

STORY **HEATHER WRIGHT** | PHOTOGRAPHY **JESSICA DEEKS**

# SOPHISTICATED *Style*



The open dining room leads into the fresh kitchen. Shiva likes a smooth transition from one floor to another, shown by the curved lines used from the tile to the wood. **OPPOSITE TOP:** The space between the dining table and the kitchen creates a great reading nook or breakfast area. **BOTTOM:** The modern design of the front garden creates an impression of the home straight away.

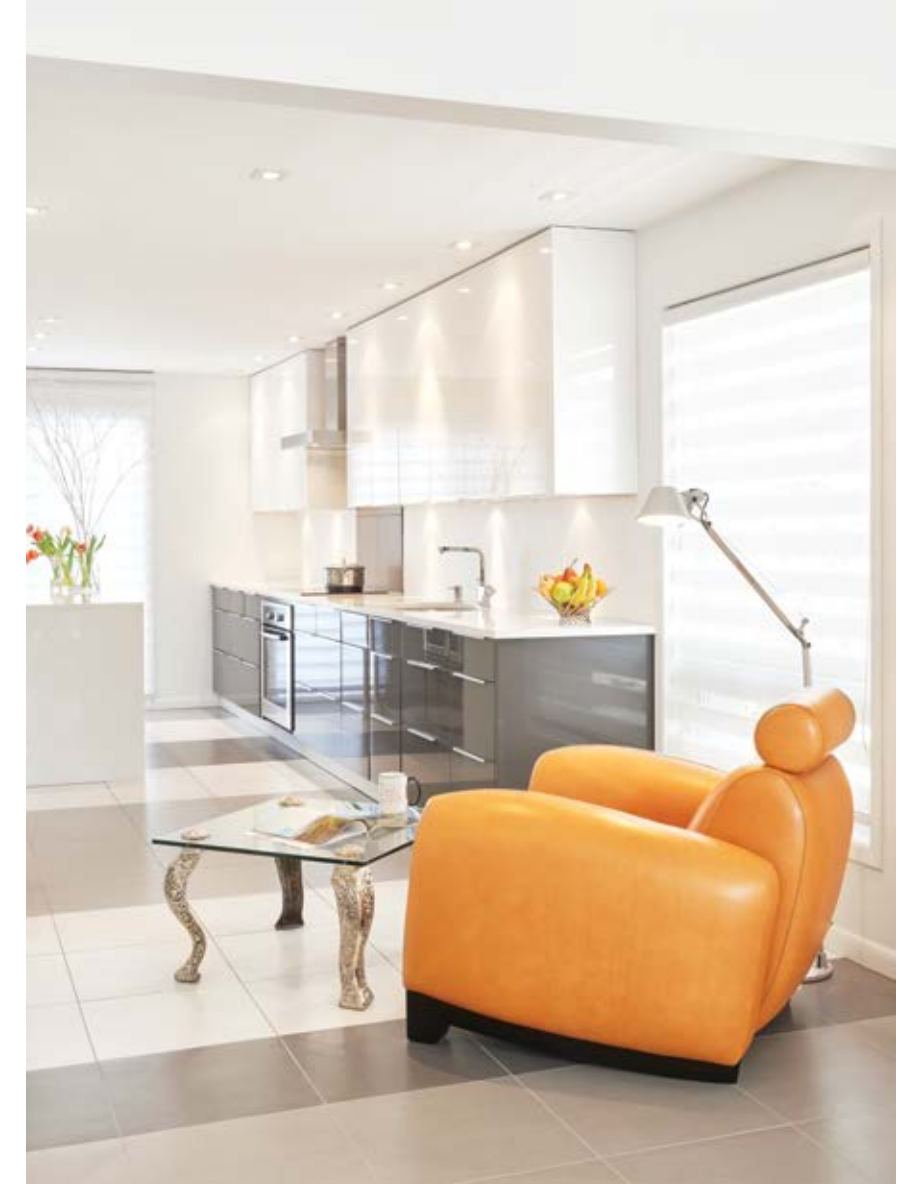
Although good design is an activity that draws on multiple senses, it is the visual influence that creates the biggest impact. When your visual acuity is led by a clever, multi-layered, cohesive design, the results are striking.

Shiva Gupta's sleek suburban home is nestled on a tree-lined Kanata street. However, this home absolutely hums with urban chic, from the moment you pull up to the curb. It pops out of the streetscape, with sublime landscaping by **7j Design**, a front door with an elegant curve (**Designer's Home Centre**), original works of art and a contemporary exterior façade that packages the home and hints at the design experience that awaits inside.

Designer and proprietor of 7j Design, Shiva designed her entire home herself, both the interior and the exterior façade. She has a team of tradespeople, and prides herself on her personal investment in her projects – both emotionally and to the vision of the design plan. "I take a whole project from start to finish," she explains.

A trained designer, also an artist, Shiva's home is a testament to her craft, with each square inch filling an artistic need. Like brushstrokes on a canvas, each splash of colour or placement of line and shape combine to create a quiet visual impact. It's subtle yet profound, like a piece of artwork that stays with you long after you leave the gallery. Shiva's original pieces of art comprise the accent pieces throughout the home, including sculpture and paintings. Everywhere, on the walls and in the design elements, Shiva's preference for clean lines is clear.

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The dining table fills the space at the front of the home, with gorgeous yellow and grey blinds as a backdrop. **OPPOSITE LEFT:** The hallway is complete with patterned glass on the stairs leading down to the basement. **TOP RIGHT:** The view from the living room into the kitchen. **BOTTOM:** The kitchen flows into the reading area and dining room.



She describes herself as a “minimalist” who “likes straight lines that are not too busy to the eye. It’s all about what is pleasing to the eye.”

Shiva has lived in this house for 30 years. Her 1,900 sq. ft. home has been renovated extensively (think moving walls and completely redefining and repurposing the space). The first wall came down 20 years ago.

Since then, among other things, she has redesigned her main floor plan. Originally, there was a sunken living room, which they didn’t use often, and a dining room, flanked by a small galley kitchen. She raised the sunken living room because, as she explains, “a drop in level contributes to a chop in the space, giving it a narrow feel,” and has repurposed it as the dining room.

The whole home is a study in geometry, with stripes and directed line patterns occupying the space. On several doors and windows, instead of traditional window coverings, Shiva has placed patterned films with cut-out shapes that accomplish privacy and décor at the same time.

In order to lead the eye, Shiva has used wide stripes of grey in the tile (**Emerald Tile + Marble**), both on the kitchen floor and on the backsplash, which provides contrast to the white surrounding. *Continued on page 42*





These angles and lines continue upstairs into the main bathroom, where the tile is angular and patterned, with just the right contrast and connection to each other. Of particular interest over the floating toilet, is a trail of red, which literally lures your eye around the room. “The grout lines in red detail what makes this space special,” says Shiva.

Shiva doesn't like the visually jarring effect that happens when you cut between spaces. As the hardwood (Mirage Hardwood Floors, Select Grade Birch in Satin finish) of the dining room transitions into the tile of the kitchen and then back into the hardwood of the great room, she has added elegant curves in the flooring to soften the visual blow when you move from space to space. It makes an interesting subtext as well; while this is a wide open space plan, these subtle cues divide the perimeters of each room, without dividing the space.

Almost like a visual ladder, a textured fireplace (**The Fireplace Center & Patio Shop**) with a sculpted façade draws the eye in and up in the two-storey great room. Cathedral ceilings are punctuated with a skylight and natural light that enhance the sense of space.

The finishes in the main living space play a refractory purpose, with quartz countertops (Emerald Tile + Marble) in the kitchen and lacquer cabinetry (custom made by 7j Design) by catching the light and spreading it throughout. A glass block wall (**Merkley Supply Ltd.**) along the staircase to the basement sits in front of a mirror to help light the space. *Continued on page 44*



A space to relax upstairs overlooks the lounge area. **OPPOSITE TOP LEFT:** Shiva Gupta, the designer and owner of 7j Design, relaxes by the fire. **TOP RIGHT:** Small touches add depth to the room. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The living room is complete with a unique textured wall behind the fireplace.

**BELOW:** The guest bedroom's wall shelving unit is ideal for display and storage. **RIGHT:** The bathroom is complete with clean lines and a fun red lighting fixture. **BELOW:** The master bedroom is full of light and personality.

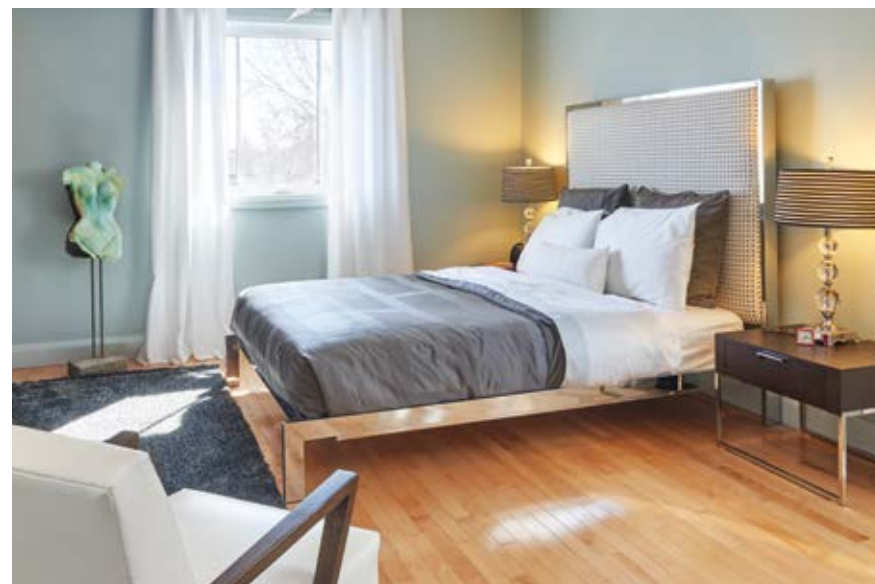


Shiva is keenly aware of the sightline in the space and goes to great lengths not to interrupt it. For instance, there is very little suspended lighting in the home, save for a super-funky light fixture (Marchand Lighting + Electrical) in the upstairs bathroom, in place "to provide a splash of colour," according to Shiva. This, like every other inch of this home, is the result of a deliberate choice.

Instead, Shiva favours recessed lights in the kitchen, which she has pragmatically put on dimmer switches to aid in work, or to soften the mood in the room. "Suspended fixtures cut into a small space," she says.

The focal point in the kitchen is a streamline hood fan (Bosch, **Universal Appliances**), and she felt that stacking the space with light fixtures would diminish the impact. There are also potlights in numerous areas around the house, meant to showcase her artwork, but to also diffuse and deliver light throughout the space in a way that uniquely suits it.

What is particularly appealing about this home is how it presents a visual experience, and then working backwards, and pulling the design elements apart, you can see how expertly they fit together. **OH**



# Attention to detail

The secret to satisfying returning customers.

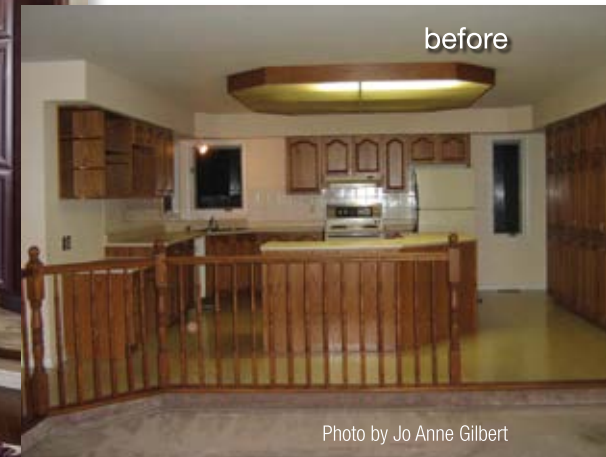
By Brian McCullough



Westend Bath & Kitchen Centre



Photo by Jonathon Harrington/Icon Imaging



before

Photo by Jo Anne Gilbert

For returning Westend Bath and Kitchen customers Jo Anne Gilbert and Paul Pagotto, the looming 25th anniversary of their Kanata home was all the impetus they needed to get started on the kitchen and family area renovations they had been fantasizing about for years. The couple was tired of their dated oak cabinets and railings, inadequate storage, poor lighting and problems with traffic flow between the rooms.

"The big open kitchen, eating area and family room together form the master control centre of our home," says Jo Anne. "It is where we spend most of our time and do our entertaining, but the entire space looked like it was mired in the 1980s."

Undertaking a sweeping renovation of wide open room spaces calls for just the right mix of panoramic vision and macroscopic attention to detail. Too much of one without regard for the other can leave an open concept area of the home looking unbalanced and lacking in the cohesion that makes it a joy to move from room to room. For Westend Bath and Kitchen designer Valerie Laba, meeting the couple's renovation needs came down to choosing features, textures and colours that would work well together in the individual room spaces, but which would also integrate into an attractive overall design.

"The open concept meant keeping all the materials for each room in mind, allowing for a proper flow," Valerie says. "We carried the 20x20-inch Noce floor tiles throughout the kitchen and breakfast room on the one level, then finished the hardwood floor in the sunken family room in a complementary Maple Truffle. The new half-wall with wood cap adds a sophisticated defining element to the overall design, and we used pot lights throughout to achieve the warm lighting effect."

Valerie called on skilled Westend installer Dave Edwards to undertake the renovation, which also included quartz kitchen countertops, and

Cherry Merlot cabinets featuring a number of amazing space-saving options such as roll-out trays, a pull-out spice rack and removable sliding storage baskets. A custom valance box was constructed for the lights above the corner sink area.

"We love our new kitchen space," says Jo Anne. "The beautiful backsplash behind the glass canopy range hood is just the focal point we envisioned." The spacious kitchen accommodates a cook-top, dual wall ovens, a built-in microwave and a warming drawer. The built-in appliances are flanked by deep pantries.

"Valerie did a wonderful job of helping us bring our dream to life," says Jo Anne. "She spent many hours with us, making sure we chose just the right complement of cabinets, tiles, countertop, flooring and so on. She was very patient about updating the design several times, and quick to make suggestions and point out the impact of changes on our budget. No detail was too insignificant for her to address before, during or after the renovation."

Like many other customers, Jo Anne and Paul were happy leaving any direct dealings with suppliers and subcontractors in the capable hands of Westend Bath and Kitchen.

"It was a great experience to work with Valerie and the rest of the team," Jo Anne says. "To have people who share your dream and can pay attention to every detail and make it all happen for you is pretty special."

Westend Bath and Kitchen Centre is located at 1660 Woodward Dr. and is open Monday to Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Visit online anytime at [www.westendbathandkitchen.com](http://www.westendbathandkitchen.com), or call 613-226-7701 to arrange a free in-home consultation.