

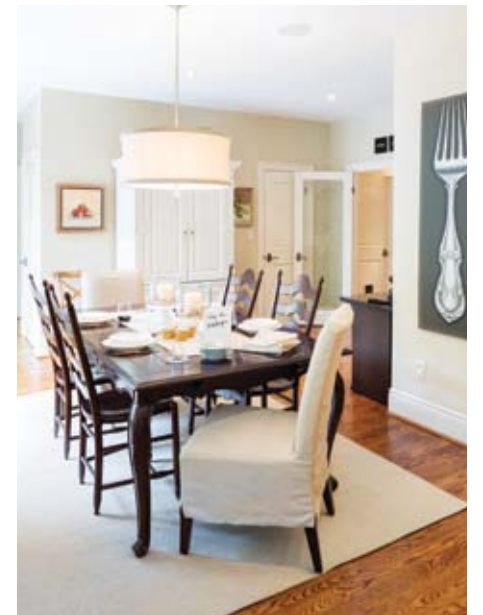
RAVISHING *Reno*

BY JOYCE TURNER-GIONET
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON HARTOG

A vibrant zebra print runner from Anderson Carpet and Home adds a subtle graphic touch and makes the staircase come alive. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** The kitchen includes a convenient nook with storage for glassware and extra counter space. **TOP RIGHT:** A more casual kitchen dining area is anchored by a beautifully refinished walnut-coloured table and a creamy fabric drum light fixture. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A perfect hostess, Fulvia Walton's table settings include personalized place cards to add a whimsical touch. **BOTTOM CENTRE:** Beautiful details in the trim work frame each room and add architectural detail and character. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Pale blue wallpaper in the powder room creates a soothing, spa-like feeling.



Each year, *MoneySense* magazine highlights the top places to live in Canada, and Oakville consistently makes the grade. For almost 200 years, the town has been a drawing card for couples like Fulvia and Roland Walton who bought their 3,700 sq. ft. Oakville home 15 years ago.



They were captivated by the quiet streets, proximity to Toronto, the lake, and a rare American chestnut tree at this delightful place to call home.

Recently, renovations to the kitchen, great room, living and dining rooms were done. The couple briefly contemplated moving, but with the home nestled on an idyllic lot, they decided to let the reno work its magic. Although Fulvia has superb design sense, she wanted an expert onboard. After viewing the home of designer Tracy Ray, owner of **Unique Ideas**, Fulvia was sold. "I loved Tracy's style from the get-go," Fulvia says. "It's in synch with mine – clean lines, symmetry, interspersed drama, with the onus on comfort, and she really listened to what we wanted. We didn't want a design that was too precious, we wanted to live in the house, not tiptoe around. Tracy understood this."

As if to make the point, her small dog suddenly leapt onto a gorgeous Bergère armchair. "He's not usually allowed to do that, but you get the picture," Fulvia smiles. To oversee the reno, Tracy brought in **Stuart Riley** of **BRS Construction** (partner with HGTV's Bryan Bacumler). Stuart is

known for his ability to combine classical and contemporary architecture for a holistic approach with timeless appeal.

"It's a north-facing house, so Fulvia and Roland wanted to bring more natural light into the main living areas," says Tracy. Working from her design, Stuart tackled structural changes first. Across the main floor, raised solid panels were added to walls to create drama. Square-cut doorways were arched and made deeper to let in light. Beautiful trim work, crown moulding and taller baseboards by **Jay Hackett** now run throughout. In the dining room, a stunning plaster-coffered ceiling replaced the original flat ceiling. The white trim and zen-like palette on the walls allows architectural details to shine. The original oak floors were refinished by **Oakwood Floors** in a natural stain. "When working within the confines of an original build, the challenge in a reno is to maintain a harmonious balance between what's kept and what's changing; the structural mathematics must result in a seamless, aesthetically pleasing outcome," says Stuart. *Continued on page 22*



The stunning kitchen by Top Notch Cabinets blends fresh white cabinets with warm walnut tones. The large island in is the perfect place for Fulvia to whip up culinary creations, and the door connecting to the dining room maintains easy flow.

In the new kitchen, the couple wanted a space for optimum workflow and fluid entertaining. With a great reputation, Oakville's **Top Notch Cabinets** was a perfect fit for the reno. "Fulvia is a serious cook who would one day like to host a children's cooking school in-house, so a durable, low-maintenance design was essential," said Tracy. Two windows frame the cooking area and bring symmetry and light. The colour flecks in the white Italian Statuario marble backsplash by **Stone Edge Marble and Granite** are picked up in the beige striations of the creamy Buttermilk Caesarstone island top.

Bevelled white shaker cabinets are dressed with satin-nickel knobs and

pulls. An open upper section of cabinets showcases celeste blue accessories – a jewel-coloured jolt in a tranquil kitchen oasis. The generous eating area with its tall windows is an ideal spot for relaxed family meals. The kitchen table was refinished in walnut. Easy-care slipcovers were added to the chairs. "With kids and pets, slipcovers are easy and I told Tracy we're too busy to be too fussy," Fulvia laughs. Valerie Thompson of Top Notch Cabinets describes the kitchen as a transitional space marrying traditional elements such as stacked cabinets and turned legs on the island with the contemporary appeal of slab-door cabinets and an oversized stainless hood surrounded with a more traditional wood surround. *Continued on page 24*



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In the great room off the kitchen, full-length windows tower and spill sunlight into the casual but chic interior. A whimsical twig base supports a glass-top table from **Cocoon Furnishings Inc.**, and an oversized leather ottoman was fitted with a celeste blue tray top. Dated millwork and trim were replaced with more modern lines and floor-to-ceiling pillars were converted from round to square. New hardwood was stained to match.

The living room reno transformed a dark, relatively unused space to a light, airy, room that tempts one to linger. "We lightened the walls with warm greys, added patterned fabrics, pops of cheery yellow and reframed the couple's artwork to suit the updated look," says Tracy. Custom mirrors from **Continental Mirror & Glass Co.** flank the updated gas fireplace. A freestanding bookshelf was built in and painted dark grey for contrast. Two existing Bergere chairs were reupholstered in a striking floral fabric. A textured wool area rug from **Anderson Carpet and Home** ties the look together. *Continued on page 26*

LEFT: Yellow accents add a little verve to the lovely greys in the living room. Built-in shelving is a showcase for beautiful books. **BELOW:** Floor-to-ceiling windows veiled with soft drapery blend effortlessly into the soothing neutral palette in the cosy family room.



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LEFT: The dramatic waffle ceiling and intricate wall mouldings create a beautiful backdrop for elegant evening entertaining. **BELOW:** The master bath is bright and fresh with large windows and water blue accents. **BOTTOM:** French doors in the master bedroom open to a beautiful view of the backyard. Soft fabrics create a tranquil space.



Soft grey dining room walls are inviting and sophisticated. A custom dining table made by Cocoon Furnishings anchors the room. Upholstered chairs complement the table. Polished nickel accents on the wall sconces, bar cart, trays, hardware and the chandelier are elegant room jewelry.

From day one, Tracy's style resonated with Fulvia and Roland, creating a successful reno. In some ways a designer has to be a chameleon, adapting to and anticipating the desires of a client without imposing her own personal style onto the work. "The most important part of my job is listening, balancing what I know about good design with what my clients need to make them happy," says Tracy. Fulvia and Roland can certainly be classified as happy clients. **OH**



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