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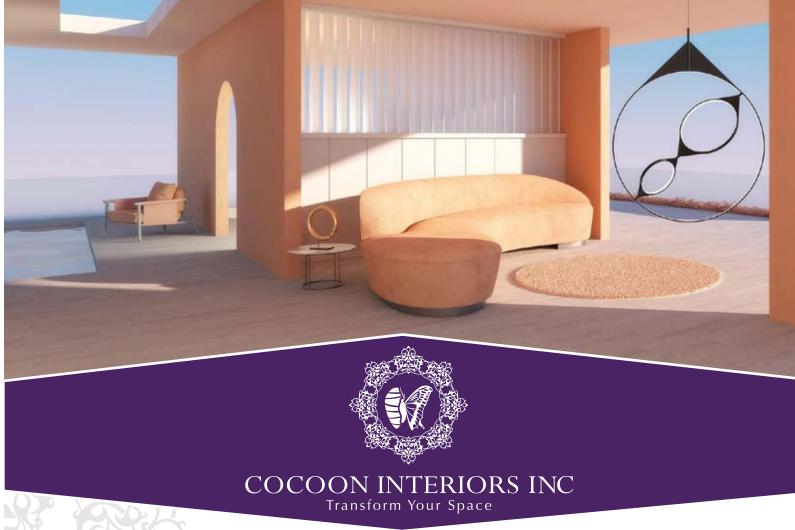




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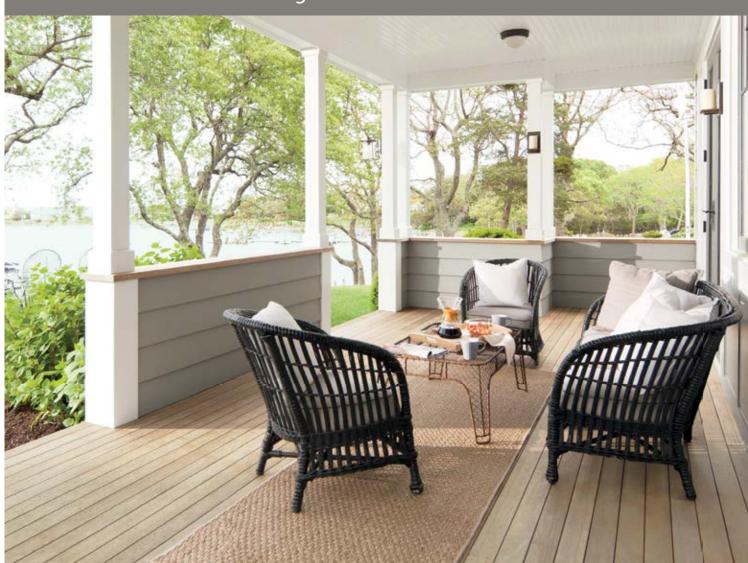
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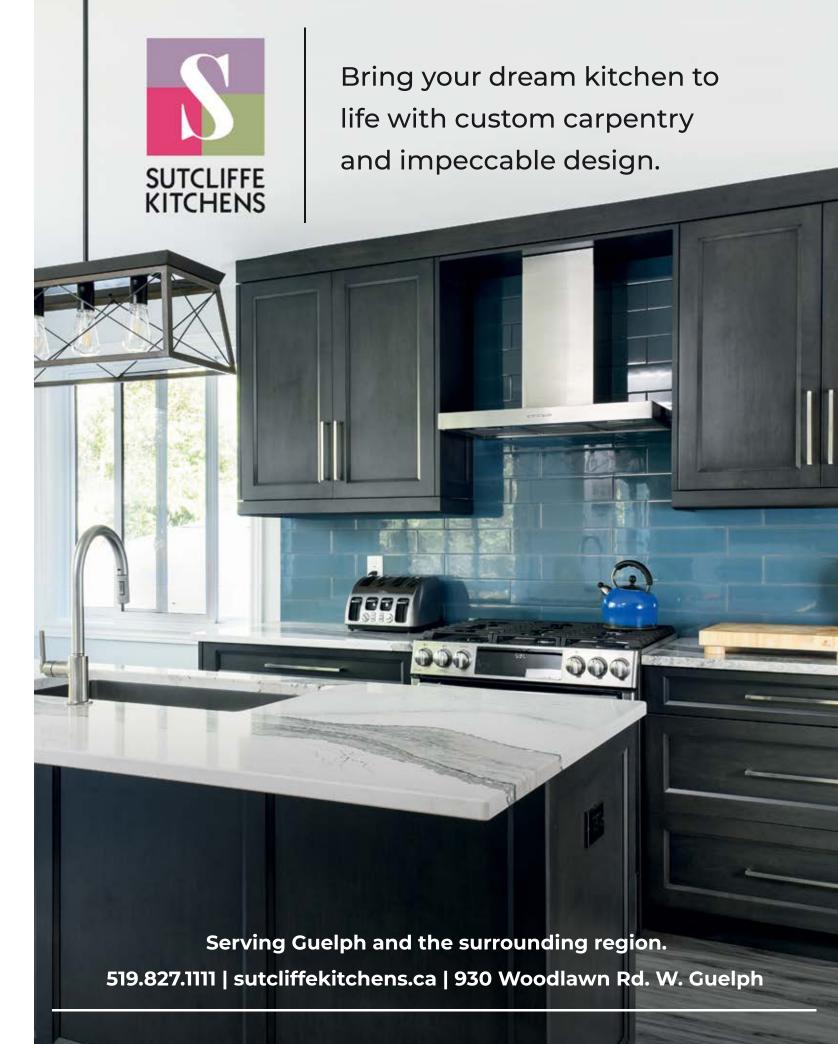
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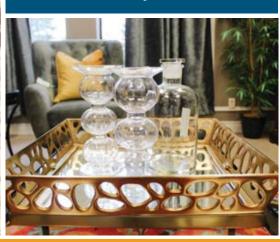


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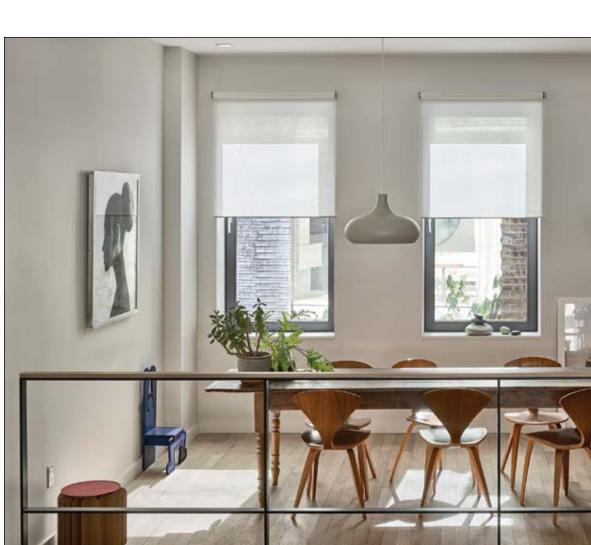


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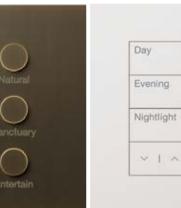


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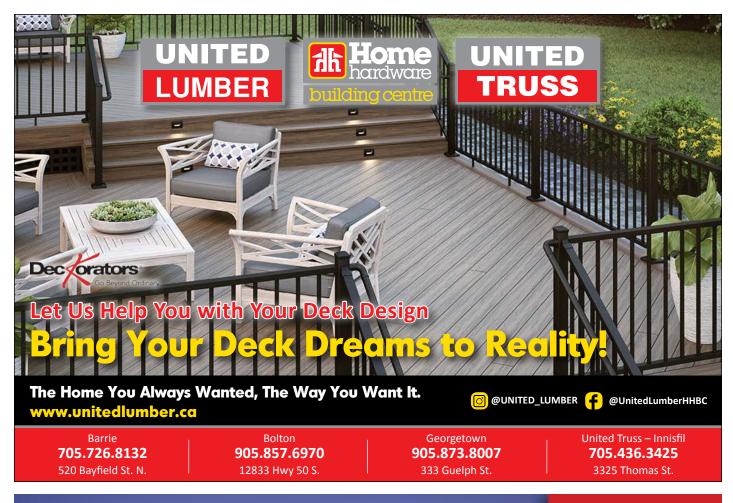
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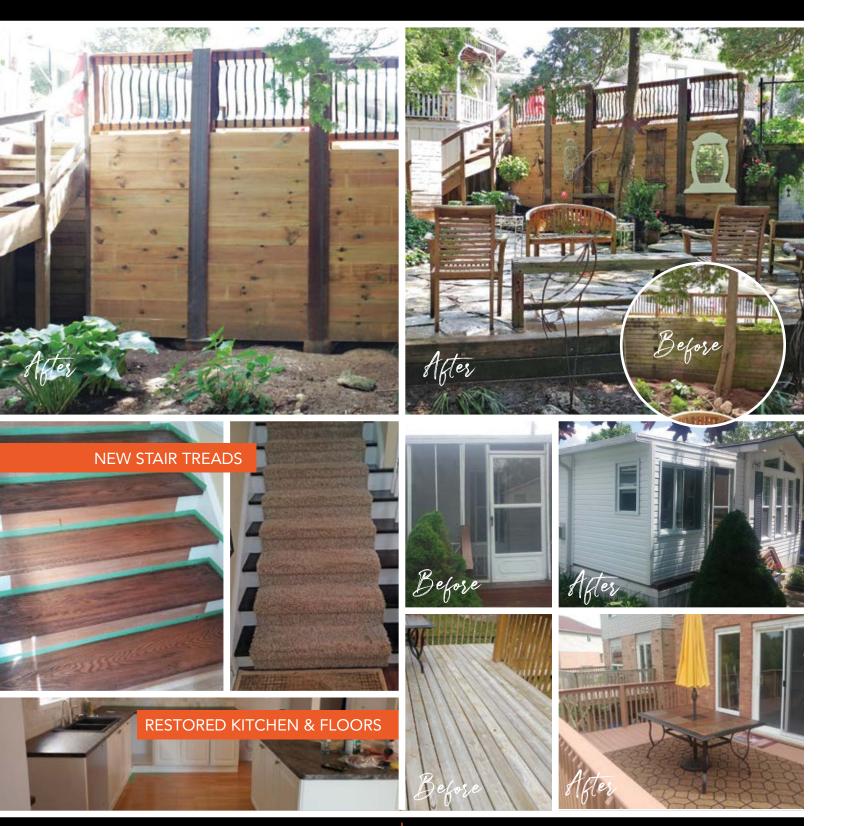


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REGIONAL MANAGING EDITOR Janet White Bardwell

REGIONAL PRODUCTION MANAGER Tracy Shuttleworth

MARKETING & ADVERTISING Avis McFarlane, 519.787.0133 avis.mcfarlane@ourhomes.ca

Pam Gummerson, 519.217.8717

pam.gummerson@ourhomes.ca Glenda Wiedeman, 705,446,4997 alenda wiedeman@ourhomes ca

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OUR HOMES MEDIA GROUP INC:

EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Georgette McCulloch ASSOCIATE EDITOR Kristin Schnelten

DIGITAL EDITOR Rachael Havens

MANAGING EDITORS

Nancy Belgue, Liz Bruckner, Walter Franczyk, Mary Hatt, Gina Makkar, Sara Martin, Tiffany Mayer Georgette McCulloch, Melissa North, Janet White Bardwell, Heather Wright

ART DIRECTOR Tara Chattell

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PRODUCTION

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Lynn Derrick

Julia Dempsey, Kelly Donaldson, Tracy Shuttleworth

OPERATIONS

MANAGING DIRECTOR, SALES & MARKETING Jamie Jefferson

amie.jefferson@ourhomes.ca

MANAGING DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS Georgette McCulloch

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE &

DIRECTOR OF DISTRIBUTION Lisa Ormsby

REGIONAL ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Suzanne Strong BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Kelly Craig

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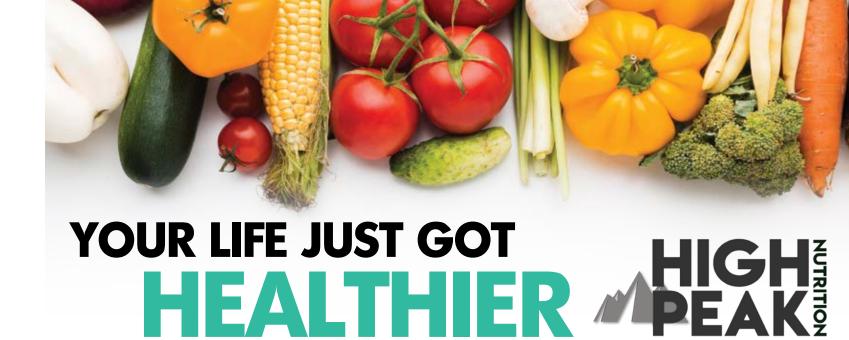
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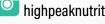
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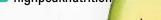
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editor's note



PERSONAL STYLE. EVERYONE HAS ONE. AND IT IS ALWAYS JUST SO... PERSONAL.

For most of us, personal style transcends trends, practicality and even rationality. And we will go to great lengths to get to our style "happy place."

For me, it is white slipcovered sofas. I knew from the get-go they were not practical. Everyone told me to steer clear, but I could not be swayed. When I purchased them my twin boys were young and rambunctious, and it was a recipe for disaster - as indeed it proved to be. Nevertheless, every few months I am

willing to soak my slipcovers in bleach to get them back to their crisp white originals – if only temporarily. Something about them just makes me happy.

For the homeowners featured in our summer issue, personal style shines through strongly. For Renate Karger and John Kears (page 44), polished concrete flooring - which John painstakingly polished and continues to polish himself – was the mandatory flooring to add just the right mood to their home. For Stephanie McKenna (page 104), a basement room full of accessories is meticulously kept so she can change out her style on a whim. "My husband Brian says it looks like a HomeSense store down there, but when I change things up and it looks like a brand-new home it is worth it!" she says. For Sharon and David Reimer (page 66) a desire for a walkout basement on a property with a lower level just 12 inches above grade required an extensive stone retaining wall to make it happen. When it comes to personal style, practicality just does not enter the equation!

This has been a very personal year for all of us, but at the same time, it was anything but personal. We have spent a lot of time focusing on others, on the world - in service, in concern, in empathy and in sympathy. We hope this summer issue inspires you to focus on your own personal style "happy place" and nurture it.

Have a great, stylish summer!



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

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- **44** Feature Take a peek inside this gorgeous Scandi-Boho Elora landmark above the Karger Gallery.

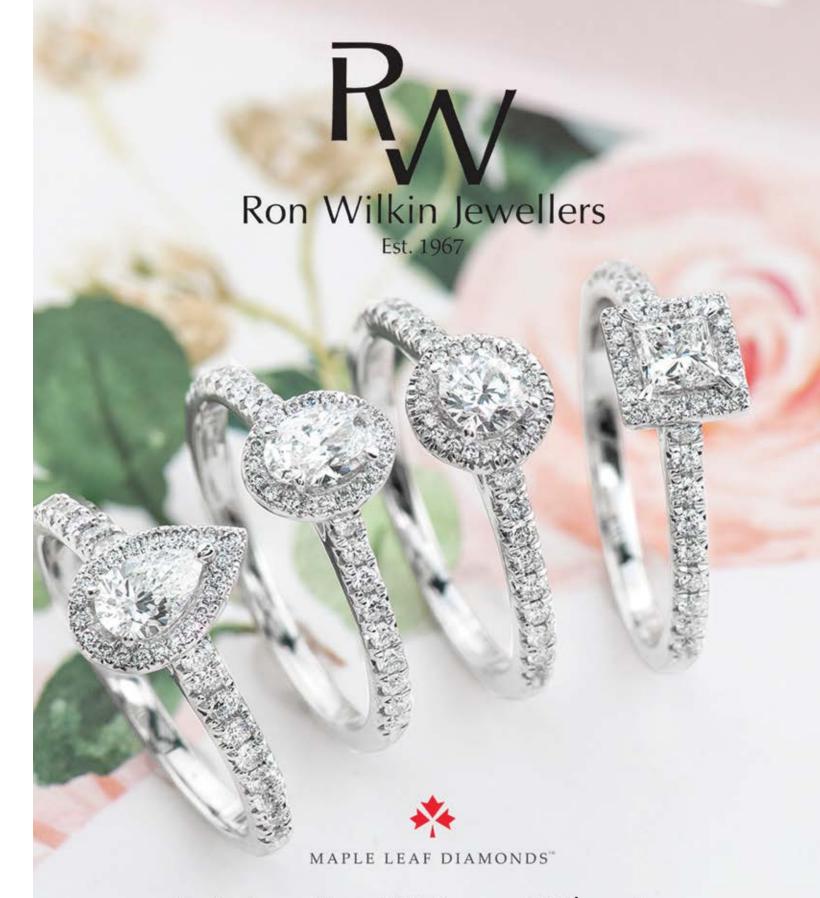
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- **62** Spotlight With expanding options and growing partnerships, Bigelow Flooring has your flooring needs covered.
- **66** Home & Builder Dalerose Country Inc. helped this Grand Valley couple bring their detailed home plan to life.
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- **104** Home & Designer Designer Stephanie McKenna's calming East Garafraxa home.

ON THE COVER

This gorgeous home built above the Karger Gallery is filled with unique charm. Story, page 44. Photography by Jason Hartog.





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advice



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

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?
- Mow 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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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.



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

1/4 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 1/4 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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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. Continued on page 42







New Construction | Additions | Renovations

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birding

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, mosscovered 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.







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 higherquality 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! on



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

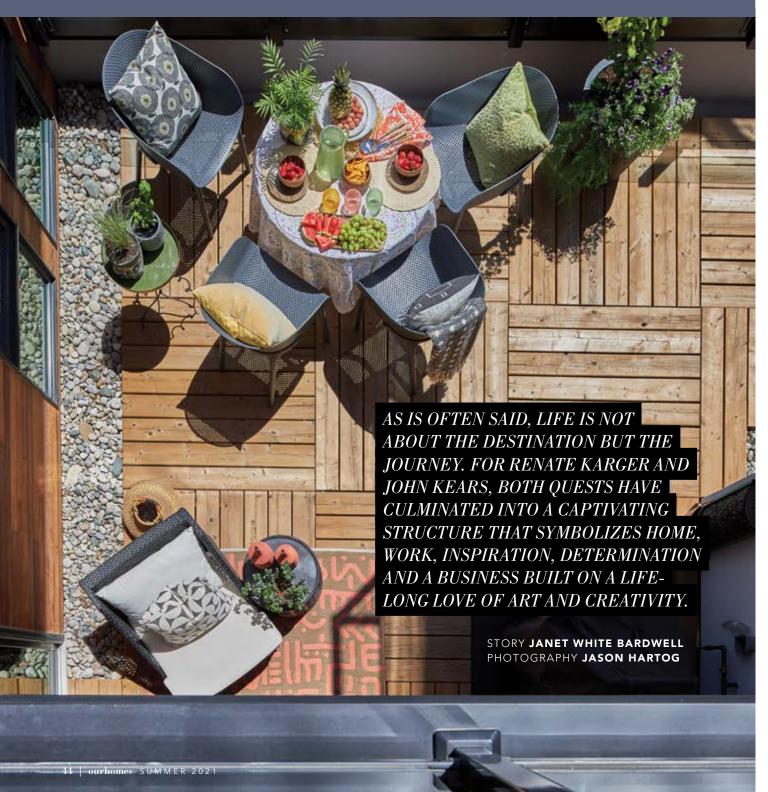








Journey to the TOPOFTHE SHOP



The Karger Gallery and its expansive upper penthouse is a well-known landmark on the east side of Elora's charming downtown core. But it was not always that way, says Renate, shop owner and retail entrepreneur. In 2012 Renate relocated her lifestyle gallery from Elora's west side into a one-storey former restaurant, and there was a lot of work to be done. In phase one, the exterior was transformed with beautiful white stucco by Merritt Wall Systems and exotic Brazilian hardwood - and the promise of the building was revealed (for more about Karger Gallery see "The Business of Style," page 47).

In 2017, when up on the roof to check a leak, Renate and John noticed the spectacular views of old rooftops, the river and trees. "We often went up to the roof and dreamed of the possibilities," she says. Before long, the couple sold their home in Fergus, after spending several years planning their new rooftop home. Renate would oversee design while John would manage the project.

The couple worked with dear friends designers Walter Gibson and wife Lynn Whaley of W. Gibson & Co. - to create a final design that worked within the existing ground-floor structure. "John and Walter created 3D models of the design to ensure that the south-facing facade provided both ample shade in the summer months yet projected warm sunlight to the back of the kitchen in the winter," says Renate. "The angles of the roof and window placement make it an eco-friendly building."





LEFT: Winston keeps guard over the greenhouse, which is chock full of the couple's passion for all things gardening. TOP: The two-level home built above the Karger Gallery in downtown Elora looks especially magical at sunset. ABOVE: Homeowners Renate Karger and John Kears spent several years planning this special space on top of the shop. A statement entry door by Bavarian Window Works sets the artistic tone for the home. OPPOSITE: The view from the upper deck to one of the many seating areas of the 3,000 sq. ft. outdoor space.





While the building was zoned for mixed commercial and residential use, the project was not without its challenges.

Tacoma Engineers Inc.

revised the design in compliance with local building codes and ensured existing footings and walls from the original structure could sustain the weight of the additional storeys. "This dictated the layout and square footage of the building - and is why we ended up with so much outdoor space," says Renate.

Family-run local builder **Centrix Homes** was chosen to build the couple's new home. "We could not have asked for a better builder," says Renate. "Centrix did everything right and often provided additional creative input as the project progressed." Adds John: "Centrix responsibly worked within our budget, balancing design with cost."





THE BUSINESS OF STYLE

The Karger Gallery may have been new to the east side of Elora in 2012, but it was not a newcomer to the scene. Renate's young life was filled with creative endeavours that ranged from refinishing antique furniture to designing jewelry and painting on canvas. She spent many years in the retail field before opening the Karger Gallery in 1993 as an avenue to showcase her art as well as original works from local artists. The business evolved to sell furniture and other home decorating pieces Renate made or purchased on her many travels around the globe.

After 28 years, Karger Gallery has evolved into a destination store in Elora, specializing in teak, pottery, art by Canadian artists, designer clothing, jewelry, custom drapery and custom iron works through a traditional blacksmith. "Our furniture is modern and clean-lined, made in Canada, Italy, Vietnam and India," says Renate. "We sell handcrafted items from all over the world from women's organizations, to sustain families in remote villages in Africa and other struggling old-world countries. We love helping people who are creative and need a special place for their work to be seen."







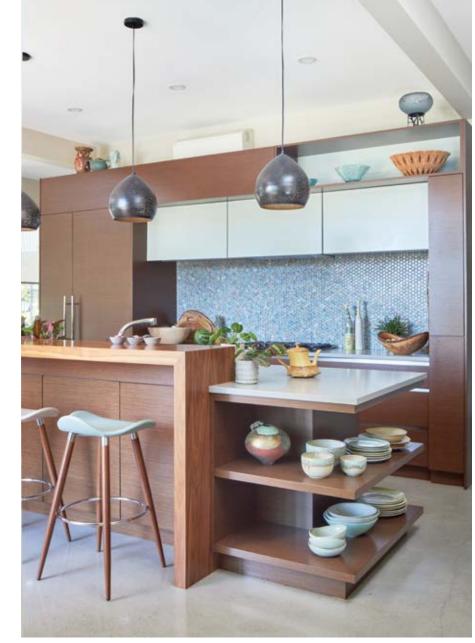
The result is a striking two-level space surrounded by glass railings, featuring the same stucco and wood fascia from the commercial space below. Main-level living, kitchen, dining and office spaces open to more than 3,000 sq. ft. of deck, showcasing multiple seating areas, planter boxes and a gorgeous BC **Greenhouse Builders Limited** greenhouse (which was one of the couple's main splurges).

The primary bedroom and bath can be found on the upper level facing the river. The upper north side includes an artistically decorated Airbnb private suite, where guests enjoy the beautiful views and local ambience in the heart of downtown Elora.

On the main level, 10-foot ceilings are wrapped with nine-foot windows by Bavarian Window Works that pull the views and the light indoors. Radiant concrete flooring by Scott England Mechanical provides heat for the entire main floor and creates a modern yet warm feel. **Flannery Electrical Inc.** expertly managed the electrical for the entire build.

In the open kitchen, African wenge wood cabinetry and walnut breakfast bar by Xanadu Homes and backsplash by Bigelow Flooring Inc. create an exotic backdrop to showcase Renate's many travel treasures.

In the main living area, modern cleanlined sofas from **G. Romano Inc.** offer timeless style, and the modern minimalist fireplace by **Fergus Fireplace** offers a contemporary glow. Continued on page 52



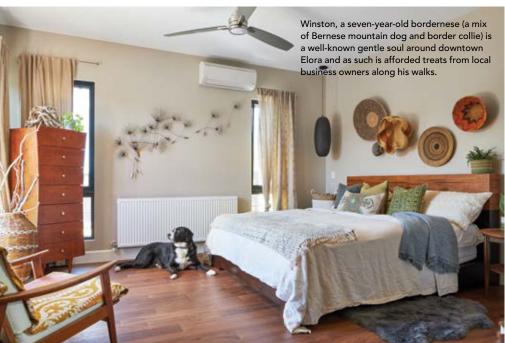


TOP LEFT: A mosaic tile backsplash creates a colourful focal point against the sleek minimalist cupboards. ABOVE: A unique element in the custom kitchen, lower-level open shelving provides an architectural display alcove. **LEFT:** At every turn, teak furniture, art and treasures Renate has gathered in her many travels provide endless visual interest. **OPPOSITE:** The refurbished Mid-century modern dining room chairs were made in Kitchener-Waterloo in the late 1960s.



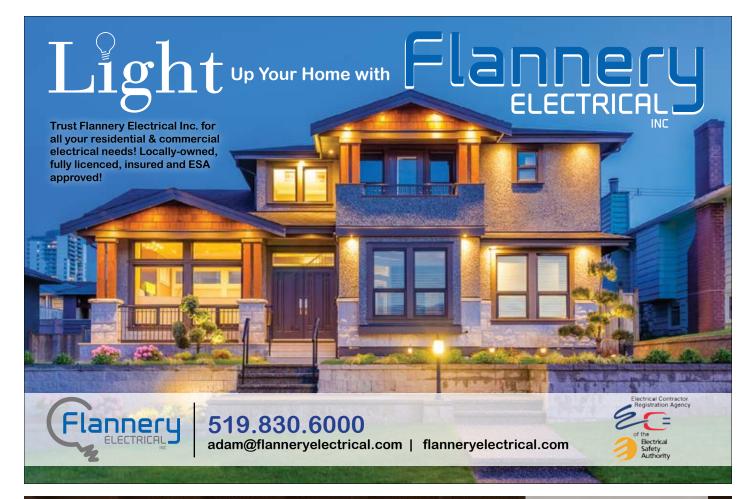
LEFT: Renate and John's primary bedroom on the top level of the home offers a comfortable Scandi-Boho atmosphere with a walkout to another gorgeous and private deck area. Everything in the house is furnished by Karger. **BELOW:** A modern freestanding soaker tub in the couple's en suite is a refreshing addition against the matte stone flooring and dark-wood credenza vanity. Pocket doors throughout were a design must, suggested by Walter, who designed the home, to keep lines clean and maximize space.





Renate describes her style as Scandi-Boho – an intuitive mix of modern Bohemian, world-travelled and Mid-century modern. "My style is never planned but rather magically falls into place with time. I do not buy with the intention to match something." She admits that her home décor tends to be secondary to her selections for the gallery. "I always buy what I love for my customers. They get first dibs on special finds. Floor models, damaged pieces and traded artwork with my artisan friends end up in our home, but it all works as everything in the home is from Karger and stands the test of time both in style and quality."

Continued on page 54





feature



Outside, planter boxes filled with blooms from LittleTree **Garden Market** and other local nurseries provide an endless outlet for Renate and John's passion for plants.

The couple's favourite part of their build? "We love the light, and the feeling of having the outdoors all around us," says Renate. "When we step outside on a clear evening and the stars are shining, geese fly overhead and splash into the river, right in the centre of downtown, it is wonderful." **OH**

LEFT: The sky's the limit on this gorgeous upper-level deck with views for days. **BELOW:** An artistically decorated one-bedroom Airbnb suite on the top level offers guests a private retreat with incredible views in the heart of downtown. Unable to find the right pieces within budget, Renate repurposed every bathroom vanity using unique credenzas and cabinets.

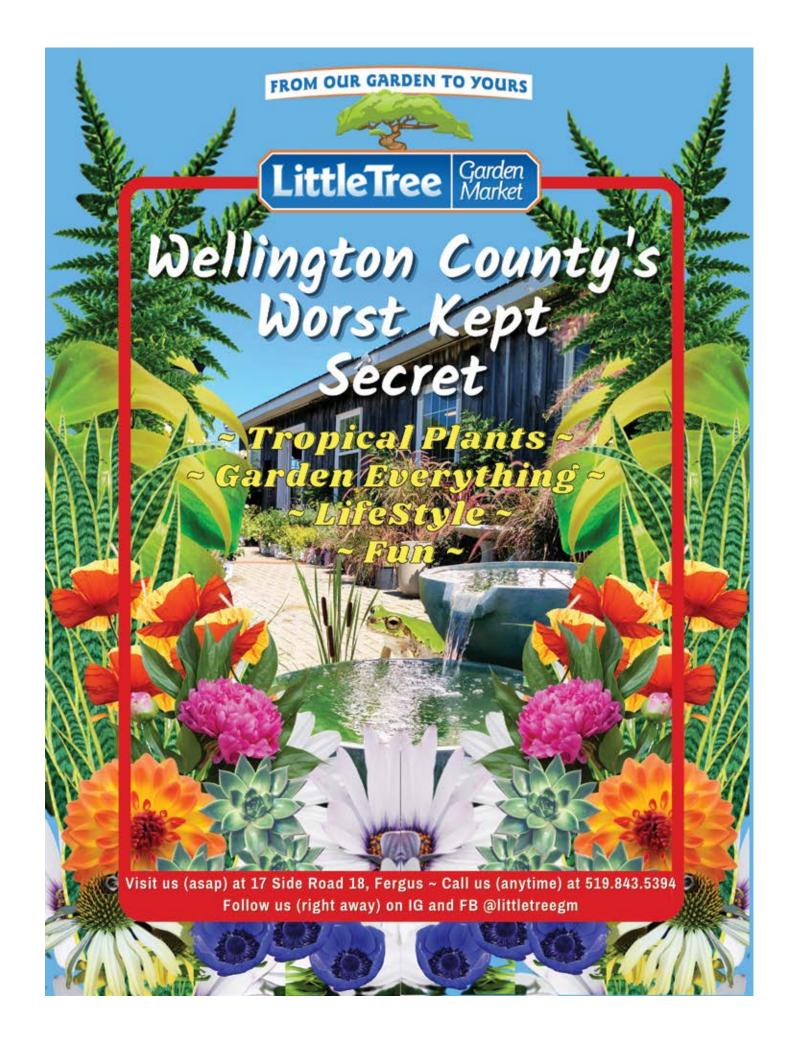
LESSONS

Renate's advice for those starting a big build project? Don't rush. Give yourself time to think things through. "The renovation phase was a very busy time because we also had to relocate my business," she says. "When you build, everything starts happening very quickly as far as ordering what you need to make it happen. If we were to do it again, we would have probably given more time to reflect and would have designed some things differently on the inside."









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STORY MICHELLE BERWICK
PHOTOGRAPHY LARRY ARNAL

Pastel PALETTE

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These hues are reminiscent of spring blossoms.



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. Continued on page 60



decorating



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.

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THE PLACE

Co-founded in 2005 by brother duo Garth and Craig Bigelow, **Bigelow Flooring** has long been a staple in Guelph and surrounding areas for quality flooring and service. Employing the motto "People Taking Care of People," the success of Bigelow Flooring has been built on the belief that a strong work ethic and outstanding customer service makes them stand out from the rest. "We strive to give customers a great shopping experience," says Garth. "We want customers to feel confident that they are purchasing the right product for their home. The positive feedback we see on our Google reviews definitely motivates our staff."



SERVICES

In addition to offering customers a massive selection of carpet, hardwood, laminate, tile and natural stone flooring options, Bigelow provides professional installation services for both residential and commercial projects, and works with customers, contractors, designers and homebuilders on a broad range of projects.





TRENDING

What's trending with customers? Kathy says colourful tiles in a variety of shapes for both floors and walls are fashionable, as well as large format tiles, patterned carpets for stairs and embossed vinyl planks in wider, longer lengths. "Lighter, more neutral shades of hardwood are also getting popular," she says. "This is a departure from the strong grey trend that we've seen for the past few years." oh

WHAT'S NEW

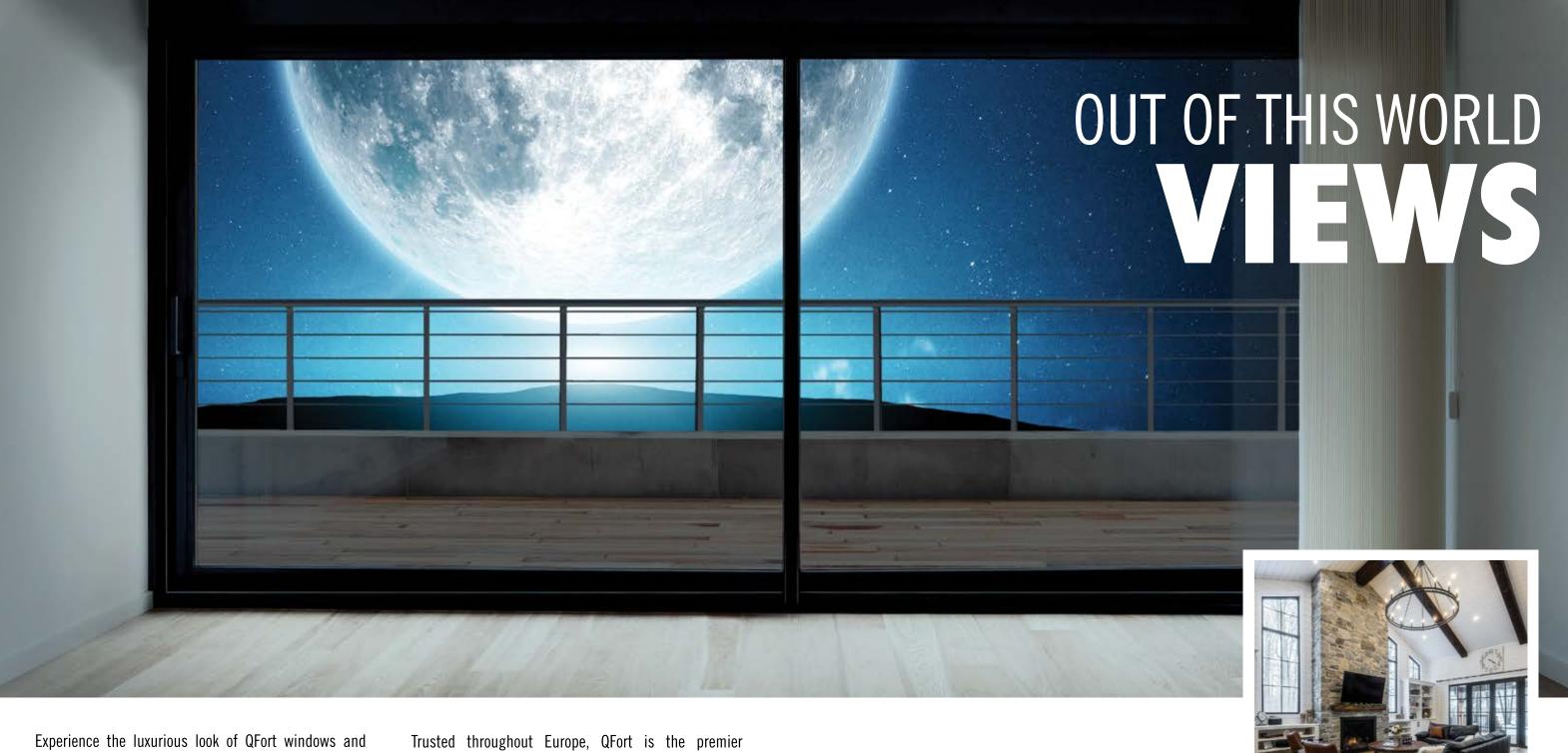
The past year has been one of change for Bigelow. "The showroom space is in the process of being redesigned and we have formed relationships with a number of new suppliers," says showroom manager Kathy Budinski. "We are an exclusive dealer in the Guelph area for Beckham Brothers Flooring. We will showcase their product line with a beautiful custom flooring gallery, and we will also stock a variety of hardwood, vinyl and tile products from this supplier for contractors and DIYers." Bigelow is proud to be the first Ceratec Surfaces 1949 Gallery Boutique in Ontario and has partnered with Schluter Systems to provide a large selection of products for customers and contractors looking for tile accessories, setting materials and waterproof shower systems.



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LEFT: Sharon and David's goal of "bringing the outdoors in" was achieved with this expansive wall of windows providing a four-season front-row seat. **TOP RIGHT:** Stunning stained glass by Kara's Stained Glass surrounding the entry door emulates the birch trees just steps outside, once again bringing the outdoors in. **BELOW:** After a long search, Sharon and Mary Lawson of Dalerose Homes finally found the perfect shade of red exterior siding that was striking but not too bright and blended beautifully into the landscape.

NEXT STEP, NEXT DOOR

Taking steps towards retirement requires a plan – and a solid leap of faith. For Sharon and David Reimer of Grand Valley, it also took a detailed vision 41 years in the making, and just a few steps next door.

STORYJANET
WHITE BARDWELL
PHOTOGRAPHY
JASON HARTOG

Continued on page 69

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Having raised their two children in a home just outside the charming town of Grand Valley, the couple knew they wanted to stay in the area. They previously purchased the property adjacent to their home and began hatching a plan for their next step – a 6.5-acre lot filled with spruce, birch and poplar trees, with paths for walking and cross-country skiing. "Our vision was a bungalow that was easy to care for in retirement," says Sharon. "We wanted to bring the outdoors in with lots of large windows."

David, a tech entrepreneur, says the couple carefully culled their vision into a three-page document of details and decisions. "After 41 years of marriage and a great relationship we knew what was going to work well for us – and that was transformational to the outcome," he says. Sharon and David also proved to be a harmonious duo when it came to the building process: David would manage the build and trades component, and Sharon would manage all the design decisions.

Their must-haves? A tech-savvy infrastructure was required to support and run their business, property-wide commercial WiFi, a heated garage floor, natural light everywhere and an open kitchen with all the culinary bells and whistles. Continued on page 70



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home & builder

Upon securing the architectural plans for the home, the Reimers selected **Dalerose Homes** to bring their retirement vision to life. "We chose Dalerose for their construction quality, interior design and creativity," says Sharon. "They had a good reputation in the community and received excellent recommendations."

Dalerose general manager **Mary Lawson** says the company knew they were competing for the Reimer build. "They were looking for a team who would listen to their wishes and remove as much stress as possible from the decision-making process," she says.

As the build began in November 2018, decisions needed to be made at every turn and debates ensued. "Dalerose was great at the back-and-forth process of working to find solutions that worked for everyone," says David. "We always asked what the right thing to do was. This enabled Dalerose and the trades to provide great advice."

Living next door to the build afforded the Reimers front-row seats to the development of their dream home. Each night after the trades finished for the day, the couple would meander



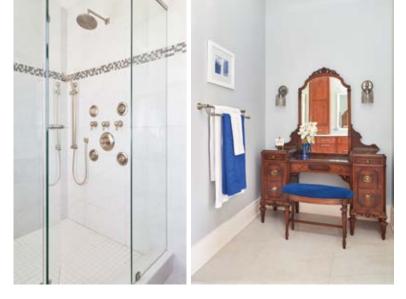
over to see how things were progressing. "Perhaps it drove them crazy, but they knew we were attentive and interested in the progress," says Sharon.

The result was a gracious bungalow with an open floor plan, loads of natural light, a main-floor primary bedroom, open kitchen, walk-in pantry, dining and living room area, laundry and office. A walkout basement contains two secondary bedrooms, a full bath, wet bar and entertainment area with fireplace to accommodate family and guests.

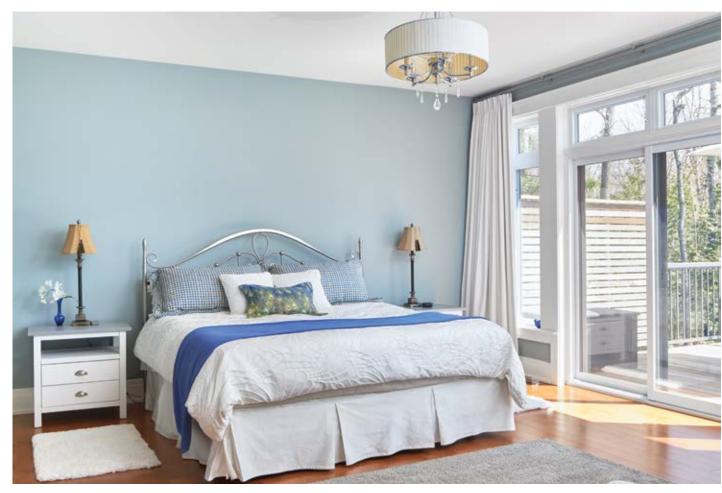
Sharon describes her style as a blend of modern neutrals, antiques and beloved garage sale finds. Neutral-toned furniture from **Fredericks Furniture Gallery** gives Sharon the opportunity to refresh the home's mood each season by changing the accessories. "Mary was such a huge help in the design process. From exterior siding and flooring to paint colours, she helped me every step of the way," says Sharon.

On the main level, maple flooring in Sierra Cashmere from **Sarmazian Brothers Flooring** provides a warm, rich base for the home. The entry leads into a great room featuring a wall of windows by **Golden Windows Ltd.** that achieves the Reimer's goal of "bringing the outdoors in." The feature-wall fireplace by **Hyde-Whipp Heating & Air Conditioning** showcases a live-edge hickory mantel and solid slab of granite. Shaker-style interior doors by **Riverside Door & Trim** were painted Cloud White by **Benjamin Moore**, as was the trim. Continued on page 72





LEFT & ABOVE: Sharon's beloved classic-style dressing table found a special spot – an alcove was custom-created in the couple's en suite to accommodate it perfectly. Blue accents and bevelled-edge mirrors add a glamorous touch to the rich-toned cabinets and crisp white countertops. Oldenburg by Beauti-Tone on the walls completes the fresh and serene space. **BELOW:** The couple's calming primary bedroom is painted Blown Glass by Beauti-Tone. Floor-to-ceiling windows with a sliding walkout to a private area of the deck provide a perfect place to start a warm summer's morning. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** The view from the kitchen toward the primary suite showcases the maple wood flooring Sharon chose for its rich, warm shade and subtle, uniform grain. Janvier by Beauti-Tone was used throughout the principal space in the home. Benjamin Moore's Cloud White was used on all the trim. **BOTTOM:** Sharon changes her design accents with the seasons to create a fresh look. The granite slab chosen for the fireplace had just enough left over to be installed as a very fancy countertop in the walk-in pantry off the kitchen.



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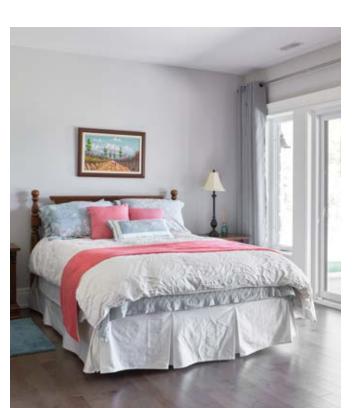


The adjoining kitchen is a gem of functional extravagance: Clean-lined cabinets by **Chervin Kitchen & Bath**, Cambria quartz countertops by **Elegant Solutions** in Highgate and Queen Anne, simple grey-tiled backsplash, JennAir appliances and a commercial exhaust fan from **Canadian Appliances** set the stage for David's gourmet cooking skills and the couple's love of casual entertaining. "The kitchen is one of our favourite rooms," says David, admitting it was also one of their biggest splurges.

Curved architecture figures prominently throughout the home to give it a less boxy feel, says the couple. Structural curves can be found above windows, the garage door and the covered porch.

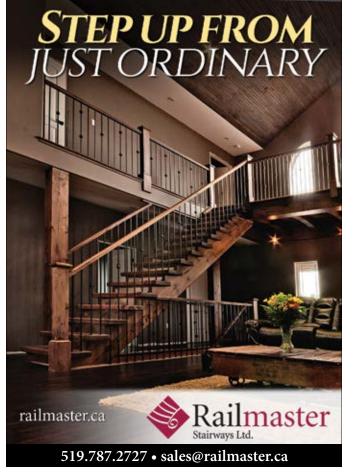
The primary bedroom features a sliding door leading to an expansive deck that spans almost the entire width of the home. A variety of intimate sitting areas beckons to take in the views with a morning coffee or evening glass of wine. Continued on page 74

LEFT: Charming build details can be found throughout the home. Here, a whimsical cubby hole was built as a secret play space under the stairs for grandkids Greta, 3, and Vivian, 1. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The main bedroom in the walkout basement features a sliding door to a private patio. **BELOW:** The main-level laundry room off the garage shines with luxe details such as a quartz countertop and stacked washer and dryer.













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LEFT: A stone firepit crowns the tiered retaining wall ready for future get-togethers with family and friends. Glass railings provide an unobstructed view of the gorgeous property. **BELOW:** A charming swing outside the main quest bedroom of the walkout basement offers a peaceful





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No new build is without its challenges, and for the Reimers the biggest hurdle was how to reconcile their desire for a bungalow with a walkout basement, with the reality of a lower level that was 12 inches above grade. Landscape designer **Henry** Sikkema of Land Escapes tackled this challenge with a solution that included a nine-foot retaining wall of armour stone and an upper firepit/ patio area and tiered gardens. "We're so happy with the sloping and natural feel of the home on the land," says David. Henry had creative solutions for any issue they came up against

on the property. "We started saying, 'Don't worry, we have a Henry for that," says David.

The Reimers took possession of their new home in September 2019. They celebrated by hosting a party for all the trades and suppliers who had worked on the house. "Our team really enjoyed this build," says Mary.

The Reimers say that the word "thankful," displayed on the wall in their kitchen best describes how they feel about the home they have created. "We love our home," says Sharon. "The quality, style and design have exceeded our expectations." OH

words to BUILD ON

A few lessons the Reimers learned along the way that may help you in your building journey.

Be Specific. "We provided the builder with a three-page document that listed what we wanted in the home," says David. "Everything from technology, structure, insulation, room types and usage. Ultimately this level of detail gave us the home we wanted."

Create a Contingency. Allow a 10 per cent contingency. Project changes are inevitable.

Ask Questions! Be open to learning and seeing things from a different perspective, says Sharon. "It's always better to think things through in order to be satisfied with decisions that you will live with for a long time."

Enjoy the Process. Get to know the team and subcontractors they are all working hard to create a house you will be proud of.



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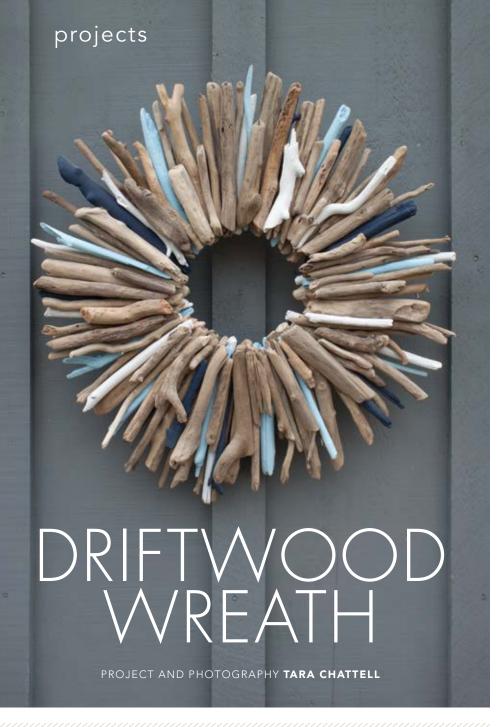






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TOOKS

Pencil

Jigsaw or scroll saw 7-inch

diameter bowl

Paintbrush

Glue gun

Screwdriver

Wire cutters

MATERIALS

1/4 to 5/6 inch-thick plywood (large enough to cut a circle 14 inches in diameter)

Roll of kraft paper

Lots of driftwood pieces, 9 inches in length or a little shorter

Sandpaper

Hot glue sticks

Acrylic paint in three colours (we've used navy, light blue and white)

Picture-hanging hardware (screws, D-ring hangers and wire)

HOW-TO

To create the plywood backing for your wreath, draw a 14 inch-diameter circle with a 10 inchdiameter circle inside. Don't worry if it's not perfect; it will be hidden behind the driftwood. Cut your circles with either a jigsaw or scroll saw to create a wooden ring.

Place your ring on a large piece of kraft paper. Using something round, with a diameter of about 7 inches, trace a circle with a pencil inside your wood ring. This will be your guide as you begin gluing the driftwood pieces onto the ring. You can temporarily glue your backing to the paper to prevent sliding. Peel paper from wood when complete.





Paint approximately 10-12 pieces of driftwood in each of the three colours you've chosen and leave the rest of the pieces natural. Let dry before gluing onto backing.

Begin gluing the driftwood pieces onto the wood ring, using the longest pieces first. Do not go too far past your pencil guideline on the inside of the ring. Leave some space between each piece to get a nice starburst shape.



Once you have the first layer glued around the entire ring, begin filling the spaces with slightly shorter pieces. Continue layering driftwood pieces until the backing is completely hidden.

Use shorter pieces and layer with the smallest pieces on the top layer.

Decide which way to hang the wreath and attach hardware and wire to the backing.

Now you're ready to hang and enjoy your work of art! on

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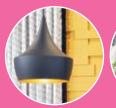
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"Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace."

WHAT'S TRENDING

Gardening is booming in popularity as we stay home more. Outdoor home spaces become a welcoming haven with almost a cottage-like feel when landscaping is done right. Proper placement of the right shrubs, trees, tall grasses and even easy-care water features will add definite value to your home. And gardening is a known stress reliever and great cardio! Let us make your gardens inviting.



Continued on page 8

ourhomes SUMMER 2021 | 81



OUR SPECIALTY

Building materials are just as important as layout and design when it comes to construction. Building supplies are critical to the success of any structure. Construction materials can be used for aesthetic purposes, but more importantly construction materials are vital for structural stability. With the right building materials, you can achieve both goals.





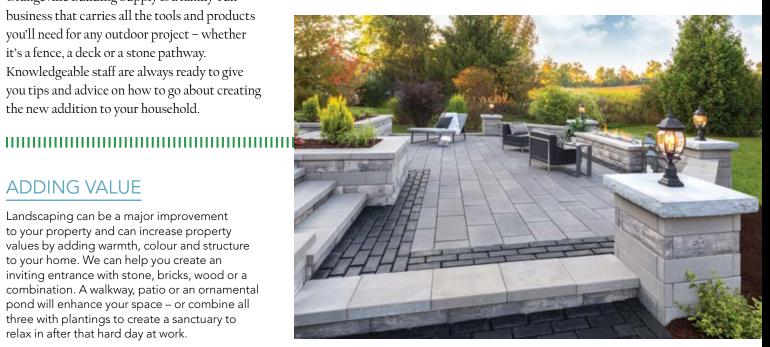
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Orangeville Building Supply is a family-run business that carries all the tools and products you'll need for any outdoor project - whether it's a fence, a deck or a stone pathway. Knowledgeable staff are always ready to give you tips and advice on how to go about creating the new addition to your household.

ADDING VALUE

Landscaping can be a major improvement to your property and can increase property values by adding warmth, colour and structure to your home. We can help you create an inviting entrance with stone, bricks, wood or a combination. A walkway, patio or an ornamental pond will enhance your space – or combine all three with plantings to create a sanctuary to relax in after that hard day at work.

"Big job or small job – we are here for you."



Continued on page 84



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HOMES

The team at Rockhaven will design, engineer, budget and build your custom home. Our clients report being "beyond happy" and say we are friendly, knowledgeable, attentive and that we care. Melissa Macumber is an integral part of our team and makes both the design and construction of a custom home enjoyable by minimizing surprises and maximizing value.



TRENDING

The work-from-home surge has driven moves from large cities to smaller towns or to the country, resulting in a growing need for functional and beautiful home offices. Whether you envision a separate workspace, a flex-space or even a dual space, Rockhaven's design and construction team is well-equipped to provide creative design solutions.



DECISIONS, DECISIONS

When building a home, the list of decisions can make people anxious. We make the process easy. Melissa's role is to support clients and break a large project down into a series of small decisions. We also allow enough time in our process, so you won't feel rushed.

"At Rockhaven, we customize both the dream and the dollars."



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SPECIALTY

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Cory Reuter

STRENGTHS

Reuter Roofing saves you money! We are experts at roof restoration. If we can restore your roof, we will not sell you a new one. If you are looking to replace your roof, our expert installers will make sure the job is done right the first time. Our preventative maintenance programs protect your investment and give you peace of mind.

Continued on page 88



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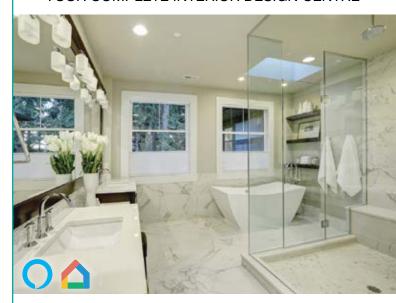
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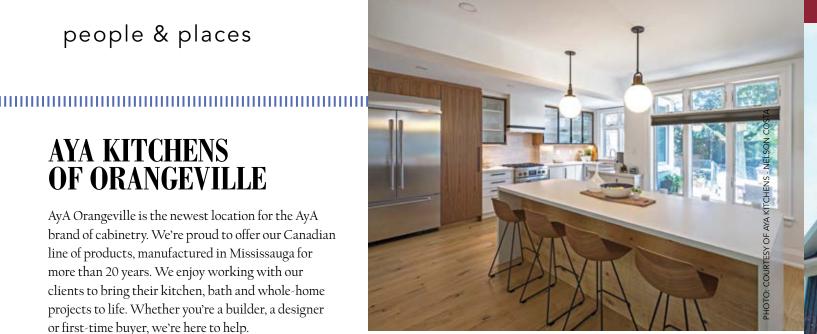
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AyA Orangeville is the newest location for the AyA brand of cabinetry. We're proud to offer our Canadian line of products, manufactured in Mississauga for more than 20 years. We enjoy working with our clients to bring their kitchen, bath and whole-home projects to life. Whether you're a builder, a designer or first-time buyer, we're here to help.



"Your best design is a combination of function and expression of personal taste."



TRENDING

Light and airy. Light colours and whites with wood accents and a pop of bright colour. Slab doors and slim shakers are bringing a contemporary mix of European and North American door styles into our homes. Not one island, but two! Why not? The kitchen remains the centre of the home, so try adding focal points that give balance and stability to the design, such as a custom range hood or coffee bar in an accent colour.

SPECIALTY

We specialize in finding solutions and eliminating problem areas to create a functional and enjoyable space. Our recommendations and solutions are specific to each project because we take time at the beginning of the project to understand each client's preferences, lifestyle and budget.







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At Bauhaus we love working with clients and designers to transform a house into a home through window treatments. Family-owned and operated, we are the region's only Hunter Douglas Gallery Store. We pride ourselves on knowledge, experience and exceptional service.

TRENDING

We are loving the Duolite options from Hunter Douglas. Multiple products are available with light filtering or room darkening options built into a single shade, providing the best of both worlds. We have brought a gorgeous collection of high-quality rugs into our showroom. A wide variety of textures, colours and patterns and can be made in a

"You'll find Ashley in the showroom most days, while Stefanie will join you in your home for a consultation."

SPECIALTY

We specialize in home automation with certified automation specialists to outfit your home at any step, whether it's a new build or home renovation. Any product – shades, shutters or drapery – can be automated. Visit our showroom to see our automated displays and see how we can help with your project

Continued on page 92

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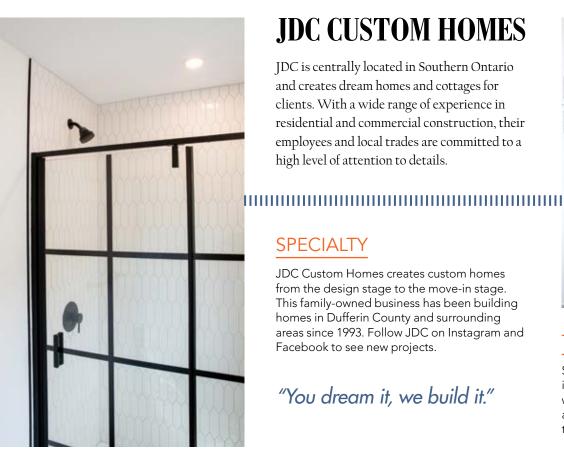


Ashley Sarrasy & Stefanie Morrissey

people & places

people & places





JDC CUSTOM HOMES

JDC is centrally located in Southern Ontario and creates dream homes and cottages for clients. With a wide range of experience in residential and commercial construction, their employees and local trades are committed to a high level of attention to details.

SPECIALTY

JDC Custom Homes creates custom homes from the design stage to the move-in stage. This family-owned business has been building homes in Dufferin County and surrounding areas since 1993. Follow JDC on Instagram and Facebook to see new projects.

"You dream it, we build it."



TRENDING

Slim Shaker cabinetry is a new look in custom homes. The white mixed with the slim Shaker cabinets offers a timeless, yet modern look in the kitchen.

Continued on page 94



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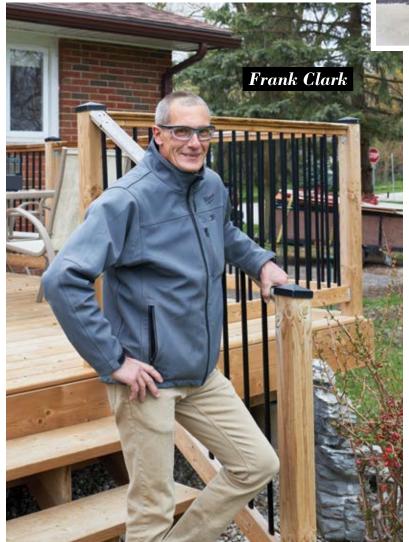
people & places

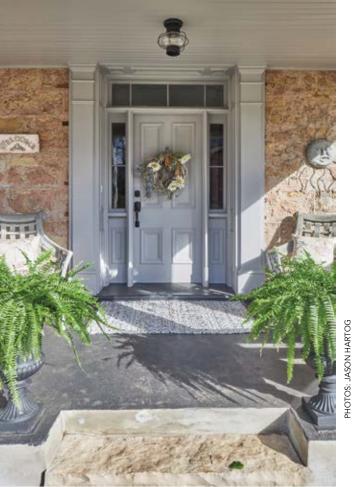
FERGUS MOBILE SERVICES

Founded seven years ago by owner Frank Clark, Fergus Mobile Services offers a broad range of repair, building and renovation services to homeowners in Fergus and surrounding areas. Over the years Frank has established working relationships with a great group of tradespeople to provide expertise in any area around the home you may need help with.

SPECIALTY

We specialize in almost anything in your household – from basement renovations, bathroom and kitchen restoration to exterior decks, porches, lawn or landscaping design projects. We also specialize in historical home restoration, from the ground to the rooftop. No job is too small or too big.





"Don't just get a handyman, get a super Frank handyman!"

FAVORITE PROJECT

The restoration of a charming old century home in Elora. The project started in January 2020 and was such a challenge. The home was featured in the Spring 2021 issue of OUR HOMES and is the project I am most proud of so far.





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Pine Meadows is about people getting together and doing things. Whether it's forming a group of devoted tennis players, a relaxed game of bridge or a round of golf at the nearby golf course, at Pine Meadows you'll never want for something to do. And if you're in the mood for peaceful solitude, the lakeside ambience and pleasant surroundings will serve you well.

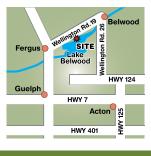
While Pine Meadows is situated in a rural, park-like setting beside Lake Belwood, it's convenient to all the things that make for a rich and fulfilling lifestyle. Nearby amenities include great shopping in Fergus and Elora, cuisine that reflects local tastes and culture, theatre, the arts and all the conveniences of a thriving community.

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people & places





OUR FOCUS

Kelan created the company's Back to Basics program based on evidence, hormones and mindset. This 35-day system allows your hormones to naturally reset and operate the way they should. We have partnered with **Human Fuel Supplements** to provide clients with the support their bodies need as the body heals and returns to baseline. OH

HIGH PEAK NUTRITION

Four years ago, Kelan Smith and Marjie Richardson launched High Peak Nutrition. Their story may sound familiar: Kelan's weight loss progress had stalled. Marjie was a new mom with postpartum depression (ppd). After receiving nutrition coaching, they both lost weight and Marjie's ppd eased. Inspired, the couple created a company focused on the system that transformed them.



To address the mind-body connection with our clients, we are proud to work with clinical psychologist Dr. Jasmine Dean to create mindset pieces, goal-setting worksheets and more to truly help our clients learn and develop alongside the system. Using a weekly video, Dr. Dean helps you set goals and understand your brain while sharing tactical pieces of advice you can apply.



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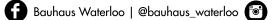
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COMPOSTING 101

Composting is perhaps not the most elegant of subject matters. The word may conjure a messy, stinky, high-maintenance process, but it doesn't have to be so. Composting can be very gratifying and it certainly has a role to play in supporting a beautiful garden, a strong body and a healthy planet, too.

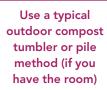
Compost is your veggie and flower gardens' best friend. Imagine the magic of creating the best, healthy soil conditioner through a natural and free process designed by Mother Nature herself! The key is to support the many responsible microbes. Much like our own microbiome, a host of tiny life forms allow plant life to absorb an optimum amount of soil nutrients.

Composting has an enormous impact on your carbon footprint. The average reduction is 663 pounds of carbon per person, per year, which is more than two average sized backyards full of trees. It also cuts your garbage by almost half.

It doesn't have to be complicated. Anyone can compost, regardless of living situation even condo and apartment dwellers. The fundamental start to any composting is combining carbon-rich materials called browns with high-nitrogen greens. Browns rot more slowly and are usually woody or fibrous, such as paper, nut shells, dry leaves and twigs. Greens rot fairly fast and are typically moist, such as fruit and veggie scraps, coffee grounds and any fresh, green leaves. Green and browns should be layered equally to create an optimum composting environment. But even if your quantities aren't perfect, the material will compost eventually. By adding your brown layer last you'll help cut down on odours and flies.

There are quite a few ways to compost, with varying degrees of complexity, but the basic methods are:





Yes, they are not attractive but they do the job. Alternate green and brown layers and tumble or fork-turn occasionally.



Keyhole composting

Make a tube of chicken wire and partially bury it in the middle of your veggie garden bed. That's right, you can compost within your growing garden! The same layering techniques apply., except you don't turn or mix it. By watering your veggie garden through the compost cage, the nutrients spread throughout your garden bed. I've been using this technique for several years and cannot believe the increase in production and great taste of my garden yield.

PRO TIPS: Don't add meat, bones, dairy or fats to your compost – it will attract

unwanted critters. Any large fruit or veggie pieces should be cut so they break down

faster. And citrus peelings should be avoided as they kill microbes.



Electric composting

I've been using the Vitamix FoodCycler FC-50 as a trial and I'm amazed how easy it is to use - and with no odour! I actually like the smell of the resulting compost. It doesn't hold a large volume, so you have to use it often and there is the added expense of the electricity to run it, but it's really perfect for anyone who finds composting icky.

Happy brothing, happy composting and happy gardening dear readers summer is upon us! on

I can't speak about composting without also touching on cooking and food usage. Many food scraps can be saved and

reused to make a nourishing

and wholesome broth, such

as animal bones and veggie

peelings/ends. Making broth

is easy, stretches your grocery

dollars and further lowers your

home I save my favourite savoury

veggie ends and peelings from a

weeks' worth of cooking - such

as carrots, onions, garlic, beets

and artichokes - in a bag in the

fridge. They can also be frozen

until ready for use. Simple broth

recipes are available online and

as many great chefs know, broth

is easy to use and a wonderful

starter for many mouth-

watering recipes.

environmental impact. At my

Melanie is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.



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PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**



WHAT'S NEW

Growth has been the key word for QFORT this year. "We have been able to expand our team by adding two sales representatives in British Columbia because our products have gained significant interest from waterfront homeowners," says Marius, adding that plans are in the works to open a showroom in the Toronto area.

TRENDING

offer that."

Sleek lines and thin frames that allow as much glass as possible for optimal visibility to bring the outdoors in, says Marius.

"Many of our clients are looking for a modern option for their windows and door needs," he says. "Our products, especially our aluminum lines,





THE PLACE

QFORT may be new on the Canadian window and door scene, but this high-end manufacturer/supplier is anything but inexperienced. With a longstanding history in Europe since the company was established in Romania in 1995, QFORT offers an impressive line of windows, front entry doors, bi-fold patio doors and minimalist sliding doors to the Canadian market. Since opening its first Canadian showroom in May 2020 in Kitchener, QFORT has been offering premium European windows and doors designed and engineered for Canadians in both PVC and aluminum - and installed by trained professionals. "Our products exemplify European elegance and style while also providing high security and efficiency," says Marius Urzica, general manager, Canada. "Our aluminum line provides thin, sleek profiles and a minimalist design. Our products are fashionable yet strong and are built to withstand the coldest Canadian temperatures."



THE REACTION

Since opening the Kitchener showroom, Marius says the response has been extremely positive. "Our state-ofthe-art showroom seems to be making a big impact and clients love to see and feel the quality of our products," he says. "The excitement our clients show in our products has been encouraging. Our products really do speak for themselves. Quality, elegance, security and efficiency - none of these elements should ever be compromised." он



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SMOOTIN 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

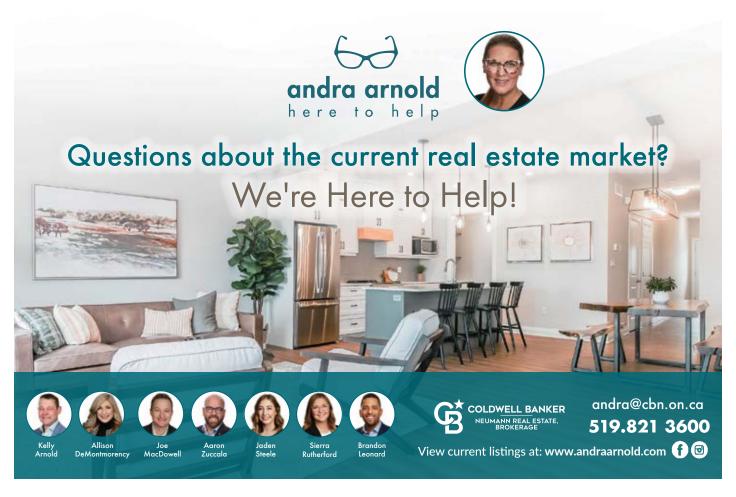
When both parties discuss and document expectations, disappointment is rare. For example, when a builder creates a schedule and sticks to it, the homeowner understands how long each stage takes and respects those requirements. Renovations are messy, loud, inconvenient and sometimes dangerous for young 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











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BELOW: Stephanie and Brian's entry door leads to the open and welcoming living room area. **OPPOSITE:** Stephanie's monochromatic design aesthetic allows her passion for accessories to pop. Natural grasses create texture and visual interest. Vintage books are displayed spine-in to let the variety of neutral page hues shine. Greenery, thrifting finds and texture-focused décor blend to create a unique charm.



LANDIG STORY JANET WHITE BARDWELL PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG

Since retiring in 2020 from her 40-year career as a flight attendant, **Stephanie McKenna** finally feels free to focus her full attention on an enduring passion: her design business, **Chic Alors Decor & Design**. She has owned the company since 2011, but now has the time to really establish her land legs for a business she has always loved. "Design has now become an integral part of my life," she says.

Continued on page 106











Encouraged to pursue interior design by her two daughters after she surprised them with makeovers of their own homes, Stephanie completed an online course through an accredited school. "It gave me the confidence to draw floor plans and start my business," she says. "The design part comes quite easily to me. I don't think it's something you can learn."

Stephanie's clientele includes residential customers and custom homebuilders. "Most of my work comes from referrals and friendships established," she says.

Over the years the homes she and her husband Brian, a retired pilot, have owned have always offered a testing ground for Stephanie to hone her design skills. "I use my own home as a blank slate, experimenting with colours, fabrics and décor," she says. "To me, a house is never

finished. Like nurturing a child, it is curated over time."

After downsizing from a 75-acre horse farm to a 26-acre horse farm, and then to 10 acres in Mono, the couple landed at their most compact space to date: a two-bedroom bungalow on a one-acre lot in picturesque Rayburn Meadows, East Garafraxa. Purchased in 2011, the home came complete with a fully finished walkout lower level and pool overlooking a private wooded area – perfect for empty nesters who want a manageable home with enough space for family and friends to gather comfortably. "I fell in love with this house," she says, adding that the unique salvaged elements of the home were especially appealing. "There were hemlock floors, a stained-glass feature and an oversize newel post – all reclaimed from old farmhouses being demolished in the area. We made an offer the next day." Continued on page 109

"TO ME, A HOUSE IS NEVER FINISHED. LIKE NURTURING A CHILD, IT IS CURATED OVER TIME."

- Stephanie McKenna

ABOVE LEFT: The locally reclaimed stained-glass window and newel post were features of the home that made the couple fall in love with the space. ABOVE: Stephanie enjoys switching out and moving accessories around to change things up and play with visual inspiration. "From the pillows and drapery to the picture frames and throws, I keep everything in my basement storage room and when I bring it upstairs with the change of the season, it's all brand new again," she says.

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The main floor required minimal cosmetic updates. The entryway leads to an open family room and kitchen with breakfast nook, a formal dining area to the right and office to the left. **Benjamin Moore** White Down on the walls provides a calm backdrop for the room's peaceful presence. Lighting fixtures by **Lando Lighting** offer visual interest. Neutral tones and natural textures blend to create a relaxing atmosphere and set the stage for Stephanie's unique accessories. "I love patina," she says. "Anything that is vintage, books, pottery, brass, pewter, antiques – I appreciate the history in each item."

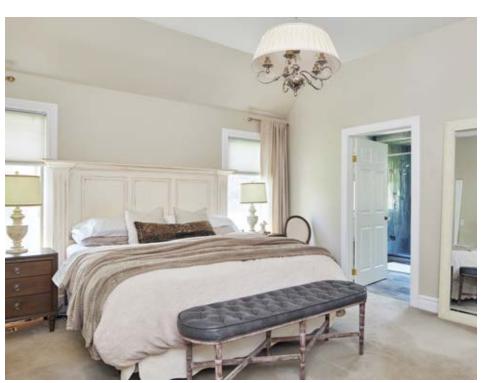
Stephanie describes her style as a mix of transitional, French farmhouse, modern country and coastal with a hint of contemporary. "I believe you should honour the home and its architecture, along with the client's style, and not to force a certain look." A passionate thrifter, Stephanie says she enjoys discovering pieces at local spots such as **Blumen on Broadway** and authentic vintage pillows and rugs online at **Little Barn Vintage**. *Continued on page 111*

TOP LEFT: Another reclaimed piece above the range is just one of the many eclectic elements that Stephanie cherishes in her home. TOP RIGHT: Dark matte wood chairs from Restoration Hardware are showcased against the white breakfast bar and fresh quartz countertops in Cannes from Millan Marble & Granite. RIGHT: The dining nook overlooking the pool and outdoor entertaining area provides a perfect spot to plan the day over coffee in the morning or talk about the future over a candlelit dinner.











On the lower level, a wood-burning fireplace was replaced with a gas version from Fergus Fireplace. A custom bar was installed by The Bar Store and a pool table create a classic entertainment space for their many guests and family visits over the years.

Recent updates have included a full principal en suite renovation and a laundry/mudroom makeover. A custom outdoor kitchen – designed by husband Brian – was installed by the couple's long-time trusted contractor **Steve Rowley**, owner of **Rowley Home Renovations**, and features a striking bar-style quartz countertop by ${\bf Foster}$ Signature Countertops Ltd., a Napoleon grill and an XLarge Big Green Egg for outdoor soirees by the picturesque pool. In fact, all the renovations in their homes over the years have been completed by Rowley. "We have worked with Steve for almost 25 years. He is like family," says Stephanie. "It is so important to have a trusted bond with your contractor." Continued on page 112

TOP LEFT: A comfy chaise tucked in the corner of the couple's primary bedroom is where Stephanie spends many evenings relaxing and planning client design projects. **TOP** RIGHT: Vignettes are a key element of Stephanie's design approach. **LEFT:** In the primary bedroom, the bed – layered with a variety of textures in neutral tones and flanked with solid dark side tables – gives the room a comfortable, grounded presence to retire to each night. FAR LEFT: The primary en suite, the couple's most recent renovation, offers the perfect mix of bling and natural features and textures.

home & designer

The charming laundry room makeover features cabinets from IKEA and countertop from Foster Signature Countertops. A coat of Benjamin Moore's Abalone completes the chic space.

The stunning principal en suite renovation features a whirlpool tub, walk-in shower and single vanity. Floor tile and shower walls are Evolution HD Porcelain Mica from Caledon Tile, Bath & Kitchen Centre. Continued on page 114

RIGHT: The fireplace and club chair in the home's basement sets the stage for cosy visits and get-togethers.
BELOW: Another recent renovation, this chic laundry room is bright and stylish. Natural wood shelving and unique accessories give this essential room character and personality.









ABOVE: Official empty nesters with four grandchildren, this sweet crib awaits family visits when they can happen once again. "I look forward to when we are able to visit – there are lots more memories to be made!" Stephanie says.













The designer feels fortunate to have had a long career with the airlines and to have been able to travel the world, with plenty of memories to spark inspiration. But now, as she focuses fully on her design clients, she is also grateful to have a comfortable home. "This is a home where I love to organize special events, which we all miss so much," she says. "As we spend so much time in our homes, I take great pleasure in creating spaces that my clients want to spend time in." он



TOP LEFT: Ready, set, grill! Hot summer days and nights are a breeze with the McKennas outdoor kitchen and lounge area. MIDDLE LEFT: Protected from the elements but still open and airy, this space overlooks the couple's pool area and is primed for get-togethers with family and friends in the future. **BOTTOM LEFT:** An avid gardener, Stephanie enjoys spending time developing the gardens around the pool.

RENO DOS

Stephanie reveals three renovation recommendations she has learned over the years.

Always get at least two quotes on a project.

Consider hiring a sub-contractor to coordinate trades. "It is invaluable to keep everything organized so that the job is done on time," says Stephanie.

Stephanie recommends going with a referral, no matter how long the wait will be. "With the current renovation boom, the rising cost of materials and supply issues, it is difficult to find a reputable contractor. Good contractors are not available for several months, but they will be worth the wait," she says.











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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.

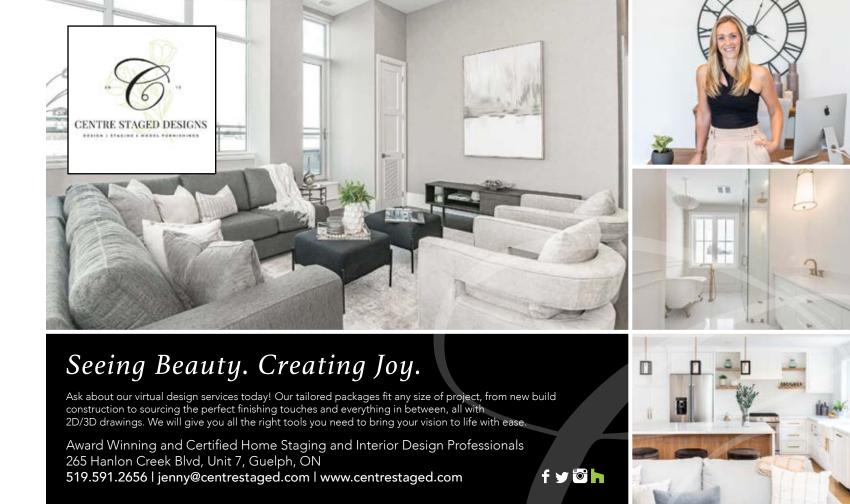
Continued on page 1

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.







.....

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.

.......







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.

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.



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.



FLANNERY ELECTRICAL INC.

Flannery Electrical Inc. is locallyowned by Adam Flannery. Adam is a licensed Master Electrician and operates a fully insured company and is an approved ESA contractor.

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The company also provides installation of backup generators, hot tub wiring, and LED lighting upgrades which are very popular now. In addition, they perform code compliance work for rental units and is up to date with new Smart Home technology.

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(Please see ad on pg 53)

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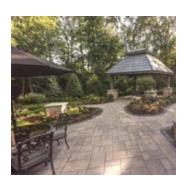
Jacob is the owner, founder, and head craftsman at Jacob's Woodworking. With over thirty years of experience, Jacob's skill is largely self-taught, and his craft has evolved as Jacob's Woodworking has grown. Jacob is a proud community member, and brings principles of quality, timelessness and dedication to each and every design. Jacob's Woodworking offers the opportunity for an interactive and accessible design experience, providing you with a beautiful kitchen which you will be proud to have in your home.

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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.





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.









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.





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



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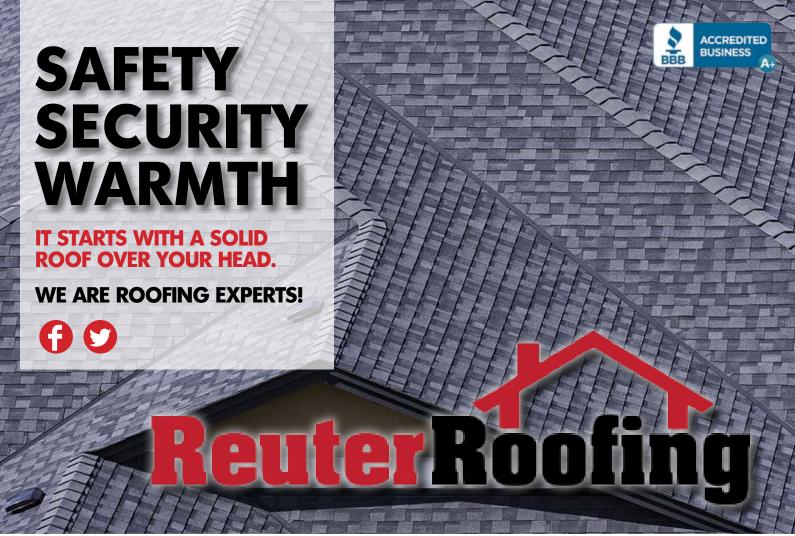
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