

# *lived - in* **LUXURY**

STORY **NANCY BELGUE**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **MAX WEDGE**



The biggest challenge to the redesign of the great room was the very high feature wall. Jodi Mason of Urbanhome brought everything down to eye level and selected neutral colours to keep the room warm and welcoming. **OPPOSITE TOP:** Jodi redid the entryway with a comfortable seating area. She added the pictures and the runner up the stairs.

Outside, two little boys spray each other with a hose in the fading light of an early autumn evening. Inside, their parents, Bianca and Pat Montaleone, relax over a glass of wine and smile at the antics of their children. The entire scene exudes warmth and cosiness. And that's exactly the way Bianca, a former competitive figure skater, wants it.

After spending many years of her adolescence travelling and living in hotel rooms, hominess was the overriding requirement for the redesign of the couple's 3,700 sq. ft., six-year-old home in Lakeshore. "When we moved in, the home was beautiful," Bianca recalls. "But it was done in a sophisticated European style that wasn't what I envisioned for our family home." The couple originally set out to create the welcoming and warm feeling they wanted, but soon came to realize they needed assistance. "We bought this massive, oversize piece of furniture for the great room," says Pat. "It looked absolutely terrible and it ended up in the basement."

"It was at about that time I realized we needed to bring in reinforcements," laughs Bianca. "The great room was the main room and we wanted to update it and really didn't know where to begin." Enter **Jodi Mason of Urbanhome Windsor**. An acquaintance of Bianca's parents, Jodi came highly recommended. The minute she and Bianca sat down together, Bianca knew she'd found the right designer to help her create the kind of home she envisioned. "Jodi is very straightforward," she says, "And I really appreciate that." *Continued on page 40*



Philip Chouinard & Jodi Mason of Urbanhome



**RIGHT:** Jodi redecorated the entire main floor, ensuring a cohesive flow of design elements throughout. **BELOW:** The double thickness of the island countertop gives heft and substance to the kitchen. **BOTTOM:** Organic accessories add to the home's warmth and cosiness.



Jodi took stock of the situation and listened carefully to what the couple wanted. She advised them that in order for the home to look cohesive, the project would begin with the great room, but eventually should expand to include the kitchen and eat-in area as well.

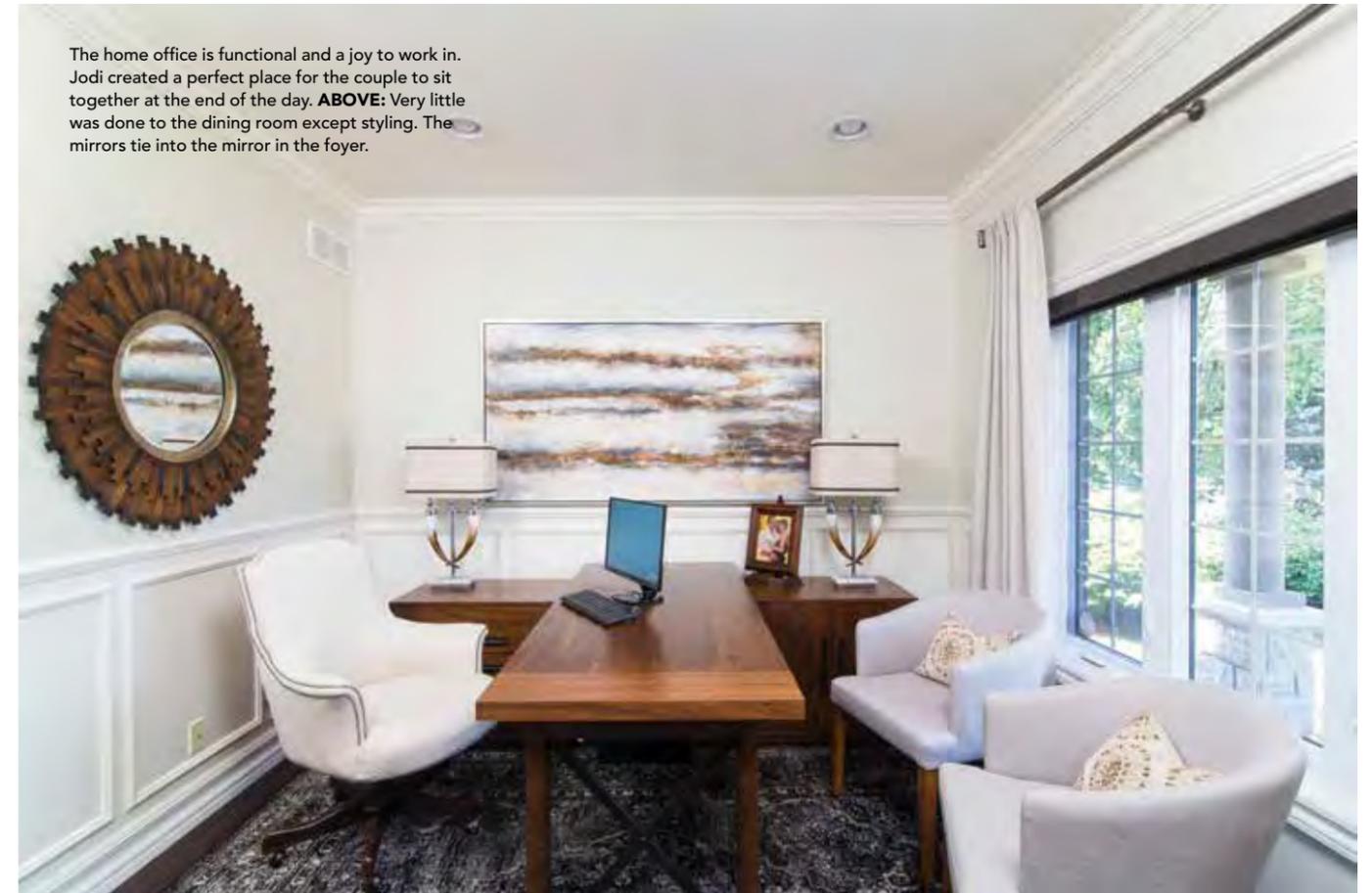
Relieved to have someone take the reins, Bianca and Pat “stood back and let the professionals go to work.” Working with Jodi and **Philip Chouinard** (who assisted with the styling) was a “large reminder why we would never furnish by ourselves again,” they say. “Even the way Jodi puts books on the bookshelf looks nothing like how I would do it,” says Bianca.

Under Jodi’s guidance and with Philip’s styling assistance, the great room was given an updated traditional look that includes warm, classic pieces. The big challenge was a very large feature wall that, according to Jodi, drove the design for the entire project. “We started by flanking large bookcases beside a series of large artworks,” she says. “Then we tucked a chaise between the bookcases to complete the look of the wall. We kept everything at eye level so we didn’t notice the blank space above it. Because of the size of the room we installed two oversize sofas in warm earth tones to play off the colours of the existing floor.”

And, as Jodi had foreseen, once the great room was completed, the homeowners turned their attention to updating the rest of the main floor. Next in line was the kitchen, where the changes were minimal but made a huge difference. The original cabinets were retained but the hardware was updated. *Continued on page 42*



The home office is functional and a joy to work in. Jodi created a perfect place for the couple to sit together at the end of the day. **ABOVE:** Very little was done to the dining room except styling. The mirrors tie into the mirror in the foyer.



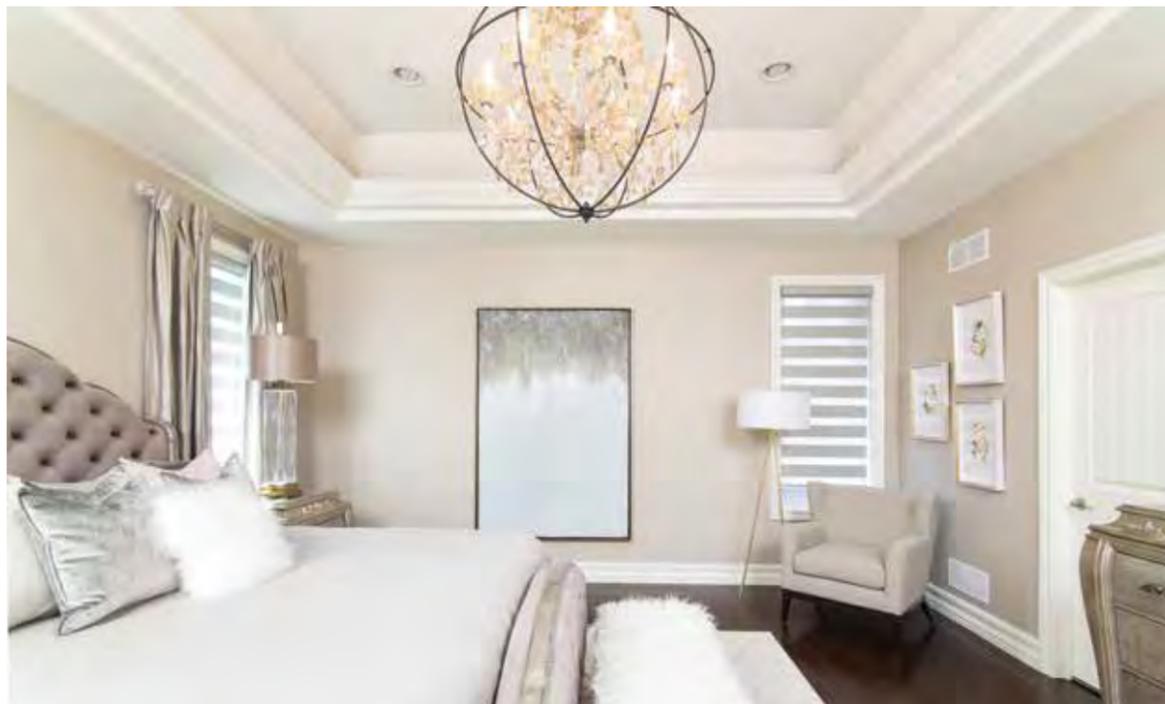


The countertops were switched out for Cambria quartz, including on the kitchen island where Jodi doubled its thickness to create maximum impact. One of the biggest changes was the backsplash, which was inspired by the couple's love of travel. They wanted an "Old World, distressed-brick look," and, after an extensive search and several attempts were able to find exactly what they were looking for through **Marquis Tile**.

One of the most important spaces in the home was Bianca's office. She works from home as office manager for her husband's busy medical practice, and it was extremely important that the room be functional, stylish and inviting. "I had furnished it with things I already owned," says Bianca. "But I am in there for several hours every day and Pat and I sit here at night because we work as a team. I wanted it to be a space I really enjoyed, so I asked Jodi for a complete do-over, which included a Hooker professional desk as well as thoughtful accessories and rugs from Urbanhome.

Next up was the dining room, which really only required Jodi's help for styling. The couple brought their dining room furniture from their previous home and consulted Jodi on how to tie it into the rest of the main floor, which she accomplished with a deft use of accessories. *Continued on page 44*

The master bedroom was a place to express the couple's more dramatic and glamorous side. "We wanted it to feel like a boutique hotel," says Bianca.



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Due to their aforementioned love of travel, the couple wanted their master bedroom to feel like a hotel. The bed with its deeply tufted headboard and footboard (**Guaranteed A Fine Furniture**) had belonged to the couple, but Mason added even more dramatic and glamorous touches, including the faux fur-covered bench at the foot of the bed, richly appointed drapery and splashes of bling in both the artwork and the series of diamond-shaped mirrors.

The basement was unfinished when the couple bought the home, so they quickly framed it out and enlisted Jodi to style it. "It's one of my favourite rooms in the house," Bianca says. "This is the space we use when we have everyone over. We left one side for the kids to beat up with their crafts and games and for the bar with its food and drinks. The rest of the space is for the adults." And, because Bianca and Pat were the first of their extended families to get married and have children, their home is, very happily, the gathering place for many family events.



The gathering of the clans seems a fitting way to conclude. The children have put away the hose. Their parents bundle them up in warm towels. Night is closing in. The home embraces its charges. Cosiness envelops all. **OH**



**TOP:** The basement has a prep kitchen and bar area. It is the scene of many family gatherings. **ABOVE:** The seating area is perfect for adults and children. **LEFT:** Artistically arranged accessories transform a bare wall.

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