



SIMPLY  
*beautiful*



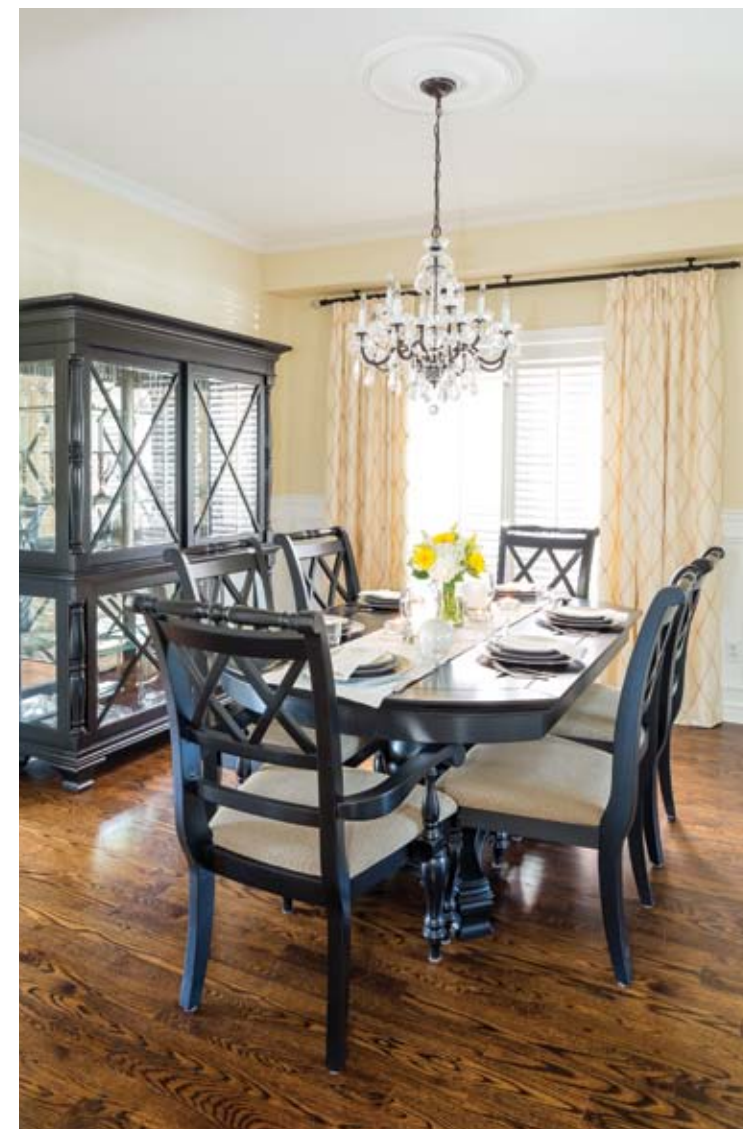
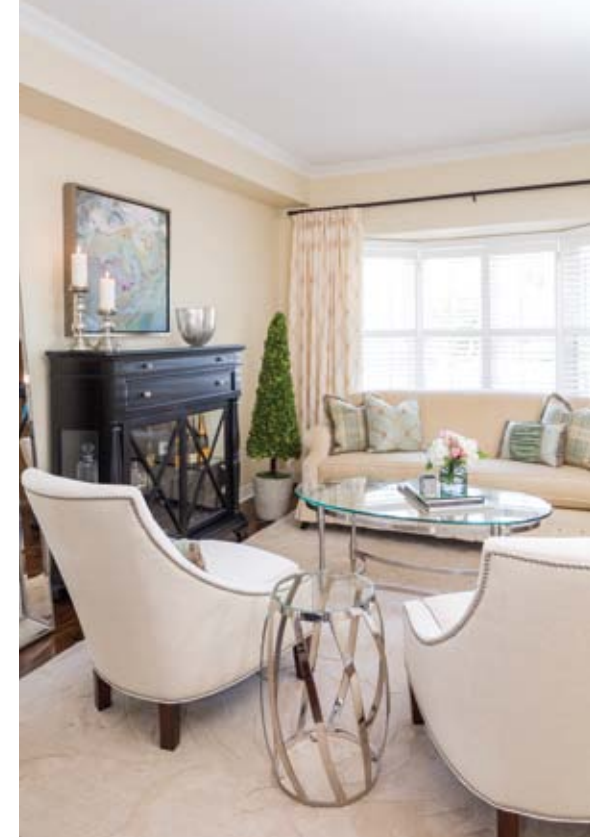
BY NANCY FORNASIERO  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON HARTOG  
FLOWERS BY MAGENTA FLOWERS

One-of-a-kind” is a desirable quality in home design, but how can originality be achieved in a development with only a handful of floor plans to choose from? The answer is to hire a designer with the know-how to bring your vision to life. Meet homeowner **Michelle Taggart** and **Lisa Frahm** of **Frahm Interiors**. Together, they turned OK into over-the-top in this stylish River Oaks home.

Their collaboration began in 2010 when they first met to discuss a kitchen facelift. The initial encounter snowballed into one exciting project after another. Surprisingly, this transformation didn't involve major reconstruction. Instead, cosmetic fixes, attention to detail, artful placement of furnishings, accessories and updated surfaces work together to make a world of difference.

Michelle and her husband, Sean, purchased the carriage-style residence 11 years ago. It boasted many attractive features even pre-renovation. “We liked the traditional feel and the fairly large kitchen,” says Michelle. The detached garage was also appealing, as was the rich oak flooring in some rooms. “**EC Hardwood Flooring Inc.** worked on site to match our existing flooring, which is no easy thing, and they did a fantastic job!” says Michelle. *Continued on page 39*

**OPPOSITE:** Elegant slipper chairs, a large mirror and sparkling accessories result in a tranquil, welcoming room. **TOP LEFT:** The charming exterior radiates curb appeal. **TOP RIGHT AND RIGHT:** French doors create just the right amount of separation between the dining room and living room.







**ABOVE:** The warmth of the dark maple island shines against the white cabinetry. Details, like beautiful lighting, add interest to the space. **TOP RIGHT:** Designer Lisa Frahm helped homeowner Michelle Taggart turn vision into reality. **RIGHT:** The powder room was made beautiful with a new vanity and distinctive wallpaper. **MIDDLE:** The island is a wonderful spot to place food for entertaining. **FAR RIGHT:** Artwork above the fireplace and fabrics throughout the space add a bright punch of colour in the neutral family room.



Other simple yet impactful changes orchestrated by Lisa included refacing the kitchen cabinetry to make it look beautifully brand-new. She added an eye-catching natural stone mosaic backsplash and a custom-designed maple island, topped with granite from **Stone Edge Marble & Granite**. Hand-blown, Moreno glass pendants deliver a bit of sparkle. The kitchen flows seamlessly into the comfy family room, allowing Michelle to keep an eye on her daughter, Alexis, at play.

During the kitchen reno, Lisa noticed a tiny corner in need of makeover magic. “The powder room had such an unusually high ceiling that I knew we had to do something fun with it.” She incorporated a dropped chandelier and lustrous bronze wallpaper. The elegant space was made complete with a new vanity and fixtures.

From there, the momentum continued. “We were still putting the kitchen and powder room together when we decided to redo the front room and front entry.” By now, Michelle knew she had a trusted partner and was happy to have Lisa lead. Next steps? Replacing every bit of brass hardware in the house with oil-rubbed bronze. The standard light fixtures were upgraded and the sliding mirrored doors in the foyer became classic paneled doors. “Lisa showed me how all these little things make a huge difference.”

By the time they tackled the living room they were totally in sync. Michelle sought a serene space that reflected her own personal style, and, knowing her well at this point, Lisa hit the mark with ease. Calm, neutral hues, sleek upholstered seating from **Cocoon Furnishings Inc.**, and gleaming touches like the oversize mirror and glass-topped occasional table from **Ethan Allen** create just enough formality for a room used mainly for company or by Michelle herself. “Whether I’m having a quiet phone conversation or reading a good book, it’s just a beautiful, peaceful place to be.” Topiaries, a trellis pattern on draperies and furniture, and posy-pastels in the focal-point artwork hint at a garden motif. *Continued on page 40*





# feature

After a brief hiatus, Lisa returned last winter to work on the master suite. Although pleased as punch with the public spaces in the house, Michelle calls it her favourite hangout. “It’s so peaceful and calm, and I love to connect with Sean there after a long day.” Before the remodel, the room felt empty and there was a lot of wasted space. Sean’s desire for a king-size bed demanded a major shakeup to the furniture arrangement. Lisa envisioned a new configuration that allowed for extra closets flanking a brand-new electric fireplace;


elements the homeowners hadn’t been looking for but now absolutely love. Michelle was smitten with the suggested silver-leaf bedside tables from **Elizabeth Interiors**, so Lisa used them as inspiration for the overall palette. Sea-blue accents and a subtle grey-blue ceiling blend dreamily with the reflective surfaces. Lisa points to finer touches like the scallop on the upholstered headboard and the pretty pillow details. She describes the look as “very romantic, but not in a clichéd kind of way.”


*Continued on page 42*



The romantic bedroom is a wonderful place to end each day. The dramatic redesign included the addition of a fireplace flanked by built-in wardrobes.

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## feature



The en suite embodies the most dramatic transformation of all. A basic builder bath with a tiny shower blossomed into a veritable luxury suite. “Lisa chose the tile,” says Michelle. “I was almost jumping up and down when she showed it to me. It’s just so beautiful.” Lisa chose a myriad of shapes, sizes, materials and hues, sourced from various suppliers, including **Factory Tile Depot**. Local contractor **Corbin Crawford** of **Home Comfort Kitchen and Bathrooms** did all the work, from tiling to carpentry to plumbing. The vanity from **Hearty Furniture**, lighting from **Concept Lighting** and a new tub and fixtures complete the space.

“The master suite feels like a guilty pleasure,” confesses Michelle. “As parents we’re used to putting our kids’ needs first, so having this little bit of luxury just for ourselves is really special.”

Down the hall, daughter Alexis’s pretty purple room is a little girl’s dream with ruffled drapes, a sparkling chandelier, and vibrant pops of colour in the floral bedding.

What else is really special? How, over time, this house – one in a neighbourhood of similar houses – evolved into an elegant custom home. All it took was a bit of patience, a clear vision and a generous dose of input from a trusted and talented designer. **OH**



**TOP LEFT:** Alexis’s purple bedroom is a little girl’s delight with playful bedding, soft ruffled drapes and a sparkling chandelier. **LEFT AND ABOVE:** Blues and greys are the ideal accent against the fresh white backdrop of the master en suite.



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