

# FIRE AND WATER

## DETAILS MAKE THE DESIGN

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A wall niche in a foyer exhibiting a sleek vase lit from above sets the tone for the design of a home. Change that to a niche cluttered with keys and junk mail and the design story is a very different tale.







A saltwater lap pool, is enhanced by two sheer descent waterfalls that flow out of cultured Black Rundle stonework. It's the same stonework as the residence. Inserted in the top of the wall are two six-foot-long fire troughs that send flames licking into the air. "They throw off a tremendous amount of heat and warm the whole area."



People often compliment homeowner Randy Porter on the clean lines and flawless design work his wife, Laurie, has achieved at their Oro-Medonte ranch bungalow. He grins. “She’ll tell you it’s all me. I’m the one with the ideas and, although sometimes she wonders about what I want to do, she lets me run with it.”

Interior design may not be the talent one would normally associate with a man who’s had a career in law enforcement, but pigeonholing anyone is a grave mistake. People tend to be far more complex than they appear at first blush. Randy may impart an imposing presence, but the artistic streak runs deep in his family. His mother, an artist, always “fancied up homes” and the schooling was well absorbed.

The Porter home is an immaculate, glistening dwelling with a decisive use of negative space. Sofas and accent chairs are leather. Tables are glass and chrome. Art is minimal. The architecture is left to stand on its own.

Embellishments come in the form of the trim work: deep coffered ceilings, craftsman-style wainscoting (carpentry by Mark Jackson) and the addition of two pillars in the open concept great room/dining room, which are not structural elements at all, but added purely to break up any cavernous effect.

The palette for the home, both inside and



“The dining room is separated from the kitchen by a partial dark grey stone-clad wall with a see-through fireplace.



out, is white, grey and black. In fact, there are seven different shades of grey used on the interior walls that demarcate the subtleties of movement from room to room.

The dining room is separated from the kitchen by a partial dark grey stone-clad wall with a see-through fireplace. A rectangular sparkling glass and chrome chandelier dangles above the Urban Barn dining table that seats eight.

The kitchen shimmers with black granite counters, Fisher Pakel appliances and wavy chrome drawer pulls. A floating ceiling with pendant lights over the island provides task lighting while upper cabinet interior lighting adds ambience. (Lighting throughout from the Lighting Gallery in Barrie.)

A lovely breakfast nook with view to the garden sits off the kitchen and a butler's pantry on the reverse side sports a wine fridge, microwave and 42-inch TV screen embedded in the cabinetry so news won't be missed during meal prep.

When the Porters first bought the home,

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Top: A lovely breakfast nook with view to the garden sits off the kitchen

Bottom Left: A floating ceiling with pendant lights over the island provides task lighting while upper cabinet interior lighting adds ambience.



the previous owner had placed a sofa in the kitchen below the fireplace. "We thought it was weird," says Randy. "But after a while, decided to try it. Now it's the main hangout. We live in here."

Exiting the breakfast nook through patio doors, a long, covered veranda is where the family enjoys barbecues with friends. Equipped with motorized "Don't Bug Me" screens (installed by Bert Balas), it's also the favourite hangout of their 10-year-old Newfoundland Landseer, Laker, who helps keep the domain secure, along with a high-tech security and camera system that is monitored 24/7.

The home has four luxe bedrooms – three above grade and one below. In the main floor master, three high windows above the bed with California shutters top the wainscoting that runs three-quarters of the way up the wall. They open to allow refreshing night breezes to flow directly over the bed. This is a quiet home where you can hear the sway of the wind in the trees from the forest that

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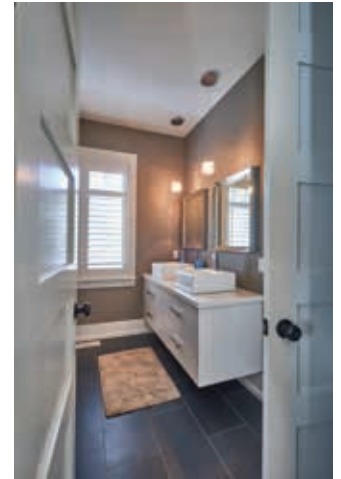
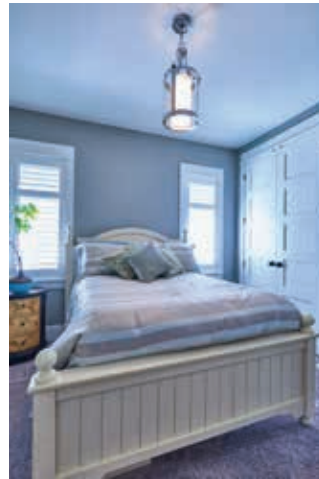


surrounds all sides of the two-and-a-half-acre property.

The Porters moved to the Windfield Drive enclave of executive homes a few years ago. They were attempting to downsize from a Lake Simcoe waterfront property that had ballooned in size from a tiny cottage to 3,800 square feet with the three additions the couple had added. “We started looking

at properties to get ideas. We were going to build,” says Randy. “We walked in here and ended up purchasing it that day. It’s so peaceful. When you move off the water, you realize how noisy it was and how much work.”

The yard and the recreation level of the new home were still blank slates, however, and where a vacuum exists, Randy targets



his attention. He began designing the pool and the recreation room. "I don't just imagine a look," he says. "I can actually see it completed in my mind, preconstruction."

The recipe he used for the yard was fire and water – elements that are always sure winners.

A saltwater lap pool, designed by Randy and installed by Majestic Pools, is enhanced by two sheer descent waterfalls that flow out of cultured Black Rundle stonework (Owens Corning). It's the same stonework as on the residence. Inserted in the top of the wall are two six-foot-long fire troughs that send flames licking into the air. "They throw off a tremendous amount of heat and warm the whole area." The entire system is remotely controlled through a TP-Link System tethered to an Apple iPhone. It can even monitor chemical levels in the pool.

Under-wall landscape lighting was added for additional atmosphere and 24-by-30-inch travertine slab decking completes the hardscaping. To the right of the pool, a cabana with a bar and change room adds functionality. On the far side of the pool, a terrace was built with an outdoor wood-burning fireplace that has a bit of the Inca Empire look to it. Here, swimmers can relax and enjoy forest views where deer roam. The brilliance of placing the fireplace to the rear of the pool is that guests are warmed from behind by the fire troughs and from the front by the fireplace, thus erasing any chilly spots.

But a small section of the yard still remained bare and Randy saw the opportunity for green space that wouldn't require lawn cutting. Artificial turf now surrounds a pleasant three-hole putting green, making the yard an adult recreational wonderland.

Next to the yard, Randy took on the driveway and built a mammoth (26-feet wide by 46-feet deep) RV garage with 18-foot ceilings to house the couple's 37-foot Holiday Rambler Vacationer. (Superior Maibec siding on the structure also matches the residence.)

But it was in the recreation room that Randy really unleashed his creative juices and stretched the home's square footage to 5,400. The "party room" is the locale for the family's renowned karaoke soirees, equipped with a 70- TV screen and Bose

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Lush, 50-ounce pile shag rug here rests atop heated floors. Flush wall-mounted fireplace with heatilator adds more warmth and red leather bar stools acquired from Kings Distributing add a punch of colour.

Randy, who finished much of the work, also added a full kitchen, spacious bedroom and en suite with Bianca Carrara marble countertop and separate shower so the space could double as an in-law suite.

This level has a roomy living room and various other sitting rooms to wander and slouch in. There's also a gym with rubberized floor.

The kitchen appliances are built in cabinetry, including wine fridge, oven, microwave, dishwasher and a full-sized refrigerator. The stainless steel and glass tile backsplash continues the home's monochromatic colour theme.

Now that the home's square footage has suddenly risen 1,600 square feet above what

they previously downsized from, Randy has decided to give downsizing another go. This time, however, he and his partner are embracing extreme downsizing by moving into only 400 square feet.

Laurie is retiring this year and Randy post-retirement business, Traffic Ticket Experts, is on solid footing, so the couple has decided to sell the Windfield property, put belongings in storage and hit the road in their luxury Vacationer, a vehicle they love. Their road trip will be a leisurely, yearlong journey across North America – a remarkable escapade sure to inspire future building plans.

Of course, it will be up to Laurie to keep those wheels rolling because if they stop too long somewhere, a new addition could spring up on the side of the Vacationer in some distant RV park on the way.

46 Windfield Drive West is currently on the market represented by Kristin Anne Cripps of Your Choice Realty Corp., Brokerage. ■