

Timeless TRANQUILITY

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

During renovations, the glass doors and windows were extended to stretch along the whole back wall, transforming the experience of the river view. Arched ceilings add to the sense of space, as does the wide open kitchen and dining area.

WHEN LONG-TIME OTTAWA RADIO PERSONALITY WENDY DANIELS SET OUT FOR A DRIVE ONE DAY IN 1991, ALL SHE WAS LOOKING FOR WAS A WAY TO SETTLE HER CRYING BABY. IN SEARCH OF A FEW MOMENTS OF PEACE AND QUIET, SHE ENDED UP WITH TRANQUILITY ON A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SCALE.

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LEFT: Providing the base for subtle contrast, large slate-style tile runs throughout the home, starting in the foyer. **BELOW:** Wendy and John play records while Ava plays with Gracie in front of the stone fireplace, which matches the home's exterior. **BOTTOM:** A sunken living room keeps the mid-century modern vibe going.



Wendy, John and Ava



This mid-century modern dining set that Wendy inherited brings some retro cool to the dining room. **BOTTOM:** The water theme can be seen in the kitchen, with a wavy backsplash and bubbly, translucent light fixtures.



Cruising along River Road towards Manotick, Wendy spotted a private sale sign for the waterfront bungalow that would soon become hers. Built in 1977, the house was a bit of a time capsule. “It was like stepping into *The Brady Bunch* house,” she laughs.

Fast forward to 2017, and the house remained largely untouched as the demands of work and family kept Wendy from undertaking any major updates. When she was finally ready to make a change, all she really wanted was a more functional mudroom. To fulfill this wish, she turned to **Lagois Design Build Renovate**, whose initial plan for the mudroom launched a months-long overhaul that touched almost every space in the home – and won Lagois a coveted Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association Housing Design Award in the Renovation \$200,001 – \$350,000 category last fall.

“Some people asked why we wouldn’t just move and avoid the disruption and hassle of renovating,” says Wendy. “The fact is that I just love the lot so much.”

Many homeowners decide to find temporary accommodations during a renovation of this size. Wendy, her partner John (who is a Veteran, having served in Rwanda, Bosnia and Afghanistan in medicine) and daughter Ava (the crying baby who led Wendy to the home 16 years earlier) elected to stay put.

“Lagois made the entire process as painless as possible,” says Wendy. “I was able to leave everything in their hands and didn’t have to stress at all.”

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This home was designed with an emphasis on function, with small touches like a built-in desk, which doubles as a drop zone. **BELOW:** The kitchen is done in an appealing mix of wood and quartz, making it warm and welcoming.

The Lagois team included designer **Catherine Liebe** to help choose the finishes for the new space. “I was apprehensive about trusting a designer, but it turned out we were a perfect fit,” says Wendy.

The biggest change is evident as soon as you walk through the front doors. The original layout was dominated by a circular staircase leading from the foyer to the basement, with the kitchen directly behind it. Not only did this configuration block the view to the river beyond, it was a nightmare for traffic flow, especially when entertaining.

During the renovation, access to the basement was moved around the corner and the kitchen was kept to one side, allowing for an unobstructed river view from the front door and completely opening up the space. Large format slate-look tile from **Ceragres** is heated for warmth underfoot throughout the foyer and kitchen. “Now it’s perfect for entertaining,” says Wendy. “No one is walking in circles anymore!”

The updated kitchen combines high-gloss white and rich cherry cabinetry from **Laurysen Kitchens** to create a warm and welcoming space with modern flair.

Atop the cabinets, the stunning Cambria Britannica quartz counter and matching backsplash from **Urban Quarry** make a dramatic statement. And, in the centre of it all, a generous central island provides a gathering place for family and friends as well as a perfect spot to take in the river views. *Continued on page 78*



This lovely island with a raised breakfast bar combines quartz and butcher block surfaces and is the perfect place to consume river views.



A deep oval soaker tub contributes to the circular theme in the master bathroom. **TOP:** Walnut provides warmth and contrast in the master bathroom. The cabinet is stylish and slides out for extra storage.

“I absolutely love the morning ritual of walking along the window wall and lifting each blind to let in the new day,” says Wendy. “I appreciate the beauty of that view every time.”

Technology is everywhere you look in the refreshed space. The “smart” refrigerator is an information and entertainment hub, dishing up everything from music and weather to recipes and live television right in the fridge door. At the grocery store and not sure whether you need eggs? No problem – this fridge lets you take a peek inside using your phone. Ava’s favourite gadget, however, is the bathroom mirror with an integrated WiFi speaker that lets her blast tunes in the shower.

“We went high tech everywhere we could,” says Wendy.

The renovation also allowed the laundry room to be relocated from the basement to the main floor. Now, it is accessible from both the main bathroom as well as the master bedroom’s walk-through closet. “Before, the laundry room was as far from the bedrooms as it could be,” says Wendy. “Now, my clothes never have to leave my closet!”

As with most renovation projects, there were compromises to be made. In the living room, plans to re-face the original stone fireplace had to be shelved to keep the budget in check. “It made sense to keep the fireplace as is for now,” says Wendy. “The stone ties in with the exterior of the house, and it’s something that’s easily changed if we decide we want something different down the road.” *Continued on page 80*



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feature

Although the home underwent a complete makeover during the renovation, it retains a slightly retro vibe. Indeed, the design was heavily inspired by a mid-century modern dining set that Wendy inherited just as the plans were coming together. An original 1970s light fixture in the kitchen and a funky set of curtains in the master bedroom are a nod to the home's past that seamlessly blend into the new design.

And as for the mudroom that started it all? Tucked between the garage and dining space, it's a functional spot to keep pet supplies out of the way and set down groceries on the way into the house.

"My goal was to create something timeless," says Wendy. "The original design lasted for over 40 years, and I hope this one is just as enduring." **OH**

RIGHT: The sunny master bedroom features incredible Italian drapes from the 1970s, which are original to the home. **BELOW:** As a long-time radio personality, Wendy has collected lots of music memorabilia.



Listening to the classics authentically, with a turntable and a Blondie album - one of Wendy's favourites.



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