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STORY **CATALINA MARGULIS** | PHOTOGRAPHY **SANDY MACKAY**

The home was designed to preserve the mature trees in the backyard. A covered porch creates an outdoor space protected from the elements.

Bringing the outdoors in was a key element driving the design of this new Port Credit build, home of Walter and Margaret Zanel and their children Cole and Hailey.

The Zanel family first moved into their modest bungalow in Port Credit nine years ago. Over the years, they looked into major renovations, but instead chose minor upgrades to their home. When the time was right, they opted for a complete rebuild. They moved out for a year and handed their home to builder **Peter Giampuzzi** of **Ornella Homes**. Together with architectural technologist **Richard Kossak** of **New Age Design** and designer **Francy Kralik** of **House Candy**, Giampuzzi worked for 11 months to design and build the new home. *Continued on page 32*

The Zaneli's first encountered Peter when they followed his building of a home across the street. "We were impressed with how they managed the build and the quality of workmanship we saw," says Walter. "It was the best referral we could possibly have, to watch somebody in action, so it was a no-brainer for us to move forward with Peter. It's been a great experience. I would never do another build without Peter; he was that impressive."

"This neighbourhood is a hidden gem," says Peter. "It's walking distance to the lake, the marina, GO train, shopping and dining on the water – it doesn't get much better than this. A lot of people don't know it's here, but the word is quickly getting out. Today, it's in total regeneration with five new homes slated to start this fall alone."

The Zaneli's spacious 75-by-150-foot lot includes mature trees and greenery. "There's a first-growth oak tree in the backyard that's about 400 years old and there's also an old chestnut tree," says Peter. "The family wanted to maintain the two trees, so we designed the house around the tree canopies. They provide natural shade and privacy year-round."

The desire to integrate as many natural elements as possible was a big part of the plan. "Walter and Margaret had a very clear vision of their home from day one," says Peter. "Their design philosophy was to build a home that would stand the test of time through clean, simple lines – and I believe they achieved it!"

Ornella Homes built the home with extended setbacks from the

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ABOVE: Modern lines are softened with warm wood, Owen Sound ledge rock and touches of greenery. **RIGHT:** A two-storey entrance and cantilevered staircase create a dramatic welcome. **OPPOSITE:** The home was carefully constructed to allow for maximum natural light.



"THEIR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY WAS TO BUILD A HOME THAT WOULD STAND THE TEST OF TIME THROUGH CLEAN, SIMPLE LINES – AND I BELIEVE THEY ACHIEVED IT!"



LEFT: A glass-enclosed bridge overlooking the modern kitchen connects the two wings on the upper level. **ABOVE:** A mudroom with integrated storage brings practicality to the main floor. **BELOW:** The use of windows instead of a traditional backsplash is an unexpected and dynamic addition. All outlets are integrated into the solid surface counter.



“ALL YOU SEE IS THE GREENERY OF THE BACKYARD POURING INTO THE LIVING ROOM. IT’S BEAUTIFUL,” SAYS PETER.

property line, 36-inch roof overhangs, charcoal grey windows and panelling, and sawn Owen Sound ledge-rock to give the home a California feel.

Living space was extended to the outdoors with a built-in backyard kitchen, complete with a barbecue and simmer unit. Between the exposed, I-beam back porch and the front entrance, 12,000 pounds of exposed steel were used.

“The architectural designer did just an incredible job with all the details,” Peter says. “Richard gave us the look of a floating canopy

– the front and back porch look like they are floating on top of steel beams.”

Inside, the home features a two-storey light tunnel from the front of the house to the back and splits the second storey into a master bedroom on one side, and kids’ rooms on the other. A glass bridge connects the two wings and floods the interior with natural light throughout the day.

“Richard is a master of form and function. He did an excellent job in maximizing the amount of natural light into the home, without sacrificing privacy or space. The home

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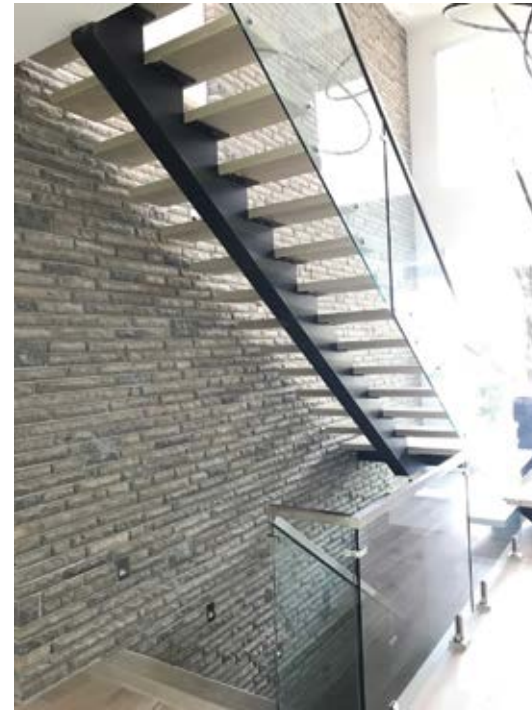
A great room with large proportions could feel cold, but the use of deep wood tones, stone and rich leather add warmth and texture. **TOP LEFT:** A built-in backyard kitchen allows the family to extend outdoor living well into fall.

With so many windows throughout, the home has a cottage in the city vibe despite its modern aesthetic. **BELOW:** The powder room blends simple, organic materials to echo the home's overall feel.



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features floor-to-ceiling glass across 80 per cent of the rear of the home – all you see is the greenery of the backyard pouring into the living room. It's beautiful," says Peter.

In the kitchen, glass windows were used for the backsplash, giving the impression of a "floating kitchen." All cabinetry and built-in closets were imported from Venice, Italy, by **Trevisana Kitchens & Interiors**. **Gian Luigi Ongaro**, who leads the Toronto office, has been part of the family business from the beginning and launched here in Toronto five years ago, bringing a range of products I've never seen before in Canada," says Peter. The lacquer kitchen features powder-grey cabinets, concrete panels and LED track lighting recessed into the millwork. "It's simple, clean and elegant."

City Stairs created stairs made of cut and welded steel with floating white oak slabs to match the hardwood floors, which are white

oak with a bleached finish. The home also integrates natural elements, with a feature wall in the entryway made of 600 square feet of natural stone.

It was important to maintain the warm, modern feel throughout the home. This was accomplished by Francy the designer. "She ensured that the choices we made aligned to this vision: Tiles, flooring, countertops, millwork, fixtures, lighting, doors and paint colour all worked together perfectly," says Walter.

Ornella Homes did all the landscaping. A mix of ornamental grasses and river rock give the exterior an exotic look, while highlighting the simplicity of the house and the nature surrounding it. "Every house we do, we try to plant at least a dozen trees. We planted oak trees, Japanese maples and dogwood trees for seasonal colour and foliage," Peter says.

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The home also includes a family space in the basement, as well as a gym and nanny suite. In addition to LED lighting throughout, the home has a two-stage furnace that allows heat and air conditioning to be controlled from each room in the house.

The project delivered exactly what the homeowners wanted, a month ahead of schedule, which makes for happy homeowners and a happy builder.

“Like anything else in life, it’s important to have the right team in place, and we really did,” says Walter. “When you have the right team, you are able to overcome any hurdles or issues pretty easily. We are very happy with the end result.” **OH**

LEFT: Wood elements are carried to the upper level for continuity. **BOTTOM LEFT:** A peek into a custom closet in the master bedroom. **BELOW:** Integrated custom shelves and sleek furnishings in the office maintain the modern feel and add function.



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