

### A Crowning Achievement

Architectural interest abounds in this contemporary masterpiece. Expansive walls, fireplace mantels and soaring ceilings are traditionally dressed with the wood trim, crown mouldings, wall panels and deep beams that bring a completed refinement to the impressive space. Expert carpenters from Horne Construction did the skilled finishing work. Pleated floor to ceiling side panels drape in a lightly textured, woven bisque fabric on black wrought iron rods ready to be pulled for added privacy away from street views, if need be.





# a new classic

This Niagara-on-the-Lake home is tough to define but easy on the eyes and wonderfully functional for the family that lives in it

*By* Christine Darragh | *Photography by* Roy Timm

Just as we sometimes find certain people hard to define, so too with houses—especially when trying to fit them into an architectural style. They can be gorgeous to the eye, but what is it you're seeing? The French would say such a home has a certain *je ne sais quoi*, and that descriptive applies perfectly to an outstanding home recently completed in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Even its architect, Wayne Murray of Chapman Murray Architects,







### Kitchen Connectivity

“The kitchen and dining concept is open, casual, and entertaining,” says designer Wendy Edwards. “Utilizing a large pantry to the side of the kitchen allowed us to delete more traditional upper cabinetry. On each side of the cooktop, we installed floating upper shelves and base cabinets with sliding drawers on exposed shelves. This openness allows for placing colourful bowls and interesting serving dishes on display and for frequent family use.” Countertops are a combination of Calcutta marble on the island, and a very simple quartz stone on shaker style base cabinetry painted to match the wall colour. Kitchen millwork by Millbrook Cabinetry with counters by Custom Granite.

### Divided Quarters

The master ensuite is smartly comprised of individual areas while taking on the appearance of one large, seamless room. A cosy bathing area with a shower on one side and a free-standing tub on the other are two parts of the whole, separated by a clear glass wall and door. Enclosed to control bathing temperatures, the entire space is done in a ceramic tile from Cercan which has a look similar to the Calcutta marble used elsewhere. Matching white, drop-in basins are raised two inches above the table-inspired vanity, a dark-stained maple base accompanied by an easy care, laminate countertop.



pauses to carefully consider the question. “I’ve often thought it has the look of an embassy, but maybe less formal?” It’s a suitably diplomatic answer.

So the question remains. Perhaps the difficulty in defining this home is solid proof of its distinctive look and unique characteristics. The classically designed family residence is truly a masterful example of refined elegance in an attractive, contemporary inspired style.

Part of the home’s individuality stems from its exceptional limestone façade, quite unlike the wood facing structures found in most of Niagara-on-the-Lake; although any concern about excessive formality is quickly neutralized by the transparent, interior views that are granted.

Murray wanted the structure to feel engaging and inviting, lining up a frontage of five windows perched on corresponding French doors that directly view the street. With a design based on established principles of symmetry and proportion, he kept the rows of windows and doors exactly in line with the cut stone block which “also gives a nice rhythm to the overall design,” he explains. >





### Symmetrical Simplicity

A set of five solid wood windows co-ordinate atop matching French doors for a stunning façade. Custom made from Tradewood Windows and Doors in solid hemlock, the upper ones are fixed with the lower doors operational, allowing for them to be opened on warm, welcoming fall days. All balconies and railings were custom fabricated by Metal Design Niagara to the architect's specifications. Traditional limestone veneer block, a manmade product by Arriscraft in Cambridge, Ontario, projects a grand impression for the two-storey home. The slightly recessed double Clopay garage doors were manufactured again in hemlock and supplied by Regional Doors and Windows in St. Catharines.



The 3,600-square-foot house rests next to a hundred-year floodplain in an older area, close by a neighbouring golf course. It had to be positioned and constructed into a sloping hillside to compensate for the location; the homeowner's backyard now overlooks the mature trees beside the long, low floodplain. Prior to this, there had been a 1930s farmhouse on the property, which had no historical importance and was not subject to heritage protection.

Inside, a grand sense of comfortable family living resides. The brightness produced by the columns of abundant glass is further enhanced with lofty, elevated spaces and a clean, fresh backdrop of white throughout (A Benjamin Moore paint in Swiss Coffee).

An eclectic mix of leather furniture, crushed velvet fabrics, lively satin prints and woven accents pull key pieces together perfectly. Wendy Edwards, owner of Edwards Designs in Niagara-on-the-Lake, called in Haubrok Upholstery to re-purpose some of the family's existing, cherished furnishings, helping to incorporate them into their new surroundings.

"The client came to me with a file folder full of photographs of looks and things that they liked," Edwards shares. "Together, we prioritized their 'wish list' and tried to achieve as much of it for the house as possible." Working within their preferred budget, design selections were made, and at times altered, to balance practicality with 'must have' décor desires.

In the end, the creative process led to a fulfilled reflection of what the homeowners wanted to achieve, says architect Murray. "They wanted flexibility for the house, allowing it to function for their family as a whole unit and to entertain in when needed. Here, nothing is broken up. The kitchen relates to the dining room and to the living room, and it's designed for a family to all live together, rather than in a more formal arrangement."

And as for all that uncertainty about the home's architectural style? The architect and homeowners were recently awarded a 2011 Celebration of Heritage commendation certificate by the municipal heritage committee for the house's unique, contemporary design. It bestows enthusiastic recognition upon this highly original creation for its appealing design, blending traditional sensibility in the midst of a present-day approach.

Question answered. NMI

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