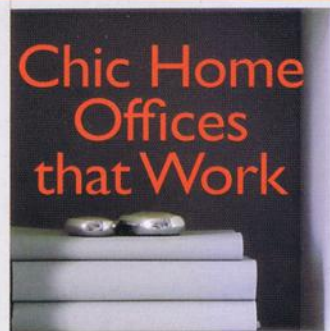
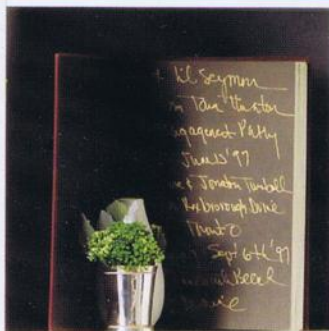


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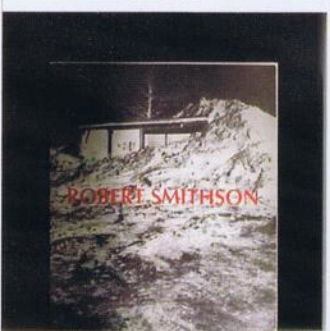
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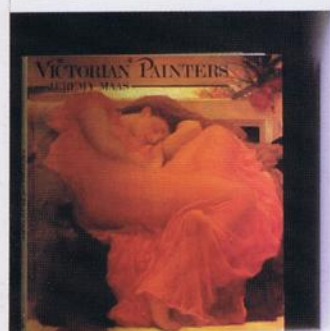


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ORDER

A YEARNING FOR SPACE, LIGHT, CHARACTER AND A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING DRIVES THE DESIGN OF AN IDYLIC NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE HOME.

Text by Jennifer David

Photography by Stacey Brandford

Knowledge is a powerful tool. But so, too, is a mind that can create order from the ground up. All it takes is one look around the classically inspired, elegantly proportioned home of Joe and Anita Robertson to know that a little research, some depth of design knowledge, and a healthy dose of organization can make for a spectacular end result.

For the Robertsons, who are originally from Ottawa and followed a business opportunity to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., in 1989, choosing the right people to steer the redevelopment of

their house, purchased in 1995, was a priority, and so architect Les Andrew and designer Kate Zeidler, and their teams of contractors and suppliers, were called on to guide the extensive project, which took four years from inception to completion.

Although the couple had initially considered their stay in the picturesque historic town a temporary one, by 2000 they knew they wanted to stay. They acquired two adjacent lots, expanding their property to 200 by 200 feet, and looked to enlarge the house from 4,500 square feet to over 13,000 square



The formal dining room's pairing of traditional architectural details, a subtly warm palette, rich fabrics and antique furnishings creates a sense of timeless tranquility. Project architect, Les Andrew; interior design, Kate Zeidler; Interior Design; contractors, Bicubic Project Management; all floral arrangements, BBBlooms; carpet, Scollard Carpet & Interiors.

OPPOSITE: The Colonial style of Anita and Joe Robertson's stately home is in keeping with the rich design heritage of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Its appearance from the street belies its much-expanded living space. Landscaping, Aldershot Landscape Contractors.



feet. They planned to add an indoor pool, a four-car garage, a paddle tennis court (which becomes an ice rink complete with boards in the winter), and a two-storey field house.

"From the start, we had a vision of what the house should look like," says Anita: a Colonial style in step with the town's design heritage. And they placed a premium on quality. Only the most thoughtful design, the finest materials, the most skilled craftspeople and the latest technology would do. "We knew that a house like this was destined to outlast our time in it," Anita explains. They also wanted it to be filled with light (a quality in short supply in the original house), to have "flow," and to have enough attractive storage to contain all of the stuff that comes with a busy life that includes three active teenagers.

It was an enormous undertaking, and one that the couple entrusted to local architect Andrew, whose plan for the new Stratus Vineyards winery in the area is an exemplar of green design and the first winery to receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accreditation. Here was a man steeped in knowledge about the area's traditional architecture, its building standards and codes, and its very particular, light-affecting climate. "He also has a great sense of humour," says Anita, adding that that's not a bad thing with a project of this magnitude, intensity and duration. But more importantly, he would prove to be as dedicated to the process of building a home with integrity as the Robertsons were.



Though not immediately apparent, the warm, sophisticated living room was designed with family use in mind. Its elegant furnishings and fabrics, like plush velvet and patterned paisley, are all durable choices. The deep crown mouldings and transomed french doors allude to the historical design inspiration. Sofas, bergere, Kate Zeidler Interior Design; finishing carpentry, Peters & James; artwork by Kevin Sonmor; Leo Kamen Gallery; wall colour, Powell Buff (HC-35), Benjamin Moore; home technology, Intelligent Interiors; fireplace stone, Old World Stone.

TOP LEFT: Leaving the French Directoire sideboard in the dining room relatively unadorned lets the art take centre stage. Painting by Thomas Stiltz, Denison Gallery; sideboard, Kantelberg Antiques & Interiors.



A sunny sitting room and an informal dining area give the family a place to congregate near the kitchen (foreground), an important feature for Anita. Bar stools, dining chairs, sofa, armchair, coffee table, Kate Zeidler Interior Design; all wood windows, Tradewood Windows and Doors.



OPPOSITE, TOP: Copious storage in the “task room” was originally designed to contain the children’s toys — most notably their large Lego collection. Now that they’re older, this lower-level room is used for projects and crafts. Carpet, Scollard Carpet & Interiors; table, benches, Kantelberg Antiques & Interiors; armoire, Sharon O’Dowd.

BOTTOM: Anita loves spending time in her large main-floor laundry room, which is positioned to get maximum sunlight. She uses the cupboards and drawers here to store most of the home’s linens. Carpet, Scollard Carpet & Interiors; light, Kantelberg Antiques & Interiors; chair, throw pillow upholstery, Kate Zeidler Interior Design.

Andrew's well-read approach dovetailed beautifully with the Robertsons' exacting, methodical tendencies. "He had every resource," says Anita, "and I had a passion to delve into them." After a year of Friday-night meetings, the trio had struck on a design that would give the family the style and space they desired, while both inside and out the expansive five-bedroom home would appear in scale with its surroundings. Andrew achieved this by extending the house out at the back so that the exquisite, spa-like indoor pool wing, the greenhouse wing and the paddle tennis court and its field house are not evident from the street. (In addition, the pool is linked to the house by a specially ventilated "compression chamber" so that no whiff of chlorine will reach the living areas.)

With the architecture in hand, the couple turned to Zeidler, a Toronto designer noted for her meticulously executed interiors. But while, on the surface, her signatures — timeless colours, clean lines, beautiful carpets, and well-considered antiques and artwork — would seem to indicate a particular traditional design ideal, she explains that "it's not about the specific possessions. It's about creating a home that's a reflection of the

"We pinpointed the function of every room and situated the cabinets in just the right places"

homeowners' personalities. It's my responsibility to understand how the family works."

Lists in hand, Anita held weekly meetings with Zeidler and hammered out every detail of the interior design. In the end, Zeidler took the clean and classic canvas, distinguished by its formal but sensible layout and abundant light, and layered in warm colours with skillful restraint. "This is a big house, and we wanted warm colours," Anita says. (Interestingly, some of the paint colours Zeidler chose in her Toronto office fell flat when viewed on site: "The light in Niagara is bluer, so colours look different," she explains.) The palette, Zeidler says, is part of what creates a sense of flow in the house: there are no dramatic shifts in tone between rooms. Zeidler then enlivened every room with bolder strokes of pattern and colour, frequently taking her cues from the lush carpets. In addition, she paired handsome classic upholstered furnishings with tables and benches that would look equally at home in a contemporary setting. And she specified a rich array of textures, like the living room's plush camel velvet sofas, the rich red, blue and camel paisley that dresses a bergere chair, and the kitchen's crewelwork drapery. No detail was left unaddressed. "Even the dining room drapes are lined in patterned fabric — because you can see them from the garden," Zeidler says.

Anita is quick to discuss the knowledge she CONTINUED ON PAGE 170





The airy principal bedroom is divided into three zones, each designed to capture the light at a certain time of day. The sun-drenched morning room is a quiet place to linger over coffee and the paper. Table, Kantelberg Antiques & Interiors; chairs, HorseFeathersHome; drapery fabric, Kate Zeidler Interior Design; light, Stanley Wagman Antiques. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** A small sitting area between their

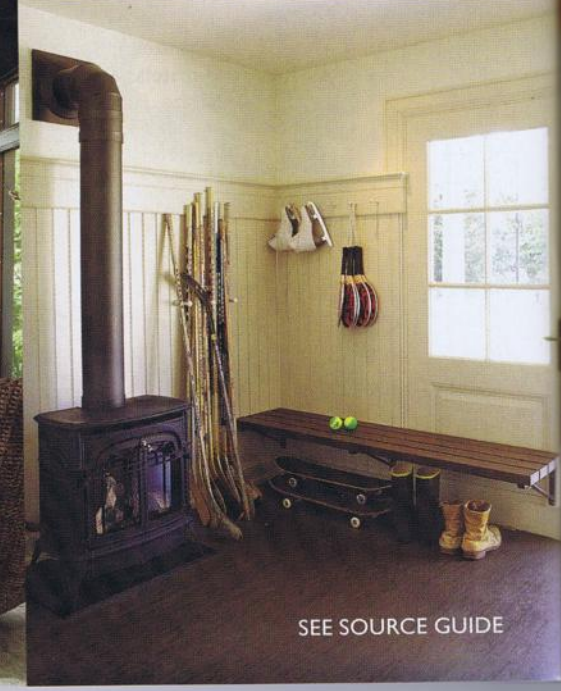
bedrooms gives the two sons additional hangout space. Chairs, table, Kate Zeidler Interior Design; carpet, Scollard Carpet & Interiors. **TOP RIGHT:** Elegant furniture and a cheerful palette give the teenage daughter's room ageless appeal. Chandelier, Constantine; bed, bedding, chair, ottoman, fabrics, Kate Zeidler Interior Design.



Wall-to-wall closets, with built-in dressers and cubbies, define the principal suite's sleek dressing room. Simple elongated handles give the classic cabinetry a contemporary twist. Millwork, Peters & James; bench, Decorum Decorative Finds; wall colour, Navajo White (OC-95), Benjamin Moore.

RIGHT: More built-in drawers and shelves line a walk-in closet off the guest bedroom, where Anita organizes and tags her collection of matelassé bedding according to size. Rug, Scollard Carpet & Interiors; lamp, NordSud Home by En Provence.







Windows that soar to 13' and a huge skylight allow sun to flood the indoor pool area; this is enhanced by the warm Jerusalem Gold limestone tiles. Architect Les Andrew did a computer-modelled light study of the room to determine the best position for the sitting area (opposite, top left). Chairs, Studio b Home.

OPPOSITE, TOP (left to right): Poolside, a towering 13' Honduras mahogany armoire that echoes the windows actually conceals a fridge. Chairs, ottoman, Studio b Home; light over bar, Primavera Interior Furnishings. The greenhouse wing terminates at an outdoor seating area centred on a fireplace. Greenhouse design, installation, Architectural Hi-Lites.

CENTRE (left to right): The landscape design, like the architecture itself, is formal and based on a rectilinear plan. Landscape design, Aldershot Landscape Contractors.

Andrew drew design inspiration — for this detail in the greenhouse, and for other parts of the house — from various historical architectural books. The muted tones and general authenticity of the materials used to build the field house — including dark brick, wood siding and copper roofing — give it the illusion of age. The building overlooks the paddle tennis court (the game is played with a paddle and rubber ball); the court becomes a rink in winter. Rink refrigeration system, Cimco Refrigeration.

BOTTOM (left to right): This chic courtyard between the pool and garage is in fact a well-disguised drainage facility. With its stone floor and dark wood interior, the screened porch has a cottagey vibe. Chairs, Scollard Carpet & Interiors; table, light, Constantine. A bench in the field house is used for donning skates or warming up by the wood-burning stove. Upstairs, a furnished loft overlooks the paddle tennis court.