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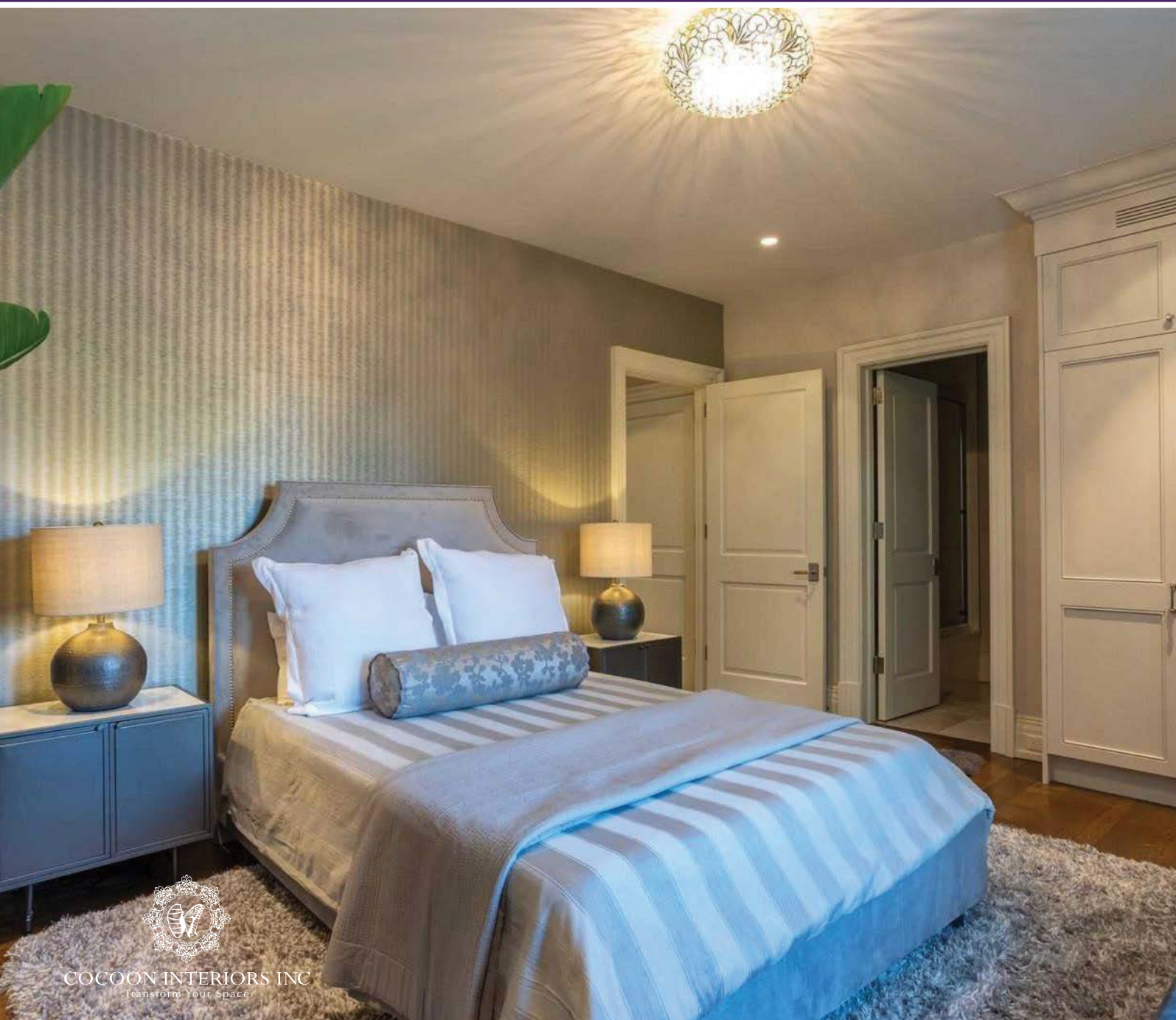


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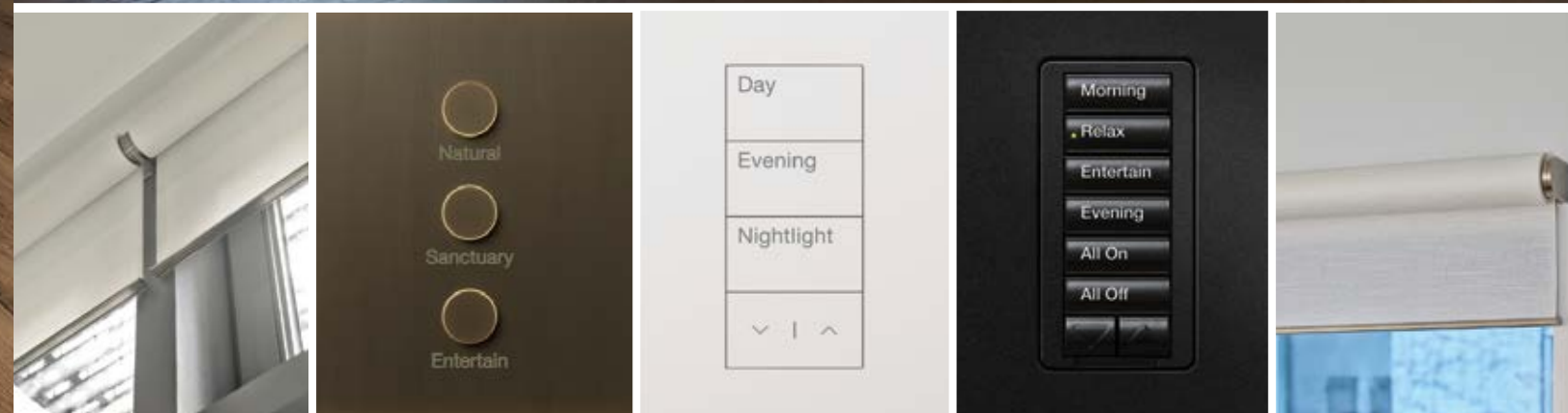
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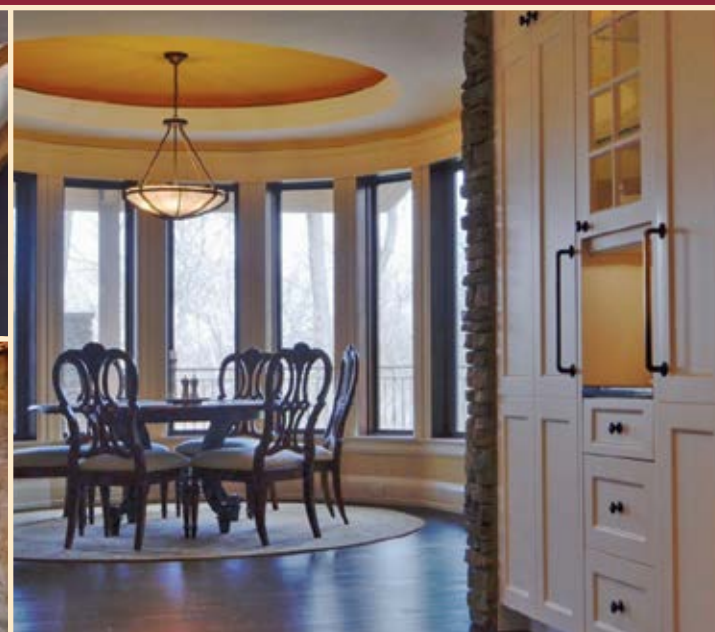


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editor's note

HOW CAN WE BE AT THE END OF 2022 ALREADY?

It feels like yesterday I was waxing poetic in the spring issue about the amazing container vegetable garden I was going to create. Full disclosure: that did not happen – and life did legitimately get in the way. But that is OK, the best part of fun décor – and home-related projects – is that they will always be there as a rewarding and enjoyable expression of our creativity and individuality. Not on our To-Do Lists, but rather on our Want-To-Do Lists.

In this issue, we're pretty sure you'll find something to add to your Want-To-Do List: our feature homes run the gamut of décor and design possibilities. Our homeowners in Listowel (page 52) reveal their naturally-charming festive styling and skilled design choices to help inspire your own holiday décor. Our homeowners in Kitchener (page 78) give you a tour through their heritage cottage and gorgeous new kitchen, which brings a fresh perspective to the home's rich history. At the opposite end of the home development spectrum, a beautiful model home by Thomasfield Homes and styled by the designer duo at Arris Interiors Inc. showcases the interior potential for this new development in Ospringe (page 114).

In this final issue of 2022, I would like to take a moment to thank all the businesses – both regional and national – that have supported the magazine this past year. You have helped make OUR HOMES such a great source of information and inspiration for readers, and we couldn't do it without you. As well, a thank you to the many behind-the-scenes professionals who make this magazine look so good: the graphic design team at OUR HOMES, the writers and our artistic photographers – thank you all: your talent brings the beauty of homes to our readers.

And a big thank you to YOU, our readers, for picking us up and checking us out – I thoroughly enjoy your feedback and our email correspondence. From OUR HOMES to yours, happy holidays! We are looking forward to inspiring beautiful interiors together with you in 2023.

Janet

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ON THE COVER

Step inside this Kitchener heritage cottage-style home with a future-forward new kitchen renovation. Story, page 78. Photography by Jason Hartog.



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PHOTO: SANDY MACKAY



GATHER 'ROUND

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

FEW THINGS ARE MORE WELCOMING IN A HOME THAN A FIREPLACE.

What was once a necessity for the daily functioning of a household (heating, cooking, baking, boiling water, etc.) has become somewhat redundant with advances in mechanical systems. However, it is difficult to substitute the sensory experience of the warm glow, flickers and crackles of an authentic wood-burning fireplace. The hearth remains the centre of a home and is a hallmark of emotional comfort to the human psyche.

Whether renovating or building new, installing a fireplace (wood burning, gas or even electric) creates a natural focal point and gathering place. The ideal location is logically within a common area, but it is also nice to view and enjoy the fireplace from adjoining spaces, such as the kitchen. The location of the chimney and venting requirements may dictate placement.

Many argue that the heat from a wood-burning fireplace is unrivalled, but it also comes with a certain level of commitment. Firstly, you need to cut or purchase a supply of seasoned firewood and have a place to stack and store it that is protected from the elements, such as an outdoor storage shelter or attached garage. You also need a storage rack or containment unit inside that can hold a supply for a day or

two. Although there are endless images of beautifully curated stacks of firewood inside homes, the reality is quite different! Firewood is messy – and so is the process of emptying and disposing of the ashes. Chimney cleaning and maintenance are also a must. However, an often-overlooked benefit of a wood-burning unit is the opportunity to slow down and create a daily ritual of getting the fire going in the late afternoon or early evening during the colder months – a good excuse to take a moment of repose while you do it!

There are parameters regarding the appropriate clearances of various units from combustible materials, often making the footprint of a wood-burning stove or fireplace considerably larger than a gas fireplace (and

PHOTO: SANDY MACKAY



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much more than electric). For wood burning and gas stoves, there are also requirements for the surround to be faced with non-combustible materials, including honed natural stone, slate, porcelain tile and metal. Always plan ahead and work with a professional to ensure you can accommodate the unit of your choice.

One obvious advantage of a wood-burning unit is that it provides a heat source in the event of a power outage, which can offer peace of mind. This isn't always the case with a gas unit. However, for day to day, a gas stove provides heat at the touch of a button and doesn't require cleaning or managing of wood. Just be sure to select a unit with realistic-looking logs. The temperature of a gas or electric unit is set with a thermostat and is much easier to regulate than a wood-burning stove.

Traditionally, an authentic chimney breast will extend from the floor to the ceiling (avoid stopping it above the firebox). Balance the chimney breast in the space, while keeping the centre bay the widest/largest. If installing a gas or electric fireplace that is horizontal in proportions (wider than it is tall), ensure that it is raised off the floor. The design of the fire surround should take into consideration the scale of the unit, the chimney breast and overall space to ensure the proportions are harmonious. The design of the mantel and surround will be affected by the unit you select, as manufacturers provide specific dimensions regarding clearances.

Even though the iconic and substantial traditional masonry chimneys are no longer commonplace (a lovely addition to a new build – albeit costly!), it is still important to be sympathetic to traditional architectural design if you're installing a wood or gas fireplace. If you can afford a chimney, be generous and make it look as authentic as possible by cladding the exterior in brick or stone and using traditional proportions.

Always consult a professional when installing any type of fireplace. Also, check with your insurance company about extending coverage. **OH**

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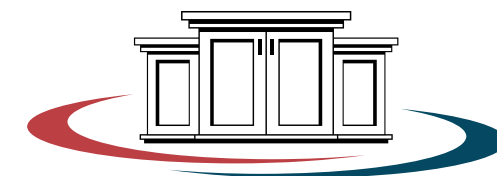
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3



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Bourbon Caramel CHEESECAKE

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

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amber.*

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Ingredients

GRAHAM CRUST

- 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
- 5 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ cup granulated sugar

CHEESECAKE FILLING

- 4 8-ounce blocks full-fat cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs, room temperature

BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream, room temperature
- ¼ cup butter, room temperature
- 2 Tbsp bourbon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp fine sea salt

Instructions

CHEESECAKE

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Using a food processor, pulse graham crackers into crumbs. Combine with melted butter and sugar. Press mixture into a 9-inch springform pan. Prebake crust for 10 minutes. Once baked, remove from the oven.

To prepare the cheesecake filling, using your mixer, beat together cream cheese and sugar on medium speed until creamy, about 2 minutes. Add sour cream and vanilla until combined. Beat in eggs one at a time, stopping after the last egg is combined to prevent overbeating. Pour the cheesecake batter on top of the crust. Use a rubber spatula or spoon to smooth it into an even layer.

Place in oven and bake for 55-70 minutes, until the centre is set. When it's done, the centre of the cheesecake will wobble slightly if you gently shake the pan. Turn the oven off and open the oven door slightly. Let the cheesecake sit in the oven and cool down for 1 hour. Remove from oven and cool cheesecake completely uncovered at room temperature. Then cover and refrigerate the cheesecake for at least 4 hours or overnight.

BOURBON CARAMEL SAUCE

Combine sugar and water in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir once to combine and leave untouched until the sugar has caramelized. The sugar will slowly turn from gold to an amber colour. Cooking the caramel longer will enhance the bitterness and is up to personal preference. Once it reaches an amber colour, remove from heat and slowly whisk in the heavy cream. The mixture will bubble – be careful of the steam. Add in butter and whisk until combined. Add bourbon, vanilla and sea salt and whisk to combine. Set aside and let cool in the fridge until thickened.

TO SERVE

Remove cheesecake from the springform pan. Pour the caramel sauce over top and place back into the fridge to set or until ready to serve. **OH**

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Black is definitely having a moment right now. There are a zillion different ways to insert black into your décor. Personally, I like using black as a stylish accent colour rather than an all-over application and since I almost always use white as my backdrop, it acts as a nice contrast and really anchors your overall design. A long time ago I learned the classic 60-30-10 rule for decorating, which says that 60 per cent of the room should be your dominant colour, 30 per cent should be your secondary colour and the last 10 per cent should be your accent colour. Now I'm not one to follow all the rules, but I do believe if black is your accent colour, it should be kept somewhere under 20 per cent, otherwise it's going to come on too strong and you won't consider it an accent. I've seen some very cool all-black rooms, complete with black ceiling and black trim, but that's for another post.



Here are my favourite ways to use black as an accent:

SWITCH UP YOUR CABINET HARDWARE AND/OR PLUMBING FIXTURES

This is a great way to incorporate a little bit of black into any room without going overboard. Changing out your hardware is an easy and affordable way to make a quick update. Don't be afraid to mix your metals. Just try to limit your metal finishes to no more than two per room.

TIP: Matte black looks great with brushed gold. *Continued on page 44*



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f i

PAINT YOUR INTERIOR DOORS

I absolutely love this idea because literally anybody can do it regardless of budget and it makes such an incredible statement. Black hides a lot of dirty, grimy little fingerprints. So, buy a can of black paint and get to it my friends. There are plenty of great tutorials online to help with your technique and choosing the right tools. A designer favourite is Tricorn Black by Sherwin Williams and I'd go with a satin finish.



GO DARK WITH ART

You want to choose artwork that is heavy on the black. Simple right? There are lots of options out there ranging in price from high to low. Make a serious impact with something high contrast or go moody with an all-dark palette. Either way, tie it back to one or two of the other options on this list and your décor is going to look so pulled together people will think you hired a designer.



CHANGE UP LIGHT FIXTURES

I especially like this option in the kitchen, but changing out light fixtures anywhere in the home is a great way to add some black. An all-white kitchen with black pendant lights is a rising trend. Even though there's no sign of black anywhere else in the design, it just seems to work very well. That little hit of contrast gives a much more polished look by staying away from the dreaded "matchy-matchy."



PAINT AN ACCENT WALL

I get that black is not the first colour that comes to mind for many when they are choosing paint colour for their home, but I would love you to reconsider. Just as white is a designer favourite, and literally goes with anything, I'd like you to consider black as the new neutral and try it out on an accent wall. It's moody, dramatic, cosy and can anchor a room in the best way possible. It works best if the rest of the room is white and you keep your furniture on the lighter side, too. **OH**



Amanda Shields is the creative director and principal designer for Amanda Shields Interiors.

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STORY **PATTI WILSON**

Your home becomes a hosting haven in the fall and winter months, when the chill sets in and people want a warm, cosy place to meet and greet. For some, their homes practically become an open venue for drop-ins and planned gatherings that stretch through the winter and into the new year. Here are some easy tips to keep your home “dressed for guests” on any given day.

MAKE WAY FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

The cardinal sin of decorating, for everyday or any occasion, is creating clutter in the process. I’m a big proponent of the “one in, one out” rule, whereby you remove one item for every new piece you intend to introduce into a room. This is especially relevant when adding seasonal décor to an already furnished and accessorized room. Whenever adding a set of new or themed décor or furnishings, your decorating strategy should include the removal of some of your year-round elements in favour of those festive fares. If you are decorating your fireplace mantel, be sure to remove the existing décor and start with a blank slate. This rule also applies to tabletop accessories, centrepieces, pillows and throws. Similarly, swap out the photos in your picture frames and replace pillows and throws with something appropriately themed in a richer fabric such as fleece and chunky wool knits. And what about the decorated tree? Unless you have lots of open space, you’ll likely need to remove an armchair or a side table to accommodate this larger item.

Continued on page 48

PHOTOGRAPHY **JAMES C LEE**



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TIP: Choose a theme and stick to it. There are many festive options: woodsy cottage, winter wonderland, silver and gold. Carry your chosen theme into others areas of the home, too, such as fresh or faux greenery wrapped around your banister and incorporated into unconventional areas, like in the kitchen and bathrooms.

SET THE MOOD

Lighting contributes to the vibe in your home, which impacts the people who live in your home and visitors. Layer lighting by combining ambient, task and accent lighting that can be increased and decreased, depending on the mood of your gathering. For example, dim light is better suited to dining and intimate gatherings, while brighter light is great for more casual kitchen parties. Installing a dimmer switch on your lights lets you crank it up or down as needed, so you don't have to commit to one type of light – or party!

TIP: Candles are a must at this time of year, adding a key layer to your lighting strategy, not to mention their aesthetic attributes and aroma! But be safe and never leave a candle unattended.



The holidays should be a time of fun and joy, but for many, they are also a source of stress. Take the overwhelm out of the holidays by planning ahead and being prepared. Your gatherings don't have to be overblown or overdone. Just a little thoughtful planning and preparedness will ensure that you enjoy the season just as much as your guests do! **OH**

Patti Wilson, principal of award-winning Patti Wilson Design, is known for creating stylish, thoughtfully curated, livable interiors.



WOW WITH A CENTREPIECE

What's the first thing people see when they enter your home? Many open-concept homes open to a dining area or kitchen with an island, making these the perfect place for a seasonal centerpiece. This will welcome and wow anyone who walks into the home – yourself included! You can't go wrong with a classic floral centerpiece, but stick to the season with elements like evergreen boughs, pinecones and even consider incorporating seasonal fruit and vegetables. One particularly fun thing about the holidays is the opportunity to really lean on the theme and be a little bit extra with light strings, shimmering baubles, ribbons, feathers or candles.

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STORY **TANYA BOTTOMLEY**
PHOTOS **JASON HARTOG**



William strikes a pose by the Christmas tree in the dining room of Katherine and Andrew Miller's Listowel home.
OPPOSITE: A simple cedar door wreath and urns filled with festive decorations grace the front entrance.

During the holiday season, a visit to Katherine and Andrew Miller’s custom built Listowel home is a memorable experience.

Backing onto the picturesque Listowel Golf Club grounds, the views outside are serene. Inside, the scent of festive candles floats through the air, greenery and natural Christmas décor can be found at every turn, and handsome golden retriever William approaches – a warm canine welcome that sets a charming seasonal vibe. *Continued on page 56*



LEFT: A tiny tree and garland add a festive touch in the foyer. **ABOVE:** Katherine keeps it real and simple when decorating for the holidays. **OPPOSITE:** Linen sheets, yellow quilts and fun throw pillows with a touch of teal dress the twin iron beds in this main-floor guest bedroom.



“WE LOVE OUR HOME – BUT WE LOVE IT THE MOST AT THIS TIME OF THE YEAR.”
~Katherine Miller



Katherine, a purchasing manager by day, but a tried-and-true décor and style enthusiast at heart, admits she goes a bit over the top with décor at this time of year. “Christmas is my favourite time of year and I love styling for the holidays,” she says. In fact, Katherine has always had a flair for design and a passion for décor. In her 20s, she purchased her first home and completed a top-to-bottom renovation. Not long after, she sold the home and did it all again. Andrew, a master electrician and owner of **AM Electric Inc.**, has his own passion for the inner workings of homes – and their abilities blend together perfectly in homebuilding harmony.

So when they purchased the Listowel property in 2015 and started their custom build, they had a vision and a solid set of skills to make it all happen. “We wanted to build something that reflected who we are and would suit our lifestyle,” she says. “Something warm and welcoming – a place for gathering with friends and family. A true home versus just a house.” The couple worked in tandem on the build, with Katherine in charge of all things design-related and Andrew completing all the electrical. All finishings were chosen by Katherine and sourced primarily from local suppliers. “We come from a small community and try to support local whenever we can,” she says. *Continued on page 59*

This classic white kitchen is timeless with Shaker-style cabinets by Barzotti Woodworking Ltd. and white quartz counters from Graniteworx. **TOP RIGHT:** Katherine and Andrew Miller sit at the island with William. She’s the designer behind Miller & Co. Interiors and he’s a master electrician and owner of AM Electric. **RIGHT:** The table is set with white linens and black dishware.





The result is a comfortable, relaxed environment with five bedrooms (three on the main level and two on the lower level), three bathrooms, and an open-concept kitchen, dining and living area – both upstairs and downstairs.

On the walls a blend of **Benjamin Moore** classic whites from **Town & County Decorating Centre** – Chantilly Lace, Decorator’s White and Pure White – create a fresh base. “I wanted our entire home to have white walls to act as a backdrop for all things décor,” says Katherine. Maple hand-scraped flooring throughout the main level offers texture, warmth and durability – which was key for the Millers with William in the house (and another golden retriever on the way).

Just off the entryway, a guest room with a fresh cottagey style provides a comfy space for overnight guests. The open-concept main kitchen is a mix of modern and traditional, featuring white Shaker-style cabinetry with glass inserts from **Barzotti Woodworking Ltd.**, a luxe and timeless marble subway tile backsplash, granite countertops from **Graniteworx** and an oversize side-by-side JennAir refrigerator from **Goemans Appliances**. An oversize centre island topped with Edison-style pendulum lighting creates a crisp yet warm appeal.

Continued on page 60



LEFT: This elegant tree is decorated with twinkling white lights, complementing the garland on the stairs. **ABOVE:** A living room with black-and-white art and a pop of green showcases Katherine’s style. **OPPOSITE:** Stockings are hung with care by the natural-stone fireplace in the cosy living room.



The spacious primary bedroom is located near the living area. In the en suite, Katherine selected a black vanity topped with a dark counter to complement the black-framed mirrors and lighting. The cream upholstered bed is dressed in sumptuous linens. There's plenty of room for a Christmas tree in this luxurious space.



The living and dining areas are at once cosy and spacious, achieved with 10-foot tray ceilings, oversize windows from **Golden Windows Ltd.** and a natural stone fireplace from **Lina Masonry**. Tucked into the dining area, Katherine's largest tree touches the ceiling and maintains a subtle, natural style. Off the living area, the primary bedroom and en suite are romantic and neutral – with space made for the second of three minimalist Christmas trees.

The lower level of the home, completed in 2020, features oversize windows that bathe the space in natural light. A compact and stylish second kitchen with custom built-ins by **Heirloom's Custom Cabinetry & Furniture** offer additional storage. A custom concrete fireplace by Dekko, installed by **Woodview Construction**, adds warmth and texture to the room. Also located in the basement is a spacious and functional office space that features stunning white oak and black cabinetry by Heirloom's Custom Cabinetry & Furniture. "Andrew and I both work from home, so having a larger, very functional office space was important to us," says Katherine.

Continued on page 62



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Katherine's personal style and skill can be seen in every inch of the Miller's custom home, most notably during the holiday season: greenery throughout the home is subtly festive and adds to the charm of the home. "I get a lot of inspiration from nature," says Katherine. "It is so simple to add a small pine tree, a wreath, top a mirror with a sprig of greenery or use little white lights for ambience. We love our home – but we love it the most at this time of the year."

Most recently, Katherine decided to take her love of all-things-style up a notch – she created **Miller & Co. Interiors** to extend her skills to others wanting help bringing their own visions to life. "I have always had a passion for interior design and styling," says Katherine. "It just took me a while to take the leap and offer my skills and enthusiasm to others." **OH**

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The lower-level is pure comfort with a Dekko fireplace surround and a second kitchen by Heirlooms Custom Cabinetry & Furniture. **ABOVE:** There is room for two in the downstairs office beautifully outfitted with custom black cabinetry, built-in desks and storage, also by Heirlooms Custom Cabinetry & Furniture.

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RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

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FIG AND THYME SYRUP

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 4-5 fresh figs
- A few sprigs of thyme

In a saucepan, combine sugar, water and figs. Heat gently for 5-10 minutes, stirring until the sugar dissolves and the figs begin to soften and break down. Remove from the heat and add the thyme. Allow to infuse for 30 minutes. Strain into a clean jar. You can keep any of the unused fig syrup for 3-4 weeks in the fridge.

PER COCKTAIL

- 2 oz. gin
- 1 oz. fig syrup
- ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
- Tonic water to top it off

To make your cocktail, fill a glass with ice and add gin, fig syrup and lemon juice. Top with a neutral tonic. Stir well, then garnish with a sprig of fresh thyme and enjoy! **OH**

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A third-generation family business founded in 1959, **Grand Valley Tile & Flooring** has long been known in the Waterloo region for its extensive selection of expertly curated flooring products and its gorgeous showroom. Vice-President Zach Goetz says his family has proudly grown the business through the years while servicing the local area and beyond. "We're humbled to help build our local communities across southwestern Ontario," he says. For this family business, customer service means everything, and it runs under a mission to help build the community in a responsible way and create functional and inspiring spaces for people to work, live and play. "We have expert knowledge of products and installations and formal training, holding diplomas and degrees in interior design and decorating," he says. "We help clients make the best selections for style, functionality and budget – and we install too!"

COLLABS

Working with homeowners, designers, contractors and owners to select materials, Grand Valley has collaborated on everything from small offices and coffee shops to spin studios, high-end restaurants and high-tech office spaces. "We do it all," says Zach. "About half of our business is home renovations and residential new builds – check out some examples of our work on Instagram!"



WHAT'S TRENDING

Zach says sustainable products are trending with his customers. "Natural wool carpets and cork flooring are some of the most sustainable materials on earth, and products produced domestically, like our wide selection of Canadian-made hardwood flooring, carpet and quartz countertops, are very popular," he says. "We invite you to come by and visit our beautiful, comfortable showroom and experience our products for yourself." **OH**

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DRIED ORANGE ORNAMENTS

PROJECT AND PHOTOGRAPHY **ERIN ROCHON**

THESE DRIED ORANGE ORNAMENTS ARE A COLOURFUL ADDITION TO YOUR TREE OR TABLE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON. THEY ALSO ADD A FESTIVE SCENT TO YOUR HOME.



MATERIALS

- 3 oranges
- Sharp knife
- Parchment paper
- Cookie sheet
- Hot glue gun
- String & needle
- Star anise
- Cinnamon sticks
- Rosemary sprigs
- Peppercorns
- Wooden beads (optional)
- String & needle

HOW-TO

Start by cutting the oranges into ¼-inch thick slices. Preheat oven to 200°F. Place sliced oranges onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Make sure orange slices are equally spaced and not touching each other. Bake oranges for between two-and-a-half and five hours, until slices are translucent.

Next, remove oranges from oven and let cool for two hours.

Then, with a glue gun, start decorating the orange slices. Glue some star anise to the centre, add some pink peppercorns, a cinnamon stick and a sprig of rosemary to complete your ornament. Have fun, get creative and try different combinations!

Lastly, cut some string to hang your ornament. Use a needle to make a hole near the top of the orange and thread the string. Add a wooden bead or a cinnamon stick to the string to complete the look. Knot the ends of the string.

Add these dried orange ornaments to your tree, as a decorative touch to your table or add to a gift for that special someone. **OH**



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CHRISTMAS Wishlist

We asked the staff at OUR HOMES what they'd like to find under the tree for their homes this Christmas.

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Breville
Wafflemaker



Tara
KitchenAid's
Blossom
Stand Mixer



Tyler
ActiveDough
+ Bamboo
Charcoal Pillow
from Malouf



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The Bay's Iconic
Oxford White
Point Blanket



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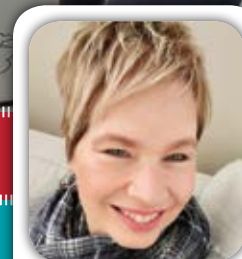
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STAR wall hanging



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ERIN ROCHON

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MATERIALS

Birch tree branch
Small and large star-shaped cookie cutter
Air dry clay (enough for 25 stars)
Roller
Paintbrush
String
White acrylic paint
Greenery (optional)

HOW-TO

Start by rolling out the clay to a thickness of about one-quarter inch.

Next, using the cookie cutter, cut 15 to 25 stars. Make enough to fill the branch.

Remove the excess clay from the stars. Apply a small amount of water to smooth out any rough edges on the stars. Then, use the tip of a fine paintbrush to poke a hole in the top centre of the star. Let the stars dry for 24 hours.

Once dry, paint the stars with

two coats of paint. Next, cut enough strands of string to hang each star to the branch.

Feed a strand of string through a hole in each star and make a knot. Repeat this step with all of the stars.

Lastly, tie the stars to the branch at varying heights. Cut excess string. Add some greenery to the branch.

Add your wall hanging over a mantel or on a bare wall to bring in the winter or holiday season. **OH**



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STORY MEGAN SMITH-HARRIS

How Do You HOLIDAY?

MULTICULTURAL HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Canada opens its arms to people from many different cultures. During the winter months, family celebrations proliferate and many of us raise a glass (or a fork) to mark the arrival of cherished holidays and reconnect with loved ones. Here's a sampler of holiday traditions from local families.

Bermudian Holiday Breakfast

Sacha Welsh, a fertility nutritionist, originally hails from Hamilton Parish, Bermuda. While attending boarding school at Albert College in Belleville, she met her future husband, Owen Welsh, now a vice-president at the Canadian Football League. The couple have three young daughters: Whitney, 6, Victoria, 4 and Cassia,



her family: boiled codfish and potatoes with tomato and onion sauces along with sides of boiled eggs, banana and avocado slices.

Stockings Hung With Care

Fred Lafontaine grew up in Québec during the depression. Money was tight, so at Christmastime there weren't a lot of gifts, but he and his siblings always received a stocking with chocolate, a hand-turned wooden top and a tangerine – considered an exotic treat



– in the toe. After Fred moved to Toronto in the 50s, he continued the custom with his wife Marie and their six children. Today, his eldest daughter Marie-Josée Lafontaine, who operates a retirement residence, keeps her father's tradition alive. "At midnight my staff and I hang Christmas stockings on every resident's door," she says. "Each one contains chocolate, a tangerine in the toe and a wooden top, hand-turned by my 99-year-old father who still makes these classic wooden toys in his woodshop."

Kwanzaa

Dewitt Lee, founder and president of Emancipation Month, has celebrated Kwanzaa (a pan-African holiday that began in 1966) his entire life. Every year, Dewitt and his partner, Suzette, enjoy sharing the week-long holiday with their six children. Kwanzaa begins on December 26 and ends on January 1, culminating with the Karamu feast when the family "samples foods from around the Caribbean, Africa and soul food from North America," says Dewitt. "One of the great traditions we have is shutting down the TV and social media. We focus on reading and writing about the Nguzo Saba, also

known as the Seven Principles or the Black Value System, which include: *Umoja* (unity), *Kujichagulia* (self-determination), *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility), *Ujamaa* (cooperative economics), *Nia* (purpose), *Kuumba* (creativity) and *Imani* (faith)."

Chinese New Year



Kevin, 28, and Robin, 25, she carries on holiday customs she grew up with. "Traditionally, Chinese New Year falls at the end of January or the beginning of February and continues for 15 days," says Ruowen. "There are dozens of rituals but here in Canada, we follow only a few of them."

"Parents, uncles and aunts give red envelopes containing money to the younger generation and to anyone who isn't married. We buy red letters and create lucky words with them." Her family also eats jiao zi (pork dumplings) before midnight and enjoys vegetable dumplings after midnight, followed by sweets, which symbolize a sweet future filled with happiness, good luck and prosperity.

Hybrid Hanukkah

"I was born Jewish and though I am not religious, I have grown to love the culture," says Avery Saltzman, co-artistic director of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre. "Hanukkah is a time of giving: the giving of oneself to family young and old. And it's also a delicious time of potato pancakes topped with applesauce." Avery and his husband, Kevin Dunlop, celebrate Christmas with Kevin's extended family, including nephews and nieces who excitedly await the arrival of St. Nick. After celebrating with their respective families, the couple have created their own hybrid holiday. "We plug in our electric Christmas tree adorned with ornaments both Jewish and not, switch on our gas fireplace and celebrate our love for one another by ordering Chinese food." **OH**

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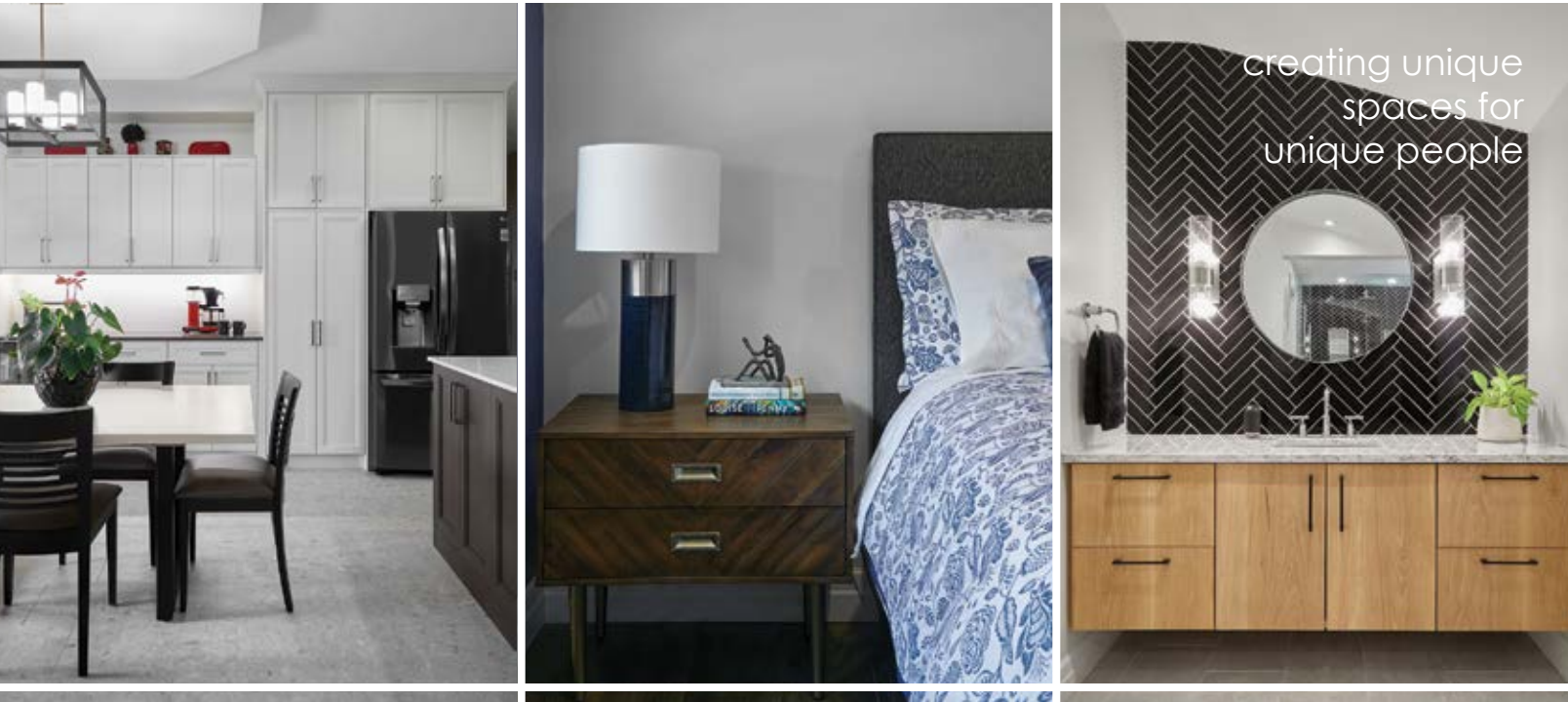
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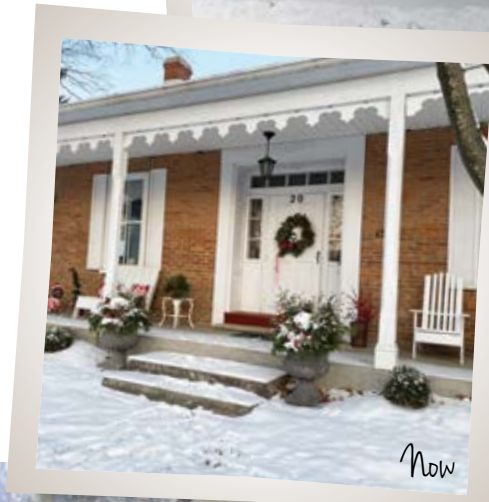
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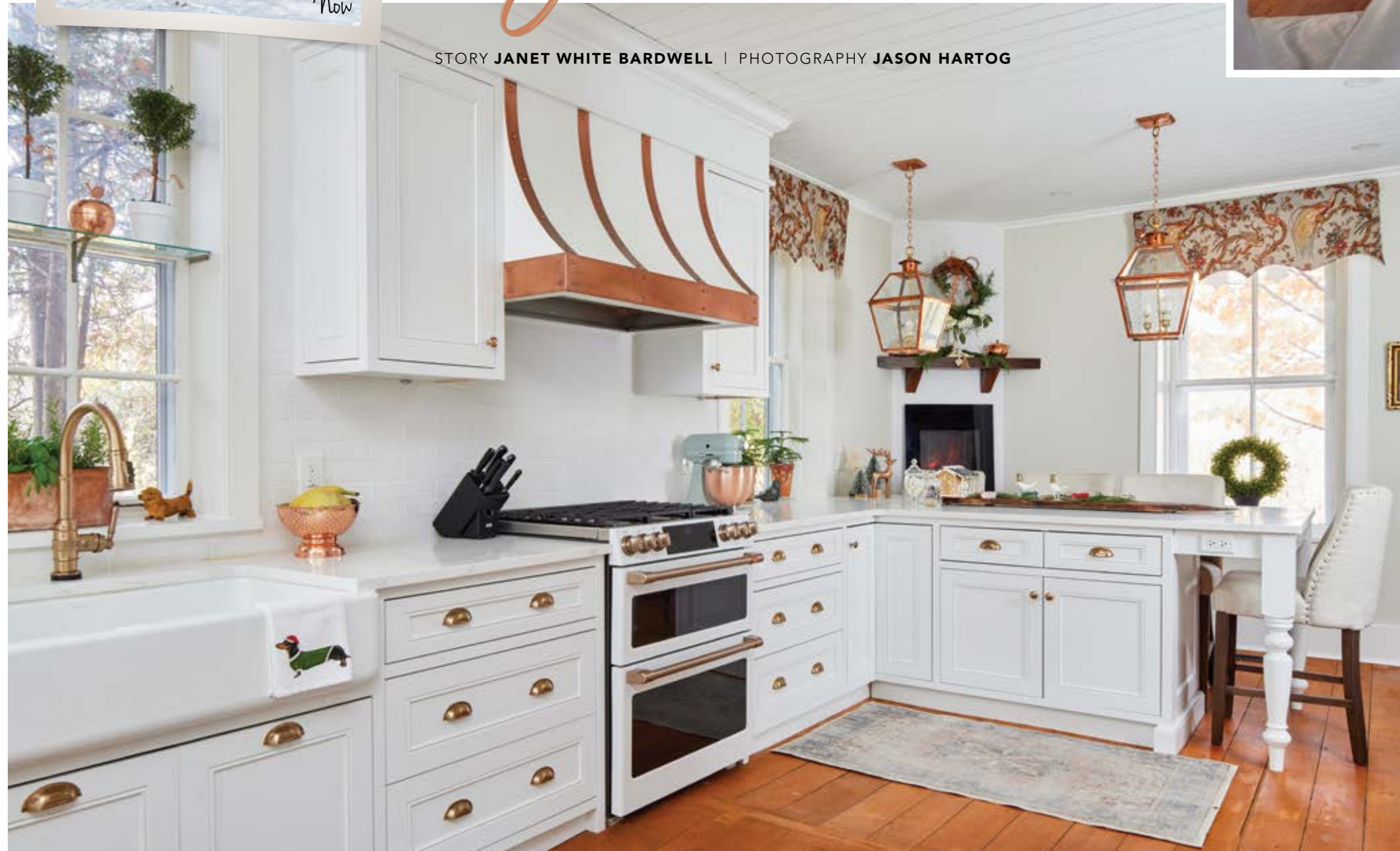


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HEART *of the* HOME *Rejuvenated*

STORY JANET WHITE BARDWELL | PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG



Set on the crest of a hill overlooking gorgeous views of the Grand River, Randy Martin and Gerry West's heritage cottage home in Kitchener's Lower Doon area has a rich and storied past – and an equally fulfilling future ahead.

Built in 1858 by Xavier Pfeffer – a local carpenter who also laid the hardwood flooring and pews at the local Doon Presbyterian Church – the home is constructed using a Regency Cottage style, with its characteristic low-pitched hip roof and symmetrical front facade. Randy and his late wife Gina originally purchased the home in 1983, and they renovated in 1994 to add a primary bedroom and en suite and upgraded the main bathroom to meet the needs of their growing three daughters.

Gerry and Randy began their life together in the home in 2014, and both have recently retired – now able to fully enjoy the area and their home with the newest addition to their home: miniature dachshund Murray – a little dog with a big character. “Randy and I both grew up near Lake Huron-Sarnia and like to be near water,” says Gerry. “We love to be able to stay active during the day on the trails and relax on the front porch in the evening to enjoy the sunset with a glass of wine.” *Continued on page 81*

LEFT: Randy and Gerry's new kitchen required relocating the existing dining room and taking down a wall to open the length of the new room to natural light from windows at the front of the home. The peninsula dining area is perfect for informal dinners and casual get-togethers. **ABOVE:** In the family room, a contemporary sofa, end table and coffee table from Tepperman's adds a comfortable and refined look to the rustic pine walls and natural stone fireplace.



Simple Shaker-style cabinets are covered with Benjamin Moore Oxford White and capped with gleaming copper hardware. Charming copper accessories add whimsy and shine. Area rugs by Ruggable.

Inside, the home is warm and relaxed. “We like mixing old and new together in our furnishings and artwork to create an informal, comfortable and cottagey vibe,” says Gerry. Notwithstanding the home’s many attributes – including gorgeous original pine floorboards and charming details such as an original Dutch door – the kitchen was dark and the couple wanted something more open, functional and bright. In 2021 they connected with **Suzanne Tait** from **Suzanne Tait Design** to plan a renovation that would include expanding the kitchen, relocating the dining room and rejuvenating the side-porch and front-entry area. “I was so excited to meet Gerry and Randy after our first phone call,” says Suzanne. “I love old homes and this one is truly special with such a rich history.”

Suzanne collaborated with **Stacey Gagnon Halil** from **Simply Dwell** and **Heirlooms Custom Cabinetry & Furniture** on the kitchen design. Structurally, a wall between the existing kitchen and the previous dining room was taken down, letting the daylight in from the front of the home to brighten the space. “There is always a chance of a surprise when the walls come down in a heritage home, and this home was no different,” says Gerry. “We needed to replace the ceiling and inside we found an antique scotch box filled with booze – if only these walls could talk!” *Continued on page 82*



ABOVE: Gerry, Randy and designer Suzanne Tait forged a strong working relationship through communication and a shared love of heritage homes. **TOP LEFT & RIGHT:** Natural details and greenery bring festive warmth to the home. A gingerbread replica of the home made by a family friend is a beyond-charming homage to the special space. **RIGHT:** A functional nook in the kitchen provides an area for coffee prep, lots of storage space and areas to display dishes and culinary copper accessories.





Defining the design direction was Gerry’s love of brass, copper and her must-have GE Cafe Series appliances in matte white with metal handles. “We knew this had to be an integral part of the design materials,” says Suzanne. The layout of the kitchen presented an initial challenge. The couple envisioned a large island, but space was tight. “The team recommended a peninsula, and at first I wasn’t keen on it. But once we saw the 3D design, we were delighted,” says Gerry. “Suzanne and Stacey are great listeners and really addressed our wish list. We grew to respect and trust the team and enjoyed the process.”

The result is a pristine and bright open kitchen area that shimmers with character. Gerry’s chosen GE Cafe Series fridge and stove in matte white with copper hardware from **Kimball Appliance** set the tone for the copper accents throughout, such as the striking Charleston series copper lanterns from Lantern & Scroll. Quartz countertops by **Natural Stone City** provide a neutral and luxurious workspace for meal prep. The Whitehaven sink by Kohler, and Broderick touch faucet by Delta from **The Ensuite Bath & Kitchen Showroom** create a vintage appeal that complements the home’s heritage roots. *Continued on page 84*





“IT IS SO BRIGHT AND INVITING. WE ENTERTAIN MORE NOW AND WE GET LOTS OF COMPLIMENTS – IT REALLY IS THE HEART OF OUR HOME.”

TOP LEFT & RIGHT: A three-season porch area was given a functional makeover to include a place for outdoor dining and a relaxing spot to take in the outdoors. **RIGHT:** Just off the kitchen, a rare original Dutch door is just one of the many unique details to be appreciated and enjoyed in the couple’s heritage cottage home. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** A second nook in the kitchen houses a wine fridge and lots of storage to showcase stemware. A glimpse of the church pew made by the home’s original builder can be seen in the entryway. **BOTTOM:** The result of lots of planning and teamwork, the couple’s renovated kitchen is bright and welcoming – everything they hoped it would be. Stove by Goemans Appliances.





Murray, a miniature long-haired dachshund, found his forever home with Gerry and Randy during the pandemic lockdown, and has been a feisty addition to their lives ever since.



Tucked beside the space-saving peninsula eating area, a raised fireplace from **Best Home Comfort Inc.** adds a cosy ambience and fends off the drafts that often accompany an older home. Surrounding the fireplace, white-painted brick tile adds texture and harmonizes with the home's existing materials, says Suzanne. "It feels like it could be original." A recessed coffee station and separate wine nook add character to the space. "The idea is that we start the day at one area and end it at the other," says Gerry. Just off the kitchen, a charming screened porch was updated to create a three-season sitting area. "The gardens and property are beautiful, and this porch is a perfect spot to enjoy a morning coffee or dinner in the warmer months," says Suzanne.

In the entryway, the home's central staircase was refreshed with dark paint and a durable wool runner from **Alexanian Carpet and Flooring**. Throughout the home, Gerry's passion for floral design can be seen at every turn, with elegant custom accents created using materials from the **Cambridge School of Flowers**. *Continued on page 86*

TOP: The dining room was relocated to the opposite side of the house and is furnished with antiques and charming accessories. The reclaimed wood dining table and bench are from HD Threshing Floor Furniture. Benjamin Moore Gray Mist creates a calming backdrop. **RIGHT:** The entryway was given a bright makeover with fresh paint on the stairs and a durable, chic runner. The pine floorboards are original.

(SINCE 2004)


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RIGHT: On the upper level, the primary bedroom and en suite are simple and comfortable with antique furniture and original doors and flooring. **BELOW LEFT & RIGHT:** On the main level, a simple powder room off the kitchen maintains a vintage appeal. The couple's main-level office is a functional and comfortable space to get work done. More of Gerry's beautiful floral work accents the desk. **BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT:** The home's two upper-level bedrooms feature slanted ceilings, antique details and lots of charm.



Randy and Gerry's home welcomes the new, but also honours years past and the home's origin: a wood church pew built by Xavier Pfeffer sits in the entryway as an homage to the past and the effort that went into building the home they now enjoy. "The results are beautiful and fit our needs perfectly," says Gerry. "It is so bright and inviting. We entertain more now and we get lots of compliments – it really is the heart of our home." **OH**





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To Rent or Buy?

THAT IS THE QUESTION

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

In life and in real estate, timing is everything. With interest rates ratcheting up at an unnerving pace, is it better to rent and luxuriate in a turnkey, trouble-free existence? Or should one take advantage of plummeting real estate prices and jump into the housing market before mortgage rates soar even higher?

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO? As a consumer, it's hard to know the right financial move in the current real estate climate, which is, at best, murky and at worst, highly volatile.

These are not idle musings. My American husband and I are in the thick of it. After 20 years living in the United States, we decided to move back to my Canadian homeland. I identified a charming, walkable community for us to live in, one with great restaurants and enviable cultural attractions, but by the time we relocated, house prices had soared an astonishing 40 per cent in a mere two years. Our dream of buying a storybook cottage imploded as pre-emptive bully bids and dog-eat-dog bidding wars became the norm.

So, we've been renting. Don't feel sorry for us – we're in a penthouse condo with amazing views, a private rooftop deck and heated underground parking. After decades of

homeownership, we're enjoying the freedom of not paying property taxes, shovelling the walkway or dealing with maintenance issues. But here's the rub: we miss being the rulers of our own domain. We want a real Christmas tree (only faux allowed here) and crave a big gas barbecue instead of the lame electric one mandated by the condo board. But most of all we want a fenced yard for our dog Duncan, who currently lives with our son because we're in a no-pets building.

I have bought and sold eight homes and done things the right way (made a tidy profit), and the soul-destroying way (sold two houses for less than I paid for them). Why do I keep buying real estate? Growing up, I was indoctrinated to believe that renting was "throwing money away" that could more advantageously be used to pay down a mortgage. That reasoning has merit, but on

the other hand, my husband and I don't want to be chumps and overpay for a house that won't hold its value. I consulted some local real estate professionals to get their take on the situation.

The market is correcting and that's a good thing according to Jodi Hannivan of Keller Williams Lifestyles Realty in London. "Now that prices and expectations are more balanced, buyers can ask for reasonable conditions such as financing and home inspections."

According to a recent study released by in-house economists at Desjardins Group, Ontario has moved from a "pandemic-fuelled seller's market" to more "balanced territory." Housing prices are predicted to drop by up to 25 per cent by December 2023 from their all-time high in February 2022.

Is springtime still the ideal time to buy? According to Jodi, maybe not. "Seasonality doesn't really exist in the way it used to," she says. "We see great properties listed throughout the year." Her advice to homebuyers: "Keep up your search. There aren't as many buyers in the winter so you won't face as much competition."

June Leitch, a realtor at Home & Company Real Estate Brokerage in Stratford concurs. "We're still in a transitional market and prices continue to go down slightly on a weekly basis," June says. "After six years of a seller's market buyers now have an advantage because inventory is high and negotiations come into play with almost every deal."

And renting isn't always the cheaper option. Recent stats from rentals.ca indicate: "The average price for all property types across Canada in September was \$2,043 per month." This is an increase of 21.9 per cent from April 2021.

"In our community we have a shortage of rentals and rents are high so it comes down to supply and demand," explains June. "If someone can qualify for a mortgage, they should consider purchasing because their monthly payments will likely be less than their rent."

Will my husband and I finally be able to buy a Victorian charmer on a mature tree-lined street at an affordable price? That remains to be seen. In the meantime, we're enjoying the perks of being renters but looking forward to the day when we can play with our dog in our own backyard. **OH**

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Continued on page 98



**Front: Wes, Sabina & Daniel
Back: Adrian, Brendan,
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Homes are taking longer to sell than in the past two years. The median days on market have tripled in the last year and we are seeing properties on the market for anywhere from three weeks to three months. My advice is: Prepare and price your home properly to sell at the best price and in the shortest time.

BEST UPDATES

Clean, declutter and depersonalize are my words of wisdom when getting your home ready. Take care of those outstanding items on your to-do list and hire out the ones you aren't able to do yourself. The more move-in ready your home is the better. Competition is stiff! Your realtor can help you decide which items offer the best return on investment.



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Pick A Colour

EXPERT ADVICE ON CHOOSING PAINT COLOURS FOR YOUR KIDS' ROOMS

STORY **CONNIE JESKE CRANE**

From bedtime stories and board games to play dates. From Facetiming friends to homework. Your child's room is a place where a lifetime of memories are made. So when it's time to paint and decorate, let's face it, parents may feel a bit of pressure.

Colour in particular, so central to a child's room, may have you wavering a bit. Do you go bold or neutral with some bright splashes? And, more practically, is it possible to land on a colour that doesn't just work for today, but lasts for a few more ages and stages?

We took our questions to Sharon Grech, a design expert with Benjamin Moore Paints in Canada. Here are some helpful tips from Sharon:

Involve your child

Rather than just a quick chat to suss out your child's favourite colour or pop culture character, Sharon suggests a deeper dive. If kids are old enough, she says, "Let them have some creativity and learn about the process so it can be fun to go through it with them and see what colours they like, rather than just throwing down a paint deck," she says. She also suggests going online or looking through magazines with your kids and "getting out, letting them show you what they like and what they're interested in."

Sharon says today's trends are more about personalization "as opposed to saying, 'Oh, everybody's using pink' or 'Everybody's doing this.' It's more like everyone adding their own personality," Sharon says.

Ultimately, involving your child more, she says, may result in a décor scheme that has longevity. "It might even make them feel more like 'I'm going to keep my room tidy and clean because I was part of it!'" Sharon says. *Continued on page 104*



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Think outside the box with colour

Once you’ve made colour choices, the options don’t stop there. You may want to do something beyond applying colour to all four walls.

SHARON HAS CREATIVE SUGGESTIONS:

While **accent walls** have been around for a long time, she still likes them, saying colour helps define different areas. “The idea of the rooms being more multifunctional is big – the room has more functions than just for sleeping. And colour is a really great way to help define the difference.” One option, Sharon says, is applying a bold colour to one wall, while keeping others neutral.

Also popular is **colour blocking** or **colour dipping**. Here, Sharon says, you might run a favourite colour part-way up the walls, “maybe three quarters of the way up, or a quarter depending on what you’re defining. I think in a young kid’s room it almost feels like a horizontal stripe or band where things that kids can reach are below a certain area and defined by a colour – which is fun.”

Painted furniture can be a nice joint DIY project too, says Sharon. “Painting a headboard or chair or painting a dresser. It’s a great way to bring colour and fun into the space.”

“**Murals** are absolutely a thing I’ve been seeing,” she adds. Whether you hire an artist or paint one with your kids, murals can make a room personal and memorable. Sharon even sees them in tween and teen bedrooms but notes with this age group designs lean “more geometric, something like a mountainscape or treescape, but really simple and graphic.”



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BENJAMIN MOORE

Don’t be afraid to break some rules

Finally, Sharon says traditional paint and colour rules aren’t absolute. For example, “I don’t think colour really defines gender the way it did 50 years ago or even 20 years ago. I don’t think about rules for colour, especially when it comes to gender.”

Even with those tried-and-true rules, Sharon says there is wiggle room. “Maybe you think, ‘Oh I can’t use a dark colour because it’s such a small room.’” Here, Sharon says it’s more about creating balance. “Colour is very emotional and definitely we’re drawn to certain colours because of that emotional connection. You don’t want to lose that completely.”

So how to make that bold colour that your child loves work in a small space? From a composition standpoint, Sharon says, “Really, any colour can look fantastic in a room. It’s really how you use it.” She suggests adding good lighting and possibly balancing bold or dark shades with some neutral walls. “It can really add a lot of joy if it’s your kid’s favourite colour.” **OH**

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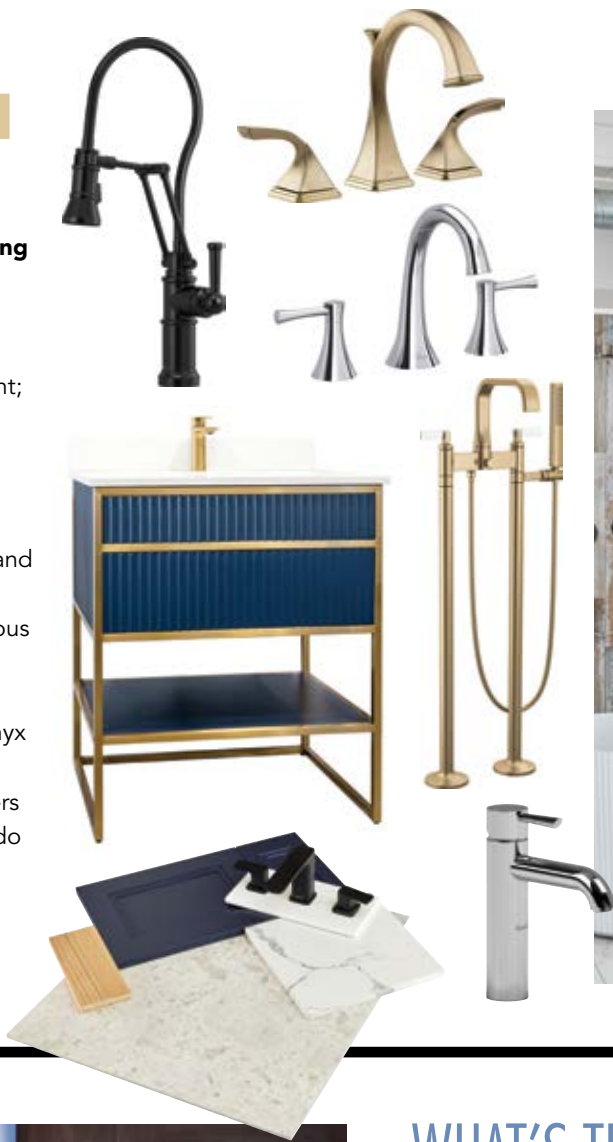
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WHAT'S TRENDING

Smart home technology has entered the bathroom and kitchen spaces, says Rudi, bringing digital and voice-controlled fixtures. "Also, a focus on age-in-place products and design brought us to partner with Mobility in Motion, a province-wide supplier of home accessibility solutions." Large open-concept, sill-less showers continue to be trending in bathroom design, says Rudi, adding that both black and brushed-gold faucets, lighting and hardware, combined with white, are also in hot demand. "On the plumbing front, more efficiency is very important with longevity with warranties being one of the most requested pieces of information," he says. "Rental equipment such as water heaters and water softeners are being shunned, with customers purchasing better quality, more efficient pieces that save operating costs and overall cash outlay." **OH**



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(Please see ad on pg 66&67)



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(Please see ad on pg 47)



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(Please see ad on pg 87)



STORY
LISA KOOISTRA

PHOTO: BLYNDA DACOSTA

3 REASONS Designers Love SCANDINAVIAN STYLE

If you've seen my work, then it should come as no surprise that I'm a big fan of Scandinavian décor. This distinctive aesthetic is also popular among many of my clients, who are seeking a home that is defined by simplicity, warmth and comfort, with contemporary flair. These happen to be the very qualities that encapsulate what has been affectionately dubbed "Scandi style" and from an end-user perspective, are what home goals are made of. From a more technical designer's perspective, here are three reasons this unique aesthetic has been at the forefront of interior design since the 50s, and it isn't likely to fade anytime soon.



PHOTO: BLYNDA DACOSTA

IT WORKS

Function is one of the fundamental values and guiding principles of Scandinavian design. This approach gives precedence to the practical over the ornamental. Looks are important when it comes to design but the utilitarian mindset behind this decorating style focuses on efficiency, maximizing space, the user's energy and the materials used in construction. Aesthetically, Scandinavian-inspired design embraces clean lines, subtle curves and tapered legs, with a "less is more" mindset.

Another important aspect of this look isn't about what's in the space, but rather what isn't there. I'm referring to clutter. Regardless of your home's style, the dreaded "C" word creeps up and captures our home, and with it, our sense of space and sanity. Decluttering is even more critical in Scandinavian spaces to enhance a home's function and simplicity.

Continued on page 112

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IT HAS STAYING POWER

The neutral palette that defines Scandinavian style gives it a much longer shelf life than perhaps the bolder, more “trendy” styles that come – and go – and quickly show their age. This makes it a winning choice for many clients, who don’t want to endure the inconvenience of yet another redesign in a few years, or suffer the cost.

This minimal colour palette commonly includes variations of white, off-white, ivory, beige, taupe and grey, and visual depth is achieved through the layering of multi-tonal neutrals, some subtle (and specific) patterns, and a variety of different textures. Black details bring balance to this neutral backdrop, add emphasis and draw attention as key focal points in the space, such as black-and-white prints or black-framed artwork, black accessories or accent furniture.

Materials also tend toward the neutral and organic, with a big focus on wood everywhere from flooring and furniture to accessories.



IT FEELS LIKE HOME

The role of a designer is to make a house (or a condo) feel like a home. A home is intrinsically warm, cosy and comfortable, inviting you to come in, sit down and put your feet up. When a client feels all this in their newly designed home, a designer’s work is done. I love Scandinavian décor because it does exactly that.

The Scandinavian concept of “hygge” is about comfort as a state of mind. So, how does a feeling or a thought materialize in a physical and sensory way? Enter texture. Think oversize cushions, cotton chenille and alpaca wool throws, knotted area rugs and fluffy sheepskin. Now, layer these over hardwood, wicker, leather and linen. If you picked up on a theme, very good! Scandi style leans heavily on organic materials and motifs that instantly warm the heart and body.

Scandinavian style has it all – high function, simplicity and beauty, all priorities in today’s hectic world. A home should be a place to escape and feel embraced by the people, things and emotions that bring you comfort. If you’re in search of a new aesthetic for 2023 or are craving some cosy, give Scandinavian a go.

Lisa Kooistra is the creative director and principal designer for Lisa Kooistra Design.



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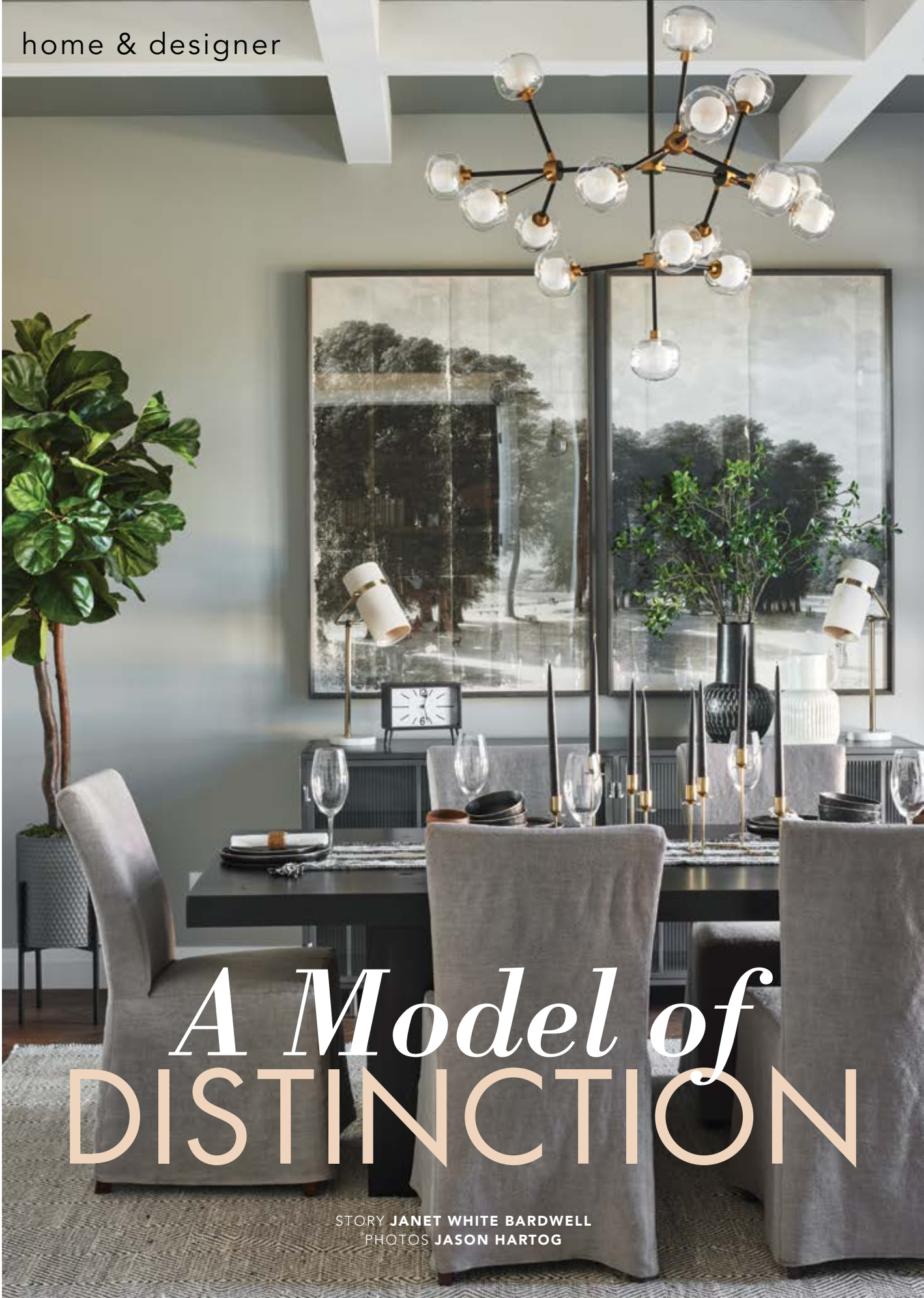
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A Model of DISTINCTION

STORY JANET WHITE BARDWELL
PHOTOS JASON HARTOG



WHEN THOMASFIELD HOMES APPROACHED CANDACE CHRISTIAN AND CHRISTINE SCHMIDT OF ARRIS INTERIORS INC. TO DESIGN THE MODEL HOME FOR A COMMUNITY OF GORGEOUS ESTATE HOMES SET ON HALF-ACRE LOTS IN OSPRINGE, THEY KNEW THEY WERE UP FOR THE TASK.



Since launching Arris Interiors Inc. in 2016, the team has designed and staged more than 30 model homes for local home builders. “This custom model home was an entirely new approach for the Thomasfield team, and they trusted our process and vision,” says Christine. “We couldn’t be more proud of how it all came together.”

Candace and Christine describe their design aesthetic as modern organic with a nod to the past, and the home they have created certainly epitomizes this style. “We are always trying to think about materials in different ways,” says Candace. “This project is a representation of our current style and really highlights our focus on marrying form and function in new and interesting ways.” *Continued on page 116*

TOP LEFT & LEFT: “Model homes are a great opportunity for both the builder and their suppliers to showcase what they can offer while also really inspiring and impressing potential buyers,” says Candace. **TOP RIGHT:** Designers Candace and Christine say a model home project always starts with a floor-plan review with required changes noted to architects prior to permitting. **OPPOSITE:** Furnishings were selected based on their clean lines, organic feel and materials, such as linen, wood, leather, metal and wool – highlighted with pops of colour throughout. Chandelier from The Lighting Shoppe.



OUR HOMES SAT DOWN WITH THIS DYNAMIC DESIGN DUO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROCESS OF CREATING THIS BEAUTIFUL MODEL HOME.

Q: *Can you share a bit about the background of this project?*

A: Model home design and presentation is one of our most popular services with our builder/developer clients. It is one of their greatest marketing tools and we love helping them showcase their craftsmanship to potential buyers. We have worked with Thomasfield Homes in various design capacities since 2016, but this was the first model home project we have completed for them.

Q: *What guidelines did Thomasfield give you for this project? Any restrictions?*

A: There weren't many restrictions from the Thomasfield team, so we could let our imaginations run a little wild. This is not typically the case and often there would be some parameters and restrictions. From a process standpoint, the team was collaborative and receptive to our ideas and recommendations.

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ABOVE & LEFT: A wood-slat wall by Stairworks adds visual interest and texture while allowing light into the stairway leading to the lower level. Stairs and railings also by Stairworks. **FAR LEFT, TOP RIGHT & RIGHT:** Arris Interiors' design process always starts with a good understanding of the target market. "Time at the beginning goes into market research and trade/vendor meetings so we can formulate a strong design plan," says Candace.



Custom blinds and drapery throughout are from Blinds Are Us and installed by Tri-City Blind Guy. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** While most of the furnishings and décor are neutral, bold choices were added in other areas of the home for added impact. **BOTTOM:** Vaulted ceilings highlighted with exposed beams create drama in the living area.



Q: *How would you describe the décor style of this model home?*

A: The furnishings and décor were all about natural elements and layers of texture and tone. We took inspiration from the stunning natural area that surrounds the development site along with a nod to the Mid-century modern style – hence why we dubbed this our #projectmidcenturynod.



DESIGNING THE DETAILS

Five materials used in the model home and why.

Walnut Cabinetry. With an emphasis on warm natural wood, natural walnut cabinetry throughout seemed like a no-brainer, says Christine. “There is a combo of natural and laminate walnut – based on budget, we showcased the natural wood in key areas.”

Oak Hardwood. Wide-planked and hand-scraped, the beautiful white oak hardwood by Beaulieu Canada Ltd. from **Flooring Plus** was selected specifically by Arris to complement the walnut cabinetry and provide a base of warmth. It also blends seamlessly with the slat wall, stairs and railing by **Stairworks**.

Slate Tile. “Selected to contrast the modern feel of the primary en suite, the natural textures and imperfections of the tile stand up so beautifully against the sleek cabinetry, counters, fixtures and quartz,” says Candace.

Terrazzo Quartz. “The Sanibel Shoreline quartz was our jumping off point for the kitchen design,” says Christine. “The large terrazzo pattern and taupe-white finish was the perfect neutral complement to our overall design.”

Textured Tiles. Candace and Christine say they love repetition in different applications. “When you walk through the front door you land on a linear tile that gives the look of woven fabric,” says Candace. “We wanted to incorporate textural fabrics in this home – linen, chunky knits, etc., and this tile gave us the same feel with a hard surface application.”



Continued on page 121



HIGHLIGHTS — ROOM BY ROOM

The design duo shares some details about two of their favourite spots in the home.

THE KITCHEN

Arris Interiors worked with **Paragon Kitchens** to create this stunning heart of the home. “They knocked it out of the park,” says Christine. “There are so many little nuances to this design and from day one they were on-board with the vision.” Highlights include two-tone framed cabinets that play with proportions – thicker gables that frame all the cabinets in the kitchen and flow seamlessly into the chunky floating shelves on either side of the hood. Appliances by **TA Appliances & Barbecues**.

PRIMARY BEDROOM EN SUITE

The en suite was made bigger by shifting a bit of space from the mudroom to create a long, linear en suite that features a wet room with freestanding tub and double showers. “En suites are a huge selling point in model homes, so it warranted minimizing some other areas to make this space shine,” says Candace.

Q: *Where did you find inspiration for this project?*

A: Mid-century modern has always been a huge inspiration for us – design rooted in functionality and clean lines with emphasis on wood and contrasting or bold accent colours. The home doesn’t have the overly retro feel that is so often associated with this design movement, but you can find nods in the custom-designed powder room vanity, full-height, oak-slat wall railing, repeated in the custom oak slat headboard, asymmetrical features in the den and great room fireplace.



LEFT AND TOP: Storage in the primary en suite includes cabinetry and shelving to showcase bathroom décor items. **OPPOSITE:** There were a few key areas Arris Interiors redesigned from the initial floor plans to maximize space and impact. The kitchen and primary en suite with wet area were the biggest of the changes.

Q: *What do you like best about this project?*

A: The juxtaposition of traditional and rustic set against smooth and modern. We love playing with the push and pull of contrasting styles and finishes and this home is a perfect example – hand-scraped, rich stained hardwood contrasted with streamlined slab cabinetry. Natural slate tiles set against a dramatic veined quartz feature wall in the en suite.

Q: *How do you – and the client – feel about the results?*

A: The result has impressed us all. The model has gone above and beyond to showcase what Thomasfield Homes has to offer and their quality craftsmanship.



LEFT: A dramatic wood-slat headboard by Riverside Millwork Group, set against a dark wall in the primary suite, continues the natural Mid-century modern style in the rest of the home. **ABOVE:** Warm tones and natural textures create a welcoming, organic and timeless space. Rugs by Flooring Plus.



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KITCHENS

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LEFT: In the den area, an asymmetrical walnut bookshelf features a Dekton solid surface inset panel to reflect light in the space. Many accessories from Wills & Prior. **BELOW & BOTTOM MIDDLE:** A green feature wall in the laundry/mudroom area adds a pop of colour against neutral, natural tones. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The powder room features a vanity custom-designed by Arris Interiors to look like a piece of furniture.



THE DEVELOPMENT

Matthew Krizsan, director of marketing for **Thomasfield Homes Ltd.**, says the Ospringe development is a perfect location for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of the city and still be close to many major centres. He says Thomasfield was aware of Arris Interiors from previous work with other builders and has built a long-standing relationship with the team due to their professionalism and continuously up-to-date aesthetics. "With our Ospringe model home, we wanted to show what was possible and open our visitors' imaginations," says Matthew. "The results are outstanding and it's a timeless showpiece. Lots of love and care went into the design, material selection and construction." **OH**



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with *Pesto Béchamel*

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
JENELLE MCCULLOCH



**THIS VIBRANT BAKED GNOCCHI STARS
A CREAMY PESTO BÉCHAMEL MADE WITH
FRESH BASIL AND SPINACH.**

INGREDIENTS

2 Tbsp butter
2 Tbsp flour
1 ½ cups milk, heated
Prepared gnocchi
¼ cup pine nuts
¼ cup parmesan, grated
1 cup fresh basil leaves
2 cups fresh spinach
1 cup mozzarella
Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

To make the béchamel, melt butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan.

Stir in flour and cook, stirring constantly until the paste bubbles a bit, but don't let it brown – about 2 minutes.

Add hot milk, continuing to stir as the sauce thickens.

Add salt and pepper to taste, lower the heat and cook, stirring for 2 to 3 minutes more.

Remove from heat and let cool slightly.

Put béchamel in a blender with pine nuts, parmesan, basil and spinach. Blend until smooth.

Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Place gnocchi in an even layer in a medium-sized oven-safe dish and pour sauce on top.

Cover with a layer of mozzarella cheese.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden. **OH**



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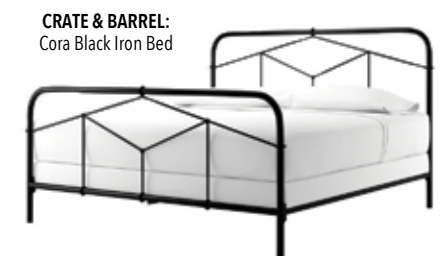
**COTTAGE
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