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WELL, HAMILTON, IT'S BEEN SWELL. TRULY.

This marks my final issue of OUR HOMES Hamilton for now. Managing editor Melissa North's familiar and friendly face will be back on this page soon. In the meantime, let me say thanks so much for how welcoming you've been to this foreigner from Niagara. I know I've said it before (probably in every Hamilton issue I worked on), but I love this city.

It's been incredibly fun to make the trip down the QEW these past few issues to peek inside some stunning homes, meet some wonderful people and be tempted to spend my paycheque in so many great businesses. You'll see some of what I mean in this issue, starting with our Style Picks. We've put together a collection of bright and bold pieces, big and small, to breathe life and colour into your favourite rooms – kind of like opening a window to let in the fresh, warm air after a long winter.

Speaking of warmth, our pros talk about why they do what they do, and it comes down to loving their work. You can also see some of that love in our feature home, from homeowners who adore their abodes to the work done by talented tradespeople. Both homes in this issue are so different. One – a new build – overlooks the city on the Mountain; the other, about 95 years old, is located in the heart of the lower city. Both are gems and so much a reflection of the heartfelt emotion that goes into making a house a

personal temple and refuge.

My hope is that reading these pages will reaffirm your own love for your home, or help you find the inspiration you need to fall in love with it again. Whatever the case, happy reading and happy Spring.



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Photography by Kelly Horkoff.



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PHOTO: PAT LIZMORE

Laurie and Tim celebrate their 30th anniversary.

**SPRING IS HERE.** Such a lovely time of year. It's the season to celebrate new beginnings, the homes we live in, and green, my favourite colour, as Ontario comes alive again.

OUR HOMES Hamilton has much to celebrate this spring. One of our own Hamiltonians has just been nominated as President of the North American Home Furnishings Association. Congratulations to Jim Fee of Stoney Creek Furniture. Think about how many furniture stores are in our area, then add the rest from Ontario, Canada, the United States and Mexico – the number is enormous. I love furniture shopping but I think I will stay right here where we have lots of selection. Congrats Jim. A great achievement done right here at home!

And another huge accomplishment and reason to celebrate is Turkstra Lumber's 65th anniversary.

Keep reading to discover two fabulous home features. One is an amazing family home on the mountain. The family is celebrating the

completion of their project after a long but rewarding experience with Violin Contracting and Marcel Poirier Custom Built Homes.

We also feature a bright, flowery little home in the old Hamilton core. Olwyne and Greg Mitton have transformed this home and garden, and the wonderful spring flowers are something to celebrate.

A huge thank you to my daughter Leslea and her husband Mike for creating a wonderful celebration in our home recently – a surprise 30th wedding anniversary party for me and my husband Tim. Now that was truly a celebration of life at home.

Happy Spring!

*Laurie*

Laurie Lotimer, Publisher  
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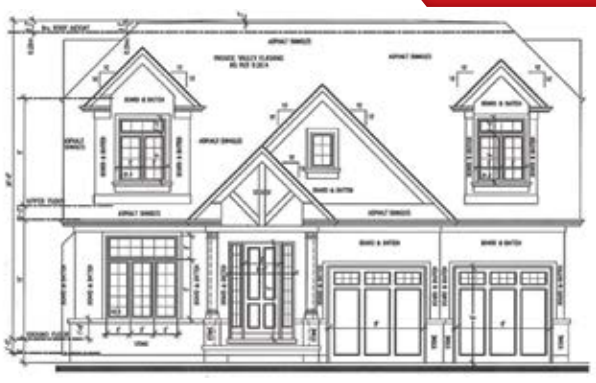
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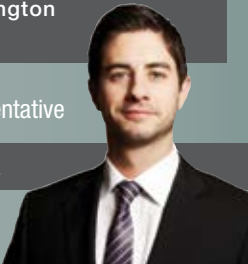
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# STAYING ORGANIZED

AND OTHER WAYS TO KEEP IT TOGETHER

Interior Designer **Dolores Pian** shares her ideas.

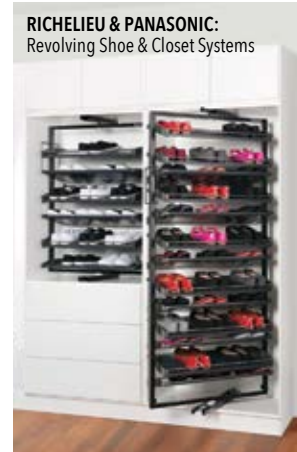


Feeling stressed because you're surrounded by stuff? That stuff can actually make you happy, if it's efficiently and artistically displayed. And when organized properly, you can grab and go. Technology has helped reduce or eliminate the need for some stuff, like books and record albums, but we still need to store the items we do collect.

Storage, home organization or space solutions – whatever you call it – has become a science using the latest technology. For

example, hardware supplier Richelieu has teamed up with Panasonic to create revolving closet systems and shelves that pull down and return pneumatically, providing innovative ways to make our lives easier.

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## START RIGHT – GET ORGANIZED

Whether you're living in a tiny studio or a mansion, many of the same rules apply when it comes to getting organized:

**Purge:** Get rid of things you don't need or that don't give you pleasure in some way.

**Learn to make sacrifices:** In a small or large space, every object matters. Make choices and focus on priorities.

**Inventory items that need storage and display:** Determine what type of storage or shelving you need. Make this scientific by calculating how much linear space and square footage is required.

**Design and plan:** Plan where these items are going and then find the design solutions you need to maximize and beautify your space.

## DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Storage is designed in three style categories:

### 1. In sight and in mind.

Open shelving allows us to see what we own, defining our unique personalities. Free-standing or bolted to the wall, shelving is simple. The structure itself can be a design feature, elevating your simple objects into things of beauty.



**DWR:** Story Bookcase

### 2. Out of sight and out of mind.

Closets or storage rooms are enclosed empty spaces. You can add rods or shelving to suit your requirements. People are now choosing to turn closets into dressing rooms, enclosing items in cabinetry and revealing only what's most precious and notable through glass cabinets. If you own shoes, purses, belts or ties that are beautiful and cost a pretty penny, then why not put them on display like an art object in a glass case?

### 3. Combining in and out of sight.

Say we've opted for open-plan spaces instead of separate rooms for our functions. Even kitchens are now blended in, requiring special thinking on how to manage all its requirements. While one-room living reveals all, do we really want to show off everything?

Storage credenzas, shelving and wall units can act as free-standing room dividers to delineate space. One company that provides unique items is Design Within Reach (DWR). It is a go-to destination for design sophisticates. Their variety of cabinets and shelving units are real designer heirloom classics that can make space efficient and extra special.

## CUSTOM VS. STANDARD

Each home is unique, not only in structure, but also in the personality and vision of its owner. While standard shelving and storage units are available at most home stores, and while you

can hack Ikea, it is best to give your storage needs the attention they deserve.

Investing in custom built-in storage solutions will enhance the value of your house, much like investing in kitchen or bathroom renovations. It is money well spent. Knowing that everything is in its place and there's a place for everything helps liberate us from our stuff. **OH**

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# GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT



STORY **YANIC SIMARD**

Looking to renovate a room or two? Want to refresh your space before a big event? No matter the size or style of project you’re planning, this guide will help you know how long you really need to achieve your home makeover – and trust me, it’s nothing like what you’ve seen on television.

1

RESEARCH PHASE:

1-5  
MONTHS

Knowing your goals and limits will help you set realistic goals and avoid major hiccups that can derail your timeline.

Start by gathering lots of ideas. Save images from magazines and blogs – the more you collect, the easier it will be to figure out what elements you are drawn to again and again, and which are fleeting trends. Give this 1-2 months at the very least to find ideas that stand the test of time.

Television often portrays renovations as costing much less than they do, so it’s important to determine what you want to spend and what your dream design will cost. Starting with a realistic and honest budget (with padding for emergencies) will help you and your designer avoid big surprises later that can end up halting your plans.

Make sure to check with local building codes, inspectors, condo or neighbourhood boards (and the like) to make sure your dreams are possible. This can take just 1 week to 3 months, depending on your site conditions, so it’s smart to start early.

*Continued on page 24*



PHOTO: TARA CHATTELL

5



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DESIGN PHASE:

2-12 MONTHS

A seemingly simple project can involve five times as many decisions as you might think, so give ample time to get the details right.



PHOTO: NEE TO DA SILVA

Renovating a kitchen or bathroom? Besides selecting the basics like paint colours, you'll need to choose the grout colour, tile pattern, orientation of cabinet handles, paint finish, placement of light fixtures, style of faucet, counter edge profile... the list goes on, and can seem overwhelming when rushed. Give at least 6 weeks to 2 months for one room, and at least 4 to 6 months for a large multi-room project. Choosing many elements that work together can take a lot of searching and re-evaluating, and it's much easier to change your mind before construction or delivery than after.

Don't forget that not all products or tradespeople can be available instantly, especially around busy seasons like spring. If you want to work with the best materials and trades, add at least 1 to 2 months extra, with custom products or anything shipping from overseas taking 2 to 6 months. Don't get stuck picking from what's available last-minute for a design that will last for years!

17

CONSTRUCTION/ DELIVERY PHASE:

2-9 MONTHS

Even the best plans can be interrupted by sudden surprises. Plan for this phase to take longer than just the expected working time of the physical labour.

Expect even minor construction to take at least 1 month to prepare, conduct and touch up, with 2 to 6 months for larger projects. Then add a time buffer of 1 to 3 months before any sort of event when you want the work completed, to account for surprises.

In this detached basement bathroom renovation, for example, we had very low ceilings (just under six feet) and only a single sconce above the vanity mirror, not providing nearly enough light for the entire space. We had planned to increase the ceiling height and add recessed lighting. During demolition we discovered venting all through the above area and no room for pot lights. We required a bit of time to come up with an alternative plan, which was this stunning, sleek custom LED feature running from floor to ceiling and overhead. It created ample illumination and is beautiful. The solution also allowed us to hang our new mirror very close to the ceiling, creating the illusion of even more height in the room, and allowing the LED strip to reflect. Fortunately, with buffer time in place, we had the plan reworked for the better, and the beautiful results were worth the extra wait!

If you've been doing the math, you'll see that even small projects can easily take almost half a year, which is far from the three days you see on television. However, you get what you put into your design, and taking the proper time leads to timeless results – all while avoiding a lot of stress and the potential for costly mistakes along the way. Working with a reputable firm can expedite this process and keep you on time and on budget. **OH**



PHOTO: NEE TO DA SILVA

26

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PROJECT **EMIL MAKKAR**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

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*Continued on page 28*

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projects

Customize the height of the ladder to suit your space. These step-by-step instructions create a two-planter ladder.

TOOLS & MATERIALS

Two 6-foot, 1-by-6-inch cedar planks (each 6-foot plank will make one planter box)

One 8-foot, 2-by-6-inch cedar plank

Mitre saw

120-grit sandpaper

Nail gun or hammer and nails

2-inch galvanized wood screws

HOW-TO

Cut box fronts, backs and bottoms:

From each 6-foot plank, cut two 24-inch lengths to be used for the front and back of the planter box, and one 21-inch length for the bottom.

**Cuts box ends:** Set your mitre saw to 15 degrees. Take the 2-by-6 plank and cut the end 15 degrees. Flip the board and measure 5-¼ inches along the short edge and cut again with the 15-degree mitre. This will create one end of the planter box. Proceed until you have the four ends cut.

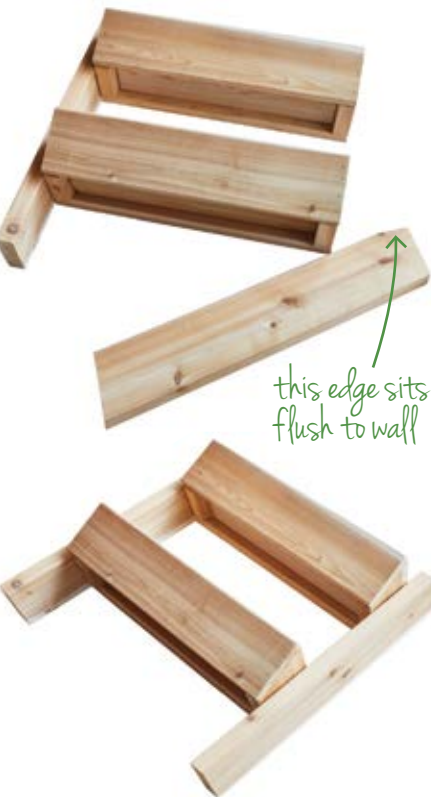
**Cut ladder rails:** From the remainder of 2-by-6, one end will already be cut at 15 degrees. Measure your finished ladder height (in this case we chose 3 feet for the two-box ladder) and make a cut at 15 degrees along the same angle for the first rail. Repeat for second rail and cut it

to match. To have the back of your ladder sit flush against a wall, measure 2 inches in from the pointed upper tip of each rail and cut perpendicular to the 15-degree surface.

**Construct planter boxes:** Sand all freshly cut edges to smooth out roughness. Place end pieces long-side down. Place the 24-inch front and back pieces flush against end pieces and nail together. Flip the box right-side up and drop the 21-inch bottom in. Secure the bottom by nailing it to the sides. Repeat for each box.



**Construct planter box ladder:** Lay the ladder rails on the floor and place your planter boxes between the rails at the desired height. Secure planter boxes to the ladder by drilling two-inch screws from inside the planter boxes to the ladder.



**Display and grow:** Place finished planter box ladder against a wall, fence or deck, fill with potting soil and get growing! **OH**



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Over the past 20 years, the business has evolved and technology has advanced. Tony, Sam and Remo Mercanti, current owners of CARSTAR Hamilton Gage and CARSTAR Hamilton Rymal, have been committed to staying ahead of the curve and driving industry standards. Being a preferred collision repair facility for local dealers, demonstrates how professional the work is at these locations.

Adhering to OEM manufacturer standards, are what makes superior collision repairs. Understanding this, both stores have made it a priority to ensure their locations have the seal of approval from auto manufacturers. Currently, the facilities are certified by Chrysler, Fiat, Dodge, Toyota, Lexus, Honda, Acura and Nissan, with the goal for Audi and Volkswagen certification by the end of the year and Ford in early 2018.

Emphasis on training, being prepared for all types of repairs—even aluminum ones, using the latest technology for better services like colour matching and prioritizing customer service, are what drives these locations. They are true to their family's values, and above all else, aim to safely and quickly get customers back on the road.

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Greg and Olwyne Mitton love the front porch community that exists in their neighbourhood. **OPPOSITE:** The front porch where the couple often enjoys a coffee and catching up with neighbours as they pass by on the street.

# COMING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN



STORY **SAMANTHA CRAGGS**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **KELLY HORKOFF**

*GROWING UP ON HAMILTON MOUNTAIN, OLWYNE AND GREG MITTON ALWAYS HEARD STORIES ABOUT HAMILTON'S LOWER CITY.*

It wasn't safe, people said. It existed on the other side of Hamilton's not-so-invisible cultural and economical divide. Above the steep slope of the Niagara Escarpment is where people lived in safety and security. The lower city was dark and urban.

Neither of them listened. A little over 20 years ago – long before it was cool – the couple bought a house a block away from the lower city's storied green space, Gage Park. Now, the Mittons have the last laugh.

With their Delta West area home, built in 1923, the Mittons have created their own individualized sanctuary, and it's one that's quadrupled in value since they bought it 20 years ago. They turned a sunroom into a year-round sitting area that overlooks their garden. They created a basement entertainment area with a large TV and a bathroom with heated floors.

The garage doesn't hold a car anymore. It houses Olwyne's home floral business, **Lulabelle's Floral Studio** (named after one of their two cats). There, Olwyne gives floral workshops and meets with brides about how to add beauty to their big days. Behind the garage is a lounge area where the couple relax on comfortable chairs from **Stoney Creek Furniture**, surrounded by fragrant flowers and drink wine as they listen to the wafting sounds of music festivals in the park nearby.

They have a spacious front porch where they sit in nice weather. On summer mornings, Olwyne takes her coffee outside and watches newly-awakened neighbours walk their dogs. Hamilton's lower city has been described as a front porch community – one where people socialize by walking down their streets and talking to people on their front porches.

*Continued on page 32*



“Living on the mountain, you didn’t have a porch,” Greg says. “I had a very small porch on Mohawk Road but you didn’t really hang out there. Now you sit on it and think ‘This is fantastic.’”

In the tale of two Hamiltons, they like the side they’ve chosen. When they moved to the Gage Park area, “nobody could believe it,” Olwyne recalls. “People said, ‘Oh my God, you can’t go down there. Nothing’s down there.’”

“If you grow up on the Mountain, you usually stay on the Mountain.”

When friends visit now, she says, “they can’t believe there’s an area like this.”

Greg grew up near Upper Sherman and Mohawk Road; Olwyne near Upper Ottawa and Limeridge.

In her early 20s, Olwyne longed to see the world and get out of Hamilton. She ended up in Vancouver, where she was drawn to floral design. She has a knack for colour, and she liked the idea of making living creations.

After working for a florist in Vancouver, she returned to Hamilton to work for one here. “I wanted to get something with a career, and I wanted to settle down,” she says. She and Greg met at a pub at Mohawk Road and Upper Gage, and they married 24 years ago.

Olwyne studied landscape design at Kemptville College, and worked at a pair of Hamilton furniture stores. At Greg’s encouragement, she applied for and received a government grant, and about two years ago, opened Lulabelle’s to work for herself.

The house made it possible, they say. They moved the contents of the garage into their large garden shed, and turned the garage into a workspace. *Continued on page 34*

**RIGHT:** The living room is a comfortable and elegant space with bright colours, bold patterns and original woodwork. Lots of windows let in ample natural light.

*“We wanted an old house,” Olwyne says. “A friend bought around the corner, and we fell in love with the area. That’s how we ended up looking in this neighbourhood.”*







There are still elements that look like a car stall. The door, for example, remains, as does the storage area above where a car would normally be parked. But the pair painted it white, and used their knack for upcycling everyday items. An old filing cabinet, for example, holds floral supplies, as does an old dresser. Small chalkboards bear inspirational messages. The french doors are from Hart Design Centre.

As for the house itself, that's been a 20-year work in progress. They looked at 35 houses back then, Greg remembers, and "this was number 33."

"We wanted an old house," Olwyne says. "A friend bought around the corner, and we fell in love with the area. That's how we ended up looking in this neighbourhood."

The previous owner, they say, used it as multi-residential, so it was divided to house several families. There was even someone living in the garage. The living room was bubblegum pink – a "very 80s" colour, Olwyne says. They have since repainted it cream with an accent wall in light green wallpaper.

When it came to renovations, the kitchen was a pressing matter. Its cupboards were so narrow, Greg says, that they scarcely fit a dinner plate laid flat. They installed cabinets with wider shelves, and as with other rooms, refinished the old hardwood floors through [Berdula Finished Interiors](#). Now, a long table serves as an island, and sprigs

*Continued on page 36*



The kitchen floor was stripped down to the original floorboards that were then finished and given a rustic and worked-in feel. **OPPOSITE, TOP:** A three-season room was refinished to be used year-round, and offers a bright and comfy space to read and admire the backyard gardens. **BOTTOM:** A cut-out between the dining room and kitchen creates a modern open-concept space in this older home.





**ABOVE:** The back gardens are a stunning oasis that reflect the homeowners' love of flowers and colour. **RIGHT:** Olwyne Mitton in Lulabelle's Floral Studio in her garage. **BELOW:** A gorgeous sitting area was added behind the garage to enjoy the gardens outdoors when the weather allows.



and pine cones dot the décor. The range hood that clears the air while cooking came from the [Habitat for Humanity ReStore](#).

They reinforced the back sunroom and turned it into a year-round sitting area where they can overlook manicured gardens filled with greenery from [Harper's Garden Centre](#). Upstairs, they turned four small bedrooms into three larger ones. They built a second bathroom downstairs with a large glass shower and heated floors. Much of the tile in the house came from [Mario's Tile & Interiors](#). *Continued on page 38*

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Olwyne decided on most of the colours, including the light green in the living room. Much of the furnishings came from Stoney Creek Furniture.

“Olwyne just sees colour, so she uses her tastes for what the colours should be, even the colour of the dining room chairs,” says Greg, who’s a biomedical technologist. “She sees it, puts it there and it works.”

The gamble of living in the lower city has paid off financially, too. As the Toronto housing market becomes increasingly unaffordable, people there are relocating to Hamilton. Numbers from the Realtors Association of Hamilton and Burlington show that in 2017, the median price of a house in Hamilton’s lower city cracked \$300,000. The median price of a home sold there was \$337,250 in 2017, up 22 per cent from 2016.

“We were ahead of the curve,” Greg says. **OH**

LOCAL SOURCE GUIDE

- Berdula Finished Interiors • Cannon Nurseries • Discount Emporium • Habitat For Humanity ReStore • Harper’s Garden Centre • Hart Design Centre • Lulabelle’s Floral Studio • Mario’s Tile & Interiors • Stoney Creek Furniture • Saint Vincent de Paul Next to New

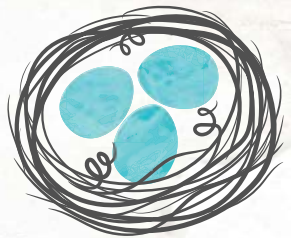


**ABOVE:** The master bathroom. **RIGHT:** The master bedroom was made spacious by knocking down a wall between two rooms.



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# Poached Peach MIMOSAS

The mimosa is a staple of every brunch, traditionally made with sparkling wine and orange juice. This recipe uses poached peaches for a refreshing twist.

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups water
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- 2-3 peaches, halved and pitted
- Sparkling wine

## DIRECTIONS

Combine water, sugar and honey in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir until sugar and honey are dissolved. Add peach halves and simmer for 5-10 minutes, turning until tender. Remove peaches and reduce poaching liquid by half. Put peaches in a small, sturdy bowl and reserve liquid in a separate bowl. Cool both.

Using a muddler or the back of a spoon, press peaches against the side of the bowl. Press hard and twist. The goal is to break up the fruit, release liquid and intensify the flavour. Add a dollop of muddled peaches to champagne glasses, then add a ½ tsp of poaching liquid to each glass. Top with sparkling wine. **OH**



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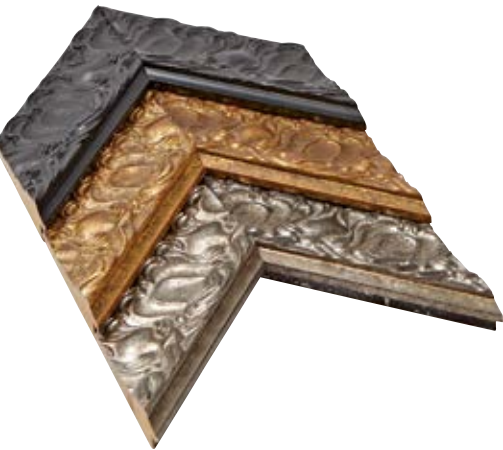
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# IN THE FRAME

STORY **TIFFANY MAYER** | PHOTOGRAPHY **KELLY HORKOFF**

**THE PLACE:** There are some professions people are just meant to do. Take Mary Paliouras, her husband Tom, and brother Steve Fotiou, who own **Arcon Picture Frames** in Stoney Creek. The trio seemed destined to work in the picture framing and art business, following in the footsteps of Mary and Steve's dad, Fotios, who established a successful frame manufacturing outfit in Toronto in the 1970s. By the mid-1980s, Fotios sold his business and moved to Hamilton where he launched Arcon

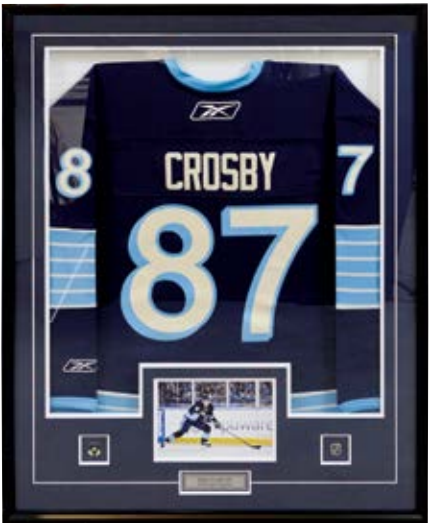
Picture Frames as a wholesale enterprise with Mary and Tom. Together, they grew the business to accommodate commercial work and a retail arm – momentum that kept going after Fotios retired and Steve joined the business in his place. Today, Arcon is one of the region's biggest manufacturers of frames, and provider of framing services. "We grew into the business," Mary says. "This is my life. This is what we know how to do. We love working with people, we love the design aspect."



**THE SPECIALTY:** Frames are obviously the name of the game here, but so is exclusive wall art to complete any space. Arcon Picture Frames works with builders, designers, artists and photographers to put the finishing touch on paintings and photos that will complete every room in a home. Mary will happily visit clients' homes to help them decide on pieces, including custom mirrors and large clocks, to finish a space. Arcon staff will install artwork as well. The store has also

carved a niche as the place to tastefully frame and display sports jerseys and memorabilia.

**THE STYLE:** The store carries artwork and frames to suit any taste, from contemporary to traditional. New items arrive weekly to keep the selection of paintings, photographs, oversize clocks and mirrors fresh. "Because we've been doing this for 30 years, we're familiar with everything," Mary says.



**THE TREND:** Canvas ruled for much of the last five years but Mary is seeing a move toward more framed artwork again. People see those once-popular frameless canvases and feel they are missing something, she says. As for the frames themselves, "rustic and barn-boardy" are popular at the moment, but traditional frames have always been big sellers.

**WHERE:** 410 Lewis Rd., Unit 7, Stoney Creek 905.643.8938 | arconframes.com OH





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# GROWING with SUCCESS

STORY **MELANIE REKOLA**

Growing food is one of the most popular forms of gardening practised today.

Given the ever increasing costs (and lack of nutritional content) of current grocery store produce, it makes sense. Growing food at home is actually pretty easy to do. For example, throwing a tomato plant or two in a sunny spot in your garden, and giving it an occasional watering, will likely produce a few fruits. But for your veggie garden to be truly successful in both health and bounty, a number of requirements must be met.

## PLACEMENT

Food gardens need sunshine, but only about eight hours per day. East facing is ideal, followed by south and west. Veggie gardens need not be planted in rows if you prefer free-form arrangement. Add some inexpensive and edible flower seeds such as sunflower and nasturtium to punch up the colour. Be artistic as crops will change year to year so nothing is permanent.

## CROP ROTATION

Certain plants are heavy feeders while others actually increase soil health in the areas in which they grow. This makes crop rotation very beneficial to the home garden. For example, legumes fix nitrogen into the soil, so plant cabbage and cauliflower in an area where you previously grew beans and peas. Root crops don't like very rich soil, so plant these in areas previously inhabited by demanding cabbage and cauliflowers.

## SOIL

Just as it is with good relationships and sound construction practises, a successful vegetable garden is built upon a solid foundation – its soil! Healthy soil is composed of weathered rock, organic matter, water and air, yet it also contains the magical hidden element of beneficial organisms. Let's take a closer look.

**Minerals:** Roughly half of soil's composition is made of bits of broken down weathered rock – the vital minerals necessary for healthy plants. The size of these particles determines the texture of soil. Large sand particles are found in sandy soil, medium particles in silty soil and small particles in clay-based soil.

**Organic Matter:** These are the partially decomposed remains of plant life, soil organisms and all kinds of vegetative matter. Although organic matter makes up only five to 10 per cent of soil composition, it is essential to bind soil particles together, retain moisture, allow air flow and provide food for the all-important microorganisms. All soil types will improve with an increase in organic matter so add in compost, aged manure or seed a "cover crop" such as annual rye grass, then till it into the existing soil to decompose.

**Soil Life:** Beneficial bacteria, fungi, nematodes and earthworms are just a few of the important creatures found in garden soil. These tiny beings are imperative to help convert the organic matter and minerals in soil into vitamins, hormones and nutrients plants need for optimum growth. Avoid sterilized commercial soils and composts, pesticides and herbicides. Add in worm compost, home compost or leaf mould to enhance your colonies instead.

## PERFECT COMPANIONS

Some plants have similar growing requirements and even grow better when planted together, making them natural allies. Other plants, like people, compete for resources. Many companion planting charts are available online so with a little research you'll find out exactly which of your plants are friends or foes.

## THE HARVEST

Every great chef knows each dish is only as good as its ingredients, so harvest your bounty at its optimum flavour. Sometimes you'll have an abundance of one crop or have many crops that mature all at once. Don't let those extras rot in place! Freezing and canning are easy and you may end up with enough delicious and nutritious preserves to last you until the following July.

Most mass-grown fruits and vegetables are sprayed with dangerous herbicides and pesticides, planted in depleted soil and shipped an average of 2,500 kilometres before they reach the local grocery store. Even much of our livestock is given loads of antibiotics and an unhealthy diet that then trickles down to us when we consume them. Given the state of the average Canadian's body fat level, coupled with mass vitamin and mineral deficiencies, our bodies are simultaneously both starving and storing fat! However, when the body is nourished at a cellular level, cravings disappear, natural energy is restored and many health problems retreat. Food is the original medicine so why not give a healthful, tasty organic veggie garden a try? **OH**

*Melanie Rekola is a certified horticulturalist and landscape designer.*

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# THE WRIGHT *inspiration*

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

When you build a house on Hamilton’s Mountain Brow Boulevard with a breathtaking view of the city and the lake, it’s natural that the landscape would play a big role in the home’s design. *Continued on page 50*

**LEFT:** The great room features a fireplace surround with the same quartz as the kitchen island, creating continuity and a stunning pedestal over which to hang original artwork. **RIGHT:** Interior finishing contractor Emilio Violin of Violin Contracting. **BELOW:** The view from the front of the house looks over Hamilton’s lower city and harbour.





The just-finished property on the Hamilton mountain, designed by **Frank Bandiera Architect Inc.**, is on the same site where the homeowners, a Hamilton couple and their four now-grown sons, have lived since 1996. As their children approached adulthood, the couple decided to tear down the original family home and create something built for the next chapter in their lives with the help of **Marcel Poirier Custom Built Homes** and **Emilio Violin** of **Violin Contracting**.

During the planning stages, the couple kept coming back to Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House in Buffalo. "Not that our house looks like a Frank Lloyd Wright design from the outside, but I was inspired by quite a few things at the Martin House," the homeowner says.

"First, the windows are such an important part of the Martin home," she notes. In Wright's design, ample, detailed glasswork makes for a light-filled home and also provides an interior focal point. The same is true in this home thanks to strikingly tall and carefully crafted windows by Kolbe Windows & Doors that run most of the length of the home's south side overlooking the backyard.

There's plenty of natural light in the bedroom, living room and kitchen for most of the day. Remote-controlled blinds from **Girgenti Custom Window Treatments** offer shade and privacy when needed. In each room, the windows blur the line between the pared-down, peaceful indoor space, with interior design by **Jan Speziale** and **Shannon Thompson** of **Barnard & Speziale**, and the sculpted backyard featuring

*Continued on page 53*



A walnut island in the spacious but functional kitchen offsets the lighter coloured cabinetry. It also features a vegetable sink to help with meal preparation. **LEFT:** Ample counter space allows room for necessities without looking cluttered. **RIGHT:** Frank Bandiera is the home's architect. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** One of the homeowner's favourite kitchen features is the Wolf gas range, which allows him to indulge in his love of cooking.







A black walnut bar in the dining area makes entertaining a breeze and provides extra, elegant storage for glassware and wine.  
**RIGHT:** Mylene Farion, assistant manager of retail and art rental and sales at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. The AGH was the source of many of the paintings in the homeowners' collection.  
**FAR RIGHT:** Interior designer Jan Speziale of Barnard & Speziale.

A dining table with room for 10 makes it easy to host the entire extended family on special occasions.



a rock garden and vegetable patch designed by landscape architectural consultant **Lyn Glanfield Bravo** of **Lyn Glanfield Inc.** and built by **Dykstra Landscaping**.

“My oldest son has a friend in the Bruce Peninsula so he arranged for and trucked down 40 tons of these rocks,” the homeowner says about the weathered boulders in the rock garden. “They came with little plants and moss growing on them, which helps them look like they’ve been here forever.” He wanted to contribute to the project, she added, and has now started a business supplying it through **Wildewood and Stone**.

An outdoor kitchen, complete with pizza oven, and a deck that spans the length of the home’s backyard, which also features furniture by Toja, plus a nook for a fitness spa, helps to further blend the outdoors with the indoors.

So does the homeowners’ extensive collection of Canadian art, featuring bold and colourful natural or outdoor scenes. Much of the collection was purchased from the **Art Gallery of Hamilton** and local artists. Other works are on loan in the home with the help of **Mylene Farion** from the AGH.

Another hallmark of Wright’s Martin House, and something the family wanted to

capture in their new home, was a sense of craftsmanship and pared-down ornamentation. Interior finishing contractor Emilio Violin, who designed all the millwork in the house, says the Mountain Brow home is frill-free and intentional in much the same way. “Every line in here has a purpose,” Violin says. “There are clean, simple lines throughout the house, and each room has its own finishes and transitions.”

Also like the Martin house, this home embraces open-concept living. Where doors were needed, such as on bedrooms, they were sourced from **Turkstra Lumber** along with the trim throughout the home.

“We have a big extended family, and maybe the four boys will all have families of their own, one day,” the homeowner says. “We like to entertain and we tend to be something of a hub, so we wanted a space where everyone could be together, even when there are quite a few of us.”

The formal dining room was removed from one of the original floor plans in favour of a more casual eating area between the kitchen and the living room. The custom black walnut pedestal table by Millbank Family Furniture, however, lends a sense of occasion and is big enough that the entire extended family can usually take a seat around it. *Continued on page 54*



Wallpaper on the ceiling in the powder room adds a rich and intriguing element to the room.



**RIGHT:** Even in the powder room, no detail was overlooked, including providing enough wall space to feature some of the owner's collection of original artwork. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Original artwork features many outdoor and natural scenes painted by Canadian artists.



The kitchen, with its cabinetry by **Crescent Cabinet Co. Ltd.** and granite counters from **Granite By Design Ltd.**, is timeless and pared down. It was designed with function in mind and as the backdrop for everyday life as well as special gatherings. "The kitchen's always the spot where people end up," the homeowner notes. "I love that even if we're in here, we're still connected to whoever is in the family room. We had everyone here this past Christmas and for the first time I can remember, all the kids were in one place with the entire family. It was fantastic."

To help make open-concept living more practical, the family created a combination kitchen extension, similar to a butler's pantry, and mudroom. There's also a walk-in pantry in the nook and an oversize closet. "We built this home with lots of storage space," says the homeowner. "We did get rid of a lot of things when we moved to build the house, too, but we wanted to make sure we had a place for everything." In particular, that meant a spot on the main floor for everyday items. "In our old home we had a pantry in the lower level, but that gets a little harder to manage as you age," she adds.

The mudroom area is also the main access to and from the garage, with a discreet staircase down to the lower level. "The boys and their friends tend to come and go. With this side entrance and access to downstairs, they can have their own space and we can have privacy, too," the homeowner says.

It's also the perfect solution to the challenge of dirt tracked in from the garden, since the family will plant and grow a wide range of greenery and vegetables in the backyard. At the moment, one of the rooms in the lower level is serving as a temporary potting station until a mini greenhouse outside can be outfitted with geothermal heating, so there's lots of dirty foot traffic to keep tucked off to the side.

Continued on page 58



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The homeowners plan to add a coffee machine and build a deck off the master suite so they can enjoy coffee outside in the mornings without a trip to the kitchen.



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**LEFT:** The master en suite is a mix of elegance and functionality with plenty of mirrors and storage to help with primping and keeping things tidy. **BELOW:** Lots of glass elements add a spacious and airy feeling to the master en suite. **BOTTOM:** A large rain showerhead creates a relaxing experience in the shower while the handheld makes washing up even easier.



## SOURCE GUIDE

- Art Gallery Of Hamilton • Barnard & Speziale • Centura Hamilton • Crescent Cabinet Co. Ltd. • Dykstra Landscaping • Frank Bandiera Architect Inc. • Girgenti Custom Window Treatments • Granite By Design Ltd. • Grand River Natural Stone Ltd. • Home Lighting • Kevin Neeb Electric Ltd. • Lyn Glanfield Inc. • Marcel Poirier Custom Built Homes • Painting Canada • Turkstra Lumber • Violin Contracting • Wildwood and Stone

Then again, blending the outside with the inside – even if it means bringing in a little dirt from the garden – was always one of the foundations in the home’s design. “We love this location and we put years of thought and research into how to make everything work the way we want it to,” the homeowner says. “It was worth it. It’s a pretty joyful thing to walk into your home and truly love everything about it.” **OH**



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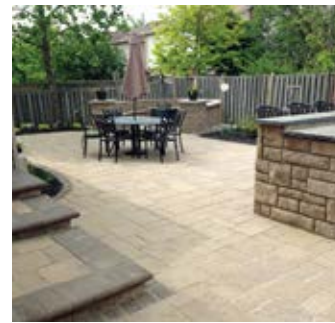
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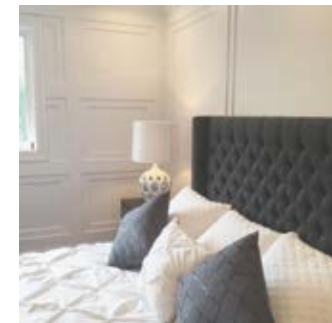
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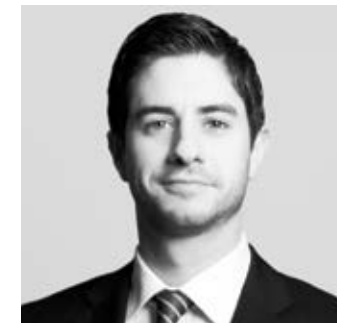
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Often located adjacent to the garage, the mudroom can become the primary entrance in many homes and is a high-traffic area. It's the last place you see when you head out for the day and the first space that greets you when you return (and perhaps the first space guests will see as well). Therefore, the mudroom should be designed with the utmost utility in mind to meet the specific needs and requirements of your household. Walking in and out of a tidy, organized and functional space creates a welcoming and comforting environment that can help calm your nerves and reduce stress. Whether you're redesigning your current space or starting from scratch, here are some considerations when designing a mudroom:

### MATERIALS

As the name suggests, the space should be designed with durable materials and finishes that can withstand the dirt, mud and snow. A non-porous hard floor surface, such as porcelain or luxury vinyl tile, is easy to mop and requires minimal maintenance. Just avoid light-coloured grout.

Consider hard-wearing wall finishes (the matte paint trend is not suitable for the mudroom). Wall tile, wood panelling and many wallcoverings are resilient and easy to wipe.

Be mindful of uneven surfaces and heavy textures where dust and dirt can settle and become difficult to clean.

Radiant floor heat is worth the investment in the mudroom as it helps to keep the space warm and dry in the cool, damp months and is a welcome treat for cold toes.

Continued on page 64

The kitchen might be the hardest working space in the house, but the mudroom comes in a close second. So it's no surprise that mudroom design is receiving more attention and the room itself more square footage than ever before.

Mudrooms are multifunctional spaces. In addition to storing a household's shoes, boots, coats, mitts, hats, umbrellas, purses, backpacks, keys and sports gear, it is frequently also the mail drop, home to the family calendar, pantry, housekeeping or laundry space, and often the spot for a family pet's crate, food and litter. It truly is a hard-working space!



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## STORAGE

Consider where shoes, boots, coats and mitts will be stored both in season and off season. Do you prefer visible hooks for coats and open cubbies for boots or do you prefer them hidden behind closed doors? Incorporating a bench or form of seating is helpful for people of all ages when it comes to footwear.

Individual storage cubbies have become popular and their ease of access allows everyone to be responsible for placing their stuff in its designated location.

A combination of open and closed storage helps minimize visual clutter while providing an opportunity to express your individual style through cabinetry, hooks, hardware, bins and baskets.



## EXTRAS

If you're an active individual or household, be sure to designate space to accommodate the gear for various sports and outdoor activities.

Avid gardeners can incorporate sufficient counter space to pot, prune and care for plants and start spring vegetables. A small, deep, wash-up sink can be handy to rinse fresh garden produce and to clean hard-working hands straight from the shop or barn.

Do you struggle with muddy paws after walks with your dog? Pet showers are becoming a more popular request when sufficient space is available. They help contain the mess so it doesn't get tracked throughout your home, and can also be handy to fill the mop bucket or rinse boots.



A docking station for mobile phones can be a great addition to the space as more people try to successfully balance the demands of work and home life. The idea is to leave your phone in a specific location instead of continually by your side, which can allow you to be less distracted and more focused on the present moment.

Be sure to consider the vantage point from adjoining spaces and decide what you don't mind on display and what you'd prefer hidden from view. Pocket or barn-style doors are a good option that don't take up valuable floor space like a door swing.

Although functionality and practicality are the focus of the mudroom, it is also another space where you can express your unique style and design sensibility. Be creative and have fun with it! **OH**

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9. **INDIGO:** Click & Grow Smart Garden with 3 Basil Plants
10. **DELTA:** Trinsic Single Handle Pull-Down Bar/Prep Faucet in Matte Black
11. **BLANCO:** Quatrus R15 Laundry Sink
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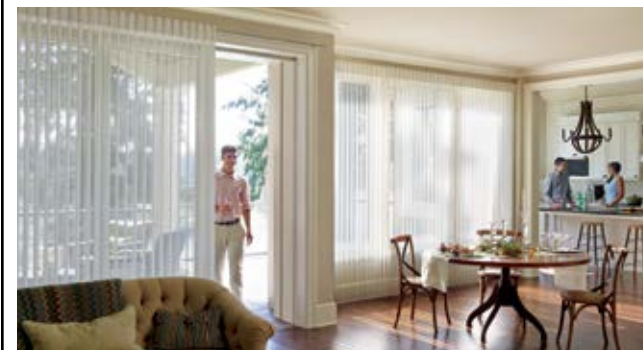


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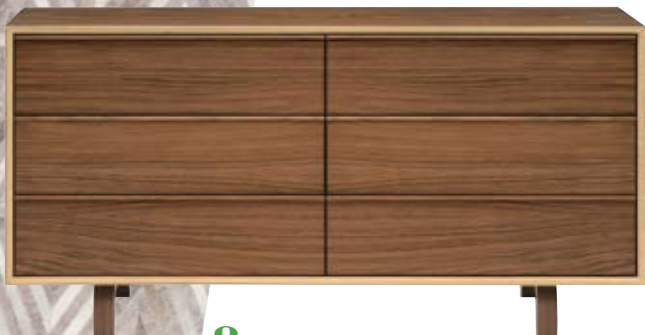
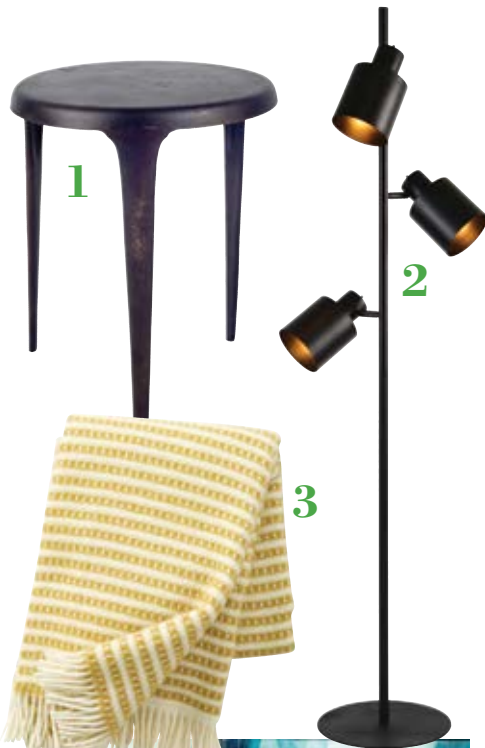


double take



the  
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PHOTO: JASON HARTOG



9

- 1. **MERCANA:** Abraham Side Table
- 2. **RENWIL:** Downfield Floor Lamp
- 3. **KLIPPAN:** Olle Throw in Saffron
- 4. **SURYA:** Eternal Wall Art by Caroline Ashton
- 5. **ZUO MODERN:** Lincoln Lounge Chair in Gray
- 6. **CYAN DESIGN:** Meadow Vases
- 7. **MUUTO:** Balance Vase Single Set in Black
- 8. **SURYA:** Medora Rug MOD-1012
- 9. **KLAUS:** Cherner Multiflex Sideboard

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# INSPIRED WORK

STORY TIFFANY MAYER  
PHOTOGRAPHY KELLY HORKOFF

## ROBERT VANDERBRUGGHEN & TODD VANDERBRUGGHEN OWNERS *Ridgeline Renovations*

**What is Ridgeline Renovations?** We are a custom builder and home renovation company that specializes in mid-to-high-end projects. Ridgeline Renovations offers quality craftsmanship with superior customer service that keeps our clients informed so they understand every step of their project. Building trust with quality makes a great relationship with long-lasting results.

**What drew you to this line of work?** The satisfaction of transforming a client's home into something more beautiful than they imagined, and also bringing back trust to the renovation industry.

**What are your favourite types of renovation projects to do?** Main-floor renovations and additions are the top of the list. Investing and renovating in your current property allows you to customize your space, change the layout of your home or enhance additional square footage to meet your lifestyle. Renovating is a great way to convert your existing house into your dream home.

## BRAD & TRACEY PATON, OWNERS *Shades of Summer Landscaping and Maintenance, Waterdown*

**Tell us what you do at Shades of Summer:** Shades of Summer is a residential landscape maintenance and construction company. Tracey looks after all the bookkeeping and everything behind the scenes. I work three days a week cutting grass and gardening and three days a week installing new landscaping.

**What drew you to landscaping?** Landscaping was a great summer job when I was in university. I liked being outside and I liked the physical work. After university, I enrolled in a horticulture program at Mohawk

College and I really enjoyed that.

**What advice do you have for homeowners considering big changes to their yards and gardens this year?** Plan ahead as far as possible because good companies get busy. Not only should you look at websites but go look at their work. We take clients to homes that we completed anywhere from one to five years ago. It's important not only to be happy with the work when it's done, but be happy five years from now.

*Continued on page 70*







**JOANNA CUTAIA-BEALES**  
*BROKER*  
*RE/MAX Escarpment Realty Inc., Brokerage*

**Tell us what you do:** As a Hamilton-born, southwest native with a lifelong passion for the city, and over 30 years in real estate and development, I proudly work as a broker with RE/MAX Escarpment Realty Inc., Brokerage. I assist my clients with buying and selling in an ever-evolving market. My commitment is to my clients' best interests and happiness during the entire real estate process.

**Why did you get into real estate?** I've always been involved in the housing industry, be it site development, new construction, or the sales aspect of the business. Real estate has always come naturally to me and helping people find their dream home is so rewarding, which makes it simple to love what I do and do what I love.

**What one thing do prospective homebuyers need to know about the housing market in Hamilton right now?** The market is ever-changing due to government regulations, increases in interest rates and uncertainty amongst the public. Both buyers and sellers should align themselves with a broker who has her pulse on the market and knows it like the back of her hand. By working with a knowledgeable broker, clients' interests are always put first during the entire real estate process.



**KATE ANDERTON**  
*GENERAL MANGER*  
**DOUG JONES**  
*OWNER*  
*CRS Renovation & Design, Ancaster*

**What do you do at CRS?** CRS is a full home remodelling company that specializes in kitchens, bathrooms and basements. Our clients are our number one priority, from the first point of contact to the finishing touches in the home. We strive to provide homeowners with one-stop shopping solutions, quality products and professional service.

**What inspired you to get into the home renovation business?** I love to create and design beautiful living spaces for everyone to enjoy. Seeing the dramatic change in our before

and after photos is so rewarding. I'm so proud of the CRS finished products we've delivered, but more importantly the thousands of happy customers we've served since 2005.

**Any advice for people looking to do a major overhaul at home this year?** Collect pictures of what you would like done in your home. Know your budget and invest wisely. Ask lots of technical questions to understand what you've bought and the skill level of the people doing the work. **OH**

SEE OUR DIRECTORY FOR ALL CONTACT INFORMATION.



cooking at home

# BLACKBERRY SHORTCAKE

*with BOURBON CARAMEL*

Go above and beyond with this modern upgrade to an old classic: the shortcake. Light sponge cake is layered with mascarpone whipped cream and topped with decadent blackberries with a hint of bourbon.



NEW  
TAKE  
ON AN OLD  
CLASSIC

RECIPE AND PHOTOGRAPHY  
JENELLE MCCULLOCH

## Sponge Cake

For this super simple sponge cake you will need two 6-inch round baking pans.

### INGREDIENTS

5 large eggs at room temperature  
1 cup + 1 Tbsp cake flour, sifted  
½ cup + 1 Tbsp granulated sugar  
pinch of salt

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 340°F. Butter and flour sides and bottoms of baking pans. Cut out two 6-inch rounds of parchment paper and line the bottom of each pan. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, combine eggs, sugar and salt. With the whisk attachment, beat on medium/medium-high speed for 15-20 minutes until pale and fluffy. The mixture will be firm and will form soft peaks when ready. In batches, slowly sift in flour and carefully fold the mixture by hand to combine. Be careful not to overwork and deflate the batter.

When combined, divide the mixture evenly in the two prepared pans and bake for 25-30 minutes. Be careful not to open the oven as the cakes may deflate. The cakes are done when an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Turn off oven. Leave cakes to cool inside the oven for 5-10 minutes with the door propped open. Remove from oven and let cool for another 10 minutes before removing from pans and inverting them onto a rack to fully cool.

## Blackberries in Bourbon

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups fresh blackberries  
1 Tbsp bourbon  
2 Tbsp maple syrup

### DIRECTIONS

Combine ingredients in a saucepan. Heat over medium until blackberries begin to render their juices. Chill until ready to use.



## Bourbon Caramel

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup sugar  
½ cup water  
½ cup heavy cream  
1 Tbsp butter  
1 Tbsp bourbon  
Pinch of salt

### DIRECTIONS

In a saucepan over medium heat combine sugar and water. Do not stir, but let sugar dissolve and come to a simmer. Simmer until syrup is a golden, amber

colour. Swirl the mixture in the pan if necessary to ensure all of the sugar is dissolved and caramelized.

Remove from heat and whisk in heavy cream. Lower heat to medium-low and return pan to burner. Continue to stir the caramel for another 2-3 minutes.

Remove from heat, add butter and stir. Add the bourbon and salt, stirring again.

Transfer to a heat-safe container to cool. The caramel will thicken as it cools.

## Mascarpone Whipped Cream

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup mascarpone cheese  
½ cup superfine sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 cup whipping cream

### DIRECTIONS

Combine mascarpone cheese, sugar and vanilla in a small bowl.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, whip whipping cream until light and fluffy.

Slowly add cheese mixture to whipped cream while the mixer is still running. Mix until combined.

### TO ASSEMBLE THE CAKE

Layer sponge cake with whipped mascarpone and top with blackberries. Drizzle with bourbon caramel to finish. Serve cake soon after assembly for best results and cut with a serrated knife – the cake is very delicate. **OH**



online

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PROJECT **EMIL MAKKAR**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

# chalkboard SERVING TRAYS

Add flair to your next function with a custom serving platter. Whether you are serving crudité's or gourmet treats, it's a fun and functional way to add a personal touch your guests will love.

**online** Discover more DIY projects at [ourhomes.ca/mag/create](http://ourhomes.ca/mag/create)

**MATERIALS**

- 12-by-48-inch pine project board
- 120/220/320 grit sandpaper
- Two-inch painter's tape
- Chalkboard spray paint
- Minwax Wood Finish stain of your choice (we used Early American for our project)
- Staining rag
- Handles of choice and fasteners (we used drawer pulls)

**HOW-TO**

- Sand both sides of the 12-by-48-inch project board using 120-grit sandpaper.
- Wipe the surface with a lint-free rag, and sand both sides again with 220-grit sandpaper. Repeat with 320-grit sandpaper.
- Using a staining rag, stain both sides of the board and let dry. For a deeper colour, add a second coat of stain.
- Once the board is dry, use the painter's tape to mask off the perimeter and edges of the board to create a border that will remain unpainted.
- Spray with chalkboard paint in even strokes on the unmasked portion of the board. Allow the project to dry completely before carefully removing the tape.
- Fasten the handles of your choice.
- Add a custom message or design with chalk and use to serve.

**NOTE:** Do not place food directly on the chalkboard surface. We use small, decorative dishes or wax paper for food safety. **OH**



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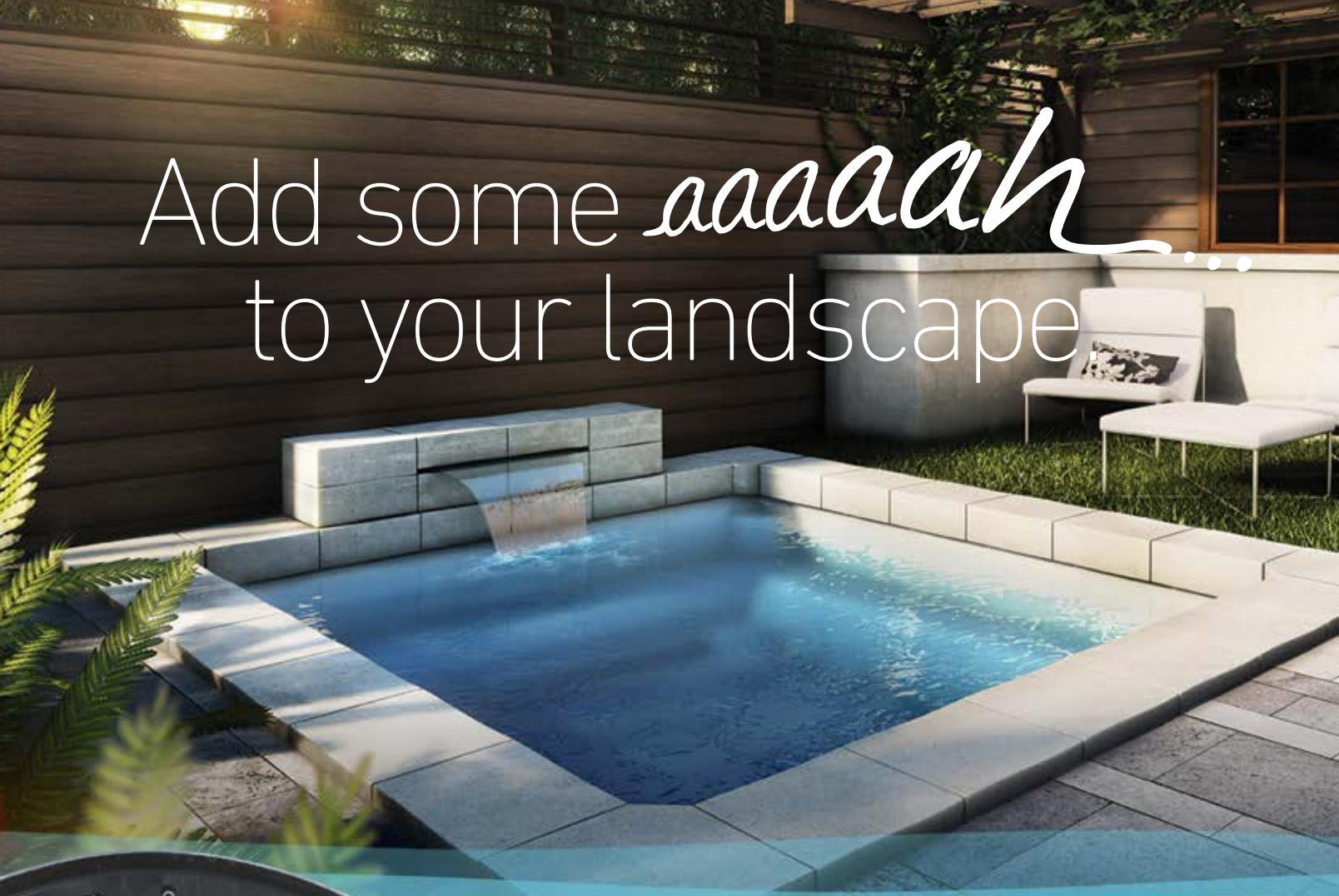


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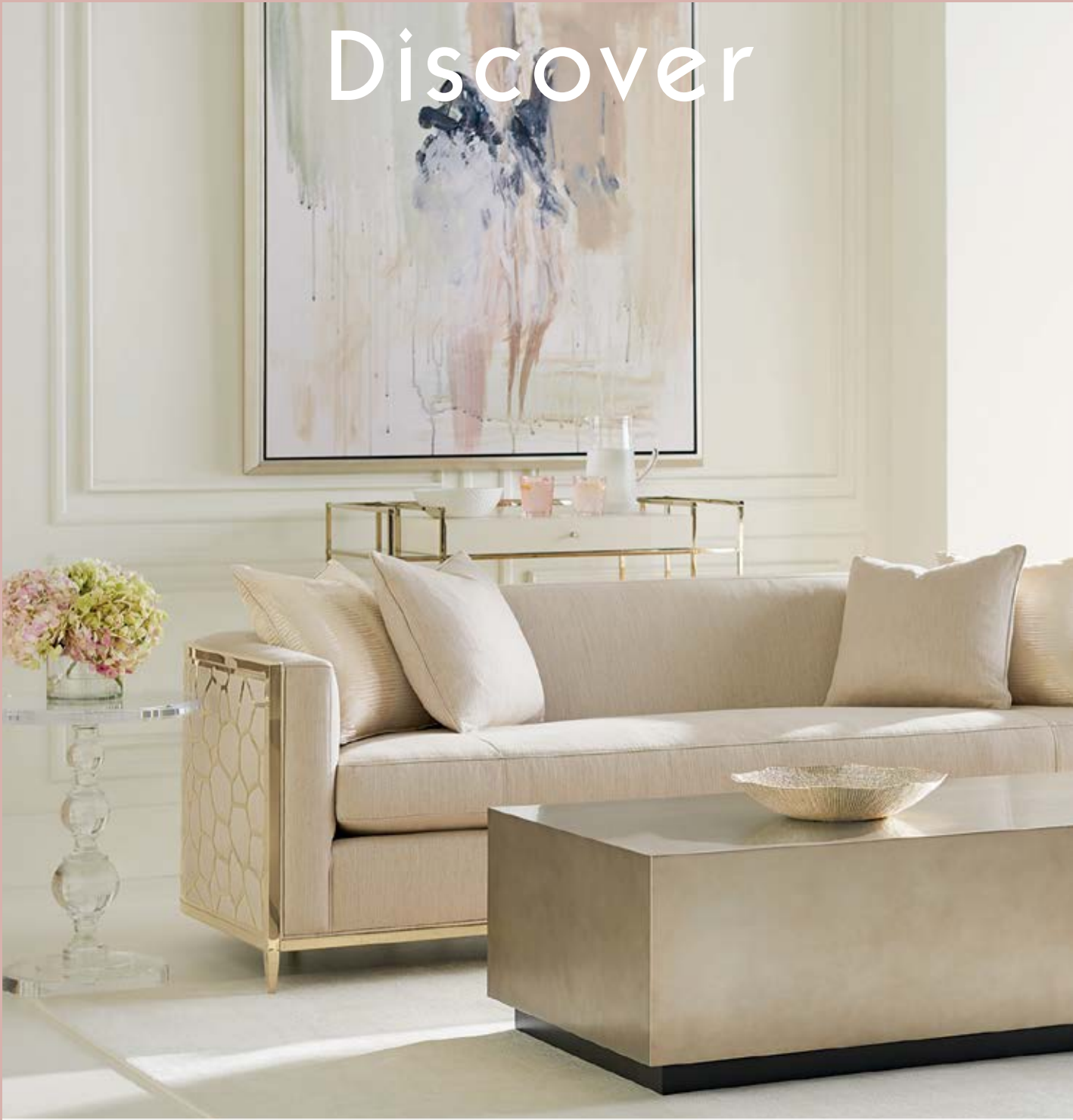


finishing touch

1. BENJAMIN MOORE: Paint in Mystical Grape (2071-30), Your Majesty (1400) & Gentle Violet (2071-20)  
2. YORK WALLCOVERINGS: Aquarella (ST6025) Wallpaper from the Stacy Garcia Paper Muse Collection  
3. DIMOND LIGHTING: Wayfarer Table Lamp in Purple 4. AREAWARE: Cubebot in Violet 5. DYSON:  
Supersonic Hair Dryer in Black/Purple 6. BERNHARDT: Alana Chair 7. RENWIL: Seychelle Mosaic Mirror  
8. RENWIL: Feather Wall Décor 9. WATERFORD: W Heather Tumbler 10. INNIT DESIGNS: Acapulco Chair  
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