

THE Rewards OF RESEARCH

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

I “I like to do my research,” says Ancaster resident, Becky. “I’ve had a binder full of home design ideas since I was 17.”

When she met and married a man who does a lot of research in his profession, the two had some well-thought-out plans for their home renovation.

His 15-year-old home was lacking the open-concept floor plan they both wanted, yet it had two features Becky’s husband was reluctant to give up. “One of the most attractive features of this house, for my husband, is that it has a great spot for his piano,” says Becky, of the room dubbed “the conservatory.” Also, there’s a two-storey window in the family room that he just loves,” she adds. “Between those two things, he was really happy here.”

Nearly all of the rest of the house, however, underwent a transformation. “We wanted a place that was a comfortable family home; where our extended family could come and feel at home,” Becky explains. “We wanted an open-concept kitchen and more windows – we love natural light.”

To tackle and manage the massive project, the couple reached out to **Rob Vanderbruggen** of **Ridgeline Renovations**.

“We knew it was going to be a big project, right from the start,” says Rob. “They looked at buying a new house and couldn’t find what they wanted, so they decided to change their whole place up and make it the house they really wanted.”

The size and scale of the renovation led Rob to recommend adding Architectural Technologist **Tony Prassas**, of **Prassas Design** and designer **Mary Cath Altobelli**, of **Alto Interiors** to the team.

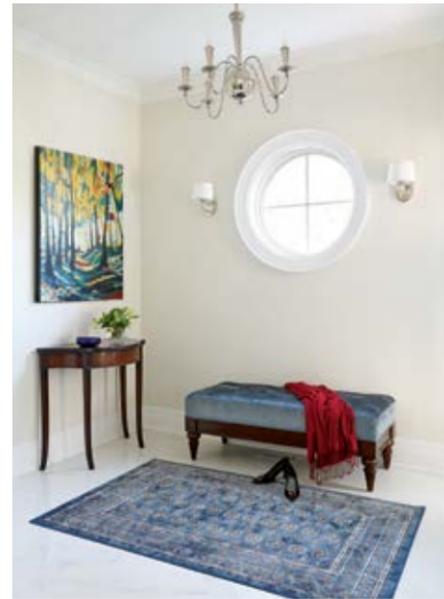
At the heart of the renovation: ditching the walled-in formal dining room in the centre of the space and creating an open-concept kitchen, dining and living area.

“Becky’s husband was a bit hesitant about not having a designated dining space,” says Mary Cath, “but this space we’ve created is special. Now that it’s all come together, he doesn’t miss it at all.” *Continued on page 24*

The conservatory is a brightly lit showcase of artworks: a chinoiserie detailed cabinet from Michael Thomas Antiques, blue velvet chairs from Locke Street Antiques and locally inspired paintings *Sherman* and *Winter* by artist Marina Randazzo.



ABOVE: Cloud White cabinetry coordinated with the similarly toned backsplash creates a classic look that won't date. **TOP RIGHT:** Welcoming touches in the entryway include a Locke Street Antiques console table and Marina Randazzo's *Hermitage Pass*. **RIGHT:** Becky is sitting in an armchair by Booth Furniture & Interiors Inc., and the table is by Stoney Creek Furniture.



As a gift to him, Becky had **Expressions in Wood** create the reclaimed-elm double pedestal dining table. Mary Cath helped Becky incorporate four cane-backed, hand-me-down dining chairs from her grandmother, recovering them in rich green fabric, and adding a layer of family history to the space.

The couple commissioned local artist **Marina Randazzo** to create the focal piece of the room – an impressionistic take on a photo of the London Mall at Buckingham Palace (snapped by a cell phone during a recent trip).

The colours in the stunning painting are echoed in the living room with turquoise custom-made accent pillows, a raspberry ottoman, and more muted shades in the rug, all sourced through **Alto Interiors**.

"The furniture pieces are all Becky's choices," says Mary Cath. "She's a classicist. She likes the old-world details. But she's so young and full of energy, so that's where all the bright colours come in."

The room's most striking structural feature is the two-storey window. To balance the window, Mary Cath recommended the wrought-iron and crystal chandelier. "Visually, it lowers the ceiling and that makes the space feel more connected," says Mary Cath.

Becky knew what she wanted in her home. "I like pretty, and I'm very particular."



"The secret pantry [tucked in beside the oven] is probably what I love most about the kitchen," says Becky. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Mary Cath Altobelli of Alto Interiors was integral in designing the highly functional open floor plan.



Fresh cut greens add a grounded yet festive touch to elegant settings.



The biggest change in the house is the brand-new kitchen. Once cramped, awkward and separated from the rest of the house, it's now the home's centre. It's a hub; guests tend to pull up a bar stool, chat over coffee, and enjoy a view of the yard, the fireplace or even the TV. "I can't get people out of the kitchen when they come over!" Becky jokes.

The eight-and-a-half-foot island topped with white and grey quartz, by **T&S Granite Inc.**, anchors the space. White cabinetry by **Dwayne Blokner's Silverbirch Woodworks**, is accented by a backsplash of elongated white subway tile and a monochromatic Moroccan-patterned motif

over the stove, both by **Centura Tile**. A tall, open-shelf display cabinet offers a visual borderline between the kitchen and the rest of the space. "I thought it was important to have a distinction between the dining area and the kitchen area, so we added a vertical shelf," says Mary Cath. "It's just a little moment to say, this is my workspace on this side, and it's also another opportunity for display."

Another big change to the main floor was the sweeping spiral staircase leading to the second level. While the footprint for the staircase remained the same, **Rob Fluit of Trinity Rail & Trim** replaced all the spindles and railings. *Continued on page 26*



LEFT: Bright pops of colour lend a youthful energy to the classic furnishings purchased from Booth Furniture & Interiors Ltd. in Dundas. **BELOW:** Rob Vanderbruggen of Ridgeline Renovations is particularly proud of the millwork and wainscoting they incorporated into the renovated staircase. **BOTTOM:** In the guest bedroom, framing the bed with the windows and drapes makes for a stunning focal point.



Treasured souvenirs stand out on neutral walls.

“The staircase was one of the most rewarding things to work on,” says Rob. The finer details – and these homeowners care deeply about the details – made all the difference. “The wainscoting going up the stairs, for example,” says Rob, “was challenging because it was curved, but the results are really worth it.”

Upstairs, the favourite update was adding an oversize window by Ostaco in the master bedroom, offering views of the treetops in the ravine beyond the backyard.

“Opening the windows to this extent created an amazing feature for the room,” says Mary Cath. “But it was also a little bit of a challenge since it’s such a strong feature, visually. We needed to balance it, so we extended the closet doors up towards the ceiling a bit, just to

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LEFT: To create the spacious and spa-like master en suite, the couple gave up two large walk-in closets. **BOTTOM:** Becky told Mary Cath, "I don't want any blinds, I don't want any shutters, I want drapes." Ottawa Textiles provided the pooling drapes in the master bedroom, as well as all draperies and hardware.

give them a little more scale. Now they have some presence." **Penner Home Hardware Building Centre** supplied the window, and all the lumber and interior doors.

"The house isn't what we expected," says Becky, of both the master bedroom window and the entire renovation, "It's BETTER!"

"Not every client cares that much," says Rob. "These homeowners both have an eye for detail and a clear vision of what they wanted to see happen, and they both appreciate good quality work."

Now that the renovation dust has settled, all those details have come together for a finished product that's everything Becky and her husband wished for. "I just wanted a happy and beautiful home; a place where our family would want to come, and would want to stay." She adds, "I think all the research, all the teamwork and some really great communication really paid off." **OH**



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HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

This past November, Becky's home was featured in the annual Junior League of Hamilton-Burlington's fundraising Holiday House Tour. Local decorators professionally and elegantly decked the house out for the holiday season. To learn more, visit holidayhousetour.ca or juniorleague.ca.



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