

LET THE SUN *shine in*



The living room decorated in a palette of warm earth tones features a custom area rug that offers a vibrant pop of red. **RIGHT:** Homeowner Sofia Gabor.



BY HEATHER WRIGHT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUZANNE BIRD

Sofia Gabor's sense of comfort is guided by a love of natural light, which is evident in every spot in her expansive, gloriously lit bungalow.

In fact, Sofia's entire house seems to be designed in support of natural light. South-facing walls with numerous sprawling windows, tube lights in the bathrooms and walk-in closets, and two wide, angular skylights in the hallways are all conduits to the outside, ushering the light inside.

Her consciousness of light extends to her warm, earthy colour palette throughout the home and to her light fixtures, and even to the Swarovski crystals that dot the walls in her master bathroom shower, which all have the common goal of softening, diffusing and distributing the light in the most pleasing fashion. "I wanted to introduce a lot of elements that would let the light in," Sofia says. "I wanted to make sure that my home had light always. Light always makes you feel better. It's about the energy that comes in." *Continued on page 38*



FAR LEFT: The refrigerator blends seamlessly with the kitchen cabinetry. **LEFT:** The kitchen's sleek white palette is accented with punches of colour. **BELOW LEFT & CENTRE:** Steps away from the kitchen is the laundry room, which features a full-sized upright freezer, also cleverly disguised.

Before her current home, which she shares with her mother, Gizella, Sofia lived in a two-storey, four-bedroom house in Barrhaven that did not suit her needs. After searching extensively for a bungalow with no success, she took matters into her own hands.

Sofia purchased the lot five years ago, engaged **Klinger Homes Inc.**, and set down to designing the home herself. Her design process worked slightly backwards, beginning with what she didn't like and then whittling away to a design that suited her without extraneous space or details that didn't serve a function or support a fashion.

The end result is a masterfully crafted, four-bedroom (two upstairs, two downstairs), open-concept bungalow, wrapped in natural light, and tied end to end with common elements of design and detail. In addition to the bedrooms and two full bathrooms, the main floor has an open concept living/dining area that boasts maple hardwood from **Gaylord Hardwood Flooring**. The floor features a custom stain that accents the warmth infused throughout the main floor.

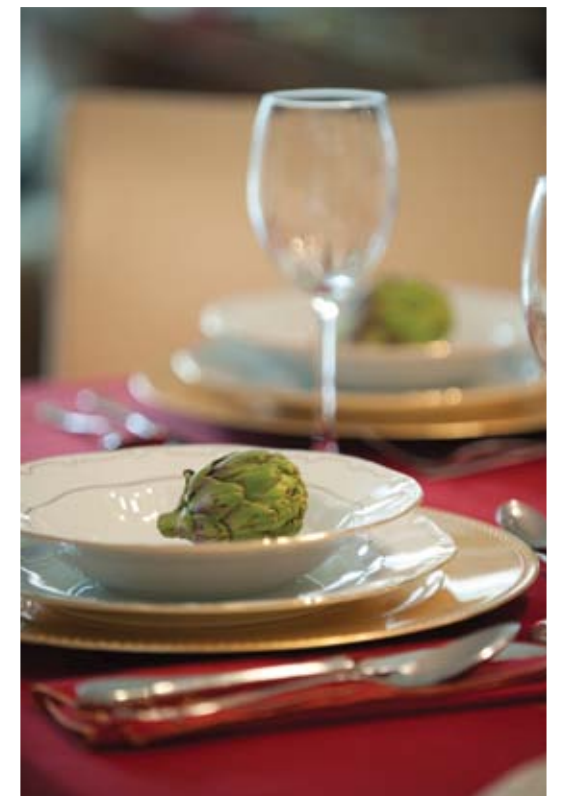
Downstairs is a fully finished, delightfully bright basement, where Sofia's frequent visitors from Europe stay, as well as her daughter when she is in town. The walls encase custom, built-in cabinetry and a funky fireplace with a custom-designed, red-glass surround by local artist **Delfina Falcão**.

Sofia says designing her home was a lengthy process: "It took me about two years," she explains. "I started with pieces of paper drawing down what I liked and there was a whole process that I went through, changing the rooms and changing the size."

In addition to visiting numerous open houses, and consulting magazines, Sofia drew on the two years she spent recently in Europe, mostly in Germany and Transylvania, for inspiration.

Her windows, from **Euro-Tech Windows**, are interesting, not just for their size, but for their European influence, and for how they support her desire to bring the outside in. "I think they are the biggest ones you are allowed," says Sofia. The windows are called "tilt and turn." They pull open on the inside, maximizing air circulation.

Sofia wears her affection for her kitchen on her sleeve. She describes "meeting" her kitchen with much the same language that someone describes the serendipitous meeting of one's true love. In a random act, a couple of months after they had broken the ground for her home, she walked into the **Acco Renovations Inc.** showroom, and saw her kitchen. "I knew it was the one," she gushes. "When I saw the kitchen, I really liked how it looked. I liked that it was clean, a little bit shiny and very pleasing to the eye." Clearly, it's her favourite room in the house. *Continued on page 40*





The main floor master suite boasts a large walk-in closet with ceiling conduit that ushers the natural light in from the outside. **BELOW LEFT:** A conduit was also inserted in the en suite ceiling. The tilt and turn windows in the bathroom and throughout the home are European inspired and maximize air circulation. **BELOW RIGHT:** Swarovski crystals in the glass enclosed shower sparkle like delicate raindrops.



Of particular interest in the kitchen is the custom designed glass backsplash by Delfina Falcão. It is the perfect complement to the rest of the space, with geometric lines and spots of colour that add visual interest.

Falcão, in addition to designing the backsplash and the surround for the basement fireplace, designed two custom area rugs for Sofia. One sits in the middle of the living room and is a focal point to behold. She rounded the edges so as not to interfere with the nearby dining room furniture. The red rug is embedded with bits of rounded, soft glass. It captures much of the same geometric pattern that is expressed in the kitchen backsplash, tying the rooms together and reflecting the symbiotic relationship between the spaces in Sofia's home: separate but connected. This level of detail expresses Sofia's sense of design and desire for aesthetic unity.

Although most of the home is done in earth tones, Sofia favoured red to strategically spread colour through her home. "The colour red is not overwhelming in the house but I'm trying to carry it throughout," she says.

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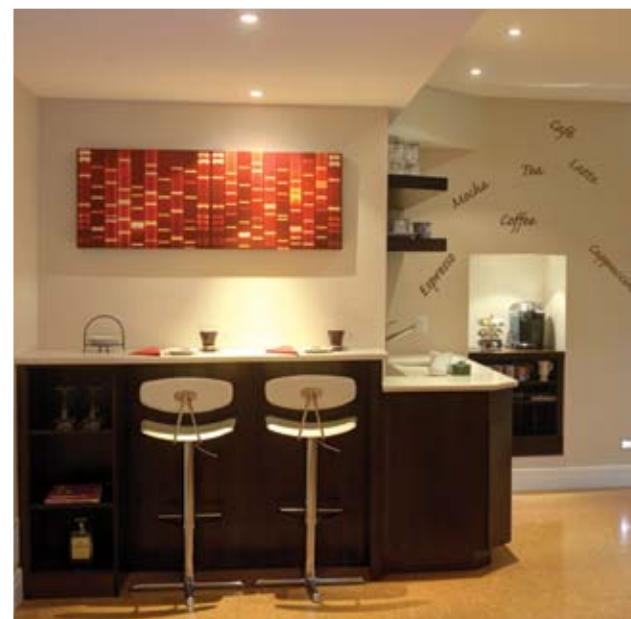
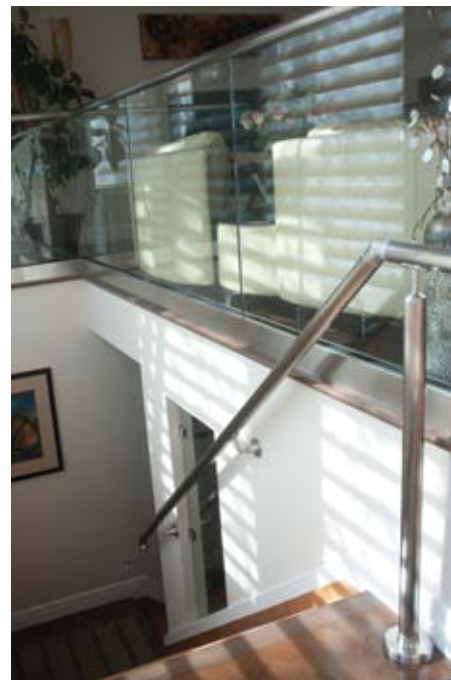
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Beyond her kitchen, Sofia finds respite in her tree-lined backyard, which she landscaped with the help of [Turf's Up Landscaping Inc.](#) They included a small deck, the perfect place for her to enjoy her morning coffee. What she treasures most is the sense of connectedness she feels to the rest of the neighbourhood when sitting outside, surrounded by birdsong and the chatter and laughter of children in the family-friendly neighbourhood.

This sense of connection to her surroundings is what pushed Sofia through her design process and is the source of her happiness now. She wanted a home that was sublime, with crisp, clean lines and abundant natural light, but mostly she wanted a house whose purpose fit into hers and not the other way around. "Your home should be your home first and your house second," she says. **OH**

LEFT: The basement was designed with warmth in mind. Cork floors with radiant heating and a gas fireplace with custom surround make for stylish, comfortable touches. **BELOW:** Sofia chose a contemporary glass staircase design (Rossen Glass & Mirror Co.) for the stairs leading to the basement. **BOTTOM:** The lower level has a wet bar and coffee station, perfect for entertaining.



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