

MODERN IN THE MARSH

STORY
JOYCE TURNER-GIONET
PHOTOGRAPHY
JASON HARTOG

The modernity of the home is reflected instantly upon entering. The foyer sports floor to ceiling windows, and a minimalist design is warmed up by wood and inlaid floral vases featuring the colours of fall.



The exterior of the home fits right into a wooded marsh lot. The minimalist design is brought into the yard by the pool's clean lines, and glass railings allow the wooded panorama to steal the show. **RIGHT:** The architecture of the home reflects some elements taken from Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Homes – a simple geometric design.

“Bill, we need more glass, can't the windows be any bigger?”

Architectural designer Bill Brown of **Black Tusk Development Group** laughs, recalling plans for Pam and Paul's modern house on an acre overlooking Rattray Marsh. “I think windows should be inspirational,” Pam chuckles. “I drove Bill a little crazy, not to mention the angst inflicted on **Kolbe Windows & Doors** when we asked them to push window size to the limit.” Most windows run floor-to-ceiling with frames akin to gallery wrap, unassuming, allowing the beauty of the marsh setting to speak loudest.

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ABOVE: Flower vases sit snugly in the prominent staircase in the foyer. **RIGHT:** The living space is given texture with a feature stone wall and fireplace. The light colours are punched up with paper lanterns.





The kitchen is built for casual dining and entertaining. The island breakfast bar has enough seating for the entire family, plus guests. **BELOW:** The formal dining room is open to the kitchen, which allows for easy conversation throughout the space.



The couple initially hired Bill and Interior Decorator **Barbara Patton-Brown** to design a weekend retreat on Georgian Bay. Delighted with the way Bill and Barb thoughtfully created spaces that embraced the needs of their growing family, they contacted the firm to design their modern city home. “We lived in a 55-year-old bungalow built in the Frank Lloyd Wright style,” says Pam. “With four boys, we’d outgrown its possibilities.” Not willing to lose the marsh setting, they decided to tear down and rebuild.

“Pam and Paul’s home is one of the most rewarding projects I’ve ever been involved with,” says builder Dale Haugrud of **Haugrud Homes**. “It’s a thoughtful and unique design on an outstanding property. Pam included lots of special touches that enhanced the design. The experience was a pleasure, not only for me, but for all my trades.”

“As the last remaining lakefront marsh between Burlington and Toronto, local building restrictions on height, sprawl and tree removal are stringent,” says Bill. “The new footprint is not much bigger than the original dwelling, but makes better use of space.” His exterior design blends seamlessly into the marsh environment, with elements from Wright’s Prairie Homes – a low-pitched roof, horizontal lines and a composite of stucco, stackstone and cedar. Interior spaces are free-flowing with few separations. A magnificent stackstone feature wall rises through the centre of the house. Its smoky charcoal tone accentuates the cinnamon stain on the solid maple staircase. Five-and-a-half-inch maple plank floors run throughout.



“I like design to be sturdy and chunky with clean lines and little fuss,” says Pam. Friends teased her about her use of white finishes in a home with four boys. “Benjamin Moore paint, leather soap bar stools and a Caesarstone island that won’t scratch or stain – Barb and I made white work,” says Pam proudly, pointing out that the white continues to hold up well.

Orange is the home’s main accent colour, happily asserting itself throughout. In the kitchen, orange pendant lights from **Eurofase** hang from a polished bulkhead. Positioned over the 16-foot long white Caesarstone slab island, they lend playfulness to the space. Pam reveals she’s a bit of a neat freak, so the grey Caesarstone workspace abutting the island was stepped down in height to hide messy food prep areas. The hammerhead at one end makes a convenient serving spot near the dining table. “Pam and Paul are big on casual entertaining,” explains Bill. “They didn’t want separation between dining room and kitchen, opting for a punch-through design where conversation can flow as freely as the food. Cabinets and built-ins are by Jason and AJ of **JTI Custom Cabinets &**

Furniture – reconstituted walnut in a custom stain. Their horizontal grain follows the home’s architectural lines. Chunky Formae Italian cabinet hardware is from **Oakville Fine Hardware**.

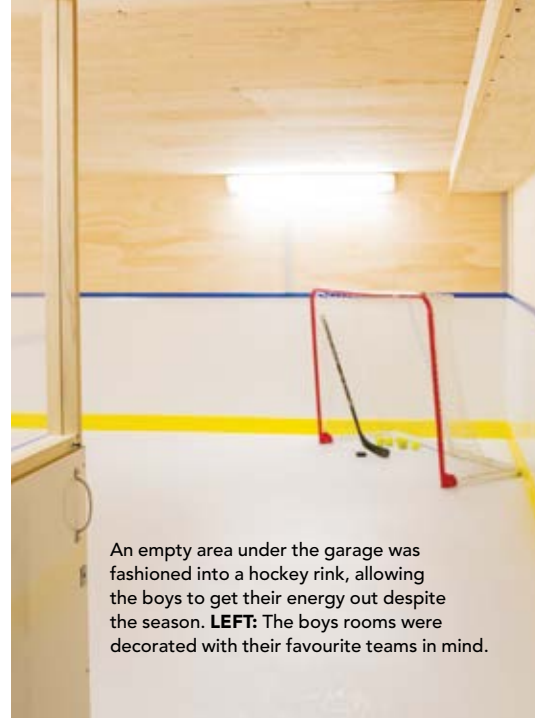
The living room is sized for parties and styled for comfort. A lone abstract in oils and whimsical display of paper lanterns on an indoor tree add a splash of colour in a space where colour is intentionally muted to allow marsh views to rule. Over the gas fireplace, a mantel of Silver Fox stone veneer by **ErthCoverings** is offset, in keeping with the asymmetrical space. Wired pendant lights can be operated hydraulically. The only separation of space is an area Bill calls “the away room” in the home’s northwest corner. A concept made popular by architect Sarah Susanka in her book *The Not So Big House*, it’s a place where family members can enjoy a little alone time.

Upstairs, the boys’ rooms are separated from their parents’ master retreat by an elegant bridge walkway. Their rooms are decorated in the colours of their favourite sports team. Conversely, Pam and Paul’s retreat is all grown up. *Continued on page 22*



FAR LEFT: The “away room,” the only sectioned off part of the living space, means that there is some privacy or a quiet spot away from the busy family just to reflect. **LEFT:** The powder room features clean lines with a little bit of bling in a mirror sourced by Barb. **BELOW LEFT:** The master en suite features a Caesarstone counter and a stackstone wall that add natural elements to the modern space. **BELOW RIGHT:** The master bedroom’s focal point is the huge window that overlooks the wooded scenery. Warm wood floors bring the outside in.





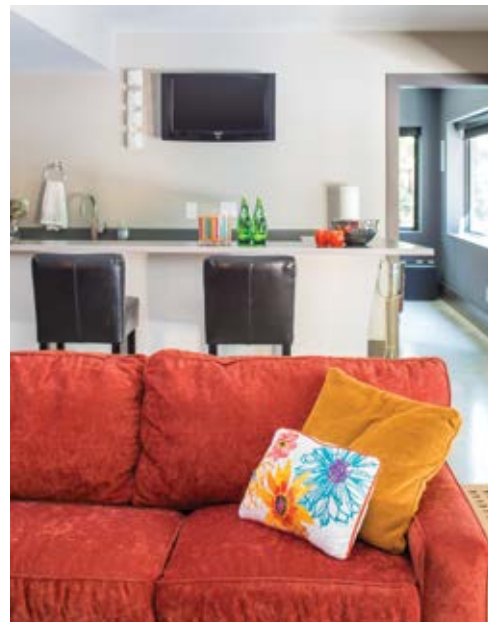
An empty area under the garage was fashioned into a hockey rink, allowing the boys to get their energy out despite the season. **LEFT:** The boys rooms were decorated with their favourite teams in mind.

“We love hotel vacations and wanted that ‘kick off your shoes feel,’” says Pam. Barb’s design delivers in spades. Furniture has a breezy organic feel. Dresser and end tables (by Charles Davies Custom Fine Furniture & Built Ins) are ebony stained white oak, attached to the wall for an uncluttered aesthetic that does away with furniture feet.

“When you’re relaxing in a hot bath, it matters what you look at,” Pam says. The en suite was designed around a soaker tub positioned to take in the outdoor vista. Look up, and a quirky chrome “sputnik” light smiles down. Blizzard White Caesarstone was chosen for countertops and repeated on the tub deck. Cabinets are reconstituted walnut. The creamy stackstone feature wall reinforces

the luxurious hotel feel, tying in beautifully with off-white walls and creamy Bianca porcelain floor tiles installed by **Diamante Granite and Marble Inc.** A cheeky splash of orange shows up on candle sconces.

Nothing is over-the-top in the design of this tasteful modern home. Nothing except the family’s unbridled enthusiasm for sports. On the covered patio, a giant TV screen looks over a space large enough to hold four boys, their friends and Mom and Dad. In the laid-back atmosphere of Pam and Paul’s modern glass house, the sofa’s orange cushions can be tossed aside to make room for anyone else who drops by to see the game. **OH**



ABOVE: The lower level offers extra entertaining space with a bar and lounge. **RIGHT:** Even guest rooms get a beautiful view, and are immaculately decorated.



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