



Tara Brown's living room exudes a chic, comfortable, contemporary look.

BY JUDE WAYLAND // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY

DESIGNER'S TOUCH

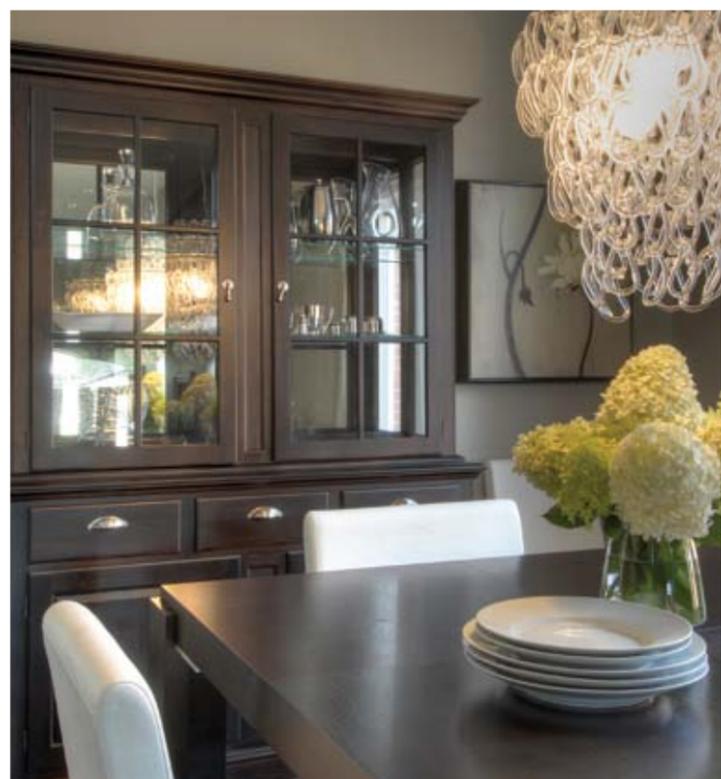
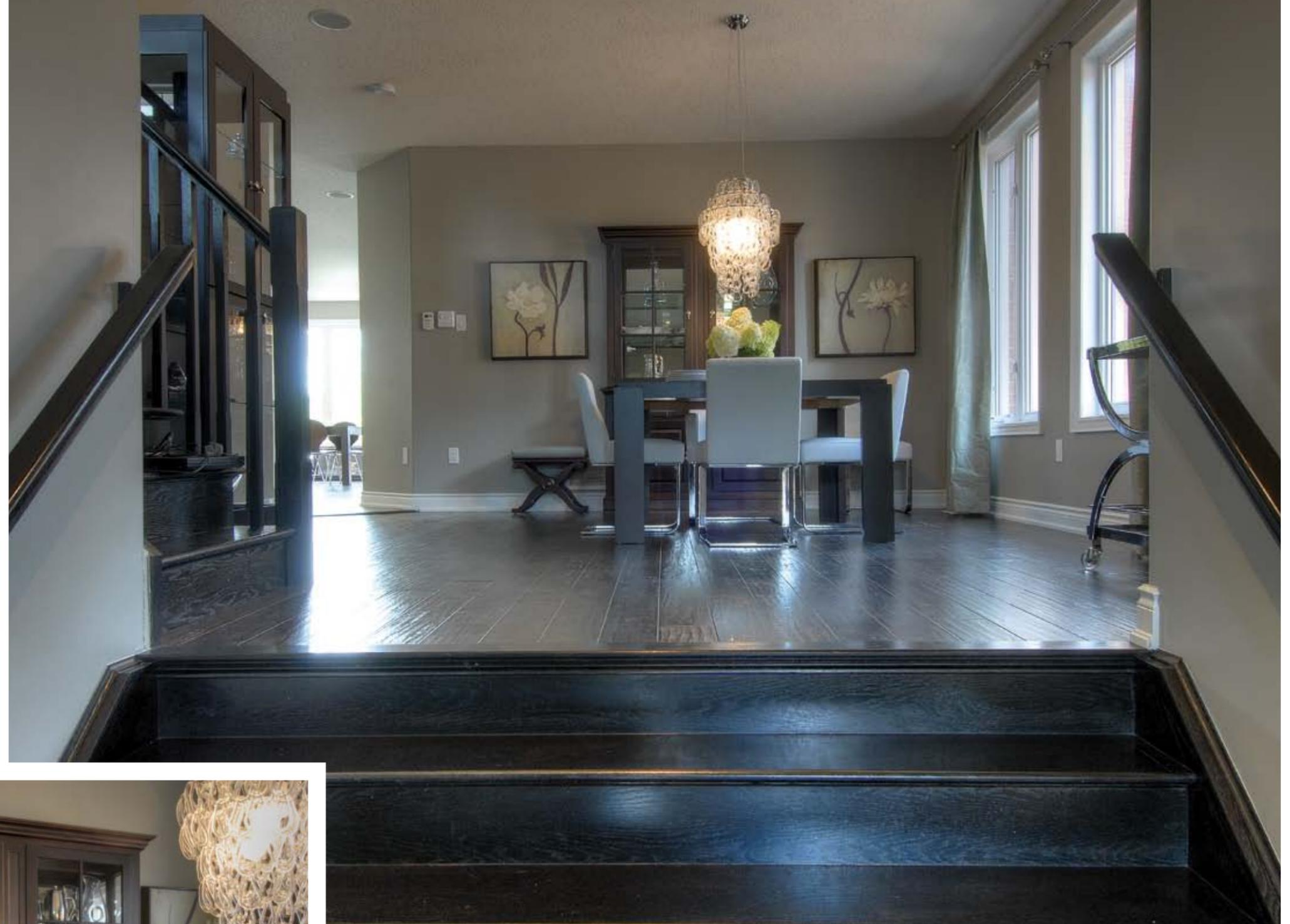
Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Love of beauty is Taste. The creation of beauty is Art." *Continued on page 31*



ABOVE LEFT: Tara welcomes guests to her home.

ABOVE RIGHT: Less is more in Tara Brown's dining room, viewed from the foyer of her home. The dining room is glamorous and, when necessary, can accommodate a happy group.

RIGHT: Tara selected a chocolate dining table and sideboard with hutch, which blends nicely with the hardwood. She added white, modern, chrome Parsons chairs and a sparkling chandelier. Seasonal flowers add a finishing touch.



Tara Brown knows exactly what Emerson meant. When this stunning 29-year-old woman decorates a home, her appreciation of beauty and artistic good taste come shining through.

Tara just built her dream home five minutes from downtown Barrie, and is still finessing the finishing touches. She's the decorator at **Grandview Homes** in Barrie. And she's an artist who studied at the Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver. This artistic dynamo is also an awesome drummer who can rock your socks off!

"I love my job," Tara gushes. "I do all the interior design for Grandview. Everyone who purchases a Grandview home gets an appointment with me to pick out all their selections. I've learned so much from being in this industry and from working closely with all of Grandview's trades."

Tara's 2,900 sq. ft., four-bedroom home is roomy and bright, a modified version of Grandview's two-storey Windermere model. "I did sit down and make a lot of changes to the floor plans," she explains. "I switched the layout a little, added a few feet to the width, and went deeper in the back as well."

The home exudes a "less is more" minimalist feel. Contemporary black, white and grey furnishings create a picture of utmost simplicity. "It's my thing," says Tara. "It's classic, but at the same time, contemporary. It's always in style, even though trends come and go."

Clean lines and a lack of clutter characterize the open-concept main floor, which includes a living room, dining room, spacious kitchen and laundry room. Large windows welcome in plenty of natural light. *Continued on page 32*

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The front foyer features a 12-by-24-inch smooth porcelain flooring, which contrasts beautifully with the textured plastered ceiling (standard in all Grandview homes). Recessed pot lighting, soaring 15-foot ceilings and a tidy little powder room complete the entryway design.

It's three steps up to the dining room that showcases a square dark wood table and four contemporary white leather chairs with simple, yet elegant chrome bases. The dining room walls are painted warm taupe-grey (Silver Fox by Benjamin Moore). Tara sourced her lighting fixtures from **La Moquette** (including an eclectic piece over the large kitchen island).

It's evident that Tara loves what she does. Her face lights up when she describes her design philosophy. "I'm not a modernist," she states, "but I am a minimalist." Tara's home is the perfect blend of minimalist flair and contemporary style. "That's me perfectly," she says. "And I like to mix 'n match expensive and inexpensive pieces."

To customize her home, Tara worked with several Grandview suppliers and trades, including **Ray Levitt Drywall**, bricklayer **Larry**

Farr, Mike Smith from **United Lumber** (windows and lumber), **Barrie Trim** (doorknobs and trim), finishing framer **Kevin Hunter** of **The Finishing Touch** (oak stairs and fireplace mantel installations), and **Kim Hazelwood** (landscape design and installation).

Gleaming distressed engineered walnut floors (from **Irvine's Carpet One Floor & Home**) run through the dining area into the kitchen. "I love walnut," says Tara. "It's really dark, glossy and smooth. Plus, it's distressed, so it's easy to live with."

"If you were to ask me what my style is, I would say it's my kitchen," says Tara. "It's modern, still a bit classic with the crown moulding, but very simple." Classic, off-white cabinets (**Kitchen Craft**) complement matte, flecked-grey **Corian** countertops.

Restoration Hardware supplied the chrome kitchen pulls. She selected KitchenAid and Jenn-Air appliances. "I love my fridge, and I really love my double-wall oven. It's probably my favourite thing in the house," she says. "I'm a huge baker." *Continued on page 34*



Tara adheres to a high-low standard when she's designing any interior. In her own home, she's splurged on beautiful lighting and top-of-the-line appliances. Grey is the dominant colour on the main floor, with a big splash of white in the kitchen.

ABOVE: The dining room walls are painted Silver Fox by Benjamin Moore.

RIGHT: The kitchen shines with white cabinetry, stainless steel appliances and a brilliant silver, drum chandelier.



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Says Tara, "This house is fantastic for entertaining. It's open, bright, and comfortable. When I have friends over, everyone always ends up around the kitchen island."

Up another few steps is a spacious media room (above the double garage). A projector transforms an entire wall into a giant screen, and this is where Tara and her girlfriends gather for movie and "rock band" nights. Tara decorated the room with a large Martha Stewart media console, a **Natuzzi** sofa and a drum set that matches her "New White" Farrow & Ball walls.

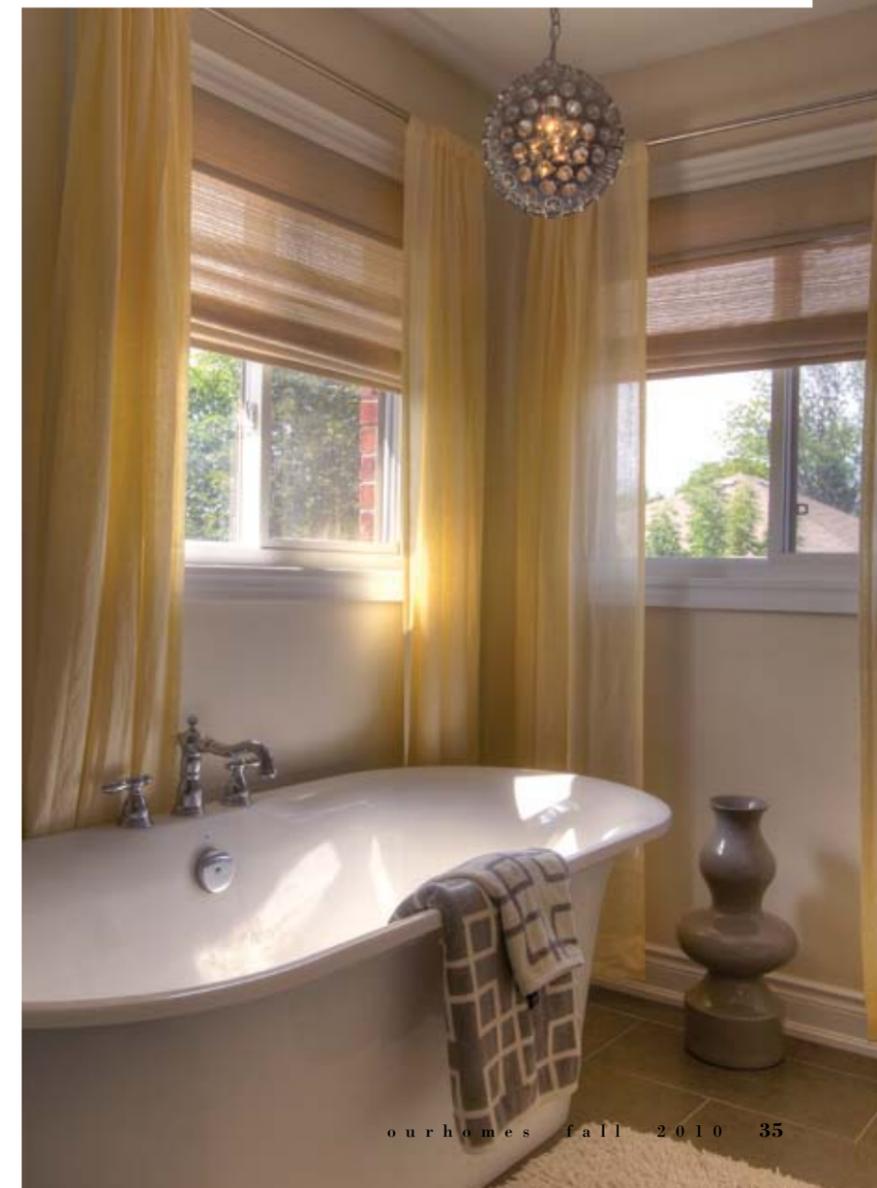
The master bedroom is an oasis of serenity, modeled after Tara's favourite beach house in Hilton Head, S.C. "It's right on the ocean and there's this one bedroom that's pale yellow and everything in it is white, and you look out at the beautiful blue ocean." She tastefully recreates that feeling of calm and juxtaposes an expensive king-sized bed (Restoration Hardware) with an inexpensive mirror and a funky fixture.

The open and fresh en suite features white beadboard painted maple cabinets, brushed nickel hardware, double sinks, lovely fixtures, porcelain tiles, a floor-to-ceiling, glassed-in shower and the pièce de résistance: a svelte, freestanding tub from **Bath Works**. "It's a little nod to the past with the curve," says Tara, "but then it's very modern."

Is this Tara's dream home? Without blinking, she responds: "Yes."

"Being in the industry, it's a work in progress," she explains. "I change it up all the time, but I hope to be here for a really long time." Tara Brown is a savvy, smart and incredibly talented young woman. She's already living a dream in her dream home in Barrie. Considering her artistic sense and aesthetic flair, it's no doubt that this young entrepreneur has a very promising future. **OH**

Grandview Homes has been in business since 1999. Owned by Linda and Randy Brown, the company builds homes that offer exceptional value and quality workmanship. Grandview Homes currently have two developments in Barrie, another in Innisfil, and an ongoing four-year project in Collingwood. Even though business is booming, the homebuilder will continue to build only 50 to 75 homes per year, in an effort to grow better, not bigger.



OPPOSITE PAGE:

BOTTOM LEFT: Family and friends gather in Tara's upstairs media room, where Tara plays her drums and hosts movie nights.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Tara's drum set has a special place in this room. The drums are yellow and match the décor.

TOP RIGHT: The family room's colour scheme is vibrant and earthy.

THIS PAGE:

TOP: Tara's master bedroom is fresh and oh so feminine. Peachy-pink accents and soft, airy fabrics make this room a special place for rest and relaxation.

RIGHT: The vessel tub in the master en suite is the splurge. A hip chandelier and sheer drapery add to the serene, luxurious space.