

FAMILY friendly

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There is no question that Steve and Esther Houle's stunning, sweeping Carleton place home is a study in design, with an emphasis on angles, light and colour. Yet there is also a grounded quality that exists between these walls. A family with style lives here.

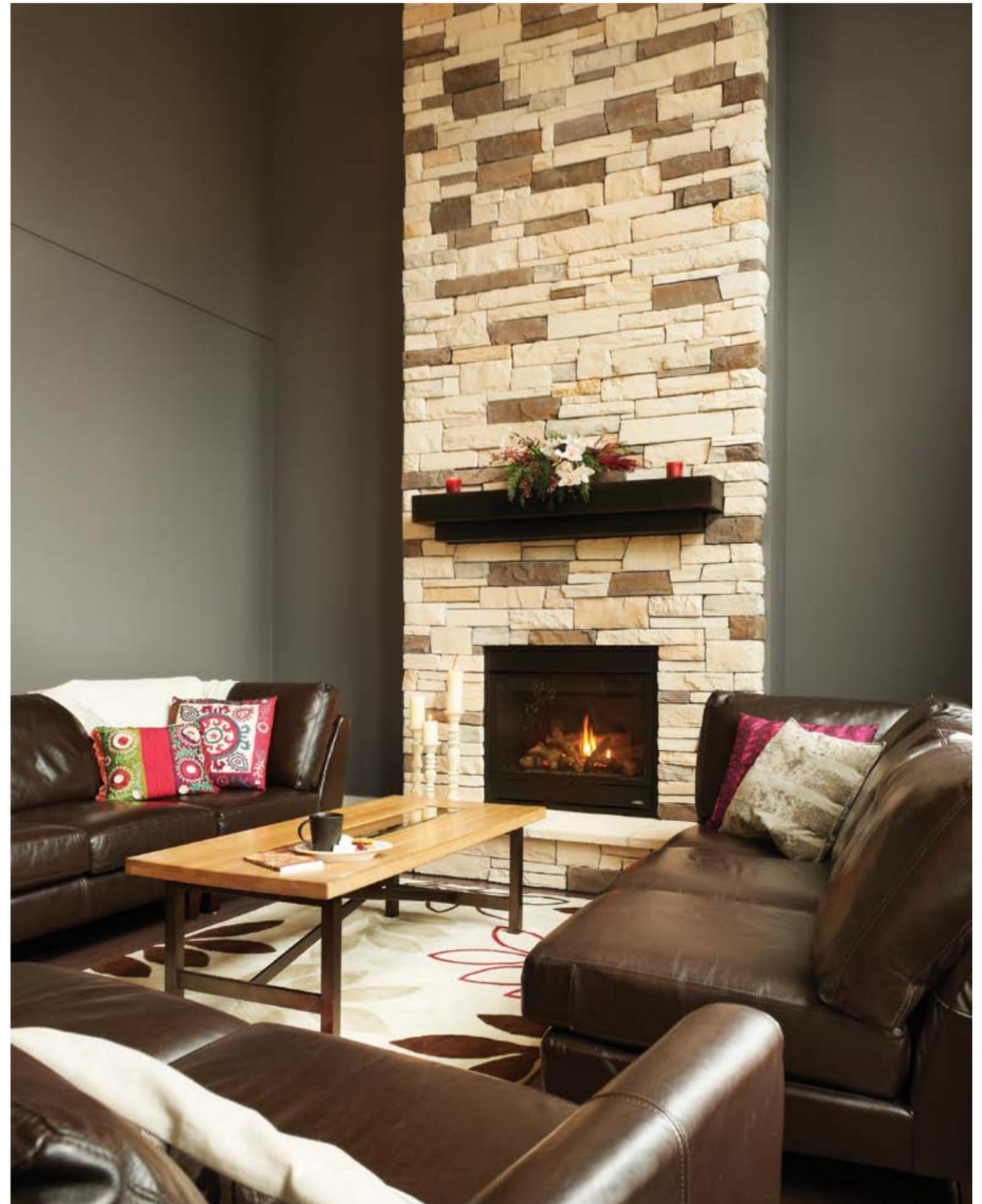
They delight in how their funky design decisions look and how they actually promote the prevalence of pragmatism. This house, with abundant storage and custom elements, functions to serve the family's needs.

Together, with **Luxart Homes**, Steve and Esther set out last spring to build this five-bedroom home on a large lot, comfortably nestled in nature – complete with deer spotted from the back deck.

The impact of their careful decision is immediate. In the foyer lovely accents and accessories include an impressive mirror and a long, true-to-scale chandelier.

Steve and Esther worked the design with their three kids in mind. The home revolves around the way they live. They redesigned an area in the upstairs hallway to include a cosy reading nook instead of a desk. In the great room, they decided to extend the shale stone fireplace (stone from **Merkley Supply Ltd.**) over two storeys and open the space above on the second floor, adding a railing and a fabulous view of the room below. The plans called for an additional bedroom on the second floor, and to cap the fireplace, but Esther and Steve acknowledge that that just didn't make sense for them. *Continued on page 25*

THIS PAGE: The fireplace is a perfect place to relax in front of with a hot chocolate. Flowers from The Blossom Shop in Carleton Place add a touch of elegance. **OPPOSITE:** This beautiful stone fireplace extends over two storeys.





Steve says: "We really didn't need a bedroom up there and we thought it would be wasting square footage. We thought it would be more important to have the nice cathedral ceilings and the extended fireplace."

Amanda Wagorn of Luxart Homes says the choice was a good one, because it allowed for the stone fireplace to be seen and enjoyed from the second floor and created the flow of additional light. "Having two storeys affords two sets of windows," Amanda says. "It made sense to have the space in which they do most of their living be tall, bright and airy."

The end result is a room that is serene and country chic. The stone in the fireplace is also reflective of the subtext that colour plays, with bits of the grey that colours the walls, and is present in numerous places throughout the home. Like so many other spots in this home, grey is there, but it isn't the dominant colour: it is a contributor to effect. *Continued on page 26*



OPPOSITE: The dining area is great for entertaining friends and family. **LEFT:** The living room opens in to the kitchen which boasts a chic black and white table set from La-Z-Boy Furniture Gallery. **TOP:** The island is the ideal meeting spot for a casual family breakfast. **ABOVE:** Esther and Steve Houle enjoy their family home.



For Esther, colour is clearly an anchor around which much of the house is planned. The walls throughout the home are brushed with two different shades of grey (appropriately named Gauntlet Grey and Repose Grey from Sherwin Williams). She says: "Once I knew that I wanted grey, everything else fell into place and then I kind of built it around that colour. I just had a sense."

The finish on the railings (**Custom Stairs and Railings**), and on the Oak hardwood floor from **Gaylord Hardwood Flooring** incorporated some of the grey hues, which Esther says are "just enough to pull it in. It has similar tones without being the same colour," and the colours depend on the vantage point in the room. The wide planks on these hardwood floors contribute to a sense of warmth and style.



TOP: One of the children shows their creative side. **ABOVE:** The reading nook that Esther created sits between the upstairs bedrooms. **RIGHT:** The master bedroom creates a tranquil place to rest.



LEFT: Pretty in pink for one of the girl's rooms. **BELOW LEFT:** The garage is a "man cave; for Steve. **BELOW RIGHT:** Steve and his son's mini bikes are among the "toys" in the garage.

Adjacent to the great room is a bright, white kitchen with cabinetry from **Deslaurier Custom Cabinets Inc.** The polished marble backsplash is textured, shiny and sublime and is yet another example of the subtle role of colour working as a design thread that binds this home together.

Another unique design decision was to place black doors within white frames at various locations around the house. Esther's love for her black doors comes from their unique, aesthetic and pragmatic appeal. "When you have three kids putting their hands on everything they're practical," she says.

Amanda says that the black doors play an interesting role and actually serve to brighten the dark colours that flank the walls and floors. "They add depth and give intense colours something to play off of. They (the doors) lend to the overall brightness," Amanda says.

The one place where grey is replaced as the dominant colour is in Steve's glorious, state-of-the-art "man cave" garage. This expansive, heated, four-car garage, with walls painted with racing-car red, gives Steve plenty of extra room for his "toys," including mini-bikes, snowmobiles and cars. *Continued on page 28*





LEFT: The entrance hallway is welcoming with sunburst mirror and vintage-style chair. BELOW: A fitting sign for a family home.

In the series of spaces that combine to make up this home, the colours encompass a rich subset of hues and flavour and promote the intricacies of the relationships that exist on this particular earthy palette. They, in and of themselves, are not necessarily a design element, but they function to amplify the quiet design elements abundant throughout the home. **OH**



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