

A *fine* Balance

There's a trick to combining rustic, industrial and vintage styles to create a home that feels modern, spacious and flows effortlessly while keeping with Niagara-on-the-Lake's charm: collaborate with a designer who knows how to pull together the perfect balance. *Continued on page 50*

Walls were removed on the main level of the home to create an airy and open space between the front hall, great room and dining area. A glass wall enclosing the office creates separation while still maintaining an open-concept feel.



Walking into this once dated 1980s home on the periphery of Old Town, a wall of factory glass immediately catches the eye. It's a surprisingly industrial feature, but perfectly at home in an interior that ticks all the boxes for owners and Toronto transplants Gail Hawkins and Arlyn Levy.

"When we bought the house, virtually every wall was rotting and needed to be rebuilt," Gail says. "However, the home was also a little quirky, and I'm always drawn to character."

Gail enlisted the expertise of interior designer **Tracy Clipsham** from **Liv 4 Design**. Clipsham's design was brought to life by builder **Roger Provost** from **Property Rehab** who was critical to the construction

side of the project, which allowed Gail and Tracy to focus on coordinating the specialized tradespeople to install the design elements that are reflected throughout the home.

"Gail prepared an inventory of their art and furniture, so I could get a sense of their style," Tracy says. "I quickly learned that in order for them both to have their dream home, I'd have to balance urban and rustic elements without losing the Niagara-on-the-Lake feel."

By updating windows and taking out dividing walls between the living and dining spaces, light now streams into the main floor. Vaulted ceilings and skylights provide a sense of spaciousness. Walls are painted with colour from **Creek Road Paints**, including Benjamin Moore's Natural Cream, while

Cloud White covers trim and ceilings, making the space feel entirely unconstrained.

Modern leather chairs by **Critelli's Fine Furniture** in the living and dining rooms add warmth and provide structure to the open floor plan. A window seat with a soft faux-leather cushion by **Dennis Fashion Upholstery** in the living room is designed to store firewood, adding a rustic element. And every consideration for comfort has been made with heated entryway floors and a wireless

security system by **ADT Hamilton**.

The fireplace, by **The One Stop Fireplace Shop**, with Dekko Concrete surround and propeller-style ceiling fans could be straight from a warehouse conversion. However, they are complemented by features like the vintage chrome chandelier, marble-and-chrome coffee table and enviable Carrara marble backsplash in the kitchen.

In fact, everywhere you look the interior is pulled together by continuous themes. Most

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FAR LEFT: Interior designer Tracy Clipsham of Liv 4 Design spearheaded the overhaul of this home. **ABOVE:** Large windows surrounding the dining area allow natural light and a view to a backyard with mature trees.

ABOVE RIGHT: The home's transformation included a significant facelift outside that saw a front porch added. **RIGHT:** Natural wood elements throughout the home tie everything together.



A media room on the upper floor fills an area where the master bedroom once existed. **OPPOSITE:** An oversize kitchen island suits the homeowners' love of cooking and makes an obvious gathering spot while entertaining.

satisfying is the use of walnut to create flow through the different living spaces. A walnut beam runs the length of the downstairs from the front door to the kitchen at the rear. It's bracketed by a custom walnut hood in the kitchen over a gas range by **Nickerson Home Appliances** and minimalist walnut fireplace mantel in the living room.

"Gail was after a rustic component, so I introduced the use of walnut very intentionally as a theme throughout the house," Tracy says. "It brought the outside in, offered warmth and provided a more refined finish that complemented the other features of the home."

The effortless flow of the home is highlighted by Gail's resistance to name a favourite room. "Each individual space is so special, it would be tough to pick the standout," Gail says. "In Toronto we used about half of the house. Here we use every square inch, including the basement. When we entertain, we start in the kitchen with cocktails and appetizers, then we have our main course in the dining room; then enjoy our post-dinner drinks in the living room."

Kitchen cabinets, along with the built-ins in the media room and bathrooms by **Wingers Cabinets** add a traditional touch. An oversize kitchen island with Cambria quartz, designed and sourced by Liv 4 Design and installed by **QuartzCo**, is perfect for Gail's love of cooking and entertaining guests.

Gail, aside from formerly owning two cafés and an institute that trained adults with Asperger syndrome for the workforce, is also a musician. The acoustics of her new home make it a pleasure to pull out her banjo, guitar or mandolin and fill the space with music.

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A quartz countertop with an uncomplicated design fits the home's industrial and rustic vibe.





A large en suite feels like a spa retreat with a dark blue accent wall and an intricate chandelier casting a warm glow.

“Opening up the house and removing the carpeting resulted in beautiful acoustics and a wonderful ritual: I love to play first thing every morning,” she says.

Upstairs, a half-wall was created by moving the master bedroom and bath from the front of the house to the back. Clipsham then turned this space into a contemporary media room. An internal glass balcony with walnut railing by **Enzokhan Stairs & Railings** overlooks the main floor and lets light stream in from the second-floor windows.

Also upstairs is a guest bedroom, which was an addition over the

garage, laundry space and large en suite, which Gail and Arlyn wanted to provide a spa-like experience. To achieve this, Clipsham incorporated a piece the couple already owned, but never would have considered for the bathroom.

“We had this very cool and intricate chandelier – more of an art piece – custom-made from glass. With the sloped ceilings on the main floor, there was no way we could have used it,” Gail explains. “Then Tracy had the brilliant idea of using it as a focal point in the en suite. When you walk into the room, it’s a showpiece.”

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The large, free-standing tub adds to the luxurious feel while the black bathroom fixtures by **Bathworks** continue the modern industrial theme.

Sunscreen shades on the second floor by **Interiors by Better Shade** cut light and add privacy without taking away from the bright, airy feel.

To better reflect Niagara-on-the-Lake's charm, Clipsham designed an extensive transformation of the exterior also meticulously done by Provost and Property Rehab. This included the front porch, back deck, and adding the guest room over the garage to balance out the formerly lopsided-looking house. A new driveway by **Rempel Landscapes**, and plants from **Mori Gardens** finish the exterior updates.

"Gail and Arlyn's willingness to allow me to transform the space," Clipsham says, "and our mutual excitement about the possibilities, created an amazing partnership throughout the process, right through to completion." **OH**



ABOVE: The master bedroom. **BELOW:** Black fixtures in the en suite continue the modern industrial look but don't take away from the relaxing oasis the owners created.



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