

THE NEXT *Chapter*

BY ANDREA TOMKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUZANNE BIRD
STYLED BY LUC CRAWFORD

In the heart of Rockliffe is a residence whose halls are filled with warmth and character. For many years the house was home to the late Canadian cultural visionary Hamilton Southam. Awarded the Order of Canada in 1977 for his many accomplishments, Southam left a legacy that lives on and could fill many chapters.

Two years ago, Karen and Marty Corsten were looking for a new home closer to their children's school when they saw the open house sign for Southam's home.

It certainly was charming but it would need extensive work to become the right home for the family of five and their little Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Poppy.

"It was the first house we looked at," explains Karen. "And we thought it would need a fair bit of updating." It was this daunting reno work that led them to walk away from this slice of Ottawa history. But eventually, on the advice of their realtor, they reconsidered, made an offer and got it. Now they are busy writing their own chapter in the historic home. *Continued on page 25*



The beautiful stone home once belonged to cultural visionary Hamilton Southam. **LEFT:** Current homeowner Karen Corsten.



Designed to better accommodate a family of five, the new kitchen features a large custom island and stylish finishes including new windows from Cana Windows and Doors. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The Corsten children enjoying a sweet after school treat. **RIGHT:** The cosy nook is almost an extension of the kitchen and was preserved from the original layout.

Karen says one of the biggest issues was with the kitchen area. The couple loves to cook, but the home only had a tiny area for cooking and food preparation. While this would have been the norm for 1947, it was less than ideal for the active family.

"I knew I wanted a big island," says Karen. "It had to be a space to entertain and be comfortable for the family at the same time."

It was Marty's parents who first took matters into their own hands. They were staying over when Karen says she suddenly awoke to the house shaking. "Marty's father was tearing down walls, with no real plan in place," she says laughing. Perhaps it was a surprising way to greet the day, but there was no doubt in everyone's mind that parts of the main floor needed to be opened up.

They knew what they wanted but felt they needed professional guidance. That's when they called Suzanne Martin of **Reno by Design** and **Luxurious Living Studio**. Karen says Suzanne was instrumental in designing the kitchen as well as the lighting plan.

The Corstens then called upon general contractor **Mike Gorman** to set the plans in motion. "He really kept us on time and on budget," says Karen. "He was great to work with."

The Woodturner in Stittsville was called in for custom cabinetry and other carpentry work. The kitchen has minimal uppers, which makes the space seem larger than it really is. The majority of kitchen items are hidden away in easy-to-access drawers.

"Like many reno projects, we went over budget, so the decorating was done by me and on a tight budget," says Karen. She was keen for the seating around the island to match the cabinetry, so she purchased unfinished wood stools and asked Mike McKinley from The Woodturner to paint them to match. *Continued on page 27*





TOP LEFT: Some of the details from the dining room are repeated in the kitchen, such as the rounded fixture and creamy white cabinetry. **ABOVE:** The walls of the generously sized dining room are covered in an elegant, deep grey tapestry. The sparkling chandelier is the room's crowning jewel. **LEFT:** Even Poppy is dressed up to receive guests.

Stainless steel appliances from **Universal Appliances** add a modern touch to the traditional look and feel of the room.

An informal sitting area wings off the kitchen, although "sitting area" is almost too formal a term for this little corner. It's a cosy little nook that Karen and Marty preserved from the original layout. The wood panelling covering the walls is original to the home. Karen had the new kitchen cabinetry custom match the style. With cushy seating and a wood-burning fireplace, it's the perfect spot to gather on a brisk winter day.

The kitchen area is perfectly situated a few steps from the dining room, where the centrepiece is a round table under a sparkling chandelier from **Yardley's Antiques**. The table originally had a smaller tabletop, but Mike McKinley replaced it with a larger one in order to accommodate more people.

Mike also refinished a vintage dresser to serve as a sideboard and updated the hardware with vintage-style knobs from **Details Home Apparel** on Beechwood. A stylish grey patterned wallpaper from **Randall's** continues to set the sophisticated tone of this room without being fussy.

Continued on page 28

Sophisticated and warm with a large wood-burning fireplace and the right amount of glitter and greenery, the home's living room is the perfect space to share with visiting friends and family.



The living room is truly designed for living. Sophisticated and warm with just the right amount of glitter and greenery, it's the perfect space to accommodate guests. The living room leads a few steps down to a family room – a heavy-duty all-purpose hideaway where the kids can watch TV with their friends. The family room leads to a screened-in patio. It's a labyrinth of restful spaces.

The overarching theme here, of course, is the history. Hamilton Southam might be gone, but his spirit lives on in this elegant home.

"I love the privacy here and the history of this house," says Karen. "And that we maintained the look of the house and kept it cosy and family friendly... I never wanted it to be the kind of house in which you're afraid of sitting on the furniture." **OH**

PIERINO
PIERINO SCARFO
SALONS

PIERINO SCARFO

*Your Look
Your Image
Our Passion*

greencircle salons OTTAWA'S FIRST

WESTBORO, 432 RICHMOND ROAD, OTTAWA
BELLS CORNERS, 1 STAFFORD ROAD, OTTAWA
www.pierinoscarfo.com
613.828.6101

luxurious living studio
'fitting form & function into your lifestyle'

"You'll wonder how you ever lived without these ingenious concepts"

rational exclusive showroom

german engineered non-toxic cabinetry
custom cabinetry, fixtures & finishes
professional design build services
award winning team

613.738.2110 (by appointment)
2477 Huntley Road, Unit 2, Stittsville, ON. K2S 1B8
www.luxuriouslivingstudio.ca