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editor's note



LAST SPRING A LITTLE BIRD DECIDED

to build its nest in a place that was ideal from its perspective but less than ideal from mine. I can only imagine how much time and effort that bird put into building its nest on the wheel well of the van parked in our

laneway. This little builder clearly never met a realtor to drive home the important "location, location, location" mantra. I suppose the location made sense in that it was somewhat sheltered, but the fact that vehicles move from time to time... well, you get the point. It broke my heart to do this, but I moved the nest to what I thought was a more suitable location; a low branch on a nearby tree. Thankfully, there weren't any eggs in the nest. (I think I would have had to rent a car at that point and leave the nest in place. I'm a bit sentimental.) Of course, I realized the chances of that bird ever using the nest again were slim to none. There was the whole fact/myth debate about whether human scent prevents a bird from returning to its nest and, of course, there was the whole issue of the bird not receiving proper notification of the nest's sudden relocation.

If there was one thing to be gained from this experience it was my opportunity to observe a bird's nest up close. The craftsmanship was simply beautiful. Little twigs and blades of grass were intricately woven and held together with fresh mud. Also mixed in the tapestry were what appeared to be little bits of colourful thread and lint. Not only did this bird excel at its craft, it had artistic flair!

There are many lessons to be learned from that bird. The first, of course, is choosing the right location for your home. In this issue's Home & Builder we visit a contemporary-style home outside of the town of Carleton Place. With plenty of space inside and out, it suits the family who lives there to a T.

Another lesson is to decorate your nest so that it reflects your personality and the way you like to live. Ottawa artist Christina Lovisa fully understands this lesson. She opened her doors to give us a peek inside her family home; a showcase of her original art pieces and upcycled treasures, this nest exudes warmth, personality and style.

I am sure there are other lessons to be drawn but alas, I am running out of space to write them. This spring I hope you take some time to draw inspiration from your surroundings. Who knows, a little bird might teach you a thing or two about creating a nest that is just right for you.

Happy reading!

Lise Larocque, Managing Editor
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An Eclectic Mix of Treasures Story, page 20. Photography by Suzanne Bird.



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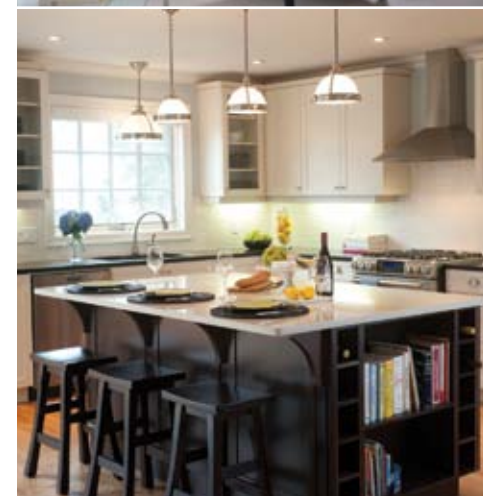
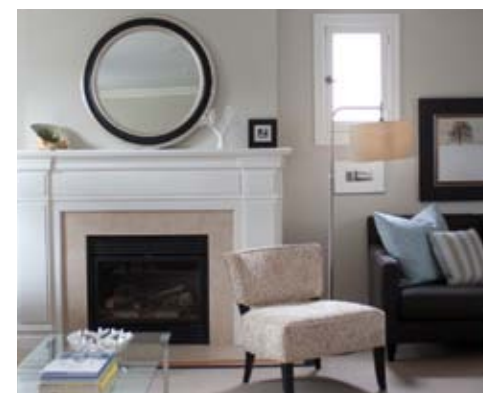
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*"Spring is nature's way
of saying 'Let's party!'"*
— Robin Williams

THIS IS SO INDICATIVE OF CANADIAN SPRING TIME.
Of all the seasons, spring is the one that celebrates the biggest change. The dirty, dull snow vanishes and is replaced with beautiful shades of green, yellow and purple. It's a party indeed!

We are both so proud to present you with the spring issue of OUR HOMES. It was a treat for us to work alongside our team to develop content during the dark and cold of winter and we're confident you will enjoy the inspiring ideas this issue brings. We enjoyed spending time in the Byward Market, visiting wonderful shops and looking for hidden treasures in their midst. See what resulted in our Style Picks section.

Spring is also a time to freshen our living spaces, both inside and out. Whether your home is new, historic or somewhere in between, we think you'll find some inspiring ideas and the local resources you need to help you get the job done right. Whether you want to do a project yourself or need a hand pulling it all together, our pages are filled with knowledgeable professionals and stylish shops; and all can be found right here in Ottawa.

With each issue we publish, we are impressed with the wonderful businesses and people we meet and are very thankful to be in a position to promote our local economy. On February 23rd the Kanata Chamber of Commerce presented us with the People's Choice Small Business of the Year Award for our efforts. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our readers and local business community for your support and votes! It was truly an honour to receive this award!

As always, we look forward to hearing your comments on our issue and on the projects you decide to take on this spring. Let the party begin!

Sharon & Janine

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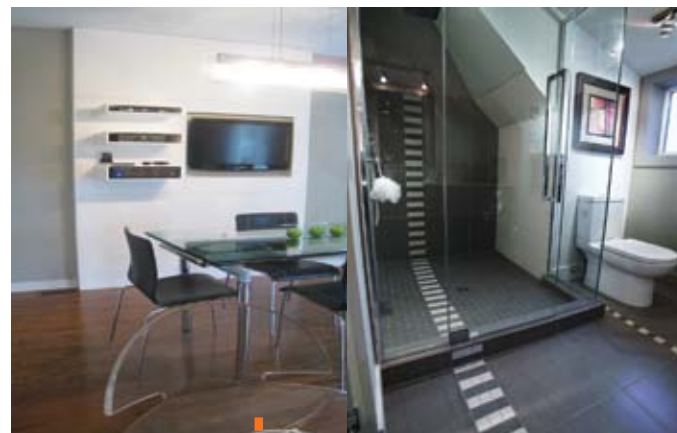
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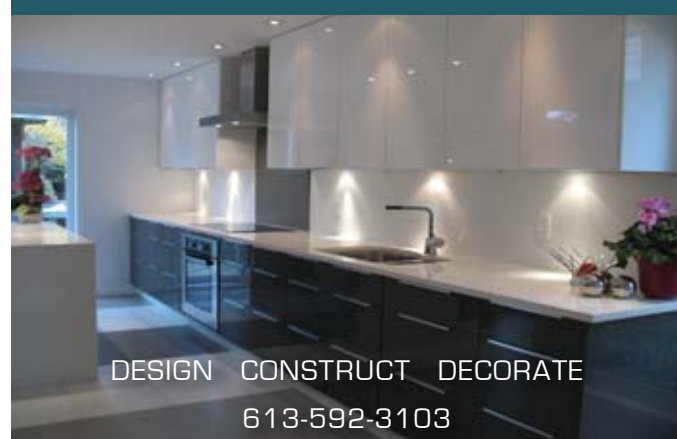

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advice

PAPER possibilities

Every so often I look around my home and wish that I had covered every wall in grasscloth and over-painted in white. It would achieve an aged look like a charming farmhouse in the English countryside and I would never have to think about my walls again. Of course, I would. And how could you not with all of the wonderful wallpapers on offer?

We've seen enough traditional wallpaper to know that it can be beautiful in the right setting and withstand the test of time, so you will see no toile or damask on this page. But will you be happy with your walls in time or will they age quickly with some of the newer, more daring designs? Wallpapering can always be stripped away and re-painted (or re-papered) but the expense would be a shame, so choose wisely.

Manufacturers will provide samples to take home and look at in situ. What you see online or in a showroom does not always translate well at home so take advantage of this service and make sure you're happy with the colour and the pattern.

When you're ready to take the plunge, think of two things: What am I trying to achieve? How can I achieve it?



Designer
Stephanie Redmond
answers your questions.

WALLPAPERING SCENARIO 1

Dilemma: I would like to see a bold change in my modern dining room.

Advice: Use a daring pattern on one wall to create a visual pop when entering the room.

I have never been a fan of the "accent wall" but it does apply in some cases. Take this Cole & Son geometric (1) which gives the effect of a colourful kaleidoscope. It is shocking and the scale enormous, but it could be stunning paired with all things simple to tone it down. For something less extreme, try Trove wallpapers. Again, the scale is huge, but the pattern, a little softer (and easier to apply on all walls if you choose). My favourite is Auva in blue (2). You would certainly have no need for art!

WALLPAPERING SCENARIO 2

Dilemma: I would like to add warmth to my den.

Advice: Choose a paper-backed linen or a finely textured grasscloth and apply to all walls.

Applying texture to walls gives a sense of being enveloped in a room. It creates warmth and a cosiness that you can't achieve with a flat paint. And there are limitless possibilities when it comes to textures – try Phillip Jeffries' Manila Hemp (3) or Tapetex's Espada Linen (4). If seeing the seaming will bother you, steer clear of grasscloth and opt for a paperbacked fabric instead. The seams are tighter and inconspicuous. It's admittedly, my favourite treatment.

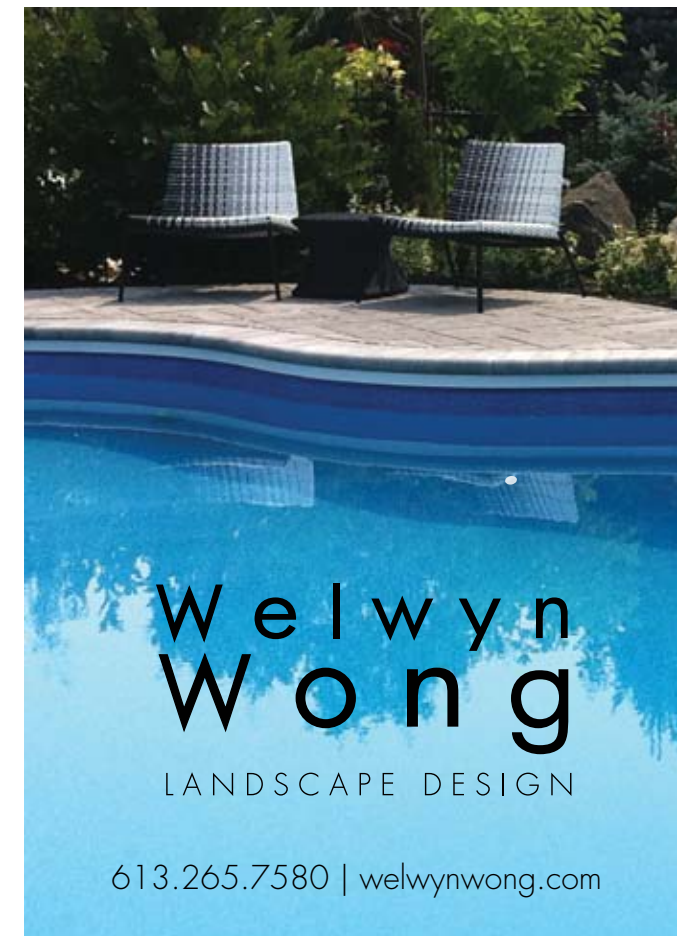
WALLPAPERING SCENARIO 3

Dilemma: I would like to make my bookshelves appear more interesting and less bare.

Advice: Use a small-scale pattern to create a visually interesting backdrop.

Choose a classic like Farrow & Ball's Polka Square (5), whose gold dots will add a bit of glam to the setting. Or try Galbraith & Paul's Small Star (6) for a contemporary twist on classic patterning. This would create a beautiful backdrop highlighting the items placed in front. Of course, when choosing your paper, keep in mind what you intend to place on the shelves. If the objects are ornate, be sure to tone down the backdrop.

Wallpapering never really went away, but with the advancement of printing techniques and the popularity of home decorating we've certainly seen an incredible array of new designs. It's exciting and the applications are endless. The only trouble with wallpapering is, once you commit to one area, the remaining walls seem nude by comparison! **OH**



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Whether you refresh the old or bring in the new, add a little spring to your home with these picks from the Byward Market.

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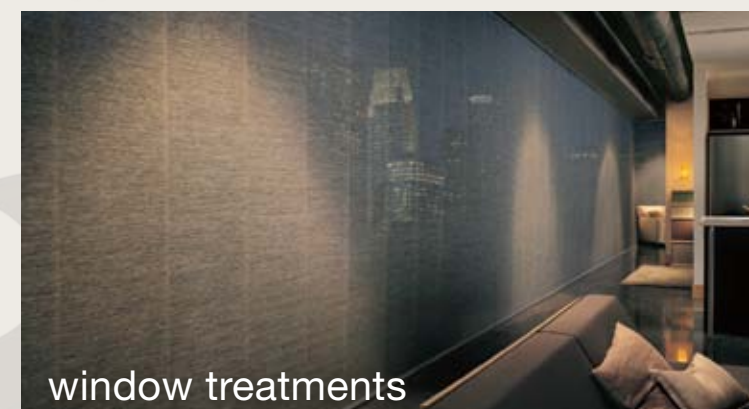
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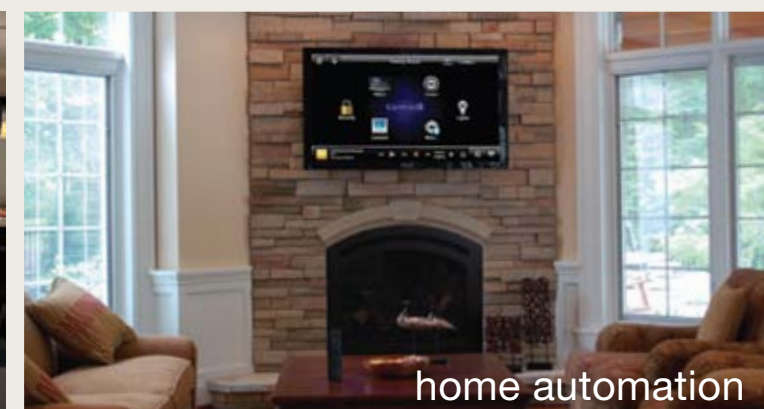
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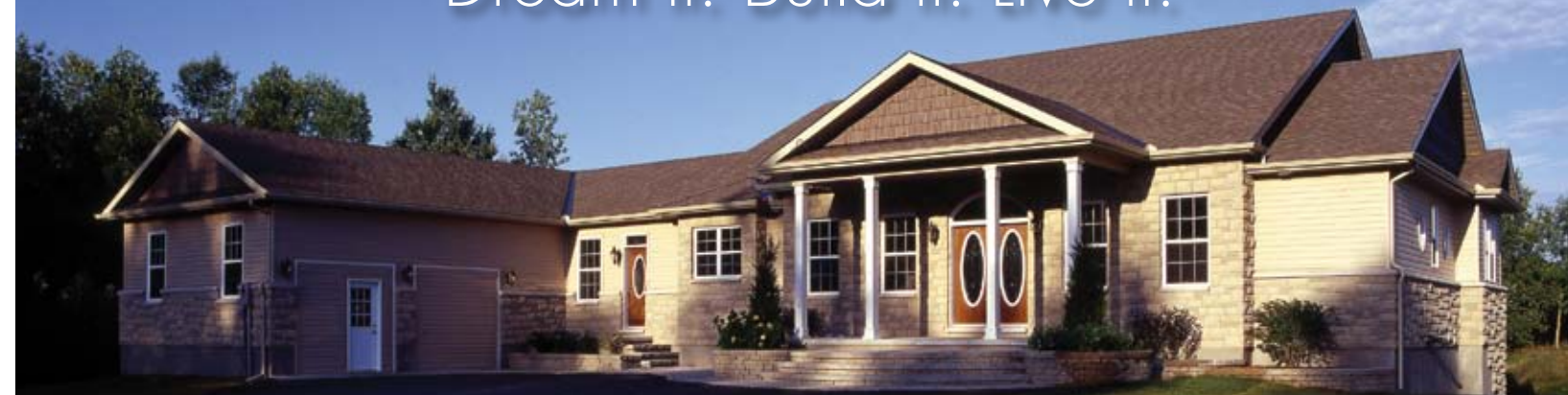
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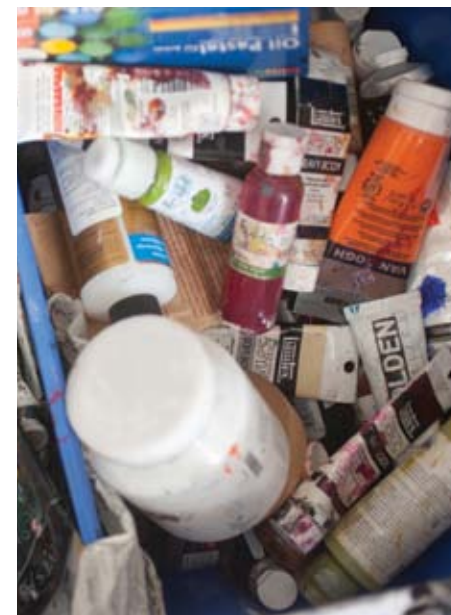
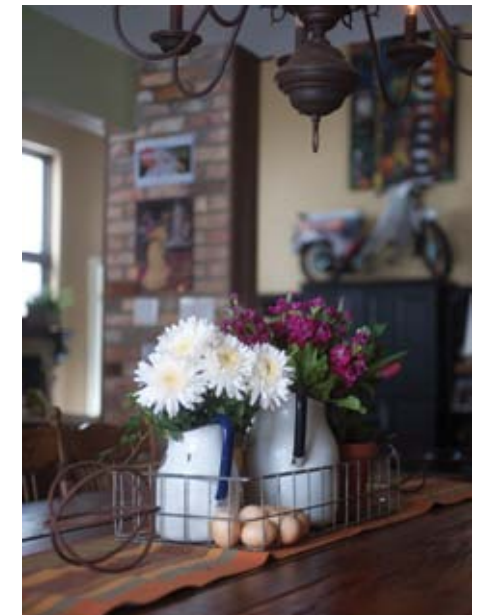
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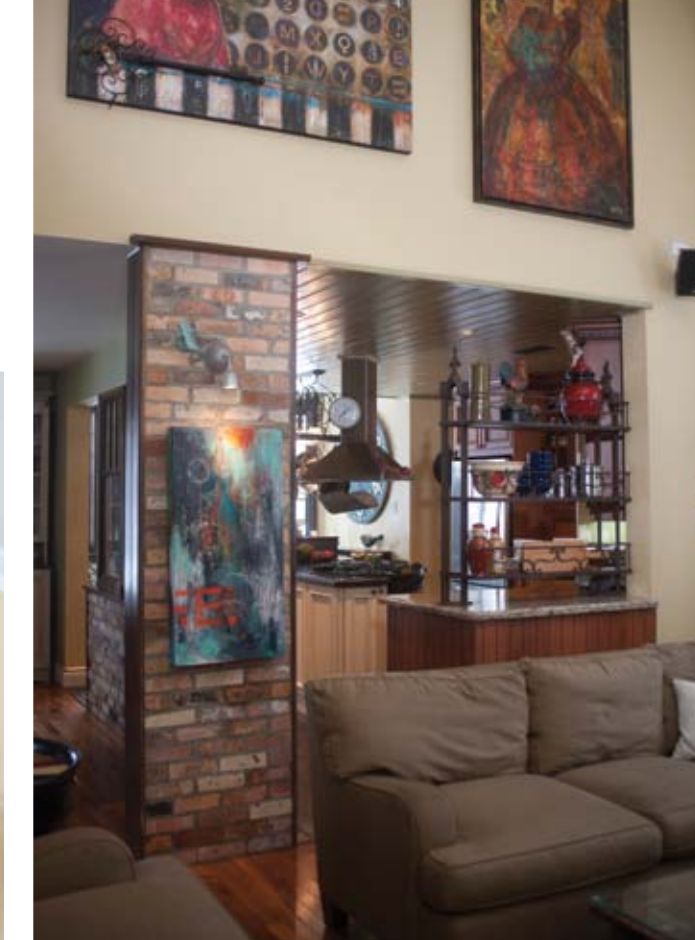
BY ANDREA TOMKINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUZANNE BIRD

Christina Lovisa in her home studio.
OPPOSITE: The house is a grand
showcase of Lovisa's own art and her
lifelong collection of found treasures.



Most of the time when you walk into someone's home you can predict what you'll find behind the front door. Other times, as you step over the threshold, a home will not only take you by complete surprise but shake up your idea of interior design. *Continued on page 23*





LEFT: The living room is an eclectic mix of treasures. Perched above the entertainment unit, a salvaged motorbike has found new life as a decorative piece. Even the furniture is transformed by Christina's hand. **TOP:** A plate rack bolted to the granite counter in the kitchen is made from 140-year-old Victorian gateposts. **ABOVE:** A closer look at the etching on the coffee table. **OPPOSITE TOP:** This foyer sees plenty of use beyond the ordinary. The Lovisas have incorporated a pinball machine and popcorn maker to make it a hangout for their family. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT:** Christina demonstrates her pinball wizardry. **OPPOSITE BOTTOM RIGHT:** The powder room off the foyer displays Christina's creative, decorative touch.

Just west of Dick Bell Park, tucked away in a little inlet along the Ottawa River, is a custom-designed home that belongs to artist/scavenger Christina Lovisa, her husband Paul and their two school-age sons. "My house is an evolution," says Lovisa. "It's like a piece of art to me."

Lovisa is the owner of [St. Elmos Fire](#) in Stittsville where her artwork is also showcased. There she creates and teaches others to trust their own artistic voice.

Upcycling, deconstructing, reconstructing, recycling – these are all trendy buzzwords right now – but for people like Lovisa, they have been a way of life for a long time. This is evident in her artwork and home.

The creation of the Lovisa home has been a decade-long project. Christina and Paul designed the house themselves and had a draftsman draw up the building plans. Paul's father was a custom homebuilder who came out of retirement to help build one last house. Theirs.

"It's his legacy," Lovisa says fondly. "My husband and I did the work with him. We were labourers. People would not believe it but I built the staircase with my father-in-law."

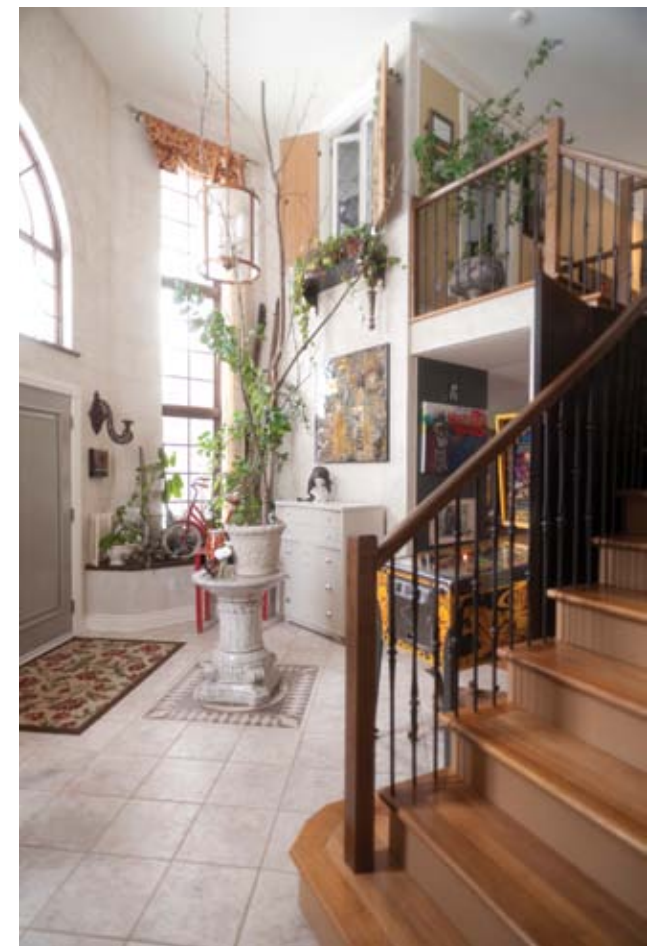
They did almost everything themselves, save the drywall and the framing, which they contracted out to save time.

"When we talk about our renovation and people ask us if we'd do it again, the answer is no. It was the biggest renovation of my life," says Lovisa.

She wanted a house that looked lived-in and a style that would stand the test of time. It will never be the kind of home that is filled with trendy furnishings. Instead, Lovisa prefers personality pieces that don't age, mostly furniture and "objets d'art" that she personalizes herself.

"When we first built our home, we were house poor; all of our furnishings had to be found," she says. "I think that was the birth of my business."

The new things stayed and Lovisa says she hasn't felt a need to buy many new items. "Everything speaks to me and I love it." *Continued on page 24*



feature

The whole house is a grand showcase of Lovisa’s own art and her lifelong collection of found treasures. Almost every item has a story. It’s like a well-organized magpie’s nest; a coat rack is made from the front of a piano (and a nearby plant stand is made from the other half), a repainted motorcycle is perched on the top of a cabinet. “My attention to detail is who I am and it really comes out in this house,” she says.

The dining room table was custom made out of thick fir planks her father-in-law brought from Italy to use for his work as a stonemason. They’re well over 100 years old. “We had the table made in his honour,” says Lovisa.

It was decided that no matter what legs they chose, they just weren’t substantial enough for the girth of the table, so they used salvaged beams from a 200-year-old house in Carp. The table was put together using traditional means, without screws.

Three old windows from **Cohen & Cohen** separate the dining and kitchen areas, framing each side like a painting. “I like using the

windows because it gives you a nice open feel. We didn’t want to block it with a solid wall.”

There are fantastic scavenged finds everywhere. A plate rack bolted to the granite counter in the kitchen is made from 140-year-old Victorian gateposts, found at a salvage yard in Virginia on the way to a wedding.

Lovisa designed her kitchen with help from **Astro Design Centre**. She wanted “chunky” cabinetry that had a furniture-like quality to it.

“I loved their maple cupboards because they looked old and they’d stand the test of time,” recalls Lovisa. Not only did she want a wood that was timeless, but she chose a creamy finish for the island in case she ever wanted to paint it.

One of Lovisa’s favourite things about the kitchen is the choice of windows from **Théo Mineault Inc.** that open inwards. There is no centre bar, which results in a totally unobstructed view; and the views, especially out to the river, are gorgeous. *Continued on page 26*



TOP LEFT: Made of thick fir planks, the custom dining room table has a personal inscription; a nod to Adriano Lovisa, Paul’s father. **LEFT:** A blend of creamy white and rich maple cabinetry give the kitchen a timeless feel. **ABOVE:** Three reclaimed windows separate the dining and kitchen areas, framing each side like a painting. **OPPOSITE:** The home’s dining room is filled with personal touches, from the massive handmade table to the impressive original art pieces that grace the walls.





Two old doors were refinished to create a unique headboard for the master bedroom. Beautiful floral accents add warmth to the room.



Paul and Christina are in it for the long haul and are planning on growing old together here. “We have our master bedroom and master bathroom on the main floor. We’ve designed everything with wide doors and it’s very open,” says Lovisa.

Although the house was designed with the future in mind, it’s certainly warm and welcoming right now.

“I want to use my house,” says Lovisa. The front foyer is a testament to this. Decorated with stunning mixed media canvasses it also has a vintage

pinball machine and carnival-style popcorn popper.

“We’ll often sit and have coffee in the foyer in the morning,” says Lovisa. “Kids come and play pinball, make popcorn, and everyone’s on the same floor instead of heading down into the basement right away. I don’t always want them disappearing.”

By surrounding herself with the things that speak to her, she has created a living space that is perfect for entertaining and comfortable for her family. Now that’s a nice nest. **OH**

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Confessions OF A CLUTTER BUG

BY PAUL WILSON



Paul Wilson is a writer, editor, and translator who lives full time in rural Ontario. He can be reached at paul@ourhomesmagazine.com.

At our house, far more comes in the door than goes out. In what was once a roomy dwelling of a few thousand square feet – far more than two people really need – I find myself banging into things in the night, things I'd forgotten were there, things that in fact weren't there not that long ago.

This is mainly my fault. I'm a hoarder; my wife, Patricia, is a chucker. If it were up to her, we'd be regulars at the town dump, or the local Goodwill, or the Re-store, and we'd hold a garage sale every long weekend. But as I see it, you never

know when you might find a use for that old sliding door, the boxes of left-over tiles, the chipped chinaware, or the extra set of my mother's ancient dining room chairs. What if our kids suddenly decide to move to a bigger apartment and need more stuff? What if Windsor chairs come back in style? And what's wrong, by the way, with having three saws, four hammers, five caulking guns, and 45 screwdrivers? Nothing like the right tool for the right job, I say.

It helps that Patricia is also an organizer. Using what she calls "sleight of hand," she can magically find a place for everything, making additional pieces of furniture or dishes vanish or blend in with what's already there. I, on the other hand, tend to put my latest acquisitions on the handiest empty, flat surface. As a result, there are no more empty, flat surfaces left in our home.

I used to think hoarding was something that could be remedied with a periodic tidy-up. But as I've discovered, that's as delusional as a problem drinker believing he has only to remain sober for a few days to prove he's not an alcoholic. Sooner rather than later, we return to our old habits.

Naturally, where there is a problem, someone will offer solutions, or sell them. In the United States, professional organizers – people whose job it is to help others like me – have created an entity called the National Study Group on Chronic Disorganization (NSGCD). I took a scary quiz on their website (www.nsgcd.org) that helps determine if you need help, and how badly. "Has disorganization been a factor in your life for many years?" (Yes, okay, whatever.) "Does your level of disorganization interfere with the quality of your life?" (Now that you mention it...) "Do you suffer from 'fear of filing'?" (No, but I think I've read the book.) "Is it difficult for you to part with things even though they have outlived their usefulness?" (Is the Pope Catholic?)

"Don't panic," the site advises those who, like me, answered three or

more questions positively: "We have solutions." Thankfully, they offer a non-judgemental list of possible causes of chronic disorganization, ranging all the way from poor lighting, lack of storage space, and "too much stuff" to more unsettling possibilities such as traumatic brain injury (TBI), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), or a fascinating new affliction called "affluenza," which I'm almost certain I don't have. My favourite possible cause, and one that I will readily admit to, is "infomania." Fortunately, we only have dial-up Internet access where we live, so that particular mania remains, for the most part, unsatisfied – unless you count the 30 odd years of old New Yorkers that are currently choking our bookshelves.

Here in Canada, we're not far behind the U.S. in offering help to the organizationally challenged. Professional Organizers in Canada (POC) is a relatively new group (founded in 2002) of around 500 professional organizers who are, well, organized in 14 chapters across the country, seven of which are in Ontario (www.organizersincanada.com). The statistics they offer are rather alarming, unless you are a professional organizer looking for work. A poll they conducted last December told them that 80 per cent of Canadians feel disorganized to some degree. Their past president, Kristie Demke, says: "When people have car troubles, they hire a mechanic. When something is wrong with their health they go to a doctor. So it should be natural that when disorganization is making your life less pleasurable, you should hire a Professional Organizer."

If the POC's numbers are even partially accurate, we are probably looking at a new growth industry, one we'll be hearing more and more about in the future. But judging from my own experience, I think the answer to the problem is more likely to be found in the field of abnormal psychology. A former president of the NSGCD put her finger on the root of my problem, at least, when she told the *New York Times* a few years ago that if someone with serious disorganization problems looks at a row of coffee mugs she (more likely he) will see each mug as a unique item invested with strong memories.

I think she's got that right. To be honest, I have trouble throwing something out not because I think it might come in handy but because it feels like a silent witness to a part of my life, or even my parents' or grandparents' life. Hoarders like me surround themselves with souvenirs of their own history. Deep down, in some primitive recess of our brains, we're afraid that if we throw something out, we'll lose a part of our selves.

Okay, I admit it. It's a serious problem, and it calls for a serious solution. There is such a program. It's called Clutterers Anonymous (www.clutterersanonymous.net). No, I'm not kidding. It treats the affliction of untidiness as an addiction, using a 12-step program borrowed from Alcoholics Anonymous. As a matter of fact, I've just taken the first step. I've admitted that I'm powerless over clutter. Now I just need a higher power to help me sort out the mess. **OH**

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MODERN SOPHISTICATION

BY LISE LAROCQUE // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDIE HEWSON



THE PLACE: Located in the heart of Ottawa's Wellington Village, **Alteriors Contemporary Furniture** is a showcase of contemporary design. Three years ago, husband and wife team Jacob Visutskie and Monika Durczak decided to follow their passion for interior design and purchased the store from its previous owner. While the store's focus on modern design hasn't shifted, the source of many of the products has. Now with a primary focus on furnishings from top Canadian manufacturers as well as pieces from some internationally renowned companies, the store has plenty to offer those seeking sleek, sophisticated furniture and décor. "There was a time when you would have to source pieces you would see in magazines elsewhere," says

Monika. "You would have to go to Toronto or Montreal. We wanted to bring those options to people here."

THE STYLE: Sleek, modern, comfortable furniture in leather, wood, glass and more. Jacob says when it comes to selecting pieces for the showroom, they go beyond the safe and expected. "We like pushing the envelope a bit and taking a little bit of risk," he says. The store also carries sophisticated lighting and décor options to add that special touch to a living space. They also offer a design consultation service for those who need a hand blending new pieces with existing furnishings.

WHAT'S HOT: When asked what's in style, Jacob and Monika

say they advise people to follow their own sense of personal taste. "Look at what appeals to you," says Jacob. "When you go home to your cave, you want it to be comfortable and you want to look around and enjoy what you see."

FAVOURITES: The fact that this store focuses on quality products from Canadian sources will make sense to the buyer with discerning taste who also wants to support his or her own economy. A stunning, deep set Bensen "Park" chair would make for a perfect place to curl up with a good book on a rainy spring day.

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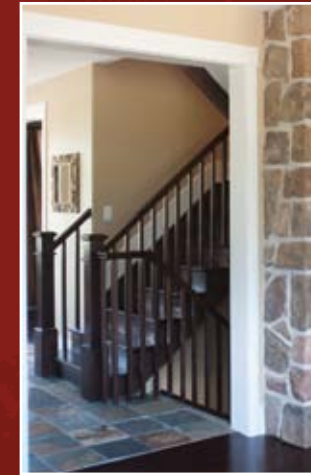


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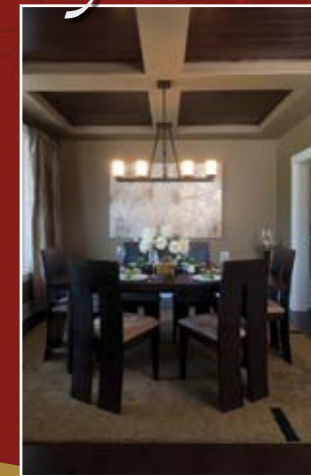


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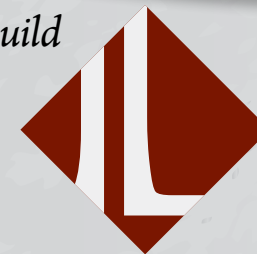
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SURFACE *matters*

BY IRENE TURNBULL

Countertops have become one of today's hottest home fashion accessories as kitchens have reclaimed their place as the hub of family life and entertaining, and bathrooms have abdicated their utilitarian role to become personal nourishing oases.

Not surprisingly, the marketplace has responded to this prime decorating focus by offering an overwhelming selection of surface options. However, trying to separate the sales hype from the facts can be difficult. If a new countertop is on your decorating to-do list, a little straight talk might be useful, especially given that a wise countertop investment will add substantial market value to your home.

CHOICE

There are two major categories of countertop materials: natural and man-made. Natural countertop materials include stone products mined directly from the earth, and wood. All other materials are man-made. There are various options for quality and performance within each category that must be considered before making a decision.

NATURAL STONE

Scientifically, there are hundreds of rock type identifications, but only nine groups are commonly acknowledged commercially: granite, limestone, marble, onyx, quartzite, sandstone, serpentine, slate, soapstone and travertine. It is important to understand that all stone is a product of nature and different stones, because of their inherent characteristics, look and perform differently in specific circumstances, so you must know what is appropriate for your application.

Natural stone is either siliceous or calcareous. Siliceous means composed mainly of silica or quartz-like particles and includes granite, slate, sandstone and quartzite. Calcareous is mainly calcium carbonate and is sensitive to acidic products like those found in kitchen and bar settings and frequently requires different care and cleaning procedures than siliceous stone. These include marble, travertine, limestone and onyx. So knowing which is which and how best to use them is important.

MAN-MADE PRODUCTS

Man-made products include glass, engineered (stone) quartz, solid surfaces, stainless steel, ceramic/porcelain tiles, concrete and laminates. All are manufactured. Some products incorporate natural materials as part of their composition but nevertheless, their creation involves a formulation process. The oldest of these materials are concrete, ceramic and porcelain tiles. Glass has also ventured into the functional realm and brings a unique artistic quality to design.

Developments in acrylic resins and polymers have resulted in the production of solid surfaces that are known as composites – engineered products manufactured from polymeric materials that can have granules added to enhance the colour effects (often to simulate natural stone). Solid surface materials are non-porous and homogenous with the same composition throughout. They can be repaired/renewed to the original finish and fabricated into continuous surfaces with inconspicuous seams.

FACTS AND FICTION ABOUT NATURAL GRANITE AND ENGINEERED QUARTZ

Many marketing claims have been made to position some man-made products, particularly engineered quartz, as superior to natural granite based upon hardness, staining, heat resistance, bacteria retention and cost. The fact is that both are excellent products and perform equally as well.

Care and cleaning of each surface is essentially similar, so the real choice comes down to texture, colour, pattern and perceived value. Granite is a product of nature and as such, no two pieces are identical – its beauty is in its uniqueness. Engineered quartz and other solid surfaces offer uniformity and consistency in pattern. Granite is comprised of mainly quartz and feldspar, mica and other minerals and is considered one of the hardest natural products on Earth. Once polished, it will maintain its high gloss for most, if not all, of its lifespan. Most granite countertops do not need to be sealed. However, in many cases it makes sense to do so since this is a simple wipe on and wipe off procedure that gives added resistance against everyday spills and dirt – a practice that has become common, more as a comfort to homeowners than a necessity.

All products will stain if they aren't maintained properly. The important thing is to wipe up spills quickly and keep the surface clean. And as far as bacteria retention is concerned, a 2006 study by the Hospitality Institute of Technology and Management (U.S.), marble and granite have the same level of cleanability as engineered, and the natural stone specimens weren't sealed prior to testing.

And last but not least, when common sense prevails (no red hot pots or abusive practices on either choice – granite or engineered quartz), both types of counters will provide a lifetime of enjoyment for you to feel great in your home. **OH**



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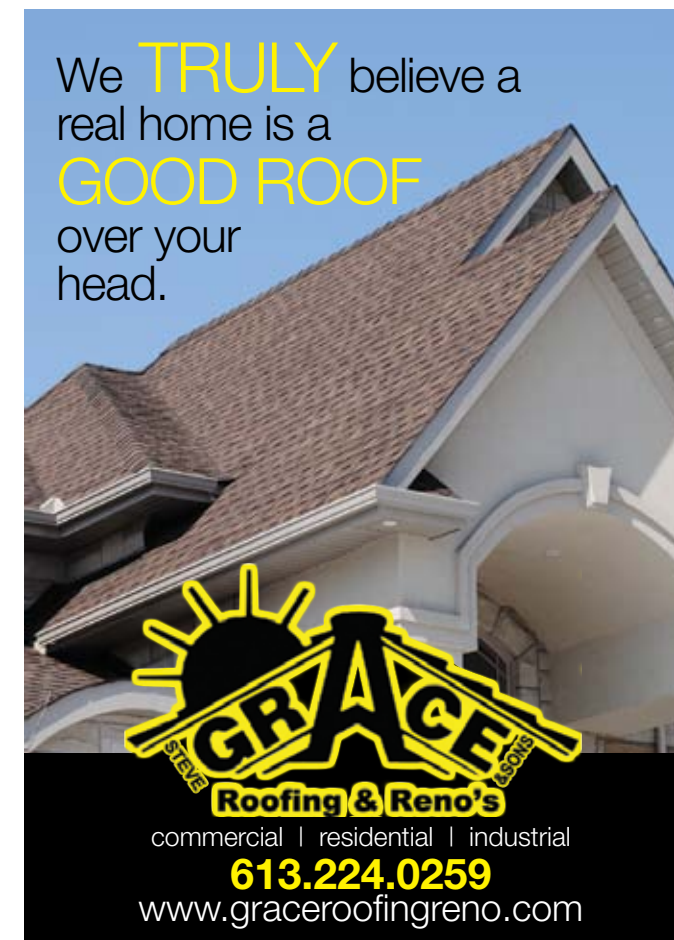
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TOP LEFT: Reflections of light and spring; fresh floral arrangement from The Blossom Shop. **TOP RIGHT:** With its open shelving and palette of soft creams and whites, the great room has a light, airy feel. **RIGHT:** A large square table and leather chairs lend an air of sophistication to the dining room.



BY LISE LAROCQUE // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA DEEKS

CONTEMPORARY *flavour*

Back in the early 1800s, the flowing Mississippi River west of Ottawa attracted many settlers to an area which would later become known as Carleton Place.

Today, people are being drawn to the area once again. A newly expanded highway makes for a short commute to and from Ottawa, offering a taste of country living in historic, picturesque surroundings.

This is what prompted one Ottawa family of three to relocate to the area three years ago. At first, they lived on the waterfront on nearby Mississippi Lake but found the size of the home too small and the cost and limitations of expanding it too great. Instead, they opted to keep the waterfront home as their cottage and find a home nearby that would provide the living space they needed. On one Sunday drive, they stumbled

upon a sign for an open house for **AMT Lifestyle Homes**, and ultimately found the house they were seeking.

Set on a 500 ft., executive size lot among tall, mature trees, the family's new bungalow is designed for living. The family purchased the home when it was in the drywall stage and worked with designer and builder **Margret Gallo** to add the finishing touches. "We sat down with Margret and she went over a lot of her ideas, which worked with us," says the homeowner. "The colours and some of the thoughts she wanted to put into this home, we agreed with almost all of it." *Continued on page 44*

Margret says she likes to help personalize clients' homes. "Because we are custom, we can give the house any flavour you want," she says. One particular idea, which she incorporated into the design was an impressive wooden staircase that leads down to the large open-concept basement. "It's unusual and it's really nice and contemporary," says Margret. "Everything in the design process of the home begins with the first conversation. I listen and get the feeling of what the homeowners want and can guide them in their choices."

The open-concept main floor features 11 ft. ceilings and large picture windows that invite nature in. The kitchen boasts beautiful dark stained cabinetry and open shelves. Granite countertops and stainless steel appliances from Sears make for a practical yet stylish space. The kitchen was also designed to incorporate plenty of seating for family meals.

A separate dining room with beautiful fixtures from **Multi Luminaire** and a square table and leather chairs from **Structube** is used for more formal occasions.

Directly across the kitchen is the great room. White leather furniture from The Brick, a fireplace surrounded by porcelain tile and floor to ceiling open shelving lend a light airy feel to the space. Large windows, with stylish custom coverings from **Bella Window Fashions Inc.** bring warmth to the room and frame the yard's beautiful natural scene. *Continued on page 48*



The kitchen boasts beautiful dark stained cabinetry and open shelves. **TOP LEFT:** Multiple glass pendant lights above the island make for a stylish statement. **LEFT:** Stainless steel and natural stone accents bring sophistication and warmth to the space.



TOP LEFT: Fresh flowers add a touch of life to the space. **MIDDLE LEFT:** Doors throughout the home feature smoked-glass panel inserts. **LEFT:** The expansive en suite has his-and-hers vanities and a large roman tub. **ABOVE:** The master suite has a sleek contemporary feel.

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A little further down the hall are the bedrooms and home office. The master suite features a large walk-in closet and an expansive en suite bathroom complete with his-and-hers vanity, glass surround shower and roman tub.

The basement features plenty of space for the family to unwind. A custom designed theatre room from **Signature Audio Video** makes for a great escape for family and friends.

"We like to entertain, I think that's part of why we enjoy the layout," says the homeowner. "We also like the privacy of having that theatre room so there's a place where you can go and not necessarily be in the action of it all."

A few steps from the theatre room is a large open space with pool table from **Purewater** and a wet bar. With large windows and a patio

door that opens to the backyard, the basement has a bright, spacious feel.

"In many two-storey houses the basements can be quite small," says the homeowner. "With estate lots you can build larger bungalows, which make for a beautiful lower level and provide plenty of room for the kids."

The homeowners enjoy their new surroundings so much they managed to convince relatives to purchase a home directly across from theirs. Their son and his cousins now spend time together discovering the great outdoors, playing video games and the like. As it turns out, the bungalow suits them well.

"At first, my wife was always keen on two-storey homes but we really enjoy the width of this home; there's a nice feeling to it," says the homeowner. "It's also versatile for when we age; everything's on the same floor. In the end it's perfect." **OH**



TOP LEFT: A few steps from the theatre room is a large open space with pool table and wet bar. **TOP RIGHT:** An impressive wooden staircase leads down to the finished walk-out basement. **ABOVE:** Evidence of some time well spent in the custom theatre room. **RIGHT:** Plenty of cosy theatre-style seating makes for a perfect place to enjoy big screen action.



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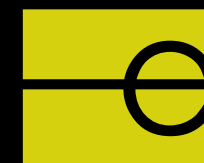
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SO *Gouda*

ROASTED PEPPER, BACON AND GOUDA QUICHE

BY MARIA DASILVA // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT HUNTER

When I was younger, quiche was the epitome of culinary elegance. The creamy egg filling, the flaky golden pastry and the fancy fillings all seemed to ooze luxury and fancy French cooking – perhaps because we only ate it at home when we had special guests over or went to fancy restaurants for brunch. Now that I know a bit more, and have learned how to cook for myself I still think quiche is a fine symbol of the simplicity and refinement of French cooking. It is certainly a crowd-pleaser for brunch or a casual dinner. And it's so versatile: change the cheese, change the vegetables, keep the meat out if you choose, a kind of anything-goes dish as long as the egg to milk proportions remain the same. But here's the real kicker, and what I love the most about French cooking in general, it's dead easy to make. Prepare the pastry the night before your special guests are coming to brunch. Complete it just before they arrive and voilà, instant elegance for any occasion.

Serves 6 to 8. Makes one 9-inch deep round quiche

FILLING:

6 slices bacon

1 onion, diced

½ tsp pepper

¼ tsp salt

2 jarred roasted red peppers, drained, patted dry and diced

8 eggs

¾ cup milk

1 cup shredded aged Gouda cheese

PASTRY:

1 ½ cups flour

¼ tsp salt

½ cup cold butter, cubed

1 egg yolk

1 tsp vinegar

PASTRY

- In bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Using two knives or a pastry blender, cut in butter until it resembles coarse meal with pea-sized pieces of butter. In small measuring glass, mix egg yolk with vinegar, add enough ice-cold water to measure ¾ cup total. Drizzle over flour mixture, tossing with fork and adding up to 2 tsp more water until a rough dough forms. Knead dough in bowl until it just comes together. Shape into a ball. Flatten dough into disc and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or up to 24 hours.
- On floured surface, roll dough into 13-inch circle. Fit into deep nine-inch pie plate and crimp edges. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. Prick dough all over with fork. Line with parchment paper or foil paper; fill with pie weights or dried beans. Bake on bottom third of 400°F oven until pastry is light golden, 15 to 18 minutes.

FILLING

- Meanwhile, in skillet over medium heat, cook bacon, turning once, until crisp, about eight minutes. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate; let cool then chop. Drain all but 1 tbsp fat from skillet.
- In same skillet over medium heat, cook onion (add salt and pepper) until tender and lightly golden, about five minutes. Stir in red peppers and bacon; set aside.
- In bowl, beat eggs with milk until combined. Stir in bacon, pepper and onion mixture and ¾ cup of the cheese. Pour filling into pastry and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake in bottom third of 375°F oven, covering pastry edge with pieces of foil if getting too brown, until filling is set, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving. **OH**



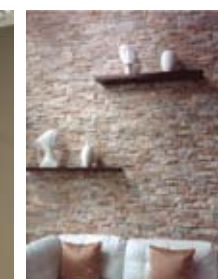
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY JESSICA DEEKS



◀ Peter Magee

Magee Electric

SPECIALTY:

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FAVOURITE TOOL:

Makita impact screw gun

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WORKING IN OTTAWA:

The city is small enough that word of mouth makes for good advertising.

BEST ADVICE:

Flickering lights or plugs are signs that should not be ignored.

CURRENT HOME

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:

Making a large harvest table



◀ Paul St-Germain

House of Fine Carpentry

SPECIALTY:

Architectural detailing through woodworking

FAVOURITE TOOL:

Altendorf panel saw

BEST THING ABOUT

WORKING IN OTTAWA:

The great people and the interesting projects

BEST ADVICE:

Spend money on trim work, it will pay off in spades when you sell your home.

CURRENT HOME

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:

Refinishing our great room

Peppi LaRicca ▶

Pure Reno Inc.

SPECIALTY:

Renovations and design

FAVOURITE TOOL:

Stiletto framing hammer

BEST THING ABOUT

WORKING IN OTTAWA:

The range of historical to ultra modern architecture

BEST ADVICE:

Take the time to do it right and also consider adding a little extra detail to your project.

CURRENT HOME

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:

A basement reno



Daniel Smith ▶

Strokes of Genius Painting

SPECIALTY:

Interior and exterior painting

FAVOURITE TOOL:

High quality, low-VOC paint

BEST THING ABOUT

WORKING IN OTTAWA:

The people; it has a small-town feel, despite its size.

BEST ADVICE:

As pros, we don't use tape, but if you plan to DIY and you want crisp lines, make sure to remove tape after each coat while paint is still wet.

Continued on page 56



people

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SPECIALTY:

Renovations and repairs

FAVOURITE TOOL:

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BEST THING ABOUT

WORKING IN OTTAWA:

The people are great to work for.

BEST ADVICE:

Qualified and certified contractors may cost a little more but the job will be done right.

CURRENT HOME

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT:

Painting and redecorating our main floor



◀ Don Garvey

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SPECIALTY:

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BEST THING ABOUT

WORKING IN OTTAWA:

It's a diverse community with a fairly stable local economy.

BEST ADVICE:

Invest in an energy efficient furnace or air conditioner.

CURRENT HOME

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The Benefits of a Project Manager



by Patricia Miragliotta
Interior Images

We all hear renovation horrors of deadlines not being met and projects that never end. You can avoid these nightmares by availing yourself of the services of an experienced Project Manager. As much as we'd like to think that our Contractor is working exclusively on our job, the reality is that it's not fiscally feasible to tie up all the trades on one site. Most Contractors with a team take on at least two, and sometimes 3-4 concurrent projects. This practice works only when the Contractor is extremely experienced and organized, and when his Trades are reliable and can follow a set schedule. The Contractor moves daily from job site to job site and may not always be available to monitor or solve problems as quickly as needed.

Enter the invaluable services of an Interior Designer/Decorator that offers Project Management as part of a full service package. A good Project Manager will be available as needed to follow up and ensure continuity and quality control, and keep things on track, on time and on budget. The more experienced ones will have backup Trade resources to fill in when the Contractor's people may be unavailable, allowing the project to continue and avoid delays to the next stage.

Best of all, with a Project Manager, the homeowner has only one point of contact for any issues arising. Your PM is working on your behalf, and with years of construction experience, can be a great mediator not only with the Trades but also in any discussions with the Contractor.

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CONSUMER CHOICE AWARD 2012

CAN SWIMMING POOLS BE GOOD *For The Soul & The Environment?*

BY GEORGETTE MCCULLOCH AND RYAN LECLAIRE

Today's homeowner is more environmentally responsible than ever and wants every inch of their home to be greener – even their swimming pool.

Traditionally, backyard pools have been somewhat wasteful in the way they were designed to operate and maintain themselves. However, in recent years, eco-savvy consumers have asked for less waste and fewer chemicals in their pools.

"By using products designed for performance that are environmentally responsible and deliver value, consumers can enjoy their pool knowing they are doing their part for sustainability," says Kathryn Pollock of Pollock Pools and Spas of Guelph.

A consumer who is interested in reducing their environmental impact

can enjoy a smaller, shallower pool using fewer materials, less water and fewer chemicals. A design to suit a backyard can offer beauty, family fun and deliver savings by using energy efficient innovations.

"Educating the consumer on features such as high performance chlorine and bromine products, alternative salt generated sanitation systems, solar heat technology, alternative filtration systems and high performance variable speed pumps is part of our mandate. Educating on products that provide savings is important," says Pollock.

Like most eco-friendly innovations, these pool products face the challenge of getting environmental fence-sitters to jump off onto the green side. Saving the planet isn't enough to win their business; they need to be shown real value or cost savings.

New products on the market decrease the amount of time and money spent on maintaining your pool, and they're earth-friendly too.

Pool Cleaning Systems

Salt water systems are all the rage these days. Chlorine pucks and chemicals are now considered to be old fashioned and their use extremely rare in new pools. With these systems, you don't have to buy or handle chlorine and the water is easy on the eyes and the skin. In addition, the cost of a salt system is decreasing as demand increases.

But don't kid yourself. Salt water pools are still full of chlorine – only the delivery system is different.

Saline systems use sodium chloride. A generator converts the salt to chlorine using a process called electrolysis. What's little known is that the generator cell will probably have to be replaced every three-to-five years at a cost of around \$400.

Chlorine-Free Pools

New technologies can eliminate or reduce the use of chlorine to clean pools. Some systems use copper ionization and liquid oxidation to sanitize pools. This happens when water flows through a chamber, killing bacteria and algae.

Other systems inject ozone gas into the water as it re-circulates, oxidizing bacteria and killing micro-organisms.

Many of these systems can be retrofitted onto existing pools.

Natural pools could be the answer for those who want to go totally

green when they cool off in the water.

These pond-like pools, built from scratch, use aquatic plants to clean the water.

Save Energy

It's not cheap to operate a swimming pool. Electricity for a single-speed pump that runs around the clock can cost up to \$200 a month, depending on the size of your pool. Add heating costs, whether gas or electric, and a pool is a luxury item many families can't afford.

But new technology is starting to pay off for pool owners.

Variable Speed Pumps

Slower pump speeds equal reduced energy costs. Pool owners can program and adjust the pump speed to meet peak enjoyment periods. Variable speed pumps are quieter and many come with built-in diagnostics that detect problems.

These pumps can translate into energy savings of up to 90 per cent.

Solar Heating

Solar energy is free and it's good for the environment.

According to Natural Resources Canada, "over a 15-year period, you could spend five times or more on heating with gas what you would spend on installing a solar heater today. Once your solar heating system is installed, there are no more heating bills to pay." A solar system will also extend the season for outdoor swimmers. Although a solar blanket will help, a solar heating system is ideal.

Solar equipment, including panels, lasts longer than conventional systems, is more durable and requires less maintenance. *Continued on page 62*





More Options

Pollock Pools installs custom designed Paramount automatic in-floor pool cleaning and circulation systems. The filter cleans body oils, suntan lotions, pollen, and bacteria with less effort and waste.

“Pools typically circulate water near the surface where chemicals and heat quickly evaporate,” says Pollock.

Lighting

LED lighting is cost-efficient, long-lasting and beautiful.

You can also use fibre optics. Optical fibres conduct light from a remotely located light projector to the pool, eliminating the use of electricity at the pool.

Solar lighting is another option. Waterproof solar lights float on the surface, gathering the sun’s energy during the day, charging a rechargeable battery. They automatically turn on at night via a light sensor.

Landscaping

Use local, natural elements around your pool. Use natural stone for paving to create your outdoor environment and a healthy setting to enjoy your cool feature.

Another great way to create an eco-friendly atmosphere in your yard is to buy locally grown, indigenous plants for your gardens. **OH**



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PLANNING YOUR CUSTOM HOME

BY WALTER FRANCZYK
ILLUSTRATION BY SHEILA BRITTON

Building a custom home was such a pleasure that Sheri and James Cox say they'd do it again. "We are thrilled with our home," says Sheri. "It is exactly everything we wanted and then some."

Distler Construction Ltd. built the Cox's five-bedroom house on Georgian Bay. "We explained to them the features we wanted in a home and they came up with a plan for a home that would suit the lot and had everything in it that we wanted," says Sheri. She and James like their surroundings to be unique and special to them. "That's why we went custom. There is no other home like ours out there. It is tailored to our lot. It is tailored to our family," says the mother of three children, aged 9, 10 and 12.

Unlike some contractors who offered estimates with 10 to 20 per cent variables, Distler gave them a firm price and finished the 3,500 sq. ft. home ahead of schedule and within one per cent of their final budget. "That was huge for us," says Sheri. "It made a difference in being able to add different features to the home."

Working with a custom builder overseeing all aspects of construction was worth it, she says. "It eliminated a lot of the hassle and stress. It was fun, being able to choose colours and flooring and stonework. It made it very hassle-free. We'd do it again."

A custom-built home is an opportunity to make your living space precisely as you want it – a rare chance to use creativity and personal tastes to please and comfort you and your family. For many people, building a home is one of the biggest investments they will ever make. So a great deal of planning and prudence is essential.

Deciding how much you can afford is a key step, says Liam Cragg, a mortgage broker with Community Mortgage Services Corp. When a financial institution pre-approves your mortgage, calculate the monthly payment, add property taxes, utilities, insurance and all the other costs of home ownership to determine your total monthly cost, Cragg advises. "There has to be a comfort factor," he says. "That's the first thing you should establish, 'What amount of payment is reasonable for me to handle?'"

The more money you have available to build a custom home, the easier financing will be, he says. If you own a mortgage-free home and intend to sell it when your new home is finished, you could get a line of credit against your existing home and use that money, as you need it, until you reach substantial completion on the new house, Cragg explains. When you sell your existing home you then pay off the line of credit. If your existing home is not mortgage-free, a bank may offer you a line of credit based on your equity.

It's always a good strategy to ask for more financing than you need, Cragg says. "You don't have to use the additional funds, but if you run into problems during the construction phase and go back to your lender for more money your lender might say no. Then your financing options could get expensive," he warns.

The cost of a custom-built home depends on its size, complexity and finishes, says Scott Clark, operations manager for Edenlane Homes Inc., a family owned and operated design and construction company. Other expenses, such as building permits, architectural fees, a development permit, as well as water and sewer services, may add to the final price.

Prospective custom homeowners, Clark says, must make many decisions prior to construction to determine whether their house will be as expensive as one already built.

Finding the right builder is crucial. Clark recommends speaking to a few builders right at the start of the project. Visiting trade shows that showcase builders will provide a feel of what's involved, he says. "The client should feel comfortable and secure with the builder from the beginning," Clark says. "If there is even a slight sense of apprehension on the part of the client regarding a particular builder, then walk away."

The Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) advises anyone looking for a contractor to ask around and talk to friends, family, co-workers and neighbours. Find out if their contractors lived up to expectations. How were issues resolved? Use the business directory in this magazine. The beautiful homes featured in OUR HOMES magazine are owned by people happy with their builder's work. Drive around, look at homes and find out who built the houses you like.

"A client should request references from a builder's previous clients," says Clark. "See some of their work, ask how the financial portion of the project works, ensure the builder has all the necessary insurance and find out who they use for subcontractors."

After interviewing builders and checking references, ask a short list of contractors to provide an actual bid, based on clear and detailed plans and specifications, the CHBA suggests. The bid that affords the best overall value, not necessarily the lowest price, is the one to look for, says the CHBA.

Develop a contract, determine a price and get a warranty on materials and workmanship in writing. "Verbal assurances that a contractor will come back and fix anything that goes wrong is very difficult to enforce after the job is finished," the CHBA warns. Have a lawyer review the draft contract and insist on proof of liability insurance and Workers' Compensation coverage or equivalent private disability coverage for exempt workers. "A contract that requires compliance with the laws of your province or territory is a good way to protect yourself and your family from legal or financial risks," the CHBA says.

The CHBA offers a wealth of information on its website www.chba.ca. It has worksheets to help you decide what you need in a home, how much it will cost, and how to rate builders. **OH**



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(Please see ad on page 36 & 37)

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For more information about cooking sessions, products and services please visit our web site at www.mieleonbank.ca, also on Facebook Miele Gallery on Bank, or call us at 613.695.9944. Located at 433 Bank Street, Ottawa

(Please see ad on page 11)



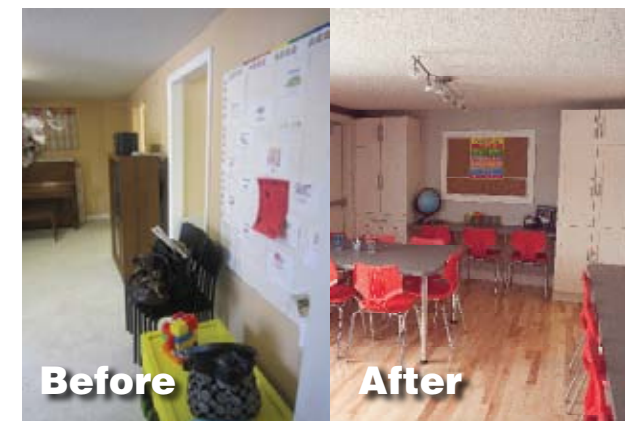
A MISCELLANY OF THE NEW, NEAT, UNIQUE, AND FABULOUS IN OTTAWA AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

DESIGN IN KIND

For the second year in a row, eight Ottawa interior decorators and D.E. Kinkade Konstruktion Ltd joined together to participate in the United Way's Kindness Week event, Extreme Makeover: Kindness Edition. Taking the spirit of "choosing to be kind" to heart, the design team (led by Sonya Kinkade) donated their time and skills to the cause and rounded up an impressive list of donors and sponsors who were excited to come on board and help them spread the kindness.

The recipient of this year's Extreme Makeover was the Foster Farm Family House Homework Club in west Ottawa. It's a place where children in the Foster Farm community can go to do homework and get assistance if they need it. Thanks to the generosity of some very big-hearted individuals and companies, the design team made over two rooms for The Homework Club with a fresh new colour scheme, flooring, cabinetry, chairs, window treatments, artwork, and lots of school supplies.

By creating a vibrant and inspiring environment to work in, the design team hopes that they've played a part in helping the kids at the Homework Club achieve great things. As donor Faye Fortuney said, "Changing a person's physical surroundings can bring inspiration, motivation, a sense of pride, and the idea that someone else sees value in them."



Designers: Sonya Kinkade Design | Modcor | Solace Interiors | Lisa Goulet Design | dh designs | JAX Decor & Design | Sarah Kidder Design | Otta Decorate

Donors: D.E. Kinkade Konstruktion Ltd | Ottawa Valley Kitchens | Sherwin-Williams store #8785 | B.T. Kelly Painting Inc | Barwood Flooring | Marchand Lighting and Electrical | Climate Works | Lafarge Canada | School Furniture of Canada | Tamarack Developments | Tag Along Toys | Smart Space Organizing | Future Shop | Faye Fortune Drapery | Ikea Canada | Matt LeBlanc Abstract Art | Sheila Cain, pencil artist | Danielle Lynn Photography | Randy Little | Spotlight Hair Studio & Spa | Marc Gagnon | Kristin Berit | Tina Klein Walsh

To view more photos from the Extreme Makeover Kindness Edition please visit www.daniellelynnphotography.com

Written by: Kelly James of JAX Decor & Design
Photography by: Danielle Lynn Photography

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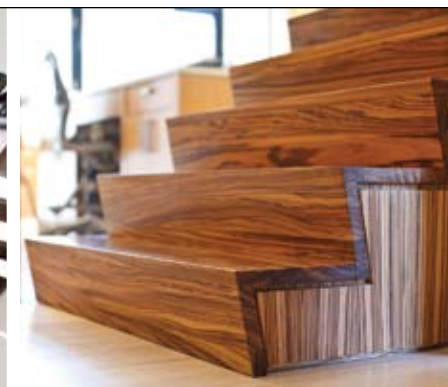
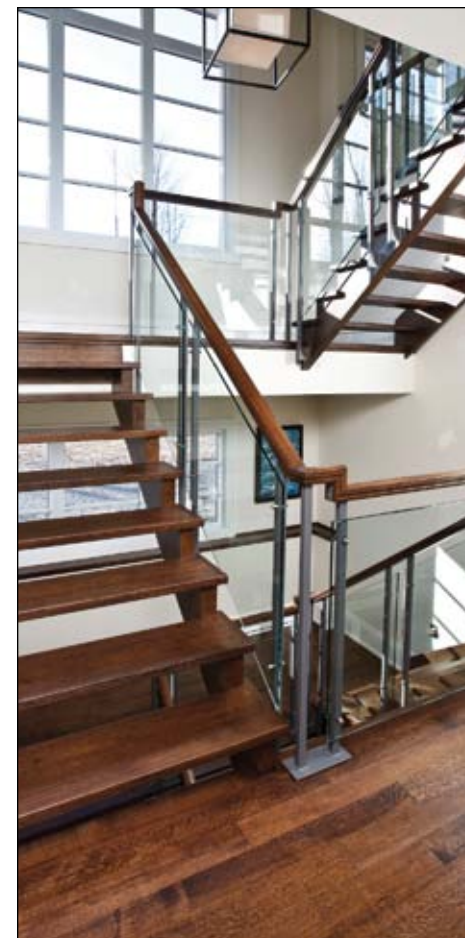
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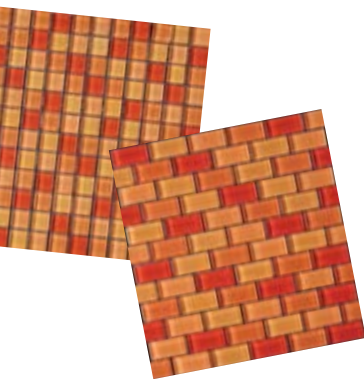
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