



uncommonly STYLISH

STORY **MARY HATT** | PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON HARTOG**

London's Oakridge neighbourhood is having a moment, with park-like properties and classic ranch homes in high demand.

John Mathews of **Spruce Crossing Developments** hopes his new enclave of contemporary homes, perched on a rise overlooking the Thames River near the northwest corner of Wonderland Road and Riverside Drive, will add a new dimension to the area's current cachet.

John heard about the building site and didn't hesitate when his chance to own the land came along in August of 2015. He recalls being struck by the stunning vistas of river and parkland on one side, and the trees of Oakridge on the other.

He recalls, "The first time I showed up on site I said, I have to develop this." Today, seven two-floor detached units in **Oakridge Common** have been constructed and one is finished as a model home, open to view for inspiration since the other interiors will be custom finished once purchased. *Continued on page 25*



Designer Stephanie Sinclair of Portico Design anchored the living room with a sisal area rug. She then mixed traditional and modern furnishings to create classic comfort. The wall niche with dramatic photo art adds a gallery vibe. **TOP LEFT:** The honed basalt stone fireplace is a dramatic focal point, adding weight and texture to the room.



Stephanie chose a simple yet refined radius dining table in cherry and European beech wood, with metal ferrules for decorative accent. Mid-century style chairs get an update from modern horizontal channeling and linen upholstery. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT:** Stephanie Sinclair and John Mathews. **TOP RIGHT:** The kitchen is a sleek combo of geometric lines in dark-stained maple and glossy white MDF cabinetry and glass backsplash. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** A handy serving bar and wine fridge along one wall of the kitchen plus the waterfall-style island countertop make a sophisticated connection with the dining and living areas.

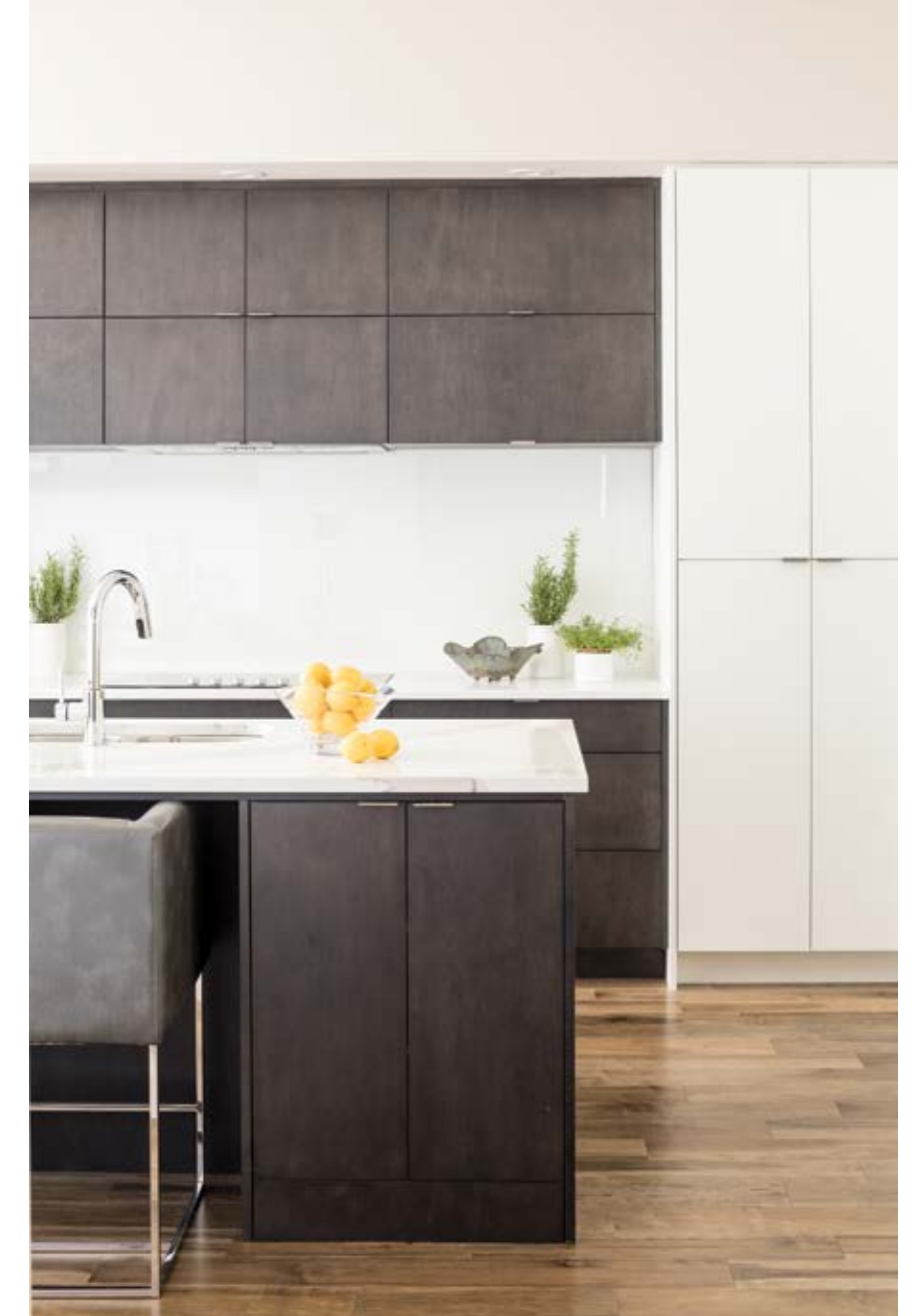
John opted for clean contemporary exteriors, finishing them with stone, stucco and Woodtone siding (**Ferrell Brick & Stone, Fonseca Masonry Inc., Lambton Stucco Ltd.** and **JNI Aluminum & Vinyl Products Inc.**). The exteriors also feature balconies with waterproof Duradek decking on both sides of the homes. All units have lower-level walk-outs.

Inside, John worked with Stephanie Sinclair of **Portico Design** to maximize functionality and style. Together, they have created three levels of dynamic living space, just under 4,000 square feet in size, offering plenty of room for family gatherings and entertaining as well as cosy niches and conversation areas.

“The open floor plan and room layouts were designed to take full advantage of both the view and the abundance of natural light streaming in through the large-scale windows,” Stephanie says, adding that two-foot glass transom windows above all the interior passage doors give a play of light throughout the home.

The living and dining areas, with windows by **Golden Windows Limited** and furniture, lighting and accessories by Portico, are situated at the rear of the home. The kitchen is nicely open to these spaces yet also connected to practical features such as a pantry, a utility room where the home’s Wi-fi features are controlled, and a hallway to the two-car garage at the front of the home.

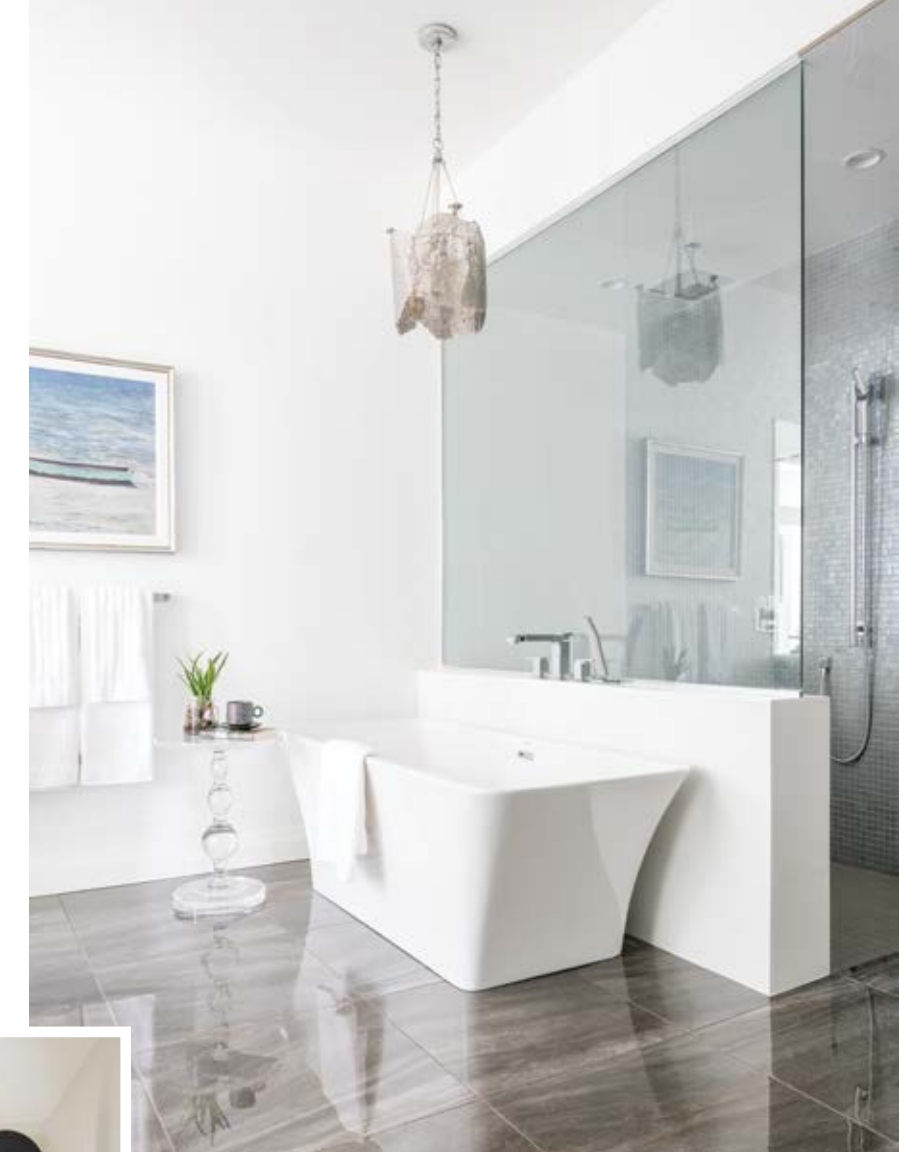
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GCW Custom Kitchens & Cabinetry Inc. supplied the cabinetry here and elsewhere in the unit. In the kitchen there is a mixture of raven-coloured stain on maple and glossy white on MDF. The back-painted glass backsplash by **Stuart Glass** adds a dash of contemporary flair and is one of many reflective surfaces throughout the home amplifying natural light, explains Stephanie. The backsplash is also a stand-out accompaniment to quartz and Caesarstone countertops from **Progressive Countertops** and fixtures from **Ensuite Showroom London**. Fisher & Paykel appliances finish off the kitchen's sleek look.

The main floor also includes a welcoming front foyer, wide hallway and a powder room. Ten-foot ceilings plus the transom windows above painted slab doors by **County Heritage** add to the airy, open interior and are features of the second level, as well. Unique ash stairways by **Roes Stair Company** are extra wide. **Cambridge Elevating Inc.** fitted the model home with their Heritage elevator to all three levels.



ABOVE: Serene and spa-like, the master bath mixes contemporary fixtures and luxurious finishes including the shower's feature wall in recycled glass mosaic tiles and sparkly grout. **LEFT:** A playful hanging mobile enhances the wide stairwell from the second level to the main floor. One of several wall niches, this one accommodating built-ins and display shelves, adds architectural interest in the hallway. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The master bedroom in classic whites and blacks continues the transitional decorative styling. A chic animal print chair grabs attention, as do vintage feather sketches on handmade English watercolour paper framed in acrylic on the far wall.

John and Stephanie located the master bedroom on the home's second floor along the back wall to offer even higher views of the river. Here there is a blend of organic warmth and modern finishes, with added ambience from the Majestic fireplace (**Zed-Air Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.**). The suite connects to a spectacular bathroom with fixtures and finishes by **Centura Tile, Baker McMillan Plumbing** and **Scherba's Great Floors**, as well as **Ensuite Showroom London**. Shimmery recycled glass mosaic tiles make for a statement shower wall, another of Stephanie's decorative touches playing artistically with light. The wall is complemented by a porcelain floor in oversize tiles, two-foot square.

A large, well-fitted walk-in closet opens off the bathroom. The closet is also sensibly accessible from the main hallway where a versatile niche with built-ins nestles into one wall, with the stairway to the lower level across from it. Further along are two sunny bedrooms and a full bathroom. *Continued on page 28*



ABOVE: The guest room's art wall echoes the acrylic framing on the master bedroom wall. Here, vintage arrow studies add pop. Acrylic was chosen for its reflective quality that bounces natural light. **BELOW LEFT:** The lower level walk-out includes a relaxing conversation area, as well as a wet bar and an additional bedroom and bathroom. **BELOW RIGHT:** The wood-paneled home elevator interior promises a comfortable ride between floors.

The model also includes a finished lower level with a walk-out, wet bar and comfy conversation area surrounding a honed stone fireplace. Stephanie explains how she used the basics of transitional decorative styling to create a modern edge within a timeless interior. To complement natural maple floors, she added a waterfall counter in the kitchen to meet the natural grain of the hardwood. She chose the warm tones of Simply White and Collingwood (Benjamin Moore) as the model's main palette. Then she dropped in touches of grey, such as the fireplace surround in the living room, and mixed the neutral scheme with saturated bright colour in greenery, accessories and artwork.

"We have been careful to use the latest trending colour in small doses," she says. "There is just enough colour to infuse the space with energy and personality." John, who has been building homes in southwest Ontario since 1986, takes pride in the extras loaded into the homes of Oakridge Common. The model shows off Lauzon's Pure Genius hardwood flooring (Scherba's), chosen not just for style but its healthful properties, as well. Billed as an air-purifying smart floor activated by light, it promises up to 85 per cent cleaner indoor air. Many luxury finishes, such as Caesarstone, will be standard and the guts of these homes will also be top of the line.

"We've installed a Carrier HVAC system with Wi-fi controls (Zed-Air Heating & Air Conditioning Inc.), the Cadillac of systems," says John. "Other standard extras include an iPod docking station (**AITC Security**) with optional speakers and alarm system. One of the features John likes most about Oakridge Common is the opportunity for purchasers to customize their interiors. He enjoys working one-on-one with his clients and says, "I like to allow them to make design changes. Fortunately, we're a small enough company that we can easily fulfill their wishes." **OH**



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