

ECHOING NATURE

Design of this Mississauga home takes its cue from the natural world outside

BY LAURA BEESTON • PHOTOGRAPHY: LARRY ARNAL • STYLING: SANDRA NASH

DESIGN

The open-concept great room is designed with zones for family entertaining. Cocktails and appetizers are served at the kitchen island, meals are taken at the adjacent table and desserts are enjoyed on the sofa seating area. Custom-made cushions and drapes: Making-A-Scene; lighting: Lighting Centre; area rug and cowhide: Surya Rugs; sofa and chair upholstery: Korson Furniture; chair: Campio Group; map artwork: Leftbank Art; antlers: Homesense; floor clock: Howard Miller.

SHE SOURCED 697 ITEMS AND 79 PIECES OF ART, and spent 2,500 hours transforming 18 rooms from a plain builder's cream colour to a beautifully designed space. But long before interior designer Sandra Nash was brought into this extensive project, the homeowners had bought a 40-year-old house on a 1.5-acre lot and demolished it to rebuild.

They hired award-winning custom-home designer David Small of David Small Designs

to create the 8,000-square-foot, five-bedroom, five-bathroom urban hideaway among the trees. It was completed in 2009. Then they hired Nash, principal at Making-A-Scene.

Among its features, the house boasts \$80,000 worth of soundproofing insulation, floor-to-ceiling millwork, and geothermal-heated flooring throughout the interiors, garage and driveway. If the electricity ever goes off, three fireplaces are equipped to heat the entire house.




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Nash says the home has a “truly elegant feel.”

“This was a dream project,” she says. “Basically, the homeowners said, ‘This is your budget, just do it.’ They had no input at all. So I had to learn about them and more about the house. I tried to connect it to the land as well and to keep it earthy.”

The house affords the homeowners access to the property's views thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows on one side. A skylight allows the interiors to be filled with natural light.

Nash says she was struck by the array of wildlife she spotted when she began spending time on the property; it was the inspiration for much of the design. “We saw deer and fed them apples and carrots,” she says. “We also saw coyotes.”

She used the natural beauty around the house as the basis for decorating it in a wood-and-deer theme. She also says the natural light allowed her to use a dramatic colour palette on the beams and walls. 





When she began, each room needed to be furnished. “That great room is so huge, that when I had a sofa delivered it looked like dollhouse furniture,” she laughs. “I thought to myself, ‘Oh my gawd, this is going to take a lot of stuff.’ There are hundreds of yards of fabric in there.”

She sourced most of the furnishings from North Carolina, the furniture hub she typically favours for her projects. “I tried to focus on what was special about each room,” says Nash of finding the perfect decor accessories. “I started with that great room and worked my

way back. It was really a challenge; that room just ate everything up.”

It helped that the home’s architectural features are beautiful in their own right. The two-storey design of the master bedroom, for example, includes a library and wood shelving on the second floor, a fireplace, and a custom-built walk-in closet that measures 20-by-14 feet. The space, Nash says, “is to die for.”

The ensuite bathroom boasts a \$50,000 steam shower. “You’re in your own world in that master bedroom,” she says.

While the home is decorated in a traditional style, the basement, where Nash installed a wine bar, was given a more contemporary ambience.

Nash says she aimed for “casual elegance” in the home. Everything—including the piano, situated in a room built acoustically for it—has its place. ☞

Utilitarian items are hidden from view, including the stove vent, which is concealed in the baseboards just below the lower cabinets. The microwave oven is built into one end of the island.





The kitchen, which is open to the great room, is the centre of life in the home. Despite the open plan that connects it with the contiguous spaces, its coffered ceiling delineates the area. The island is large enough to accommodate three cooks; its large slab of counter granite was imported from Italy.

“Lighting was instrumental to the functionality of this space, not only as a matter of design and atmosphere, but as a safety issue when handling sharp or hot kitchenware,” says Nash. “It’s a bonus that the more light you have, the better you can showcase all the design elements.”

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Because the homeowners live in their other properties, the house has been rented out to production companies and for corporate events. American female R&B group En Vogue recently filmed a Christmas special there. It is, however, a welcome retreat all year round. 🐾

A refined rusticity reigns in the home office. Chairs: Campio Group; custom-made drapes and roman shades: Making-A-Scene; desk: Restoration Hardware; accessories and wall decor: John Richard Collection; area rug: Surya; lighting: Lighting Centre.

