

BETTER, BETTER, BEST

There's nothing quite like practice to pave a path to perfect. So when **Marcello Alaimo** of **Exquisite Living Homes** and **Paula Alaimo** designed their new family home in Ancaster, having built many before, it didn't take them long to design a home that's custom-made to fit their growing family. *Continued on page 29*



Marcello and Paula Alaimo with Anthony, Vanessa and Charles.



STORY **MELISSA CAMPEAU**
PHOTOGRAPHY **KELLY HORKOFF**
FLOWERS **FASCINATION FLOWERS**

Fabulous first impressions! The three-car garage opens to the backyard for easy access. Cheryl LaPointe of LaPointe Interior Design & Landscape assisted with plant selection. The luxury Genesis G70 Sport, courtesy of Genesis Niagara.



High ceilings and generous windows contribute to the bright, spacious atmosphere of the kitchen. Paula also loves her pot filler! The arabesque tiles of the backsplash echo the dining room wallpaper and roofing shingles.

All that experience helped them feel confident in their choices, even when they were a little off the beaten path. For example, Paula designed a driveway that's a bold mix of large square pavers (Permacon), laid by **Schuit Landscapes**. The effect is a little old world, a little new, and that was exactly the plan.

"Our vision for the house was French chateau, but with a modern twist," says Paula. That idea guided most of their decisions, including diamond-shaped roofing shingles with a European feel, and black-framed windows (Golden Windows Ltd.) with a grill effect for a mix of traditional and new.

Vincent Fracassi of **Coldwell Banker Community Professionals, Brokerage**, helped locate the ideal property for the Alaimos. "He knew where we wanted to be, and he worked hard to help us get what we wanted," says Paula. "He's an exceptional realtor, always going above and beyond!"

Married for 12 years and with three young children, Paula and Marcello's decisions about layout were often fuelled by the practicalities of family life. In the kitchen, for instance, they opted for a family dining table in line with, and attached to the island. "For us, this is really functional," says Paula. "The kids are close by if they're sitting here and colouring or working on homework while I'm cooking." It also keeps the path to the screen doors clear, for easy access to the grassy, fenced-in backyard.

Paula and Marcello chose cabinetry with a subtle profile to add warmth and a bit of tradition (**Perri's Cabinetry**). "We wanted a grey wash for the cabinets because it looks a bit old, a bit new," says Paula. Arabesque tiles add elegance, and sleek, oversize hardware in a polished chrome brings in the modern.

Continued on page 30

Cabinet doors disguise the refrigerator.

Between the kitchen and dining room is the walk-in butler pantry – both an older-home feature and a modern family must-have. “This keeps all the clutter in one spot,” says Paula. A wine fridge and sink add ease to hosting. And for everyday life, “Cereal boxes and other foods are stored here, so the kids can help themselves,” says Marcello.

At the other end of the kitchen, the two-way fireplace is a similar mix of style and practicality. It’s a room divider, so the living area isn’t entirely open concept, but the glass insert means there’s a clear view from one room into the other. “If I’m in the kitchen and the kids are over there, I can still see what’s going on,” says Paula.

The fireplace is also the room’s most prominent design feature, with Arriscraft tile designed to look like aged, smooth stone running all the way to the ceiling. Underfoot, hardwood floors (**The Flooring Warehouse**) in a mid-tone ground the room and feel earthy and timeless. “I fell in love with this flooring,” says Paula. “It’s rustic but also a bit modern.” Adds Marcello, “It’s durable, too, which is really important for some of our higher traffic areas.” *Continued on page 32*



RIGHT: Room divider or striking design feature? The two-way fireplace is both. **TOP:** A two room butler’s pantry, with child-friendly access to storage links the kitchen and the dining room.



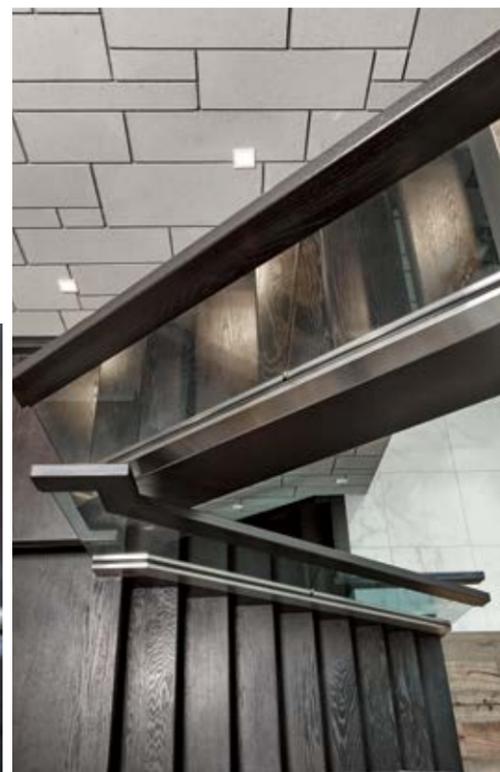
Paula shopped locally for this home – the gorgeous dining room table is from Stoney Creek Furniture, the wallpaper from Aftica Decor and Girgenti Custom Window Treatments supplied the blinds Paula originally saw in a magazine.



While there's a balance of traditional and new design throughout the home, the staircase, leading right from the lower level to the main floor and up to the second floor, is decidedly modern. Open riser wooden steps are stained black to tie in with the windows and accented by two by six-inch

wood handrails (both by **Glanbrook Stairs & Woodworking Ltd.**). Glass panels (**Glass Pro**) complete the look. "The glass is a really important part of the design," says Marcello. "It gives you that open feel, but it does mean we have to clean fingerprints off it every now and then!" *Continued on page 34*

TOP: Wood beams add character and warmth to the living room. Artwork by Hamilton artist Marina Randazzo, who credits Ancaster (her old stomping grounds) with inspiring her work. Just don't ask her about the gin. **RIGHT:** Paula's space. "The kids know if they come in here, it's a spot for reading and quiet things," she says. **FAR RIGHT:** Built-in lighting accents the distinctive staircase.



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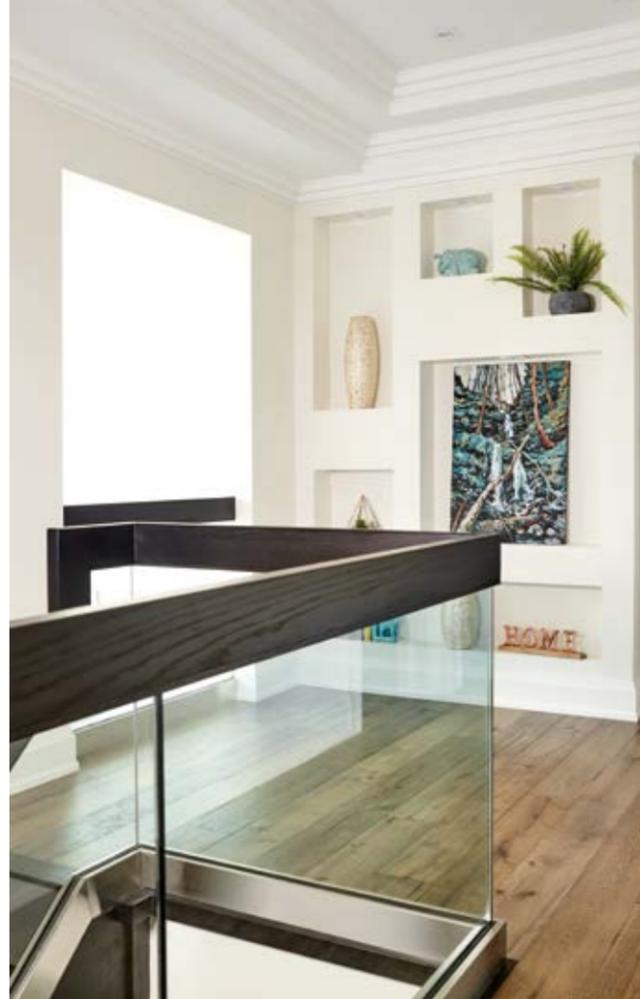
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At the top of the stairs, the couple designed a built-in display area for family photos and keepsakes. And in the two children's bathrooms, there are other touches tailored to the family's needs. Marcello, who began his career in home construction as a plumber (**Alamo Plumbing and Drain Specialists Inc.**), installed kid-friendly toilets that flush with the wave of a hand. And showers (Riobel) have custom steam jets where parents can add a few drops of essential oils to soothe the kids during cold and flu season. "The steam also makes shaving easy for us bald people!" adds Marcello. *Continued on page 36*



TOP LEFT: The master en suite has a glass enclosed walk-in shower, his-and-hers sinks, a tub and a vanity for Paula. **TOP RIGHT:** The landing overlooks the entryway, and includes a unique display wall (more artwork by Marina Randazzo). **RIGHT:** Accents and finishes carry through the home, such as this wallpaper in both the master bedroom and the dining room. **ABOVE:** The Alaimos designed the children's roomy bedrooms for longevity. Vanessa has her own bathroom with shower.

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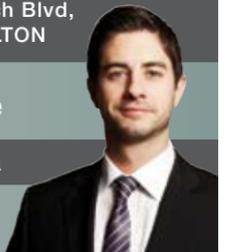
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The lower level, too, is outfitted in ways that uniquely suit the family. Marcello's office is roomy and polished, and has an exterior door at the side of the house to accommodate clients. There's a colourful playroom (dubbed the "kids' cave") filled with toys and vibrant gear. And because they're not new at parenting or home design, Paula and Marcello made sure to put a door on that room so kid clutter can be out of sight and out of mind when the family is huddled up and watching a movie in the adjacent rec room.

Like the entire house, the lower level is spacious, but there's still a sense of cosiness and warmth. Every room has a purpose and every room is used – by design, there's not a square foot of wasted space. "We've built so many houses together," says Paula. "We knew exactly what we wanted and what we needed this time around." **OH**

SOURCE GUIDE

- Aftica Decor • Alamo Plumbing and Drain Specialists Inc.
- AMI Electrical • Dell Smart Home Solutions • Exquisite Living Homes Inc. • Vincent Fracassi, Coldwell Banker Community Professionals, Brokerage • Girgenti Custom Window Treatments
- Glanbrook Stairs & Woodworking Ltd. • Glass Pro • Home Lighting • Landstruction • LaPointe Interior Design & Landscape
- Mario's Tile & Interiors • Mark's Supply Inc. • Parsons Precast
- Patene Building Supply • Perri's Cabinetry • Marina Randazzo
- Rennie Climate Care • Royal Stone Gallery • Schuit Landscapes
- Stoney Creek Furniture • The Flooring Warehouse • Turkstra Lumber • V.L. Drywall Services Inc.



TOP LEFT: A covered porch off the kitchen makes for an extra entertainment area and place for the family to sit. "I can BBQ all year round!" enthuses Marcello. **LEFT AND ABOVE:** Hard wearing, and beautiful, tile flooring from The Flooring Warehouse is repeated in the laundry room, bathrooms and mudroom. Clever storage ideas are implemented throughout the home.

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