

An overall view of the upstairs great room anchored by the unique fireplace. The timber tresses give chalet-warmth to the space. With windows on all sides, the views from the second floor are mesmerizing. All flower arrangements by Paperwhite Flowers.

RUSTIC INVERSION

STORY **LAURA CONNING**
PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**



The ingenuity of this Nipissing Ridge home begins with its reverse floor plan.

Bedrooms are on the ground level and the main living space and kitchen are on the second floor. It ensures the Menendez family enjoys incredible views of Craigleith and Alpine ski hills, as well as Georgian Bay and its surroundings from the upper floor windows. This home away from their Toronto home boasts a multitude of smart innovations.

The family designed the layout – and say it was an intensive, yet joyful project for them. They approached **Milan Smeh**, owner and president of **Legendary Group**, to fine tune the design and build the home using a hybrid process. During the on-site construction phase, time was spent working with **Ralph Spadafora**, general contractor and project manager of Legendary Group to ensure each detail of their custom home was met.

Legendary is known for airtight, environmentally-sound, prefabricated wall systems that can be used for homes ranging from small, traditional spaces to large, modern homes and everything in between. Smeh explains, “Right from the beginning, our home plans are designed to maximize use of materials available. Unlike site construction where much of the off-cut material typically winds up in the landfill, our factory setting means any potentially usable building material can be sorted, stored and rolled into the next project.” This pre-fab setup was just what the Menendez family was seeking.

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TOP LEFT: Leather director's chairs are comfortable and encourage lingering around the harvest dining table. **LEFT:** Overlooking the fireplace, the sectional sofa sits in a quiet corner with views to the ski hills. **OPPOSITE:** Cowhide benches are placed close to the fireplace for warming hands and feet. The base of the fire table holds logs for the flames.





The refrigerator and the exhaust hood are finished in the same fashion as the cupboards. The island countertop is a different stone from the perimeter cupboards and the bar area. A subway tile backsplash grouted in white adds a hint of texture and keeps the area clean and soft.

The reverse floor plan design allowed them to build two upper decks; one outdoor dining area off the front and a second large area (complete with fireplace) on the back. A hallway between the decks converts into a breezeway in the summer, achieved by closing a barn-board door off the kitchen, and opening up the sliding glass doors to the decks. “It’s a simple design feature that packs a lot of punch, achieved by mirroring the oversize, glass doors opening onto each deck and connecting both spaces with a wide hallway clad in exterior siding, giving it the feeling of an outdoor passage,” says Smeh.

The upper decks connect with the ground level via a spiral metal staircase. The beautiful backyard centres on an oversize hot tub and fully-loaded cabana house, with a large flagstone ground-level porch protected on three sides and topped with a timber arbour, stained to reflect the exposed fir rafter beams and the ceiling cladding inside the home.

The main-floor porch design wasn’t in the home’s initial plans, but its inclusion provided a bonus getaway room in the basement. It offers the family a second space off the main recreation room.

As for style, the family has achieved a rustic cosiness amidst the home’s modernity. The open-face kitchen design and bedroom built-ins ensure efficient use of space. The bunk beds are a great option in the kids’ rooms. Bathrooms are decorated in greyscale, which hints towards modern, but the use of brick and stone textures add rustic touches. *Continued on page 132*



FAR LEFT: The stone accent wall behind the fireplace is repeated in the stairwell and the front entrance. The tile inset under the fireplace protects the wood floor from any wayward sparks. **LEFT:** Looking into the mudroom reveals an organized space with lots of storage for winter gear. The sliding barn door can be closed when guests arrive at the front door. **ABOVE:** The long bar area in the kitchen has a wine fridge disguised as cabinetry and appears as a sideboard in this open space. Windows look over the back deck and hot tub.



The main living area upstairs centres on an incredible floating, wood-burning fireplace that helps segment the open-concept kitchen, living and dining spaces. The fireplace commands attention and the family happily gathers around it in the wintertime. Smeh notes that the fireplace design was easily accommodated into the build. “We modified the framing of the roof panel over the fireplace section to incorporate the support bracket for the chimney,” says Smeh, “however, the added weight of the flue was no concern. The structural capacity achieved using our typical Synergy Roof Panel construction was more than sufficient to easily pull off this feature.”

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ABOVE: At the front of the house, the same colour was used for window trim and siding. The steel roof and the angled roof lines of the carport and cabana add visual interest to this modern chalet. **FAR LEFT:** Welcoming and large, the front hall is tiled, so winter’s snowy mess is not an issue. **LEFT:** A view of the rear facade highlights the spiral staircase that provides access to the hot tub from the upper balcony. Flagstone and boulders define the patio space. **BELOW:** Family evenings are spent playing games or watching a movie on the warm and cosy leather sectional sofa in the media room.



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The inviting master suite has a wide opening into the master bath, creating a nice flow between the two areas. The sliding barn door can be closed for privacy.



ABOVE: Positioned to face the windows, the free-standing tub is at the ready for a long soak at the end of a busy ski day. **RIGHT:** Open treads on the stairs let light move throughout the stairwell. The stone feature wall adds texture and a natural quality. Wire side panels are an interesting way to add safety.




The style of the home blends neutrals, textures and finishes, but in a very natural way. The long harvest table in the dining room is meant to be darker than the floors and to contrast ever so slightly with the ceiling and beams. Similarly, the oversize sectional in the living room is not matched by colour to the swivel club chairs, and the director-style leather dining chairs are not perfectly in tune with the distressed leather stools at the kitchen island. The home's rustic, farmhouse tones all meld without being perfectly matched.

Each room has impeccable overhead lighting (through pot lights and ceiling lights), as well as wisely-placed floor and table lamps. In the open-concept space upstairs, their Lutron system allows dozens of possible lighting configurations for different activities or times of day.

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Smeh recalls, “The Menendez family brought ingenuity and enthusiasm to this project like no one else, allowing us to raise the bar on prefab construction in Ontario.” After two decades, the Legendary Group is still expanding its design portfolio with new models in its prefab Mod² line. “The Gneiss Vista is a modern single storey cottage designed for slab-on-grade living, and the Flat Rock is a compact two-storey home offered as a detached plan or as a two-unit townhome design,” says Smeh. Customizing one of Legendary’s models allows clients to build a home suited to their desires, at the same time benefitting from the experience of previous builds and all the environmental benefits and efficiencies that come along with it.

The Menendez family appreciates all of Legendary’s hard work, especially after a long day on the slopes. “We love every inch of it!” **OH**

ABOVE: With storage for extra bedding and towels and counter space to fold it all, the laundry room can handle everything that is tossed into its machines. **TOP RIGHT:** Bunk beds are made for sleepovers.



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