

Decorating with purple decorations from Tinseltown Christmas Emporium is a great step away from a traditional festive feel. **OPPOSITE:** The open concept is ideal for socializing with a dining area and comfy lounge.



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# ALTERNATIVE *luxury*



**T**he William's Court Premium Apartments community in Kanata Lakes is an interesting play in opposites. These condo-style apartments fuse together simultaneously the concept of wide-open space with the experience of being cosy. Tenants get to embrace the conveniences and flexibility of rental turnkey living, but also get to live within a connected community. William's Court is decidedly suburban in its location, but promotes a pedestrian lifestyle that is often associated with urban living.

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Mostly, William's Court is the synthesis of a shrewd housing strategy, presenting an alternative solution in the swelling debate over "rent versus buy" when it comes to shelter.

"It is far easier to sell your home right now, than it is to find a good apartment," says Francesca Lépine-Willson, of **Lépine Corporation**, the complex's developer. And by good apartment, Francesca means one that closely aligns with what their tenants would expect if they were living in a luxurious house or a condominium.

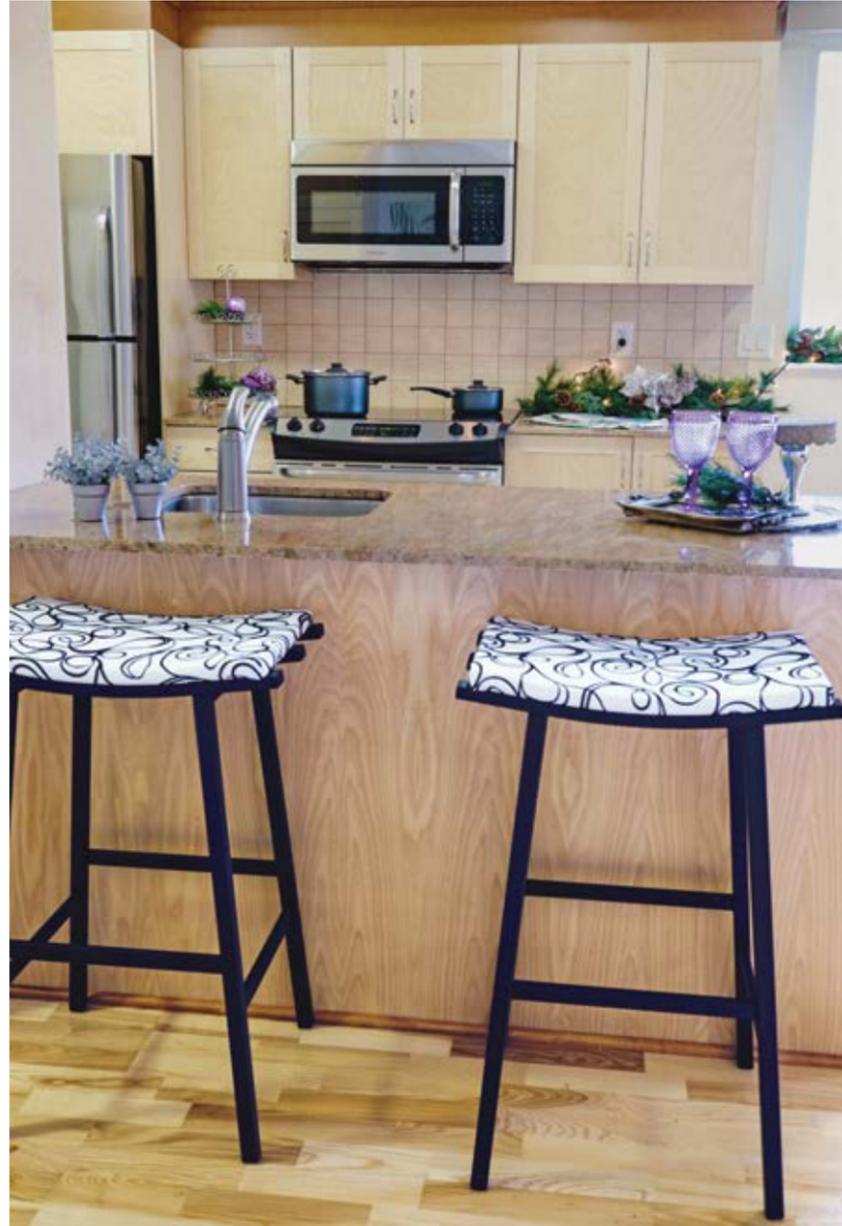
Francesca and her brother Francis Lépine are partners in the company and are the force behind William's Court. This is truly a family business, with roots extending back over generations. The development's name even displays family ties (William is Francis's son). There are several other family members working on site as well.

Their father, René G. Lépine, was one of the biggest land developers in Québec. He founded Lépine Corporation and developed tens of thousands of residential units over several decades – mostly homes and condos in various locations across Canada and the United States.

"He was known as the Donald Trump of Montréal," Francesca says of her father and describes him as a housing development visionary, accurately predicting the trajectory of the coming trends. For instance, "In 1953, he built a split-level home in Côte St.-Luc in Montréal, which was completely unheard of at the time," says Francesca. This housing type, of course, took off and defined the style for how an entire generation lived.

Francesca believes that William's Court operates on the same forward-thinking principle. They have identified a gap in the marketplace, and are delivering a product that has the tangibles of high-end housing, but also the intangibles, including a sense of community and quality of life.

What is most interesting is that this development is not geared to one demographic over another, but is bound by the appeal of being surrounded with good taste. It provides a high-end stage for transition, either before you enter the housing market or after you exit it. This is evidenced by the wide cross-section of tenants, which include young professionals, all the way through to retirees.



This three-building apartment complex is clearly constructed to emit a resort vibe. Surrounded by woodlands and wildlife (but also with immediate access to shopping, dining and the Highway 417) there is an abundance of amenities on site, including barbecue pads, a gazebo with a firepit, a children's playground, a saltwater pool and an expansive state-of-the-art gym, with enormous windows and views, making the time on the treadmill a little more pleasant.

One bedroom, one bedroom plus a den/study, and two bedroom suites range in size from 650 sq. ft. to 1,750 sq. ft., with clever layouts that maximize every inch. What is really notable in the units, common areas and amenity spaces in the buildings is the liberal distribution of light, which gives a lofty sense of space. Even though you are aware of a contained space, the abundance of light and air – and the way in which they

*Continued on page 42*

**ABOVE:** This one bedroom plus den apartment is spacious with a continuous flow throughout. **LEFT:** A beautiful table setting will make your holiday guests feel welcome. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The kitchen, complete with an island breakfast bar, makes the most of the space. **BOTTOM:** A little sprinkle of festive cheer.

interact with the finishes and the design elements – suggest flow and movement throughout.

When trying to create this effect, details matter – from the floor plan to finishes and furnishings. They either culminate to expand the space or box it in. It all comes down to perception of your surroundings, and the design choices made in these units go far to promote that sense of air and space.

Francesca's daughter, Stacie Willson, cleverly styled these model units with space enhancing furniture, eye-catching mirrors and art that catches the eye and amplifies the sensation of space.

Upon entry, the units unfold into a wide open layout. The colour palettes are neutral, with understated beech flooring (**Westboro Flooring & Decor Inc.**) unwinding through the common areas. The kitchen is a welcome focal point, fitted with granite countertops (**Emerald Tile + Marble**) and stainless steel appliances (Sears), which contribute to the contemporary feel. Maple shaker-style cabinetry (**Lauryzen Kitchens Ltd.**) provides low-key panache.

Each unit is flanked with large windows by **Vision 2000** (bay windows in some units) that open up to natural vistas that surround the buildings. In the units with the den/study option, french doors in the den elegantly cut the space without closing it in, allowing the light to drift through the room. *Continued on page 44*

The den creates an area for a home office and a guest room with the addition of a sofa bed.



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The bedroom is sizeable and bright, and offers large California-style closets (Laurysen Kitchens). The carpeted floor (Westboro Flooring & Decor) is neutrally coloured as well, and opens into a well-designed en suite bathroom.

While these units are clearly designed to enhance the perception of space, they are also pleasantly cosy. For instance, during Christmas, one can picture the snow falling outside the large windows against the trees. As the natural light begins to retreat for the night, the snug interior is illuminated by the festive lighting instead, making it homey.

The attention to detail carries throughout the buildings into the common spaces. In one of the lobbies, against a stately flagstone wall, is a three-panelled piece of art by local artist **Susan Goold** of area wildlife, connecting this contemporary edifice to its natural surroundings through design detail.

Part of what Francesca and her brother are trying to accomplish is to redefine apartment living in the current context of the market. "Everyone knows what condo living is and everyone knows what apartment living is," says Francesca, explaining how they want to create a market space between the two. **OH**

**TOP LEFT:** Add some excitement to a simple bathroom with a fresh pop of colour. **ABOVE:** Every room in this apartment flows, from the living room, to the bedroom, through to the bathroom. **LEFT:** The bedroom is complete with a decorative chair.

# Tinseltown

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