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Emma Hernan

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CITY LIFE

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"Joy is what happens to us when we allow ourselves to recognize how good things really are"

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Michelle Zerillo-Sosa
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief



Fernando Zerillo
Co-Founder/Creative Director

We are all guilty of it — the focusing on what is missing in our lives, instead of noticing the plentiful gifts we possess.

Too often we approach life with the mindset that things are not quite as we'd like them to be. We think that we would be that much happier if we had more things, if we were more popular, enjoyed more business and financial success and, of course had more time.

But, what we need to ask ourselves is, "Would we truly be happier if we had all these material things in our lives — and how long would they actually satiate us?"

We do our best to teach our kids to be more mindful and, yes, to be grateful for what they have, for who they are, for where they live. Our happiness and our existence are not — should not — be dictated by worldly possessions or by others' perceptions of who we are or how we should live.

Every one of us is responsible for our own personal happiness. We are each accountable for finding the little moments of joy in our everyday lives. Creating a daily gratitude list will also sprinkle our lives and the lives of those around us with a sense of joy and positivity. A call from a friend, the smile of a stranger, the sun on our faces and intimate dinners with friends are the small but important markers that can shape our lives with happiness and appreciation. The more grateful we are, the more joy we will experience.

Dr. Krishna Bhatta dreams of a world where Eastern wisdom and Western discoveries coalesce to make the world a better place. He believes that we Westerners live in our heads. And understandably so, as our thinking plays a critically important role in all our lives. The mind is what we use to learn and explore intellectual pursuits, like science, which we equate with progress. But Dr. Bhatta also posits that we need to take a break from our thinking mind and spend some time in the hemisphere of our hearts.

Why? Because the heart is where joy and happiness seed and blossom. The more the heart is superseded by the mind, the less happy and joyful we become — making us more stressed, indifferent, even pessimistic in our mindset. Story on page 50.

So, there we have it: joy and happiness are the most important values to nurture within our hearts and in our lives. We need to curate and nurture these priceless tenets within our own personal real estate assets.

Speaking of real estate, Emma Hernan, the star of Netflix's popular real estate reality series, *Selling Sunset*, is *City Life*'s cover celebrity. Hernan is a seller of dream homes and an angel investor. She owns her own food company, Emma Leigh & Co., and is a power of example to young women who aspire to be successful entrepreneurs. She defines her recipe for initiating and finding joy and happiness in her life thusly: "It is just so important to live your best life and not to worry about the small things: put all your energy into positive vibes. Adopt the YOLO [You Only Live Once] mantra."

As you read through this issue, you will notice the celebratory joy for living that is witnessed frequently, along with stories of individuals who have had the courage to follow their heart's dreams, even if their mind negates their thinking. These are stories of individuals who have won their inner battles.

It is our sincerest hope, valued readers, that you, too, will continue to learn to actualize joy and live life with hearts full of gratitude.

Until next time, we envelope you in …

Joy, love and gratitude,

Michelle Zerillo-Sosa
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DESIGN NEWS

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WRITTEN BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**



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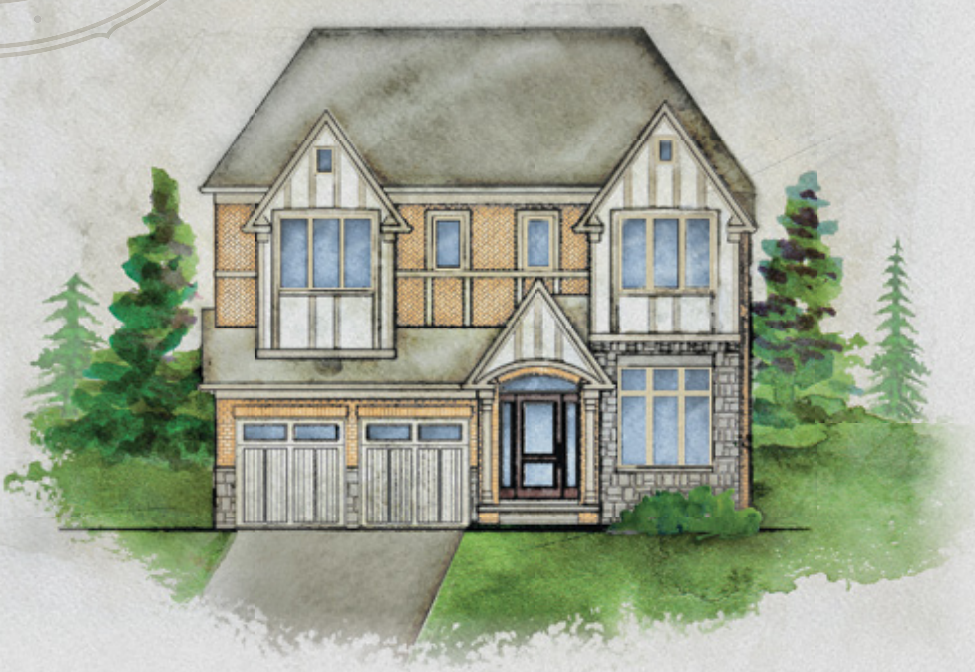
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Jenna Caira, Richmond Hill-born Olympic medallist, joins Laser Clinics Canada to lead its franchise expansion

There's no such thing as one-size-fits-all beauty. That's why Laser Clinics Canada is committed to customized treatments for every client, *a beauty tailored to you* approach, addressing a wide range of goals. "It's not just about enhanced beauty: we can target other things like acne scars, for instance, or other issues that people had growing up that they have had to carry into their adult lives," says Jenna Caira, head of franchise recruitment at Laser Clinics Canada. "Our services are more affordable, and that is getting more Canadians greater accessibility to each treatment — but they're still getting world-class treatments at our clinics," she adds.

Caira, a former Olympian (as a member of Canada's women's national softball team, she helped Canada win a bronze medal at the 2020 Summer Olympics), knows how important it is to feel good about yourself. And that's why she is so excited about some of the treatments at the clinic, with the first one in Canada opening here just this past February in Richmond Hill, Ont., at Hillcrest Mall. With summer on the way, state-of-the art medical-grade equipment for laser hair removal treatments can support different hair and skin types. "We provide a wide range of treatments and services using industry-leading, medical-grade equipment in our clinics," says Caira.



But the clinic offers more than just laser treatments. "I know that the word 'laser' is in our name, but we have much more than just laser hair removal," says Caira. Some of the most common treatments include cosmetic injectables, microdermabrasion and LED light treatments to target concerns about everything from enlarged pores and rosacea to pigmentation and wrinkles. One of the most popular treatments at the clinic is the HydraFacial, which cleanses, hydrates and delivers powerful antioxidants to counteract damage from the sun, pollution and stress.

Before a plan is put forth for each client, everyone gets a free private consultation to talk about their concerns and interests. Caira highlights the fact that a Medical Advisory Committee overlooks all the treatments available, along with the doctors, nurse practitioners and trained therapists administering treatments. "Clients can feel more comfortable coming in, knowing there is a professional Medical Advisory Committee overseeing the treatments and services offered in our clinics," she adds.

With more than 180 clinics, Laser Clinics Group is the largest cosmetic clinic group worldwide. There are big plans, including opening more than a dozen clinics in Canada this year. It's a franchise business model with many growth opportunities.

"If there are entrepreneurs out there who are interested in this industry, with great leadership skills and business expertise and they're passionate about helping others, then I would encourage them to get in touch with us," says Caira. Going into business alone can be intimidating, she adds, but that is the beauty of having the support that comes with their franchise business model. "We make sure that we are working together as a team," she says.

"It's a welcoming environment," says Caira. "We have products, services and tailored beauty treatments for everyone; we're offering services that deliver to the needs of everyday Canadians." With a second clinic opening soon in Mississauga, Ont., people will have even more possibilities to get themselves ready for the summertime.

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Aerin found success after winning a competition to become a design expert on CTV's *The Marilyn Denis Show*

AMANDA AERIN BELIEVES GOOD DESIGN HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES

The entrepreneur, creative director and TV personality opens up about design as therapy, the importance of education and using struggle to fuel reinvention

WRITTEN BY **JOSH WALKER** | INTERVIEW BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMANDA AERIN

There's a good chance you've seen Amanda Aerin before. As well as being a design expert on CTV's *The Marilyn Denis Show*, she has amassed over 80,000 followers on Instagram for her educational, authentic approach to design and speaks publicly on trends across North America. She's collaborated with brands on a number of projects and is in the process of releasing her own line of custom furniture.

She describes her signature style as being made of four things. First, an appreciation of clean lines and timeless esthetics. "Start with the classic," she says. After that, "a kaleidoscope of bright colours, some patterns and then the antique." Combine those together and you'll have an Amanda Aerin room.

Though it might appear Aerin's success came quickly, after winning a contest to work in television 10 years ago, design has always been an integral part of her life. She shares a story of when she was 12 years old, and her mother gifted her $200 to redecorate her room. "That really set a feeling in me about what could be achieved in a space when you make it your own," she says.

From there, she honed her skills and continued exploring her art. She shares how, while having a family of her own, creativity came out of necessity. "I would pick up pieces of furniture from the side of the road and that's how I learned how to sew or paint something. I would say those foundational times of trial and error gave me the confidence to try to be on a television show when I had no television background."

The CTV opportunity she talks about came in 2012, when she was awarded the design expert role on *The Marilyn Denis Show*. "When I approached my audition, it was very much with the idea that I wanted to show other parents and young people looking at a creative career that if I could do this, they could, too. It's really about having the confidence to go out on a limb. If you fail, it's fine. If you don't, it's also fine."

Naturally, making the jump from living behind the camera to being in front of one regularly was tough and took some adjustments. Aerin is open in saying how she might appear comfortable and confident onscreen, but is in fact shy. "I was petrified and even now, before I go on television, I have to take a deep breath, centre myself and take the approach that I'm talking and teaching."

She goes on to share an anecdote about advice she received from one of the show's producers when she started. Aerin says she was planning a segment where she would explain different suppliers and list various specifics about the products she was highlighting, but kept forgetting the details.

> **"When things are difficult, I turn to design. When things are great, I celebrate with design. It's really at the core of who I am"**

In response, the producer cut the cameras and told her to forget about the product codes and be authentic, because that's all the viewers want. "It was the simplest advice, but the best advice I've ever received. Even today when I get a script, I'll read it, think I'd never say it like that, take the top three things I want to get across in a teachable moment and share them as I would with a colleague or friend."

It's this spirit of sharing and offering something that's educational that still spurs much of Aerin's work. "Our viewers and followers are very smart people. They don't want to be sold information," Aerin continues. "They just want good, practical, fun advice and something that's going to lighten the load."

For Aerin, who believes "good design changes lives," this has never been more paramount than through her own periods of struggle. "For me, even through difficult times, design and creativity became therapy. I feel it's escapism. When things are difficult, I turn to design. When things are great, I celebrate with design. It's really at the core of who I am."

She continues to say how everyone can be empowered by that notion and take charge of design to better their situation. "It could be something like rearranging your bedroom or changing a scent in your home to something that's more relaxing for you."

Design has become such a part of Aerin's life that she has also used her personal style as a vehicle for change. She discusses how the opportunity that saw her starting work in television was a moment of reinvention, and she decided to make conscious changes to her personal style to reflect where she saw her career and trajectory going. "My current fashion and personal style didn't reflect where I wanted to go," she explains. "So, I created a mood board that would form who Amanda Forrest (before she changed her name to Amanda Aerin) would be in five years."

This influence from the world of fashion plays a part in her professional work. "I look to fashion designers as a way of gauging what colour palettes will be popular, as well as what's happening with innovative materials. I've done work where we take beautiful fabrics and have them made into accent pillows or framed. There's a cool collaboration between the two."

Since then, Aerin's career has moved in the direction she wanted to take it. Her portfolio of work includes clients such as IKEA and Sunwing, and she offers a number of services that span both residential and commercial design. "Being able to tailor design with marketing is fascinating," she shares.

Of all the projects she's embarked on, Aerin marks two as being standout. For the first, with Kim Crawford Wines, she designed interactive pods that would travel across Canada. Visitors entering

Aerin suggests mixing and matching the same dining chair style in different colours to create an unexpected look







From funky planting pots to mixing antique and vintage pieces, Aerin shares how to add fun details into a room, unveiling exquisite character throughout a space

> “I would say success is defined by my health, a career that I love and the ability to share my gifts with others”

the pods would enjoy a multisensory experience that related to the taste of different wines. “It was the perfect way to show how all the senses are so combined,” she says.

The second highlight was her collaboration with interior mouldings and door company Metrie to design an interactive trade show booth in Las Vegas. “This was interesting because, when I started, the moulding industry was very male dominated. I was able to align with a company that’s so male dominated, but had the foresight to bring in a group of designers, half of whom were women. The booth had to be large enough to walk through and showcase their trims, but they really appreciated the female spin on it.”

For Aerin, collaboration is key. Even with her projects with individuals, she works to ensure the process works both ways, hosting a number of meetings to uncover what a family’s functional needs are, and where their personal tastes will align with that.

“I joke that I’m a furniture whisperer,” she says. “I feel I’m intuitive to a client’s emotions when they’re speaking and feel their energies about what’s paining them in the space versus what’s getting them excited, and I’m able to translate that to a design that’s tailored to them.” That’s followed by a process of going to different stores and figuring out what should be shopped for, both new and antique, and if anything needs to be custom-made.

Today, as well as hoping to amp up her custom furniture division, with a focus on keeping as much of the fabrication in Canada and the employment with Canadian families, Aerin is keen to spend some time in Europe, with living in Paris for a few months high on the bucket list. She’s also getting married to her partner in June 2022, after spending eight years together.

“I would say success is defined by my health, a career that I love and the ability to share my gifts with others,” she says, reflecting on what being successful means to her. “I don’t know how it gets better than that.”

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It all started with a child’s room. When Marilena Madio, the founder of Wall Wear, was pregnant, she painted a mural of Noah’s Ark with all the animals on the nursery wall. Everyone who saw it was amazed, and she started painting a few for family and friends. “When my son was born, I decided to turn it into a full-time business because I just had more and more people asking, ‘Can you do my room? Can you do my room?’” she says.

Marilena likes to set up video calls with clients so they can discuss ideas, then she makes an appointment to go to their home. It’s a creative process, and it’s important to Marilena. “It has to look good because my name is on it, but it has to include their vision,” she says. “Because in the end, it is still their wall; they have to look at it.”

Now Marilena handles both residential and commercial clients. And from glorious flowers and giant waves to geometric designs and adorable cartoon characters, everything is on the table. It is bespoke work, and the pricing depends on the project. But one thing is certain: Marilena loves her work, and it shows.

One of Marilena’s proudest moments came about eight years when she got a call from the Property Brothers, who wanted her to paint a mural, and she has now worked with them in five episodes of their show. “That gave me credibility and helped build my business, too,” she says. She uses social media to showcase and market her creations as well, and her latest TikTok video has racked up more than two million views.

Marilena is grateful. “I’m a people person — we work together. We create something. We make a room beautiful,” she says. “I get to make people super-happy.” Perhaps there is a room in your home where a hand-painted mural can come to life? If you can dream it, Marilena Madio can make it happen.

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PHOTO BY NICOLE AUBREY



The Caesarstone display booth manufactured and installed by Unique brought Munge's vision to life with a sensorial immersive experience through earth, art and nature

STANDOUT DESIGN

Unique Store Fixtures's collaboration with Caesarstone and Alessandro Munge wows Interior Design Show 2022

WRITTEN BY **RICK MULLER**

PHOTO BY MAXIME BOCKEN

Acclaimed international interior designer Munge fully embraced Caesarstone's newly launched Pebbles Collection

When you can create, manufacture and install interior design that stands out and receives accolades in an environment surrounded by the finest in design, you can safely say you're at the top of your profession. That was the reaction at this year's Interior Design Show 2022 (IDS22) to Unique Store Fixtures's collaboration with Caesarstone Canada in manufacturing and installing the hardware at Caesarstone's display booth designed by the vision of famed Canadian interior designer Alessandro Munge of the award-winning Studio Munge.

Celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2022, luxury quartz brand Caesarstone wanted something special to mark the occasion at this year's IDS22 and teamed with Munge to unveil eight new nature-inspired designs with Neo Colosso, which featured Caesarstone's newly launched Pebbles Collection. The

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIQUE





Brothers Marco (immediate left) and Ferro Corrente were part of the Unique team which pulled the display together in four weeks and installed it in just four days



display manufactured and installed by Unique took visitors through Munge's whimsical and sensorial journey of earth, art, nature and expression, which had the jaws dropping of both show guests and leading designers alike for its emotion, inventiveness and stunning appearance.

As with any show in a popular venue such as the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, timelines for load-in and setup are extremely tight, and this year was no different, which presented some challenges for the task given to Unique.

"We had challenges like most years, as we had time restraints," says Ferro Corrente, who is the chief operating officer of Unique Store Fixtures. "We put the booth together in fewer than four weeks, and we only had four short days to install it. But with Alessandro's team and Caesarstone and Unique, we overcame a lot of adversity. Caesarstone is always a great client, but Alessandro really put it over the top this year."

The captivating sensorial immersive experience stood out among the many displays at IDS22 and once again demonstrated the talent and creativity that set apart Unique and has made it North America's premier manufacturer of custom retail environments. It also caught the eye of one of the most internationally respected interior designers in the world.

> "It may look effortless, but it's because of partners like Unique that it feels effortless, and we're able to enjoy it"
>
> — Alessandro Munge

"A project like this obviously takes a team, and it takes a tremendous amount of commitment," says Alessandro Munge. "Unique is one of those partners that will take on absolutely anything, and that's what they're all about. To imagine that they installed this in just four days is very powerful. They believed in the idea and the message we're trying to put out in the community. It may look effortless, but it's because of partners like Unique that it feels effortless, and that we're able to enjoy it."

Already working with leading global luxury brands at Tiffany & Co., Gucci and Bergdorf Goodman in some of the world's leading retailing destinations, Unique takes a customer-first approach to every assignment, which still creates excitement among its 100 full-time craftspeople, engineers and designers.

"The best part for me was seeing the products come through the shop and coming to life at the show," says Marco Corrente, who is the vice-president of



Alessandro Munge (right) stands with Unique Store Fixtures's founder and chief executive officer Ferruccio Corrente, who began the company in 1983

The Caesarstone booth was a standout presence at IDS22 using many different materials featuring areas where patrons could embrace the experience

PHOTO BY NICOLE AUBREY



Brothers Ferro and Marco Corrente stand proudly in the display, flanking client Ken Williams, president and CEO of Caesarstone Ltd., The Americas

new business development for Unique. "We wanted to ensure we captured Alessandro and Caesarstone's vision and brought that to life, and the reactions of the patrons of the show really made it worth it."

"This is our gift to the design community," says Yael Goldshmid, senior marketing manager of Caesarstone. "This is Caesarstone, this is who we are. And we are fortunate to be able to showcase that to the design community."

In-store or in a convention centre, the collaboration with Caesarstone and Alessandro Munge is the latest example of leading retailers and designers turning to Unique to create custom environments that stand out and elevate experiences.

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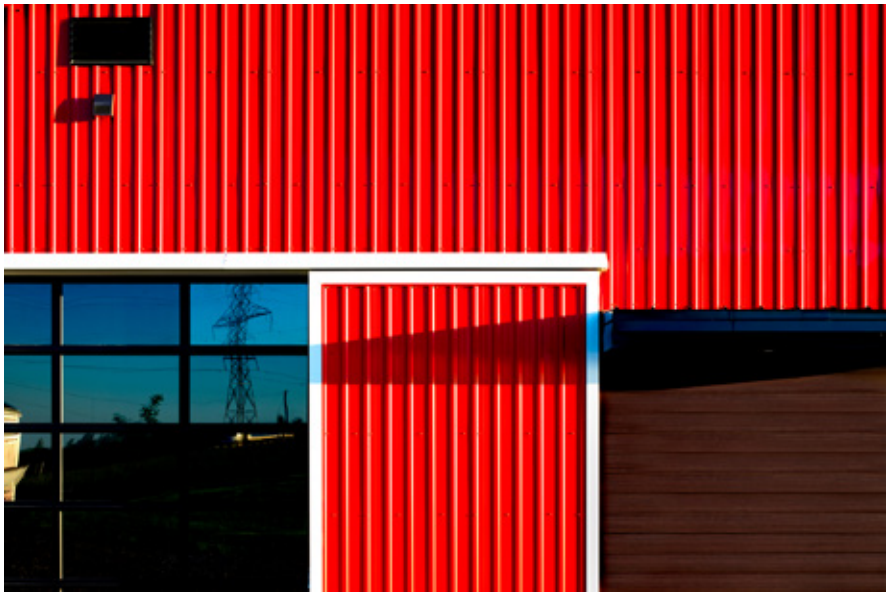
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The colours were chosen so they paid homage to traditional barn construction



A BARN OFF THE HIGHWAY

Situated along Tecumseh's Highway 3, the Highway Pole Barn fuses traditional barn design with contemporary architecture

WRITTEN BY **JOSH WALKER**

Aptly named for the way it stands — with presence and mystery along the busy highway — the Highway Pole Barn serves as an extension to the owners' primary residence, surrounded by 64 acres of farmland.

In terms of design, it takes the original typography of barn design, but fuses it with contemporary influences the owners enjoy. The structure is built with wood-framed pole barn methods, and every detail has been considered.

Given that it's oriented south, the shed roof has been sloped to maximize the roof's surface area, so it's primed to be fitted with solar panels in the future. Not only that, but the building's elevation means the windows have been placed strategically. The largest window groupings are placed in the barn's most public sections to make the most of the natural light and stretching views. The higher windows are more discreet, offering more privacy without sacrificing any light.

The barn is skinned with various

PHOTOS BY WINDSOR CREATIVE



The roof's slope means it's primed to be fitted with solar panels in the future

metal sidings, notably red and black, to offer both an homage to traditional barn construction and also to offer seclusion from the flurry of activity that is synonymous with the nearby highway. While it is used to store farm equipment and vehicles, the space has also been outfitted with a section for social gatherings and quiet reflection.

The build has been led by Dory Azar Architect Inc., an architectural firm located in Tecumseh, Ont. The firm is known for its extensive knowledge of residential and commercial design, as well as its international portfolio of projects.

While the build of the barn promises its owners the opportunity to have additional space to host, tend to their gardens and relax, it also acts as an anchor and a landmark for future projects that are planned to be built on the same property.

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Brothers Carlo (left) and Dino Taurasi take a personal and hands-on approach when designing and building their quality homes, as if they were building each home for their own families.

STATEVIEW HOMES: POWERING GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY IN YORK REGION

Founded just 12 years ago, award-winning StateView Homes is now one of the region's busiest home builders with aggressive expansion plans throughout southern Ontario

Among the many advantages of living in York Region is its growth. Growth brings jobs, opportunities, possibilities, economic vitality and social engagement to live, work and play in a thriving urban environment.

One of the drivers of that growth is StateView Homes, one of the most respected homebuilders in the region. Founded in 2010 by brothers Carlo and Dino Taurasi, it has built many communities throughout the GTA with further expansion now planned for Ontario cities Barrie, Newmarket, Kleinburg, Brooklin and Stouffville.

City Life recently sat down with Carlo and Dino to discuss their business philosophy and the reasons behind the firm's success and continued growth.

Q. What are StateView's core values, and how have they evolved into what the company's guiding principles are today?

Carlo: Our team is guided by the principles of performing with integrity, commitment, accountability, responsibility and experience. These are the foundations that make up our iCare Service Program, and we ensure these principles are carried throughout our business, from upper management through to our trades and site workers.

Q. StateView says it "aims to craft distinctive niche communities that answer to each homeowner's individuality, design preferences and lifestyle aspirations." How do you deliver on that?

Carlo: We try not to build cookie-cutter homes. When we are designing our homes, we take the approach that we would be designing these homes for us, for our families.

Dino: It also means adding in features that make your home better to live in through our Comfort+ and Harmony packages.

Carlo: Harmony adds extra eco-friendly features to the home that makes it healthier to live in, more energy efficient, which is good for the environment, but

PHOTO BY JESSE MILNS





With stylish interiors and quality exterior design, StateView Homes has become one of the most respected homebuilders in the region.

> “OUR TEAM IS GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLES OF PERFORMING WITH INTEGRITY, COMMITMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPONSIBILITY AND EXPERIENCE.”
>
> — Carlo Taurasi

also good for our homeowners because their bills are less expensive. We also have our own in-house architects, so, when our homeowners meet with their décor consultants, if they want structural changes, we have a team on hand who can facilitate that. Oftentimes, it's like our homeowners are getting a completely custom home!

Q. Your company has received many awards over the years, including many BILD awards and from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) in California. How satisfying is that?
Dino: Last year, our Enclave project in Kleinburg won Low-Rise Project of the Year at the BILD Awards, which was very rewarding because we know just how competitive the GTA market is, probably the most competitive in North America.
Carlo: NAHB, though, has a special significance for us, as we were up against the best-of-the-best across all of North America.
Dino: At the end of the day, however, what really matters is that our homeowners are happy with the home we provide.

Q. What are some of the upcoming projects you're excited about in 2022 and beyond?
Carlo: Soon, we'll be launching the Tesoro Collection, an exclusive community of just 12 50-foot singles on a private cul-de-sac in Kleinburg and, after that, we have Elia in Newmarket, which is a fantastic collection of 72 townhomes in the heart of the city.
Dino: Into the fall, we move out east to Brooklin and the first phase of a multiple-phase project of nearly 500 homes that will include a wide range of product, including back-to-back townhomes, traditional towns and singles, and then we move on to Stouffville, with a master-planned community of townhomes and seven high-rise condos.

Q. Can you explain the passion behind your philanthropic work and why it's important to show community support to such hospitals as SickKids and Johns Hopkins?
Carlo: We strongly believe in helping our communities and the people who live in them. Whether it's supporting local community charities or events to helping on a larger scale, we like to do what we can.
Dino: StateView is a family, and we all have kids, which is why we are so committed to our continued support of SickKids, to whom we've donated more than $800,000 through various events, such as its 'Get Loud' campaign or its annual Bubble Hockey Tournament.
Carlo: My brother-in-law, Julian, who is also our director of sales, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) several years ago, so we have a very personal connection to MS4MS, which helps raise funds for research at Johns Hopkins. It's not only our responsibility to give back and make the world a better place, but we're also happy to do it.

Q. In your industry, there is the expression "good build." What is the StateView definition of a good build?
Carlo: When we know that we've heavily vetted our plans to be the best they can be, and we see that reflected in the excitement our clients have. It's when we plan to phase out a project, but it sells out in a few weeks because our clients love what they see. It's when our clients spend hours with our décor team because they are building out the home of their dreams. It's when we get emails and messages from our homeowners saying how happy they are with their home or the service or the site staff. These are all the things that constitute a good build for us.

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How to describe the art that Diana Joleen creates? She will tell you herself: it's all over the place — no boundaries. And now she's looking forward to her first solo show

HOW A DREAM ABOUT A BUNNY AWAKENED A SLEEPING ARTIST

No one knows where their life will go, but in Diana Joleen's case, it went full circle. A brutal car accident forced her to stop working. And then came the gift. A reawakening of her inner artist. Now, with her no-holds-barred creations, she's rocking an artistic career, designing customized pieces for luxury brands and streetwear, and starting to dabble in NFTs

WRITTEN BY **DONNA PARIS** | INTERVIEW BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**

PHOTO BY EMAD MOHAMMADI

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As a child, Diana Joleen leaned on her little inner artist to make her happy. Her dad worked for an international telecommunications company, so the family moved a lot, living in countries around the world. Her limited resources and materials forced her to get super-creative. So, she remembers doing things like drawing in the sand in Saudi Arabia. "I just gravitated toward creating something out of nothing," she says.

It wasn't until high school when Joleen got her own art kit and learned to do things such as stretch canvas. She wanted to study at a school for the arts, but her parents thought the road to happiness was paved with a polished title: a doctor, lawyer or accountant. She put her dream on a shelf and went on to study business administration, instead. Joleen started a family and began working in asset property management, overseeing a region with 33 buildings in 17 cities. "I was high on life. I was making a good income, the company car, the office, the title — all of it," she says.

Ironically, one day in 2011, when she was going to interview someone for her job, so she could move up to a director's position, she got into a car accident, turning to see a car headed straight for her as she was driving through an intersection. She screamed and lost consciousness. The next thing she remembers is lifting her head from the steering wheel and calling 911. But she couldn't even tell the dispatcher where she was. Mississauga, Ont.? Brampton, Ont.?

Joleen had severe injuries: head trauma, a concussion, and neck and spine injuries. It was a long journey just to be able to walk properly again, to drive and to work. For three years, she tried really hard to go back to her previous life. On days she couldn't drive, Joleen sat at her desk. She worked through migraines, sometimes blurred vision and ringing in her ears that forced her to pretend to hear what people were saying. "It was brutal," she says. "I'm thinking, *I'm in my 30s. I have kids. This is my career; I'm going to fight*." The battle came to an abrupt end when her doctor deemed her unable to work and told her to focus on getting better. Joleen became anxious and depressed. She started experiencing insomnia.

But one night, when she couldn't sleep, she had a watershed moment. She found her 20-year-old paints downstairs. She expected they might be dried up or clumpy, but they weren't. She had primary colours and a small canvas. "It felt like a tremendous sense of comfort," she says. Joleen finished a piece and posted it on Instagram.

> "I'm just doing what I feel — and all my series have been born on the heels of emotion"

Someone asked if it was for sale. At first, she said "No," but then "Yes," because, after all, she had no money coming in.

She started painting furiously, filling up the walls with her artwork. Sometimes her hands would shake because of her disabilities, so she started to blow on the canvas, using her breath as a tool to spread the paints. In three years, Joleen sold more than 100 paintings, most of them for an extremely low cost. "I was so insecure, so uncertain," she says. Eventually, a fine arts curator wanted to represent Joleen, and she signed with him, but when the pandemic shut down everything, she had to pivot and represent herself again.

She reached out to designers, curators, gallery owners and publishing companies, and one magazine agreed to take one of her paintings as a giveaway. Joleen finished the piece, but one night she woke up, grabbed her iPad and drew a bunny she had dreamt. She wrote "Bunee" next to it (she's not even sure why she spelled it like this) and went back to sleep. Joleen handed it over as a giveaway, too, so Bunee was launched on Instagram in summer 2020, and people just fell in love with Bunee.

Joleen started to realize how the simple image could be parlayed into something much bigger. She created her *Artist Series*, customizing the bunny for each artist and ended up with a wait list that extended into 2021. Bunee also began to become associated with luxury brands, such as Lamborghini Bunee, and some Bunees are sculpted with unbelievable materials, including 24-karat gold and silver, and smothered in Swarovski crystals. She has launched limited-edition merchandise, with a percentage of proceeds going to SickKids Hospital. And then, bigger news. She sold the TM licensing rights to a European company, but she only agreed after they let her fulfill her charity commitments (and she still reserves the rights to the name).

Joleen is so open with her art, and so the universe came together to help her create another winning character. "I was overlapping two Bunees, then the bunny head was looking back at me — this creepy, more edgy, more mature-looking skinny bunny," she says. She took the *B* and the *e* off, and called it "Üne," the umlaut over the *u* symbolic of Üne's face. Üne will be strictly digital art, NFTs and merchandise. Some people want Üne on a hoodie, and she's happy to oblige. "That's the beauty of art. There's an unhindered sense to it, because I'm not trained," she says. "I'm just doing what I feel — and all my series have been born on the heels of emotion."

Asked how she would describe her style, Joleen says it's all over the place. "I think my brain tends to gravitate toward abstract, and I have a tendency to gravitate toward landscapes." It's all there on her Instagram — hard-edged contemporary, modern, pop, sculptures, digital and abstract paintings. And for Joleen, who is still dealing with mental health issues, art is like a safe friend. "It's everything for me," she says. "When it comes to mental health and art, I think it's a direct link — it's like breathing."

Her advice for budding artists? "When it comes to art, there are no rules: follow your instincts," she says. And Joleen would give her younger self a bit of advice, too. "Don't be scared: no more self-doubt, no fear."

dianajoleen.com
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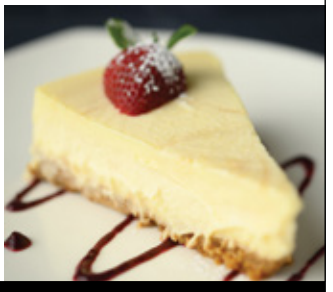


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HORMONE HEALTH *with* TRI-HEALTH



Naturopathic doctors Maria (left) and Jason Granzotto, owners of Tri-Health Wellness Centre

PHOTO BY CARLOS A. PINTO

Hormone health — what's that? Jason Granzotto, a naturopathic doctor and the founder and owner of Tri-Health Wellness Centre, helps us understand how women can take ownership of their hormones, ultimately leading to overall health.

Q. What are some of the most common symptoms women are concerned about?
A. Some of the common symptoms I hear include changes to their periods like irregularity, heaviness and mood changes. They describe the typical PMS-related symptoms: acne flares, difficulty trying to conceive or difficulty trying to lose weight. This then starts the conversation off about assessing their hormone status.

Q. What is the best way that you like to assess women's hormone health?
A. The most comprehensive way of assessing hormones that we like to use is with something called the Dutch test. The Dutch test is a state-of-the-art at-home test that provides a lot more information than a standard hormone test done at a doctor's office. The test provides an extremely comprehensive profile that reveals what the person is lacking and what sort of protocol for dietary change they need. The test itself reveals the solution.

Q. What are some helpful tips you could offer for women to maintain their hormone health?
A. Understanding what a balanced diet is by having sufficient protein, good carbs and vegetables. This is key for blood-sugar regulation. Physical activity is also essential. I would lean toward some strength training because that is another way to ensure you have a good metabolic rate. Good muscle tone is one of the best mechanisms to maintain health throughout your whole life, to prevent diseases, to strengthen your bones and to maintain a healthy metabolic rate, weight and hormonal balance.

Q. How can women take advantage of spring and its milder weather when it comes to their hormone health?
A. Spring is a good time to introduce a little detox or modified diet. This will kickstart some lifestyle changes to a healthier diet and physical activity. And that plays well into maintaining a healthy hormone profile.

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AN ACTOR GOES FROM SMALL TOWN TO THE BIG TIME

Canadian actor, Erin Karpluk talks about her journey from a small town to the big screen and her secret to learning lines

WRITTEN BY **JOSH WALKER**
INTERVIEW BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**

Karpluk is well-known for her role playing Erica Strange in the CBC show *Being Erica*

When Erin Karpluk talks about the small town she grew up in, she describes it as a place you'd see on a Canada postcard. Her graduating class contained only 32 people, everybody knew her name and her mother was the school's principal.

It's a town she returns to multiple times a year, saying "it's a very spiritual place where I fill my teacup" and offers a reset to living in Toronto and Los Angeles. But even though Karpluk grew up playing hockey and basketball, skiing and hiking, she always wanted to be an actor.

Judging by the length of her IMDb, she's had an impressive journey from her home in the Rockies. As well as having regular appearances on TV shows, including *A Million Little Things, Holly Hobbie* and *Being Erica*, Karpluk has appeared in movies alongside the likes of Samuel L. Jackson.

When it comes to accepting a role, there are several elements that matter to Karpluk. These include who the character is, what the story is and who she's working with, as well as where it will be shot. "If I have the opportunity to shoot in Scotland, I'll jump at it," she says. "When I shot in Prague, the crew didn't speak English, so that in itself was a different experience. You have this bond you form without saying words, which is a wonderful way to experience the culture."

She goes on to talk about shooting in Scotland and, with the crew being

PHOTO BY BRANDON ELLIOT | STYLIST: ELENI TSAPAS | HAIR/MAKEUP: ZAHRA DEE

> “Given my experience in front of the camera, I’d like to switch behind and see it through a different lens”



PHOTO BY BRANDON ELLIOT

Karpluk is a philanthropist, completing marathons for World Vision and the SPCA

local and full of recommendations, taking their advice on renting a car and driving through Edinburgh and the Isle of Skye.

Of the characters she plays, Karpluk explains how “90 per cent are in my wheelhouse, and I’ve got them on a flow. The other 10 per cent, I’m a bit thrown off.” In that case, she’ll get a coach, dissecting the script and figuring out which prompts act as reminders when she’s on set.

Regardless of whether a role brings new challenges or not, she has an interesting way of getting into character. “I have a different scent I wear,” she explains. “For Anna [Benoit, *A Million Little Things*], I wore Jimmy Choo. I loved that it was soft and floral. I also have a song that links me to a character’s story. *Slasher* was a difficult part for me. It was dark. I had a Sia song and would listen to it to get me into the skin of that character.”

When it comes to learning lines, she’s someone who remembers them better if they’re learned while moving forward. For that reason, you’ll often see her with scripts while walking, or playing lines in her car while driving to and from the studio. Of course, it’s not just the lines themselves that are important, but also what you choose to do with them.

“Humans say all kinds of things with a different intention underneath,” she notes. “We’ll say things to hurt, but are really saying ‘Love me’ or ‘I miss you.’ That’s so much more interesting to watch than the obvious.” This is something she put into practice with her character on *Being Erica*, Erica Strange. “She was written as a victim. I read it and played the opposite, trying to bring resilience to her.”

Next to her acting work, Karpluk finds a way to combine her love for fitness and athleticism with philanthropy. As well as training for triathlons in Saskatoon with Olympic champion Simon Whitfield, she’s done marathons for World Vision and the SPCA and took part in the Half Ironman.

It’s clear that acting is what Karpluk is meant to do. When asked what makes her happy, acting was her answer, alongside “being in nature and spending time with friends and family.” However, in the future, she’s looking to explore another side to film.

“I would like to tread into directing,” she says. “As a director, you’re telling the whole story. As an actor, you’re playing one story within that. Given my experience in front of the camera, I’d like to switch behind and see it through a different lens.”

@erinkarpluk



In 2011, Katz' mother-in-law suggested that she start working in floral design. Katz, mother to three boys, hasn't looked back since. Today, her brand's cornerstones have become: flowers, fitness, fashion and family

REACH FOR THE SKYE

Meet luxury florist Skye Katz, known for her chic bloom designs. Her creations are strikingly bold and beautiful and make a statement in any room — just like her

WRITTEN BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**

Nothing compares to the feeling of receiving a beautiful arrangement of flowers. No matter the occasion, they are a thoughtful, elegant and beautiful way of commemorating a moment. As luxury florist Skye Katz explains, "When people send flowers, they're sending them because, a lot of times, there's nothing else they can do for that person. This person may have everything in the world, but they don't have a beautiful arrangement."

If you've been lucky enough to receive an arrangement prepared by Katz, you've been treated to an abundant collection of orchids, roses and hydrangeas, all composed with Katz's individual style and sophisticated attention to detail.

The flower guru started in floral design around the time that her third son was born. Today, she has store locations in Toronto and Muskoka, Ont., and is *the* go-to luxury florist in the Muskoka area. With a loyal following and an impeccable eye for not only florals, but also fashion and design, Katz opened her Flowers Muskoka Shop seven years ago, offering luxury florals and a carefully curated selection of jewelry, home décor and her own private label apparel collection, the Muskoka Summer Club.

Her success in the world of florals has come, perhaps most of all, because of her ability to draw from a wide basket of inspiration. This multidimensional approach has allowed her arrangements to both evolve with time and meet the bespoke tastes of each client, and it's also why Skye Flowers is more than just a flower shop. As Katz told us, she was initially drawn to the world of fashion, and her entry into the world of flowers came as a surprise to her, so naturally, she has a lot more planned for the future. "I really want to be someone who's associated with flowers, style, fashion and home décor, but my goal is to create a lot more than just flowers."

We sat down with Katz to speak about how flowers ignited her vision for the Skye Flowers brand.

Q: What is the biggest difference between your Toronto and Muskoka clientele?
A: The difference is that once they get to Muskoka, they're ready to relax. They're ready to have people over. Generally speaking, I have regular clients who will order weekly flowers for their cottage, and so I have much more regular people in Muskoka than in Toronto.

Q: What are some of the trends you're seeing?

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SKYE FLOWERS





Skye has locations in both Toronto and the heart of Muskoka where you can find everything from perfume oil, luxury coffee-table books, to funky black and white flower vases. She also carries bespoke wardrobe pieces by Aimee Elise Lapedus, which are made by using upcycled materials

> “I create my arrangements as though I would like to receive them myself”

A: I'm always looking for something new. I like the black-and-white vases right now; I'm doing a lot of that. That has been really popular because people like to keep things simple, and I want people to be able to do their own flowers. If you have these vases, you can do them on your own. Or, if you want something more elaborate, I can create that for you.

Q: How do you create your arrangements?
A: I create my arrangements as though I would like to receive them myself. When I create things, they have to make sense, and there's a pattern I create in my head. I always make sure [the arrangement] is as it can be and as perfectly rounded as possible. There are techniques that I had to teach myself. I knew how I wanted it to look, and it was trial and error using the method that I decided to create.

Q: What is your approach to style?
A: I love fashion. How I dress and my style are a little bit more rock-and-roll, but at the same time, I like classic simplicity. I like to keep it very simple on the base and then wear something really cool that stands out with either a cool bag, a cool jacket or a cool pair of boots. Fashion has always been my thing, and it's always been a big surprise to me that I got into flowers.

Q: Who do you admire in the industry?
A: I would say Jeff Leatham does great work, over the top. Eric Buterbaugh, my top favourite in L.A.

There's Nicolai Bergmann in Japan. I really, really admire the things that they do with their business.

Q: What is your definition of “art”?
A: I'd say art is personal. It's whatever has been created by somebody that is a personal reflection of who they are. I think art is not just a painting; art is a creation of something that you put yourself into.

Q: What are some of your hobbies?
A: I've always been athletic. In the summer, I run and swim.

I've always been into working out and doing anything with my kids, like skiing, waterskiing and anything outdoors.

Q: What would be some of the goals you have over the next 10 years with your business?
A: My business is flowers, but my goal is to make it a lot more than that. I'm very grateful and lucky that I have a good client base. Starting in Muskoka, I started gradually carrying different things that were not flowers. I want to grow in other aspects, like fashion, home décor and styling. I want people to be able to look in their home and say, “I bought all these coffee table books at Skye Flowers. I bought these amazing candles at Skye Flowers. I bought this amazing bag at Skye Flowers.”

Q: What is your definition of success?
A: I think success is that you know from the bottom of your heart that you've done everything you can and put every effort into doing what you want to do. I think it's having a challenge put in your way and being able to look at that challenge and accomplish it ... and not even realize that you've accomplished it and that you've actually moved beyond it.

skyeflowers.ca
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EDITOR'S PICKS

When life gives you EVOO and honey, you make the most out of it — same goes with the rest of our curated picks; enjoy WRITTEN BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**





1. **RECYCLED FASHION** Embossed with gold buttons, this emerald blazer features a lapel collar and long sleeves with shoulder pads, giving us all the '80s feels. **www.zara.com**
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While the co-founders of Morellina's describe their restaurant's style as "modern Italian," for both, it's more about breaking tradition

THE ITALIAN RESTAURANT USING FOOD TO CREATE SEASONAL ENSEMBLES

WRITTEN BY **JOSH WALKER**
INTERVIEW BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**

PHOTO BY GEOFF FITZGERALD





PHOTOS COURTESY OF MORELLINA'S



Sandra Morelli (left) and Lina Hatem (right) are co-founders of Morellina's

Before they founded their Italian restaurant, Morellina's, Sandra Morelli and Lina Hatem were living different lives. Where Morelli came from a family of pasta makers, Hatem was teaching piano, interested in starting a music school.

But after a period of cooking for each other, changing recipes and finding how much fun they were having with food, they decided to give the Morellina's venture a go. As Morelli says, "Morellina's started because we met."

Initially, the business started as a catering project. From there, it was turned into a café and then what it is today: an Italian-inspired restaurant in the heart of Toronto. While the business has moved through different iterations, what's been constant is a desire to bring people together, founded on both Morelli's and Hatem's shared experiences of hosting and having people around.

"I grew up in Damascus, Syria. It's very similar to Italian culture, where doors are open, you're talking to your neighbours, an espresso turns into a pizza, and it becomes a big party with food and family," says Hatem. "That's the vision we always saw and wanted — bringing people together and having a good time, with food."

It's this ethos that drives what they do at Morellina's, offering menus that change with the seasons and initiatives such as private dining. "Private dining means you really get to enjoy each other, and we'll create a menu according to the tastes of the party," Morelli says. "You can come, and your family won't feel rushed to leave."

Alongside their shared vision of bringing people together, the duo is informed by each other's differences. Morelli, coming from an environment where food was perceived as an art, takes care of the cooking. Hatem, whose piano-playing background inspires her creative process, takes care of the baking.

> "That's the vision we always saw and wanted — bringing people together and having a good time, with food"

"In music, it's very much art and science at the same time. Through baking, I was able to apply the same methods of following instructions, and knowing all the small elements play a big role in the final results. It's the same with music: There's so much that goes into performance to make it look or sound the way it is," says Hatem.

At the time of writing, the menu at Morellina's includes dishes such as burrata bruschetta, served with herb focaccia crostini and extra virgin olive oil. There's pappardelle bolognese, created with handmade pasta and topped with rosemary. The cannelloni della campagna features pasta rolled with ricotta, and the pesce alla puttanesca's sauce is made with cherry tomatoes, asparagus, black olives and capers.

The food is described as Italian-style, but the more you speak with Morelli and Hatem, the more you understand that tradition is just a springboard, and rules are meant to be broken. They talk of breaking traditions instilled by their parents or different regions, and how that can introduce positive, unexpected results.

Morelli talks about one instance where, wanting to make a s'mores cookie, the marshmallow accidentally seeped out of the edges. "It made this brûlée, crispy sugar, and that became the best part," she says. "We started making it crisp. The accident was perfect."

Morelli also talks of the first time she fell in love with za'atar, a dried wild thyme mixture with sesame seeds popular in the Middle East, and how she combined it with focaccia bread and mozzarella to create something distinct. "It's a modern world, and even today in Italy, it's very open to different cuisines," Morelli continues. "We're using the open-world concept to try different things."

It sits in line with the fact that dishes at Morellina's are designed to complement one another. Morelli tells us that guests will often order a whole menu as a tasting experience, prompting her to call it "a seasonal ensemble."

Given the events of the past two years, the restaurant has had to adapt and overcome its challenges. For example, the pandemic saw them switch to offering curbside pickup to weather the storm of uncertainty. Through that time, the pair are quick to mention the support they had from the local community, and how every time the restaurant unveiled a new experiment, people came out to try it.

"We became friends with a lot of clients," notes Hatem. "They saw us when we were a small café and the developments we took to stay alive. They really supported us at every stage. The community and neighbourhood are the No. 1 factors to our success and survival."

It's clear that passion reaches every touch point of Morellina's, from the food to the feeling of sitting in for a meal. When asked how they would define hospitality, that ethos continues to ring true. "Creating memories," says Morelli. "We're the platform. What happens from there is for them to remember and hold onto."

www.morellinas.com
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Emma Heman

FROM CEO & LUXURY REAL ESTATE AGENT TO POPULAR REALITY STAR

With very little inventory and housing prices through the roof, Netflix's *Selling Sunset* real estate reality show offers viewers an addictive and captivating insiders peek into eye-popping luxury homes and the inner drama surrounding the relationships of the cast

WRITTEN BY **CECE M. SCOTT** | INTERVIEW BY **MURSAL RAHMAN**

In this 2022 post-pandemic world, with real estate prices soaring and no end in sight, there are two lenses through which prospective new home buyers, as well as entrenched title holders, can view the situation: either deal with the facts, or escape into a real estate reality show such as *Selling Sunset*.

And because the vast majority of us are exhausted with the idea of dealing with the first option, the latter alternative has become somewhat of a phenomenal escape for lovers of extravagant homes, cutting-edge fashions and designer trends.

On April 19, 2022, the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) released an up-to-date comparative month-over-month real estate market assessment, as well as projections for the rest of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023. The full overview identified some key findings for buyers and sellers. These include the fact that "National home sales and newly available listings both retreated in March 2022 after having jumped briefly higher in February." And, "The number of newly listed homes fell back by 5.5% on a month-over-month basis in March." [1]

On the same day, *Toronto Star* real estate reporter Tess Kalinowski disclosed, "Royal LePage has revised its annual Canadian forecast upward to 15 per cent from 10.5 per cent nationally." The real estate giant had also "adjusted its annual forecast for the GTA to a 16

PHOTOS BY JASON KENT



Cool, casual and dressed in classic black, Emma Hernan oozes the confidence of the CEO that she is



American reality show created by Adam DiVello, *Selling Sunset* profiles the real estate agents who work for the Los Angeles luxury brokerage firm, the Oppenheim Group

> “WE DON’T GO INTO EVERY LITTLE SHOWING IN SIX-INCH STILETTOS. I’VE GONE TO INSPECTIONS WITH CLIENTS AND HAVE CRAWLED AROUND IN A HOUSE TRYING TO FIND THE LIGHT SWITCHES”

per cent increase, up from 11 per cent.”[2]

Chris Fox, web content writer for *CP24*, reported, “The adjustment is being partially attributed to a record-breaking first quarter, in which the average price of a Canadian home rose 25.1 per cent year-over-year to $856,900.” In the GTA, “The acceleration in prices was even more pronounced, with the average home price increasing by 27.7 per cent year-over-year to $1,269,900.”[3]

With the rise in interest rates over the last few months and the Bank of Canada’s first quarter-point increase in March 2022, there is a lot of worry and scurry in the real estate marketplace. However, if you are in the market to buy a luxury home, it is the exponential rise in the actual price of a home that is what resonates most.

Bob Clarke, of Muskoka Realty and the owner and president of Clarke Real Estate and Construction, states, “We are coming off of two of our hottest years, with a 60 per cent increase in value both years. The average house price in Muskoka is $2 to $3 million, so interest rates don’t have a large impact in high-value markets, nor do foreign buyers, who represent less than one per cent of our market.”

Clarke’s clientele, in fact, revolve in the same “hobnob” hemisphere as the patrons of the ever-burgeoning *Selling Sunset* series.

The defining bones of this popular show, whose Season 5 kicked off on Netflix on April 22, 2022, is aptly captured by the American architectural photographer Julius Shulman, who quipped, “What good is a dream house if you haven’t got a dream?”

And, of course, what better environment in which to build on those dream home dreams than the recent two-year sheltering-in-place lockdowns that had many of us not only painting our own four walls, but also talking to them, at times, in weary frustration and boredom?

Let’s face it: In this materialistic mindset world, for many, it is not just a matter of keeping up with the Joneses, but it’s also a matter of one-upping them by owning the best McMansion on the street.

So, what is the fascination for the

sizable audience of viewers who watch *Selling Sunset* on a continual basis? Well, first off is the interior and exterior eye candy, not to mention the ingrained tendency for humankind to love a good old snoop into other people's business — or in layperson's terms: being a Nosy Parker.

Who wouldn't be fascinated with the million-dollar views — quite literally — the lapping infinity pools and the rooms of furniture that in most houses would be cordoned off with red rope to keep the family from trespassing on the *pièce de résistance* sacrosanct décor. Absolutely, there are some positive attributes to be garnered from a real estate reality show like *Selling Sunset*. Emma Hernan, one of the breakout stars in the series, is an excellent power of example for young women who want to be successful entrepreneurs. The flip side of this scenario, however, is what keeps viewers glued to their proverbial couches, which is the interaction, otherwise known as "drama," between the real estate agents of the Los Angeles Oppenheim Group. Who doesn't love the romance of sunny weather cocktails and the explosive rounds of confrontation and gossip, while at the same time salivating over the latest fashion designs and the eye-popping extravaganza of homes that are set against backdrops that most viewers can only dream about?

City Life Magazine interviewed *Selling Sunset* cast member Emma Hernan, who is also a successful entrepreneur, angel investor and the CEO of her own successful food company, Emma-Leigh & Co., to get her insights on the show and the multimillion-dollar-dream-home marketplace.



Hernan with her "favourite guy in the world" four-year-old Benny, an Akita mix

Q: Did you have any reservations about joining the *Selling Sunset* cast, Emma?

EH: Yes, of course. When you're opening yourself up for people to judge you and your life, of course, there's going to be some hesitation. I've always been a private person. And when it comes to jumping onto a show where there's been some previous history with someone who was a negative part of your life, you don't want to have to deal with that. But, I also wanted to share my story and let women see they can be successful entrepreneurs and accomplish whatever they want to, regardless of their backstory. It's been the best decision that I've made, because I've received so many messages from women who watch the show and tell me that I have motivated them to put everything they have into their own businesses.

Q: What's the best way to deal with conflict with a co-worker or a friend?

EH: Not just with co-workers, but also in everyday life, it is always best to take the high road and see that journey

through. You can't let people into your life who are negative and have that same kind of effect on you; although, it's easier said than done. I believe that what you put out into the universe you get back.

Q: What does the not-so-glamorous side of real estate look like?
EH: We don't go into every little showing in six-inch stilettos. I've gone to inspections with clients and have crawled around in a house trying to find the light switches. I've gone to houses that are completely under construction, and we're in sneakers and hard hats. Sure, you're looking at the most luxurious homes in the world, but the interesting thing about real estate is that it is 24-7, not nine to five. I have clients in Singapore, so I am literally working non-stop. It's not always glamorous, but that's what makes it fun.

Q: Please share how you give a voice to young people.
EH: I've been investing in companies since I was 14 years old. I want young girls and women to know that they can start saving their money at a very young age and put it into the stock market or crypto or NFTs [non-fungible tokens]. It's a great way to have your money working for you, while going to your nine-to-five job. Money well invested grows, but we're not always taught that. I think it's really important for young women to learn how to manage their money and to have a game plan. I definitely plan to advocate for that in the future and show girls how to do whatever they want and be as successful as they can.

Q: What does your dream home look like?
EH: The house that I purchased here in Los Angeles and am currently living in is a New England–style home. I love contemporary houses, ones that have a lot of warmth to them, because it reminds me of home. I think I will always have homes in Boston, and I'll always want that home to have a contemporary feel, because that's just who I am. And, of course, a pool and all of those necessities are important, but most of the homes here have pools, because we're not that close to the beach.

> "IT IS JUST SO IMPORTANT TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE AND NOT WORRY ABOUT THE SMALL THINGS; PUT ALL OF YOUR ENERGY INTO POSITIVE VIBES. ADOPT THE YOLO MANTRA"

Q: What's the key to pulling off a really nice business suit?
EH: I love business suits. I also love getting dressed up and putting outfits together and creating my own individual style. You see that on the show, but sometimes I'll go and buy different outfits and then take them to a tailor and have them completely reconstructed, so it's customized to my body. Everyone has different body types, so it's all about finding the best style and what looks good on you.

Q: What's the key to living *la dolce vita*?
EH: That's so funny. I feel like I use that quote all the time. I actually texted it to a couple of friends just last night. It is just so important to live your best life and not worry about the small things; put all of your energy into positive vibes. Adopt the YOLO (You only live once) mantra. I do think you will live your best life when you focus on the good and put your energy into everything that means something to you.

And, so, at the end of the day, what is most important for all of us to remember is that there is a decided distinction between reality and realty.

Therein lies the truth of our dreams.

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Resources
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CULTIVATING GRATITUDE IN 2022

Dr. Krishna Bhatta dreams of a world where Eastern wisdom and Western discoveries embrace each other to make the world a better place. Let's take a look at this perspective on cultivating gratitude no matter who you are or where you come from

WRITTEN BY **DR. KRISHNA BHATTA**



PHOTO BY GABRIELLE HENDERSON

Gratitude is a song of the heart that is full of peace, positivity and happiness. While gratitude is not something that we can or should practise, it may be cultivated simply by allowing the heart to express itself. Allow me to explain.

In the West, we are used to living in our heads nearly all the time, and understandably so. "Head" plays a critically important role in all our lives. The brain is what allows us to learn and use complex tools. The mind is what we use to explore intellectual pursuits like science, which we equate with progress. But we need to take a break from the head and visit the heart from time to time.

Why? Because the heart is where joy and happiness reside. The more the heart is pushed aside by the mind, the less happy and joyful we become, and the more stressed and indifferent, even cynical, our mindset becomes.

> "Once you lose the connection to your heart, you exist without gratitude"

Is it any wonder that, even before the pandemic, depression and anxiety were epidemic in Western culture, particularly among young people, who traditionally should be living from their hearts the most?

I would suggest that living in the mind is itself a pandemic. The apps on our phones are designed to appeal to the head, not the heart. They promise to fill our brains with information and data, from new languages to investment ideas that will make us rich without effort. Intelligence offers outsized rewards in our culture, from money to status, as well as the impossibility of making sense of a world often in chaos.

Wrapped up in all this potential, we forget that the mind consists of two parts: mindfulness and minding.

Be mindful that mindfulness requires empathy and self-awareness. Gratitude is a property of the heart. You can let it out or let it go, but you cannot internalize it, even by chanting

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PHOTO BY BRAD NEATHERY

A thoughtful way of exercising gratitude is by writing in a daily gratitude journal devoted to writings focused on the blessings in one's life

a mantra or doing yoga poses. Once you lose the connection to your heart, you exist without gratitude.

We are taught to think of our personal journeys in terms of individual growth and accomplishments. But journeys are both individual and collective. The collective part of the journey will influence the individual part, as our outer selves influence our inner being. For example, my childhood in a small village in India placed me on a different journey than that of someone of the same age born in the United States. While I cannot walk to the Himalayas from where I now live in Maine, this does not stop me from connecting to my heart. Because even in a crowded, capitalist society, I may find silence in a lonely campsite or along the Appalachian Trail, for example.

Because meditation is about connecting with our hearts and releasing gratitude, we may call it prayer or decompressing or simply relaxing, but the result is the same.

What do I meditate on? That the people and places that helped in my journey have made the "me" I am now, for example. How can I not be thankful and grateful for all of them? At the same time, how can I be thankful without acknowledging their effect on my heart?

Now my gratitude overflows in thankfulness, a sign of the abundance of heart. When we are connected internally, gratitude will flow from the inner space of consciousness outside of the nucleus. This is the space where emotions live.

I think that we all want to be grateful. Many of us use religions to find a spiritual place, and religions can be a great support when trying to live in the heart.

Even in the hardest of circumstances, such as a prison, there is freedom inside us, and we should relish that gift. We should be grateful for our internal and external freedom, our hearts and our minds. Suffering and isolation often bring connection because they are a shared experience. Do not fear. Let the gratitude arise for all that has come your way.

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About Dr. Krishna Bhatta

Dr. Krishna Bhatta is an author, surgeon and inventor, currently practicing as chief of urology at Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, Maine. Dr. Bhatta began his life in a small Indian village, attended Patna Medical College in India and continued his education in the United Kingdom. He completed his research and medical training at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston before settling down in Maine. Dr. Bhatta takes joy in sharing what he has learned and earnestly hopes to further the spiritual discoveries of generations to come. He dreams of a world where Eastern wisdom and Western discoveries embrace each other to make the world a better place.

About Relaxx App

Relaxx's goal is to bring material change to the people of the world by connecting their inner flame with their daily routine. With tools, techniques, content, and an application, we can effect change in people's lives immediately, helping companies and families around the world; the world needs us more than ever. Dr. Krishna Bhatta is the founder of Relaxx App. The app has a number of great features, including mindfulness, intermittent silence and meditation, to help people sleep, relax, prevent stress and burnout, stay calm and become more in tune with nature. Relaxx's vision is to become the world's destination for mindfulness, intermittent silence™, meditation and consciousness. In reality, that translates to being the world's destination for wellness. It's a portable guru, a portable peace and positivity companion. The Relaxx app is available for both Apple and Android devices.

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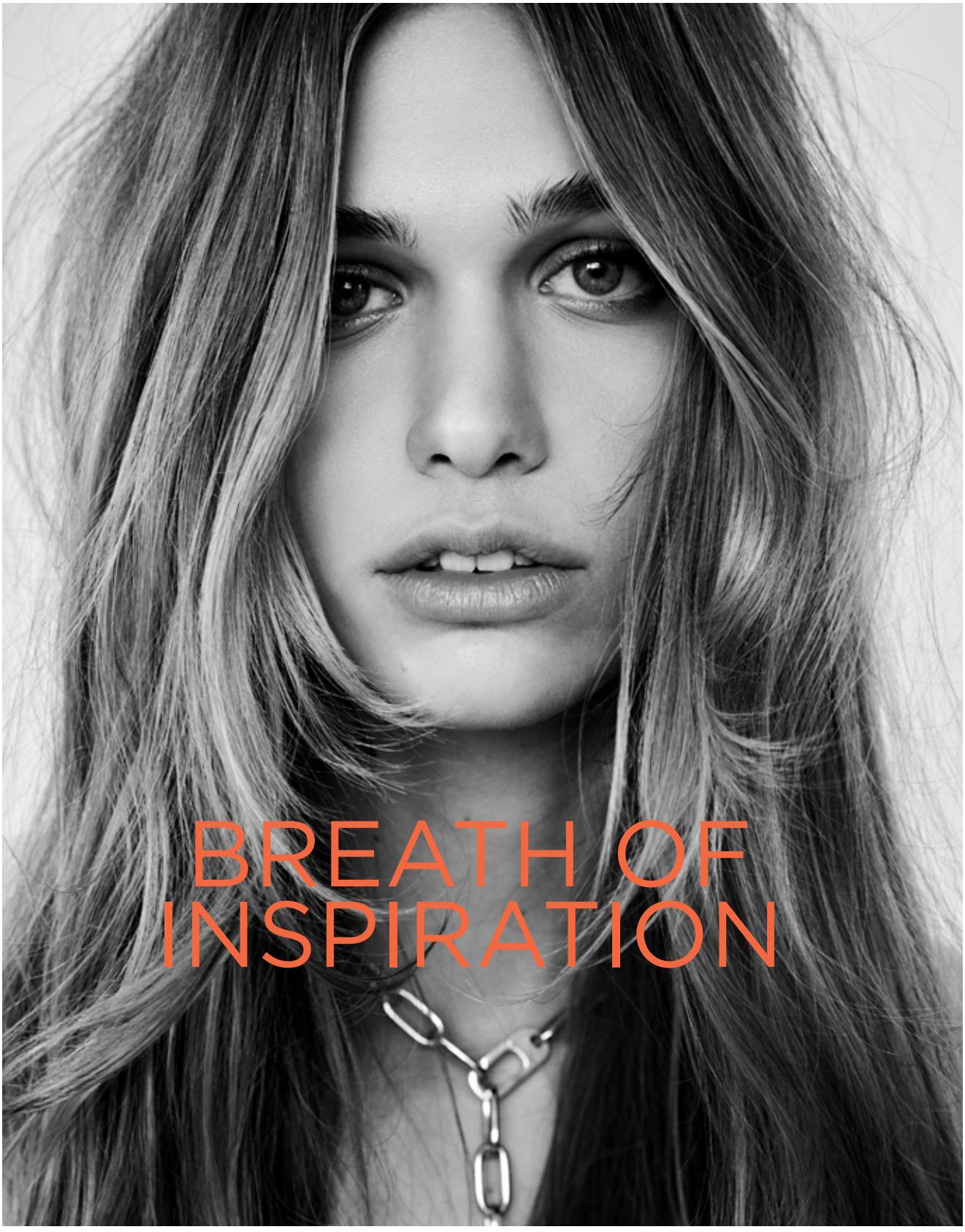
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BREATH OF INSPIRATION

Jewelry that elevates the au natural and gives a je-ne-sais-quoi to this Spring's trends

Necklace: ISABELLE FA

FEELING GOOD IN THE NUDE



Embellish neutral tones with a golden touch

Dress: WEEKEND MAX MARA
Collier: CARTIER
Ring: SUSA BECK

SITTING PRETTY IN EYE-CATCHING KHAKI

Add a little khaki colorway to your wardrobe as a classic staple this Spring

Jacket & Pants: SOPHIE SCHNOOR
Sandals: UNISA
Earrings: CARTIER
Ring: CARTIER





HERE COMES THE SUN

Create some serious shine with standout pieces, like this statement ring

Sunglasses: RODENSTOCK
Ring: SUS BECK

PHOTO: BENJAMIN KAUFMANN
PRODUCTION/STYLING: OLIVER RAUH
DIGITAL OPERATOR: VINCENZO BUSCEMI
MAKEUP/HAIR: VANGELIS TZIMIKAS / FAME AGENCY
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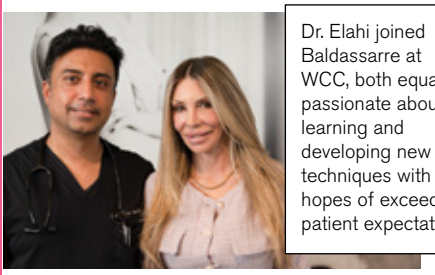
"LIQUID BUTT LIFT" IS NOW IN CANADA

At Woodbridge Cosmetic Clinic, the "Liquid Butt Lift" is the gold standard with this exclusive procedure. There's nothing to lose and much to gain with hyaluronic acid injections

Luisa Baldassarre, owner of Woodbridge Cosmetic Clinic, offers a wide variety of aesthetic services, including her premium service coined, "Liquid Butt Lift", which is now available in Canada exclusively through her



PHOTO BY EMAD MOHAMMADI



Dr. Elahi joined Baldassarre at WCC, both equally passionate about learning and developing new techniques with the hopes of exceeding patient expectations

It sounds too good to be true, but the first procedure of its kind in Canada can give you a real boost. Already known for Botox, filler, PRP, laser and plastic surgery consults, the Woodbridge Cosmetic Clinic, owned by Luisa Baldassarre, is the only clinic to offer the "Liquid Butt Lift".

A certified cosmetic injectionist, Baldassarre graduated at the top of her class at CMU in 2013. She managed a plastic surgery clinic in Toronto for two decades and was the master injector and surgical assist in the operating room, which allowed her to excel in her career. Before this, she was a pharmaceuticals rep for Prollenium Medical Technologies, the first and only Canadian company to manufacture dermal fillers in Canada.

"I dreamed of opening a Canadian medical aesthetics clinic that would meet the highest standard of care in aesthetic medicine," says Baldassarre. She left her job to do just that when the pandemic hit. She reached out to Dr. Omar Elahi (known as Dr. O.), who joined her, and now they both continue to learn new techniques with the hopes of exceeding patient expectations, while maintaining the highest standard of care.

Things fell into place in January 2020, when Baldassarre's friend, Ario Khoshbin, the owner and CEO of Prollenium Medical Technologies, asked if Baldassarre would like to be involved, along with Dr. Sean Rice, an internationally renowned plastic surgeon, in the launch of REVANESSE Contour XL, the first body filler. Baldassarre was very excited, and, with Dr. Rice joining forces with her, the clinic offers the "Liquid Butt Lift", exclusively.

The "Liquid Butt Lift" is a hyaluronic acid used to augment the buttock and hip dips. It's a one-time treatment with zero downtime and instant results. "It's an amazing option for those who don't want to undergo major surgery or the skinny girl that doesn't have the fat to do a graft to the buttocks, or an older woman that just wants things up where they used to be or the young girls following the Kardashians' trend," says Baldassarre. And people are loving the results, with clients coming from all over the world.

Dr. O. and Dr. Rice share Baldassarre's passion in advancing aesthetics techniques, optimizing patient results and providing the safest environment for patients, and they all are excited about this new chapter in their careers, which will fulfill their goals of providing premium aesthetic care in Canada. "As for the product itself, the dermal filler is approved from Health Canada," says Baldassarre. "I have been using their product line for many years, and it is a product line I trust."

"We were finally able to celebrate the procedure with a launch party recently," says Baldassarre. All the proceeds will be donated to CAMH. It's simply their way of giving back and supporting overall mental health for everyone.

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TRENDING BEAUTY PRODUCTS

WRITTEN BY **MURSAL RAHMAN**



CHARLOTTE TILBURY PILLOW TALK MULTI-GLOW FACE & EYE HIGHLIGHTER PALETTE
The newest addition to Charlotte Tilbury's fan-favourite Pillow Talk collection is, of course, so stunning. The Pillow Talk Multi-Glow Face & Eye Highlighter Palette contains four shades that reflect beautifully in the light and give the skin a gorgeous glow. $50, **sephora.ca**



PHOTO BY KATHY HUTCHINS



TARTE MARACUJA JUICY LIP PLUMP
If you like a shiny finish and like having fuller-looking lips, then the Tarte Maracuja Juicy Lip plumps are just what you need. The formula is super creamy and hydrating. It's a must-have product for anyone who can't leave the house without having something glossy on their lips. $29, **sephora.ca**



HUDA BEAUTY CHEEKY TINT CREAM BLUSH STICK
These blush sticks will leave the skin with a nice flush of colour and a glowy sheen. Instead of applying the blush stick directly to your face, use a brush for seamless application. $33, **sephora.ca**



JLO BEAUTY THAT BLOCKBUSTER HYDRATING CREAM
The JLo Beauty That Blockbuster Hydrating Cream has a rich consistency that is great for those who have dry skin. It provides long-lasting hydration and gives the skin a dewy glow without making the skin feel greasy. $79, **sephora.ca**



GLOW RECIPE STRAWBERRY SMOOTH BHA + AHA SALICYLIC ACID SERUM
Glow Recipe does it again. This lightweight serum will help minimize the appearance of pores and help clear breakouts. It has a gentle formula that will leave your skin feeling soft and smooth. $53, **sephora.ca**



MAC COSMETICS MACSTACK MASCARA
MAC's new mascara is TikTok's latest obsession. You can choose from two brush sizes and can layer on the product until you have the lavish lashes you've always wanted.
$35, **sephora.ca**



KEYS SOULCARE LET ME GLOW ILLUMINATING SERUM WITH NIACINAMIDE
Alicia Keys recently launched her skin-care line, called Keys Soulcare, at Sephora, and her Let Me Glow Illuminating Serum is already getting lots of attention. The serum is lightweight, hydrating and leaves the skin with a healthy, luminous glow.
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DESIGNING HOMES AND HIDEAWAYS

How Laura Hay transformed an existing Ontario family cottage home into a modern retreat

WRITTEN BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**





At the heart of the room, the central fireplace was updated from the existing traditional wood-burning stove into a contemporary, four-sided gas unit



Laura Hay's practice is known for her combination of classical conventions with contemporary surprises

Growing up, Laura Hay was surrounded by creativity and business. Her passion was found in design and decor, with a seamstress grandmother, decor and gift-shop-owner mother and yarn-manufacturer father, operating his business with 500 employees. It's safe to say that both business and the arts run in her blood.

Although Hay's ultimate source of inspiration comes from travelling, she can draw inspiration from everywhere, including her clients, colleagues, friends, artists, galleries and architecture and wilderness, "To see and experience new things helps one appreciate what is important, what can improve, what can change and what should stay the same. Sometimes the influence is subtle, and sometimes it is huge," says Hay.

With most of her time spent between Toronto, Blue Mountain and Georgian Bay, her projects fall within the 416, 905 and 705 area codes, "My weekend travel is double duty, and I love that about my job — it's not 9-5." Undeniably, Hay is a born creative hustler, and one of her recent projects displays her incredible ability to elevate the character of the homeowners' and that of the home itself.

Hay's definition of a well-designed home? "Interiors that combine great beauty with liveability. A well-designed home should reflect the individuals who live in the space and should enhance how they truly live every day." We take a look at one of her latest projects, which captures just that.

Q: What can you tell us about the project in this feature?

A: Our client was a family that truly valued time spent together, fine wine, good company. As the designer, I was tasked with transforming an existing Ontario family cottage home. While location and landscape served as strong inspiration for the home's cozy aesthetic, the homeowners themselves motivated a few unexpected amusements throughout.

I was focused on staying true to the chalet-chic aesthetic and to make it uniquely theirs. The main living area was a focal point for this family, and I was looking to infuse some life with my design, which materialized in the form of a casual decorating style with pops of vibrant colour and an open layout that invites family gatherings.

The original stained pine walls, floors and pickled pine ceilings and warm-wood cabinets were charming (and my clients loved them), but those didn't quite enhance our vision for a more-modern retreat. We toned down the clashing mix of wood finishes and opted for a more streamlined look.

The home had to first reflect its owners, so we decided to keep the pine ceilings and took a toned-down approach to the rest. We removed the old vertical pine boards and swapped them out with beloved shiplap boards painted a fresh, winter-white hue.

At the heart of this home is a central fireplace. Here, the fireplace needed no introduction. We updated the existing traditional wood-burning stove with a contemporary, four-sided gas unit, enjoyed from every point in the main living and dining areas.

Adding to the modern touches, we painted the east and west gable ends in a warm grey hue that ties in with the dark fireplace and floors, in contrast to the white shiplap and pickled pine ceiling. This same dark hue is echoed on all interior doors to match the tone of the smoky, stained hardwood.

The home boasts a playful vibe that was largely guided by the homeowners' modern tastes. We used small but mighty hits of colour and geometric patterns and low-maintenance furniture that puts comfort first, with style coming in at a close second.

Physical comforts are matched by a warm and inviting palette of colour, texture and materials: warm greys and vibrant jewel-toned textiles, like the dining room area rug and accent fabrics.

This warm, welcoming home is a haven for family, friends and fun, inspired by the people who live there and the environment around them. Our clients loved our design of the space and connected with it on a deeper level, which was our ultimate goal for this design project – and every project.

Q: What are some things that sets your design style apart from other designers?

A: My design style is eclectic; I'm rooted in traditional, but I'm inspired by modern forms. I am passionate about vernacular architecture, and I take inspiration from local materials, historic elements, climate and lifestyle. My finished spaces feel at home within their environment.

PHOTOS BY GILLIAN JACKSON



Hay maintained the owners' chalet-chic aesthetic while infusing pops of vibrant colour and by creating an open layout that invites family gatherings

> "I stay motivated by being with the clients and including them in the process"



Ultimately, the owners loved Hay's design of the space and connected with it on a deeper level, which is always her team's goal

Q: What motivates you to create and design?
A: I'm excited by new projects… both new and existing clients trusting us with the task of solving their most intimate lifestyle challenges. My favourite part of this job is bringing joy to my clients... and that starts with problem-solving and finishes with something more beautiful than they had imagined. Between the initial consultation and the installation, there are endless hours of project management. I stay motivated by being with the clients and including them in the process. The best projects involve a unified team approach.

My design motivation comes from within.... I've always revelled in the satisfaction of improving something. Perhaps that is simply human... or maybe it's obsessive!

Q: Where did you study, and when did you know you wanted to focus on interior design as a career choice?
A: I studied Interior Design & Planning at The Art Institute in Toronto. It was my second career after five years of operating a hospitality business. My mother told me to study Interior Design when I was in high school, but it didn't seem "serious enough", and so I didn't listen to her. My first degree was in business, and I still think a BComm [Business Communications degree] is a great undergrad to have.

Q: Name three items that can turn any room into something you would see in a magazine?
1) Perfect Symmetry
2) Statement windows
3) Dramatic Focal Point: a perfectly placed piece of art, a statement fireplace, a chandelier

Q: What design trends can we look for this year?
A: The biggest trend is earth-inspired colour palettes and the growing use of natural inspired materials – honed marble, warm-toned and textured metal and casual luxury fabrics, such as linen. Organic forms inspire furniture pieces: mushroom and bean shapes, for example.

Custom millwork takes centre stage with a variety of interesting elements — curvilinear details, enhanced decorative mouldings, interesting faux finishes and non-wood-panel details that replicate stone, leather or other materials. Trims and casings and windows get a facelift with the use of contrast colours with earthy greens, moody blues and brown are gaining in popularity.

Q: What is your definition of joy?
A: Joy is feeling accomplished and deserving of life's many pleasures: a glass of wine, a long cuddle, a good novel, a festive feast....

Q: What is your favourite saying?
A: The devil is in the details.

Q: Where do you like to dine in Toronto?
A: I stick to Ossington Avenue because it's the most condensed and diverse dining scene in Toronto, and it's literally a five-minute walk from my home. My favourites are Mamakas Tavern, Foxley and The Halifax Room.
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VARIETY OF LIFE

LAST WORD

Rain or shine, this spring is bound to be full of fun and flavour with these finds

WRITTEN BY **ESTELLE ZENTIL**

1. THE POWER OF PASTA: Martelli's gluten-free pasta is made with a careful selection of pulses (chickpeas and lentils), buckwheat, teff, corn, sorghum and amaranth, creating an ideal pasta for celiacs. It's also rich in protein. *Mangia, mangia.* martellifoods.com | @martellifoods

2. TOO GOOD, IT'S A CRIME: Releasing a new wine with the same company as Snoop Dogg, Martha's Chard is 19 Crimes's first California white wine. Martha Stewart worked with 19 Crimes to create a wine that breaks preconceived notions of California Chardonnay. Cheers to that. 19crimes.com | @19crimes

3. SICILIAN SPRING: What a beautiful way of adding a bright hue to your pasta this spring. Agromonte's Yellow Cherry Tomato maintains the authenticity of traditional Sicilian taste by using only the highest quality ingredients. martellifoods.com | @martellifoods

4. GENERATIONAL COOKWARE: Inspired by generations of Italians, Lagostina's Copper Set brings top-of-the-line pans to cooks in Canada, designed for a lifetime of memorable meals for you and your family. www.lagostina.ca | @lagostinacanada

5. DANISH PASTRIES FOR ALL: From imported Danish marzipan, to handmade pastries, the Danish Pastry House is the real deal, producing fresh-baked Danish dough with no fewer than 27 melt-in-your-mouth layers. danishpastryhouse.ca | @danishpastryca

6. ON THE RADAR: Can't find your keys? Keep track of your stuff with Apple's AirTag — a super-easy way to monitor where your belongings are through the radar in the Find My app. www.apple.com

7. PIZZA CONNOISSEUR: When you start making pizza with Ciao Bella's 2021 QUATTRO Wood Fired Pizza Oven, you'll never look back. Easy to install and fun to use, you'll be making pizza every day of the week. www.ciaobellapizzaovens.com | @ciaobellapizzaovens



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