:** Simple lines, natural materials and black details in the entryway set the tone for the aesthetic throughout the home.

In 2018, tragedy struck when a fire ripped through their modest bungalow, and water, smoke and flames destroyed everything in its wake. In the aftermath, they embarked on a new custom rebuild where the original home once stood.

They called on **Elisse Navi** of **Elisse Navi Interiors** and **Roman Itskovich** of **Old York Custom** to complete the project. “The initial thought was that we would rebuild what they had before,” says Elisse. “We said, ‘You have a really good team working for you, why don’t we do more than just give you the original house back? Why not make a wish list and build a dream home?’ ”

The team started from ground zero. Elisse developed the architectural concept and Roman took the designs to his engineer. “From there, the home took just over a year to build,” says Roman. “We were building from scratch, so they were able to consider things they might not have previously been able to do with their home. It was important for them to have a separate basement area for the kids since they were getting older.”

The wish list also incorporated large spaces with plenty of natural light, a home office and an open-concept layout that would allow the family of four to spend time together. The couple also enjoys hosting parties, so a lower-level walkout with a separate kitchen and additional bedrooms was incorporated to accommodate guests.

The result is a modern aesthetic with traditional leanings that blend with the existing landscape. “It stands out as a quality, non-cookie-cutter home,” says Deb.

At over 4,000 sq. ft., the new footprint is vastly larger than the original. “It’s very different, building from scratch instead of renovating. It was a big project,” says Roman. He adds that custom builds allow attention to detail with features such as higher ceiling heights, large windows, skylights and archways to make a space homier. “It’s definitely a time to take advantage of the freedom that you have to do whatever you want.” *Continued on page 40*



LEFT: Designer Elisse Navi and Roman Itskovich stand in front of the home they transformed together. **ABOVE:** The kitchen is large and features floor-to-ceiling cabinetry from Alliance Millwork Products Inc. and oversize windows with full views to the backyard.

“WE SAID, ‘YOU HAVE A REALLY GOOD TEAM WORKING FOR YOU, WHY DON’T WE DO MORE THAN JUST GIVE YOU THE ORIGINAL HOUSE BACK? WHY NOT MAKE A WISH LIST AND BUILD A DREAM HOME?’ ” ~Elisse Navi

As part of her process, Elisse asks questions and observes her client’s lifestyle to develop a custom plan that caters to each family’s individual needs. “How do you live? Do you have pets? Have you entertained? How many people live in your house? Do you spend a lot of time in the bathroom? Would you like a dressing room? I study my clients and their lifestyle before creating a design.”

Roman and Elisse have collaborated on numerous projects, refining their process along the way. “Our system is very simple. We don’t overlap,” says Elisse. “I let him do his thing and I trust that. We respect each other’s expertise. At the end of the day, we see it as a team trying to achieve the same goal. There’s a sense of security for clients knowing that they’re in good hands when they see that the designer and the builder work well as a team.”

Roman emphasizes the importance of client satisfaction and how rewarding it is to see their joy. “It’s a nice feeling when you know you’ve built someone’s dream home.”

Thoughtful details can be found from the moment guests step inside. A two-storey portico delineates the entryway from the rest of the home. Gentle curves in the doorframes mirror the curve of the deep espresso door from **Cobra Doors 2000 Ltd.** Simple board-and-batten wall mouldings add dimension to the white walls. Millwork throughout is from **Victoria Strong Manufacturing Corp.**

French double doors lead to an office where Brian can have privacy while he works. Black floor-to-ceiling windows from **Zenith Aluminum Systems Ltd.** flood the space with light and add architectural interest indoors while warming the off-white stone of the exterior. Light hardwood from **Biyork Floors** lead to a stacked stairwell with simple wrought-iron spindles.

The landing in a stairwell often goes unused, but Elisse added Shaker-style panelling with an integrated mirror to make use of the space. “I wanted something different. It’s gorgeous because you walk upstairs and you can see yourself, even from the upper hallway. It’s a big, grand feature,” she says. *Continued on page 42*



ABOVE: A black La Cornue range from Tasco Appliances pops against the white surroundings, while simple drawer pulls blend beautifully with the Shaker-style cabinets. **RIGHT:** French doors leading to the backyard offer a grounding punctuation against the wall of white. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The television room features more clean lines and open shelving to display décor items. Fireplace by Napoleon Fireplaces. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A streamlined wood stairway by Old York Custom features light wood and wrought-iron spindles. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Floor-to-ceiling windows provide a modern appeal while clean-lined leather chairs offer a casual refinement.





LEFT: The open upper level creates expansive views and allows light to stream into the second storey. **RIGHT:** The monochromatic powder room showcases a pristine floating Caesarstone countertop vanity and simple black light fixtures. **BOTTOM:** The clean-lined laundry room is stylish and functional, complete with a convenient hanging rack to keep items wrinkle-free fresh from the dryer.



Elisse struck just the right note with the scale of the new kitchen, marrying beauty with functionality for a practical but lovely space. Earth tones and a light, foggy hue (**Benjamin Moore** Pale Oak) on the cabinetry from **Alliance Millwork Products Inc.** maintain the bright aesthetic the couple were after.

“I made sure that they have lots of natural light. I placed a huge window in front of the sink in the kitchen,” says Elisse. “When weather permits, they will be outside because they are outdoor people, and Deb wanted to be able to work in her kitchen or be at the sink and see her guests and interact with them.”

Deb says she loves the kitchen. “I love to cook. I have a view of the backyard, and it’s where everyone congregates. The hub of the house.” The living room palette mirrors the tones of the kitchen, creating one cohesive space.

The powder room, laundry room and primary en suite all incorporate the creamy white hue found throughout the home. Graphic tiles in the laundry add an element of playfulness. The variegated greys in the en suite add warmth to the spa-like feel. The stonework throughout is from **Caesarstone**. *Continued on page 44*

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Brian and Deb ultimately decided to put the home on the market and made room for new owner Carol and her family to call it home. “When we did our research, we found that the details of the house attracted us,” says new owner Carol. “The materials used were nice, and the layout was functional. The ideas behind the design of the house are very advanced. We can easily host a party of 30 people in the basement, kitchen or backyard. We’ve been in the home for two years, and we love it so much. It provides us with a wonderful place to live, have fun and work.”

It’s a space to call home, again and again. **OH**

LEFT: The primary en suite is neutral and serene, featuring grey cabinetry by Alliance Millwork Products Inc. and a Caesarstone quartz countertop installed by Royal Stone Countertops. **BELOW:** Every element was meticulously incorporated into the primary en suite, featuring a luxurious soaker tub and a spacious walk-in shower complete with a comfortable bench and recessed shelving.



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Rustic COTTAGE CHIC

STORY **LORI DAVIS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **KIRA NOEL**

AS THE FIRST FLAKES OF SNOW GENTLY FLUTTER OVER BUCKSHOT LAKE, VIKRAM AND ASMITA SAVOUR THE NATURAL BEAUTY SURROUNDING THEIR FOUR-BEDROOM LOG COTTAGE.

“I always wanted a place in nature, away from city life,” says Vikram. He had looked at many properties before this rocky, picturesque landscape caught his eye and he imagined the potential of this diamond in the rough. “I stood on a large rock and looked out at the lake. I loved it and envisioned what it could be, it just resonated with me.” Aside from the exquisite panorama of water and woods, the property – west of Ottawa in the Addington Highlands – had practical amenities such as an access road, hydro and a nearby cellular tower.

Vikram and Asmita researched building options and chose a package from **True North Log Homes**. “True North gave us the structure and we had the flexibility to do what we wanted with the inside,” says Vikram. A contractor finished the interior and family friend **Tim Kueper** put the final touches on the build. “He takes a lot of pride in his work and treated the cottage like his own,” says Asmita.

The couple decided to alter the original floor plans and entrusted the modifications to **Kyla Boyle** and **Jeremy Caulfield**, owners of **AB+ZU Design Studio**. “They were renovating my uncle’s home in Markham, and we loved the aesthetics they incorporated,” says Asmita. “They were flexible, willing to work with us and good with budgets and timelines.” *Continued on page 51*

LEFT: Vikram and Asmita’s serene cottage location west of Ottawa features stunning views of the lake beyond. **RIGHT:** The couple’s A-frame cottage by True North Log Homes offers oversized windows that bring the outdoors in. A coffee table made from salvaged barn beams was sourced from Legacy Vintage Building Materials & Antiques.





AB+ZU's journey to success began as an exciting adventure in Germany that evolved into a thriving business that offers clients interior design with a European flair. Enchanted by Berlin's culture, music and art scene, the couple boldly moved abroad in 2003. "I didn't want to be a tourist, so we jumped right in and opened Aunt Benny Café," says Kyla who earned a Bachelor of Interior Design degree from Toronto Metropolitan University. "I always wanted to be a designer. When I was a kid, I wasn't really interested in Barbie, but I loved to decorate her home."

The café was an excellent vehicle to showcase Kyla's design skills and utilize Jeremy's experience as a graphic designer and music producer. The business expanded to include multiple entities in the hospitality field, interior design services, event planning and restaurant consultation. "People could see our work in the café, which led to more commercial clients," says Kyla. After 17 years in Berlin, the couple returned to Toronto in 2020 and established their design studio, specializing in residential and commercial design, restaurant and hospitality consultation, and branding strategies. *Continued on page 52*



LEFT: Raw wood, light walls and dark engineered oak hardwood flooring blend beautifully to create this serene cottage environment. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Matte black lighting and décor items pop against a neutral, natural background. **BELOW:** The view from the galley kitchen to the dining area is cohesive and gorgeously rustic. **OPPOSITE:** The dining area is rustic and refined, with simple black chairs adorned with cosy sheepskin hides.




home & designer

The AB+ZU duo eagerly tackled the challenge of creating a new floor plan for Asmita and Vikram's log home. In the original plan, the staircase linking the second level cut through the great room, drastically reducing its size. Kyla designed and relocated the elegant, contemporary open-tread staircase, created by **Capital Stairs Inc.**, resulting in a spacious, open-living area. She also added a landing that allows convenient access to the powder room. "We loved Kyla's plan to move the staircase," says Asmita. "It's the centrepiece of our cottage. She pulled everything together, beautifully." The second level features the bedrooms of daughters Avnee and Sara, as well as the couple's primary suite.


Situated on a rocky slope, the property presented challenges at the onset of construction. "We had to decide whether to blast out a basement or build on stilts," says Vikram. "I always wanted a walk-out basement, so we went ahead and added a lower level." The result was 700 additional square feet of living space complete with two guest bedrooms and a recreational area with a heated, polished cement floor. A colourful mosaic pebble floor in the bathroom shower and a grey travertine vessel sink make the downstairs bathroom a unique showpiece. *Continued on page 54*



LEFT: An overview of the main level reveals the inviting rustic charm that defines the space. **TOP:** In the powder room, the design aesthetic is extended with sleek wall-mounted fixtures and an eye-catching matte black sink. **ABOVE:** Open wood stairs by Capital Stairs Inc. feature extended wrought-iron spindles that create visual interest.



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Recently completed, the log home is the essence of rustic beauty and understated minimalist style. A cathedral ceiling in the great room reflects natural light streaming through towering, lakefront windows. A two-tier, cascading black chandelier with exposed bulbs hangs at the apex of the symmetrical vaulted ceiling, accentuating the northeastern white pine walls. “Because the wood is so bright, we wanted to keep the rest of the palette neutral with blacks, browns, and creams,” says Kyla. The chandelier, from **Visual Comfort & Co.**, illuminates a unique coffee table, flanked by two low-profile brown leather sofas. Provided by **Legacy Vintage Building Materials & Antiques**, the coffee table is reclaimed Douglas fir barn beams. The engineered oak hardwood flooring from **Torlys** completes the warm, inviting space.

Continued on page 56




ABOVE: The epitome of cottage chic shines through in a bedroom furnished with twin black wrought-iron beds, adorned with understated bedding, and complemented by a natural wood side table. **TOP RIGHT:** The second floor seamlessly opens to the great room below, offering unobstructed and breathtaking views. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** A simple cottage vibe is achieved with a natural stone basin and wall-mounted fixtures. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The natural aesthetic continues in the shower with river-stone tilework and a simple shower curtain.




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home & designer

A generous oak dining table, seating 10, sits just off the galley kitchen. “We do a lot of entertaining so we wanted the main floor to be open so everyone could hang out,” says Asmita. The sleek, compact kitchen features European-style, built-in slate-grey cabinets, housing the refrigerator and dishwasher. “It saves space and gives the kitchen a clean, simple look,” says Kyla. An embedded induction cooktop, quartz countertops and a glazed-porcelain backsplash from **Ciot** enhance a minimalist vibe.

Vikram and Asmita reflect on their beautiful home and the supportive Buckshot Lake community. “We are city people and completely new to cottage culture,” says Asmita. “The people here are amazing. They helped us feel at home and settle into our new space. We are so grateful and appreciative.” **OH**



LEFT: Another bedroom exudes classic cottage charm with a natural wood bed, a sleek black side table and a cosy array of textures. **ABOVE & BELOW:** Another bathroom features an organically-shaped mirror, raised sink and striking black cabinet vanity.



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Welcome to a little slice of heaven on Stoney Lake. This beautiful new build has extremely high vaulted ceilings and incredibly tall wall-to-wall windows that are seriously something to behold. The view over the lake is spectacular. Nestled under the loft overhang in this open concept space is where most of the kitchen cabinets reside. The hefty 48" Wolf range is pulled around the corner into the open space. It's centred on the island and on the floor-to-ceiling fireplace on the far wall — quite the focal point! You may notice I love using scale to create interest. I also believe people spend more time prepping and cooking than they do cleaning up, so let's do it where it feels more open and take advantage of the

view. The fridge is downplayed with matching panels. Adding glass doors on recessed uppers over the sink creates headroom and makes standing at the sink a little more interesting. The island is centred on the same size dining table. The dining chandelier is centred between the island sconces. Island sconces repeat the shape of the hood, nice touch by the clients. The island overhang is intentionally deep enough to allow the stools to disappear. Facing the range are large pot and pan drawers and the other side of the island not shown in this photo is where the built-in microwave and wine fridge are. Lots of thoughtful design in this beautiful space by all parties. Cheers!



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Nogol, Joanna & Susi

PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

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More than 40 years ago, **Au Lit Fine Linens** was established with a mission to introduce Canadians to high-quality, all-natural European bed linens. Peggy Byron founded Boutique Au Lit in Montreal in 1981, a pioneering bedding shop offering authentic linens. The shop's instant success led to Peggy starting her own bedding line and opening a Montreal factory. Peggy and her daughter, Joanna Goodman, later moved the retail operation to Toronto, founding Au Lit Fine Linens. Despite Peggy's passing in 2014, Joanna continues the legacy, sourcing premium European fabrics and maintaining the Montreal factory.

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"Having our own factory in Montreal allows us to offer our clients a breadth of customization opportunity, from sizing and style to custom monograms and embroidery," says Joanna. "Our skilled team of bedding experts is extremely knowledgeable on all things bedding and design, and always happy to help our clients put together their dream bed." Au Lit also offers a complimentary swatch program, which allows clients to take fabric samples home to ensure a perfect match for their bedroom before making final decisions.



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

PHOTO: JASON HARTOG



WHAT'S NEW

This year was big for Au Lit, with the opening of a second Toronto location in the heart of Toronto's Design District. The sprawling 10,000 sq. ft. store has been a long-time dream of both Joanna and her mother. The store opened in July and is a bedding oasis, boasting 40 display beds and expanded bath and loungewear departments, as well as Au Lit's signature pillow and duvet wall. "It has been an absolute dream come true to bring this second location to life!" says Joanna.



TRENDING

Trend-wise, Joanna says the natural laid-back luxury of washed linen has been a hot bedding trend for the past few years, and while it's definitely still on trend, they are noticing a shift towards more bold and playful collections. "Our customers seem to be excited for more unique looks that really make a statement in the bedroom," says Joanna, adding that Au Lit's exclusive line of Indian Block Prints has been a huge hit, featuring bold, hand-printed designs. "We're seeing more and more clients opt for fresh colour stories over more muted neutrals. Shades of green, from olive and eucalyptus to sage, are really having a moment!" As the business continues to grow exponentially, Joanna says the mission remains the same: to change the way people sleep. The new store and evolving trends reflect the commitment to providing customers with a diverse and stylish range of bedding options while upholding the legacy of quality and customization that Peggy Byron started 40 years ago. **OH**



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG



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TIPS AND TRICKS TO DECORATE YOUR FIFTH WALL

When decorating your home, the ceiling is often an overlooked part of your room with tremendous potential. Much like hanging art on your walls or adding a new rug to your floors, there are many ways to spruce up your ceilings to completely transform how a space looks and feels. Whether you're freshening up a rental or designing your forever home, here are seven different ways to transform your room from the top.



HINKLEY: Agave Large Multi Tier

HINKLEY: Argo
Medium Pendant
in Sage Green

HINKLEY: Nash
Small Pendant

LIGHT IT UP

Ceiling lights are more than just functional, they're a design statement that can make or break a space. A stunning chandelier, a sleek pendant or even a cluster of minimalist fixtures can infuse your space with personality. Switching light fixtures is also one of the easiest renter-friendly ways to make a home feel like your own.

ADD MEDALLIONS

Ceiling medallions are decorative disks that encircle ceiling light fixtures and are like jewelry for your ceiling. From traditional and ornate designs to more sleek and contemporary options, ceiling medallions are a great way to complement existing woodwork or crown moulding in a room.



YORK WALLCOVERINGS: Evening Star Wallpaper

PLAY WITH WALLPAPER

Why limit wallpaper to walls when you can adorn your ceiling? A beautifully patterned or textured wallpaper can transform your ceiling into a work of art, adding depth and intrigue to your space. Peel-and-stick decals have also come a long way in recent years and are an alternative to get a similar look on a budget. *Continued on page 64*

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ADD ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Ceilings are an excellent place to play around with architectural details, especially shiplap or exposed beams. Shiplap on the ceiling adds patterns and textures while making a space seem larger and brighter. Similarly, exposed beams will add warmth and can preserve the rustic character of a room.

DON'T FORGET TO PAINT YOUR CEILING

The strategic use of coloured ceilings can influence the perceived dimensions of a room. Lower ceilings can appear taller when painted a shade or two lighter than the walls. In contrast, high ceilings can be visually lowered by painting them slightly darker, instilling a sense of intimacy. For a dramatic effect, try colour drenching, which involves painting the ceiling, walls and trim the same colour.

BENJAMIN MOORE:
Chelsea Gray HC-168



BENJAMIN MOORE:
Bruton White CW-710



SHERWIN WILLIAMS:
Caviar SW 6990



USE YOUR CEILING AS A BOLD ACCENT WALL

Elevating a space with an accent colour on the ceiling is an unexpected way to enhance a space. If you're looking for a unique way to add visual interest to your space, choose a neutral wall colour and a bolder shade for your ceiling. By doing so, you can create a truly striking and dynamic interior.



ADD HANGING PLANTS TO YOUR CEILING

Did you know that adding plants to your home can boost your mood, increase productivity and enhance focus? If square footage is limited and you desire more greenery indoors, hanging plants from the ceiling or over a windowsill is an ideal way to make the most of vertical space. **OH**

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STORY **DENISE O'CONNELL** | PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

After acquiring several beloved furniture pieces from **Veranda** for their new home, these York Region homeowners knew they had stumbled across a wonderful resource. They sought the expertise of Veranda's principal designer **Laura Ranft** to help them put their own signature on the grand but rustic and traditional post-and-beam-style home amid spectacular surroundings. *Continued on page 68*



LEFT: Veranda designer Laura Ranft collaborated with a couple from York Region to infuse their grand new acquisition with a cosy and relaxed ambience. **RIGHT:** The soaring ceilings and the enormous stone hearth combine to fashion an undeniably majestic great room.



The homeowners had good instincts when they sensed they had discovered a gem. Veranda, a leading destination for home furniture and accessories, has become a trusted go-to for designers, homeowners and cottagers. Founded by **Elise Boyer** in Huntsville two decades ago, it features an exceptional collection of home furnishings and décor. Due to its success, Veranda rapidly expanded and has now established a prominent presence in downtown Bracebridge. The store's vast space features four galleries, each hosting a full collection of furnishings and accessories reflecting varied styles for homes, lodges, cottages and condominium retreats. "What is amazing about Veranda is that it has everything you could ever want or need for interior design," says Laura. "The store carries a large inventory of furniture, rugs, art, lighting, linens, window coverings, complimentary design services and many custom options."

Continued on page 70



I TRULY ENJOY WORKING WITH MY CLIENTS AND LISTENING TO WHAT THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THAT THEY REALLY LIKE. ~Laura Ranft

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

LEFT: Thoughtfully selected furniture and décor from Veranda craft a warm and sophisticated ambience. **ABOVE:** The inclusion of a rustic sideboard contributes to the relaxed and casual aesthetic that the homeowners desired. **RIGHT:** The addition of upholstered chairs at the ends of the dining table completes the space and enhances its comfort for mealtime.



After spending more than 20 years transforming luxury home and cottage interiors, Laura has also proven herself as a trusted resource for design advice and guidance. Having grown up in the Aurora area and as a fourth-generation lifelong cottager on Lake Rosseau in Muskoka, she definitely knows rustic style. For this project, Laura collaborated closely with the homeowners to discover the desired style and functionality of their home. They emphasized their preference for a relaxed and comfortable ambience, a vision that she incorporated into every decision.

According to Laura, the home possesses “amazing bones.” Its wide-plank oak wood flooring and the wooden trussing encircling the windows provide a solid foundation for inspiring design and décor. Architectural elements such as beamed ceilings, pillars and arched passageways are scattered throughout the space, adding to its overall grandeur.

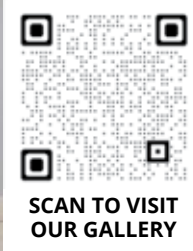
With Laura leading the project, Veranda supplied all design services, furnishings and accessories. Laura designed the interiors of the loft, lower level, dining room, living room, primary suite and the foyers. In the living room, the focal point is a towering stone fireplace and an immense window that brings in a spectacular view of the landscape. A central focal point in the living room is a richly hued dark-blue-and-cream wool area rug. It harmonizes with the surrounding elements, including a cream-coloured sofa, a leather chair and ottoman, and two swivel chairs with intricate patterns. A set of rounded nesting coffee tables crafted from a combination of wood and metal add both functionality and visual appeal. *Continued on page 72*

RIGHT: A quiet corner is created with a neutral-toned bench and organically refined table and lamp. **ABOVE:** A view of the main level showcases the home’s stunning wood beams and rich wide-plank flooring.



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Laura's strategy for the lower level was to echo the beauty of the natural outdoor environment. The space is large and mostly used as a media room. Comfort is key, and the juxtaposition of darker furnishings against the pristine white walls works exceptionally well in this space. An elegant sectional sofa upholstered in herringbone fabric with nail detailing, complemented by two swivel chairs in rich chocolate brown leather, together create a tasteful seating arrangement. A thick woven wool rug adds the warmth needed underfoot in this welcoming space.

In the primary bedroom, a white granite fireplace pops against dramatic dark grey walls. Laura chose a soft palette to suit her clients' desire for a relaxed and comfortable ambience. A beautiful tufted bed with custom bedding, coordinating nightstands, lamps, a fluffy swivel chair, marble table, a large rug and some lovely art complete the refined but casual appeal. A hide bench reflects the clients' love of horses.

Continued on page 74



ABOVE: Laura has crafted a serene and inviting atmosphere in the primary bedroom, featuring an upholstered bed, soothing muted tones, drapery-free windows and a dreamy multi-coloured rug. **FAR LEFT:** In the bedroom, a cosy nook was created, complete with a comfortable fireside chair and matching ottoman. **LEFT:** A sliding barn door provides access to the primary en suite, with its hardware extending into the bathroom, adding a rustic and charming appeal to the space.



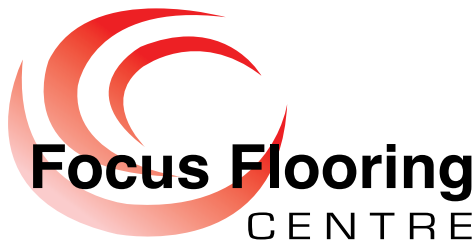
You could hear the gasps as they came into the room...

Our recently renovated living room was abuzz with chatter as our guests *oohed* and *aahed* over the changes we had made. The highlight of the room is the coral white strip fireplace wall from **Focus Flooring**. After visiting a few of the traditional tile stores we were getting a little discouraged. Expressing our frustration to a friend, she suggested we

try visiting the showroom at **Focus Flooring**. We were blown away. They have the most amazing selection and exclusive lines of tile from all over the world. **GLASS, PORCELAIN, CERAMIC** and every kind of **STONE** you can imagine. If you, too, want to see what's new and cool for your home, you need to get into the **Focus Flooring** showroom today!

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home & designer

In the dining room Laura added new upholstered chairs at each end of the dining table to add a dramatic and comforting presence. To round out the room, a mirror, some art pieces and a rug create a relaxed yet polished look.

Laura says the homeowners are beyond pleased with the result and feel comfortable and relaxed in their new space – exactly how they wanted to feel. “I truly enjoy working with my clients and listening to what they are passionate about, and then creating a space that they really like,” she says. “I can work in any style, I am very versatile.”

As a result, Laura says homeowners she works with often evolve into long-term clients and, more importantly, friends. Cultivating these close relationships provides her with a deeper understanding of their tastes and preferences, facilitating a more seamless and harmonious design process as they continue to collaborate. **OH**



RIGHT & BELOW: On the lower level, the recreation room serves as the ideal space for entertaining and cosy movie nights with family and friends. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A simple workout room is fitted with glass doors, ensuring a bright and airy atmosphere for daily exercise sessions.



Elise Boyer,
Owner/Operator

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PHOTO: YUMMY PIC

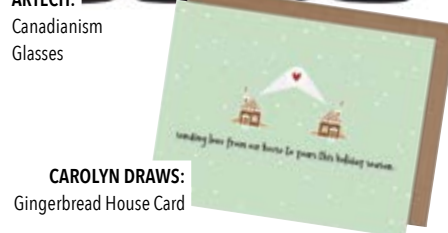
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Everyone has that certain someone on their list who requires extra inspiration to shop for. Take the guesswork out of finding the perfect gift and opt for one of these simple solutions this season. Santa will have nothing on you!



ARTECH:
Canadianism
Glasses



CAROLYN DRAWS:
Gingerbread House Card



FOLI: Large ZZ Plant in
White Pot with Wooden Stand



Continued on page 78

STORY **NICOLE HILTON**

SHOP LOCAL

Think outside the big box and support independent businesses in your own community. Make a point of shopping at stores on your main street or from vendors at holiday markets where you can find art, plants, handmade cards, soaps, candles, apparel and more. Make sure you tuck a business card into the gift, so the recipient knows it came from a retailer close by.

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holiday hints

ABBOTT: Bull Terrier with Wreath Ornament

ABBOTT: Fancy Winter Mouse Ornaments

ABBOTT: Sitting Cat with Lights Ornament

DAVID YOUNGSON: Goodmeasure 16-ounce Mocktail Measuring Cup

UNIQUE HOST AND HOSTESS GIFTS

The key to bringing an unforgettable hostess gift is to give something that's useful. Yes, cocktail napkins or a cheese knife could be considered passable, but considering other small gestures that are creative will be appreciated more. Try a personalized tree ornament, mocktail maker for dry January, winter bouquet of flowers, amaryllis or customized gift basket you've curated yourself to say thanks for including me on your guestlist.

DANICA STUDIO: Myth Block Print Large Tote Bag

EXPERIENCES

This gift-giving trend is here to stay. People are craving interesting experiences more than ever and you can also benefit by planning to accompany the receiver on an adventure! Whether it's something totally new like a one-day surprise road trip, dinner reservations at a special place, a brewery tour or ski lessons, good memories are the best gift of all. **OH**



GUESS WHERE TRIPS: Road Trip Gift Box

Nicole Hilton is a lifestyle expert from Thornbury.

SUSTAINABLE GIFTS

Eco-friendly products and reusable packaging are on everyone's minds these days. A sustainable gift will show you care about the recipient's well-being as well as the world we live in. Looking for B Corp certified brands, upcycled items, refillery stores in your area, and organic and natural products will help you become a more conscious consumer. Remember to select your giftwrapping method carefully by using tote bags instead of single-use bags, recyclable brown paper or newsprint or a wearable scarf to present your gift in.

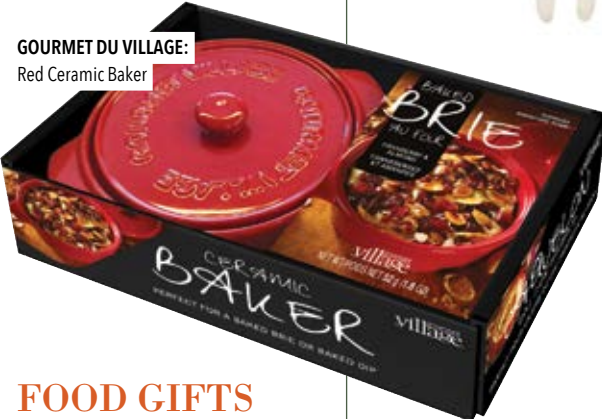


PROVISIONS FOOD COMPANY: Peach Prosecco Sparkling Jam

FOOD GIFTS

Consumables are a top pick for any age because there are so many options to choose from such as confectionaries, jams and gift sets. Some companies will even deliver pre-prepared frozen entrées, fresh meal kits or charcuterie boxes directly to the recipient's door with an enclosed greeting from you. Food gifts are a favourite because they can be as generic or customized as you want them to be, depending on everyone's taste!

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PHOTO: JASON HARTOG



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OUR SPECIALTY

We simplify the interior design process with meticulous attention to detail and seamless project management. We take pride in delivering a stress-free journey from conception to completion. Whether it is one room or the whole house, we offer a custom plan tailored to your needs, bringing our ideas and samples to your home or office. We handle everything, from measurements to installation, ensuring a seamless process. We are committed to creating beautiful and functional spaces for you while maintaining transparency and delivering exceptional service.

WHAT'S NEW

We're delighted to announce our recent recognition within the design community, where we received a prestigious bronze award from the Decorators and Designers Association of Canada (DDA). The DDA stands as Canada's foremost association for industry professionals in decorating and design. This accolade, specifically in the under \$35K room category, affirms our unwavering dedication to excellence and innovation in our field.

Continued on page 82



Goli Basiri & Kia Kazemian

HARMEN DESIGN

Operating since 2018, Harmen Design Inc. offers architectural and interior design for new builds and renovations. Our services encompass millwork, lighting, materials, plumbing, tile, paint, furniture layouts and fixture selection. With a dedicated team, we support you from permits to the final design before construction begins.

OUR PROCESS

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



"We are a dedicated team of professionals aiming to deliver the industry's best quality."

Continued on page 84

A Celebration of Lights, Fans and Fireplaces

- 1 The Owen by Adesso**
Inspired by vintage hollywood decor, the Owen Table Lamp uses sharp angles and mid-century finishes to create a must-have retro-modern style. With two adjustable task shades, this lamp can work in various spaces. An easily accessible brass on/off rotary switch is located on the lamp base.
- 2 The Allure by Napoleon**
Create a stunning focal point with the Allure Vertical Electric Fireplace. Available in two sizes, these fireplaces are perfect for every room. The vertical design hosts a collection of features including an LED ember bed, flames, and side accent lights with more than 6 colour options. Operable with or without heat allows you to enjoy this piece all year round.
- 3 The Maverick by Visual Comfort**
With a sleek modern silhouette, a DC motor and super energy-efficiency, the Maverick ceiling fan features softly rounded blades and elegantly simple housing. Maverick has a 3-blade design that delivers a distinct profile and incredible airflow for living rooms, great rooms, or outdoor covered areas.
- 4 The Grace by Visual Comfort**
Designed with 2 rings that illuminate this contemporary chandelier. A large weathered oak outer ring has organic texture complemented by a decorative black inner ring housing gently diffused upward and downward LEDs. Featuring integrated LED technology on the inner ring, the Grace Chandelier provides a graceful halo of light.
- 5 The Pina by Zafferano**
A rechargeable portable table lamp, features dimming touch control and has 3-CCT colour temperature. Features die-cast LED lamp with polycarbonate diffuser, 13+ hours cordless illumination, indoor/outdoor use, rechargeable, and touch-dimmable.



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CLIENT ADVICE

Vision: Find a designer who is receptive to your style and taste.

Communication: Prioritize working with someone who effectively and proactively communicates.

Execution: Hire someone who will be available throughout the entirety of the project to ensure everything is executed as planned.

Carolina Garzon, Monica Velasquez, Marisa Lupo, Priyanka Jagodana & Luisa Maringola



OUR SPECIALTY

At Lumar Interiors, our pride lies in crafting spaces that our clients truly adore and cherish. We design rooms that are not only inviting and comfortable, ideal for relaxation and hosting, but rooms that also warmly say, “Welcome home.”

“We create beautiful backdrops for life’s special moments.”



LUMAR INTERIORS

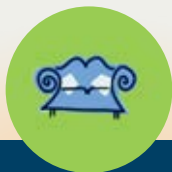
As an established design studio, we approach every project with professionalism and meticulous care. Our comprehensive services guide clients from initial concept to project completion, helping them achieve their design aspirations. With more than 30 years of experience, we have cultivated and refined relationships with top-tier manufacturers, suppliers and skilled tradespeople, ensuring the finest quality in every aspect of our designs.



TOP DESIGN TIPS

Thoughtful planning is a cornerstone of design, and at Lumar Interiors, we excel at it. It’s the key to minimizing frustrations and surprises when transforming a space. Our services not only guide you through the planning process but also ensure that your vision and the space’s functionality are in perfect harmony. Many clients eagerly acquire exquisite finishes, such as artwork or furniture, only to realize that they don’t seamlessly fit the space. With Lumar Interiors, our meticulous planning and expertise help you avoid these pitfalls and create a design that’s both stunning and perfectly aligned with your needs.

Continued on page 86



At The Millionaire’s Daughter, we accept furniture and home decor from private homes, model homes, Estate Sales, furniture retailers closeouts and design studios. Antiques, vintage and other mid-century furnishings are welcome. We have three locations to serve you better in Hamilton, Oakville and Aurora!

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Many satisfied clients consign with us and are thrilled when their belongings are sold at one of our locations. We move items quickly, processing seven houses worth of furniture each week per location. If your items don’t sell after 150 days and you choose not to retrieve them, we’ll take care of them. Plus, we’re committed to minimizing waste. That’s why we donate unsold items to Habitat for Humanity in Aurora, the Grimsby Benevolent Society, and Habitat for Humanity Restore in Burlington through our Oakville location.

Melissa Rey, Dorothy Hallett, Janice Baker, Elizabeth Barnowski, Inessa Perron, Scott Somerville, John Fiorino, Julie Elder & Jordan Cecchi



PHOTO: SANDY MACKAY

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Continued on page 88

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The Millionaire’s Daughter is a friendly, mid- to high-end furniture and décor consignment business with three retail locations in Hamilton, Aurora and Oakville. For more than 14 years they have carried a wide variety of furniture and accessories at various price points for the shopping pleasure of every customer. What began in Hamilton has since grown by taking over a smaller consignment store in Oakville and growing the business from 3,000 to 10,000 square feet. Aurora followed, with another 8,000 square feet of merchandise.



TREASURE HUNTERS

In the beginning, owner Maureen Barnes would go to auction sales and purchase items that would grab a customer’s interest, like a carousel horse, a large bar and cabinetry. They utilized their display windows and website to promote these products and garner attention. Today, sourcing through real estate agents and word-of-mouth expands their stock.



Maureen Barnes

PHOTOS: JASON HARTOG

UNIQUE BUSINESS

Each member of their team loves what they do. They find joy in witnessing the delight of consignors who see their beloved furniture go to a new home. They have established a global website to reach clients and now connect with clients from all over the world, from New Zealand to England.

“Happiness is reuse, repurpose and enjoy.”

Continued on page 90



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**Kaitlyn Taylor
& Andrew Mueller**

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PHOTOS: MIKE CHAJECKI

OUR PROCESS

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Continued on page 92

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“Discover the Renoasis difference. Let’s craft spaces that inspire, together.”



PHOTO: JASON HARTOG

OUR SPECIALTY

Renoasis excels in enhancing living spaces through structural engineering for renovations and the construction of custom sunrooms. Our team specializes in creative problem-solving and craftsmanship, ensuring our custom design solutions work best with existing buildings. Our sunroom solutions offer the seamless blending of natural light, comfort and aesthetics to bring the outdoors inside, free from nuisances. With Renoasis, you can experience the beauty of nature while comfortably within your home.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Our strength lies in partnerships with homeowners, designers, architects and contractors. We involve clients at every step to help them realize their vision. Collaborating with designers ensures beauty and purpose, and architects merge creativity with feasibility. Our contractor relationships prioritize respect and practical solutions. Renoasis offers tailored solutions, commitment to excellence, transparent communication and sustainable practices, ensuring environmentally-friendly, energy-efficient structures built for tomorrow. **OH**



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The Joys and Perils of DOWNSIZING

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

My husband and I recently completed the process of downsizing from a large family home to a new house half the size. Not only did we grossly underestimate the amount of time and effort the process demanded but we put ourselves through a considerable amount of unnecessary emotional angst. Turns out, we’re textbook examples of doing everything the wrong way. It’s too late for us, but it’s not for you. Three experts offer practical advice on how to make downsizing a more manageable, less stressful process.

TAKE STOCK

“When downsizing, your primary objective is to take stock and identify what’s going with you to your new home,” says Alenka Manners, owner of Life Made Easier (lifemadeeasier.ca). “Identify what items family and friends wish to keep so those pieces don’t get sold, donated or tossed out. Next, take measurements to ensure that bigger items will actually fit in the new space. Target one area such as a closet so it won’t be overwhelming. By choosing a small contained area, you can focus on the task at hand. It will empower you and give you confidence.”

MANAGE EMOTIONS

“It’s common to underestimate emotional attachments to possessions, making decluttering and downsizing challenging,”

says Effy Terry, owner of Organize That (organizethat.ca). “To address this effectively, start early and use a systematic sorting system. Prioritize sentimental items and involve loved ones. Sharing stories can ease parting with items while preserving the emotional connection. Designating a memory box and reflecting on downsizing goals, like simplifying life, can maintain motivation.”

CREATE A FLOOR PLAN

My mother always said, “failing to plan is planning to fail,” and she wasn’t wrong. Our experts agree that it’s critical to get a floor plan of the new space and to take note of the placement of doors, windows and closets. That giant sectional sofa that worked perfectly in your family room may not be optimal for your new 900 sq. ft. condo.

PURGE, PURGE, PURGE

We’re all guilty of holding on to random items just in case (hello ice cream machine and rusty golf club). Rebecca Shearer, a Certified Professional Organizer with Just in Time Solutions (justintimesolutions.com) says, “People find it easier to part with personal items when they know it’s going to a family member, friend, or an individual in need. A typical downsize from a family home should be reduced by 50 per cent.” But don’t expect the process to happen all at once. “Letting go of things happens in stages. There will be four purges: the first is giving things away, the second happens when you start to think about packing, the third is when you actually pack and the fourth occurs after you move.”

SELL! SELL! SELL!

Selling things online has never been easier and the proceeds can go towards your moving expenses. Have a yard sale or list items on Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist and eBay. If that’s too overwhelming, hire an auction house or estate sale company or donate.

DO GOOD

Look for local non-profit organizations that provide furniture, clothing, household items and toys to those in need – Donation Town, Dress for Success, Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity, Mission Thrift, The Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Value Village etc.

SHOULD YOU HIRE A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER?

Can you do everything on your own? Yes. But do you really want to? If you can afford to hire a professional organizer it’s well worth the expense. Effy Terry sums up the benefits, “Professional organizers bring expertise and guidance to the process, offering tailored plans and strategies for efficient downsizing and decluttering. Their organizational skills help streamline sorting and categorizing items, optimizing your new living space. Additionally, they can recommend creative storage solutions, facilitate resource connections, and save you time and stress ensuring a smooth transition to a clutter-free and well-organized living space.” Amen! **OH**

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RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 Tbsp cooking oil (olive or avocado)
½ cup shallots or onion, diced
2 cups sliced mushrooms
2 Tbsp soy sauce
Salt and pepper
1 Tbsp flour
2 Tbsp fresh herbs (thyme or rosemary)
⅔ cup dried lentils, rinsed and drained*
1 Tbsp tomato paste
2-3 cups vegetable broth
3-4 cups mashed potatoes, to serve

*Soak lentils overnight for better digestibility, but not required.

DIRECTIONS

In a large pot over medium heat, add oil and shallots. Sauté for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add mushrooms and soy sauce and sauté for 5 minutes.

Add salt and pepper to taste. Add flour and stir until combined.

Add herbs, lentils, tomato paste, and 2 cups of vegetable broth.

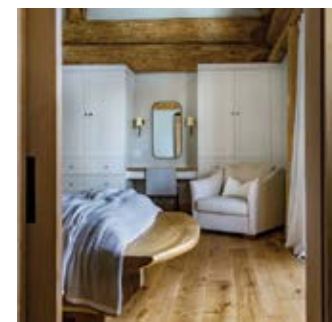
Reduce heat and simmer for about 20 minutes, adding more broth as needed.

Once lentils are cooked and tender, taste and adjust for seasoning.

Serve over mashed potatoes and enjoy! **OH**

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(Please see ad on pg 21)



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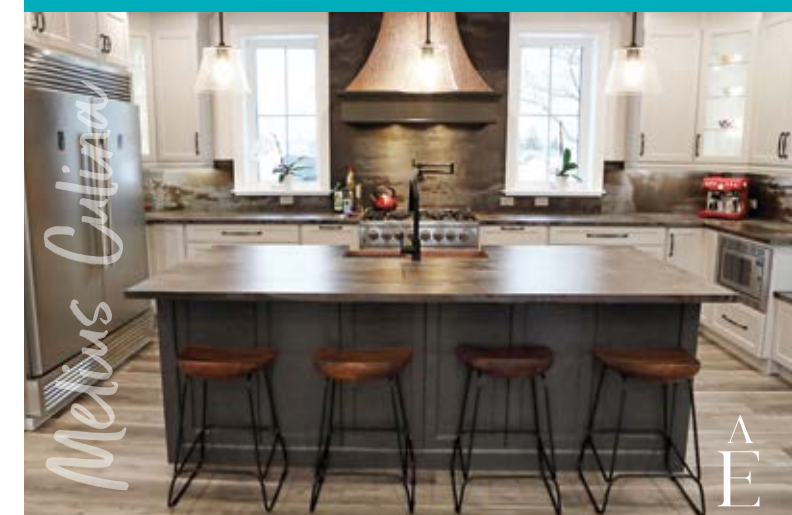
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(Please see ad on pg 53)

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(Please see ad on pg 34)



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(Please see ad on pg 63)



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(Please see ad on pg 55)



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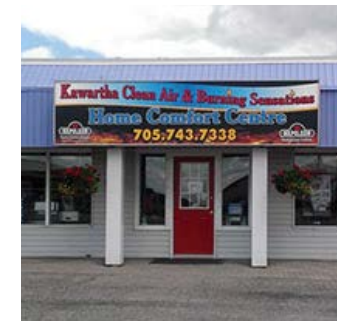
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(Please see ad on pg 65)



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(Please see ad on pg 17)

SOLID FOOTING

WHEN FIORELLA AND DAVID ZEPPIERI PURCHASED ONE OF 21 BUILDABLE LOTS FOR SALE ON A KING CITY PARCEL BORDERING NEWMARKET, RICHMOND HILL AND AURORA, THEY CLEARLY ENVISIONED THE ESTATE THEY WOULD BUILD THERE.

STORY DENISE WILLSON | PHOTOGRAPHY TODD HEWINES



“I knew exactly where everything we owned would fit or go and how we would use each room,” says Fiorella. “We didn’t want a ton of rooms, we just wanted large, open spaces our family could enjoy.” The couple has three children aged 15 to 18, and the family loves hosting gatherings and parties year-round.

Although the Zeppieri home is a large 12,000 sq. ft., including the lower level, each room was designed for comfortable grandeur. Much of the square footage is upward, with soaring ceiling heights ranging from 12-to-24 feet. While the home boasts many extraordinary features, the flooring grounds them all. “We love the floors,” says Fiorella. “David walked into the [Northern Wide Plank](#) showroom in Schomberg and spotted our flooring

immediately.” The family has two French Bulldogs – Ollie and Mack – and love how the hardwood’s warm grey and creamy brown shades hide dog hair and scratches.

The wood flooring and wall panelling used throughout the Zeppieri home was manufactured by Northern Wide Plank, a Canadian company with presence throughout North America. The seven-inch-wide engineered oak floors feature natural knots and texture to look and feel aged, and the hardwax oil UV-cured finish seeps deep into the wood for lasting protection. “Our flooring is made to last for well over 100 years when taken care of,” says marketing director [Jeff Tennebaum](#). Although the company’s state-of-the-art production facility is in Ontario, they have showrooms throughout

North America. “What makes us different from other flooring manufacturers is our holistic approach,” says Jeff. “We work closely with all our clients, whether it is the designer, architect or homeowner – even during the visionary stage. We are a company focused on sustainability. We are FSC certified, all of our products have a Declare Label, and have collections that are Cradle-to-Cradle Certified products, which is a multi-attribute standard used globally across industries by designers, brands and manufacturers for designing and making products that enable a healthy, equitable and sustainable future.” This product Innovation Institute standard ensures the entire life cycle of the flooring meets the highest sustainability standards within the forest and production industry. *Continued on page 103*



Wainscoting and coffered ceilings provide refinement and visual interest in the dining area. **ABOVE:** The couple’s expansive 12,000 sq. ft. home is thoughtfully designed to achieve a harmonious blend of grandeur and comfort, providing an inviting space where the entire family can gather and entertain. **OPPOSITE:** The home’s hallways strike a balance between understated elegance and luxury, featuring oak flooring meticulously laid out in a herringbone pattern.

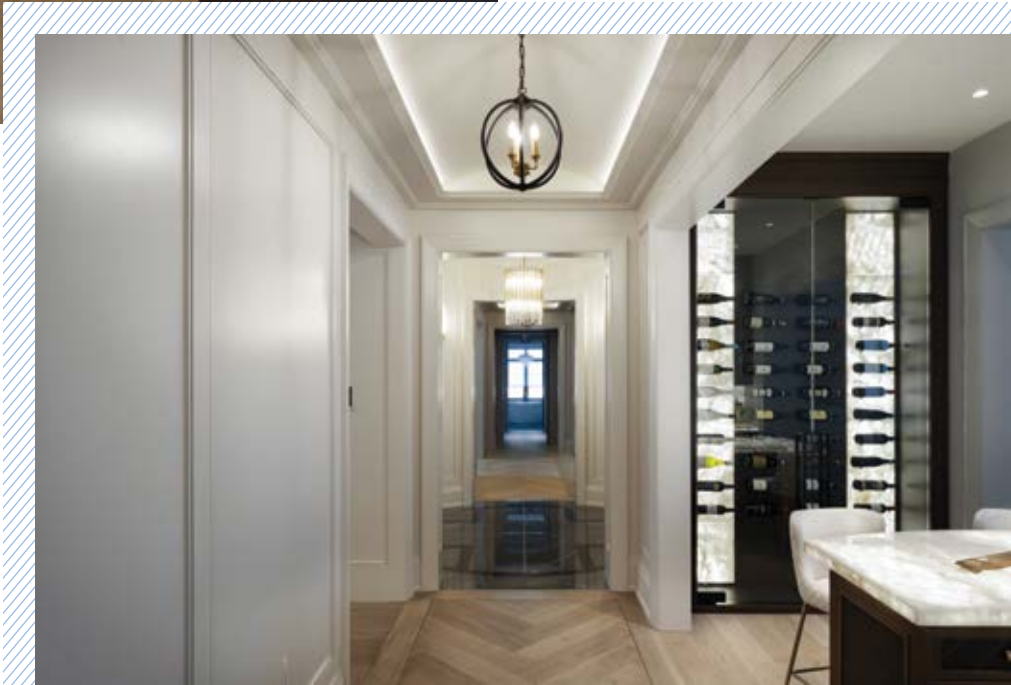


“When you walk in the front door the circular stone floor branches out into hallways clad with hardwood,” says Fiorella, “and the herringbone points lead your eyes to various rooms.” The flooring flows from one area to another, adding to the open-concept allure. Sets of pocket doors between the bar, dining room, living room and kitchen create division when needed or disappear to invite party guests to mingle while they enjoy food and cocktails.

Although the exterior is quite traditional, the interior combines timeless elements and modern style. The staircase, for example, is a modern combination of glass and wood. Natural stone from **Interstone Marble & Granite Limited** adds a timeless elegance to the fireplaces, vanities, showers, kitchen countertops and backsplashes. The white granite used for the bar counter and wine gallery is lit from behind, displaying the stone’s unique veining as if they are art pieces. Lavish yet modern light fixtures were found at **Union Lighting & Furnishings**, and **Phillip Jeffries** wallpaper and **Benjamin Moore** paint offer a cohesive look. A simple yet classic colour palette, the flooring and layered wall panelling take centre stage. To add contrast, punches of black, charcoal, walnut and white were added, complementing the floor-to-ceiling black-framed windows. Mini lights draw the eye to delicate features on the walls and floors. *Continued on page 104*



ABOVE: The kitchen is transformed with the addition of under-cabinet lighting and bold black accents, creating a captivating and magical ambience. **RIGHT:** The matte natural flooring serves as a harmonious counterpoint to the opulent finishes, statement lighting and the captivating wine fridge. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The generously-sized kitchen stands ready to host friends and family, offering ample seating and exuding a grand and welcoming ambience. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The tall doorways and floor-to-ceiling cabinetry impart a sense of grandeur and opulence to the space. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** In the kitchen, a banquette seating arrangement adds a comforting texture, while the under-seat lighting enhances the overall ambience with an upscale touch.





ABOVE: A simple seating area is elevated with wainscoting and muted tones that blend seamlessly to create a refined and tranquil tone. **BELOW LEFT:** A trio of sparkly chandeliers, set against the backdrop of soaring ceilings and an elegant glass banister, come together harmoniously to create a modern and glamorous atmosphere. **BELOW RIGHT:** In the television room, open shelving and muted tones provide an understated elegance. The focal point is a sleek and expansive low-profile fireplace, contributing to the room's modern and streamlined design.




The loft above the garage was built and designed with the kids in mind. “Teenagers need a spot to hang out with friends,” says Fiorella. There is a guest bedroom in the basement so friends can sleep over and have their own space. The two-storey estate also has four bedrooms on the upper level and a primary bedroom on the main floor. “We liked the idea of one-floor living in our older age,” says Fiorella.

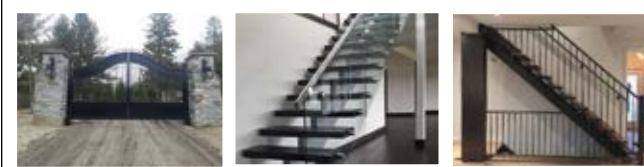
The Zeppieris had tackled a new build before, so they knew what they wanted. The couple hired a general contractor and tapped experienced trades they knew would bring their vision to life. But it was **Jane Lockhart** of **Jane Lockhart Design** who solidified the aesthetic. “Our designer helped us harmonize the look we envisioned but was flexible when I had my own ideas,” says Fiorella.

Jane says her focus was creating wow spaces and coordinating choices to make the house unique. Some of her favourite elements include the hidden door to the pantry, the kitchen banquette and the 1940s-style range hood. Gold inlay and brass hardware from **Top Knobs Decor** and **Marathon Hardware** complete the vibe. “I love how the stone countertops wrap both islands in the kitchen,”

Continued on page 106



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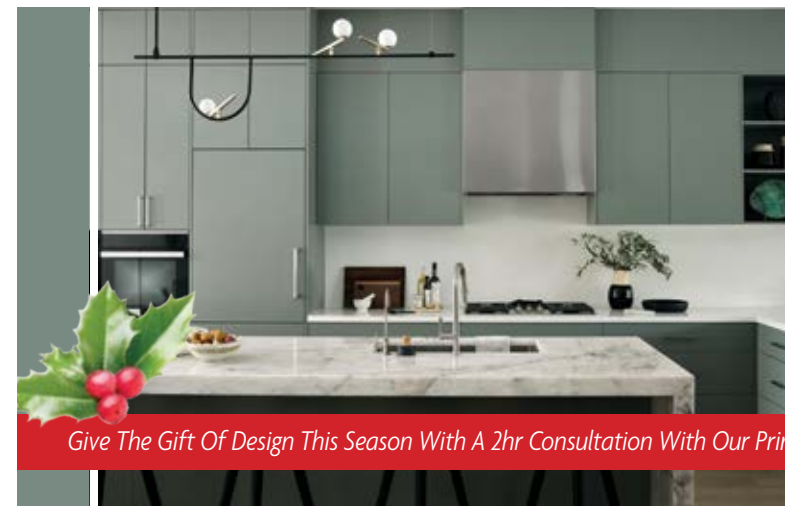


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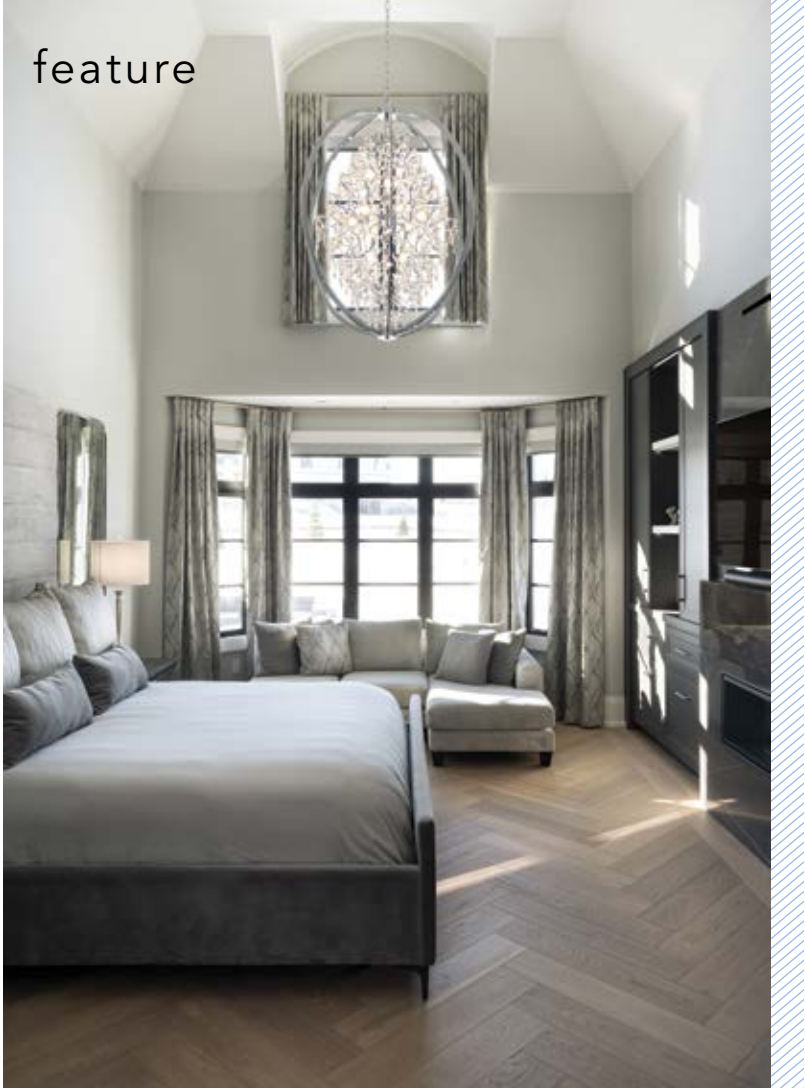


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says Jane, “and how the curved wall panelling in the round rotunda mimics the porcelain sheets.” She also designed the two-level office library and worked with **Estate Interiors** to design the custom millwork and cabinetry that features in almost every room. “While flow was important,” says Jane, “it was just as vital to ensure all materials were user-friendly and easy to clean and maintain.”

While every detail was planned based on the family’s wants and needs, one surprised the homeowners. “I didn’t think I’d like or want a Smart Home,” says Fiorella. The family can control the alarm system, lighting, window coverings, sound system, and even the televisions on an app. “Turns out we like the convenience,” she adds with a chuckle. “When I forget to turn something off, I pull out my cell phone.”

Solid footing was an integral element in the design of this estate. The results will stand the test of time. **OH**

LEFT: The main-level primary suite is a tranquil sanctuary, where a palette of soft, muted tones combines harmoniously with statement lighting, resulting in a calm and sophisticated space. **BELOW LEFT:** The selection of Northern Wide Plank flooring stands out as the most significant decision the homeowners made, shaping the tone for every subsequent choice in the home’s design. **BELOW RIGHT:** The open staircase, tall baseboards and monochromatic colour scheme come together to create a serene and warm atmosphere.



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PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY **ERIN ROCHON**

MATERIALS

4 small aluminium planters

Black matte spray paint

Small bowls (that fit on the bottom
of the plant pot)

Hammer

Jute rope

Embroidery hoop –
inside hoop only

Wooden rings

Metallic gold and silver
acrylic paint

Yarn

Paintbrush

Glue gun and Gorilla Glue

220 sandpaper

4 Nails

HOW-TO

In a well-ventilated area, spray paint the planters and
bowls black.

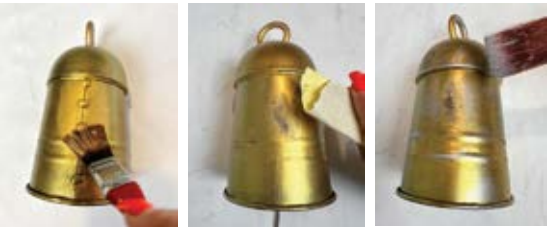
Follow these steps for each bell:

Use a hammer and nail to make a hole in the bottom
of the pot. Place the yarn through the hole and make
a knot. Apply a drop of hot glue to anchor the knot in
place on the bottom of the pot.



Next, flip the bowl upside down and, using the glue
gun, secure a wooden ring on the centre of the bowl.
Once dry, apply Gorilla glue to anchor it in place.

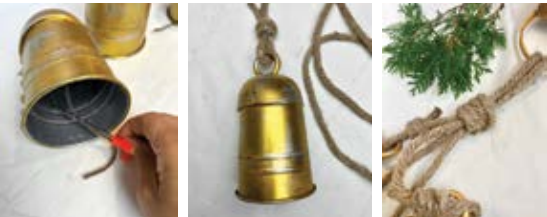
Use Gorilla Glue to secure the small bowl to the
bottom of the pot and let dry.



Then, paint the bell and embroidery hoop in
metallic gold.

Once dry, use the sandpaper to lightly distress the
edges to allow the black paint to show through.

Next, paint the inside of each pot with silver paint.
Apply a touch of silver paint around the edges and
add intricate details for a weathered appearance.



Using the yarn, tie a knot around the nail and secure it
in place with hot glue.

Cut two lengths of jute rope at varying heights. Fasten
one bell to the end of the rope and thread the other
end through the hoop. Attach the bell to the opposite
end and wrap a small amount of rope to conceal the
knot. Repeat these steps with the other bells.

Stagger the height of the bells. Wrap a small amount
of rope approximately four inches below the hoop and
use a drop of hot glue to secure it in place.

Hang your sleigh bells on your front door, over a
mantel or in your foyer to ring in the festive season! **OH**

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CHOCOLATE Pudding Cake

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH



THIS CHOCOLATE PUDDING CAKE IS THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF FUDGEY CHOCOLATE CAKE AND GOOEY PUDDING! SERVE IT WARM OUT OF THE OVEN WITH A HEAPING SCOOP OR TWO OF VANILLA ICE CREAM.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4-6)

Cake

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup white granulated sugar
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Sauce

- ½ cup white granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp cocoa powder
- 1-¼ cups boiling water

DIRECTIONS

There are two layers to this cake.

Cake Layer

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium-size bowl, add flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. Stir in milk, melted butter and vanilla extract until combined. Add to a buttered and floured 9-inch square or round pan.

Sauce Layer

In another bowl, combine sugar, brown sugar and cocoa powder. Sprinkle this mixture over the cake batter in an even layer. Carefully pour the boiling water over the top, being careful not to disturb the layers underneath. Do not mix the layers!

Bake for 30-35 minutes. The middle of the cake will still jiggle when removed. Wait 15 minutes before serving, but the cake is best served out of the oven on the day you bake it. **OH**



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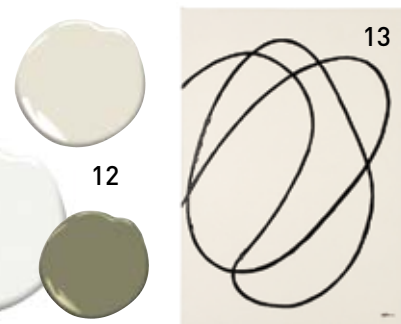
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1. FINIUM: 1" Distink Decorative Walls in White Oak 2. MADE GOODS: Giulana Wall Décor 3. ELK HOME: Sophie Pendant 4. ARTERIORS: Ronaldo Chandelier 5. CB2: Ori Globe Table Lamp with Black Wood Base 6. INDABA: Boule Mug and Pitcher in Cream 7. ROYAL DOULTON: Olio Black Teapot by Barber Osger 8. CB2: Coronado Walnut Wood Credenza 9. MOBILIA: Eclipse Black Ceramic Vase 10. CYAN DESIGN: Elon Bowl in White 11. RENWIL: Draco Wall Sconce 12. BENJAMIN MOORE: Paint in White Down, Chantilly Lace and Tapenade 13. MERCANA: Mess Canvas 14. INDABA: Selenia Linen (Forest), Callisto (Natural) and Mallorca (Grey) Pillows 15. ARTERIORS: Moana Accent Table 16. STYLE IN FORM: California North Chair 17. CRATE & BARREL: Unwind 4-Piece Reversible Slipcovered Sectional Sofa 18. INDABA: Selenia Linen End of Bed Blanket in Lichen 19. RENWIL: Cledon Pouf 20. MADE GOODS: Millie Coffee Table 21. JAIPUR LIVING: Saga Area Rug 22. PLANTSOME: Ficus Lyrata Bush and Grafted Ficus Ginseng Bonsai Tree OH

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