



natural SPLENDOUR

STORY GINA MAKKAR | PHOTOGRAPHY JASON HARTOG

When opportunity knocks, sometimes it's hard to ignore. After an extensive renovation, **Jon** and **Isla Kuronen** had settled into their new home with no plans of moving any time soon. *Continued on page 70*



RIGHT: A vaulted ceiling and exposed beams add character to the Muskoka-style room. **TOP:** Unassuming from the outside, the home actually boasts a large footprint.

feature

BELOW: Repeating the use of white and wood tones and materials helps connect one room to the next. **RIGHT:** Shiplap ceilings and white timbers add architectural details up high in this modern farmhouse-inspired design. **BOTTOM:** A custom wine cellar built by Jon is a focal point in the dining area.



Both home specialists of sorts – Isla is a busy real estate agent with **Avis Team Real Estate Group** and Jon owns renovation company **Kuronen Construction** – she opened the door to possibility when she stepped into a home that her clients planned to sell. “I see a lot of homes here in Oakville,” she says. “Clients of ours were planning on selling this house. When I walked in, I immediately told them ‘I might want to buy this!’”

Perched within the natural setting of Sixteen Mile Creek and a short walk to

the shops and restaurants at the heart of downtown Oakville, the couple knew the home was a game changer. “When Jon walked in, he agreed it was a great opportunity, and right away, we had a vision together,” says Isla.

From the outside, the pretty bungalow is small and unassuming, and snaps snugly into the landscape. Though plenty of older south Oakville homes are often knocked down to make way for larger custom builds, the couple focused on maximizing the existing 4,000 sq. ft. footprint to make it bright, functional and beautiful.

“Over the years we’ve developed a love for the world of real estate, design and construction. So much so that we have both aligned our career paths in these industries. I think sometimes our age has made people skeptical of our abilities, but we are both very passionate about it. We have used Instagram as a tool to document the progress of our work and to showcase what we are capable of and share our before/after photos.”

Together, they finalized the design, and then the house was stripped back to the studs and entirely redone inside and out. Though

trades were secured to complete a few of the elements, Jon and his team carried out the majority of the work, from demolition to carpentry. Now, large format windows in every room provide natural light. Upgraded trim with oversize moulding and 84-inch solid core interior doors add architectural elements throughout. Once the construction was complete, they used furniture and accents to layer colour and texture throughout for an elegant, yet relaxed and cosy result.

Inside, a quaint entryway leads upstairs to the main living space. “We found the ratios

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of the home were off. Some rooms were really big, some rooms small, and overall, the home wasn't functional for us," says Isla. The main floor was modified to create an open-concept space perfect for entertaining. White oak, seven-and-a-half-inch hardwood from **Wüd Floors** were added throughout, a choice the couple says is durable, as the grains and knots hide the dirt and debris often found in the common areas of a home.

To the right of the entryway, the dining room graces the front of the home. A custom wine cellar crafted by Jon features a shiplap wall treatment, a glass enclosure from **Waterdown Glass & Mirror** and wire cables from Feeney Inc. Custom built-ins from **Liberty Custom Cabinetry** are topped with reclaimed elm from **Exotic Woods**.

The centre of the new layout features the heart of the home: the kitchen. Here, a shiplap ceiling adds architectural detail. Custom cabinetry from Liberty Custom Cabinetry in **Benjamin Moore's** Cloud White helps create the modern farmhouse look the duo were after. "We love the cabinetry that Liberty Custom Cabinetry has done for us. We constantly get compliments on the quality and workmanship." A chef's delight, the space is home to top-of-the-line Wolf, Sub-Zero and Miele appliances, a white bevelled subway-tile backsplash, and super white quartz countertops.

In the great room, which the couple calls the Muskoka room, a vaulted ceiling and exposed beams add character. A fireplace from **Ontario Hearth Fireplaces Ltd.** adds warmth. Accents, like an area rug from **Imperial Rug Galleries** complete the space. Wall-to-wall sliding doors flood the room with natural light and create seamless indoor-outdoor living. "We love the privacy and that you see greenery from every window when looking outside." Toward the back of the property, 64 steps descend to Sixteen Mile Creek where the couple can take a canoe or kayak and float toward the yacht club or the lake. "We basically have a cottage in the heart of downtown Oakville, and that's something we won't be able to recreate again.

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ABOVE: Sixteen Mile Creek is a beautiful backdrop. The couple created their own patio furniture from cedar two-by-sixes after deconstructing a garden shed. **TOP LEFT:** Black window trim creates the perfect picture frame to the outdoors. **TOP RIGHT:** An all-purpose room keeps the messiness of daily living tucked out of sight.

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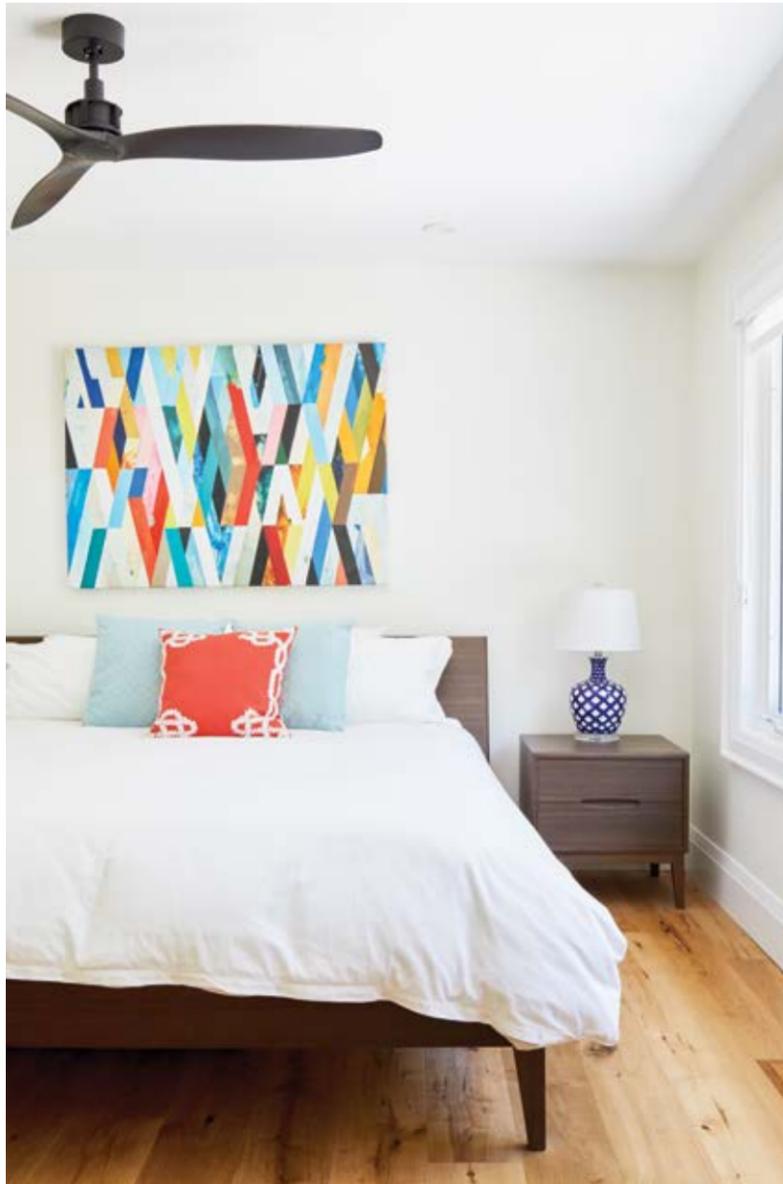
The master retreat and additional bedrooms are tucked away in a separate wing of the home. The en suite is cool and tranquil, with marble basket-weave flooring and cabinetry in Benjamin Moore's Stonington Gray.

The couple's favourite room in the home? A bonus space that combines the functionalities of a mudroom, pantry and laundry room. Attached to the kitchen with garage and side-yard access, Isla says it's one of the most used rooms in the house. The space boasts ample storage, a commercial fridge, pantry, washer and dryer and an extra sink. The counter holds all the small appliances that homeowners

don't want cluttering the kitchen. "When we entertain, we can prep everything and keep it hidden away behind a pocket door separating it from the kitchen," says Isla.

For Jon and Isla, doing the project together was just as rewarding as the end result. "We have very similar tastes and styles, which makes decision making easy," says Isla. "When there are so many options and decisions to be made, you need to be decisive and trust your gut when selecting products for your project."

Now that the home is complete, it's for sale with Avis Team Real Estate Group. What will the couple tackle next? Check out their Instagram page for the latest updates. **OH**



LEFT: A touch of bold colour adds playfulness to the master bedroom. **ABOVE:** A textured floor adds contrast. **TOP:** Fresh, simple finishes maximize the visual space in a smaller bathroom.

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